ART, NATURE, AND PEOPLE: LANDSCAPE VALUES OF AN URBAN PARK

by

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ABSTRACT

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This is a critical study of a landscape restoration project in Prospect Park, Brooklyn, New York, a landscape park designed in 1866 by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux. A privately organized group, the Prospect Park Alliance, is reconstructing a portion of the park's woodland landscape in partnership with New York City Department of Parks and Recreation. The project is represented as an act of historic preservation and of ecological restoration. The restoration work in Prospect Park is at the forefront of urban park regeneration efforts throughout North America. These projects typically combine elements of historic preservation of original design features with elements of natural ecological restoration. This study seeks to consider the case of Prospect Park from the standpoint of the social and individual experience of present-day users.

The author combines research data from a park user survey with interview data he collected specifically for this dissertation research. The user survey reached 350 park users across the park with questions measuring park visitation habits, attitudes toward the park, the meaning of the park, fears, likes, dislikes, and demographic characteristics.

The dissertation research methodology features "transect walks" through park landscapes with willing participants who take the opportunity to speak of their park experience. The transect walks produce rich ethnographic data that, in combination with the broader but shallower survey data, provide a basis for evaluating the woodlands project in light of the users' experience of the park.

This study finds that park users interviewed in the wooded region of the park hold strong attachments to the park as a natural landscape. Users were interested in the material dialogue expressed in this landscape between nature and the products of culture. The data suggest that the park's pastoral spaces are more significant in most users' experience than are the wooded areas, and that a range of bodily movement in the park environment is as important as aesthetic values. The historical research indicates that the present restoration is quite selective in the elements of the original design it chooses to restore. Social and cultural experience were important historically and are salient in many present-day users' park experience. Management alternatives are considered and policy recommendations offered.

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Chapter I. INTRODUCTION

What meanings and uses does the nineteenth-century landscape park have at the start of the twenty-first century? As city neighborhoods have undergone cycles of ethnic change, disinvestment and reinvestment in the decades since the Second World War, the parks that serve them have changed accordingly. People writing on urban parks in the 1970s and 1980s (Heckscher, 1977, Zaitzevski, 1982, Cranz, 1982, Hayward, 1989) marked a long period of declining maintenance and attendance, particularly for the urban landscape park, characteristically a park designed or inspired by the work of Frederick Law Olmsted. In the last twenty years, the trend has reversed itself with a notable restoration movement. Best exemplified by the achievements of the Central Park Conservancy in New York, this trend is notable for the prominence of private groups in planning, funding, and undertaking restorations, and for the ambition common to many such efforts of reasserting "Olmstedian" values in parks that may have changed considerably after one-hundred or more years of use. Amid the acclaim given to such restoration efforts there has been little study of their social and cultural ramifications. Are parks being restored in ways that make meaningful connections among urban communities and in our understanding of the relationships between nature and the city?

Restoring a park is a work of material culture, an expression in the public landscape of a particular set of cultural values. This dissertation seeks to find out whether there are significant differences in value systems among various communities of interest as reflected in a landscape reconstruction project in Prospect Park in Brooklyn, New York--one of three urban parks regarded as Olmsted's greatest park achievements (Newton,

1971, Zaitzevsky, 1982; Harnik, 2000).[1] The Prospect Park Alliance's "Woodlands Campaign" involves a 25-year, phased landscape restoration, focused on the sequence of watercourses in the park's central woodlands, involving waterfalls, pools, bridges and streams, and extensive planting in the adjacent woods. Through the examination of project documents and interviews with principals, I seek to understand and describe the cultural values represented by the reconstruction project. Through analysis of an existing data set and new field research, I explore the cultural values associated with the park and its various kinds of landscape and environment by a range of park users. I then determine to what extent the values implicit in the reconstruction project reflect those of the park's users.

The grounds and facilities of Prospect Park have deteriorated in the last two generations. Public funding for parks has declined citywide, reducing the Parks Department's maintenance capacity and its ability to provide well-staffed programs and activities. The city's watchdog Independent Budget Office reports that spending on parks dropped by 31 percent between 1987 and 1996. Private spending has only partially offset this decline, and it is concentrated in relatively few parks. The Parks Department's recreation program has seen a 65 percent budget decline, from $20 million in 1987 to $7 million in 1996. New York maintains 35 recreation centers, as compared to 158 in Philadelphia, 260 in Chicago, and 127 in Los Angeles—all cities with much smaller populations than New York (Harnik, 2000).

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[1] The other two are Central Park, New York, and Franklin Park, in Boston, which was designed by Olmsted without Vaux in 1886, about 20 years after the work on Prospect Park.

Staffing reductions have been severe in the past ten years, even as the city parks are generally considered to be cleaner, in better repair, and enjoying greater use. Full-time Parks Department staff declined from 4,161 employees in 1987 to 2,216 in 1996 (Harnik, 2000). New York City spends $42 per resident on parks annually, in contrast to $164 per resident spent in Seattle, $153 in Minneapolis, $114 in Chicago, $96 in Boston, and $95 in San Francisco; but only $47 in Baltimore and Philadelphia and $35 in Los Angeles (Harnik, 2000).

The perceived improvement in New York City parks has been possible for several reasons. Foremost is the availablity, at no cost to the Parks Department, of the labor of persons on public assistance for basic maintenance operations, mainly picking up trash. About 5,000 Work Experience Program (WEP) workers have been deployed in the parks in recent years. Their labor in 1996 was estimated by the Parks Department as equivalent to that of 2,900 full-time employees (Harnik, 2000). Free labor is also available to the parks through the Community Service programs of the city's criminal justice system. Some offenders are given "community service" tasks, such as park cleaning, in lieu of punishment.

Other factors in the improved appearance of city parks include the practice of contracting out some maintenance functions; the rise of privately organized "conservancies" in certain prominent parks that raise funds for restoration and maintenance, recruit volunteer work, and pursue public relations; and the greater availability in a prosperous economy of public funds for park reconstruction, although not for maintenance (Harnik, 2000).

One of the best established and most accomplished of the park conservancies is the Prospect Park Alliance. The Alliance "brings together the community, corporate, and government resources" necessary to maintain and renew the park, raising funds for landscape restoration and community programming, and operating a volunteer program (PPA, 1995). The Alliance is governed by a Board of Directors, composed of influential citizens of Brooklyn and representatives of businesses like Keyspan, the local gas utility. Formed in 1987, the Prospect Park Alliance grew out of a smaller and less influential "Friends of Prospect Park" group that existed in the 1970s and 1980s. The Friends organized themselves in response to the severe cutbacks in park funding during and after New York City's fiscal crisis of 1975.

The Prospect Park Alliance funds a number of park staff positions at Prospect Park. These individuals work in the park headquarters (the Litchfield Villa), alongside Parks Department staff people, in such efforts as fund-raising, public information, landscape design, and volunteer recruitment. Tupper Thomas, the President of the Prospect Park Alliance, has also held the city post of Prospect Park Administrator since 1980. Both Parks Department and Prospect Park Alliance staff report to her.

Park renewal--arguably one faithful to the park's "Olmstedian" origins--is the mission of the Prospect Park Alliance. Olmstedian design is based on the pastoral style of landscaping, which creates idealized simulations of the scenery of south-central England--typically of pastures that rise over gentle hillsides, punctuated by spreading trees, with ponds and streams nestled in the valleys amid tree groves. Plantings are arranged to seem natural and uncontrived, with a predominance of native plants. Olmsted argued that a pastoral park should have none of the contrived flowerbed displays and other highly

stylized effects that dominated garden design at the time. The chief purpose of a large landscape park, according to Olmsted, was to provide city dwellers with the calming benefits of open space and pastoral scenery. Decorative horticultural displays he viewed as excitements that detracted from the soothing effects of pastoral scenery.

The major feature of a pastoral landscape design was an open space of natural turf over undulating terrain, a space of indefinite shape and seemingly unlimited extent that shaded off into woods. Prospect Park has such a space in the Long Meadow. The architectural work--Vaux's bridges and terraces and the various "rustic" shelters--was intended to blend with the landscape. The emphasis in a pastoral composition was on views out over open meadows and hills, brook, pools, and lake. If not exactly a garden, the landscape park was still very much a constructed landscape, which distinguishes it from the the many state and national parks and forest reservations, established mostly since Olmsted's day, that preserve existing woods and landforms.

In recent decades, demographic shifts have made Prospect Park something of a social fault line between white and black, affluent and poor, educated and uneducated. The restoration in Prospect Park is therefore being carried out against a social and cultural background far more complex than the one prevailing at the time the park was built, or even up to the era of World War II. The solidly white, middle class neighborhoods to the north, east and south of the park in 1945 have become the homes of poor and working class black, Latino, and Middle Eastern people, while gentrification has made the Park Slope section, which is west of the park, increasingly affluent. As a result, different sides of the park have become identified with the class and ethnicity of the adjacent neighborhoods: black and working class in the area bordering Ocean and Parkside

Avenues; white and middle class in the area alongside Prospect Park West. In a society polarized by race and class, these social and cultural differences increase the potential for conflicts over the park's resources.

There is evidence already of conflict in Prospect Park between people with different cultural values. The following are examples of what I mean by conflicts in cultural values. Some park users allege that park maintenance is not as good on the "black side" of the park as on the Park Slope side. The park management insists that its maintenance efforts and resource allocations are evenly distributed. Such a conflict, between people of color and "officialdom," is in one sense a manifestation of the persistent racism within the larger society in which the park is situated. Yet the conflict in the park is real, whether or not the charge of unevenly distributed maintenance has a factual basis, because some park users believe it to be true. In another sense, this may be a conflict of cultural values between a management that prefers to "let nature take its course," encouraging the growth of underbrush and woods in many areas, and a user constituency that prefers a "clean" look of lush lawns shaded by well-spaced, mature trees. To these users, their part of the park may look unkempt.

Social divisions along lines of race and class have also precipitated a conflict in the park over the practice of cooking out. One of the two designated cookout sites in the park is on the west side, bordering a white and affluent section of Park Slope. Some residents in recent years have protested the cookouts, trying to get them banned from the park. Most such picnickers are people of color. This is an inter-user conflict in which management becomes caught in a struggle between user groups.

A third example of conflict occurs as a result of what the park means to certain users. A sizeable proportion uses the park lawns to play active sports such as soccer and ultimate frisbee. The park's meadows were designed to be enjoyed for their natural scenery; such intensive athletic use was opposed by its designers and managers in the early years. These activities were supposed to take place elsewhere--on local fields and in the Parade Ground, an active-use recreation area provided by the Brooklyn Park Commission adjacent to Prospect Park. But after 130 years of population growth and land development in Brooklyn, there are too few such fields for the number of players. Thus soccer, volleyball, and frisbee games go on all over Prospect Park, and with almost no enforcement staff, the park management can do little to stop such games. However, the intensive use of the grounds for sports requires a level of maintenance that the park management has been unable to provide. As a result, the lawns become worn and bare of grass in many places, diminishing their scenic value.

A major goal of this dissertation is to explore the ways in which the cultural values of the Alliance's landscape reconstruction work are like and unlike the park's various other user constituencies. What conflicts are inherent in this work? Are there other visions for Prospect Park not embraced by the Prospect Park Alliance and its woodlands reconstruction?

While this dissertation draws upon an understanding of historic preservation and offers a critique of the historic landscape preservation of the Prospect Park woodlands, historic preservation is not its focus, in that I intend to compare the "values" of the woodland preservation to the cultural values of the user population. These values may or

may not complement each other, but they need to be examined in order to evaluate decisions that have been made regarding park design.

In this sense, then, I am evaluating the woodland redesign, but not strictly as a post-occupancy evaluation, which has the narrower objective of evaluating how well a given design works. I want to compare and understand the potentially conflicting values represented by the design, on the one hand, and by the practices and expressed values of park users, on the other, in order to evaluate the appropriateness of this historic preservation strategy in a park that serves an ethnically diverse and class-stratified constituency. I also want to compare the woodlands to other environment types within the larger palate of nature in the city that Prospect Park offers, so as to evaluate the priority placed by park administrators on woodlands restoration.

I.A. The Landscape Reconstruction Project

The Woodlands Campaign incorporates two kinds of restoration, one of the living ecology, through soil reconditioning, planting, and selective cutting; the other of the design as an architectural composition. The latter restoration involves reconstructing the picturesque stonework and rustic wooden bridges and shelters evident in historic photographs. On the surrounding hillsides, eroded slopes are being reconditioned and invasive species replaced with indigenous plants. The woodland landscape reconstruction satisfies the historic preservation priorities of faithfulness to the original, removing the accretions of time, and meticulous workmanship. Not just a stabilization of the woodland ecosystem, this is a highly designed art landscape of demure, sylvan tableaux. It also

marks an effort to enrich the biodiversity of the woodlands so as to make them a better wildlife habitat.

The first three phases of restoration are complete, although not yet open to the public. Funded with municipal bond sale revenues, the project has reconstructed the upper portions of the park's surface water system. This area of about four acres incorporates waterfalls, two ponds, several footbridges, and associated paths and stairways. The Alliance's landscape architects have meticulously reconstructed the shoreline of the ponds, the stonework around the waterfalls, and rustic wooden bridges, keeping as close as possible to what they know of the original design. The park is also undergoing a reforestation program incorporating portions of the park perimeter and other marginal areas. One goal of reforestation along the perimeter is to restore Olmsted and Vaux's concept of screening out the sight and sound of the surrounding city.

The reconstruction project stems from a 1994 report, prepared under the direction of the Prospect Park Alliance, entitled "The Landscape Management Plan for the Natural Areas of Prospect Park," which reports on the existing condition of the woodland ecosystem and provides a plan for its renewal. The stated goal is to manage the interior woodland region primarily as a natural forest ecosystem (rather than, for example, a recreation area.) The report outlines three principal ecological problems: soil compaction, soil erosion, and the growing dominance of invasive tree and plant species which crowd out indigenous, sustainable varieties. The plan calls for reforesting the woodlands with indigenous shrubs and trees and removing at least some of the invasive plants, so as to create a stable, self-sustaining woodland ecosystem.

The importance this plan places on ecological and architectural restoration contrasts with the best data available on how regular visitors use and value Prospect Park. A User Study completed in 1998, under contract to the park administration, involved observation of social activity and interviews with more than 350 park users. The data demonstrate a great demand for the open spaces of the park--for ball games of all kinds, for picnics and cookouts, walking, hanging out, sitting together, and similar activities (Taplin, Brower, Scheld, & Low, 1998). The findings from this data indicate that the great majority of present park users make little use of the park woodlands, favoring instead the open lawns, shoreline areas, park attractions such as the skating rink and the zoo, and the park roadway. Instead of responding to these user concerns, the Woodlands Campaign instead makes the woodland areas of the park into a development and funding priority.

Does everyone agree that this restoration is the right choice for Prospect Park? Not necessarily: conflict between this and other cultural value orientations is foreshadowed in the maintenance of semi-permanent fencing. The restored areas are to be kept behind fences for an indefinite period of up to ten years. So far, the public is admitted only for guided tours at certain hours on the weekends in warm weather. The tours are part of a public education program that seeks to instruct park users about ecological and historic aspects of the woodlands. When the fences eventually come down, it is hoped that the users will respect the restored features and not walk or bicycle on slopes, trample the vegetation, vandalize the bridges, or otherwise mar the restored landscapes.

A public information pamphlet announces the Woodlands Campaign with the phrase "Brooklyn's Last Forest is Dying" (Prospect Park Alliance, undated pamphlet). The pamphlet then states "The woods that define and shape the beauty of Prospect Park are nearly extinct. Seventy percent of the Forest is dead or dying." Another rhetorical phrase, "Saving Brooklyn's Last Forest," is used in an annual report. The text stresses the importance of "public awareness programs that will reach out to the Park users, area school children, volunteers, community groups and religious organizations" (Prospect Park Alliance, 1994). These sources reveal an anticipated gap between the values of the Woodlands Campaign and those of at least some park users.

Ostensibly written to educate the public about issues and projects that concern the park, these texts deliberately influence public opinion. The phrase "Brooklyn's last forest is dying" is more alarming than informative. Using the term "forest" rather than the more prosaic "woods" associates these woods with the evocative notion of "wilderness." This, for white Americans, has been the place where myths of individualistic character were forged through the experience of taming the frontier (Taylor, 2000). Calling the woods Brooklyn's "last forest" calls forth the image of nature as a scarce and dwindling resource, threatened by daily human life and disappearing before the advance of human activity.

Given the diversity of the local population, these values of wilderness, redemption in nature, and landscape conservation summoned by the Woodlands Campaign are unlikely to be shared by all park users. The task at hand is to investigate whether other points of view among the users and in the history of the park could produce more flexible, inclusive, and forward-looking strategies for the planning and management of park resources.

Chapter II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Many fields of research are relevant to this dissertation, which is an historical inquiry, an ethnographic field study, a critique of historic preservation, and a challenge to park restoration policy. I shall begin at the most general level with social theory on space and nature. Following this are sections on the aesthetic theory exemplified in the design of Prospect Park, social control, historic preservation, and a survey of previous empirical studies.

II.A. SPACE AND NATURE

I find a theoretical rift between explanations of space arising from social sciences like geography and those coming out of the design and planning professions. The latter are rooted in materiality and form, which are accorded a fundamental and unproblematic existence. Christopher Alexander, for example, writes about the "quality without a name" being free of inner contradictions (Alexander, 1977, p. 26). For the geographer David Harvey, nothing in the material world is free of contradictions. The things so often treated "...as irreducible and therefore unproblematic are seen in dialectical thought as internally contradictory by virtue of the multiple processes that constitute them" (Harvey, 1996, p. 51). Social theory makes spatial form contingent on dialectical processes. So much for the environmental determinism that pervades Olmsted's park theory and urban planning and architecture in general: if the processes are what count, the things themselves cannot be the agents of social change.

These contradictory theoretical traditions are both necessary to laying the foundation for a critique of the restoration work in Prospect Park. I wish to evaluate the project on its own terms as a mediation in the material fabric of the park. Yet the critical insights of social theory admit profound questions of social production and the relationship of culture to nature. Without these insights it is difficult to go beyond the formal paradigm which prioritizes finding, or restoring, the "correct" material form.

I have always been attracted to the work of Lefebvre whose theory on space seems to offer a bridge to the urban planner's (and my own) fixation on spatial form. For Lefebvre (1991), every social system produces spaces appropriate to its form of social relations. The large city was a central feature of the space produced by the industrializing capitalistic society of nineteenth-century United States. As urban historians have shown, cities grew through the speculative actions of thousands of landowners and builders, fueled by concentrations of manufacturing, vast population growth through migration and immigration, and enabled technologically by street car and railroad networks (Warner, 1962; Schuyler, 1986).

Like New York City, Brooklyn created a space for real estate development (capital accumulation) by mapping city street grids over nearby countryside (Schuyler, 1986; Lefebvre, 1991). As the land filled up with houses and factories, civic leaders were moved to produce a complementary feature, an arcadian landscape of "rural" cemeteries, pastoral parks and parkways, and garden suburbs (Schuyler, 1986).

These new spaces of nature belong to what Lefebvre calls "appropriated" space, in distinction to "dominated" space. For Marx there is no distinction: nature, source and resource, is appropriated (Macnaghten & Urry, 1998). In Lefebvre, appropriated space is

the homologous natural space taken and modified by a group for its use in making a life. Ideally it has the organic, undesigned, work-of-art quality of the Japanese garden and the Norman village, but also of medieval cities such as Venice. Lefebvre's distinction seems parallel to that of Christopher Alexander (1977), for whom space that has the "quality without a name" is in balance, its formal dynamics free of contradictions.

Lefebvre distinguishes between the historic, organic city and the capitalist city with its shapeless tracts of housing, industry, railroads, and edge city freeway-interchange concatenations. In these examples of dominated space, the built environment emerges not from social activity but from exertions of state and corporate power. Appropriated space arises from a particular environment, as in the estuarine city of Venice. In dominated space, the natural environment is ignored at best, and at worst, devastated and then decorated with standardized landscape treatments. Although dominated and appropriated space can coexist in a state of tension, the contest increasingly goes to dominated space (Lefebvre, 1991; Harvey, 1985).

Dominated space is more a paradigmatic than literal description of the urban scene today, which must be *social* no matter how mechanized and abstract the processes of site assemblage, planning, construction, et cetera. If the American urban grid turns natural space into a tabula rasa for capital accumulation, it also embraces the homes, gardens, schools, and workplaces where people live and go about their business. Still, I like Lefebvre's distinction because it provides a basis for understanding parks as a partial substitute and remedy, at a particular moment in history, for the seemingly unsustainable conditions imposed on individuals by the city of dominated space. Parks, especially landscape parks like Prospect Park, were and are widely seen as necessary complements

to the speculative industrial city. The nineteenth-century landscape parks might be considered the vanguard of the whole suburbanization process that has by now restructured the geography of the city into a huge quilt of private mini-parks each surrounding the family dwelling.

As leisure phenomena, parks fall within the rubric of *consumptive* spaces. As theorized by critics such as Harvey, the fundamental relationship to nature is through work, in which the raw materials of nature are transmuted into human creations. Under industrial capitalism, the worker gives up the product of the work and receives money instead, becoming thus alienated from both product and its material origins, nature. The product becomes a market commodity, and the worker's involvement with the physical world is increasingly refracted through exchange value. People no longer relate to nature through their work, but they can buy the products manufactured from materials extracted from nature. They can even buy whole landscapes, as the suburban development of cities in the United States demonstrates. Whether for residential or leisure purposes, landscape becomes a commodity to be consumed for pleasure, rather than the setting for life and source of work. The idea of nature is reduced "...to a leisure-time concept, as something to be consumed in restful recuperation from...a degrading relationship to nature in the most fundamental of all human activities--work" (Harvey, 1985, p. 54).

The rise of leisurely nature consumption has been analyzed most impressively by Raymond Williams (1973). In the eighteenth-century, the Enclosure Acts enabled English landlords to appropriate about a quarter of all cultivated acreage, ending what remained of the open-field villages and common rights. The enclosures enabled the rise

of the estates and their great houses, which brought a division of land and of nature itself into separate practical and aesthetic realms.

Ironically, the enclosures brought widespread removal of the fences and hedges that had divided up the land into peasant plots, resulting in large territorial holdings that could be molded to suit the tastes of the gentry (Shepard, 1967). These were increasingly influenced by personal but socially constructed experiences of Italian landscapes coming from the Grand Tour, as well as the poetic enthusiasms of Alexander Pope and other champions of the ancient gods and their classical landscape. (Pope's Pastorals and the prose poem "Windsor Forest," written in the early eighteenth century, are examples). Such poetry inspired landscape painters like Lorrain and Poussin to retell classical narratives using the Italian countryside as a medium. These paintings became the models for the new parks. 'Capability' Brown directed the "landscaping of hundreds of acres of the grounds of great English houses on a formula of unbroken turf, sinuous streams, vistas amid clumps of trees, and a surrounding ring of woodland" (Shepard, 1967, p. 86).

The parks were scenic nature reserves set off from the working country to provide for elite consumption of "the view, the ordered proprietary repose, the prospect." The new landlords "succeeded in creating in the land below their windows and terraces... a rural landscape emptied of rural labor and of laborers; a sylvan and watery prospect, with a hundred analogies in neo-pastoral painting and poetry, from which the facts of production had been banished" (Williams, 1973, p. 125). Looking at nature makes it an object, something separate from ourselves. Landscape, in the painterly sense, is not working country; it implies separation and observation, and consumption rather than production (Williams, 1973).

The conceptual separation of nature from people has been traced to the Cartesian ideas of the Enlightenment (Harvey, 1996; Macnaghten & Urry, 1998, Wilson, 1992). Nature then came to be seen as a resource to be rationally managed for exploitation, a "passive set of assets to be scientifically assessed, used, and valued in commercial terms" (Harvey, 1996, p. 131). Nature was the opposite of reason. Thought and culture were of the human world; nature was the other--dark, unpredictable, disorderly, violent. The kind of nature arranged for consumptive purposes was tamed and domesticated, and at the same time, "cleansed" of the practical and utilitarian features of production.

Leisurely consumption of nature, guided first by the imagery of landscape paintings and later by land art, is a predominantly visual experience. It is especially so in contrast to the older relationship of making a livelihood within and out of nature. A visual relationship to nature is but one dimension of the increasing dominance of visuality over the other senses in Western societies (Lefebvre, 1991). Neitzsche demonstrated how ocularcentrism dominates the metaphors and metonyms used to describe thought processes: idea, vision, clarity, enlightenment and obscurity, perspective, and so forth (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 138). Modern urban spaces have "an increasingly pronounced visual character. They are made with the visible in mind. The predominance of visualization... serves to conceal repetitiveness. People *look*, and take sight, take seeing, for life itself" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 75). Thus the embodied nature of our relationship to the world has come to be narrowly "focused" on the visual sense (Macnaghten and Urry, 1998, p. 105).

The North American legacy of the historic separation of nature into practical and aesthetic realms is a duality of the practical, banal, fractured landscape of residence and

work; and the separate landscape of parks in their multiple varieties, which are visited but not lived in (Wilson, 1992). The manifold expansion of parks and conservation lands worldwide in recent decades perpetuates the idea of nature as something apart from people. "Nature parks are not the answer, we need people living on the land, caring for it, working out the idea that nature includes human culture and livelihood" (Wilson, 1992, p. 17).

Local parks occur around the world, but wilderness, as reflected in legislation and rhetoric, is a social construction unique to the United States and Canada (Cheek & Burch, 1976). Cheek and Burch argue that European and Asian societies with long histories of settledness consider managed nature as the only appropriate aesthetic. Even in North America, the recreational clientele of wilderness areas is a small and select group. The authors say that African Americans and Native Americans view the idea of nature as an untrammeled refuge with bewilderment—doubtless an over-generalization but one that makes a useful contrast to European-American cultural values. Wilson (1992) suggests that the notion of wilderness is most attractive to cultures that are the most distant from a life of rural subsistence. Cheek and Burch point out that in its emphasis on natural processes and its use restrictions, wilderness management "turns local park notions inside-out" (1976, p. 167). The focus shifts from managing the environment for human activity to protecting wilderness character by limiting human activity. Harvey (1996) calls into question the environmental movement's precept that values such as integrity, stability, and beauty inhere in nature. If they did, how could we ever know what they are? We cannot: all such values are human attributions imputed to nature through metaphor. Smith (1984) posits a historical "production of nature" under capitalism in

which first nature (the homologous material of nature) is replaced by a second nature that suits the purposes of capital accumulation. This second nature is what Zukin (1992) calls landscape.

Katz (1998) compares two models for renewing human bonds with nature: preservation and restoration. Preservation is driven by the "tiresome and moralistic narratives of scarcity, ends, and limits" pervasive in environmental discourse (Katz, 1998, p. 57). It is characterized by the conservation projects of the Nature Conservancy which cordon off and sometimes depopulate areas of supposedly pristine nature—"first nature." Such "investments" in nature zones justify a disregard for the natural processes at work under conditions of urbanization, and, of course, reifies the social construction of nature as something located outside of culture (Katz, 1998, p. 55). Alexander Wilson is the major proponent of ecological restoration, which he offers as an explicit alternative to preservation (Katz, 1998). Wilson's restoration prioritizes settled landscapes, and calls for reconnecting the ruptures, rejuvenating dead zones, and caring for natural systems (Wilson, 1992).

Writers in various fields have pointed out that nature is ever present in the most human of environments, such as New York City (Harvey, 1996; Lynch, 1981; Siebert, 1998). Spirn (1984), for example, argues that the natural environment of a city is no less "natural" than the intensely cultivated countryside or the shady streets and tended gardens of outer suburbs. The urban environment is less pastoral, not less natural. Harvey finds a model for reunion with nature in the deep ecology movement, which see humans not as autonomous subjects but as points in a dialectical structure of place, space and environment. In this framework, merely looking at nature is "extremely peculiar

behavior. Experiencing an environment instead happens by doing something in it, living in it, mediating and acting" (Naess, quoted in Harvey, 1996, p. 169).

The ideas offered by Wilson and others for renewing the bonds between people and nature are instructive in thinking about restoring the park in ways that make meaningful connections with surrounding urban communities. Nature in the park need not be limited to a passive visual spectacle. For example, Galen Cranz questions the wisdom of building a new nineteenth-century pleasure ground in New York which the developer of Riverside South offered in return for greater building density. She points out that most of the protest of this Trump project is on environmental grounds, such as sewage and traffic impacts, which an ornamental park does not solve (Cranz, 1999). Elsewhere, Cranz (1993) calls for making sustainability a subject of community action. Modernity is replete with accounts of alienation, isolation, loneliness, and so on. Environmental issues of sustainability offer a ground for rebuilding community. In the Riverside South example, if the new buildings were built on sustainability principles, the open space associated with them would be free to perform other functions than the traditional pleasure ground one of ameliorating the environmental impact of the city and of city life. Cranz suggests that sustainability involves integrating the functional relationships between buildings, land, and infrastructure. Thus the park at Riverside South could be designed to solve problems of stormwater drainage as well as accommodating recreationists in a pleasant setting (Cranz, 1993, 1999).

The art critic Robert Smithson (1973) makes a similar argument, calling for a renewal of the material dialectic of culture and nature expressed in Olmsted's work. Central Park, he writes, is not a Thoreauvian retreat into "wilderness" but an essay on the

relationship between human and natural processes. The park emerged from a harshly treated landscape which Smithson compares to scenes of strip mining regions.[2] Not seeing the inherent dialectic is a result of ignoring the natural processes involved in the park's history and seeing, instead, only the finished ideal.

Spirn is another advocate of making the dialectic in land art visible. Some of Olmsted's greatest works are collaborations of engineering, ecology, landscape design, and city planning (Spirn, 1996). His Fens and Riverway projects are significant because of the natural processes applied to landscape restoration to benefit human health, safety, and welfare; not because the finished work was imitative of natural scenery. Missing this significance, a team of historians, preservationists, and landscape architects proposed a restoration to the park's original appearance, treating it as an "ornamental object used solely for strolling, looking and thinking" (Spirn, 1996, p. 109). The problem with Olmsted's method is that the finished work conceals the dialogue. It simulates an undisturbed natural setting rather than showing the interaction of human and natural processes on the site.

This observation recalls Harvey's criticism of the planner's fixation on finding the right spatial form. As Olmsted and other nineteenth century planners saw it, the right form would modify and enhance social processes such as assimilation and acculturation. They made the mistake of "privileging things and spatial forms over social processes" (Harvey, 1996, p. 419). A multiplicity of processes produces "a distinctive mix of spatialized permanences"—including landscape parks--in relation to each other. "The idea that a thing called the city has causal powers in relation to social life is untenable"

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[2] Recent scholarship on Central Park has moved from treating the site as a wasteland to an emphasis on the African American and other settlements which the park displaced. Probably both points of view are

(Harvey, 1996, p. 419). Thus Warner, for example, calls for a more transitory, process-revealing spatial form for public parks, "areas that would always be in the process of construction and reconstruction" (Warner, 1993, p. 20).

Yet the appeal of pastoralism in landscape design continues, and not only for aesthetic reasons. Jackson (1984) cites the ecological productivity of places where woodland and meadow meet as the underlying meaning of pastoralism. Wilson (1992) calls this the most complex and textured ecosystem of all, the richest feeding ground for animals, the landscape with the greatest number of species, and where cooperation and symbiosis are most advanced. It is "one of our oldest and most sacred abodes" (Wilson, 1992, p. 96). The persistence of pastoralism relates to the human impulse to create and inhabit these dynamic edge habitats that connect and bind the planet together. In the work of Olmsted, despite references to real agriculture such as flocks of grazing sheep, pastoralism is very much an aesthetic formulation, as the next section discusses at some length.

II.B. PASTORALISM AND AESTHETIC THEORY

Prospect Park is a product of the park movement that swept through North America during a 50-year period beginning just before the Civil War. Like most of the parks built during this period, Prospect Park was consciously shaped in accordance with the aesthetic theory of the day. There were three, interrelated aesthetic ideals developed and much elaborated in eighteenth and nineteenth century thought: the pastoral, the picturesque, and the sublime.

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correct: the site was both inhabited and marked by destructive land-use practices.

Of the three, the pastoral is the primary motif of Olmsted's park design. The pastoral, or "beautiful," ideal strove for a gentleness of line and an atmosphere of repose and passivity. In addition to graceful curves, it called for grazing animals and a mixture of lawn, water and trees. For Edmund Burke, the beautiful was best experienced by "being swiftly drawn in an easy coach on a smooth turf, with gradual ascents and declivities" (quoted in Shepard, 1967, p. 87). To this formula Samuel Johnson added "the company of a beautiful and witty woman." Thus, the pastoral style was associated with pleasure, love, and a hint of sex.

The sublime ideal, by contrast, stimulated feelings of self-preservation. As defined by Edmund Burke in 1757, the sublime was characterized by vastness, solitude, and obscurity (Zaitzevsky, 1982). The sublime is found in mountain crags, breathtaking heights, and rushing water. Designers like Humphrey Repton as well as Frederick Law Olmsted felt that the sublime could not be designed into a landscape composition. The view from a height such as Lookout Hill, however, could be sublime.

The picturesque ideal emerged in the mid-eighteenth century from the writing of Sir Uvedale Price and the Reverend William Gilpin. Olmsted had enjoyed the work of both since his boyhood. The picturesque ideal was most closely related to painting—literally, a painterly composition. To the simplicity of Capability Brown's pastoral lawn amid trees, the picturesque added variety, intricacy, irregularity, and contrast (Zaitzevsky, 1982). These qualities came from plants, from landforms, and from architectural projects (Beveridge & Rocheleau, 1998). "A tree, for example, struck by lightning was something other than merely beautiful or sublime—it was 'picturesque'" (Smithson, 1973, p. 63).

To Smithson (1973), the picturesque ideal, closely related to chance and change in the material world, provided the basis of a dialectic of the landscape. Washed out gullies become picturesque with the passing of time as nature heals the scars, just as it obscures the rougher edges of ruined buildings, making them "romantic." The picturesque is a synthesis of the two opposite ideals—sublime and pastoral—rooted in the real world. In

this "dialectical materialism," a park becomes a "thing for us" in a historical, temporal process of interrelated events, natural and intentional, rather than a "thing in itself" (Smithson, 1973, p. 63).

"Olmsted showed particular sensitivity and subtlety in balancing the pastoral (beautiful) and the picturesque ideals and in interpreting both in terms of the particular geological terrain and native plant materials of [the] site" (Zaitzevsky, 1982, p. 26). The picturesque elements in Olmsted's work included the Ravine in Prospect Park, an artificial mountain stream with waterfalls, a miniature gorge, bridges of both rough stone and wooden logs, and wooden-log shelters. The plantings in the ravine were clearly picturesque in Olmsted's description:

> Although we cannot have wild mountain gorges, for instance, on the park, we may have rugged ravines shaded with trees, and made picturesque with shrubs... which remind us of mountain scenery. We may...even secure... the mystery, variety and luxuriance of tropical scenery, by an assemblage of certain forms of vegetation, gay with flowers, and intricate and mazy with vines and creepers, ferns, rushes and broadleafed plants (quoted in Fein, 1968, p. 106-107).

Philosophically, Olmsted believed that picturesque "passages" like the Ravine would add aesthetic interest to a park. The picturesque, however, was not critical to the psychological effect of park scenery, as were the open greenswards of the pastoral ideal:

> It may be inferred...that the very rugged ground, abrupt eminences, and what is technically called picturesque...in distinction from merely beautiful... scenery, is not the most desirable for a town park. Decidedly not, in my opinion. The park should, as far as possible, complement the town. Openness is the one thing you cannot get in buildings. Picturesqueness you can get. Let your buildings be as picturesque as your artists can make them. This is the beauty of a town. The beauty of the park should be...the beauty of the fields, the meadow, the prairie, of the green pastures, and the still waters. What we want to get is tranquillity and rest to the mind" (Olmsted, 1997, p. 189-190).

In Olmsted's view, people became hardened toward one another by the daily task of making one's way through the crowded streets of the industrial city. "We have

constantly to watch, to foresee, and to guard against their movements" (Olmsted, 1997, p. 179). The park would offer air "...disinfected by sunlight and foliage," in contrast to the "confined and vitiated air of the commercial quarter," as well as to "conditions requiring vigilance [and] wariness" (Olmsted, 1997, p. 182). "We want the greatest possible contrast with the restraining and confining conditions of the town" (Olmsted, 1997, p. 189).

Despite such rhetorical efforts, Olmsted's major biographer, Roper (1973), concludes that he could never really explain the healing process of charming rural scenery. The psychologists Rachel and Stephen Kaplan (1989) have studied the individual experience of natural settings with findings of great relevance to Olmsted's theory. Although they do not refer to Olmsted's theory of pastoral scenery, the Kaplans' work variously supports and rejects Olmsted's beliefs.

The Kaplans identify four psychological dimensions of the general idea that nature is psychologically restorative.

"Being away," the sense of contrast from the environment of work and home;

"Extent," or the sense gained from an interrelatedness of immediately perceived elements, that they constitute a portion of some larger whole, a larger natural world beyond the one immediately perceived;

"Fascination", the presence of stimuli such as wildlife that call forth involuntary attention, as opposed to the concentrated attention required in work; and

"Compatibility," a congruence between the affordances of the environment and one's inclination.

The Kaplans' findings appear to support Olmsted's theory that natural settings provide release from the daily grind. In their sensory contrast with the built environment, parks afford the experience of *being away*. An Olmsted park has the quality of *extent*: for example, the unfolding, slowly revealing expanse of the Long Meadow gives the illusion

of a still larger space presently coming into view. The wooded Ravine, similarly, suggests the possibility of an unending woodland—a *forest*.

The park landscape is *compatible* with many recreational inclinations, among them activities of locomotion, bonding with friends and family, or with a social group; predation (fishing if not hunting,) and observation of plants and wildlife. Park landscapes have the effect of freeing us from certain conventions of behavior. The grass, trees, foliage, and play equipment call forth role release—running and shouting for children, courtship rituals for adolescents, and for adults, relative freedom from everyday costumes and social relations (Cheek & Burch, 1976).

Other parts of Olmsted's theory are not supported by the Kaplans' research. His idea that vivid, attention-getting features were harmful to the recovery process is contradicted by the concept of *fascination*. Pastoral spaces may be objects of involuntary attention, but so are vivid floral displays and elaborate building facades—to take two things Olmsted fought to keep out of his parks. The principle of *compatibility* was manifest in Olmstedian parks from the beginning, causing endless challenges to his effort to restrict the uses of his parks to passive forms of recreation. This is the subject of the next section.

II.C. A PARK "PROPERLY SO-CALLED:" THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF THE PARK EXPERIENCE

Olmsted wrote widely on his belief that a complex web of volunteer and recreational social activity, and the "communicativeness" such activity fostered, was the crucial underpinning of a democratic society. Libraries, reading groups, gymnasiums, game clubs, boat clubs, ball clubs, and so on, were all examples of communicative associations. Olmsted believed that parks were fertile social spaces where the social capital of democracy would take root (Gopnik, 1997).

Rosenzweig & Blackmar (1992) provide support for the view that providing democratic spaces for "gregarious recreation" was Olmsted's ultimate goal. Central Park is "one of the great interracial and interclass meeting grounds of New York" (Rosenzweig & Blackmar, 1992, p. 475), its greatness lying in its ability to bring together so many different kinds of people in an amicable setting. Yet they also show how Olmsted's belief in the benefits of passive, or, as he called it, receptive, recreation caused him to oppose any intrusion of facilities for active recreation.

Many critics find a motive of social control in the intentions of Olmsted and other park proponents (Hardy, 1982; Rosenzweig, 1979; Rosenzweig & Blackmar, 1992; Taylor, 1999). Rosenzweig argues that a "vision of parks as instruments of social uplift and social control [was] a persistent, and sometimes even dominant, impulse" among urban park advocates of the nineteenth century (1979, p. 31). Park designers and managers assumed that working class park users were "both inert and totally pliable. [This attitude] ignores the possibility that workers might have taken an active part in conceiving or advocating parks and assumes that workers uncritically accepted the park programs handed down by an omnipotent ruling class" (Rosenzweig, 1979, p. 32).

Both Rosenzweig (1979) and Von Hoffman (1994) describe the persistent conflict in the late-nineteenth century between park users and managers determined to enforce Olmsted's logic of passive enjoyment. Landscape parks like Olmsted's Franklin Park and Arnold Arboretum in Boston, cut from a universal formula based on gentlemanly leisure, related poorly to the ways that local urban communities in the nineteenth century used open space (Von Hoffman, 1994).

Upper-class recreation has been characterized by what Jackson (1997) terms *agon* sports--that is, sports such as tennis that require both training and a specially constructed environment set aside for the particular sport purpose. Working-class sports and games--football, wrestling, cock fighting, ninepins--were historically more informal, and they took place wherever--in the street or square, in a field or a cemetery. Moralistic

upperclass attitudes brought seventeenth-century bans of working class gambling games being played in the streets of London. Similarly, the playground movement of the 1890s sought to replace forms of play thought to be vulgar, immoral, or morally corrosive with athletic games that would teach sportsmanship and develop healthy minds and bodies. The gymnasium, the playground, even the Olmsted park itself, all belong to this class of special spaces provided to improve the physical and moral health of the working class (Cranz, 1982; Jackson, 1997; Taylor, 1999). Olmsted, in characteristic upper class fashion, thought that organized athletics belonged on athletic fields, and opposed any such uses of the open spaces in his landscape parks. In Brooklyn, Olmsted and Vaux provided the separate Parade Ground for athletics.

The Olmsted-style parks were planned as places of healthful recreation for all classes, but they were built to middle class standards (Taylor, 1999). This environment of seamless coherence between polite middle class behavior and a graceful, tastefully furnished landscape would "naturally" compel the working class users to emulate their social betters. If emulation was not forthcoming, widespread supervision and enforcement effectively curtailed unsuitable behavior. In addition to active sports, working class recreation in the nineteenth century often involved excessive drinking, exuberant park play, demonstrations of power, and loud, rowdy behavior, in compensation for the rigors, monotony, and boredom of the job. The conflicts that sometimes occurred between working class behavior and middle class mores resulted in the criminalization of certain forms of behavior (Taylor, 1999).

Recent decades have seen the rise of what Jackson (1997) calls *"helix"* sports, or activities of mobility. They typically involve speed, and sometimes sensations of spiral, dizziness, or temporary loss of balance. Helix sports include skiing, gliding, soaring, sailing, snowboarding, skateboarding, car and motorcycle racing, surfing, rock climbing, and mountain biking. They differ from agon sports in significant ways. Helix sports share an avoidance of designated spaces, yet terrain itself is their most important

characteristic, especially when it appears uncontrived. Most are not highly competitive, nor are they wedded to established forms of equipment and technique. Jackson says that the essential value of these sports is in fresh contact with the environment and a new sense of identity. Today in Prospect Park, helix sports are popular: skateboarding, rollerblading, and most controversially, mountain biking.

II.D. WORKS OF ART OR SOCIAL ARTIFACTS: THE PROBLEM OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The Woodlands Campaign is an historic preservation project in its concern with preserving and restoring the picturesque features of the Olmsted and Vaux design. In New York City, certain public spaces, including Prospect Park and Eastern Parkway in Brooklyn, have been designated as Scenic Landscapes under the Landmarks Preservation Law. As such, material changes are regulated by the Landmarks Preservation Commission.

Olmsted invoked an artwork analogy in defense of the integrity of Central Park's pastoral character, arguing that to introduce buildings, recreation facilities, and other such elements would be tantamount to altering a work of art. In the conventional definition of aesthetics as the pursuit of visual beauty, aesthetic value is a matter of ontological fact rather than social construction. Treating things in the public environment as beautiful in fact gives preserving them an aura of legitimacy that special interest groups can exploit (Costonis, 1981). Thus, park authorities need not justify a decision to restore an Olmsted and Vaux-designed landscape because its aesthetic value is considered as factual by the regulatory authority, rather than as a socially constructed point of view.

Rosenzweig and Blackmar (1992) find that preserving the Olmstedian design legacy of Central Park is the basic motive of the Central Park Conservancy. Yet in a pluralistic city, many other cultural values have interfered with the Conservancy's

agenda. The Conservancy gave up on restoration plans that would have returned the ballfields of the North Meadow to "natural" meadow, and left the post-Vaux Naumburg Bandshell in place along the Mall, after struggles with other stakeholders. Similarly, after opposing a request for basketball courts in the North Meadow on Olmstedian grounds, the Conservancy changed course, pragmatically convincing the National Basketball Association to donate the money to build the courts and to have professional players provide classes for neighborhood teenagers (Rosenzweig & Blackmar, 1992).

There remains a traditional historic preservation perspective which, seeing the park as a work of art, is blind to the idea that this too is a socially constructed point of view. In a review of Zaitzevsky's history of the Boston park system, Roy Rosenzweig (1984) points out the gulf between those who see parks as artistic creations and those who see them as the products of social forces (cf Wilson, 1992; Katz, 1998). Although Zaitzevsky reveals the essentially collaborative nature of park design, her history is filled with references to Olmsted's "artistic genius," "brilliance," "greatness," his Boston "masterpieces." The exclusion of such factors as shifting social geography, the nature of park labor, and changes in recreational preferences leaves Zaitzevsky "unable to explain why the Emerald Necklace lies in ruins today" (Rosenzweig, 1984, p. 290). The question for Prospect Park is whether the artwork criterion is compatible with recognizing the park as a cultural space produced through use and material change.

Even within the precepts and assumptions of historic preservation practice, where, for example, the design and the designer's texts are sacred, an inquiry into Olmsted and Vaux's motives and intentions could elicit a different set of preservation criteria. Olmsted and Vaux's words are important because they bear on our understanding of what constitutes the historic value of this and other "landmarked" public landscapes. Narrowly constructing the park's historic value on aesthetic criteria tends to justify an artistic restoration that reduces the users' rights of access and freedom of behavior to a contingency. On the other hand, if social activity was central to the original plan and can

be shown in the historical record, then present day renewal could be based upon social rather than formal and artistic criteria. In this event, material changes that brought people into the park for various cultural purposes could have priority over literal reproductions of historic design details.

Much of the literature on historic preservation is devoted to techniques and methods. This body of literature is not useful to this study, which is not about the techniques of restoring the Olmsted landscapes. The Prospect Park Alliance has already been recognized by the American Society of Landscape Architects for the elaborate technique evidenced in the restoration work so far (*Landscape Architecture*, 1998). Of interest to me are certain underlying philosophical principles in historic preservation work: (1) Whether to restore to a particular period of history or to preserve a structure or landscape as is; and (2) Whether a building's or landscape's value as material culture lies in its formal, aesthetic qualities alone or in a broader range of cultural values that include the meanings that accrue from use and change.

One of the more important origins of historic preservation in Europe and North America was the Cambridge Movement of the 1840s and 1850s in England (White, 1962). An outgrowth of romanticism, the Cambridge Movement centered on the church restoration activities of the Cambridge Camden Society, whose members sought a return to the spiritual, unworldly ideals of the Middle Ages.

White writes that by the nineteenth century, few churches retained more than a small portion of their medieval furnishings. Many had been repaired or modified to some extent in one of the classical styles, reflecting in part the spare aesthetic of Protestantism. Members of the Society acted as consultants to churches throughout Britain, guiding the restoration of lost Gothic features. The Ecclesiologists, as they were called, eventually reconstituted over 7,000 medieval English churches (Lowenthal, 1985). It might come as a surprise to the thousands of tourists visiting English cathedrals to learn that much the

Gothic art and architecture they have come to see is nineteenth-century reproduction, rather than the authentic material fabric of the Middle Ages.

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Cambridge, which was built around 1100 A.D., became a model for restorations. The society restored the church back to what they believed was its original Norman design, removing all traces of later Gothic and Neoclassical architectural accretions because they lacked artistic purity. So much demolition and new construction was involved that the church is now a largely nineteenth-century reconstruction rather than a medieval structure (White, 1962).

The Society claimed to take an eclectic approach to restorations, rather than insisting either that churches be restored to the supposedly most advanced period of English Gothic design or, at the other extreme, that they be preserved with their cumulative historical integrity intact. Nonetheless, White concludes that the Society "must bear the responsibility for the wholesale destruction of great quantities of medieval art" (White, 1962, p. 173).

One of the most eloquent and influential opponents of restoration was John Ruskin, who argued that the value of old buildings followed from the values imputed to the past in general. Of all human artifacts, he wrote in *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1859), buildings are the most important in "bearing witness to the noble history of human endurance." A building's greatest glory, he argued, is in its age, its walls "long washed by the passing waves of humanity," rather than in its formal composition. Restoration, Ruskin argued, "means the most total destruction which a building can suffer... accompanied with a false description of the thing destroyed... It is *impossible*, as impossible as to raise the dead, to restore anything that has ever been great or beautiful in architecture" (quoted in White, p. 174). The solution, for Ruskin, was loving preservation.

This historic dispute over architectural restoration illustrates the contradictory impulses of Romanticism. The same love of medieval values and craftsmanship lead the

restorer to replicate medieval work, and the conservator to preserve what remained of the authentic material fabric. The work in Prospect Park involves similar issues: Many of the picturesque features of the woodland landscape were destroyed or have disintegrated, and preservation alone would not return them to the landscape intact. The *restoration* of the Olmsted and Vaux design requires archaeological reconstruction, in the manner of the Ecclesiologists--partly through building replicas and partly by excavation and reassembly of stonework. Ruskin's alternative emphasis on the value of old things as connections to the past, as mediators of memory, shifts historic preservation from an obsession with artistic form as a value in itself (to be archaeologically reconstituted), toward a meaning connected with human activity and physical change over time.

An ethnographic approach to historic preservation is one that focuses on shared meanings, which is to say cultural significance (Hayden, 1995; Loader & Zink, 1989). In this way of thinking, the standards of cultural significance invoked in historic preservation go beyond the usual ones of historic and artistic values. In this framework, buildings, roads, parks--indeed all the features of the built environment--are cultural products, that is, they are material expressions of cultural values. The meanings encoded in the built environment will be different for different groups and different individuals. The risk in historic preservation lies in imposing one group's interpretation of an artifact's cultural significance on everyone else (Loader & Zink, 1989).

II.E. HISTORIC PRESERVATION, NOSTALGIA, AND CLASS INTEREST

Historic preservation is one of several ways in which the role of the elite class in shaping civil society is articulated (Castells, 1989; Fitch, 1982). Castells argues that urban space is increasingly redesigned to reflect the tastes and underscore the domination of the professional-managerial class, in contrast to the visibility of labor in nineteenth-century factory cities such as Lowell, or agriculture's salience in the landscape during the nation's first decades. Today's demanding "upper professionals" have succeeded in

establishing their living and leisure spaces in the post-Fordist city, spaces inscripted to reflect their consumptive tastes and interests (Soja, 1991). Historic preservation is one of the strategies used to secure these spaces.

Nostalgia for the charms of times past is the dominant tone in much contemporary historic preservation. It is evident in the signs and oyster bars intended to recall the rough-and-tumble of the old waterfront at South Street Seaport (Boyer, 1992)--although without challenging the visitor to anything more than an unexpected ATM withdrawal. Across town, the residential architecture and waterside landscaping of Battery Park City make an elegy to the New York of the nineteen-twenties evoked in the art of Bernice Abbott and Joseph Pennell. In Midtown, Grand Central Terminal has been burnished to a high nostalgic gloss and amply provisioned to please the most discriminating tastes. This immense complex had faded along with the declining fortunes of its original owner, the New York Central Railroad. Now, after the railroad's bankruptcy and a long period of indifferent government management, the terminal has been restored by a private, territorial business group--the Grand Central Partnership--which was also given responsibility for its management. The partnership uses an invisible but vigilant carrot-and-stick method of keeping the homelesss and other downscale publics on the run. At the same time, it provides numerous accommodations and commoditized diversions for those with plush wallets (Katz, 1998).

These restorations and replications involve the recycling of recognized historic forms and symbolic codes in architectural form, signage, materials, colors, and ornamentation (Boyer, 1992). In Central Park, latter day disciples of Vaux have built convincing Victorian Gothic fantasies that would fool anyone who does not remember that these are entirely new structures. The material symbolism is meant to attract professionals and other middle and upper-middle class people, and thereby to discourage poor and working class people. As at Grand Central Terminal, rigorous surveillance and

enforcement assures that only the desired people retain the right to loiter. Others are told to move on, and homeless loiterers are rounded up (Katz, 1998).

The restoration of the picturesque artifices in Prospect Park's woodlands would seem to belong to this nostalgic genre of work that recycles the built environment as an upper-professional domain. As I shall discuss in Chapter IV, the original inspiration and design of the park was part of a strategy of attracting bourgeois residents to Brooklyn. Today, professionals have reclaimed the neighborhoods north, west and southwest of the park from the working class inheritors of the original high-toned occupants. The restoration of the park itself as a safely middle class space is congruent with this re-gentrification of what the realtors like to call "Brownstone Brooklyn." One need not entertain the notion of a civic and real-estate conspiracy to see the landmarking and restoration of Prospect Park as a development in sympathy, at least, with the landmarking and restoration of Park Slope and other socially resurgent neighborhoods.

II.F. EMPIRICAL STUDIES AND OTHER PARK PROJECTS

Hayward (1990) reports on his methods and findings from a user analysis and community survey of Franklin Park, ranked by Newton (1971) with Central and Prospect Parks as Olmsted's three greatest public landscapes. Franklin Park deteriorated as the neighborhoods it borders became poor and populated largely by blacks and Latinos in the 1960s, and the park earned a reputation for muggings and rapes. Hayward's study was commissioned in preparation for a making a master plan for restoration and rehabilitation.

Hayward asks a pertinent question: "Even though Olmsted's designs are considered "classics," are they so timeless that they serve the community well 100 years later?" Considering people's fear of using wooded areas with little or no surveillance, should the park's woodland be maintained as is for the few who want wooded solitude or redesigned to be more accessible?

later?" Considering people's fear of using wooded areas with little or no surveillance, should the park's woodland be maintained as is for the few who want wooded solitude or redesigned to be more accessible?

Hayward's study addressed the issues of active and passive recreation and perceived conflict among different user groups. He found that passive activities were by far the most common uses of the park, suggesting "some strong parallels with Olmsted's original design and making a stronger case for historic preservation" (Hayward, 1990, p. 203). He might have concluded too that the design of the park and the long-time use of its major open space as a golf course limits the potential for active uses. Hayward also found a need for better interpretive information about the park--"explaining its features, history, and opportunities for use" (Hayward, 1990, p. 204). From my own observation, Franklin Park has made its woods somewhat more accessible by providing wide, inviting paths and clearings with picnic tables in them.

Figure II-1
PATH IN "THE WILDERNESS," FRANKLIN PARK
The path has a dirt and gravel surface appropriate to a woodland aesthetic. At each side of the walking surface are grassy margins, mown periodically to maintain an open pedestrian space. The vegetative understory, visible to the right of the path, helps to guide pedestrians away from delicate woodland plants.

Most of the usage, however, remains within the visually open areas of the park.

The reconstruction in Prospect and Central Parks parallels the work going on in several other U.S. cities with nineteenth-century landscape parks. Louisville, Kentucky, embarked on a reconstruction of its eponymous Olmsted Park System, designed by the Olmsted firm in 1890. The work was carried out by a private group named the Olmsted Parks Conservancy in cooperation with the City of Louisville. As in New York, faithfulness to the Olmsted design was the underlying principle: in Conservancy Director Rademacher's words, "restoring Olmsted's vision, not imposing our own ideas" (Johnson, 1996, p. 85). The work includes restoration of indigenous plant communities, pastoral scenery, and green parkway links, as well as "a spirit of positive community involvement." Prior to implementing its restoration, the City/Conservancy partnership conducted planning sessions in the central city and in various neighborhoods. These sessions seemed to be more about winning residents over to a preconceived plan rather than soliciting ideas. An example was the partnership's effort to persuade residents to consider the several individual parks as parts of a whole system. That way, they would feel less empowered to claim any ownership or planning prerogatives for the parts of the system they identified with.

Forest Park in St. Louis, Missouri, was built around 1900 to designs influenced by Olmsted's work. Initially a pastoral park, over time it filled up with civic institutions, recreation facilities, and parking lots. In preparing a master landscape plan for Forest Park, the city conducted a "major public process" of several hundred public meetings, forums, and workshops (*Landscape Architecture*, 1998, p. 29). The city's Director of Urban Design called it a "mutual education process," explaining that residents have knowledge of "local vernacular history" that designers lack. Due in part to the extensive public participation, city voters approved a one-half percent gasoline tax increase that raised $44 million in funds for work on Forest Park, as well as money for other city parks

(*Landscape Architecture*, 1998). The work will be carried out by a private conservancy, Forest Park Forever, which is also charged with raising another $44 million for the park from private sources. In Forest Park, restoration involves much work on the many existing buildings, pavements, and storm sewers. However, the project will restore to daylight the River Des Peres, which was channeled underground, and thus reconnect a series of lakes and lagoons (St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 1998).

In another interesting development, Forest Park Forever requested funds from a local foundation for new, celebratory gates to the park. The foundation agreed to fund the gates but only under the condition of no public input. Without any public disclosure, much less an architectural competition, the foundation hired Lawrence Halprin who designed a series of Art Nouveau structures. When it was finally announced in May, 2001, the completed design met a "cyclone of controversy" (Duffy, 2001a). By autumn, the conservancy and the city had no choice but to reject the design and with it, the funding. Mr. Halprin, a prominent landscape architect, was "appalled" at the level of hostility (Duffy, 2001b).

In Britain, local governments are expected to work with their communities to solve problems of local services. Jones (2002) reports on efforts to rebuild community interest in parks formerly avoided due to their poor physical condition. Jones describes a process of "enticement" of users back into the parks that involves improvements to both security and facilities. Harnessing community expertise in making these improvements is recommended as an issue for further research.

These examples illustrate the ascendance of historical restoration in present thinking about urban parks designed or influenced by Olmsted. In Louisville and St. Louis, the restoration and some of the fundraising were carried out by public-private partnerships. These examples also illustrate different approaches to public participation: In Boston, restoration plans were based in part on results of a public survey. Park restoration in Louisville and St. Louis both involved numerous meetings with citizen

groups, although in Louisville the process was used to win support for a preconceived plan. St. Louis exhibited two extremes of public participation: In one case, a sufficiently high level to win public approval of a tax increase to support park investment; and in the other case, the rejection of a high-design solution prepared with no public process whatsoever.

II.G. SOCIOLOGY OF PARK USE

The last body of literature to be reviewed here is from sociological studies which seek to explain apparent differences in park-associated choices and user values according to social class and race and/or ethnicity. Values may be defined as "the symbolic content attached by a group" to objects or place (Washburne, 1978, p. 177). This work is relevant to my research on Prospect Park. In the Prospect Park User Study (Taplin, et al., 1998), from which I draw in this dissertation, we tried to explain different uses and values in terms of race and class. Although the present study will demonstrate the limitations of applying such a demographic analysis at close range, broad differences do exist among the population. The differences relate both to cultural preference and to the effects of racial discrimination.

Relative to the national population, national park users are disproportionately white and middle class (Taylor, 2000; Washburne, 1978; Woolf, 1996). "Wild land resources seem to be largely the domain of white America" (Washburne, 1978, p. 176). African Americans, Asians, Latinos, and other people of color do not attend state and national parks in numbers proportional to their percentage of the total population (Woolf, 1996).

The literature reflects two alternative explanations of the differences between white and people of color participation in parks: marginality and ethnicity (or subculture) (Floyd, Shinew, & McGuire, 1994; Hutchison, 1987; Washburne, 1978). Marginality explanations for under-participation of people of color in wild land resources focus on

poverty and socioeconomic discrimination. The reasoning goes that more people of color lack cars and cannot otherwise afford the cost of visiting national or non-local state parks, suffer disproportionately from unmet basic needs, work longer hours than whites, and so on. The marginality view implies a policy of increasing minority access to wild land parks. Urban national parks like Golden Gate in California and Gateway in New York and New Jersey--parks that seek to bring a national park experience to city dwellers--were established in response to marginality concerns (Woolf, 1996).

Advocating an "ethnicity" alternative, Washburne (1978) argued that blacks have different cultural values than whites in relation to wild lands: in effect, many blacks would rather stay home. Washburne cited California survey data showing that, relative to whites, blacks preferred playing basketball and attending spectator sports events and community and neighborhood activities, and were much less inclined than whites toward "trips and vacations," "walking, hiking, climbing," and "visiting regional or remote parks." Washburne added that blacks chose to maintain their ethnic status by socializing with one another locally, in their neighborhoods, churches, and other community institutions, as well as in local parks. For Washburne, explaining African American under-participation in wild land parks as a matter of preference implies a shift in policy away from universal access to wild lands, toward providing a variety of public spaces, including local recreational facilities.

While he served as Director of the National Park Service, Roger Kennedy stated that immigrants from Africa, southern Europe, southeast Asia, and Latin America, have strong traditions of family and clan gatherings in village squares, city parks, and orchards close to home (Woolf, 1996). Kennedy ascribed whites' attendance of western national parks to a North Sea tradition of traveling to distant natural areas for vacations of camping, hunting, and fishing. Perhaps so, but people of color also have traditions of long-distance travel. Ethnicity alone does not entirely account for their low attendance of wild land parks.

A more compelling explanation stems from the likely impact of racial hostility on people of color participation in park use. West (1989) found that black residents of Detroit were more likely to use city parks than white city residents, who visited suburban parks proportionately more than blacks and visited them more often. West argues that cultural group (ethnicity) does not explain the difference, because whites and blacks expressed equal levels of interest in using metropolitan parks. Marginality did not explain the difference either. Instead, West attributes black under representation in suburban parks in large part to their perception of a potentially hostile social environment. Sometimes the discrimination is overt, as with suburban Dearborn's effort to prohibit nonresident use of its parks. Even without overt discrimination, a black family may think twice about visiting a mostly white regional park located in the white suburbs.

Racism figures similarly in William Kornblum's assessment of people of color under-representation in western national parks. On the basis of studies he conducted for the National Park Service, Kornblum gives the whiteness of both park staff and other visitors; the prospect of a long drive through rural, white regions of the country to get there; and the cost of the trip, all as important factors (Woolf, 1996).

Taylor (2000) observes that people of color do visit wild lands and have reported unpleasant encounters with white visitors, where they were "stared at, stared down, and stared out" of these areas. Wilderness settings lack the social boundaries and rules that generally mediate against stronger interaction in other settings. Diverse ethnic groups interact routinely in work, shopping, and entertainment settings, where rules and well-defined roles prevail. In their absence, hikers and campers may be more hostile and wary when they encounter groups unlike themselves—for example, hikers encountering mountain bikers (Cheek & Burch, 1976). These reactions are based on stereotyped expectations of other groups' behavior.

"White users and wild land managers assume that park, forest, and wilderness users will be white and that the wild land areas are exclusive white spaces" (Taylor, 2000, p. 174). Taylor suggests using more images of people of color in parks to help diversify these spaces. She advocates pulling away from the typically white, urban, middle-class view of wilderness as "empty, virgin land, untouched by human hands, where [whites] can retreat form urban problems and people" (Taylor, 2000, p. 174).

Wild land use is differentiated by class as well as race or ethnicity. Cheek & Burch (1976) see a pattern in working class recreational behavior of avoidance of complicated, intellectualized, and intangible payoffs. Thus riding motor bikes, waterskiing, bait fishing (rather than fly-fishing), hunting, and snowmobiling, are characteristic. The roles are predetermined, the routine is externally set and familiar, and sex-segregation is customary. The authors suggest that recreational values compare with work values, where working-class workers attach importance to pay, fringe benefits, co-workers, and job security; rather than to how interesting the work seems, the amount of freedom available, or to altruism. These differences help to explain the predominance of middle class people among wilderness users, and the tendency of those working class people present toward hunting, fishing, and other activities with tangible rewards (Cheek & Burch, 1976).

A study of Chicago's Lincoln Park (Gobster & Delgado, 1993) found that whites visited the park predominantly alone or in couples, while black and Hispanic users came in larger groups of family and friends. Black and Hispanic users also engaged in passive social recreational activity more than whites--activity like picnicking and talking and watching organized sports. In another study of Lincoln Park, Hutchison (1987) reports clear differences between Hispanics and both blacks and whites. Hispanics shared with blacks and whites a preference for walking and bicycling, but were much more prone than the others to playground use, picnicking, watching sports events, and lying on the grass.

A study of parks in New Haven, Connecticut, found black residents more attracted to ball fields and picnic grounds, and whites to tennis courts and jogging trails (Taylor, 1993). Blacks preferred one city park disproportionately because it had safe play equipment, fields to play on, and because there were other blacks present. Taylor argues that ethnicity explanations rely on a too narrowly specified model of race, i.e., "blacks", "Hispanics", and "whites". In the New Haven study, for example, African Americans were attracted to one park for its overall peaceful atmosphere, whereas Jamaicans were more likely to be attracted by certain facilities in the park. Results like these could be useful in matching park design and programming to their user constituencies.

This body of research has produced reasonably consistent findings. There are differences in class and race/ethnicity in the choices people make about park recreation. Middle-class white Americans are the major constituents of wild land or wilderness parks. An important factor in making choices about which parks to use is the presence of people like oneself. Whites expect to find other whites in wilderness parks, and people of color have been found, for the most part, to avoid parks where other people of color are not present. Class differences have been found in the activities people pursue in parks. There are policy implications of all this research and some evidence of decisions made in consequence. A notable example is the creation of Gateway and Golden Gate National Recreation Areas to bring a wilderness park experience within close range of city dwellers. More importantly, much of this research challenges the persistent bias among park authorities and landscape designers toward the sylvan and pastoral aesthetic in open space design and planning.

II.H. CONCLUSION

Nineteenth-century landscape parks are part of the material fabric of human societies. They were grand projects of civic pride, the products of the romantic reaction

to industrialism, and of the correspondingly romantic relationship to nature. While the Olmstedian principle of refreshment in a natural environment still operates, Prospect Park is also a "production of nature" arising from a historically specific middle-nineteenth-century paradigm of second nature. It was designed as a restful, pastoral analogue of the upper-class urban-residential landscape at its borders, but also as an environment for moral and behavioral improvement of the lower classes, and perhaps as a tonic for guilt over the biotic ecologies sacrificed in the urbanization of Kings County.

The significant changes afoot in Prospect Park today are informed by the discourses of historic preservation and wilderness preservation. As is so often the case with such projects, the Woodlands Campaign is largely the work of a private group. Yet the park is now a vividly cultural space that in many ways departs from the Olmsted formula of restful recuperation. The question at hand, really, is whether this particular program of park renewal is too narrowly formulated to nurture the multiple relationships between this natural/social space and its diverse constituency.

II.I. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

I first pose my research question in a single interrogative statement, then break it down into more specific questions. The general question is this: How do multiple perspectives on current preservation efforts reflect the socially, politically, and culturally rich history of Prospect Park?

1. What were the social intentions of Frederick Law Olmsted and others involved in creating Prospect Park? What cultural values were reflected in the landscape they produced? What was the social life of the park like in the early years?
2. What are the intentions and values of the Prospect Park Alliance and its supporters in planning and undertaking the Woodlands Campaign as their major initiative? How

was the decision made? How do they present their goals and objectives to potential supporters?

3. What about this park do its users value? How do people construct their experience of the park? Which values and attributes of the park are the most shared among them--that is, which values and attributes have cultural significance? What differences in values exist among various groups? Do user values conflict with the values expressed verbally by the Prospect Park Alliance and materially by its Woodlands Campaign?
4. What effect is the Woodlands Campaign having on the social landscape of the park? What are the differences in effect among various groups? How are the different effects expressed and negotiated?

Chapter III. RESEARCH SETTING AND METHODOLOGY

This dissertation evaluates the Woodlands Campaign in light of the cultural values constructed from the historical and empirical research stages. I explore the practical implications of my research findings for park policy and planning.

The theoretical contribution of my work is to open up the current state of thinking about park restoration. We have entered a new era in the history of public parks in the United States since Galen Cranz published her social history of American parks in 1982--an era of privatized Olmstedian restoration. A great deal of urban park restoration is under way around the country, much of it following the lead of the Central Park Conservancy. This activity is focused, as it is in Brooklyn, on restoration of natural ecosystems and "original" architectural features. These privatized restorations have differential consequences for the cultural values of park users as they are played out and negotiated in public space. Unlike Frederick Law Olmsted's socially inflected park philosophy, the present-day restorers say little about the social and cultural dimensions of their work. My dissertation will enable social and cultural considerations to be returned to their rightful place in thinking about public parks.

III.A. RESEARCH SETTING

The purpose of this section is to provide an in-depth description of the area of the park that is the focus of the Woodlands Campaign, and of other features of the park that relate to my research.

Prospect Park occupies a site of 526 acres in north-central Brooklyn (Figure III-1). Grand Army Plaza, a large oval of complex structure, was created to give the park a dignified main entrance. The plaza was designed to organize the convergence of several major thoroughfares within a graceful oval that frames the main entrance to the park. At this nexus are located three prominent civic institutions that have their origins in the City Beautiful era: the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, the Brooklyn Museum, and the main building of the Brooklyn Public Library.

Densely developed neighborhoods dating from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries surround the park. Three adjacent neighborhoods each have an immediate spatial relationship with the bordering section of the park: Park Slope on the west, Windsor Terrace on the southwest, and Flatbush on the southeast. The park's ethnic makeup and cultural atmosphere changes from one neighborhood's zone of influence to another. Other nearby neighborhoods, including Prospect Heights, Crown Heights, and Kensington, do not share a border with the park, and lack this immediate connection with the park.

The 526 acres include Grand Army Plaza. The Parade Ground, an additional forty-acre area provided for active uses, borders the park on the south. Within the main area of the park are a rolling upland meadow area on the west side, a region of wooded hills across the middle, and a flat area on lower ground which the park's designers dug out to make a shallow 60-acre lake. The major pastoral composition is the 90-acre Long Meadow on the northwest side.

Figure III-2
LONG MEADOW
Looking south, with main path on the left and upper ponds in the distance behind trees.

Pastoral scenery is also found in the Nethermead, a smaller meadow in the center of the park, surrounded by wooded hills. These meadows afford essentially the same meadow scenery specified by Olmsted and Vaux, but simplified so that little maintenance beyond mechanical lawn mowing is required (Jackson, 1984; Prospect Park Alliance, 1994; Wilson, 1992). The meadows originally had the coarse turf of real pastures, and sheep grazed on them in the early years. Today they are closely mown and well-trampled lawns used for ball games of various kinds, dog walking, sitting and sunbathing, and picnics. Except for the Nethermead, woods prevail in the interior. There is little evidence of horticulture or gardening, just wooded hills and overgrown paths. The region's facilities--the Boat House and the Music Pagoda, Central and Wellhouse Drives--have the faded quality of disused things left over from another era.

Figure III-3
THE RAVINE FROM "SULLIVAN HEIGHTS"

The "Midwood," a name used by Olmsted and Vaux, is generally the east-central portion of the woodlands, between East Drive and the Ravine.[3] The west-central woodland area, between the Long Meadow and the Nethermead, is known as Quaker Hill. The gated and

Figure III-4
THE RAVINE FROM THE NETHERMEAD ARCHES
The main path is visible on the left ascending the slope toward Rocky Pass. The reconstructed streambed is in the center and a bridle path on the right. These winter views suggest the visual openness of the woodlands intended by Olmsted and Vaux in all seasons.

[3] The annual reports of the Brooklyn Park Commission refer also to the "East Woods" and the "West Woods," terms which are no longer in use.

Figure III-5
Rocky Pass

inaccessible Quaker cemetery occupies the easterly portion of this area. In between and overlapping the inexact boundaries of the Midwood and Quaker Hill is the Ravine section, which is the focus of the Woodlands Campaign.

The Ravine is a break in the row of morainal landforms that traverse the park (and all of western Long Island.) The Ravine begins as a gap across the trend of hills; it then curves around to the southeast to form a valley between two parallel ridges, Quaker Hill and the high ground of the Midwood, once known as "Sullivan

Figure III-6
RUSTIC BRIDGE LOOKING TOWARD THE AMBERGILL

Heights". The water system follows the course of the Ravine. Rocky Pass, a smaller cleft in the Quaker Hill ridge, provides a route through the hills for the principal original pedestrian sequence of the park from Grand Army Plaza to Concert Grove and the Lookout. The main path enters the woodlands at a new rustic footbridge over the upper ponds outlet, and crosses over level ground adjacent to the upper ponds. The path then winds downhill through Rocky Pass, where glacial boulders have been set into the steep embankments, and enters the valley between Quaker Hill and the Midwood ridge on a course parallel to the stream. Both stream and path are spanned by a low stone bridge, the Nethermead Arches, which brings a visual closure to the Ravine and frames the entrance to the broad, sloping Nethermead beyond the bridge.

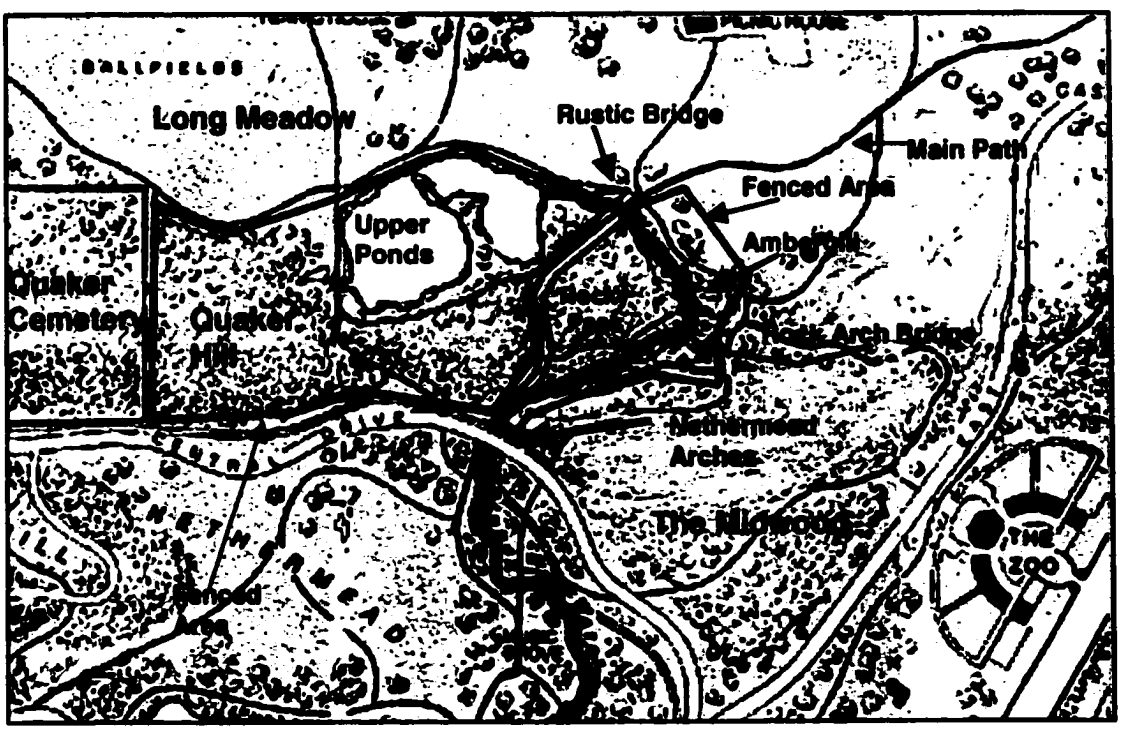

Figure III-7
RAVINE AREA

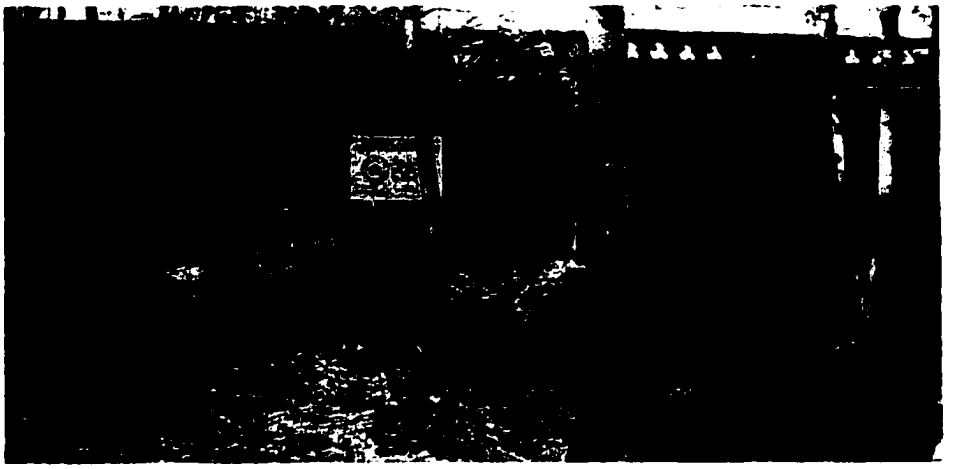

Figure III-8
NETHERMEAD ARCHES

III.A.1. The "Woodlands Campaign"

The restoration completed so far is located within the Ravine and the upper ponds. "Ravine I", the first part of the project to commence work, is limited to the beginnings of the water system and the two upper ponds. The system begins in a waterfall on the western slope of Quaker Hill, where water emerges from a concealed pipe as if from a spring. The stream flows from a pool below the waterfall underneath a new footbridge, then drops in a second falls down into the first of the upper ponds. The first pond empties into the second pond over a shallow weir. Water flows out of the second pond over another weir into the outlet stream. "Ravine I" includes the outlet stream as far as Rocky Pass path, as well as a path around the two ponds.

"Ravine II" comprises the upper portion of the Ravine, the new rustic bridge over the outlet stream, and the embankments of Rocky Pass. A couple of hundred feet into the Ravine beyond the rustic bridge, the stream drops in a falls down into a miniature gorge called the Ambergill. Rock Arch Bridge crosses over the Ambergill below the falls, affording a view of the highly picturesque falls and gorge. At this point the visitor has the choice of following the path across Rock Arch Bridge and through the valley to rejoin the main path below Rocky Pass, or climbing up a flight of stone steps to the hilltop. A new rustic shelter perches on the high ground at the top of the stone staircase. From here, a scenic path along the top of the slope parallel to the stream leads back toward the Long Meadow.

Figure III-9
RUSTIC SHELTER

"Ravine III" is the portion of the Ravine from Rock Arch Bridge down to the Nethermead Arches. In addition to the reconstructed streambed, it includes the continuation of the Rocky Pass footpath south of Rocky Pass and a bridle path that rises through the valley, east of the stream, into the narrow pass spanned by Boulder Bridge. "Ravine IV," which has not begun reconstruction, will rebuild the stream and two silted-in pools in the area downstream of the Nethermead Arches.

All three completed projects have involved an enormous amount of reconstruction. Much of this was earthmoving--dredging the sedimented ponds and streambed, building reinforcement structures into the steeper hillside slopes to prevent future collapses, excavating hundreds of buried glacial boulders and replacing them, as much as possible, just where Olmsted and Vaux put them. The work with boulders occurs throughout the streambed, but most intensively at the waterfall and at the Ambergill. Boulders were also restored to their originally designed positions along the embankments in Rocky Pass. Thick stands of tall reeds known as phragmites, with their tenacious root systems, were dug out from around the upper ponds, and the shoreline rebuilt to its original contours. The soils on the hillsides around the water system were loosened and reconditioned. Many of the "invasive" vines and trees were removed, some of them exotics descended from Olmsted and Vaux's original plantings. Thousands of new trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants have

Figure III-10
THE AMBERGILL

been planted by hand. On stream banks and on other steep slopes, erosion cloth fabric was installed over the reconditioned and replanted soils to stem erosion. Paved paths through the area were all reconstructed.

Seven-foot-high chain-link fences enclose all three project areas. Public access is restricted to guided tours on weekend afternoons and, in the past year, open hours on weekend afternoons with heavy supervision. A less secure but still effective level of fencing has enclosed all of Quaker Hill between the cemetery and Ravine I since the work began on Ravine I in 1996. For a two-year period, the only way across the hills from Long Meadow to the east side of the park was through the Midwood via Payne Hill. The main path through Rocky Pass was reopened in 1998. It has continuous fencing on both sides from where it enters the woods from the Long Meadow all the way down to Nethermead Arches. The construction areas are to be fenced in for as long as ten years, although there will be some relaxation of this policy, in the form of controlled access through the restored landscapes. Park officials justify the long-term fencing as necessary measure to let the new plantings to establish themselves.

III.A.2. Woodland Vegetation

Within the capital-project construction areas of Ravine I, II, and III, intensive planting and soil conditioning have resulted in a newly verdant forest understory. Elsewhere, the woodlands show the mixed effects of neglect and overuse, countered by the efforts of volunteer work crews in recent years, organized by the Prospect Park Alliance, at soil conditioning and tree planting. The crews have built cribbing structures on slopes throughout the Midwood and the Ravine to stem erosion. Snow fencing of

Figure III-11
MAIN PATH AND FENCES EAST OF PONDS

wooden slats and wire has been installed along many paths in the woodlands to keep pedestrians on the paths.

Figure III-12
HORNBEAM IN THE MIDWOOD

In the Olmsted and Vaux design, the woods had open groves of trees, including shrubs and ornamental trees. The woods were furnished with gazebos and hospitality facilities (mainly the Dairy Cottage) to attract picnickers. After 130 years of sporadic maintenance, at best, relatively healthy stands of mature hardwoods are

interspersed with surly thickets of overgrown vegetation. The understory is degraded in many places by erosion, litter, and uncontrolled desire-line paths. A 1986 historic landscape report commented on the presence of many remnant ornamental trees in the Midwood which could be revived with careful pruning and thinning of the younger growth crowding them (Walmsley, 1986). Some of these ornamentals are still here, fifteen years on, but rather than thinning and pruning, the vegetation has been allowed to grow in as thickly as the acidic, compacted soils will permit. This condition is the result of both neglect and deliberate policy, about which more in Chapter V.

III.A.3. Other Landmarks

Prospect Park has several crowd-attracting features. One is the Boathouse, an arcaded production in shiny white-glazed tile from the City Beautiful era (built in 1905). It replaced the original wooden boathouse, rendered in the characteristic Olmsted and Vaux rustic-bucolic style. For a long time rowboats could be rented here. More recently it was a visitor center and offered a

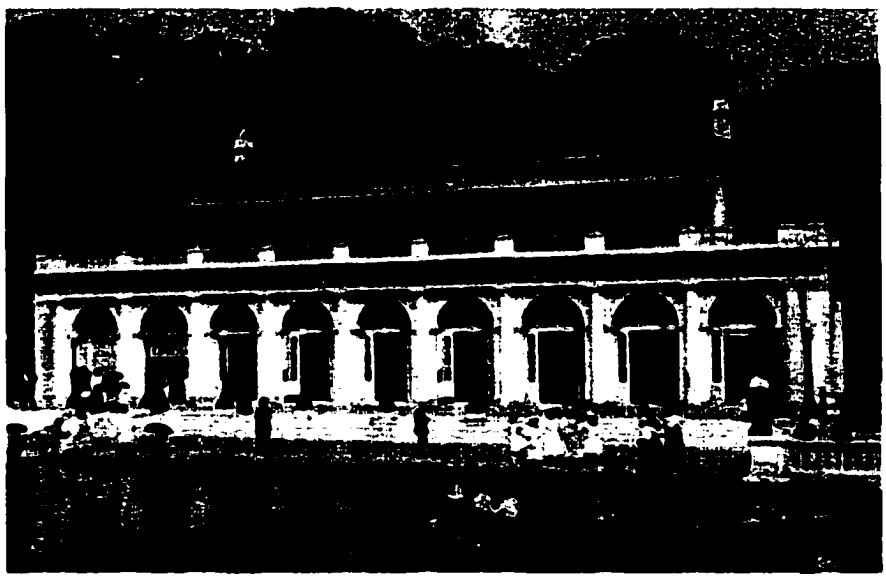

Figure III-13
THE BOATHOUSE, ca. 1910

restaurant concession. The Parks Department has had great difficulty in keeping this building weather-tight. Now undergoing its third rehabilitation in 35 years, the building is planned to house a nature center operated with the National Audubon Society.

The Boathouse presides over one of the park's more forlorn horticultural landscapes, the upper Lullwater, where ornamental plantings have withered and dead trees are left in the water where they fall. A severe gash made by foot and bicycle traffic

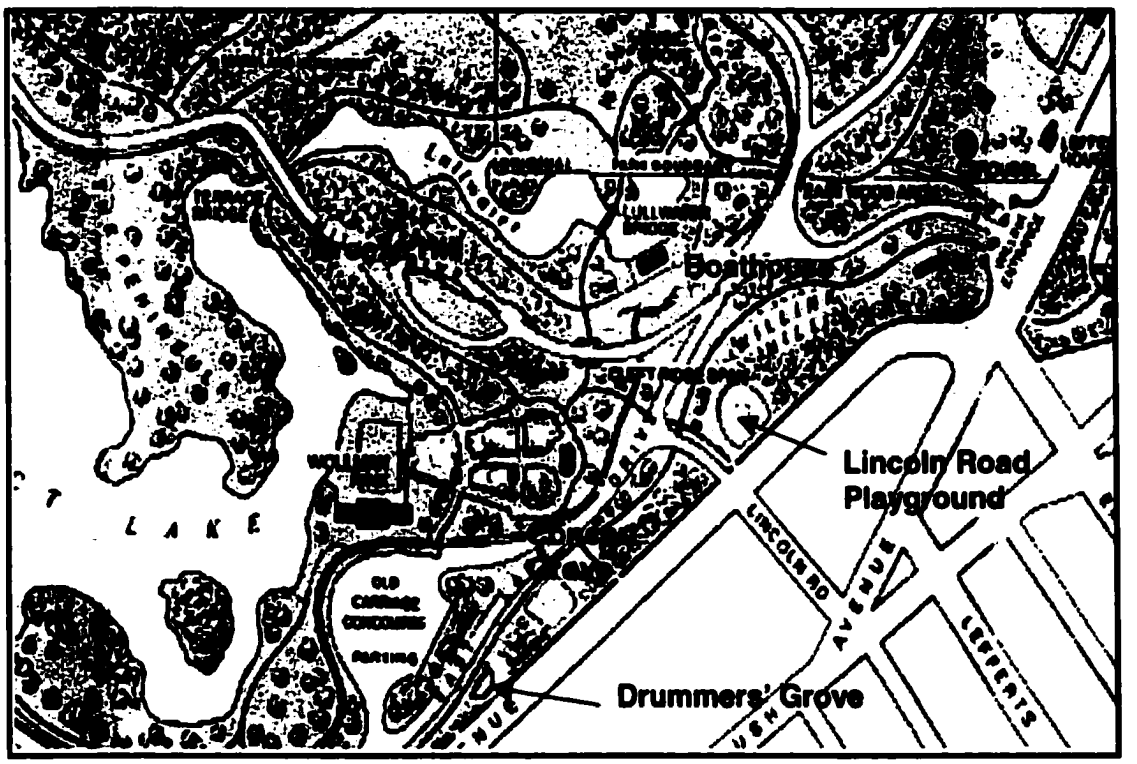

Figure III-14
LULLWATER-CONCERT GROVE AREA

mars the grassy slope next to the Boathouse. The banks of the lower waterfall, where the stream enters the Lullwater, are severely eroded. Open areas of lawn near the water (in photographs from the 1960s) have been abandoned to colonization of self-sown trees.

The main path through the park from Grand Army Plaza crosses over the Lullwater in view of the Boathouse on a most graceful bridge. Here is also a Camperdown Elm made famous by the efforts of Marianne Moore in the 1960s, in both verse and activism, to save it from collapse (Graff, 1985).

On its way to Lullwater Bridge, the main path skirts the edge of the Nethermead, passing through the Music Grove. Here, the "Music Pagoda," a high bandstand built in the 1880s, faces an open grove of trees. The construction of the Music Pagoda and the clearing of woods necessary to make the music grove angered Olmsted, who feared the loss of fine trees he and Vaux had wanted left alone. Olmsted objected that the park commission had never made a concerted effort to make use of the Concert Grove for musical performances in the way the designers intended. However, the Music Grove must be judged a successful modification of the design; the Goldman Band gave regular, well-attended concerts here for many decades, until about 1970. The pagoda has been kept in fairly good repair since its restoration after a fire in 1968. It is used occasionally for specially permitted activities, but more often by teenage couples seeking a quiet trysting place.

The band shell, on the perimeter near the Ninth Street entrance, is the site of a popular, summer-long program of outdoor pop music concerts. Around the band shell are picnic areas with tables and cookout grills, and a playground. This is an intensively used area. On the opposite side of the park, along Flatbush Avenue near the Willink entrance, are the Prospect Park Zoo, the Carousel, and the Lefferts Homestead, a historic house museum geared to children.

Including the playground behind the band shell, the park has five children's playgrounds at different locations along the perimeter, each relating to the adjacent neighborhood. The others are at Third Street, Vanderbilt Street, Ocean Avenue, and Lincoln Road. All have been reconstructed within the last ten years with capital funds. A cluster of baseball fields occupy the southern third of the Long Meadow. The ballfields were built about 1960 by flattening out the undulating meadow for diamonds and erecting fences and bleachers. In one of its first projects, the Prospect Park Alliance removed the concrete bleachers and most of the fencing. This work restored the visual openness of the meadow with little impact on people's ability to play ball or enjoy watching it played. There are many more baseball and soccer fields in the Parade Ground, a separate area across Parkside Avenue from the park's southern border.

A skating rink was built in 1960, at the end of the Moses era, on the east side of the lake. The rink complex occupies the site of Olmsted and Vaux's music island, where orchestras were intended to play. What remains of the Concert Grove lies directly to the east of the rink. The Concert Grove was the most formal composition in Prospect Park, the analogue to the Mall-Bethesda Terrace sequence in Central Park, with brownstone terraces, formal flower beds, and statues of Beethoven, Mozart, Abraham Lincoln, and other worthies. The pre-emption of the music island, the grove's focal point, with the utilitarian skating rink was a desecration not unlike replacing the Bethesda Fountain in Central Park with, say, a parking garage. The WPA Guide to New York City, written in the 1930s, noted that "...here are the restaurant and refreshment stands... The view of the lake here is perhaps the best, exuberant foliage shrouding the shores of peninsulas and islets" (WPA Guide, 1982, p. 485). From the terrace visitors could enjoy the sight of

throngs of people rowing boats in the summer and skating on the frozen lake in winter. The Prospect Park Alliance hopes to someday relocate the skating rink and restore the Concert Grove.

Next to the Concert Grove is a big parking lot, originally the Carriage Concourse. Between the parking lot and the lake is a popular picnic and cookout ground. Brooklyn's large West Indian community makes use of an area across the circuit drive, near the Ocean-Parkside Avenue entrance, for a weekly drumming and dancing fest that can attract hundreds of participants, onlookers, and food-and-craft vendors on a warm Sunday afternoon.

The northeast side of the park contains two garden-like sites, the Rose Garden and the Vale of Cashmere. The Vale is a horseshoe-shaped kettlehole formation about 30 feet deep left by the glacier. There is an utterly charming pool at the bottom with marble balustrades partly enclosing the serpentine shoreline, an island lush with intricate vegetation, a fountain to drown out the sound of traffic on Flatbush Avenue,

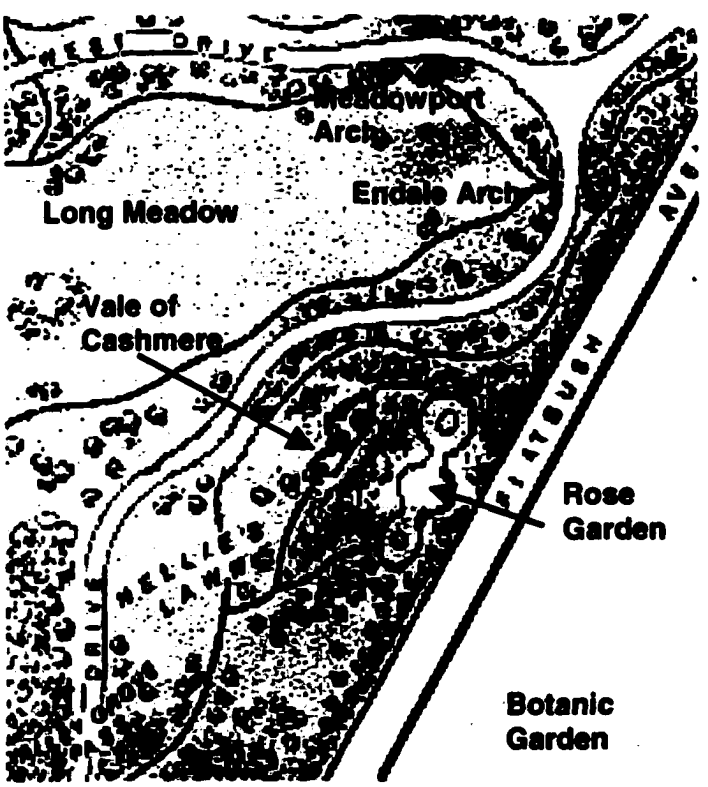

Figure III-15
VALE OF CASHMERE-ROSE GARDEN AREA

and benches facing the pool across a brick surface laid in herringbone pattern. In the 1930s, the Vale was "filled with azalea, summersweet, and rhododendron in tropical profusion" (WPA Guide, 1982). The Prospect Park Alliance has not turned its attention to the Vale of Cashmere, at least not yet, but the trash is picked up. The plantings date from a restoration by the Friends of Prospect Park in the 1970s, and one or two volunteers have tended the plantings in recent years.

The Rose Garden occupies the high ground above the Vale, next to Flatbush Avenue (although it is screened from the avenue by a densely planted perimeter embankment.) The garden is organized in a series of three round fountains, surrounded by lawns and yew trees. Once the fountains worked and flower beds bordered the lawn. No more: perhaps no place in Prospect Park is as forlorn and abandoned as the Rose Garden. The Vale of Cashmere, the Rose Garden, and the surrounding woods are "cruising" locales. There is little other use of these areas.

III.A.4. The Circulation System

Access within the park is provided mainly by a winding, three-mile drive that makes a complete circuit of the perimeter of the park. Two shorter drives cross through the park interior. The drives were intended for recreational carriage driving but their smooth surfaces now accommodate a diversity of pedestrians, cyclists, and rollerbladers. Automobile traffic is permitted on the circuit drive during rush hours as a convenience to drivers who would otherwise find themselves crawling through the congested streets surrounding the park. Car traffic in the park is a perennial matter of contention, however, because of the noise, exhaust, and danger it creates, and because it leaves many park

advocates with the impression that the drivers are not visiting the park per se, only speeding through it as a short cut.

Circulation is also provided by a curvilinear network of paved footpaths, and by a less extensive system of bridle paths. As in Central Park, the original design provided for grade-separation of the three types of paths: drives, footpaths, and bridle paths. The necessary bridges and underpasses were not all completed in Prospect Park, but for the most part the scheme survives. Unfortunately, the inherent principle in grade separation--of limiting conflict and accidents resulting from different modes of locomotion--is largely lost today as pedestrians, bicycles, rollerbladers, and cars all compete for space on the popular circuit drive. The drives are well maintained, although to the utilitarian standards of the Department of Transportation. The footpaths are in increasingly good repair, as capital projects and Alliance funds have rebuilt them in many areas. With very few exceptions, however, the bridle path system lies in ruins.

Many of the park's "places of congregation," as Olmsted would call them, are not original. The band shell and the zoo were constructed in the 1930s, and the Long Meadow ballfields and the skating rink were added circa 1960. The Rose Garden dates from early in the twentieth century. None of the playgrounds were extant prior to 1940. Olmsted and Vaux provided places for people to gather too. Some were never built; others were altered or undermined by management decisions so that they never fulfilled their intended purposes. Still others have disappeared.

III.A.5. The Social-Geographical Context

Prospect Park occupies a border zone between gentrifying neighborhoods on the north and west, and working class neighborhoods on the east and south. The core constituency of the Prospect Park Alliance resides in Park Slope. Most of Park Slope lies within zip code 11215, which is 57 percent white, 26 percent Latino, 12 percent black, and five percent Asian[4]. There is a large community of Lesbians and Gay men within this ethnically diverse district. The neighborhood is also known for progressive politics, its large food coop, and other cultural leftovers from the 1960s "counterculture".

Park Slope has long exhibited a nearly perfect topography-income gradient, in which income and ground elevation are highest in the blocks adjacent to the park. Moving downslope and away from the park, the real estate becomes steadily more modest. The WPA Guide to New York of 1939 described the blocks below Sixth Avenue as a slum, but the tide of gentrification beginning in the 1960s--while not erasing the class gradient--has made the whole district very desirable in real estate terms. In the high-income blocks adjacent to the park, between Prospect Park West and Sixth Avenue, the white population is probably much greater than for the zip code as a whole, which extends westerly to the Gowanus Canal. North of Union Street, Park Slope extends into zip code 11217. Here the white population is only 39 percent, but, as in 11215, middle and upper-middle class whites are concentrated in the old "Gold Coast" blocks around Grand Army Plaza. Zip code 11217 has about the same proportion of Latinos as 11215 but the black population is proportionally greater, at 29 percent. North of Flatbush Avenue lies Prospect Heights, in zip code 11238, which has a middle class West Indian

[4] All census figures given in this section are 2000 Census data obtained from Infoshare, a computerized source of census data for New York City that aggregates census data by zip code.

population and where blacks overall are 66 percent of the population. Here, whites, concentrated in the blocks between Flatbush and Washington Avenues, are 15 percent and Latinos 11 percent of the population.

On the southwest, the park borders Windsor Terrace and Kensington, in zip code 11218. Here, the white population is 48 percent; Latinos are 20 percent, blacks 12 percent, and Asians 14 percent. Most of the Asians are Muslim immigrants from the Middle East who live in Kensington, south of Fort Hamilton Parkway. In Windsor Terrace, north of Fort Hamilton Parkway, the blocks bordering the park have long been a lower-middle-class, largely Irish American neighborhood, where Farrell's Bar and Holy Name Church are prominent local institutions. Windsor Terrace remains largely white but is experiencing some gentrification as white professionals unable to afford Park Slope bid up the market. The Kensington part of the zip code, south of Fort Hamilton Parkway, is much more diverse ethnically and remains more working class than middle class.

The neighborhoods south and east of the park are highly segregated. Flatbush, contained in zip code 11226, is 76 percent black, 14 percent Latino, and three percent white. The Crown Heights zip code, 11225, which includes the Lefferts Gardens neighborhood just east of the park, is 81 percent black, nine percent Latino, and seven percent white. Census figures do not measure ethnicity, but in both Flatbush and Crown Heights the black population is dominated by Caribbean immigrants. Both were middle class districts with large Jewish populations into the 1950s, but in the late 1950s and 1960s there was a rapid exodus of whites and a reciprocal influx of blacks, complete with reports of panic selling and block busting typical of population turnovers of that era. Today, most of the whites in Crown Heights are residents of the highly segregated

Hassidic community along Eastern Parkway and President Street, well to the east of Prospect Park.

With some exceptions, the areas of Flatbush and Crown Heights close to the park contain some of the most densely populated streets in Brooklyn. Ocean Avenue, Caton Avenue, Lefferts Boulevard, and many intervening blocks are lined with massive apartment buildings, dating from the World War I era, rising six to twelve stories and crowded with residents. The population density in this area is much higher than in the mostly row house streets of Park Slope and Windsor Terrace. Flatbush also includes the affluent Prospect Park South neighborhood between Caton Avenue and Beverly Road. Here survives intact a high-grade subdivision from the 1890s of enormous single-family frame houses on relatively small lots. Most of Flatbush's white population lives in this neighborhood and in the similar but less opulent blocks of free-standing frame houses that extend southward from Beverly Road.

The distribution of useable space within the park works to the relative disadvantage of the most densely populated neighborhoods south and east of the park. Much of the adjacent park territory is occupied by Prospect Lake and by the area enclosed for the zoo, leaving only so much space for general park uses. By contrast, the west side of the park features the ninety-acre Long Meadow as well as other spacious grounds lying between the circuit drive and the park perimeter. Ironically, this resource borders the neighborhood with the highest incidence of private back yards, second homes, and other privileges that make the park a less vital amenity.

The east side of the park also poses a greater maintenance challenge than the simpler west side landscapes. Here are the Rose Garden-Vale of Cashmere area, the Zoo-

Carousel-Lefferts Homestead complex, the Boathouse-Lullwater area, the Nethermead-Music Grove area, and the Concert Grove--all distinct, relatively separate places. These east side "subdistricts" include most of the park's gardens, places of assembly, and formal compositions, which require more care and attention than the simpler east side landscape of meadow, trees and grass, and border woods. In an era of inadequate park funding, the east side subdistricts show more neglect and deterioration.

The evidence does not support the contention by some that the west side is better kept because its white, middle class constituents command better services, or that the reverse relationship applies on the east side. At the same time, if an affluent, white population had been living along the eastern perimeter all these years, the east side's landscapes might have received the maintenance they needed. Management insists that maintenance resources are distributed evenly across the park, but even-handed maintenance would seem to favor the west side, which needs less. In any case, a perspective on this social context is fundamental to understanding how the issues in park planning are framed, and which groups do the framing.

III.B. RESEARCH DESIGN

My research design combines archival research, interviews with park officials, analysis of existing park user data, and new field research with park users. I develop a typology of park values from different perspectives, including the cultural values and meanings implicit and explicit in the Woodlands Campaign. I uncover the values and meanings that users ascribe to the park and its various places and place types. This study makes use of two data sets. The first is from the 1996-98 User Study, comprising

opportunity-sample interviews with 357 different park users throughout the park. I wrote the User Study report and participated with others in the field research. The value of the User Study data is in delineating the various user constituencies and the broad patterns of park values associated with them. The User Study included an annual user census and ethnographies of six selected areas of the park, not including the woodlands.

The second data set comes from new field work in the woodlands project area. The work combines interviews with observation of behavior in woodland areas. The objective of this second piece of research is to uncover the multiple meanings of place and environment in the park. From the two sets of data, I assess what, from the viewpoint of human experience in the park, is being gained and being lost with the restoration brought about by the Woodlands Campaign.

III.B.1 Archival Research and Key Informant Interviews

To evaluate the Woodlands Campaign as a historic preservation project, I include historical analysis to understand the social production of the park--that is, the movement to build a park for Brooklyn, the controversies it involved, the designers' intentions, the design itself, and how the new park was used and managed. This research includes histories, reports, articles, photographs, and design drawings. The sources are the collections of the New York City Department of Parks and the Brooklyn Public Library.[5]

Archives of the Prospect Park Alliance. The archives of the Prospect Park Alliance include the written material relating to the inception and development of the Woodlands

[5] I had hoped to make use of the collections of the Brooklyn Historical Society but they have been closed for the last two years pending the rehabilitation of the society's quarters on Pierrepont Street.

Campaign. The documents studied include the historic landscape designation report for Prospect Park and the "Landscape Management Plan for the Natural Areas of Prospect Park." It is important to identify the cultural values implicit and explicit in the written record and in what Alliance officials say. From an interest in the social dimension of the Woodlands Campaign, I ask how the Alliance construes the benefit of the project to park users. I have also researched the budget and expenditure records to show how fiscal resources are allocated across the park.

Key Informant Interviews. I have conducted in-depth interviews, of one to two hours in length, with four Prospect Park Alliance officials. The officials are Tupper Thomas, the Prospect Park Administrator and President of the Prospect Park Alliance; Christian Zimmerman, the staff Landscape Architect with chief responsibility for design of the woodlands restoration; Ed Toth, the former Director of Landscape Management; and with Anne Wong, present Director of Landscape Management. Mr. Toth was instrumental in devising the non-architectural restoration policy, with regard to the ecology of soils, trees and woody plants, wildlife, and the water system. He has left the park, however, so I also interviewed his successor, Anne Wong.

My objective has been to understand the vision of these officials for Prospect Park, particularly as a material expression of cultural values. I have had other forms of contact with park officials too. One is in taking the official Woodlands Tours--guided tours, open to anyone--of the project area conducted on weekend afternoons in warmer months. The tours are usually led by volunteer guides trained by the management on the project's goals and accomplishments. Sometimes the tours are led by park officials. I

have taken four of these tours. I have had numerous conversations with tour guides, people taking the tours, and with park enforcement rangers on duty during tour hours.

At the inception of the User Study in 1996, I met with about 30 park staff during a series of four meetings. These were wide-ranging discussions of park locations, users, use and abuse patterns, cultural practices, maintenance issues, and related topics. Also in 1996 I attended a meeting with a major funder, the Lila Wallace-Readers Digest Foundation, with Tupper Thomas and a consultant anthropologist, Jill Wexler, as well as Central Park officials in attendance. During the User Study I attended several evening meetings of the Community Committee, a community outreach effort of the park management, about which more in Chapter IX. All these meetings were informative and provided me with data on management values. I have also had extended conversations with members of the Brooklyn Bird Club, who take a strongly pro-environment use-restrictive stance on managing the park.

III.B.2. Empirical Research

For this dissertation I have conducted new field research in the form of interviews and transect walks with park users in the woodland areas of the park. I also make use of the existing User Study data. This phase of research corresponds to my third and fourth research questions: the value of the park for its users and the effects of the Woodlands Campaign on the park's social landscape.

User Study Methodology. The User Study had three component parts: (a) a values survey of visitors throughout the park; (b) ethnographic observation within six selected

"ethnographic" areas; and (c) a census of visitors. The following paragraphs describe the methodology used for the values survey.

Sampling

The User Study employed cluster sampling, which is a way of sampling populations that "naturally" form groups, or "clusters," according to a more or less shared activity. While it does not provide a strictly random sample of the entire user population, so that conclusions cannot automatically be generalized to all users, it is an effective way of reaching a broad range of cultural and activity constituencies throughout the park. The study did not include any non-users of Prospect Park. We sought a geographical distribution across the park, a balance of weekend and weekday users, a balance of men and women, and certain percentages (based on visitor census data) of blacks, Hispanics, and whites. Our study produced an overview of the range of values and interests of the major ethno-cultural and activity constituencies, providing quantitative, data-based findings, and interpretive insights.

The approach to sampling and the design of the interview was determined during the first months of the project based on the previous user study by Ukeles (1988), and on four discussion sessions with approximately 30 park staff members. The staff discussions provided us with background information about the park, allowed the staff to comment on the draft interview questions, to express what they would like to learn from the user study, and to give us direction in organizing our research efforts. The final sample consisted of 357 park users.

Our research was ethnographic in describing the social life of selected areas as well as interviewing people on a geographically distributed basis. The final selection of ethnographic areas was as follows:

- Ocean-Parkside entrance, Drummers Grove and adjoining lakeshore section.
- Vanderbilt Playground and adjacent lakeshore area.
- Nethermead
- 11th Street playground/Band shell/Picnic area
- Central Long Meadow
- Circuit drive

The sample included many interviews conducted in the first languages of park visitors. Eighty-six interviews were conducted in Spanish, and ten interviews each were conducted in Haitian Creole and Russian. The rest were conducted in English.

The research team that conducted the values survey was culturally diverse, including three African Americans, two Argentinians, a Venezuelan, a Bulgarian, a Hungarian, and a Haitian, in addition to several white Americans. The team was also linguistically diverse, including two members bilingual in English and Spanish, one trilingual in French, English, and Haitian Creole; and one member fluent in Russian.

Instrument

Thirty-two interview questions were designed in consultation with park administrators (Appendix A). During July of 1996, the instrument was tested in the field and adjusted based on the recommendations of park administrators and fieldworkers. The final interview questions covered a broad range of issues including: (1) the current visit and frequency of visits; (2) a park evaluation from the user's point of view; (3)

participation in current activities and suggestions for change in the park; (4) knowledge of park facilities and places, and of the Prospect Park Alliance; (5) cultural meaning; and (6) user demographics.

The format of the interview was semi-structured and open-ended to allow flexibility and individuality of response. The interviewers carried maps of the park and noted specific sites in order to stimulate discussion.

Coding

To manage the data quantitatively, it was necessary to code the responses participants gave to each question, or "variable," in the interview. Some variables had more codes than others: Gender, for example, was a simple binary variable. The question "What do you like about the park?" produced multiple responses. We created multiple response categories for such variables allowing up to five responses.

Analysis

The coded interview content was recorded on individual coding forms, then entered into the computer, using the SPSS statistical analysis program. We used SPSS to analyze the data so as to understand the variety of themes that describe park users' attachment to the park, and the meanings that user groups share together in ways that are not necessarily obvious.

Following the reporting of coded and classified variable frequencies, we looked for patterns by comparing demographic variables (e.g. gender, census group, education, income) with cultural values variables (e.g. activities, places users fear, likes and dislikes). These comparative analyses, or "cross-tabulations" of variables were also processed through the SAS statistical program, which had the advantage of giving statistical significance for each cell in the crosstabulation. Using a Chi square significance level of 0.05, we analyzed each cell of the comparisons for statistical significance.

Reanalysis of User Study Data. User Study participants were asked questions about their visit patterns and activities in the park, their knowledge of park geography, meanings the park holds for them, cultural attachments, fears, likes and dislikes, and about their demographic characteristics. Our analysis indicated differences in user behavior and attitudes according to class and ethnicity. I have reviewed the User Study data to develop a framework of park values relevant to my study of the Woodlands Campaign. This includes asking what landscape or environment types have the broadest and least significance among different groups of users, and the ways in which values relate to these landscape types.

Dissertation Field Research. One objective of collecting further data is to test the framework developed in the analysis of User Study data described above. The major field research method in the proposed research was the transect walk. Transect walks are interviews conducted while walking with the participant on a specified route through the

park. The participant talks about the places he or she is walking through, relating attitudes, memories, and feelings. The routes traverse different kinds of park landscapes--open meadows, waterside areas, major attractions and relatively "unimproved" areas like woodlands. The routes vary with the person, but in all transect walks we came as close to the woodlands restoration areas as the site fencing allowed. Transect walks were tape-recorded.

The transect walk yields a rich texture of individual perception and experience in various park environments. I felt that simply asking people what they thought about the restoration would not produce data sufficient to answer my questions. The results are pleasing to the eye, and the person who has not thought deeply about the work would seem unlikely to react with anything more than superficial approbation. My idea, therefore, was not only to gauge reactions to the reconstructed landscape, but develop a whole structure of feeling about the park experience. This would become one basis for evaluating how well the restoration serves different park users.

The proposal called for 20 transect walks. Then, at the proposal presentation, members of the committee suggested doing some additional interviews using the User Study interview schedule. The idea was to check whether that schedule of questions would produce data consistent with that generated a few years earlier in the User Study. The idea appealed to me because it seemed like a way of finding transect walk participants. I could easily ask a person already consenting to an interview about their interest in a transect walk.

As I began field work, I soon found shades of gray between the categories "interview" and "transect walk." From the beginning, the interviews were longer and

more productive of useful data than most of the interviews conducted for the User Study. I am not sure why, except that people seemed to respond with greater interest to a person doing his own research on a particular aspect of the park than to someone representing the park. In three of the first four interviews, the participant spent from 30 to 40 minutes with me, reflecting thoughtfully on their experience of the park.

The other thing I soon learned was that I could join people who were already engaged in a walk through the park. Many of the people I stopped in the woodlands project area were walking when I stopped them. Why not accompany them on their walks, I thought. The principle inherent in the transect walk, of stimulating feelings and memories by passing through a variety of places and landscapes, would still be operative even on a walk not arranged by appointment. I realized that my interviews could be like transect walks, either in moving through the park or in taking more time than the ten or fifteen minutes typical of an *in situ* interview—or in both these ways.

As it turned out, I conducted 36 interviews. As ten of them were with couples, the 36 interviews represent contact with 46 park users. Given the numbers and quality of the new *in-situ* interviews, the dissertation committee agreed that ten transect walks would be enough, and ten were conducted. The transect walks generally did not follow the interview schedule. Rather, the participants talked about the park, and I asked questions relating to what they were discussing. In both transect walks and *in-situ* interviews, I asked people about their experience of the woodlands restoration area and what they knew or thought about the project.

I wanted interview and transect walk participants 18 years old or more who would be representative of the major divisions of race and class among park users overall.

Although I ended up with a disproportionate number of white participants, I interviewed more than a few African Americans, West Indians, and Latinos. My sample included poor and working class, middle class, and upper-middle class people.

The point of the dissertation field work, however, was not to discover cultural group and class differences. The User Study data from 357 interviews was the appropriate data set for identifying broad demographic differences. The dissertation field work was useful in representing individual experience, and in clarifying and developing the basic insights about park values indicated in the User Study data.

Data Analysis. In keeping with the precepts of grounded theory, I used an open coding process to categorize the material. Open coding is an inductive, theory-building process of qualitative data analysis in which the theoretical constructs emerge from the data rather than from existing theories (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). As Berg (1998) explains, open coding is the beginning of the qualitative data-coding process: Open coding establishes the subject categories to be used in content analysis. I read through my interview data, underlining and coding passages whose content related to my research questions. The resulting coding system was used for content analysis. In content analysis, all the transcribed data were coded according to the subject categories established in open coding. Coded words and phrases were counted.

Axial coding is the sorting of code categories according to sociological constructs emerging from the data (Berg, 1998). I made various efforts to delineate axial relationships among categories, but conceptual problems made it difficult to arrive at an "airtight" axial coding system. The most satisfactory axial coding system I achieved is

reflected in Table VII-1. The axial coding process was useful in formulating a network of conceptual relationships within the data, which I present in Chapter VII in narrative form. All interviews were transcribed into narrative interview transcripts from either tape recordings or field notes.

III.B.3. Synthesis of Methods

There are three major sources of data in this research design: (a) historical and archival research, (b) management interviews, and (c) field work including participant observation and user interviews. All provide information on park values, and this is a study of values. I have already discussed the relationship between the two user interview data sets: essentially that one indicates park values from hundreds of interviews all around the park, and the other probes the landscape values in depth among a subset of park users who visit the woodlands. In this regard the research design is to use the new interviews to both elaborate and test the general value patterns indicated by the User Study data. Chapter VIII reviews the consistencies and inconsistencies in findings from these two data sets.

The place of historical research in this design is to evaluate the Woodlands Campaign in historical context. Since the work is being conducted in part as a historic preservation project, it is important to question the assumption that the work has been faithful to the original design of the park. I think it is also legitimate to question the assumption that present day work needs to honor *any* "original" design, but that is a philosophical challenge to the notion of authorship. My inquiry remains within the values and assumptions of historic preservation that privilege authorship—not because I

necessarily affirm this framework, but because the park's management is required be faithful to the original conception of this designated historic landscape. Historical research shows, however, that the Woodlands Campaign is only selectively faithful. The task of historical analysis is to demonstrate how a restoration that apparently meets the regulatory test of historical authenticity can still be remarkably unlike the original design concept.

My archival research and interviews with management officials provide most of the data I use in representing management values. Values can be read into the landscape wrought by the Woodlands Campaign, but I choose to study the words and, to a lesser extent, the actions of management as a basis for representing management values. My thesis depends in part on contrasting the values of present-day management to those evident in the original design of the park from the writings of Olmsted and Vaux and of the Brooklyn Park Commission. Fortunately Olmsted was prolific on the subject of design intent. The writings of the present management are recondite on the social dimensions of their landscape work but my interviews with park officials bring out their values in terms that I can compare with those of the park's creators.

The third leg of the research design consists of user values. My research questions require a comparison of user values to management values, and they imply a comparison of both with the values of the original design. My use of interview and transect walk methodology enables me to describe user values in terms that allow a direct comparison with the values of management and of the original design.

SUMMARY CHART OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS, METHODS, AND PRODUCTS

Question	Method	Product
Original Intentions and Values	Archival Research	Assessment of the park's cultural importance for Historic Preservation
PPA Intentions and Values	Expert Interviews, Archival Research	Understanding of what PPA values are and who PPA represents
Cultural & Individual Park Values	Transect Walks *In-situ* Interviews Analysis of User Study Data	Understanding of different cultural values of individuals and among user groups
Effects on Social Landscape	Comparison of User Study, Transect Walk Data, and PPA Intentions & Values	Evaluation of differential effects on park use, access, meaning among user groups

Chapter IV. ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF PROSPECT PARK

There had seemed to be no need to set aside open space in a country of small towns and small farms, where the streets and squares of the town, still a safely pedestrian realm, were public space enough; and the countryside of farms and woodlots, meadows and orchards, afforded innumerable informal opportunities for walks, picnics, and outings of all kinds. It was an uncomplicated, coherent landscape, not divided up as it is so widely today among tracts devoted to housing or to industry or to commerce, with the attendant highways, shopping strips and parking lots.

IV.A. THE PARK MOVEMENT

As some cities on the eastern seaboard grew very rapidly, with unlimited prospects of continued growth, influential citizens were increasingly drawn to making unfavorable comparisons of American cities to the cities of Europe. One such comparison was in the quality and extent of public space: cities in England and on the Continent were notably embellished by the palaces, grounds, and hunting parks of the nobility. Although not public in the sense of public ownership, these places were often, by the nineteenth century, open to the public. New Yorkers travelling abroad longed for something grand and beautiful to dignify the country's most important city. William Cullen Bryant, a poet and Editor of the *Evening Post*, urged that such a park was necessary for New York to take its place among the world's great cities.

The park movement arose from a number of sources: philosophical, theological, and nationalistic. The philosophical basis lay in romanticism and its belief that nature and natural scenery had the power to uplift and restore the human spirit. Romanticism arose in reaction to the effects of capitalism and industrialism evident already in the 1840s and '50s--crowded, rapidly growing cities, slums, factory life, smoke, and tenement housing. Romanticism took many forms, one of them in landscape gardening.

Like the romantic poet reading meaning into the domestic countryside, the landscape gardener sought to arrange nature's best qualities in prospects of quiet repose. The romantic sensibility in gardening called for a naturalistic imitation of nature, rejecting the once dominant, Baroque design idiom of straight lines in formal perspective.

IV.A.1. Park Precedents: Country Seats

By the 1830s there were many examples of pastoral-style gardening on the outskirts of New York, Boston, and Philadelphia, in the form of the city gentleman's country seat. Horticulture, the practice of growing fruits and flowers, was the variety of agriculture favored by urban gentlemen in their country seats and summer homes. It was well suited to both the Romantic landscape style and to the cultivators' interest in pursuing a "scientific agriculture" that could also be ornamental (Von Hoffman, 1994, p. 67). These practices stemmed in part from patriotic reference to Thomas Jefferson's faith in agriculture as the basis of American civilization. The interest in horticulture and gardening led to the founding of horticultural societies and gardening periodicals. Andrew Jackson Downing, of Newburgh, New York, was the most influential prophet of horticulture. He wrote widely and published a serial, the *Horticulturalist*. Much of his work as a landscape designer was on the grounds of wealthy landowners in the Hudson Valley and elsewhere in the northeast United States. Downing's writing reflected the romantic belief that a beautiful environment would affect behavior and attitude. In a *Horticulturalist* essay he argued that "horticulture and its kindred arts tend strongly to fix the habits and elevate the character of the whole population" (Sweeting, 1999, p. 102). Downing called for public parks in the style of European royal parks to be established in U.S. cities. Calvert Vaux came to the United States from England to work with Downing.

For the horticulturists, ornamental gardening was a high-minded undertaking, as much a sign of cultivation and good taste as an interest in literature and letters or

attendance at musical concerts. They believed that exposure to the picturesque landscapes created through gardening practices would have a healthful, instructive, and morally uplifting effect on ordinary folk without the means of creating their own estates.

Although intensive agriculture was the prevalent use of open land in Kings County, country seats were not entirely absent from the scene. The hilly region of Prospect Heights, less suited to agriculture than the flat lands elsewhere in the county, attracted wealthy residents for country seats. One was Edwin Litchfield, who made a fortune in railroads and later in land subdivision, who built a house that still stands on Prospect Park West just inside the park. Fein (1986) describes the 25-acre estate of the gentleman horticulturalist Andre Parmentier, near Flatbush and Atlantic Avenues, as a nationally famous example of private horticultural gardening.

It was this genteel practice of horticulture and belief in its public benefits that produced the nation's first garden cemetery, Mount Auburn, outside Boston, in 1831. The garden cemetery reflected the ideal of horticulture wedded to the forms of romantic landscape gardening, now in a more public setting. The garden cemetery was not a mere graveyard, but a landscape designed to be both pleasurable and morally uplifting, one that would reflect the rural civilization Jefferson envisioned for the United States.

IV.A.2. Park Precedents: The Rural Cemetery

Mt. Auburn Cemetery immediately became a popular resort for outings and picnics among middle-class Bostonians. Its designers strove for "a picturesque effect" composed of serpentine walks and paths, groves of dark woods, ponds, clearings, and ornamental plantings of trees, shrubs, and flowers (Von Hoffman, 1994, p. 73). The garden cemetery idea soon spread to other cities. The major examples in New York were Green-Wood Cemetery, which opened in Brooklyn in 1838, and Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx. The rural cemetery was an important precursor to the urban landscape park in

offering an environment, shaped by elite sensibilities, that was generally accessible to everyone if not entirely public.

Green-Wood Cemetery, established in 1838 on the heights over Gowanus Bay, was laid out in the picturesque style popularized by Downing. Green-Wood Cemetery was an important precursor to Central Park and Prospect Park in demonstrating how popular a public landscape of winding paths, groves of trees, ponds, and beautiful views, could be, even one not devoted to public recreation per se. Green-Wood Cemetery whetted the public appetite for a large park.

IV.A.3. Vernacular Spaces

There were other traditions in recreational landscapes, parallel to but separate from that of pastoralism, that were developing at the same time. One was the undesigned, unplanned, but popular common open space, what J. B. Jackson (1994) calls the "grove." In the small town and growing city alike, there were always places outside the developed area that were used for outings, get-togethers, picnics, sports and games. These spaces are hard to document because they were not formally planned, designated, or designed, and they gave way to urban development long ago. Jackson contrasts the formal town park of the middle nineteenth century, typically very pretty but empty of people, with the lively grove just outside town, along the river. There, under the big cottonwood trees, along grassy banks, and on rough fields, the townspeople would gather on a Sunday afternoon for informal activities of all kinds. Such places outside the larger cities were largely working-class resorts avoided by more fastidious citizens: "they were crowded, boisterous, and sometimes violent" (Jackson, 1994, p. 114). In an earlier essay, Jackson (1984) argues that landscape parks substitute the aristocratic garden for the oldest, most popular kind of play space--sizeable areas where common people could exercise and play and enjoy themselves, and participate in community life.

Another vernacular tradition was that of the commercial pleasure ground. There were several popular pleasure grounds in and around New York: Rosenzweig and Blackmar (1992) cite Niblos, Palace Gardens, at Sixth Avenue and 14th Street, Harlem Gardens, and Jones Wood, around 61st Street along the East River. Hoboken offered the Elysian fields, one of the places where baseball was first played, which included level open ground and a landscaped eminence overlooking the Hudson River. There was also a popular resort for day trips at New Brighton, on Staten Island. London also had its pleasure grounds, among them Vauxhall Gardens, Ranelagh, and Cremorne Gardens (Whitaker & Browne, 1971).

The pleasure grounds "liberally mixed all styles of art and decoration to create recreational spaces that responded to popular desires for novelty and diversion". Their eclectic style featured statues, fountains, grottos, arbors, artistic displays, and tents for refreshments or performances. "Lively crowds engaged in picnics, festivals, and sports in the shady groves and open pastures of former farms or gentlemen's country seats" (Rosenzweig and Blackmar, 1992, p. 104).

In planning Central Park, the first urban landscape park in the United States, some New Yorkers hoped for a synthesis of the vernacular aesthetic of the pleasure ground with the English naturalistic landscape tradition exemplified by the rural cemetery.[6] Most proponents of the park, however, regarded the eclectic enticements of commercial pleasure grounds as vulgarities. Whether the park would adopt the English landscape style or, less likely, the characteristically geometric style of French and German parks, the influence of gentlemen gardeners and other sophisticated supporters meant that Central Park was certain to adhere to a strict aesthetic standard.

[6] Bushell Park in Hartford was the first American city park to use the principles of English landscape design but Central Park was first in its class of parks of at least 100 acres.

IV.B. NINETEENTH-CENTURY BROOKLYN

The perceived need for parks was related to the rapid growth of the cities around them. Both New York and Brooklyn grew prodigiously after 1820, from thousands to hundreds of thousands in a few decades. Brooklyn's population grew from 11,000 to 21,000 in the ten years between 1820 and 1830, then more than doubled to 48,000 in 1840, and, after absorbing Williamsburg and Bushwick, reached 420,000 by 1870 (Linder & Zacharias, 1999.)

The pace of urbanization caused the physical form of the city to change, through expansion of the built area and through constant tearing down and rebuilding, so much that the urban environment lacked the continuity and familiarity over time that people otherwise depend on. Landscape parks were designed with the specific purpose of alleviating the pressures of life in big cities, in part to create a stable, dependable environment as a foil for the constant restructuring going on outside the parks (Holleran, 1998).

Only a village in 1800, Brooklyn's potential as a suburb of New York became apparent to civic boosters by 1815. Hezekiah Pierrepont promoted a residential subdivision on the scenic bluff of Brooklyn Heights in 1823, advertising that his lots combined "all the advantages of the country with most of the conveniences of the city" (Schuyler, 1986, p. 114.) Not enough of the conveniences, however: New York was close geographically but the ferry trip was an uncertain, inconvenient crossing that limited Brooklyn's growth in the sense of a suburb of New York until greater frequency and steam power improved the service at mid-century. Its early growth from town to city owed more to industrialization and commerce than to the residential needs of New York City workers. Residential development thrived after 1840, when the ferry service became more frequent and reliable. Brooklyn's greatest suburban growth occurred after 1883, when the new Brooklyn Bridge allowed the city's lengthening horse car lines to cross over into Manhattan, eliminating the need for a ferry transfer (Linder & Zacharias, 1999.)

IV.B.1. A Growth Consensus

Central and Prospect Parks were built under conditions of rapid and unprecedented urbanization. I discuss that development here as part of the historical background of Prospect Park, particularly in regard to the enthusiasm for growth that prevailed at the time. The consensus that New York and Brooklyn would and should grow unrecognizably large is evident in the gridiron street plans adopted in both cities that committed extensive rural hinterlands to an urban future. The New York plan, adopted in 1811 when the city extended only to around Chambers Street, anticipated development of consistently urban character over most of Manhattan Island. It was, at least, an expression of the primacy of the city's commercial function (Schuyler, 1986) and of an expectation of growth far beyond the size of any city then in existence. Until mechanized transportation systems were developed, cities could not extend much beyond reasonable walking distance, perhaps three square miles in all.

The grid was an old form of city-making, but the United States of the early nineteenth century developed the shapeless, sprawling grid as a rationalization of geography as a ground for speculative urban development by thousands of separate parties. The Commissioners' Plan for Manhattan is one of the earliest and best examples of the type: it demonstrated a vision of the city as an infinitely extendable, geographically featureless plane to be divided into rectangular building lots. The Commissioners' plan extended the Manhattan grid northward to 155th Street, seven miles beyond the built area (Schuyler, 1986, p. 20, Warner, 1968). Governor DeWitt Clinton predicted in 1825 that by 1900, "the whole island of Manhattan, covered with habitations and replenished with a dense population, will constitute one vast city" (quoted in Schuyler, 1986, p. 21.)

Brooklyn's street plan was established by a similar state-appointed commission in 1838 (Fein, 1986). One grid was mapped to the southwest, in the area now known as Sunset Park; another grid was projected easterly through the village of Bedford as far as the present Broadway. As in the earlier case in Manhattan, most of the territory so

mapped consisted of farms, villages, and scattered houses. The paper streets and avenues stopped at the city line, but some years later, the state legislature passed a law requiring the adjacent rural towns to align their roads with Brooklyn's, anticipating Brooklyn's eventual expansion into the rural towns.

IV.B.2. Agriculture: The Non-Precedent

It seems reasonable to ask why, in a county of such extensive and productive farmland, the proposals for urban open space included no real agriculture. Linder and Zacharias (1999) argue that "urban agriculture had been central to earlier visions of the city," but the mid-nineteenth century period brought "a striking change of emphasis, from greenery that produced food to greenery that served to rest the eyes and refresh the air" (p. 134). The models for Prospect Park were not the thousands of farm acres spreading from its southern boundary all the way to the ocean. Jackson (1984) and others may be right in suggesting that the open agricultural landscape of New England in Olmsted's boyhood informed his taste in landscapes, but it seems certain that the models for Prospect Park were the rarified pastoral landscapes of the private parks of the English nobility. They of course had their roots in agriculture too, but romanticism brought a transition in attitudes toward the countryside from a workplace to a scenic landscape for leisurely pleasure. The productive quality of farmland, with its ample evidence of human labor in farm machinery, barns and stables, and people working, gradually dropped out of the picture--as Williams writes, a "rural landscape emptied of rural labor and of laborers" (Williams, 1973, p. 125).

Development in Kings County throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries followed a two-stage process: first agriculture, then urbanization. In the first stage, the land was put to intensive agricultural use in farms that produced fresh vegetables for the urban market so close at hand. Most people who lived in the rural towns were in agricultural occupations (Linder & Zacharias, 1999). Relatively flat, the sandy, loamy

soil well suited to growing crops, the land was unbroken by lakes, rivers, marshes, ledges, or other geographic features that would hinder agriculture.

Despite the prodigious population growth and urbanization in Brooklyn, Flatbush and the other rural towns of Kings County--New Lots, Gravesend, New Utrecht, and Flatlands--remained heavily agricultural into the 1890s. Flatbush, adjacent to the site of Prospect Park on the south and east, had a population of only 3,500 in 1860 and 2,358 acres of farmland (Lander & Zacharias, 1999)--nearly five times the size of Prospect Park. It remained for the most part a prosperous agricultural town of Dutch landowners--Lotts, Lefferts, Vanderbilts, Cortelyous, Martenses, and Vanderveers. The rural towns were jealous of their way of life and resistant to what was often portrayed as the inevitability of consolidation of all the towns within an enlarged city of Brooklyn. With good economic reason, as Linder and Zacharias (1999) demonstrate: Agriculture was highly profitable given the mid-century development of intensive truck farming and the enormous urban market of New York and Brooklyn so close at hand.

In the second stage of development, the farms were subdivided into house lots aligned with the mapped city street grid. The row house was the preferred building type, although free-standing houses were built on the most elegant blocks and a more suburban fabric of detached wooden houses became the rule in some neighborhoods south of Prospect Park that developed in the twentieth century. The relatively level, undifferentiated topography so helpful to agriculture also facilitated urbanization, when the time came. Urbanization occurred first within the rural lands of the city of Brooklyn, then spread into the rural towns, which were finally consolidated with Brooklyn in 1896.

There seems to have been relatively little of the intermediate suburban pattern of gentleman farms, country seats, and relict woods and pasture that surrounded other nineteenth century cities, notably Boston (Von Hoffman, 1996), or that characterized the Hudson River Valley. That was the kind of suburban landscape that produced the private showplaces of horticultural and gardening effects so admired and widely publicized by

Andrew Jackson Downing and other enthusiasts. The lack of it in Kings County meant that when development for residential use came, it brought a sudden transition from wide-open farm fields to decidedly urban densities. It also meant that little fallow land was available in the countryside outside Brooklyn for recreational pursuits, in the sense of Jackson's "grove."

The need for such places caused conflict between Kings County farmers and city folk who walked or rode out of Brooklyn in the horsecars in search of rural places for games and picnics. The *Rural Gazette* of Flatbush ran several editorials in 1873 complaining of Sunday "loafers" out from Brooklyn behaving "with a perfect lawlessness, making common property of whatever they choose to lay their hands on," and "crowds of lawless pleasure seekers" who would "desecrate" Sundays with their "ball playing and profanity... to say nothing of the drunken revelry in... our would be quiet localities" (quoted in Linder & Zacharias, 1999, p. 182). Given the population pressure and the lack of available open spaces in the country, there was perhaps a greater need in Brooklyn than in some other cities to provide green and watery retreats for the growing urban population.

Schuyler (1986) suggests that the transition of farming in the hinterlands of the larger East Coast cities from subsistence to commercial agriculture changed attitudes toward agriculture in general and "sounded the death knell of the agrarian ideal." Subsistence agriculture was at the heart of the Jeffersonian ideal of America as a land of small farmers. The "rise of commercial farming," he argues, "directly affected attitudes towards nature," because it subdued the charms of nature in the interest of profit (Schuyler, 1986, p. 27). The transition to commercial agriculture was pronounced in Kings County, where the growth of New York and Brooklyn had created a vast market for agricultural products. By the mid-nineteenth century, canals and railroads were shipping midwestern grain to the urban market, making grain production comparatively unremunerative for farms near New York.

Kings County farmers shifted from grain to vegetable production. The perishability of vegetables gave an edge to local farms that could transport the product to city markets in a matter of hours. The development of vegetable, or "truck garden" farming depended in part on the availability of a great supply of fertilizer produced nearby: horse manure cleaned from the city streets of New York and Brooklyn. Linder and Zacharias (1999) write that the Kings County farms were among the first to develop intensive, fertilizer-based agriculture producing vegetables for the urban market.

Such intensive, commercial farming was at odds with the new romantic ideal of nature, constructed from an urban vantage point increasingly remote from the facts of agriculture. Ideals of nature and scenery were shaped at mid-century by popular tastemakers including Olmsted himself, who had published *Walks and Talks of an American Farmer in England* in 1852, and by Susan cooper and Nathaniel Parker Willis. All three warmed to the typically English landscape elements of pastures and arable fields, set off by areas of mature trees, and by the presence of elite country seats (Stilgoe, 1988). This middle landscape of gentlemanly leisure continues to set the tone for upper class suburban towns like Bedford in Westchester County, New York (Duncan, 1993). The intensively productive and commercial Kings County farms conformed neither to the romantic ideal implied in the term "pretty country" nor to the earlier ideal of independent subsistence farmers. Thus no one in charge saw this landscape as a green and "natural" complement to the expanding city. Instead, a recreational landscape conforming to the romantic ideal was built at public expense, and the farming landscape was allowed to yield, over time, to the market for residential real estate.

The question addressed at the time was how to attract high-grade residential development to Brooklyn, rather than the motley quality of land at the urban fringe found in parts of upper Manhattan, including the land appropriated for Central Park, consisting, in Olmsted's words, of "shanties, stables, breweries, distilleries, and swine-yards." (quoted in Linder & Zacharias, 1999, p. 136). As Olmsted and others saw it, Brooklyn's

growth into a prosperous suburban metropolis depended on the provision of landscaped parks and parkways that would attract high-grade development. The opportunity to create such landscapes in Kings County had to be taken while land was still available.

IV.C. DEVELOPMENT OF PROSPECT PARK

The park movement in Brooklyn went back at least to 1830: Walt Whitman, for example, was one of many Brooklyn citizens involved in the creation of Fort Greene Park. Pierrepont's proposal of the 1820s for a high-grade subdivision on Brooklyn Heights included provision for a park looking out over the East River toward Manhattan. The bluff overlooking the East River and New York Harbor was a popular place already for walks and for promenading (Bluestone, 1987). The city street plan of 1838 provided for eleven public squares to meet the envisioned needs for civic spaces, parks, and other public spaces (Fein, 1986). As portrayed in paintings of the 1880s by William Merrit Chase, these tended to be genteel, decorous parks, well planted with flowers and furnished with walks for strolling and benches for siting: they did not provide the kind of unstructured recreational environment that a diverse urban population needed.

IV.C.1. Planning for Parks

Planning for Prospect Park began just before the Civil War but the park commissioners would wait to resume work until the war was over. Unlike New York's experience in choosing a site for Central Park, the site for Prospect Park was not controversial: a tract of unbuilt land at the city limits on varied terrain that included Mount Prospect, one of the highest elevations in Kings County, which contained a reservoir (Fein, 1986). What did arouse controversy was the idea of building a single large park, rather than a number of smaller parks in different areas of the city. Residents of the Eastern District of Brooklyn (Bushwick and Ridgewood) were not in favor of a park which, they thought, would benefit only other parts of the city (Simon, 1973).

The idea of a large landscape park in Brooklyn gained the upper hand from the city's rivalry with New York. Central Park was the product of many years of forceful campaigning by the civic elite of New York. Brooklyn's civic leaders were unstinting in their belief in continued growth and progress, and in their expectations for Brooklyn, and they considered New York City a rival. "New York's attractiveness as a residential center had become further enhanced by the introduction of a water system and Central Park. Brooklyn felt compelled to follow this pattern so as to attract residents" (Fein, 1986, p. 8). Thus prominent citizens were quick to move forward on securing a park for Brooklyn once the New York park became a reality. The ability to acquire lands for a park was not at the time a municipal prerogative: Prospect Park, like Central Park, were created by park commissions appointed by an act of the state legislature.

The Brooklyn Park Commission first recommended four large parks but the state legislature--mindful of the opposition, fearful of giving city Democrats too much power, and swayed by reports of corruption in the work on Central Park--approved only the site at Prospect Heights and a parade ground in East New York. The Prospect Park legislation passed on April 17, 1860, and made James S. T. Stranahan head of a new Brooklyn Park Commission (Fein, 1986; Simon, 1973).

Egbert Viele, an engineer, had submitted the first plan for Central Park, which was later discarded when a design competition produced the winning design of Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux. The Brooklyn park commissioners invited Viele to prepare a plan for Prospect Park in 1860, which he did in 1861. The Civil War began that year, and the commission decided to suspend work on the park until the war ended. Meanwhile, Stranahan was in contact with the architect Calvert Vaux, the co-designer of Central Park, and when the war ended in 1865, Stranahan invited Vaux to submit a new plan for Prospect Park.

According to Schuyler (1986), Stranahan and the other Commissioners were not pleased with Viele's plan of 1861 and were looking for a more satisfactory design. The

historians Schuyler (1986) and Graff (1985) believe that Viele lacked the artistic vision necessary to design a park that would be both beautiful and able to favorably resolve the difficulties of the site. Fein (1986), taking a different view, finds no evidence that the Commission was displeased with Viele's plan. Fein thinks that Stranahan warmed to Vaux partly because both men saw parks as instruments of metropolitan growth. Stranahan, a Brooklyn businessman, was behind the efforts to build a bridge between Brooklyn and Manhattan. For Stranahan, the park itself was a major step in creating an infrastructure that would provide for Brooklyn's continued growth. The two apparently agreed that Brooklyn and New York should grow into a single metropolis and they discussed the idea of situating Prospect Park within a network of landscaped regional boulevards that would spatially knit the two cities together. Fein suggests that the contemporary work of Haussmann building the boulevards of Paris was an influence in their thinking.

Vaux joined Stranahan on a tour of the site in 1865 in which they discussed design ideas that would require a change in the original boundaries. Vaux clearly was able to think more imaginatively than Viele, and he had had the design experience of Central Park to alert him to the opportunities at the Brooklyn site. Viele had taken the given site for granted, even though Flatbush Avenue crossed over it at an awkward angle, dividing the site in two and making it difficult to create an attractively symmetrical entrance. Furthermore, the eastern section contained a square-shaped reservoir at the summit of Prospect Heights that the design would have to work around. Vaux saw the possibilities here of creating park elements that he and Olmsted had been unable to do in Central Park, where the long, narrow site was bisected by four transverse roads and contained two sizeable reservoirs. Apparently the shape of the land suggested what became the Long Meadow to both Viele and Vaux: an approximation of it appears on Viele's plan, and Vaux clearly recognized the opportunity to create a sweeping meadow between the western boundary and the wooded hills of the moraine. Vaux also saw in the

flat lowland just beyond those hills the chance to create a large lake. Ice-skating had already become very popular on the lakes of Central Park and Vaux urged that Prospect Park could outdo Central Park with a lake twice as big as the largest one there.

The ability to create a park of meadow, hilly woodland (which already existed at the site) and lake depended on a major boundary change. Vaux recommended shifting the site so that it would all lie to the west of Flatbush Avenue. Much of the potential meadow area lay outside the site's southern boundaries and the area of the envisioned lake lay outside Brooklyn's municipal boundary altogether--in Flatbush. Vaux suggested that the park lands east of Flatbush Avenue, except for the reservoir itself, be sold for development and the proceeds used to finance the purchase of new land to the west.

Stranahan and the Commissioners accepted Vaux's recommendations and won approval from the legislature to revise the boundaries. The state legislature approved a recision of about 200 acres of Flatbush farmland to be annexed to Brooklyn for use in laying out Prospect Park. The land taken from Flatbush was the level land that became the lake, the southern portion of the circuit drive, and the adjacent grounds, including the Concert Grove. Having won the Prospect Park commission, Vaux spent several months persuading Olmsted to return to New York from California to work with him on the plans for Brooklyn. Olmsted finally returned in the autumn of 1866. The revived partnership submitted its first working plan for Prospect Park in December of that year.

IV.C.2. Park and Parkway

Olmsted saw parks as focal points within a framework of landscaped and graded roadways that would create a setting for high-grade residential development and connect the residential areas to the park. Scenic drives and promenades were important urban amenities in the nineteenth century. Only relatively wealthy people could afford private carriages, but their numbers were large in Brooklyn and they increased substantially as the century progressed. Promenading, both on foot and in carriages, had long been a

popular urban ritual, but rapid growth made older promenades, such as Broadway and City Hall Park in Manhattan, congested and unattractive (Bluestone, 1987, Solnit, 2000). Central Park provided New York with splendid new setting for promenading.

In Brooklyn, parkways--exceptionally wide avenues lined with several rows of trees delimiting separate rights of way for pedestrians, riders, and carriages--would link the city's new parks with scenic points along the oceanfront. The parkway, like the drives within the park, was a graded and relatively smoothly paved surface free of commercial traffic. Such a surface made carriage driving much more pleasurable than driving in ordinary city streets. The streets of the day were either not paved at all or paved in rough granite paving stones, sometimes called "Belgian block" and sometimes mistaken for cobblestone. Granite pavements survive in New York City in the "meat-packing" district and some other locations. The parkways and the park drives were paved in smooth gravel which made for a much quieter and faster surface for steel-edged carriage wheels. Their ease of driving was arguably a more important factor than their landscaped, commerce-free margins in making parkways a *cause celebre* among the more fortunate citizens of Brooklyn.

Olmsted and Vaux took up the subject of parkways in their report to the Brooklyn Park Commission in 1868, adopting earlier proposals by others for Ocean and Fort Hamilton parkways, and proposing a new Eastern Parkway, linking Prospect Park with the Eastern District following the high ground of the moraine. From there a parkway could run through Queens County into New York City via a bridge (Olmsted & Vaux, 1997).

Olmsted and Vaux were explicit on the value of these parkways in the effort to assure high-grade development of Brooklyn. Providing such pleasant and extensive amenities, they wrote, would attract the wealthy to build their mansions along them, and would nearly guarantee that land subdivisions near the parkways would be planned for high-grade development. The fine residential parkway or boulevard was not a new idea.

From before the Civil War until noise from the motor car destroyed their serenity, such long, straight avenues attracted the ostentatious houses of the wealthy in many American cities: among the most famous of these were Euclid Avenue in Cleveland, Woodward Avenue in Detroit, Van Ness Avenue in San Francisco, and North Broad Street in Philadelphia, as well as Fifth Avenue in New York. Summit Avenue in Saint Paul survives today as an example of the type.

It would be difficult to argue that Olmsted and Vaux were mistaken in their optimistic predictions. In the coming decades much of the residential development around the park would produce homes for thousands of wealthy and upper middle class families. The Park Slope and Prospect Heights neighborhoods became a new Gold Coast. In Bedford, the park and particularly Eastern Parkway drew fashion away from the older center of wealth along Clinton and Washington Avenues, on "the Hill." The region around Bedford and Atlantic Avenues became a center of fashion toward the end of the century, attracting the elite Union League club among other social and religious institutions (AIA Guide, 1988). Nearby, certain blocks of St. Mark's Avenue became one of Brooklyn's most extravagant millionaires' rows. South of Prospect Park, Ocean Parkway set the tone for fashionable subdivisions in Flatbush at the turn of the twentieth century.

IV.D. THE DESIGN

As a matter of design, Prospect Park is certainly one of the great urban parks of the nineteenth century. If the Civil War had not intervened, Viele's less distinguished plan would likely have been built, so the park we have is perhaps a happy accident of history (Fein, 1986). As a prominent landscape historian, Norman T. Newton, wrote of a contemporaneous landscape composition in Silesia, Germany, the "crowning glory" of Olmsted and Vaux's design is "the firm integrity of its magnificent pastoral spaces." Their design shows an "understanding of spatial structure--the awareness of spaces as

components of design--sought in vain among the usual English landscape gardening works" (Newton, 1971, p. 237).

Brooklyn's Green-Wood Cemetery of 1838 is an example of what Newton means by the "usual English landscape gardening works:" a curvilinear layout, lush plantings, architectural bric-a-brac (here in the form of monuments) and pleasant views, but a nondescript spatial structure. This, as Vaux pointed out in testimony against Viele's claim to be compensated for his discarded plan for Central Park, was the weakness of Viele's layout (Beveridge and Hoffman, 1997). In Newton's judgment, Prospect Park achieved the greatest mastery of space of any of Olmsted's public work, certainly greater than the difficult site of Central Park allowed. The Long Meadow, with "ample room to swing away to the south and west in a sweeping curve, is as calmly overwhelming a space as one could reasonably hope to experience anywhere" (Newton, 1971, p. 285).

Designing for movement through a sequence of related spaces is one of the landscape architect's greatest challenges. Numerous analysts of the design of Prospect Park argue that its spaces, particularly the approach to the Long Meadow through the Endale Arch from Grand Army Plaza, are so carefully constructed as to create a dynamic interplay of visual forces that seem to pull the walker into and through the meadow (Barlow, 1972; Graff, 1985; Hiss, 1991; Lambert, 1996).

IV.D.1. Olmsted's Design Philosophy

Olmsted, the primary spokesman for the partnership, wrote and spoke extensively on the purposes of his parks. The most important purpose of Prospect Park was to provide "a feeling of relief... on escaping from the cramped, confined and controlling circumstances of the streets... in other words, a sense of enlarged freedom." What, in Olmsted's words, were "those qualities of a park that meet this requirement?" The

answer: Scenery offering the "most agreeable contrast" with that of the city streets, and the "opportunity for people to come together for the single purpose of enjoyment." (quoted in Fein, 1968, pp 97-98).

Olmsted admitted a conflict here: the benefits of natural scenery could be compromised by the presence of too many people and their attendant facilities. Olmsted argued that the two requirements could be balanced, but, in any event, "in a park, the largest provision is required for the human presence. Men must come together, and must be seen coming together, in carriages, on horseback, and on foot, and the concourse of animated life which will thus be formed, must in itself be made, if possible, an attractive and diverting spectacle" (Olmsted & Vaux, 1997, p. 87). The park would therefore have to achieve two contradictory ideals: it should be a place of tranquil natural settings, but also a place where large gatherings of people would be attractions in themselves. In Olmsted and Vaux's conception of landscape architecture, the reconciliation of these conflicting ambitions lay in composing scenery.

In a speech to park advocates in Boston while Prospect Park was still in construction, Olmsted argued that picturesque features, in contrast to pastoral scenery, were not the most desirable for a "town" park, which should complement the town rather than mimic its features. "Openness is the one thing you cannot get in buildings. Picturesqueness you can get [in buildings]... The beauty of the park should be the other... of the fields, the meadow, the prairie, of the green pastures and the still waters. What we want to gain is tranquillity and rest to the mind. Mountains suggest effort" (Olmsted, 1997, p. 197).

He added that bright, exotic flowering plants of the contemporary gardenesque style were unsuited to the tranquilizing purpose of the city park. Fencing was even worse: "Twenty years ago Hyde Park had a most pleasing, open, free, and inviting expression, though certainly it was too rude, too much wanting in art; but now art is vexed with long harsh lines of repellent iron-work, and here and there behind it bouquets

of hot house plants, between which the public pass like hospital convalescents, who have been turned into the yard to walk about while their beds are making. We should undertake nothing in a park which involves the treating of the public as prisoners or wild beasts" (Olmsted, 1997, p. 190).

The design of Prospect Park employed many picturesque features, but Olmsted was emphatic on making a priority of pastoral scenery: the picturesque...

> ...will not be the characteristic features of the park. It is chiefly important that they do not become of so much relative importance as to lose their character as accessories.
>
> Rocks for instance may be such accessories so may thick wood, so may shrubbery. So may buildings, monuments etc. but these are not what make a park; they are not characteristic of it... It is chiefly important that the contrasting circumstances should be unmistakably auxiliary, subordinate, and accessory in every respect to the general design. This principle and this caution in the application of the principle, applies to the use of woods or trees as well as to more purely constructional objects (Olmsted, 1997, p.153).

IV.D.2. Scenery and its Component Parts

Prospect Park's scenery consisted of trees, shrubs, grasses, and other plantings; appealing spatial contrasts between the light, broad, open meadows and the darker, more contained spaces of wooded groves and valleys; and a system of surface waters offering almost every variety of water scenery that could be contrived within the terrain of the site--waterfalls and chasms, ponds, a winding stream with occasional tumbling rapids, a serpentine, marshy estuary, and an expansive lake. Stands of dense woods were not the idea, but rather trees standing singly and in groves amid clearings, always keeping sightlines open for scenic effect:

> ...Strictly, strenuously, always and every where within a park... trees are to be regarded as individuals, and as component parts of groups, which groups are again to be regarded both individually, and in relation one to another as components of landscapes as seen from special points of view (Olmsted, 1997, p. 154).

The materials of nature were much enhanced by numerous bridges and shelters, some so rustic they might have occurred naturally, others highly ornamented. Roads and architectural work were subordinated in siting and massing to the features of artificial nature. Architectural constructions such as the Nethermead Arches were situated so that the landforms and plants around them would dominate the scene. Even the elaborate Bethesda Terrace in Central Park was subservient to the planted hillsides and expanses of water around it.[7]

IV.D.3. Movement and Mobility

Scenery in a city park, however, could not be a static thing; it had to induce movement. As Olmsted wrote, "a park as a work of design should... be a ground which invites, encourages and facilitates movement." Its topographical conditions should make movement a pleasure and "offer inducements in variety, first by one promise of pleasure then by another" (Olmsted, 1997, pp. 151-152). The circulation system is given a tawny color in early plans for Prospect Park that stands out against the background of greens, giving the impression that the design is essentially about movement. The three-part, grade-separated path structure of Central Park was widely regarded as the triumph of the design of that park, where pedestrians on footpaths, horseback riders on bridle paths, and persons in carriages on the park drives, never needed to intersect with one another. Olmsted and Vaux used the same approach in Prospect Park, and although some of the grade separations were never completed, particularly on the west side, the path structure is the unifying element on the plan. Indeed, an elaborate and differentiated path system was essential to the stated goal for this city park of allowing people to come together.

[7] A later generation, intoxicated on the architectural pomp of the Chicago World's Columbian Exhibition in 1893, introduced numerous structures into Prospect Park that flouted the pastoral aesthetic. Among them were the Memorial Arch in Grand Army Plaza, the boat house on the Lullwater, the Tennis House overlooking the Long Meadow, and several park entrances.

This design created scenery then, not only by providing plantings in great profusion, but also by arranging sight lines and movement patterns to achieve a continuous series of attractive views for persons moving through the park. For carriages, the organizing idea was a circuit drive in a clockwise direction, beginning at the Grand Army Plaza entrance. Off the main circuit was the Central Drive, which ran across the middle of the park and provided views out over the open country to the south. The Central Drive gave access to a drive that wound up along Lookout Hill to the Lookout, the highest ground in the park. Another drive, making a loop with Central Drive and East Drive, gave access to the scenic lakes section of the park, and was intended to give access to the unbuilt Refectory.

The drives were designed to be easy, well graded, have no sharp turns or steep hills, and little chance of collisions. The original roadway pavements were smooth gravel. The drives should themselves be agreeable to the eye and harmonious with the scenery (Fein, 1968, p. 106). Shrubs were densely planted along the paths and drives and at tunnels, bridges, and entrances. These lush and intricate plantings gave depth and height to the path structure and created subtle, variable light effects. As the present management states, the original landscape design was more richly detailed than it is now. Its undulating woodland edges set off by specimen groves gave way to a "simplified and unelaborated mow line," with many fewer trees in the meadows (PPA, 1992).

IV.D.4 Provisions for the Human Presence

Much scholarly attention has been put on the strength of the design in shaping space and on shaping the user's experience of that space. Equally important were the provisions made for the human presence. For Prospect Park to become the recreational focus of bourgeois life in Brooklyn, the park had to be furnished not only with lovely drives but substantial facilities to service the masses of visitors. The largest of these was the Concert Grove, between the lake and the East Drive. The only geometrically formal

element in the plan, the Concert Grove was analogous to the Mall and Bethesda Terrace in Central Park. Here, facing a "music island" in the lake, the designers intended enough room for 10,000 people to gather "in shaded seats." Visitors could look out from the Concert Grove across "the largest water view together with a rich open meadow landscape," the Peninsula, toward Lookout Hill, "pinnacled with evergreens" (quoted in Fein, 1968, p. 112). Amid the walks and gardens of the Concert Grove were a kind of snack bar, now destroyed, and a fancifully ornate open pavilion which survives. On either side of this pedestrian concourse were located "carriage concourses" where concert-goers could park their carriages--one on the lake shore south of the Grove and a smaller one on Breeze Hill, overlooking the activity.

The drives and even the system of paths in Prospect Park were intended to draw visitors toward both the Concert Grove and the other major planned attraction, the Lookout. Perhaps in deference to the popularity of Mount Prospect, which the designers had dropped from the plan, they planned an activity center here on a hilltop nearly as high as Mount Prospect. From the top of Lookout Hill, before the trees were allowed to obscure the view, visitors could see out over the park's expanses of water, wood and meadow, over the agricultural fields of southern Long Island all the way to the ocean, and westerly toward New York Harbor and Manhattan Island. Expecting this to be one of the park's greatest attractions, the partners proposed a 100-foot long, terraced platform with seats and awnings, "broad terrace walks and staircase," and an oval court for carriages, which would be 300 feet long and 150 feet wide. There would be "a low building for the accommodation of women and children on the west side of the platform," serving refreshments. "All the principal walks" of the park would lead the visitor to the Lookout (Fein, 1968, p. 111). In later editions of the plan, Vaux provided designs for a lookout tower.

Along the lake shore below the summit of Lookout Hill, "in between the [Lookout and the Concert Grove,] amid a series of terraces and arcades, and with approaches for

footmen and carriages from both," the designers planned a large, multi-level restaurant to be called the Refectory. Skaters on the lake in winter could enter the lower level terrace directly from the ice, likewise boaters could dock here in summer. The upper terrace would measure 500 feet by 60 feet (Fein, 1968, pp. 112-113). The refectory was never built.

There were also "places of congregation and rest" in the wooded interior of the park, where the Prospect Park Alliance is reconstructing landscapes. In a shallow valley in the Midwood above the ravine, the designers placed a Dairy Cottage, "a spa-like service center to which, it was hoped, visitors would be attracted" (quoted in Fein, 1986, p. 59). As Fein (1986) points out, Olmsted and Vaux realized the difficulty of attracting people into the remoter, wooded areas. The decision to build the Dairy Cottage was made after construction of the park was under way. Its chief purpose was

Figure IV-1
THE DAIRY COTTAGE:
PICTURE AND PLAN

"to attract and hold visitors in the park's most rural and isolated district" (Fein, 1986, p. 59). The Dairy Cottage was completed in 1871, when "the ladies parlor was carpeted and provided with suitable furniture [and a fireplace], and the public room with tables, chairs, etc., [also with fireplace] for use as a refectory." The attendant's family lived upstairs. The Dairy Cottage was at the center of a farm-like complex of buildings, including a stable whose upper floor held two rooms, one where picnickers could deposit "baskets, clothing, etc.," and a smaller "retiring room for gentlemen." Livestock, presumably the sheep who grazed in the Long Meadow, were kept in the lower story. A horse shelter was "built for the convenience of equestrians who...wish to alight and obtain refreshment at the cottage." (quoted in Fein, 1986, p. 61).

The Dairy Cottage became the center of picnicking activity in the 1870s. Quoting from the Twelfth Annual Report of the Brooklyn Park Commission, Fein writes:

> Tables and chairs would be issued "without charge" by a park keeper-- perhaps a member of the family living there. Visitors could purchase at the "purveyor's counter" foods that had to be ordered in advance, such as "cold beef, ham [and] tongue sandwiches, or pickled oysters priced at twenty cents an order or two dollars a hundred." For families who brought their own tea there were available "pots and boiling water." Most important, picnickers and others could obtain fresh milk either warm or chilled, by the quart or the glass. During the summer of 1871, "11,000 quarts of milk were disposed of."
>
> Visitors could also borrow croquet equipment here for a small deposit on their value. There was a lawn adjacent where children could play, and a number of sheltered seats with small tables, "convenient for sewing, reading, studying and the care of children" (Fein, 1986, p. 62).

Figure IV-2
THE DAIRY COTTAGE

IV.E. USES OF THE WOODLANDS

This section of chapter four discusses the deliberately social uses of the woodlands in the early years of the park and compares early uses of the park to present-day uses and management issues.

IV.E.1. The Social Character of the Woodlands

The siting of the Dairy Cottage complex in the Midwood demonstrates that these woods were meant for recreational use. Olmsted referred to them as "groves," which implies clearings in between clumps of trees rather than continuous woods. The annual reports of the 1870s refer to "multitudes" of picnicking groups in the woods--both in the Midwood and in the West Woods, on the western flank of the Long Meadow. The Thirteenth Annual Report called the Dairy Cottage "a decided success", noting the "multitudes of visitors who daily throng its quiet, shady retreats (Brooklyn Park

Commission, 1872, p. 579). Multitudes of visitors could not have used these woods unless there were pleasant clearings and shelters where they could sit and rest or picnic, and facilities where they could get supplies. Thick woods with only woodland paths running through them could neither attract nor accommodate multitudes of visitors. The report for 1879 describes "...the universal use of our woods in the summer season for private and family picnics." The authors note that "every facility is afforded for proper use of the woods themselves... Fresh water liberally supplied, swings maintained in the woods, and an ample supply of tables and seats provided" (Brooklyn Park Commission, 1879, pp. 29-30).

Fein (1986) writes that the woodlands were to be an open forest grove where visitors could ramble in the shade. Olmsted and Vaux wrote that the slopes above the upper lake would offer a "display of the finest American forest trees, standing singly and in open groups... In the central portions of the park, [there would be] an open grove of forest trees, in which visitors may ramble in the shade without impediment of underwood" (Olmsted & Vaux, 1997, p. 96). The counterpart in Central Park to these wooded groves was the Ramble, which Barlow (1972) shows to have been a place of picturesque groves of trees and rock outcrops, amid clearings that offered views out over the lake.

Prospect Park's woodland includes the Ravine, where the designers took advantage of an existing pass through the hills to replicate a mountain stream, "shaded with trees, and made picturesque with shrubs, the forms and arrangement of which remind us of mountain scenery. We may perhaps even secure some [of] the mystery, variety and luxuriance of tropical scenery, by an assemblage of certain forms of vegetation, gay with flowers, and intricate and mazy with vines and creepers, ferns, rushes and broad-leaved plants" (Olmsted and Vaux, 1997, p. 91).[8]

[8] On a tour of Panama some years earlier, Olmsted had become enamored of the scenic effects of lush tropical scenery. Necessarily using plants that would survive in temperate North American climates, he strove to produce similar luxuriance in his park designs for Brooklyn and other cities.

This scenery, or scenography, was meant to be visited: paths wound alongside as well as above the ravine, bridges crossed over the water, and several wooden viewing shelters were provided. The luxuriant scenery complemented the Dairy Cottage: both were attractions that would draw people into the park interior. Another amenity nearby was a boathouse on the Lullwater, where rowboats could be rented and refreshments obtained.

Having selected a pleasant spot, perhaps a clearing in a grove of trees, with a view out to the meadow or overlooking the ravine, members of a picnicking family could get up to take a stroll through the "mazy" ravine or return to the Dairy for more milk or to borrow a croquet set for a game on the meadow. Later on they could take a boat and row through the Lullwater out into the lake, where they would enjoy views from the water of "picturesque groups of evergreens and deciduous trees and shrubs" overhanging the lakeshore (Beveridge & Hoffman, 1997, p. 96). Throngs of people came for the concerts in the Concert Grove and, somewhat later, in the Music Grove adjacent to the Nethermead. The idea was to have people feel comfortable enough to immerse themselves in this landscape, lingering for hours, taking advantage of its varied opportunities, and then to return home refreshed and renewed. As Olmsted told the Boston gathering:

> There will be room enough in the Brooklyn Park, when it is finished, for several thousand little family and neighborly parties to bivouac at frequent intervals through the summer... And although the arrangements for the purpose were yet very incomplete, and but little ground was at all prepared for such use, besides these small parties, consisting of one or two families, there came also, in companies of from thirty to a hundred and fifty, somewhere near twenty thousand children with their parents, Sunday-school teachers, or other guides and friends, who spent the best part of a day under the trees and on the turf, in recreations of which the predominating element was of this neighborly receptive class. Often they would bring a fiddle, flute, and harp, or other music. Tables, seats, shade, turf, swings, cool spring-water, and a pleasing rural prospect, stretching off half a mile or more each way, unbroken by a carriage road or the

> slightest evidence of the vicinity of the town, were supplied them without charge, and bread and milk and ice-cream at moderate fixed charges (Olmsted, 1997, p. 188).

IV.E.2. Management and Social Control

Much has been made of the conflicts in Olmsted's parks between the kind of experience Olmsted wanted people to have and what people actually did in the park--or wanted to do (Rosensweig, 1979, Rosenzweig & Blackmar, 1992; Von Hoffman, 1995). The commissioners' annual reports give the impression that they were alert to trends in recreation and quick to respond to them. The efforts put into attracting and supporting picnicking, for example, have been discussed above. It is hard to reconstruct user-management conflicts--with picnicking today, for example, most of the attention is on the conflict. Non-picnicking visitors complain of the trash and food waste left over after a day of heavy usage, management tries to restrict fires in certain areas, and neighbors outside the park complain about management policies that result in cooking out in parts of the park adjacent to their homes.

In the early years of Prospect Park, the Brooklyn Park Commission had a substantial force of "keepers" at its disposal. The keepers served much the same role as park rangers do today: they provided information to visitors and also enforced the rules. In Central Park, where the press of population was greater and the grounds available to walk on more limited, visitors were not allowed to walk on the grass in the early years (Taylor, 1999). Signs were posted to that effect, but it was the keepers' job to request offenders to return to the footpath. The plan for Prospect Park intended much more access to the grounds. The "central portion of the park" was to be "an open grove of forest trees, in which visitors may ramble in the shade without impediment of underwood, and without danger of doing harm to anything through carelessness or any ordinary selfish impulse" (Olmsted & Vaux quoted in Fein, 1968, p. 113). In other words, the woodland planting was designed to allow people to walk over the ground

surface, and to withstand the impact of such use. Visitors were also to have free access to the open greens:

> We should advise that the whole of the green, upon special occasions at least, if not at all times, should be open to all persons on foot, as a common. If the ground is properly prepared, there is no danger that the walks and resting places would be overcrowded with visitors. If this is done, and the interior groves also thrown open to pedestrians, through their whole extent between the bridle road and the green, we consider that the danger that the walks and resting places would be overcrowded so as to force or sorely tempt visitors to go upon ground where they would really injure the elements of the scenery, or create disturbance, embarrassment and waste, would be very small. (Olmsted & Vaux, 1997, p. 96.)

In addition, the keepers were there to admonish those visitors who were tempted to walk on delicate surfaces, such as the steep slopes of the Ravine, where walking would cause damage. In any case, allowing visitors free range over the grounds was a necessary condition for the social atmosphere the designers sought, in which families and parties of children could find secluded spots where they could relax and enjoy the bucolic views.

In the Fourteenth Annual Report, Olmsted and Vaux wrote that the size of the Long Meadow and the Nethermead make "the usual restrictions on walking on the turf unnecessary." But the designers warned of two dangers: "the wearing out of the turf and destruction of underwood, shrubs and plants. [We can] guard against the latter by concealed or inconspicuous barriers and cautionary signs, but [the problem will be] ultimately controlled only by a force of keepers" (Brooklyn Park Commission, 1873, p. 26). Although Prospect Park has had a few park rangers on the busier weekend days in recent years, one park official said that cuts in the budget had left the park with essentially no rangers at all (Anne Wong, personal communication, Sept. 15, 2000). The fencing of the Woodlands Campaign work areas results from the lack of any supervisory presence in the park other than police, who do not concern themselves with offenses to the landscape.

IV.E.3. Active and Passive Recreation

Active activities in the park are often construed as inappropriate, while appropriate activities are supposedly passive. Olmsted himself was among the most vigilant of anyone involved in efforts to limit "active" activities. Hardy (1982) has shown that users rebelled against various restrictions enforced by the Boston Park Commission in Franklin Park at Olmsted's insistence--for example, that only school boys and not adults be allowed to play ball on the "Playstead"--an athletic field within the park, or that the park's circuit drive not be used for group bicycling during the first great bicycle boom in the 1890s. In Prospect Park today, intramural teams play soccer games all over the meadows, an active sport that Olmsted would not have countenanced.

Yet, the park's meadows were used for many other kinds of active activities in Olmsted's day. Fein (1986) cites croquet, lawn tennis, archery, bowling, gymnastics, and kite flying as permissible and popular activities on the meadows. No doubt there was plenty of running, jumping, playing tag, hide-and-go-seek, kickball, and other informal play activity.

Today, when maintenance funds are scarce and supervision of park behavior is almost nonexistent, park managers like to think that the historic active-passive distinction means that all active games are out of keeping with the historic character of the park, to be tolerated if not discouraged. But the historic record is more complex. Certain active games and play were approved, others were forbidden. Perhaps the active-passive dichotomy is too simplistic. Still, those who think of Prospect Park as an historic Olmsted landscape--and this group includes its management, planning and design, and fundraising staff--want its spaces to be used in the proper way. Soccer fields and baseball fields are for soccer and baseball; Prospect Park's meadows, they feel, should be reserved for more genteel amusements such as walking, bird watching, and kite flying. Croquet has had its day but would be welcome. Archery might be welcome too if some sponsor

could provide the requisite organization and supervision at no cost to the park. On the other hand, many members of the more general public see Prospect Park as an available open space, a relatively unstructured environment. In the traditional working class perspective of using the space at hand, many use it for soccer, cookouts, for mountain biking up and down the hills, for hanging out, and (today) for African drumming festivals and other cultural fests.

IV.F. CONCLUSION

The design was informed by an attitude that no longer has much currency: that natural environments could be used and modified to promote particular kinds of recreational behavior and moral improvement as well (Jackson, 1997). As a type of environment, Prospect Park has more in common with playing fields and tennis courts than with the modern forest reservation or wildlife sanctuary. It did not come out of a conservationist ethos at all; it had nothing to do with creating wildlife habitat or species diversity or protecting relict bits of forest, which are some of the motives of the Woodlands Campaign. Rather, the park was to be primarily a social environment designed to support certain types of recreational activity and to have a calming effect on the human psyche. Like the tennis court or the playing field, it was a constructed environment set aside from the everyday landscape. Its design vocabulary consisted of organic materials mainly, but also of built spaces--paved drives and paths, shelters, terraces, buildings. The park was designed for recreation, social encounter, sensory delight, tranquillity, and recuperation; people and their experience of place were at the center of the whole scheme.

The historic character and intent was for the woods to be open and inviting, full of people walking along the paths and off the paths under the trees, resting and picnicking in open groves. The present restoration strays from the original design concept in privileging the woodlands as a natural rather than social space. People are supposed to

benefit from the restoration, of course, in knowing that this good work is being done, in having the restored environment at hand to walk through. But aside from their personal tastes and anecdotal knowledge, the restorers do not know how people respond to different kinds of natural settings, or how response differs among different user constituencies. Granting, for the moment, that ecological restoration in the woodlands is necessary, the management has not thought to let modern social science research on environmental perception or the uses of "nearby nature" inform the redesign. No one has thought to find out whether modern research has borne out Olmsted's unsubstantiated theories about what kinds of natural settings are the most psychologically restorative. The ethnographic findings of the 1998 User Study did not enter into decisionmaking about restoration and design priorities. Instead, the work is planned around the perceived needs of the ecosystem, to which users are expected to adjust their preferences and needs.

After more than a century, perhaps it should not be surprising that ideas about urban nature have changed so much. Just how much is the purpose of the following chapter, which describes the values and approaches of the present management and its Woodlands Campaign.

Chapter V. MANAGEMENT VALUES AND PROSPECT PARK ALLIANCE

New York City celebrated the centenary of Prospect Park in 1966 with festivities, ceremonies, and a major restoration project. Leonard Bernstein led The New York Philharmonic in a concert in the Music Grove, and the Goldman Band played other concerts in the grove that summer as it had for many years. The restoration project included work at the Grand Army Plaza entrance, restoration of the Vale and the Rose Garden, rehabilitation of the Tennis House and the Litchfield Mansion, restoration of the Croquet Shelter, rehabilitation of the zoo and surrounding areas, and restoration and rehabilitation of the boathouse and dredging of the lake.

At the rededication ceremony, Thomas Hoving, Mayor Lindsay's Park Commissioner, called attention to the historic legacy of the Olmsted and Vaux design. Prospect Park, he said, is

> ...one of the great works of landscape art in the world. Treating it, therefore, as a work of art, we have appointed a curator, Mr. Clay Lancaster, to oversee its restoration and guide its maintenance.

The ex-Commissioner, Robert Moses, called the park an

> ...enduring recreation area of great beauty. Zoos, playgrounds and new recreation areas have been added as changing tastes and increasing population and recreation demands for all ages have dictated, but no change in the basic plan has been necessary" (NYC Department of Parks and Recreation, 1965).

These two speeches in that centennial summer signaled an historic change in direction for Prospect Park, from recreation area to work of art. The playgrounds, zoo,

and ballfields had been built during Moses' long tenure (1933-1960). But values were changing: old things were coming to be seen as more valuable than the products of contemporary society. In New York City, the crisis over the demolition of Pennsylvania Station had led to the formation of the Landmarks Preservation Commission in 1965. The commission would have the power to place a protective shield on individual buildings and whole districts considered to be of historic character. In the coming years, Prospect Park would be designated as a Scenic Landscape. Any future additions to the park would be reviewed by the commission for its consistency with the historic character of the park—with the implicit assumption that "historic character" meant the original design of Olmsted and Vaux and its surviving features.

Restoration and rehabilitation and new construction, sometimes in combination with each other, are all potential approaches to managing the built form of a public park. In Prospect Park historically, construction of new features was the frequent choice, as each generation, responding to present-day needs and tastes, sought to put its stamp on the park. In the late Victorian period, a new park board ousted James S. T. Stranahan, the long-time commissioner who had hired Olmsted and Vaux and supported their particular version of pastoralism. The new board authorized construction of the Music Grove and Pagoda, effectively abandoning the designers' Concert Grove as the park's concert arena. The Music Grove brought cultural activity into an area of mature woodland that the designers wanted to preserve as such.

Elsewhere in the park, the new board installed flower gardens and elaborate bedding of the style popular at the time but unsatisfactory to Olmsted, for whom showy and stimulating floral displays would detract from the atmosphere of rest and tranquillity

he believed was most beneficial in a public park. The 34th Annual Report noted the planting of 240,000 plants in carpet flower beds, as well as cactus displays, a new garden on Breeze Hill, a chrysanthemum exhibition, and a display of tropical and flowering plants in the greenhouses, which "have given much pleasure" (Brooklyn Park Commission, 1893, p. 15). The 36th Annual Report noted 45,000 ornamental and flowering plants in flowerbeds, 116,000 Holland bulbs, propagation of 35,000 cuttings of ornamental plants, and 120,000 cuttings of hardy vines and creepers (Brooklyn Park Commission, 1895).

At the turn of the twentieth century, many new structures were built in and around the park, all in the neo-Imperial City Beautiful style. These include the Tennis House, the Maryland Monument, and the Peristyle. Olmsted and Vaux's rustic wooden boathouse was replaced by a gleaming white-tiled, neoclassical structure. Monumental structures embellished the entrances at Grand Army Plaza, Third Street, Ninth Street, Fifteenth Street, Park Circle, Ocean-Parkside, and Willink (Flatbush Avenue near Empire Boulevard.) The massive Soldiers and Sailors Arch was built in Grand Army Plaza in 1892. On Breeze Hill, the upper carriage concourse, which had never functioned as intended, was transformed into the "Old-fashioned Garden."

Greenhouses were built in the area south of the Litchfield Mansion where the park's flowers were grown; for many years the Prospect Park greenhouses were popular places to visit. The blockish, red-brick Picnic House replaced an earlier picnic shelter of Olmsted and Vaux design in 1926.

Under Commissioner Moses, the Parks Department built the now familiar playgrounds near several entrances, the ballfields in the Long Meadow, and a zoo and

formal rose garden along the Flatbush Avenue perimeter. Tennis courts were built near the Picnic House. The braided carriage drive on the east side was straightened and widened into a single roadway for easier automobile usage. In 1959, an ice-skating

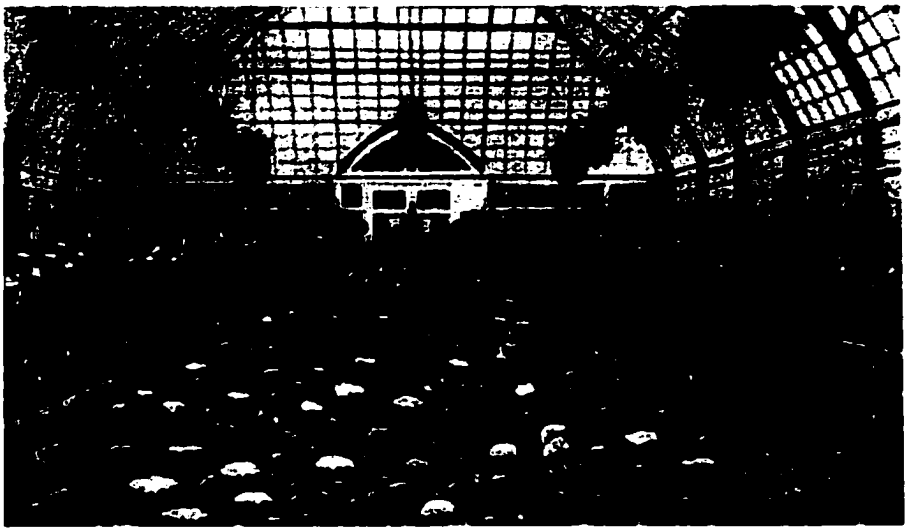

Figure V-1
PROSPECT PARK GREENHOUSE

facility preempted the music island and the view of the lake from the Concert Grove. A cove of Prospect Lake next to the old Carriage Concourse was filled in to create a picnic grove.

With such a history of change, it could be argued that the park's historic character lies in the layers of changes and improvements to the original design made by succeeding generations. Some changes have been destructive of the design integrity, as with the construction of the skating rink in the Concert Grove. More often, the changes become valued additions that give the landscape historic depth.

Despite the hopeful centennial rhetoric of 1966, Prospect Park had entered a period of decline. Funds for parks citywide declined in the 1960s, then dropped steeply

with the fiscal crisis of 1975-76. Both local and structural conditions contributed to the decline of Prospect Park, among them the departure of middle class constituents from neighborhoods around the park, the decline in the city's finances which ultimately led to the near-default in 1975, and perhaps to the passing of the Moses era. Measured by funding, maintenance, and park expansion, the Moses era marked the high water mark in the history of the New York City park system.

The historic preservation ethos began to take shape as a management approach during this period of ostensible decline. Clay Lancaster, the Prospect Park Curator in the 1960s and 1970s and an ardent preservationist, had written a book about the architecture of Brooklyn Heights. Mr. Lancaster also wrote the *Prospect Park Handbook*, in which he emphasized the Park's art objects: buildings, statues, and other artifacts. A Friends of Prospect Park group formed in the 1970s which organized volunteer cleanup and restoration projects and advocated for historical treatments of park resources. One of the Friends' projects was a restoration of the Vale of Cashmere. A leader of the Friends group was M. M. Graff, who wrote the 1986 book *Central Park Prospect Park, a New Appraisal*--generally a rhapsody on the pastoral landscape architecture tradition. In this work Graff scolded Olmsted and Vaux as well as contemporary park officials for their ignorance in designing and properly managing a pastoral landscape.

V.A PROSPECT PARK ALLIANCE

Tupper Thomas took the newly created position of Prospect Park Administrator in 1980. Ms. Thomas was interested in historic preservation too, but she had a much more inclusive vision for the park as a community and democracy-building resource (Tupper

Thomas, personal communication, Sept. 22, 2000). Her agenda involved putting public attention on the park, bringing people into the park, making the management systems more effective, and finding the funds necessary to renew the park. Numerous events were staged in the park to appeal to ethnic and life-choice constituencies. There was much outreach to different communities and potential constituencies in Brooklyn. Ms. Thomas felt that parks were not on anybody's list of community priorities in the early 1980s. Apart from a few individuals, no one had complained about the park's decline or demanded more funds or better management. The Administrator took the opportunity to make people aware of the park and its potential as a site for activities and as a subject of community action.

As Ms. Thomas describes it, despite a comparatively healthy maintenance budget, the park was in poor physical condition in 1980. Patronage was low—Ms. Thomas estimates 1.7 million visits a year as compared with at least five million today. Vandalism and neglect had taken a toll on the park's buildings: some were closed and boarded up. The woods were "walked all over" and had no significant vegetative understory. People used the perimeter areas but were afraid to venture very far into the park. There were no sunbathers, no mothers pushing baby strollers except on the edges.

The formation of the Prospect Park Alliance in 1987 apparently did not involve the Friends group, but instead grew out of the coalitions among business, political, and community leaders that Ms. Thomas had worked to organize. The Prospect Park Alliance would provide a permanent organizational structure for the park advocacy strategy devised by Tupper Thomas and her staff in the first decade of her tenure as Administrator. The Alliance was modeled on the Central Park Conservancy, which was

begun in 1983 under the leadership of Elizabeth Barlow, a socialite and Olmsted scholar. The Conservancy became famous almost immediately for its ability to raise large amounts of public and private money to lavish on the landscape of Central Park. As with the early acclaim of Central Park that inspired Brooklyn to build Prospect Park only a few years later, modern-day Brooklyn saw the success of the Central Park Conservancy and wanted its own version.

Unlike the Friends of Prospect Park, the Prospect Park Alliance is a management entity. Its staff are park staff; its President is also the park Administrator. The difference between the Alliance and the Parks Department comes with the inception and funding of construction projects. The Prospect Park Alliances's projects are restorations, while the Parks Department funds routine operations such as lawn mowing, trash pickup, and enforcement patrols. The Alliance's approach is to take on projects which the Parks Department would not ordinarily do. The Woodlands Campaign is the largest such project, but there are many others. Prospect Park Alliance has raised funds for reconstruction of much of the park perimeter, including the Grand Army Plaza entrance, sidewalks on Prospect Park West and Prospect Park Southwest, Willink entrance, Ninth Street entrance, Parkside-Ocean Entrance, and all five playgrounds. Work is now under way on the Park Circle entrance.

All these projects are funded from different capital budget sources, mainly the Brooklyn Borough President and Parks Department budgets. The Prospect Park Alliance lobbies in Borough Hall, City Hall, and at the State Capitol for appropriations. Most of the private money raised by the Prospect Park Alliance goes to pay staff salaries. Some staff, mainly the woodlands crew, work on the grounds, but most Alliance staff are

engaged in planning, design, management, volunteer organizing, outreach, grantswriting, and advocacy. Privately raised funds have paid for small construction projects like new lighting, paving, and drinking fountains for internal paths.

The Prospect Park Alliance's first project was the restoration of the carousel, located at the Willink entrance next to the zoo. Ms. Thomas described this as a "sexy little project"—easy to raise funds for because it involved a discrete, easily accomplished project involving fun for all ages and affording opportunities to name things after donors. The success of this project brought the newly formed Alliance public recognition and good will. In its first landscape restoration project, the Alliance removed the fences and concrete bleachers from the ballfields that had usurped the southern Long Meadow during the Moses era. There was no sacrifice of recreational space, only a realignment of the fields and a restoration of the visual sweep of the Long Meadow.

In 1991, after restoring a meadow-like effect in the ballfields and rehabilitating the carousel, the Prospect Park Alliance wondered what to do next. By the 1990s, new construction, or construction that replaced the old with the new, was no longer tenable in the old landscape parks like Prospect Park. Historic preservation does not come without construction, of course: the deteriorated or unoriginal elements are removed and what's left is altered to resemble the original design as closely as possible. Historic preservation is sometimes criticized as for holding up the achievement of some bygone era as superior to that of the present, but in fact it does reflect the values of the present moment. These values include the wish to be entertained, a delight in fantasy, an admiration of scenography and stagecraft, and a preference for pleasing, Disney-like simulations over the hard surfaces and harsh contrasts of modern urban landscapes (Boyer, 1996).

The park staff held a retreat to discuss what to do next. According to the recollection of both Tupper Thomas and Ed Toth, Mr. Toth proposed that the Alliance take on a woodlands restoration involving the watercourse and adjacent territory. Here was an opportunity to combine two "sexy" contemporary causes in a single project: historic preservation and restoration ecology. In affording opportunities to reshape the landscape and reconstruct long vanished architectural features, it appealed to the builder's instinct. This it married with the appeal to the conservationist, the ecologist, and the naturalist, of restoring the biological diversity of the park woodlands.

V.B. ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION

Ed Toth brought an ecologist's perspective to park management (Ed Toth, personal communication, Sept. 22, 2000). In his years at Prospect Park, Mr. Toth had already influenced the way things were done. An adherent of letting natural processes do their work, Mr. Toth wondered why the park needed to expend its limited maintenance capability on fighting processes of natural succession. Every year the grounds crew would take the time to cut weeds and mow grass to keep the ground open. Mr. Toth thought that in many of these areas it would be sounder policy to let the seeders grow in and regenerate the forest. When he became Director of the Natural Resources Crew, he ordered an end to such maintenance in several fringe areas, among them the relatively level ground between Central Drive and the Music Grove, and all along the Lullwater. Now, more than ten years later, these and other areas so affected are thick with young trees. These are volunteer, or self-sown trees--aggressive, fast-growing species that seed into open areas left unattended. In Prospect Park, these are typically Norway maple,

black cherry, and mulberry trees. They are not the better hardwoods that Olmsted would have planted in areas needing regeneration, but weed tree colonizers. In time--twenty-five years or more--they will yield to other hardwoods, native varieties like tulip tree, sweetgum, white ash and red oak, which eventually produce fine specimen trees like those standing today in the woodlands on Quaker Hill.

Part of Mr. Toth's logic is the appropriateness of ecological management in a situation where the funding is permanently inadequate to support a traditional horticultural approach. Ecologically stable woodlands need very little management as compared to a public park where the priority is on maintaining views and producing aesthetic effects. In a public garden like the Brooklyn Botanic Garden or Bryant Park, the maintenance requirements go far beyond just keeping the ground open. Trees and shrubs require pruning and trimming, and sometimes feeding and watering. The soils must be conditioned and groundcover maintained, and pesticides and herbicides regularly applied. By contrast, a suburban woodland reservation such as Harriman State Park has essentially no horticultural or silvicultural management. The forest grows and changes with the effects of fire, storms, disease, human use, and climate change. Walking trails are maintained, often by volunteer hiking organizations, and the impacts of new recreational activities (e.g., mountain biking) are debated, but the woodland ecology is more or less left to itself.

In Ed Toth's view, to maintain open views, a variety of plant textures and masses, and similar labor-intensive conditions that make highly cultivated landscapes so aesthetically pleasing, is to try to preserve a biological moment in time. Left to natural processes, the open ground will disappear. The flowering shrubs and ornamental trees

become engulfed in weeds and later in second-growth woods. Mr. Toth thought Prospect Park did not have and foreseeably never would have the resources to maintain the kinds of aesthetic effects of the Olmsted and Vaux design. However, by allowing natural processes to run their course, the park could eventually have an equally satisfying, but more natural woodland landscape.

In a situation where policy decisions are highly dependent on the preferences of individual policy makers, it is worth considering the relevant life experiences of those individuals. Ed Toth likes walking in the woods. He grew up in a suburb of Cleveland, and spent many pleasant hours in portions of the Emerald Necklace park system that forms a ring around Cleveland between 15 and 25 miles from the city center. As he described it, the Cleveland parks had the usual picnic grounds and other areas planned for intensive use, but they also had wilder areas of beech-hemlock woodland growing in ravines. By his own admission, his youthful experiences in these protected woodlands were particularly formative. Later on, as a student at Ohio State University, Mr. Toth would travel to the Hocking Hills, which he remembers as an especially beautiful region of beech and hemlock forest ravines not too distant from Columbus. His vision for Prospect Park was in part a product of his experience of woodland reservations in Ohio.

What became known as the Woodlands Campaign originated in that 1991 staff retreat. From his experience in the park's woodlands, it was Ed Toth's opinion that the woodland ecology was unhealthy. As he later wrote in a report, "Today, a tour [of the woods] by even the most casual observer would reveal a horrible scene of neglect and decay" (Toth and Sauer, 1994, p. 8). The problems he identified included soil compaction, soil erosion, lack of understory, decline of desirable native trees and

proliferation of invasive species. Left unchecked, the latter condition would lead to extensive monocultures of species that provide little food or habitat for wildlife and a poor aesthetic experience for human visitors.

The severest problems were in the areas adjacent to the watercourse, where foot traffic was highest. Here, pedestrians and dogs had trampled the ground so extensively that understory plants were mostly absent and soils were so compacted that rainwater would run off into the streams and ponds rather than soak into the soil. As a result, the denuded streambanks and hillsides were severely eroded. Mature root systems were exposed in many places, placing those trees at risk. The water bodies had silted up from years of erosion, obscuring the intricate and romantic landforms of the Olmsted and Vaux design.

Loss of topsoil from slopes through erosion was due to other factors than foot traffic. Olmsted and Vaux, wishing to heighten the picturesque effects of the rather gentle site topography, exaggerated the perception of depth in the ravine by making the hillsides unnaturally steep. Erosion had been the consequence ever since, getting worse in latter years as wear and neglect left fewer understory plants to retain the topsoil. Another source of problems was traced to management policies in effect in the 1960s, when much of the understory was removed. Some people, including Tupper Thomas, say that this was Parks Department policy out of a concern for the safety of park visitors in a time of rising crime.

Removal of underbrush would make the wooded areas more visible and, it was thought, less dangerous. The writer M. M. Graff (1985), however, attributes the cutting of understory plants to a single misguided park official working in Prospect Park at the

time. This official took it upon himself to cut away much of the understory on the hillsides above the ravine, for reasons that were not entirely clear.

Whatever the reason, much of the understory in the ravine area and elsewhere was cut severely in the 1960s. This compounded the problems already present of foot traffic on hillsides that were impracticably steep to begin with. Much of the topsoil ended up in the watercourse, where the rising sediment caused the stream and the ponds to change their boundaries. Certain features of the stream were completely obscured. The Ambergill had completely filled in with sediment, causing a stream diversion that bypassed Rock Arch Bridge and washed out the path beyond the bridge.

It is significant that the Prospect Park Alliance conceived a major renewal effort that focused on the soils, plants, and watercourses of the park rather than on structures and facilities. Infrastructure is often the focus of expenditures in parks, not just city parks but state and national parks as well. Large sums of money have been spent historically on visitor facilities, paths, roadways, and on parkways and highways leading to the parks. Money is spent both to construct this infrastructure and to maintain and police it. The present Boathouse in Prospect Park is a good example. Inspired by the turn-of-the-century City Beautiful movement, it replaced the wood and thatch boathouse built by the original designers. As noted above, the Boathouse was restored as part of the work commemorating the centenary in the 1960s. After a period of deterioration it was restored again in the 1980s. In recent years it has been boarded up and off limits, pending yet another restoration.

Most state and national parks preserve existing woodlands and other natural features and so are not understood to need much maintenance of the land itself. Prospect

Park and its kind are much closer to gardens in being as much designed and contructed spaces as the streets and squares of the city. In Ed Toth's opinion, little money had been spent in the park's history on maintaining the woods and the watercourse. Here was the chance to subvert the usual priority on infrastructure and secure the management's dedication to an expensive, multi-phased, 25-year renewal of the park's woodlands.

V.C. HISTORIC PRESERVATION

As a historic preservation project, the Woodlands Campaign involves the reconstruction of original design features, mainly in the ravine. This work has been described in Chapter III. All along the streambank, paths have been re-laid and rebuilt. The choices made about paths involved a number of debates among the park staff. Ed Toth, whose primary interest was in restoring the ecological balance, was willing to sacrifice the authenticity of a path route to get a more effective vegetative barrier between stream and visitors, or to reduce the gradient of a slope. Such loose interpretations of the original plans were opposed by the landscape architect, Christian Zimmerman, always the champion of original design details. Mr. Zimmerman is supportive of the ecological restoration effort but is most interested in reconstructing the Olmsted and Vaux landscape as literally and authentically as possible.

Mr. Zimmerman's remarkable contribution to the Woodlands Campaign is the methodology he devised for reconstructing the original landscape architecture. The original design drawings cannot be found: it is said that they were deliberately destroyed when Robert Moses was Park Commissioner (Graff, 1985). Lacking the plans, Zimmerman hit on the idea of preparing new plans based on photographic evidence of

what had once been there. The Prospect Park Alliance scoured Brooklyn for old photographs, exploring photo archives and placing advertisements in community newspapers appealing to anyone having old photos taken in the affected area.

Much of the original architecture of the watercourse involved arranging the heavy glacial boulders found in the immediate area in ways that picturesquely defined banks and formed waterfalls. With erosion and siltation and the passage of time, many of these rocks had slid downhill or been buried in sediment. In Mr. Zimmerman's design process, boulders found during excavation at the site were matched with those depicted in the hundreds of photographs collected, so that they could be repositioned exactly as Olmsted and Vaux wanted them.

The Woodlands Campaign therefore incorporates two related but distinct projects: ecological restoration on the one hand, and architectural replication on the other. Could one be done without the other? Ed Toth thought it could—at least in a more perfect funding climate. Soils can be reconditioned, invasives removed and new trees and shrubs planted without digging up the stream and reconstructing its banks. However, Mr. Toth thought there is not enough money in the park's operational budget to support an in-house crew capable of gradually restoring the plants and soils. Borrowed money, however, has been more available in New York—in the form of capital projects, which are funded through sale of municipal bonds. Capital projects are done on contract, the work turned over to contractors although supervised by city personnel.

As Mr. Toth explained it, carrying out ecological restoration as part of a construction project, where the earth is torn up with heavy machinery, was an inherently destructive way of restoring natural systems. The damage is equivalent to a catastrophic

natural event—flood, fire, earthquake—in its impact on the natural resources. Mr. Toth was willing to combine his project with the historic preservation work, however, because he thought there was no other feasible way to fund it.

For Christian Zimmerman, authentic restoration of the Olmsted and Vaux design was always the priority (Christian Zimmerman, personal communication, Sept. 18, 2000). Mr. Zimmerman has a command of historical facts: the precise names and locations of things long vanished, the inauthenticity of a certain clump of trees near the Picnic House (not original), construction dates, the introduction of hex-block pavers (1883, in the Concert Grove), the name of an obscure reach of the stream ("Binnenwater—one word.")[9] Factual accuracy is his priority. Despite his depth of knowledge of historic design details, he seemed content to leave its underlying philosophy and the values of replication unexamined.

Perhaps unaware of the body of scholarship that has demonstrated Olmsted's ability to solve complex problems of ecology, infrastructure, and transportation in his park designs, Mr. Zimmerman told me that ecology and environment were not integral to the design of Prospect Park. He thought the present plan of planting indigenous, sustainable species was a new idea, "as opposed to bringing in some Southern species that, if we get a hard winter, [will] just die." Although Olmsted knew better than to plant subtropical plants in Brooklyn, and, like Mr. Zimmerman, favored indigenous species, he did not hesitate to use "exotic" species for effect. The Woodlands Campaign uses only native plants.

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[9] "Hex-block pavers" are cast asphalt paving units of hexagonal shape, used on walkways throughout New York City parks.

For Mr. Zimmerman, historic preservation means exacting replication: The choice is either to reproduce something exactly as it was, or do nothing. He would like to reproduce the original design in total but concedes that the management has to make choices. He hopes to rebuild a thatched hut near the Grand Army Plaza entrance that vanished long ago. The Woodlands Campaign is replicating small rustic shelters in the Ravine, but not the Dairy Cottage; it would cost too much and what would they use it for?: "The Dairy will not be built, probably, in my lifetime. I'd like it to, but... it's a pretty elaborate little structure; it would cost a fortune."

When I asked him about introducing something new, of our own time, within the park, he spoke of playgrounds and ballfields. The existing playgrounds, which were introduced to the park in the 1930s and 1940s, have been rebuilt under his direction as a practical concession to their popularity. However, he would not have built any new playgrounds without existing ones to replace. As he said,

> I'm not going to promote anything that isn't original. Playgrounds go where there are playgrounds. We don't put in a new playground in a new location; it's a new playground in an existing location. I'm not going to put a playground in the woods. We would fight that. We're not going to put ballfields in the north meadow. They weren't there; they shouldn't be there. Let's accommodate them elsewhere.

Playgrounds and ballfields are the bogeymen of park preservation. They are code words in a rhetoric that sets up anything other than archeologically correct preservation as a desecration.

Practical needs can be accommodated in Mr. Zimmerman's program, but only behind an "original" façade. For example, there is no restroom anywhere near the Vanderbilt Street playground, on the southwest side. The management will not build a

restroom there because the location lacks a historic antecedent. A few hundred feet away, however, the old well house stands empty. The playground people

> ...desperately need bathrooms, so, if we get money for that, the well house will become a comfort station. Wasn't one originally, but it's the perfect place for it, you know—really needed, perfect place. The outside would look just like it did, you know, in the 1870s, but inside it'd be a modern bathroom.

At the outset of our interview I suggested that the Woodlands Campaign seemed focused more on the needs of the watercourse and the woods than on the needs of people. Mr. Zimmerman objected that one only needs to walk through the restored landscapes to realize that the whole design is for people:

> The way we recreated the water bodies, and recreated the stream and the weirs and the waterfalls—you know, the waterfalls are all for sound. You hear the water and then you see it and then [the sound] goes away. It's a bright pool in a dark woodlands; [or] it's a dark, quiet pool in the woods--you know, it's all those different visual [and aural] impacts.

In other words, sensory contact with the environment is fine as long as it adheres to the Olmsted formula of a genteel stroll along the path. Climbing trees, picking flowers or berries, wading in the stream, or sitting under the waterfall are all inappropriate. Mountain biking, of course, is anathema. For Mr. Zimmerman, people make tradeoffs in living in the city:

> My feeling is there are certain things you give up when you live in an urban environment--you know? We don't target-practice here! Perfectly comfortable to do that in a rural environment but you can't do it here, it's just—you know. You can mountain bike in the country, but to mountain bike here—you've got about 2.3 million [in Brooklyn] and just say, you know, you get a hundred-thousand mountain bikers... That does a lot of damage.

Mountain biking does do damage, but this argument disregards the fact that nearly all the mountain bikers are black and Latino teenage boys who are not in a position to

decide to live in the country. For them, Prospect Park is the only piece of ground within reach that has not been leveled and built upon. It may be impracticable to allow mountain biking in Prospect Park (although bike trails have been designated in Forest Park in Queens), but this logic showed an insensitivity to the park's social context.

V.D. FENCING

Even if they have noticed nothing else about the Woodlands Campaign, many users are aware its most conspicuous public aspect, the fencing. Fencing comes in several varieties in Prospect Park. The least controlling variety is the log border along a soft-surfaced woodland path. These exist in a few places, all of them apparently desire-line paths which the management has allowed to remain in use. The park staff wage a continuous rearguard fight against the proliferation of desire-line paths, dumping piles of dirt or placing logs to block them, building cribbing structures, installing fences. Only a few desire lines are deemed worthwhile additions. On these, the grounds crews spread wood chips over the surface periodically to protect the soils from erosion; the chips eventually mulch and so contribute to soil replenishment. Wooden logs laid alongside the walking surface are held in place by wire tied to stakes driven into the ground. The stakes, by the way, help to aerate the soil. The logs act as guidelines to keep people on the paths. All in all, this seems an excellent system for allowing users a fully sensory woodland experience without sustaining much damage to fragile soils and understory plants.

The next level of fencing, still more guidance than restriction, involves wooden railings raised about one foot off the ground. Some of these railings have been installed

on paths in the lower Midwood area near East Drive. The remaining categories of fencing are all highly restrictive.

Prospect Park has for years used "snow fences," made of red-colored wooden slats held together with baling wire and mounted on wooden stakes. Intended to control snow drifts, snow fencing is lightweight and easy to install, store, and move around, but tall and spiky enough to dissuade most people from trying to climb over it (a snow fence stands about four feet high.) Snow fences are commonly used in Prospect Park around newly planted trees, where they protect the trees from both people and lawn mowers. In recent years they have been installed temporarily around areas in the meadows that have been reseeded after having been worn down to dirt.

Snow fencing is also widely used to keep people out of areas designated by the management for reforestation, in keeping with the policy begun by Ed Toth. There are many such areas, including much of the park perimeter, woodland areas with steeper slopes, and marginal areas being allowed to revert to woods. Today, a large portion of Quaker Hill adjacent to Ravine I is enclosed within a snow fence.

Where Prospect Park has favored the snow fence, Central Park has used an all-metal variety of comparable height. The fence fabric is of stout wire woven together in a gridiron pattern, which is tied on to steel stakes driven into the ground. The fence fabric is painted, usually a green color to blend as well as possible with the dominant landscape tones. The metal fencing has a neater appearance than the "rickety" snow fencing, where the reddish paint tends to weather and the slats break off or lean precariously like the sides of a barn about to collapse. The more dignified and expensive metal fencing is now appearing in Prospect Park, where it is used along the paths within the Ravine I project

area. In these locations the fence fabric is painted black, which makes it relatively unobtrusive to the sense of sight. Such fencing within the project area is used to confine visitors to the paths provided for circulation and to keep them out of newly planted grounds.

Most restrictive and obtrusive of all is the chain link fence. The construction contractors for all three Ravine projects have installed seven-foot-high chain link fencing all around the work areas. Its height, the heavy gauge of the fence fabric, and the dull gray color make chain link fencing highly obtrusive. The park management made the decision that the contractors should install these fences—apparently after some discussion. Both Prospect and Central Parks were built with little restriction on public access, but today such security fencing is standard procedure on park construction sites. More controversially, management also decided to let the chain link fencing remain in place long after construction had finished, for as long as ten years. The rationale is that since the new plantings need a long time to become permanently established, restricting access will help insure that that process will work itself out.

None of the park officials I spoke with showed any compunction about the fencing policy. So much money and effort has been poured into this project that to them the fencing is almost automatically justified. The volunteers and staff members who meet the public on the guided tours of the restoration, however, have heard much protest. One of the tour guides, a volunteer, told me that there had been no public outreach about the fencing; it just went up. In this person's experience, many people had said they were surprised, and some were outraged. Many of the tours have involved sometimes-heated discussions of the fencing. People were asked to make written comments on the

evaluation forms distributed at the end of the tours. Supposedly some "higher-up" person reads the evaluations but this volunteer thought that management was not very interested in anything but favorable comments. A staff person leading a tour in November 2001 told me that people complained that "You're making this just like the Botanic Garden with all the fences and all this planting, but you're not doing anything for the other (east) side [of the park]" (Eddie Haines, personal communication, Oct. 28, 2001).

On a typical woodlands tour, the mostly white, middle-class visitors are told of all the extraordinarily painstaking work of photo-referencing the placement of stones and boulders to reconstruct the watercourse. They are told of the great labor of soil conditioning and hand planting of thousands of new plants, and of the long time needed for plants and soils to establish themselves. They may be told that it is hard for them to comprehend all the processes that affect soils and plants. The talk will turn to wildlife, emphasizing the fine habitat the restoration is creating, affording food, water, and shelter. The guide reminds the visitors of the importance of Prospect Park on the "Atlantic Flyway" bird migration route. The tour guide always has a packet of "before and after" photographs, as well as historical images of the watercourse: these pictures are most effective in eliciting praise. Indeed, the results are impressive.

When some comment elicits a fencing discussion, the visitors will be told that fencing is essential to the biological regeneration, given the numbers of people who would otherwise be walking all over the new plantations. If someone asks what is wrong with people making paths through the landscape, the guide may remind them that Prospect Park is a work of art. Olmsted himself occasionally used the artwork defense against proposed changes to his parks. Desire-line paths assert the autonomy of the user

in acting against the designer's authority. The existence of such paths takes the design prerogative away from the designers. As noted above, the park management fights hard to curtail desire lines by fencing them off, dumping piles of dirt or wood chips across them, and by building cribbing structures across the ones that run down steep slopes.

On one of the tours I attended, a woman objected to the kind of message that the four-foot high fencing along the paths sends to people. A more subtle form of fencing, she thought, would change the message from "Keep Out" to "Respectfully Keep Out." The tour guide, a staff person, answered that desire-line paths can be ecologically damaging. The visitor wondered why desire lines could not be made into woodland paths. If you make paths of desire lines, she argued, people would stay on the paths. The tourguide responded with the artwork defense, explaining that the paths here were all carefully and intentionally designed for sensory effects, especially the views over water. "This place is a work of art." People cannot be allowed to make paths on their own.

The visitor responded, "That's not my argument at all, that's an aesthetic argument." She argued that if woodland paths are clearly demarcated, then people can enjoy the woods without undue damage. "My point is not to ruin a perfect work of art but to talk about it in a more expanded way." The guide then attributed the problem to historic preservation laws that allow the park little leeway in making changes. He pointed to some granite slabs in the pavement as an example. The slabs had been a short flight of steps. In the restoration they took out the steps to make the path accessible to wheelchairs. In the historic spirit, they laid the original slabs flush with the pavement so as to keep the authentic materials yet comply with modern accessibility standards. It is a nice design touch, but hardly something they were required to do. Another Prospect Park

Alliance official, Mary Fox, has been heard to say that the Alliance regularly exceeds Landmarks Preservation Commission criteria in its zeal for authentic replication (Mary Fox, guided tour for Environmental Psychology Program, Fall 2000).

Beginning in fall 2000, the Ravine I and Ravine II project areas were opened up to self-guided tours between 1:00 and 5:00 on Saturday and Sunday afternoons. The supervision was heavy. The Prospect Park Alliance had hired high school students to sit at tables at the gates to each area, wearing greeter tags and greeting each party to come in. There were brochures about the Alliance and about the park. Vistors were asked to sign petitions requesting more public funding for parks. In addition to the teenage workers, one or two park officials were on duty walking back and forth, surveying visitor activity, answering questions, and talking with the teenage workers over a walkie-talkie. One afternoon, as I was talking to the official on duty, he noticed a rare Hispanic family entering the Ravine I area to walk around the ponds. He ran over to them, offering literature and urging them not to pick any flowers or to go off the trail because "this is a big restoration project." This incident indicates the level of staff anxiety over the issue of public access to the restored landscapes.

V.E. CONCLUSION

The Prospect Park Alliance's public information literature demonstrates the shift in emphasis from the woodlands as recreation area, in Robert Moses' phrase, to mini-wilderness. Parks, in any form, are managed nature. However, as Cheek and Burch wrote in 1976, the social construct of wilderness has been the great siren song in North American environmentalism. The wilderness ethos informs the ecological side of the

Woodlands Campaign. Prospect Park's woodlands become "Brooklyn's Last Forest." The specter of the "dying forest" is a call to action to save this vestige of wilderness from destruction by urban civilization.

The vocabulary of ecological restoration has a disturbing resemblance to ideologies of racial superiority. Indigenous, American plants are the valuable ones. "Exotics," plants from foreign lands, are "invasive," "aggressive," "non-native weed trees...occupying ground formerly dominated by native vegetation" (Toth & Sauer, 1994, p. 9). As the valiant indigenous trees succumb to the aggressive foreigners, "the collapse of these woodland ecosystems is at hand," resulting in debased "monocultures" of little value for wildlife. It sounds terrible.

Groening and Volschke-Bulmahn (1989) have demonstrated the parallels between the 1980s design ideology of German Eco-gardens and the race-based garden design rhetoric of the 1930s used by adherents of National Socialism. Warning of the risks of insisting upon a single basis of design, the authors argue that gardens are there to provide nutrition, pleasure, and relaxation for people, rather than to serve nature. Olmsted and Vaux also subscribed to a controlling design ideology, insisting that Prospect park have nothing that detracted from the illusion of rural scenery. Were the beds of annual flowers introduced in the 1880s wrong? They graced the park and people enjoyed them, just as people today throng the beautiful displays across Flatbush Avenue at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden.

The Prospect Park Alliance's ideological remedy for woodland decline significantly limits the users' pleasure. Ed Toth's report states that the park's "greatest practical significance is as a resource of food and shelter for migratory bird species on the

Eastern Flyway" (Toth and Sauer, 1994, p. 14). People's pleasure is missing from this argument: the woodlands become the servant of nature. This vision of ecological purity justifies many things—a heavy-handed intervention in the ecosystem to uproot the invaders, fences to keep people at a safe distance from the fauna and recovering flora, a planting regime that eschews a landscape of cultivation for one of wilderness, and the reversion of useful, waterside space to woodland.

The historic preservation part of the project, by contrast, seems ideologically cramped. Its meticulous replication of Victorian design details misses the opportunity to make fresh, contemporary interpretations of the nature-culture dialectic. The possibilities of employing land art, folk art, sculpture, and temporary installations to awaken environmental interest and generate activity into the woods are ignored. Instead, living culture is masked in a resuscitation of the lifeless forms of Victorian eclecticism, and nature, rather than reflecting human use and habitation, is refashioned in the image of non-human wilderness.

Chapter VI. USER VALUES ACROSS THE PARK

The purpose of this chapter is to use the Prospect Park User Study of 1996-98 to describe the social and cultural character of the park. The emphasis here is on park values, by which I mean feelings and attitudes of park users about their experience of being in the park. Values are reflected in the activities people engage in, the social groupings in which they visit the park, as well as in how they describe their relationship to the park and its places and programs. The material presented in this chapter provides a context for exploring the social and cultural impact of the Woodlands Campaign in the next chapter.

VI.A. RELEVANCE OF THE USER STUDY

Urban landscape parks are civic ornaments and nature preserves but also vital social spaces. They provide the essential setting for a certain kind of coming together of disparate groups in public space. If this seems like common knowledge, there is little research on just how parks function as social and cultural spaces: Perhaps the conclusions seem self-evident. Much of the existing research has been at the behest of park managers who tend to need specific kinds of information about users rather than general knowledge. Such is the case of the Prospect Park User Study of 1996-98, the third such study commissioned by the Administrator's office since 1980.

In an era of dwindling public resources, management believed that the key to the park's revitalization lay in changing user attitudes and behavior. For example, the management wanted to persuade more users to make use of the interior areas of the park

rather than crowding together on the perimeter. Management also wanted to educate users about the park's artistic legacy and its biological environment. As the Prospect Park Alliance wrote in its grant application to the Lila Wallace Readers Digest Fund,

> ...public behavior must be transformed... It never occurs to most Park visitors that riding a dirt bike up the hills of the Ravine will harm tree roots... It simply never occurs to most Park visitors that placing a charcoal grill directly under a tree will surely contribute to its death... The challenge is to learn more about the Park's users, their needs, and what they do and want to do in the Park. From that information, programs can be designed that will help them use the Park in a more constructive way" (Prospect Park Alliance Grant Application to Lila Wallace-Readers Digest Fund, 1995).

To this end, park officials were very interested in finding out where users come from, how often they come, how long they stay, and how long they have been coming. They were interested in some aspects of people's knowledge of the park and their attitudes toward it, such as the places and programs frequented, fears, and complaints about facilities and services.

I was part of the 1996-98 User Study CUNY-based research team headed by Professor Setha M. Low. Our proposal to the park Administrator emphasized the ethnographic aspects of the park and the potential for the User Study to explore how the park functioned as a socio-cultural space. The proposal called for close-up ethnographic work in selected areas of the park, and about half the final report was devoted to these mini ethnographies. This ethnographic focus, as well as an orientation to "pure" rather than "applied" research, led us to put more emphasis on users' attitudes--what we termed "park values"--than the Administrator really wanted.

We explored user attitudes in depth, both through participant observation and through several interview questions. We made a great effort to find differences in park

values among the user population, basing our analysis on variation in the data across demographic categories such as race/ethnicity, age, sex, income, and level of education. This line of inquiry led to some compelling findings. We showed that working class users--in Prospect Park, predominantly people of color--had a much more cultural and social orientation to the park than middle class, predominantly white users. This was evidenced in the abundance of sports, picnicking, and music/dance activity among people of color, and the greater tendency of these users to visit the park with family, friends, and other social groups. White visitors were more likely to come alone or with one other person, often for contemplative walks, walking their dogs, or for mobile forms of exercise along the circuit drive. These differences were evident in the interview data and from the field notes.

The User Study data also demonstrated a high level of fear across demographic categories of the wooded, less populated, interior portions of the park. As much as people liked the natural surfaces of the park, most preferred to stay in the more developed areas such as the playgrounds, the circuit drive, the zoo-carousel area, and on open grounds within sight of the circuit drive. In these developed areas, the proportion of built facilities to natural surfaces seems satisfying to many visitors.

We thought these findings could become a basis of planning and policy for the Prospect Park Alliance. In this we were mistaken--the Alliance had already set its course--but I continued to be interested in the questions raised by the User Study findings. I wanted to study the Prospect Park Alliance's major policy initiative, the Woodlands Campaign, from the user's point of view. It seemed important to ask whether the management's course would serve the park users well, especially as the Prospect Park

Alliance was in the forefront of a national movement that places much responsibility for funding and management of parks in private hands.

VI.B. USER CHARACTERISTICS

The Prospect Park study was one of three user studies carried out by the same team; the others were of Van Cortlandt and Pelham Bay Parks in the Bronx. Graduate students were hired to carry out the research: I managed the work on Prospect Park, conducted about 70 of the 357 user interviews, and wrote most of the field notes.

The User Study included a census of visitors. Pedestrians entering the park at all 18 entrances were manually counted at particular times agreed on in advance. The counts were then statistically extrapolated over the whole year, which produced an annual usership estimate of approximately five million. Prospect Park was already claiming six million annual visitors and has continued to use that figure in press releases and other public information efforts. The census takers were asked to record whether the persons they counted were white, black or Latino. This admittedly inexact methodology produced the finding that the user population was roughly one-third white, one-third black, and one-third Latino.

The most well represented neighborhoods in the sample were Park Slope (24%), Flatbush (13%), Kensington (10%), Crown Heights (8%), and Prospect Heights (6%), which are all adjacent to the park. The interview sample had 119 white participants, 102 Latinos, 117 blacks, and 13 Asians. One-hundred fifty-three participants were of either low or lower-middle income, and 123 were in the middle and higher-income ranges. Sixty-six percent of the interview sample had walked to the park; the rest drove or took

public transportation. White participants were more likely to live within easy walking distance. Most of the participants who had traveled for more than a few minutes were people of color.

VI.C. THE FLAVOR OF THE PARK

The park's pastoral landscape of lawns and shade trees attracts a great deal of recreational activity: picnics and cookouts, ball games, walking, kite flying, sunbathing, and sitting and reading. The 90-acre Long Meadow, the smaller Nethermead, and the lake shore are focal points of such activity.

Another focus of activity is the three-mile drive that makes a complete circuit of the perimeter of the park. Pedestrians, bicycles, and rollerbladers all compete for space on the popular circuit drive. In the warmer seasons and on weekends, when automobile traffic is kept out of the park, the circuit drive has a steady stream of mobile visitors. Running and bicycling are among the most popular uses. The circuitous design allows cyclists to ride uninterruptedly, lap after lap, a rare experience in the city. Many cyclists ride casually, sometimes alone but often with one or more others. But Prospect Park is also the scene of much competitive bike racing and racing workouts. Many weekend races are held on the circuit drive, usually scheduled for early morning hours when other users are not numerous. Most of the racers are men. Bicycle racing seems to be popular among Brooklyn's Caribbean population, as many of the racers are also West Indian. There is a spot along the East Drive, on the Concert Grove terrace overlooking the drive, where West Indian cyclists hang out in their colorful cycling regalia after or between rides.

Other popular features of the park include the band shell, located near the Ninth Street entrance, which is the site of a popular, summer-long program of outdoor pop music concerts. The concert scene is informal, friendly, and very multi-cultural.

Depending on who's playing, the crowd may be more white or more black or Latino, but there is always a good mix. The band shell area includes picnic grounds, a playground, and restrooms, and is thus a center of summertime activity long into the evening.

On the opposite side of the park, along Flatbush Avenue near the Willink entrance, are the Prospect Park Zoo, the Carousel, and the Lefferts Homestead, a historic house museum geared to children. These facilities also attract a diverse usership.

Prospect Park is a good place to observe the ethnic and class differences indicated in the literature, but also to notice where class and race stereotypes conceal the many park values and uses shared by different groups. In this section I borrow from the User Study to describe some aspects of the ethnographic character of the park, including the important cultural practices of music-making and picnicking.

VI.C.1. Grass-Roots Cultural Activities

It is on the east side of the park that the contemporary Brooklyn of immigrant groups and diverse peoples of color makes its presence felt the most. To paraphrase one visitor, West Indians run the show here. The southeastern corner of the park, near the Parkside-Ocean Avenue entrance, is a focal point for West Indian and African American cultural activity. A local folk artist carved human images into a tree stump by the lake shore; this site, the "Grumbwa" (a corruption of "grand bois") or "head", became a place where men gather to play Haitian roots music. The stump has decayed since the research and the carved image is no longer recognizable. It was an icon for Haitian people (the name, from Haitian mystical tradition, belongs to the spirit of the woodlands,) and Haitians still gather there on the logs that circle the old stump. Haitians also gather in the Oriental Pavilion every Sunday and give informal concerts to an appreciative Haitian audience.

Surely the most prominent "grass-roots" cultural attraction in the area is the drumming phenomenon that takes place on Sundays in an otherwise nondescript place

along the East Drive. Following is an excerpt from field notes taken by Charles Price-Reavis on July 14, 1996.

> The sound of the drums is audible from some distance. Approaching the site, one sees vendors selling foods, drinks, and arts and crafts goods. The actual drummers site is simply a group of benches arranged in a U-shape around a patch of ground worn flat and bare by the heavy traffic of feet.
>
> At approximately 3:00 p.m., there are from 75 to 100 people gathered right around and on the benches; in the peripheral area outside the benches another 200 or so people mill around. By 5:00 there are twice as many. In this peripheral area people are watching and listening to the drumming, drinking and eating, smoking, talking and dancing. People mill around the many vendor tables looking at and buying merchandise and many buying food. There is no place right nearby to sit so many who buy the chicken, corn on the cob, and other offerings eat and drink it standing up.

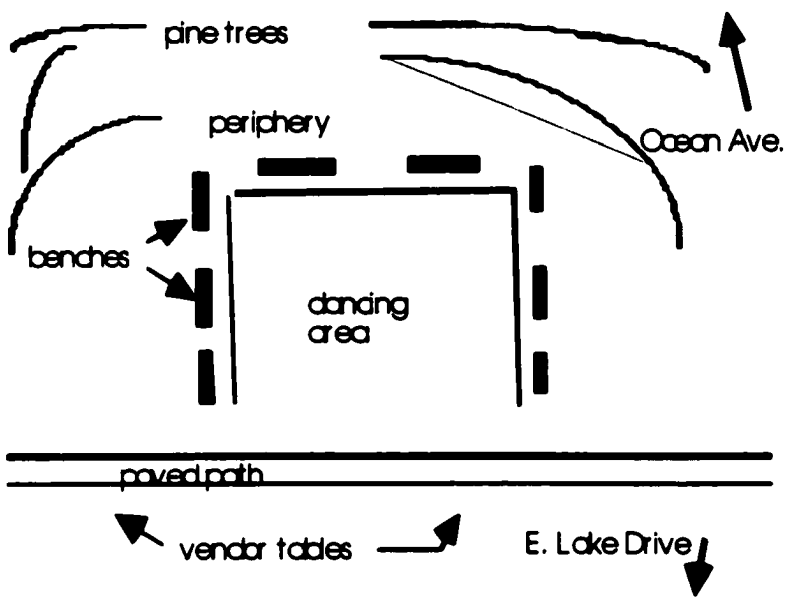

Figure VI-1.
THE DRUMMERS' GROVE

There are several drummers and percussionists in this peripheral area, some of them playing their instruments and others resting.

Some passersby, many of them jogging, rollerblading, and cycling along the circuit drive, pause along the roadside to observe the scene. Some people have set up blankets and tents in the area, and are having what might be called picnics. There is a noticeable presence of foot and cruiser police in the area, as well as at least two park enforcement patrol officers, both black women, armed with nightsticks. The crowd gathered at the site is quite ethnically and nationally

diverse. The markers and clues that suggest the participants come from places such as the Caribbean (Guyanan, Jamaican, and Trinidadian flags are in display); Africa (people wearing West African garb are evident, as are the sounds of French and Wolof; Latin/Central America/Spanish Caribbean (Spanish being spoken); African Americans, and some whites.

The Drummers in Action. The drums in use range from large and small bass drums, to congas, bongos, and talking drums. Other percussive instruments abound, such as shakerees, tambourines, bells, and a few people have recorders and flutes. The drummers are also a multi-ethnic mix of people, most of them black men. Most of the dances going on in the circle are Yoruba movements. The whole endeavor is quite participatory; all you need is an instrument of some kind, or an urge to dance. No one person guides or directs the drumming. Generally, one or another drummer starts what may be called a "baseline" rhythm, often one of the bass drummers. As this central or baseline rhythm becomes consistent, other players pick up the rhythm and perform whatever variations on the central rhythm they wish. Thus the cacophony soon becomes a syncopated rhythm. As more and more people "catch" the emergent rhythm, the sound and intensity of the drumming increases until a "groove" is reached. They then hold this "groove," especially if the onlookers and dancers are intensely involved. Eventually, the rhythm decreases in intensity until it stops entirely, or until only a few drummers are left playing. If these few drummers continue playing, then they often set the tempo for a new rhythm, which begins in the same way--other drummers slowly begin to fall in line with the new baseline or central rhythm.

Most of the drumming rhythms are of an African variety, mainly Nigerian, but some rhythms sound Haitian, and some seemingly of an Afro-Brazilian variety. On this particular day there are no Rastafarian drum rhythms, nor any other Jamaican rhythms. The reason may be that most Rastafarians avoid direct participation in activities that they, or Jamaicans in general, call "Obeah" or "science." These are folk terms for what others might call witchcraft or Vodun. The drum beats audible today are often associated with such practices, and the offerings in evidence corroborate this conclusion. All in all, as it seems today, the drumming is not simply a gathering of musicians, but also an event of religious and cultural content--even of religious and cultural significance.

Most of the people interviewed here come to the drummers' grove to hang out as well as to listen to the drums. Here they can eat, socialize, watch people, and examine the arts and crafts goods for sale. Several people said that they come to support the drummers. Some Sundays, depending on weather, the drumming sessions can go until 10:00 or later, and people remain in the area well past midnight. One young woman interviewed on a Sunday said she had been in the park until 3:00 the last night with a boyfriend.

Some on the park staff have been slow in coming to see the drumming event as an asset. Roundtable discussions with staff at the onset of research in 1996 revealed more

worry than pride. Some were concerned that the activity was causing soil compaction, which weakens the trees. Yet many of the African American and West Indian participants in the study knew of the drumming event and spoke of it favorably as a cultural tie to the park. Recent construction on the grounds around the Parkside and Ocean entrance temporarily displaced the drumming ritual. The drummers have returned to this space, where new rustic log benches are organized in a semi-circle. Management planned this new layout in cooperation with the drummers.

VI.C.2 Enjoying Nature

Many middle class visitors, predominantly white, reflect the Western romantic tradition of idealizing nature and wilderness, as well as notions of present-day environmentalism and civic-mindedness. These visitors tend to be aware of the artistic importance placed on the Olmsted and Vaux design and appreciative of the Woodlands Campaign. The Alliance's appeal to save Brooklyn's "last forest" is well received by this group, and its membership is drawn largely from among them.

Most members of this constituency also place value on the park's social and recreational character. They see the natural setting as valuable in itself and conducive to social and recreational activity. These sentiments are epitomized by the words of a white professional man interviewed in the Long Meadow. He described the park as:

> ...a godsend, an island of nature, a place of respite. It's a fabulous recreation resource, a wonderful social gathering place. It's also wonderful with a dog...it's a social resource in Park Slope. Just to watch the passage of the seasons in the park. I couldn't say enough of what the park means to me!

The aesthetic ideal of countryside that the park embodies was expressed by a German woman watching a soccer game in the Long Meadow, for whom the park:

> ...reminds me of the landscape of Europe... You don't see houses from inside the park, and it doesn't grow wild. Over here [the countryside] is not groomed or cultivated. This is like what I'm used to in Europe, where

> people can take their cars and go out into the country--there are paths and you can walk all over. All around, everywhere.

She would ride out here on her bicycle from the Lower East Side to take long walks all over the park, and to enjoy the cultural scene.

For many middle-class visitors enjoyment of the park consists in having a place to walk and take in the views, to be alone or walk their dogs, to run or ride a bike, and get to think and relax here. A few are devoted naturalists, some of them members of the Brooklyn Bird Club. An example is a man interviewed at dusk in the Nethermead in November:

> I've logged hundreds of hours here over the years... I love it in winter. I'm always here in snow and wet weather. I could never imagine living anywhere else in New York away from this park. [The Lullwater] is my favorite area [pointing that way]... Just saw a great blue heron over there. And the ravine area... still natural, just the way the glacier left it. Tremendous! ...I'm completely for wildlife; I don't like other uses at all!

For these visitors the park is not important as a social space but as a wildlife sanctuary. These visitors represent one extreme of the usership, those for whom the park should be a place of quiet contemplation of wild nature.

VI.C.3. Picnicking

Picnicking and cooking out occurs in many locations in the park. Irrespective of location, the picnickers are overwhelmingly people of color, usually black and Hispanic. There are picnic grounds at Ocean-Parkside, at Ninth-Eleventh Streets, and in the Long Meadow near the Picnic House[10]. Although picnicking is a certifiably Olmstedian use of the park, there is little sign of landscape architecture in these picnic grounds. Off-the-shelf, wooden table-bench units, some equipped with grills, are plopped down in no evident pattern. The ground around the tables is well worn. Nonetheless, picnicking and

[10] No picnicking services or supplies are offered. The main floor is rented out for private functions and the basement is used for administrative offices. The building does have public restrooms, pay phone, and candy and beverage vending machines.

cooking out are so popular that people spread out from the established picnic/cookout grounds, through the Long Meadow and the Nethermead, and to just about any place where one can sit on the ground.

The following are excerpts from field notes taken at the lakeshore picnic area near the skating rink and the Ocean-Parkside entrance:

> By late morning, the picnicking families are arriving and setting up for a day of fun: the cooking gets going by noon and continues through the afternoon into the evening. People eat, listen to music, take walks, play ball, fish, and hang out. There are many extended family groups or groups of two and three families. Some of the picnicking groups are not families but church groups or possibly other organizations. This Saturday evening, there is a gathering on the occasion of a boy's birthday of two families from Bedford Stuyvesant. There is a lot of cooking and eating going on. The father and another man are standing to the side of the gathering, drinking beer and talking (they seem to have had a few beers already). There's a boom box going. Women and teenagers of both sexes are sitting at and standing around the table, some organizing, some eating. The birthday boy, who is about 10, comes up to ask his father can he go somewhere with his friend (Yes but be back here soon!).
>
> People are well stocked here: they can drive in and park right next to the picnic ground, so carrying stuff in is relatively easy. In addition to coolers and bundles of food, drink, utensils, plates, cups, etc., are grills, lawn furniture; balls, bats and gloves; and tape deck/radios (boom boxes). Varieties of popular music, including soul, Samba, disco, and jazz, emanate sometimes very loudly from the boom boxes. Cooking smoke is in the air. Litter accumulates around some of the barbecue sites as the day progresses (but from a brief tour the next morning, Sunday, it looks like the clean-up crews have covered the area.)
>
> The central part of the picnic area is left open (free of picnic tables). Here men and boys are throwing balls, playing catch or having an abbreviated softball or soccer game. People from the picnicking groups also cross the drive to play ball on the triangular grassy area near the park entrance. Girls are playing jumprope and hopscotch on the paved paths.
>
> A man from Ghana is enjoying a beer and a cigarette with another man while seated on one of the park benches facing a stand of phragmites along the shore. The Ghanaian says he's taking a break from his family picnic nearby. He objects to the phragmites on grounds of safety, suggesting that a pervert could be waiting inside for the children who play along the lakeshore.

Latino visitors--mostly Puerto Rican, Dominican, and Mexican--do their picnicking mainly in two places: around the Vanderbilt Street playground on the southwest side and in the corner of the park marked by the band shell, the entrance at

Bartel-Pritchard Circle, and the Tenth Avenue gate. They patronize some of the more developed areas of the park, those with facilities like playgrounds and picnic tables, or where they can fish. Many Latinos said they came here to socialize, to get their extended families together, especially in summer when it is hot inside people's apartments. They saw the park as a place where they could breathe freely. A Latino man playing cards with his sons near the Picnic House said:

> Our apartment's really small, and we spend at the park as much time as possible. Since the kids discovered the trolley, we go to a different place each weekend. We go fishing, or play soccer or baseball in this area. We also go to the playgrounds. When I come to the park I forget my problems for awhile. This area (the meadow) is my favorite because it is so big, I mean, the open space, and there are so many trees.

A Mexican woman at the 11th Street playground said "I come to the park to be in contact with nature. We live in an apartment, and contact with nature is essential to my kids." She always came to this playground or to the carousel, and had not visited the lake. For her, nature was the open space, and "the trees' shadows." A Guatemalan man saw the park as a meeting place to gather in after a hard work week. He liked the "casitas" (sheltering pavilions) and "resting places" like Long Meadow, "open places--I love the view." He would like to see tennis and basketball courts distributed through the park, and places for table games.

Mexican families establish themselves in the shady grounds near the Bartel-Pritchard entrance. This is a marginal area intended as a decorative buffer zone between West Drive and the street outside the park. As at Jacob Riis Park, where Latinos hold festive gatherings in the back-beach areas originally planted for scenic effects, the Mexican visitors here have made picnic grounds out of these fringe landscape passages[11].

Sports are part of the Mexican picnic scene in the Bartel-Pritchard area,

[11] The author participated in an applied research project at Jacob Riis Park conducted in summer, 2000, for the National Park Service. The report, by Setha M. Low and the Public Space Research Group, is entitled "Rapid Ethnographic Assessment Procedures: Jacob Riis Park, Gateway National Recreation Area."

particularly volleyball games. These games take place in the vicinity of the family picnics, wherever there is reasonably level ground. Games like volleyball and soccer are very hard on the grass, and only a patch of bare ground remains after a season of volleyball games in one spot. The area could be modified to incorporate some rugged wearing surfaces for volleyball and the like, but management sees its role as protecting the park-like scenery of lawn and shade trees. The solutions attempted have been in the direction of planting trees to break up these clearings, and temporarily roping off areas of worn-out grass for reseeding.

Picnicking and especially cooking out are points of racial, class, and management contention in Prospect Park. Some of the park's white neighbors complain about the smoke and the people who take their parking spaces and walk noisily along their sidewalks getting to the park. Some park visitors complain about the garbage and ashes left over the next morning and the rodents they attract. Nearly all who use the picnic tables here for cookouts are black and Hispanic visitors, and most of the protesters are white. The Administrator told me that racial divisions in the park have lessened during her 20-year tenure. Racism, however, continues to affect some users' experience of the park.

VI.D. PERCEPTIONS OF DISCRIMINATION

The social environment of Prospect Park reflects the differences in class and ethnicity of the adjacent neighborhoods. Some users feel that these differences have resulted in hostility, differential maintenance, and other ramifications of racism. An older black man interviewed on a bench near the Ocean Avenue-Parkside Avenue entrance recalled the population transitions in the neighborhood since the 1960s:

> It was nice then...everything was clean. You couldn't hardly see a black person in the park...only whites and Jews... people in this area were very

> prejudiced. When minorities started to flow in, things changed. Whites moved out...that's when things started to go down... the upkeep [declined]...you know when minorities move in they let things fall apart.

The same man went on to say that today everyone gets along in the park but he feels the east side is much neglected. Such allegations of discrimination were not uncommon among users on the east side of the park. The racial divide affects the way different groups perceive the park and its management. People will say that park resources are allocated unevenly, that the "white" or more affluent section near Prospect Park West is better cared for. Many people interviewed in the Parkside and Ocean area commented about too much brush and not enough mowing of the grass. Several people thought it was cleaner and better kept on the Park Slope side.

A few said they felt more comfortable on "their" side of the park. A man nursing a beer near the skating rink on a July afternoon said:

> I like this side the best...You know, my kind of people over here...all these black people, Spanish people...nice you know. I don't get the same vibe on the west side...it's o.k., but not for me.

A man at the Willink entrance had:

> ...talked to this guy who was cutting the trees and he told me to go over to the other side where the whites are. That side is much cleaner. People on this side don't take care of it...I guess it's their nature. But I stay on this side where I belong.

A Trinidadian soccer player interviewed in the Nethermead emphasized the relationship between the conditions on the east side of the park to those of the adjoining neighborhoods:

> This side...people don't appreciate [the park] like they do on the other side. Buildings people live in should be kept safe and intact you know...you can't separate them. They go hand in hand, park and buildings. The fact of people being cut, aids, grants... the school system doesn't educate people to appreciate things [like the park.] Everything is a matrix.

He also thought the east side needed:

> ...more concerts to reinvigorate it...like, you see, they have them on the other side, but they fear the culture here. We need that too, we need a bandstand on this side where West Indian artists could play...instead we have a skating rink. Here people are of African descent, they don't use it that much--I don't say they don't use it at all. [But] we need that. There are so many steelbands...

The fencing erected in 1996 for the Woodlands Campaign, which blocked off the major paths across the park interior, exacerbated racial unease. Some participants saw the fencing as a ploy to keep black people away from the more affluent west side of the park. A man interviewed at the Carousel that summer said,

> They are fencing us out of the other side. Every light works over there, the benches are painted, the grass is cut. They're trying to segregate the park...barricading the routes off, fencing. Fencing... there are no signs.

He drums every Sunday:

> We did it before it was allowed. They put a curfew on us, but they let the band shell go on 'til late. You know why they do that!"[12]

Some said that the park imposes too many restrictions on activity and behavior. For example, one of a group of men sitting on crates near Ocean Avenue and playing cards on a June evening, said:

> They don't want you to barbecue no more. So I just play dominoes and things like that... People on our block used to cook out sometimes in the park. You can't do that now without getting in trouble. I think they're making too many rules for people now. But sometimes people don't know how to act in public. I know they probably blame it on us [black people]...you know--'Too many black people over here'. Can't let us take the park over.

Using a participatory design process with park users could be helpful in countering the impression that the west side is better served. One user interviewed on the east side at the Parkside and Ocean entrance, commenting on recent work at the Lincoln Road playground, made a good case for a more participatory process:

[12] The band shell is on the west side.

> At Lincoln Road, nobody asked us anything. They put the chess tables behind the bathroom, in full sun. They put the men behind the park house, where we can't protect the women [in the playgound.] Nobody asks us. They should have put the chess on the other side of the park house. They put trees there as if in one year they'll grow... What stupidity. Now, it's too hot to play chess there. Most of the guys don't even come down any more. That's the way it goes.

The same man also commented on differences between the east and the west sides. "When things get broken over here, they take their time to fix it. Over there, it's manicured. Here, they need to cut the bushes." He thought that the working class blacks on the east side behaved more viscerally:

> When we get mad, we may kick a bench down; it's the way we are. Over on the Park Slope side, there's no abuse. When people have money, they're too busy buying stuff. No energy to destroy. Here, there's all this pent-up energy. On the other side, the kids are in school, everybody's employed. So I guess we are more abusive.

Participatory design is hampered by the New York City capital budget process. Once capital funds have been appropriated, the recipient agency is under considerable pressure to commit the funds within the budget year; otherwise it risks losing the appropriation and receiving criticism for not spending its allocation. The pressure to get projects through design and into construction on time makes it more difficult to incorporate public participation into the process.

Although many people of color use the west side of the park, some feel ill at ease there. A black man with rollerblades, sitting on a bench near the Meadowport Arch, had noticed our field worker the day before. "To be honest," he told her, "you don't see that many 'sisters' out here on the weekend, at least one who is not pushing a baby carriage for a living." He said he doesn't go into the woods because someone would probably see him and scream:

> It's the way things are around here. And people are afraid if you are skating alone or biking alone. The only time I feel somewhat more comfortable is if I bring my nieces and nephews--at least people see you with children and relax a bit.

A group of teenage boys relaxing on the steps of the Picnic House after bicycling agreed to be interviewed. To the question "What do you like least about the park?" one said "White people run away! We don't run; we're not scared of them--why they scared of us? They be like, 'Oh-oh, there come some black guys.' One boy thought that walking in the park was safer now that much of the violence had stopped. To this, another boy answered, "What do you mean?! You're all the people that's doing it!" Pointing to several of his friends in turn, he added "Two years for rape [for you], three years robbery [for you], five years being black [for you]...." These comments suggest that if racial integration in the park is limited by cultural preference, it is also limited by the aversive behavior of some white visitors and police.

VI.E. LANDSCAPE PREFERENCES

The interview data point to areas of dissonance between management's landscape values and those of some user groups. The differences are related to culturally-bound preferences but also to people's fears for their safety. Following are examples of both.

Some people view the thickening woods as the result of neglect and indifferent maintenance. It would surely surprise them to learn that this is deliberate policy and not just neglect. A Colombian caregiver interviewed at the Vanderbilt playground complained of too much brush ("matorrales"). "You can't see the lake from here now. It used to be cleaner and better maintained." This woman nevertheless called the park "indispensable to my life. I would die without the park. I spend more time here than at home." She then warned the female interviewer not to venture into the interior areas across the circuit drive.

Forestry practices of cutting, pruning, and thinning trees have been contentious issues in landscape parks from the beginning (Graff, 1985; Zaitzevsky, 1982). Olmsted planted trees thickly, intending to thin the plantings as the trees grew up with a judicious "use of the axe." Yet efforts to thin stands of young trees have evoked furious public protests. In its 33rd Annual Report (1892), the Brooklyn park Commission wrote that the "plantations" were becoming overcrowded in many places, with "fine trees" being crowded out by inferior, rapidly growing trees. "These trees were originally planted close to produce immediate effects, the [original designers] intending to remove many later as demanded." The commissioners admitted of a "public clamor among the ignorant that trees were being cut down and the park destroyed" when attempts had been made to thin the woods. They added that in the last two years, thinning had progressed with "public recognition that the work is necessary to the safety and beauty of the plantations" (p. 45-46). Still, in the 1894 report two years later, the commissioners observed the need to thin out "spindly trees blocking views." They noted a lack of color in the woods with the loss of some big trees, especially conifers, and called for a varied collection of trees, shrubs, and plants for variety and contrast.

Charles Eliot, an Olmsted disciple and professional partner of Olmsted in the 1890s, commented in 1896 on the sentiment that nature left alone produces the lovelier landscapes than any "developed by intention," to which he answered "a general denial." The Middlesex Fells were more interesting than the Lynn Woods, he wrote:[13]

> ...because of Man and not nature. In the Fells are more pastures, more grassy glades and fields, and more variety in the height and density of the forest trees. Nature, indeed, is constantly striving to abolish even the meager existing variety, and to shut in all the paths and roads between walls of close-standing tree trunks. Thus, if the reservations are left to nature, monotony will follow" (Eliot, 1999, p. 657).

Thinning allows valuable trees to develop their "habit" without interference. Cutting makes it possible to maintain clearings and sight lines in otherwise wooded areas,

[13] The Middlesex Fells Reservation and the Lynn Woods Reservation are public lands near Boston associated with Charles Eliot and the Metropolitan Park Commission. Each is approximately 2,000 acres. Middlesex Fells was one of the first acquisitions of the Park Commission in the 1890s; Lynn Woods was established by the City of Lynn with advisement from Frederick Law Olmsted in 1878 (Cushing, 1988).

which arguably enhances scenic values. Under Henry Stern's leadership, the New York City Parks Dapartment stood firmly against cutting of trees. The authority of park foresters to exercise their judgment in pruning, thinning, and cutting was sharply restricted. One day I noticed a park worker cutting trees at the foot of Lookout Hill near Wellhouse Drive. When I asked, he told me he was cutting saplings to protect a valuable collection of magnolias along the drive. He was doing this on his own accord, against the no-cutting policy. "Don't tell anyone," he said. "I could lose my job." The stance against cutting and thinning allows the woods to reclaim any territory not kept open by regular lawn-mowing. Many clearings in the woods and along the shores of the Lake and the Lullwater have reverted to woods in the past twenty years. This growth in the extent of woodland creates more wildlife habitat but it also changes the ways in which people can make use of the park. In such areas, the atmosphere comes closer to that of a wildlife sanctuary than a park.

The Prospect Park Alliance thinks of the wooded interior as a "forest" distinct from the rest of the park. One of the things park officials wanted to know from the User Study was how people use and evaluate this forest. Many participants, however, did not distinguish a particular forest within the park. Latinos, in particular, said they loved the trees and shade but most seemed baffled by the questions about the forest. A participant interviewed at Parkside and Ocean, perhaps thinking of "forest" as something inclusive of social spaces, answered that the whole park was a forest. Although the confusion over the forest was partly due to a semantic discrepancy, I think that it is also the result of different cultural ideas about what a forest is. For the white, middle-class management, the term "forest" alludes to an imagined pre-Columbian wilderness covering western Long Island. For many users, a forest may be a more inhabited place, one with trees but also small farms, orchards, and villages. For them, the shady lawns around the playgrounds, the lakeshore, and the open meadows may seem as much a part of the "forest" as the thickly wooded areas.

Meanwhile, most users interviewed disliked and avoided the park's interior woodlands. When asked about fearsome places in the park, lots of people talked about

the woods, or the "bushes." Whites were even more likely than people of color to talk about avoiding the woods. For example, a white guy, 34 years old, said "Who in his right mind, male or female, would go into areas like that, even in broad daylight? A white, 33 year-old man avoids:

> ...the forest: any places that aren't open, where you don't have good visibility... specifically places where you don't know the trails. I don't have my bearings. You feel kind of isolated. The park doesn't provide maps. It's not clear where the paths go to or what's the quickest way out. Unfortunately I have to stick to the roadway. I say to my wife, 'Let's not explore... I don't know who's there.' Especially when the trees are in bloom. It's very nice, but you don't want to have to walk with a stick in your hand.

Otherwise, he likes the park:

> I like that there's some variation in the park. It's not just some square field that's flat. There are trees, a variety of uses, the roadways are nice for running around, up and down hills. It's a kind of sanctuary.

A young, male immigrant from El Salvador said he feared:

> ...that place [in the middle of the park] because it's very isolated. We don't know where we are and how we found ourselves there... It's scary because no one is there. You don't feel too comfortable. You can't relax.

But, he likes,

> ...the trees and the water and the animals I see. The trees shadow on you and relaxing you. For me that's the best I can do: sit and relax. In my culture we grew up like this... it's kind of like being in my country. Especially the trees. My grandfather taught me how to climb trees, so it reminds me of him.

A 30 year-old African American man fears the woods because:

> ...gay guys walk around over there. It seems a lot of pervs. You don't see families over there, only men alone walking around. Of course, you read about someone being attacked, and I'm not too happy about that. Doesn't matter what time of day. I don't like that area at all... too many single men walking around. Lights—they need more lights. So many secluded paths. It's very dark over there.

The presence of men standing around in wooded areas was frightening to women. As one of a group of three young women interviewed in the Long Meadow said,

> I'm curious about the woods and I look at them but I'm really afraid to explore. I often see men standing around. I won't even do it with another friend. I find myself suddenly alone and I see men standing around alone... also the shortcuts through the park are scary.

Her companion said,

> I often see men alone...some of them just seem to be hanging around. I remember when a friend told me she saw some guy playing with himself and looking at women...it was in the Midwood area. I *do* go around the perimeter. Whenever I get to the place where the rapes occurred, near the carousel, on the east side, for some reason it spreads out there and you feel really isolated.

The third young woman said she takes the short cuts,

> ...but I hold my breath until I reach civilization again on the east side. The woods are attractive but you can't orient yourself. You need maps that say 'Here is where you are,' and 'Here's the next hangout'."

For many park users, the Prospect Park woodlands lack the romantic and transcendentalist associations that the Woodlands Campaign seeks to evoke. Some find them dark, confusing, and frightening. Many stay away.

VI.F. ETHNOGRAPHIC DATA SUMMARY

In sum, the data show a variety of activity in the park, some of it distinguishable by cultural group. Ethnic music and dance is important among blacks, especially West Indians. Picnicking and cooking out are popular among people of color in general but little evident among whites. Comments about the reforestation of some areas tended to split along racial lines, with people of color generally unfavorable and whites in favor. White users, who tend to have more education and income than other users, liked the ways the park seems to symbolize community, but tended to use the park as a place to work out or to find refuge from the city in a natural setting. Some black users experience

racism in the park, either at the hands of other users or they perceive discriminatory management practices. Finally, users from all demographic categories were fearful of the woods.

VI.G. QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF USER STUDY DATA

The User Study included an extensive quantitative presentation and analysis of the interview data. We coded and counted all the answers to the interview questions. All the responses were presented in frequency distributions. We then cross-tabulated many variables to find statistical variation among the participant sample. Some of the findings produced by this process are relevant to the issues raised in the foregoing section of the chapter. In the following section, I present quantitative information that clarifies and supports the findings described in narrative form above.

I present the data mainly from two variables, "Today's Activities" and "Special Meaning." The first indicates what people do in the park, and the second allows them to say what the park means to them. Both variables elicited a wide range of answers which, when displayed according to frequency of response, reveal the comparative salience of different response categories. I then discuss the results of cross-tabulating these variables with demographic characteristics. This step can indicate the patterns in the data, such an association between black users and the drumming.

VI.G.1. Activity

Participants were asked what activities they were pursuing that day. The frequency distribution of their coded responses is presented below in Table VI-1. "Walk in the park" was cited by one-third of the interview sample (122 participants). Walking is one of the central activities of a landscape park and a perfect fit with design

Table VI-1
TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Code	Count	Pct of Responses	Pct of Cases
walk in the park	122	17.8	34.3
visit playground	69	10.1	19.4
relax	67	9.8	18.8
picnic/bbq	49	7.2	13.8
to be with the family/kids	46	6.7	12.9
bicycling	30	4.4	8.4
walk dog	21	3.1	5.9
watching people	19	2.8	5.3
meet friends/waiting for someone	18	2.6	5.1
jogging or running	17	2.5	4.8
other	16	2.3	4.5
hanging out	15	2.2	4.2
visit carousel	15	2.2	4.2
reading	15	2.2	4.2
supervising children/others	14	2.0	3.9
visit zoo	14	2.0	3.9
play soccer	12	1.8	3.4
rollerblading	11	1.6	3.1
attend performance	11	1.6	3.1
go fishing	10	1.5	2.8
other passive activities (eg.knitting)	9	1.3	2.5
skating	9	1.3	2.5
watching sports events	7	1.0	2.0
feed animals	7	1.0	2.0
listening to music	7	1.0	2.0
play chess,checkers, dominoes, cards	4	.6	1.1
birdwatching	5	.7	1.4
drugs and drinking	5	.7	1.4
play volleyball	4	.6	1.1
sunbathe	4	.6	1.1
other active sports (eg.horseshoes)	4	.6	1.1
volunteering	4	.6	1.1
play frisbee	3	.4	.8
play baseball	3	.4	.8
attend party	2	.3	.6
hiking/nature walk/scavenging	2	.3	.6
play basketball	2	.3	.6
ride trolley	2	.3	.6
cruising	1	.1	.3
greenmarket shopping	1	.1	.3
attend educational programs	1	.1	.3
watching girls	1	.1	.3
Nothing/None/ Never	1	.1	.3
Did Not Ask	2	.3	.6
No Answer	3	.4	.8
Total responses	684	100.0	192.1

intention: parks like Prospect Park were designed with walking in mind. Other high-ranking activities were "visit playground," "relax," "picnic/bbq," and "to be with family/kids." Playgrounds are not original design components in Prospect Park; they were added in the 1940s when recreation facilities were high on the park planning agenda. The high rank of walking and playground visiting reflects the dual character negotiated in urban landscape parks between natural surfaces and facilities built for intensive use. Facilities like playgrounds, skating rinks, and ballfields are often attacked as inappropriate desecrations of an historic design, but they are also very popular attractions. Indeed, many visitors do more than one thing—walking *and* visiting a playground, for example. Table VI-1 shows a total of 684 responses for a sample of 357 participants, an average of roughly two activities cited per participant.

Recreation authorities consider activities such as walking, picnicking, and visiting playgrounds as passive activities. Active forms of recreation include team sports, running, and bicycling. The distinction has its roots in Olmsted's philosophy of "recuperative recreation,"as well as in the difference in impact upon park resources of one or another form of activity. The intended use of a pastoral landscape park was for walking and promenading, carriage driving, sitting, picnicking, rowing, skating, and other "passive" activity. Games such as baseball were forbidden, but relatively informal and unstructured games and activities were common. Things such as archery, croquet, ice skating, and lawn tennis were encouraged and facilitated.

The active-passive distinction is problematic because it implies a real difference in exertion rates that is belied by some of the activities labeled "passive." Certainly sitting is a passive occupation, but walking, rowing, and skating all require some exertion—sometimes strenuous exertion. The distinction seems to have more to do with Olmsted's patrician prejudice against baseball and other activities that struck him as rough, common, working-class pursuits unbecoming of a park.

The prejudice, however, persists in contemporary park management. Prospect

Park's managers wanted to know whether contemporary usage still reflected the Olmstedian values of passive recreation. After an unsuccessful attempt at collapsing the 45 original categories into six new groupings, the management requested classification into simple binary variable of active and passive uses, coded according to management's own intuitive criteria. With "walk in the park" coded passive, the frequency results showed a great preponderance of passive activity.

Efforts to find demographic differences in the activity data produced divergent results. The active-passive classification suggested that whites were more passive than blacks and Latinos, and highly educated users more passive than less educated users. On the other hand, the classification of the activity categories into six aggregations showed very little difference in census group or education level.[14] Some differences were apparent in a comparison of unaggregated activity codes with census group. Of 49 participants engaged in picnicking or barbecuing on the day of the interview, 27 were Latino, 16 were black, and six were white. There were only eight Latino participants among the 63 who said they were here to relax, in contrast to 19 white and 36 black. Of 14 participants who said they were hanging out, 10 were black, two white, and two Latino. Among the 121 participants who cited walking as an activity, 51 were white, 37 black, and 24 Latino. In addition, most dog walkers were white. There were very few Latinos among the runners and rollerbladers, although of 30 cyclists interviewed, seven were Latino, nine white, and 14 black.

Overall, the data on activity show a wide range of activity fairly evenly distributed across education level and census group. Whites were more likely than others to say they were walking. Most picnickers were people of color and more blacks than others counted relaxation among their park activities.

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[14] In this classification, sports were grouped together, "visit playground" was left as a single category, activities involving people were grouped together as "social;" and walking, relaxing, sunbathing, and a number of other activities were grouped together as "relaxing." These new categories—"visit playground," "social," and "relaxing," were fairly evenly distributed demographically.

VI.G.2. Meaning

The User Study interviews included the question "Does the park have any special meaning for you?" We coded the wide range of answers according to response categories based on the actual responses--categories like "release/refreshment,"

Table VI-2.
FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION: SPECIAL MEANING

Category label	Count	Pct of Responses	Pct of Cases
relaxing/tranquil	58	9.1	16.2
appreciating nature/wildlife	56	8.8	15.7
childhood memories	36	5.6	10.1
other	36	5.6	10.1
release-refreshment-escape	35	5.5	9.8
nice	32	5.0	9.0
place to recreate	28	4.4	7.8
family memories in general	28	4.4	7.8
beauty	27	4.2	7.6
place memory	25	3.9	7.0
place to meet friends	21	3.3	5.9
large open space	21	3.3	5.9
place to spend time	20	3.1	5.6
community-public resource	20	3.1	5.6
alternative to being in apartment	18	2.8	5.0
nothing-none	18	2.8	5.0
inspiration	15	2.3	4.2
romantic memories	15	2.3	4.2
ethnic-cult assoc/identity	12	1.9	3.4
habitual use/second home	12	1.9	3.4
memories of activities w friends	12	1.9	3.4
fun	11	1.7	3.1
place to visit on the job	11	1.7	3.1
place to feel safe	11	1.7	3.1
parenting memories	7	1.1	2.0
place to be alone	7	1.1	2.0
freedom	6	.9	1.7
good fishing	5	.8	1.4
people are friendly	5	.8	1.4
only place thing can happen	4	.6	1.1
school-related memories	4	.6	1.1
social diversity	4	.6	1.1
hanging out	4	.6	1.1
place to be when not working	3	.5	.8
did not ask	2	.3	.6
refused to answer	2	.3	.6
no answer	9	1.4	2.5
Total responses	640	100.0	179.3

"freedom," and "alternative to the apartment." The categories are presented in a frequency distribution, in descending order, shown in Table VI-2.

"Relaxing/tranquil" had the highest number of responses--58. "Appreciating nature/wildlife" ranked second with 56 responses. These two values are consistent with one the generative ideas of the park—that people should find relaxation and tranquillity in a spacious and scenic landscape setting. "Appreciating nature/wildlife" reflects different ways of relating the natural environment of the park, certainly more than just the choices of bird-watchers or other users of a naturalist bent.

Many participants cited nature or the animal life of the park as something important to them—some with precision, others just with an emphatic "Yeah, it's nature!" Surely, enjoying nature in some sense is part of the conscious experience of the many participants from the above discussion who gave walking in the park as an activity. "Appreciating wildlife" reflects the comments of bird-watchers as well as those who feed the ducks.

Other highly ranked categories included childhood memories and family memories, "release-refreshment-escape," "place to recreate," and "nice" and "beauty." The category "release-refreshment-escape" aggregated various comments, such as getting away from the city or finding release from stress, the latter an allusion to the pressure of city life. "Relaxing/tranquil," the highest-ranked category, is similar in meaning to "release-refreshment-escape" but lacks the implied comparison to city life. "Place to recreate" was the code reserved for comments about enjoying the park for exercise routines and team sports.

Childhood and family memories associated with the park were always favorable and seemed fundamental to the experience of many users who had come to the park as children. "Place memory," in which the park reminds the person of some other place, was important to a number of immigrants and other participants who had grown up

somewhere else. "Nice" and "beautiful" are related values of judgment, "beautiful" referring more explicitly to aesthetics, and "nice" a term of more general sensory pleasure. These comments were often accompanied by some reference to the spaciousness of the park, coded as "large open space." "Place to spend time," "alternative to being in the apartment," "habitual use/second home," all reflect values that seemed to be about hanging out in the park. "Community-public resource" was the code for comments to the effect that the park contributes importantly to the sense of Brooklyn or New York City as a community of citizens.

To find demographic variation in the data I have collapsed the individual response categories into a set of broader groupings. Table VI-3 shows the results of this recoding of "special meaning."

Table VI-3
SPECIAL MEANING RECODED FREQUENCY

Category label	Count	Pct of Responses	Pct of Cases
Place to go/things to do	129	21.9	37.3
Relax/release	93	15.8	26.9
Nice/beautiful	74	12.6	21.4
Nature/wildlife	56	9.5	16.2
Memories	51	8.7	14.7
People	42	7.1	12.1
Other	36	6.1	10.4
Place memory	25	4.2	7.2
Safe	32	5.4	9.2
Civic resource	20	3.4	5.8
Nothing	18	3.1	5.2
No answer	9	1.5	2.6
Did not ask	2	.3	.6
Refused to answer	2	.3	.6
Total responses	589	100.0	170.2

This new variable, "special meaning recoded," is helpful in seeing demographic patterns in the data that correspond with the ethnographic material presented earlier in this chapter. Table VI-4, below, presents the results of a cross-tabulation of this new variable

with "census group." The cross-tabulation demonstrates that these racial groups share important park values. "Relax/release" is quite evenly distributed across "census group," as is "nature/wildlife" and "memories." Otherwise, there are some interesting differences in the data. The category "places to go/things to do" refers to values (from the original variable) such as "place to recreate," "large open space," "place to spend time,"

Table VI-4
MEANING RECODED AND CENSUS GROUP

Category	Number of Responses			
	White	Latino	Black	Total
Place to go/things to do	28	43	53	124
Relax/release	29	26	32	87
Nice/beautiful	37	10	21	68
Nature/wildlife	20	14	17	56
Memories	15	17	19	51
People	11	9	21	41
Other	18	11	7	36
Place memory	13	4	8	25
Safe	5	14	12	31
Civic resource	10	0	6	16
Nothing	7	8	3	18
No answer	3	2	3	8
Did not ask	0	1	0	1
Refused to answer	0	2	0	2
Total	115	97	116	564

"alternative to being in the apartment," "good fishing," and so on. The meaning of this new category is of the park as a place of opportunity to do things or just a place to be in. It has a higher incidence among Latinos and blacks than among whites. The value "people," which includes "ethno-cultural association and identity," "place to meet friends," and "social diversity," has a higher incidence among blacks, as the weekly drumming events demonstrate. Conversely, the category "nice/beautiful," which generally represents an aesthetic judgment, is associated with whites and scored low with Latinos. "Civic resource" is a white and black value, with no mention by Latinos. Whites were less likely than others to call the park "safe."

VI.H. CONCLUSION

The User Study data indicate a trend among working class users and many people of color to think of nature as an open ground of natural surfaces, trees, greenery, shade, breeze, and water at hand. These users appreciate shelters, recreation facilities, and places to sit. Many people prefer a landscape of open ground and trees to one of woods and brush. Woods are properly in the background, often not a subject of particular interest. Many users, especially Latinos, were baffled by official efforts to represent part of the park as a "forest."

The reforestation policy in marginal areas is tone-deaf to the culturally-based preferences of many people of color for clear, open ground. Similarly, construction projects have been undertaken with no thought of how they might be interpreted in this racialized context. The woodlands fencing disrupted the communication between different parts of the park. As a consequence, some users on the poorer, east side of the park felt as though they were being fenced out of the more affluent west side.

Many people of color share an emphasis on the park as an environment for social and cultural activity and relaxation. White users enjoy these qualities too, but the person who opposes crowd-generating activities like cookouts or who takes an interest in issues of ecosystem management or historic design is likely to be white and well educated. Class and cultural differences should be acknowledged. If management disregards them, it will miss the chance to make the park environment as responsive to these constituent values as possible.

As the leisure research literature has shown, black users experience and perceive racism in public settings. This happens even here in a park where blacks constitute a substantial minority and where people of color in general are a majority.

Latinos are much more likely than black and white users to visit the park in groups of friends and family. Those who visit for personal communion with nature,

landscape, or wildlife are disproportionately white. Similarly, some black men reported coming here to be alone with their thoughts. As one black man said, "I don't come to evaluate the park, I come to chill."

Urban woodlands have a rarified constituency. However important they may be to nature lovers and to wildlife, many people avoid these areas for fear of being assaulted or of getting lost. Olmsted and Vaux recognized the safety issue; that is why they designed the park woodlands to be open and inviting with plenty of services and creature comforts. Strictly ecological woodland management is good for the resource, but does little to attract a broader range of users to enjoy and take an interest in the woodland environment.

Chapter VII. DISSERTATION RESEARCH FINDINGS

In this chapter I discuss the findings from my field research with users in the vicinity of the woodlands project. The point of doing this research was to explore in depth the landscape values indicated in the User Study data. In fact, the attitudes toward the woodlands in the data reported in this chapter are strikingly different from those apparent in the User Study data. In contrast to the general aversion to the woodlands evident in the last chapter, the data here reflect strong attachment to both the wooded and pastoral landscapes of the park. Many of these participants approved of the woodlands restoration work. Some offered criticisms, mostly of the fencing, a few of the fussiness of the work itself.

While most User Study participants were interviewed in the more populous, peripheral areas of the park, the present sample was drawn from people who were already in the woodland areas, and it includes a larger proportion of solitary walkers, naturalists, and "nature-lovers." Many participants in the dissertation research voiced concern for their safety, and did not make as much use of the woods as they might have otherwise. Yet most of these participants entered the woods in ways that seemed acceptably safe to them—on a tour or giving a tour, with a friend or a dog, or by keeping to the main path.

A second difference appears between the two bodies of data in relation to landscape preference. From the earlier data, it would appear that many users prefer a park landscape of widely spaced trees and smooth ground—essentially the pastoral style. Many participants also liked improvements such as playgrounds, benches, smoothly paved paths, picnic tables, and shelters. Many dissertation research participants were pleased with the more "wild" character of the interior of the park, preferring it to the refined look of Central Park.

VII.A. CONTENT ANALYSIS

The new data demonstrate in some depth the scope and variation in values people hold for this landscape. After coding the interviews and transect walks for content, I came up with a group of 45 different categories of value. These categories, organized into six heuristic groupings, are presented in Table VII-1.

Table VII-1.[15]
CODING PROCESS CATEGORIES

Sensory Experience	Sensory	Project/Park Management Evaluation	Neglected
	Space		Project
	Way-finding		Fencing
	Route		Management
	Beautiful		Control
	Nice		Facilities
	Things noticed		Racist
			Restore
			Trust
Emotional Experience	Discovery	Social-Cultural Experience	Bad behavior
	Get away		People
	Release		Cultural events
	Fear		Family
	Safety		Democratic place
	Memory		Times changed
	Fun/play		Public life
	Secret		
	Love the park		
	Freedom		
Nature, Environment, and Design	Restore	Personal	Preference
	Natural		Route
	Culture-Nature		Cost
	Art		
	Other places	Activity	Activity
	Path		
	Forest/vegetation		
	Wildlife		

[15] Categories are defined in Appendix B

The following paragraphs give a feeling for what these values are and how they were expressed by the research participants. In a later section of the chapter, I use extensive quotations selected from some of the interview transcripts to describe and develop the whole structure of park values as they pertain to the Woodlands Campaign.

VII.A.1. Sensory Experience

In providing a different kind of environment than much of the city, being in the park is a sensory experience. The space, light, appearance of things, the water and natural surfaces all stimulate the senses of touch, sight, sound, and smell, even taste. People talked about watching the trees blow in the wind or looking at the autumn colors. Several people noticed the unusual sensation of walking on soft terrain in the city. People noticed things as we walked through the park, such as the sight of ducks swimming on the lake surface, or particularly colorful plants. Walking also evoked exclamations of beauty, i.e., "This is truly beautiful." Other remarks about beauty were not in reaction to a particular sight but speaking of the park in general, as in "It's a beautiful park." People spoke of more general sensory pleasure, often using the word "nice," as in "Enjoyable, warm, nice with the trees... nice to look at," and "Oh, man, this is nice!" To most participants the park felt spacious, with plenty of room to do what you want or "find a nice big open space just for me." However, for two people with experience living in exurban areas in the northeast, Prospect Park seemed too small for all the people who use it.

Wayfinding is a problem in Prospect Park, as it is in any large landscape park with an ambiguous shape and a curvilinear layout (Lynch, 1960). All the wayfinding comments referred to the experience of crossing through the park interior, where there are no directional signs or orienting devices. Finding one's way may be more difficult now that vegetation has obscured the views and landmarks that were intended to be visible. Many people talked about their routes through the park. These comments about personal

paths through the park often came up in connection with wayfinding, discovery, and fear. People like to take routes that seem reasonably safe to them, and confident way-finding is important to their sense of safety.

VII.A.2 Social and Cultural Experience

Despite the popular notion of going to parks and preserves to be alone with nature, most such trips are made in groups of two or more (Cheek & Burch, 1976). The notion of solitude appeals to some users of Prospect Park, as we shall see, yet the park is demonstrably a place of social connection and cultural expression. Participants commented on the socio-cultural aspect of the park experience in many ways. Many saw it as a place where lots of different people come together (democratic place): "You see all different types of nationalities." Many people enjoyed seeing other people enjoying themselves, or just seeing other people. One woman enjoyed the sight of "whole flocks of men" playing frisbee--"something nice to see!" For some the presence of others made the park feel safe. One woman said "I have wonderful conversations in the park," and later added, "I love people." As a young woman discussing the fencing and the restoration work noted, "That's what the park is for--to make people happy."

Some such comments were negative--for example, "I always have my eye on the floor: I'm never looking at people," and "On the weekend, you cannot get away from the people." There were numerous observations of bad behavior in other park users, such as leaving trash behind after cookouts, or a dog walker's complaint about boys on bikes "careening" down the hillsides and climbing over the woodlands project construction fences.

One woman spoke about the importance of the park in the life of the lesbian community in Park Slope. Several people said the park is good for kids. Some people could notice belonging to a community when they were in the park.

A few people remarked on the gentrification in the area. One was an African American with whom I walked across the park to the drumming site, where he was a regular spectator. He saw a relationship between landscape restoration, tourism, and real estate speculation. He thought that the "rich man" and "real estate" were interested in promoting the park as a tourist attraction, which would enhance their ability to reap profits from real estate speculation in the people-of-color neighborhoods east of the park. Prospect Park was already being promoted as a tourist site; his sister had seen brochures promoting the park during a trip to Canada. This process was also working itself out in fencing and in curfews: he likened the Ravine project to a wildlife sanctuary which can be advertised as an attraction. Curfews, he explained, begin with a late enough hour so that no one objects. Then, once the fact of a curfew is accepted, the hour can be moved up insidiously to a time when people can no longer enjoy the park in their accustomed way:

> Yeah, it seemed like, okay, we could have a curfew at one-- *I'm* never out there at one. But then when they start moving it back, moving it... you're having a late night barbecue, you know, your family came over, you had a big barbecue over here, and it went a little past hours, you know. People come all the way from, all around. Come from Boston, whatever, they come to see you over here. And then, they packing their stuff up and then come and get harassed by the cops. 'Why y'all still here?' and all this shit. 'Hold it, hold it, we packing, you see me packing it!' You see, that's what I'm talking about. This country fought too hard for freedom. If it's any way possible to keep [the woods], you know, feeling wide open, you know, keep it open.

This man was a participant in the weekly drumming event, one of several cultural events that go on in the park (see Chapter VI). These cultural events are significant aspects of the park experience for many users, especially blacks. Of 16 references to such cultural events among participants in this study, twelve were made by blacks and four by whites.

Several participants speculated on the social conditions that have led to the present lack of funding for public amenities. One white participant, speaking of the

Central Park Conservancy, thought that such private groups obtain funds through a Faustian bargain with what she called "our techno-corporate culture." Another woman spoke matter-of-factly about the need for private park conservancies since "there's no money in the budget."

VII.A.3. Nature, Environment and Design

The park reflects different visions of the relationship of culture to nature. The original vision is of the park as a seamless essay on the beauty of managed nature embellished with artwork. Contemporary managers carrying today's wilderness ethos work to establish their vision of unmanaged nature in the third of the park devoted to woodland. At the same time, individual groups in today's heterogeneous society take over parts of the park that are available and conducive to their needs and make their own cultural spaces. In conducting my research I wanted people's thoughts on Prospect Park as both a natural and artificial environment, a place of both nature and culture.

Indeed, many participants were trying to work out the relationship between the fact of the park's artificial construction and the natural environment of plants, ground, water and sky that confronts them. Several people echoed the intended design theme of art enhancing nature, calling it a "partnership." As one participant remarked, "it's not just natural--it has woods and trees--but the architectural elements of the design pavilions here are just so beautiful, so stunning." This white woman, a musician, called for more collaboration in the park with present-day artists, like the folk artist who created the head on a stump, the so-called "grumbwa."

Time was an important aspect of this relationship. One white man took me to various neglected gardens and greens that were designed to be ornamental. The Rose Garden to him seemed like a "time warp," a place "meant as a garden where the space is controlled and carefully trimmed...[that now] slowly disappears." Later in our walk, while looking down from the Nethermead Arches at the carefully reconstructed stream

bed, he said "It's never going to stay like this. How many workers would it take to maintain the stream this way, make it look like this--and why would you want to?" His point was that natural processes work against fixed compositions in land art: gardens must be tended or they disappear. He thought the stream should be allowed to change its form as processes like gravity and siltation move the materials around, whereas it made sense to restore and maintain the cultivated, groomed places of the park. Culture in this form complemented nature. Another participant commented that the slopes in the ravine were unsustainably steep: "They want to fall down and flatten. It wasn't practical, it's not natural, not self-sustaining."

Several people contrasted the park with the city, as if the city represented something bad and the nature of the park was good. These themes are further elaborated in a later section of this chapter. Others contrasted Prospect Park with Central Park, finding Prospect more "natural," like the African American who thought "...it feels more like a natural space than Central Park does, and more like a neighborhood park. Central Park is more like a garden." A West Indian man called Central Park "more sculptured. Prospect Park has more natural simplicity... it's wilder, more natural."

Several participants stressed the natural environment of the park as the attraction for them. A man who took regular walks in the afternoon by himself said that "...coming here for me is about the environment--the trees, leaves, streams... ." Another solitary regular walker said "...open space, sure--gotta see nature! This is the closest thing to nature." A third said "There's nowhere else to go, really—[outside] it's just concrete."

There were many references to trees, the woodland understory, meadows, woods, and lush greenery. Several people had strong attachments to particular trees; others talked of enjoying the lush, green environment. As one participant said, "I like it when it's green--nice and green." A white woman remarked "...the old trees are so magical," and another said "...there's something about trees." A young African American woman, taking advantage of a stretch of unemployment to walk great distances to, from, and

within the park, said she liked to "watch the trees blow." She thought that the trees "get cut nice--like the trees getting designed... or facelift, rather." As much as she enjoyed the trees, this woman made an unfavorable comment about understory plants, calling them "bushes." Two men, Latino and white, thought that the vegetation here had more resilience than the park management seems to realize. Their feeling was "Leave the woods alone."

The presence of wildlife was an important to some people's sense of nature in the park. There were mentions of frogs, "fantastic Japanese ducks," other ducks, deer, pigeons, swans, a tortoise, warblers, birds, hawks, fish, pheasant, and raccoons. Regarding raccoons, a male participant thought "they brought [raccoons] into Central Park. It really added to the sense of nature there." He also wanted more birds brought into the park, and said he would stock the lakes with fish.

VII.A.4. Emotional Experience

Another set of categories have to do with affect or emotion, such as pleasant memories or feelings of fear, joy, and release. A few people talked about finding "...freedom, few restrictions... you can come in here and do what you want and be what you want." More frequently, people talked of getting away from stress and city life, as in "it takes you away," and "where we go to be free of the governing eye of society," or of "the hustle," "the confusion," the "boom box, horns, smell of fried chicken," and "all that concrete and steel." Once in the park, "I can clear my head here," "sit and relax;" "read, relax, exercise, meditate;" or "think [and] get the stress off." For some, getting away to the park had the promise of solitude, "...a place where I can be alone." One man said "they have nice little hideaways where you can settle in with a good book. Once you come in here there's a little seclusion; you can meditate." The curvilinear layout makes hideaways. A number of participants expressed pleasure at discovering or having discovered some charming place--in some cases in the course of the transect walk.

"Secret" was the word one participant used several times to describe places she liked to think of as unknown to others.

Most participants visited the woods and many voiced some degree of fear there, usually fear of assault and sometimes fear of getting lost after dark. As one white participant said, "I feel like I'm risking too much--every woman has a line that says you're being foolish." Another white woman said "I've been attacked on my bicycle, and a friend was hit in the head by a baseball bat." To some participants, the men who hang out in some of the wooded areas seem dangerous. Two women commented on the higher sense of safety on the weekends when the park has higher usage and proportionately less deviant usage. Participants generally referred to the wooded areas of low visibility as the most fearsome places, but two African Americans feared getting mugged over by Coney Island Avenue, alluding to a working-class white neighborhood. Three people were fearful about the health risks presented by mosquito spraying and rat poison.

Several participants thought the park had gotten safer. The sight of police patrolling made some feel safe. Two participants suggested that parks like Prospect and Central were safer than the streets outside because natural settings calmed aggression. A few said they had not heard of much crime in Prospect Park which led them to think it was safe.

VII.A.5. Project/Management/Policy Evaluation

Closely related to fear and safety is the perception of neglect. Some comments were analogous to those indicating improved safety. A white woman remembered the park "when it was a horror show. You couldn't go anywhere." Other participants singled out certain areas as neglected, among them the Boathouse/Lullwater area, the Rose Garden, and the Carriage Concourse parking lot. Walking along Lookout Hill, a white man said "this erosion is completely out of control. Why aren't they putting in the effort here?" Another man commented on the alternating cycles of neglect and repair over

time, using the Boathouse as an example: "They'll get a bunch of money and fix things up, then things are allowed to run down... There are cycles of good and bad repair."

Most specific comments on the restoration work were favorable--such as, "I'm glad whatever they're doing to improve it is happening," "They're doing the right thing," and "Visually, it's great." One woman said she didn't mind not being able to go through because the area had been neglected for so long. Others said "It's amazing; the difference is incredible;" and "They're trying to make it close to what it was before;" and "They're spending more time developing the natural habitat of the park, which I think is great!" A few were impressed by the carefulness of the work: "It really seems like they're taking time and concern," said one black woman, and a white woman commented on the "...painful and difficult efforts on their part... hand-planting raspberry bushes. It's so impressive."

Not everyone liked the attention to landscape. "They're attending to things that don't matter," a white dog-walker objected. "There are no events [in the music pagoda,] nothing going on. Think of that boathouse, what someone with vision could do!" A Latino bike rider had not seen "anything wrong with it before they started," and a white mother said "It wasn't so distasteful to me before but I could use it." One white man had much criticism to offer. He had seen undergrowth knocked down and killed off in the construction process:

> ...and what for--to make it look pretty? Here's our brand new, perfectly squared-off stream with its neatly decorated, fake-looking rocks. It's not happy; it's murky, dirty. They're trying to build a beautiful, idyllic thing—it's a vanity project.

Commentary on the fencing was mostly unfavorable. One man who was enthusiastic about the project itself added "I wish I didn't have to see a fence in front of me." A woman who did not mind having the area enclosed for construction noted that "I don't want it to go on forever." Several people understood the idea that the fencing is

there to "let stuff grow that usually gets trampled." A black man said "This is alright 'cause I guess they're fixing the woods." Some participants asked how long the fencing would stay up; most were dismayed to hear that the management had said ten years. One man thought "...it's about time" for the fences to come down, and a woman likened herself to Ronald Reagan saying "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!" She added, "To create a park that's beautiful but doesn't allow [you to get to the water]--can't you do both?"

A couple of people talked about alternative methods of keeping people on the paths and out of the plants, like a stile or putting logs along paths to make guidelines. There were a number of comments about control and restriction generally. Two people noted the fencing in Central Park: "You can't go onto the Great Lawn anymore." One man thought more rangers were needed to reduce misuse of the park. Another objected to people playing soccer during the winter, in violation of posted regulations, "...but nobody stops them!"

The white man who was so critical of the reconstructed stream had similar observations about fencing and other restrictions. He wanted freer range in the woodlands and thought the management should accept many desire-line paths, rather than blocking them with fencing and piles of dirt. Yet he approved of the ban on off-road biking in the park and felt the management was lax in enforcement: "I can't believe they can't control that!" He thought management had done a "horrible job on the ballfield, where they dumped fill full of shredded plastic bags, glass and concrete. They did the same thing in the meadow. What a mess!" In general, this participant advocated more care for the cultivated parts of the park than they receive, and a less constricted approach to woodland management.

VII.A.6 Personal

Participants gave a variety of information about themselves, sometimes about their relationship to natural places when they were young. There were numerous remarks describing preferences for such things as when to visit the park, or with whom, qualities liked and not liked. One woman loved "the outdoors, especially the winter time. It's more refreshing to walk." Another woman said "I'm a nature girl--I enjoy being out in nature, in trees, with trees, with water. One with the environment." A retired man peering through the fence into the work area imagined putting "...a chair in the middle there someplace, and I'd sit there with my newspaper and radio. I'd come out only to be fed."

VII.A.7. Activity

Of course, there is a great range of activity in the park, but walking was the major activity for this sample of park users. Everyone did some walking in the park, and all but a few cited it as a specific activity. There were specific kinds of walking, like walking through the woods, or taking a tour, or walking the dog, or pushing a stroller. In several cases people said they would walk and think, or "walk and look at the trees," and "walk and hang out." Many also spoke of other forms of locomotion, especially bicycling and running.

With regard to moving through the park, people said various things about the path system. One man thought the new Rocky Pass path was too hard surfaced and too wide to give people the amount of contact with nature they should have in the woods. There were comments about paths in the sense of personal routes through the park. At least two people of color asked if the management could open up new paths for mountain bikers. An African American man remembered a mountain bike path sequence on Quaker Hill which he called the "triple drop." Some participants expressed pleasure at discovering a path they had not known about. A Latina said she loved "the feel of the bike path" (meaning in this case the circuit drive.)

Other activities included bringing out-of-town guests to the park, as something distinctive of Brooklyn to show people. A woman came here to fly kites with her son, another to feed the ducks. One West Indian man came here to photograph, often at night, he said, and sometimes early in the morning. One man mentioned fishing.

VII.B. INDIVIDUAL PORTRAITS

The above discussion lays out the structure and character of user values evident in the data. In the following pages, several of the research participants speak for themselves.

VII.B.1. Bonnie

Bonnie is a single white woman, about 40 years old, originally from upstate New York. A free-lance writer, she was working as a volunteer woodlands tour guide with the Prospect Park Alliance in 1999. I asked her to do a transect walk after taking a woodlands tour that she led:

> Everyplace I've lived there was always some woods nearby, like, where I was born, in back of our house there were woods that as far as I know went to the Adirondacks--it was just not a built up area then. It was extremely beautiful. And I remember, we moved away when I was seven, and I remember noticing how beautiful it was. So, even somebody that age, y'know six or seven years old, can know that scenery is beautiful. I remember driving along river road, you know, in the fall, and I had a book-- I was a big reader--and, but it was so beautiful, I said I'll just look out the window until the pretty part passes and then I'll read my book again. And, and the pretty part never ended. I never got back to the book the whole drive home or wherever we were going, it was just so beautiful. So, I know that that can appeal to kids, so I don't know if you grow up in the city you even know what you're missing.
>
> I think I had always enjoyed being in the woods, and that was one of the things I most liked about the park was the woods. And I would always come on the weekends, pretty much, and take walks, or I would walk through the woods to get to the boathouse and then go back and,

> y'know, that was kind of my ritual. You really do feel like you're not in the city, you're somewhere else.
>
> I adopted a birthdate in the spring because my actual birthday is in winter. And I gave myself a carousel ride on my adopted birthday. So that's my tradition. It's not just a boring little ride; it's really rather fun. And the music is wild; they have a real calliope--you know... it's very interesting and it's sort of, you know, it's this mechanical--clunk-clunk--these things hitting and hammers dropping and whistles blowing and--it's really something. So I have enjoyed the carousel.
>
> So this friend of mine had become a professional gardener starting out as a volunteer. A lot of the major public gardens rely on volunteers to get a lot of their work done. So they have a couple of mornings a week when the volunteers come and help out. And my friend did this so regularly for a year or two that when a job opened up they recommended her for it, you know, and it was an example of how something you do as a... for love, if you're so good at it, you know, people see that you're so good at it, you end up being able to do it for money also. And she is in fact now a professional gardener, and that's what she does. And I was saying 'You know, I'm gonna do this. I have to start volunteering.' I started out as a woodlands crew member, and that's where they actually do planting--of the wildflowers and young trees and shrubs--in the woodland. And then when I heard about the tours thing starting, giving the tours, I was interested in that and I wanted to help write the tours because, because I'm also a writer.

On our walk, Bonnie revealed her ambivalence over wanting to be in the presence of other people and wanting to be alone. The park's woods were the real draw for Bonnie, but she found that the difference in usership between weekdays and weekends made the park seem like a different place. This was both good and bad: the weekday desolation prevented her from using the woods at all, but the weekend crowds intruded on the solitude she sought:

> I had an experience once where I was unemployed and I would come to the park during the week, as I usually come on the weekends. It is a different place! I mean, on the weekends you have everybody. But on the weekdays, you only have people who don't have jobs. And it's much fewer people so it feels deserted and you see people that are scary, or potentially scary. You see the homeless people, and there are probably drug addicts. I mean, it's a different place and, if you see a lot of mothers with very young kids with strollers, or toddlers ...they're all at the periphery. Cause once you get in here... it gets really scary. I mean I

> would *not* go into the interior of the park on a weekday, even in beautiful weather.
>
> I mean I always say I come here for the woods, and I do--you know, to get lost in the woods, and... The other thing is the woods are crowded, I mean they're not that large, and they were never that (inaudible) fenced in, you know, remote. I mean on a weekend, especially, if the weather's nice, you cannot get away from the... you think you're alone and then, then you see somebody over there and they're watching you and you're watching them, so you're never really alone, but you have the sense of being alone.
>
> *Do you want to be alone in the woods?*
>
> Yes, yes. Yes, I do. And that's why I like it, it's privacy. It's a private place except as I say it's not really, but it's still close enough.

For Bonnie, who seeks a sense of privacy in the presence of like-minded walkers, the park woodlands seem safe in the more populated times of the week. Others are present on weekdays too, but these to her are the scary, undesirable ones--people without jobs, without homes, some probably on drugs. When populated by other mainstream citizens, the woods afford the pleasant illusion of wilderness where she can play at getting lost and pretend to be alone. Without the right people present, the woods are not negotiable at all for Bonnie: she won't go into them.

The participants in this study were generally satisfied with their ability to reach the degree of public- or private-ness that felt right to them. Several participants spoke unfavorably of more populous conditions—for example, several people described Central Park as "crowded" in comparison to Prospect Park. One participant thought Prospect Park was too crowded; she would like the park to acquire more land.

As a volunteer for the Prospect Park Alliance, Bonnie was strongly supportive of the Woodlands Campaign and its fencing policy. Bonnie recognized that people like to be able to approach the waterfalls or wade in the stream. She recognized the impulse to climb trees: "It's like there's nothing wrong in any of those actions, like climbing a tree is a good thing to do and climbing on boulders is a good thing to do, but in this situation, you know, it's just the overuse factor."

As a matter of policy, Bonnie believes that a program of environmental protection in this urban setting would be futile without sharp restrictions on public access. On one of her tours, a woman who had enjoyed clambering on the rocks objected to the new restrictions. Bonnie answered that "in a way you're right, [but] if everybody does it there's not enough trees to go around, or boulders, and you're going to ruin it. So then you have to start forbidding it." Bonnie encouraged her tour patrons to talk about the access issue:

> I do try to raise this, I mean I try to sound like 'Look there's a problem. We all want to go to this place and be alone, and not have to be fenced in or stay on trails or go on the tour, but, if everybody does that then there won't be any woods left. I had a man just last week, and he said to me 'What is your personal opinion about this?' And, what I came up with, I mean, what I should have said was 'You know, it bothers me not to be able to walk wherever I want to by myself in the woods, cause I like that. But, on the other hand, I'm learning a lot more about wildlife, and there is much more wildlife right now, because the people are restricted. So in that sense, I'm appreciating what I see more, and I think, if everybody could walk at will through the woods, they would not be as interesting woods. That's kind of my new answer.

Bonnie seeks a certain relationship with nature in the park woodlands, a sense of herself that she gets in this primarily non-human setting of earth, trees, and wildlife. The privacy of the woods seems different from indoor privacy, perhaps a communion with the things of the earth unavailable either at home or in the streets and other urban public places. As she said,

> ...it's not wilderness. And yet there are these little places where you feel like you're in the wilderness, so it kind of works.

Many participants were interested in the park as a union of culture and nature. Olmsted and Vaux wanted a natural appearance, and students of the design sometimes wonder how many among the general public realize that the park is not just some "natural" landscape that escaped development. Most of my participants knew that the

park was designed and had given some thought to whether that made it somehow less natural. Designed or not, the materials and surfaces of nature are everywhere in Prospect Park, and the source of much of its appeal. Most participants sided with Olmsted in preferring a design that appeared undesigned. Many compared Prospect Park favorably to Central Park in that regard, the latter seeming much more constructed and arranged. As Bonnie pointed out,

> The whole funny thing about this park is that it looks very natural in the woodland part but it's really not natural. I mean it was all created by human hands, and then nature kind of adopted it and took it over. And so it is... a different kind of beauty, a planned beauty, and it's got these symmetrical places and these little stone things.

These remarks reveal the contemporary premise that planned or managed nature may be inferior, aesthetically and otherwise, to nature left to its own. This was hardly Olmsted's view or the view of his contemporaries involved in building parks and managing natural landscapes. Settled landscapes that bore the signs of human habitation were understood to be more beautiful than the monotonous woods of untended land in the Northeastern United States. Wild nature was scraggly, dense, overgrown, and perhaps dangerous.

The "symmetrical places and little stone things" are the more clearly designed parts of this composition. The natural-appearing woodland stands in dialogic relation to these formal, artificial elements, perhaps the more sharply today as the burgeoning woods look less and less like something that anyone designed. The formal elements themselves have gone wild in some cases, but their underlying geometries remain to leave people wondering how natural the park is.

Culture is present in this "natural" landscape in the plants as well as the formal artifacts. As J. B. Jackson has observed, people seem more attached to trees that others have planted and cared for than to trees in the wild. Although Bonnie is drawn to the

woods for its intimation of wilderness, she has a particular fondness for one of the park's many cultivated trees--in this case, a greenleafed Japanese maple between the Grand Army Plaza entrance and Endale Arch:

> This is a favorite tree of mine. It's a Japanese Maple. It's not a native species, but... I like the green ones, for some reason. There are many red ones, and I like them too but I really like the green ones. I'm very fond of that tree. It's in a nice place. I have a seedling of it, I have to say that... it's probably totally illegal. So I have it in my garden, in front of my building. *How nice.* Yeah... It is, except they tell me they're really slow growing, so it may be this tall for 20 years. A good long time.

Cultivated trees are cultural products. They are bred and planted for certain qualities: branching habit, delicateness of foliage, fruit, blossoms, and so forth. They may be used as structural elements in landscape architecture, or grown for aesthetic effects or to produce fruit and wood.

In planting and tending trees people develop relationships with natural phenomena that go beyond aesthetic pleasure (Jackson, 19--; Wilson, 1992). That level of engagement is usually proscribed in public parks, where visitors may enjoy looking at the trees and other landscape features but may not take cuttings or pick flowers, plant things on their own, dig, prune trees, climb them, or have any other such direct, tactile, or nurturing involvement with the plants. For various reasons, parks generally limit people's ability to engage with the things of nature. A Caribbean man, looking toward the Ambergill from the rustic bridge, told me that being in the woods made him want to work in the park, "...get to do plantings... I've got a green thumb. It's what I see every day in the Caribbean. In the mountains, you're surrounded by lots of fruit trees, and you see lots of different species of birds." Bonnie wanted more involvement with this tree than just looking, so she took a cutting and planted it in front of her building.

Visitors like Bonnie form attachments to certain trees that help determine their favorite walking routines. Walking, of course, remains something people are supposed to

do in parks. Many of the participants were regular walkers, often walking by themselves, and they felt that the park allowed them both to be able to see and sometimes interact with other people and to walk in places where they could be by themselves. Prospect Park was designed for both the pedestrian and the carriage driver; the carriage driver has passed into history and the park is probably too small to give much pleasure to the automobile driver, but the pedestrian can still have something like the intended experience. The Olmsted and Vaux design shaped the pathways and the landscape so as to draw the walker on, always seeming to promise something fuller or more extensive around the next bend (Hiss, 1990; Canadian Center for Architecture, 1997; Kaplan, Kaplan, & Ryan, 1998). The landscape architects also compressed an unusual variety of landscape effects into the space available.

Although vegetation blocks many intended views, visual expanses remain to reward the walker, especially in the Long Meadow and along the lake. As Bonnie said,

> There's something neat about being able to see that long a distance unobstructed... in a more open space than a street. I mean, y'know, those long streets in Manhattan you can see a long distance but it's very narrow, and this is quite different.

The next two participants to be quoted here have much more to say about walking in the park as well as other values touched on by Bonnie. These values include the user's relationship to other people in the park, access restrictions, and the dialogue between culture and nature. The next participant to be quoted is Ellen, a businesswoman and mother of an adult son.

VII.B.2. Ellen

Ellen, a white woman, is a self-described business person about 55 years old with an adult son. She lives in Park Slope near Grand Army Plaza. In Ellen we have a regular

park user who has paid close attention to the progress of the woodlands restoration. She describes her park experience in the following excerpt:

> I get on at Grand Army Plaza, because I live down in Park Slope, on Berkeley Place between Seventh and Eighth. So I just walk--there's a berm or a roundabout-- you can come, and it leads up to this Grand Army Plaza, and it's like a little announcement that you're getting to a park because it has a peaceful quality to it. And then you come to this great roundabout which is the Grand Army Plaza--and that's when I duck into the park. And, like everybody else who comes to the park, it's like saying 'Sanctuary, sanctuary! Fling yourself at the altar!' And you say, 'Now everything can fall away from me that distresses me or harasses me in the course of my normal work life.'
>
> I used to go running and rollerblading round and round--and I do that sometimes--but I got hit by a guy on a bicycle once. I think it intimidated me although I don't usually admit these things. Sometimes, the bicycle people are kinda hard to take (we're walking on Central Drive and a cyclist shoots past.) That's what they do; they go very fast right next to each other, so if you're running or something they don't realize that you might veer off your intended path.
>
> So, I come down [to the Long Meadow] where there are no people on bicycles, or very few, and where there won't be people running up my back or making me move over. And, the wonderful thing about that, when you think about it--we're often in subways, we're often in very tightly confined spaces. I'd be very surprised if anyone here has an office even half the size that we used to think an office should be. I've got a cubicle. Most people have cubicles, and it's very confined, and there's something I noticed about life in an office. I don't know if it's true for everybody, but--this may sound strange--but you have to keep your body very still. When people are speaking to you, you need to remain still. One sudden motion and people will look; people need to know why somebody is moving... and random sort of motion like moving your arms or looking behind you or something like that never happens in the office. So, people go around in the streets, and also in the subways and everyplace else, including in the office, in this kind of frontal, squared-off fashion, with everything just so. I mean even walking has to be a somewhat contained activity: you don't want to go around bumping people. So, what I find when you come to the park is that you're free to move around in ways that would be absolutely *verboten* in your normal environment, because you might be considered an eccentric, God forbid. The park is the repository of eccentrics.
>
> So I come and moon around; sometimes I read. Sometimes I observe people but not as much cause God knows I do that enough. I'm always happy to see people enjoying the park. I guess we all like that. Most Saturdays--90% of the time I think--there's an opera so I'll listen to

> that, 'cause I sing. Then, I'll write. I started at the gardens this morning. I go to the botanical gardens; I go early when there's very few people there. And I walk around and see the state of the plants and what's blooming. And if nobody's near me I practice, get my voice warmed up a little bit. I sang some Mozart today and there was nobody there at all. Which was kind of nice for me... you want to sing something like that outdoors.

Ellen walks around the whole park, although mostly on the roadway and on the principal interior paths, like the main path through Rocky Pass and over Lullwater Bridge. She notices the natural phenomena and the changes made through time. "Every single time I look at it--there's something completely new and different about it. I'm always in a state of surprise--because now I've gone someplace completely different."

The design of Prospect Park plays on the contrast between the enclosure of woods and valleys and the visual expanse of open meadows. Ellen delights in the interaction between these qualities of openness and enclosure, "...the fact that they go from light to shade, and they go from whispery to silent". She spoke of some of the woodland places as "secret." She called the ravine a "dark and secret chasm," a phrase she attributed to Coleridge. The big open spaces have the effect for her of setting people to rights with the cosmos:

> Once I saw a horse person come along, and I thought to myself 'A knight was pricking on the plain.' It was so beautiful to see somebody coming a distance... [across] an astonishing space which seems more beautiful because of the way it's interrupted. The great joy of it is that there are long stretches where people are dwarfed, where people's activities seem contained and... and small the way they ought to be. They can't intrude, you're so far away, and what you see is these great stretches, so your eye can go as far as it wants.

After walking in the Long Meadow, she likes to enter the woodlands restoration area:

> So, after the long meadow I come along here, and the reason is the very thing you were talking about, which is this enclosed space. You see, what they've done, they've closed this off in order to make it possible for growth to prosper and not be a wreck, which it was, and also to stop it being a

> sinister environment and make it clear plain and a hint of what the woods or a natural environment might really be, so that you're... abstracted from this--what we live with all the time in the city, not the least of which is a kind of feeling that we're all too close and. I used to come here and just listen to this (she gestures toward the sound of a rivulet in the stream between the two ponds.)

Ellen was enthusiastic about the Woodlands Campaign for restoring a convincing semblance of the plant diversity that occurs under favorable conditions in nature. She had an Olmstedian, even Transcendentalist appreciation of the natural landscapes of the Northeast:

> Look at this tree-- isn't that wonderful? Whatever you say to them in your study, tell them 'Leave the dead trees! Don't prune them and make them wonderful. Leave them wonderful the way they are.'...Look, asters are growing, but usually not very much, but you hear the stream. And, I start sniffing somewhere around here because all through the summer, this had the smell of a meadow. I wish I *didn't* know that this lake is somewhat artificial, but still it is a body of water, growing different water plants. Hear that? Isn't it delightful?
>
> And, I once asked them--one of these officials here--'Did you go up to a New England meadow and grab a truckful of dirt and then threw it all down and let what grew grow?'... and he said, 'No, it's nothing; it's just New York' and I thought, 'Well... true northeastern stuff.' I mean, alfalfa and all this stuff that you wanted to see. And, they had sweet peas growing here, and as you can see, this is worthy of contemplation and enjoyment. And sometimes you see rare birds--not that I know what they are. I thought it was like some kind of crane or ... long necked crane, and... I saw some of those *fantastic* Japanese ducks--wood ducks, I think they're called-- that was quite a sight! And anyway, here are the mallards, which are companions of my youth, so I enjoy seeing their company. And then I walk here, alongside this stream and this pond. I used to spend quite some time trying to figure out... there's this farther, not a meadow but a little waterfall place, and I used to hear it and I'd say to myself 'Where is that?'
>
> Look at this-- Isn't that beautiful? Ah! Just marvelous! The red--what a red. It's not bittersweet; it's that true end-of-summer red, rich red, and the alfalfa and the goldenrod. And here you have cattails. And there what you've got is a willow tree. So, there are many beautiful things here--chamomile, and clover. So, this is truly beautiful. And you get the feeling that you're as far, far...away from the stresses of our lives, from the city itself, which I appreciate and love, but the beauty of that is not the beauty of this, and this cannot be replicated, even by the cleverest human. This is the best we can do, is figure out a way to try to let it grow. To defend it.

Ellen's considered and articulate interpretation was unusual: few participants had given as much thought to the Woodlands Campaign. Later in our walk, she said:

> I had this pleasant thought many years ago: Wouldn't it be awful if nature became this thing behind a fence that we went to visit, the way we're looking at animals in the zoo? Because I kept seeing people's houses and stuff--what they call now urban sprawl--but there's more building and more use of the land for people rather than--I suppose it's always been used for farming or whatever--but very little left standing in some kind of coherent natural state. So instead of mankind's houses and abodes and habitats and all this, as spots in this vast wilderness around us, suddenly the wilderness was this small, enclosed affair like a museum in a sea of people all around it, and that's what it started to seem like. The greatest trick--like, you asked me about that area with the fence around it that they're preserving--the greatest trick that they can do is to make that piece, which I think they've done, seem like it's part of this true expanse of natural life and of nature going all around the whole world, practically, and we are ourselves just this brief interruption, that our city and life we properly understand being one place on the face of the earth but that all of life is not that way; all of life is really going on in a natural sense and that this is part of it. And that's the trick that they accomplish with that fenced off portion. I don't know if you agree.

One of the properties of natural settings is "extent," the sense of the setting extending indefinitely beyond the immediate visual field (Kaplan, 1989). Extent can work in different ways: Kaplan's example is of wooded path where the twists and turns stimulate curiosity about what lies ahead and where the wooded surroundings seem to go on indefinitely. In a way, Ellen's interpretation of the woodlands campaign is a symbolic version of this idea, the restoration being a tableau that symbolizes wilderness as a more true, more righteous state of the world than the environment built by people.

Although she appreciated the artistry of the bridges and tunnels, Ellen would like to think that much of what is here occurs naturally. At least one of the upper ponds, she thought, is a naturally occurring kettle pond. She found the arrangement of boulders around the watercourses too artificial:

> It's not beautiful, and you can see that it's not a real rock over there, but... some of these stones are rather river worn or glacially worn. I wish they

> hadn't jumbled together rocks that are clearly hewn by something or clearly sheared off, with smooth river rocks, because they've mixed rocks of different kinds. It's a bit of a jumble, which is good if it's like a glacial moraine around here you would see that but you might tend to see them less disparate in terms of shape. But there are guys here who made this by hand; they brought this down Adirondack style.

These excerpts from my transect walk with Ellen further develop the values of sensory experience; and of nature, environment, and design in the park landscape. Ellen is a representative member of the well-educated, middle-class, largely white, Park Slope-based user constituency who give wholehearted support to the Woodlands Campaign. Ellen articulates the role that wilderness values has played in guiding and informing the Woodlands Campaign. Her narrative also shows another aspect of the nature-lover's relationship to the presence of other people in the park.

The only other participants in the study who had thought as much about the project were its critics, people like Jill, who questioned the fencing and linked the exclusiveness of the project to the influence of privatization.

VII.B.3. Jill

Jill lives in Greenwich Village and is a habitual visitor to Central Park. She is white, 60 years old, an "ex-leftie" and a professional dog-walker with a B.A. from Wellesley:

> I have wonderful conversations in the park. That's something that happens with me a lot. Strike up conversations. Once I came out here on cleanup day for the park, and it was sponsored by Nike and one other... And I talked to one of the... And finally I thought 'You know, just do it.' And there's a piece of this that says 'You can't.' You know, you're being anti-corporate the way that the right wing is being anti-government. There's something weird. Just go ahead, participate.
>
> I'm an ex-lefty. Although left visions are viable and good in certain ways, the left political culture is just-- just doesn't have anything to say about this, doesn't have *anything* to say! Anything! At least I haven't been able to find it. (Laughs--sound of brushing through fallen leaves) You know, I walk dogs for a living. You're a lot more fun than a dog!

Jill likes these city parks for the chance to be outdoors and be among people: "I love being outdoors and I love people." Yet on our weekday morning walk, Jill found the park woodlands threatening:

> This is what I do, I roam. I like to roam a lot and go into the woods, but see I don't go into the woods by myself here a lot, because there're guys, and also because the reports of crime are different... and Central Park is a little bit different, a different layout. I [have explored the park] with my dog, though--Morgan. My dog pal. If I'm with her I didn't feel any problems at all. I just-- as a woman, I'm just always, I'm a little leery in this park that somebody's gonna spot me and follow me. But, since I'm with you... And I probably would do this (fringe of woods between roadway and cemetery.)
>
> See, I'm curious about Prospect Park and why it has a higher crime rate than Central Park. And maybe it doesn't. I just know that I seem to remember more crimes, more violent crimes being committed in Prospect Park over the years than in Central Park. And, that they're perpetrated mostly by young black men who live near the park. That may be just how it's reported in the paper. I don't know, but I think that would be very interesting to do that, to find that out. Because it's very important! Because people don't feel safe generally. Human beings are pretty scared of nature anyway, you know... 'Don't go into the woods,' 'There might be a bear there.'

With me as a companion, Jill sought out some of the most secluded corners of the park--paths I had never dared to take. I had met Jill on a woodlands tour. During the tour, Jill had been offended by her inference of racism in the remarks of the tour guide, a Prospect Park Alliance official whom I shall call Bob:

> One of the things that I heard on that walk that we took, when Bob said, 'Now, you know, since we did this, the park's gotten a lot safer.' And this guy said, 'Well why is that true?' And Bob's response was... I don't even want to say these words, so I won't-- I'm going to try to not say the word, or maybe I can say it discreetly-- coming from a place where he kind of went into this thing about 'Well, actually, the neighborhood around the park has become more affluent and--you know--this used to be a high crime rate, but the neighborhood is becoming more affluent and,' you know, blah blah blah.
>
> But, basically, you know, that's a piece of a racist attitude. I don't want to--as I said, I don't like to use that term because it's so charged still--but it excludes... Lets see if I can talk about it without using [the word.] The underlying assumption when you say that is that the affluent are white, middle class, and well behaved, and Thank God they're there, and it doesn't take into consideration the reason--I mean there are probably many reasons--why the park's gotten safer, not the least of which is the fact that people in poor and working class black communities, about three or four years ago, just finally decided 'enough is enough'. Enough of the violence--enough, you know, enough. Our kids are killing each other. It's got to stop. And, I think that's a big factor in it.
>
> But I couldn't say anything. I was there, and I heard him say that. And I thought, uh-uh, wait, hold the phone! [But] I couldn't say anything. And a lot of times that happens to white people when they're in that situation and they overhear something that is based on a racist [idea].

The conversation during the tour had been about trails and fencing, Jill having suggested that fencing communicated a negative message to park users:

> Like it was assumed that the fencing was absolutely necessary. And that it's fine--this kind of fencing, this particular kind of fencing--is just fine...because we have to protect the environment. See, and it's not... and what I finally began to realize that I think it's fine to communicate an understanding that the park will not be here if the soil's compacted in its, in its, you know, high use blah blah blah, or if you ride bikes or something, and that you need to make decisions about whether or not you need permanent fencing. And you might. You might decide that. But if

> you do, it should be fencing that is respectful of people's ability to comprehend why the fencing is there. And not just Keep Out. Because that separates people from each other--it says 'This is nature, and You are a person,' and you're really not responsible. That's the implication. And of course, that runs through all the environmental movement. Human beings are destroying the environment. 'Oh yes, human cruelty knows no bounds.' I just get tired of misanthropy. The misanthropy that goes along with--almost, you know, with the environmental movement. If I hear them say, 'Well, I'd rather be with dogs than people.' Oh God, give me a break!

Jill thought that the tranquillity of the park came in part from having bodily contact with natural surfaces, particularly the ground:

> I like to walk on the earth (we begin walking on a dirt path.) Human beings... we're very sensitive creatures; we don't have fur, we don't have feathers--you know, we have skin--you know, we're very sensitive. And we pick up information, vibrations, from the earth constantly, that we need. We need it, and we do that through our feet, probably also through our hands--it's really a wonderful thing. 'Cause this is where we live--we're earthlings. It gives us information about who we really are--you know, we're not--whatever. And so... I think that's how the parks function in an urban setting... I mean I think that's why Central Park is safe. It makes sense, you know-- see, that's what I really think!

The great problem for Jill in Prospect and especially Central Park was the lack of public money for maintenance. The conservancies, she said, have to look for money—that's what they exist to do. Corporations have the money and are willing to give it if they can use the park to display their images and slogans:

> See, the Prospect Park Conservancy is private. So is the Central Park Conservancy. Now, they are under the aegis of the parks commission, but... basically they operate sort of on their own. They operate with the blessing of the park commission because there is no public money, you see. I mean, that's the rationale for creating these private things: There's no public money. In Central Park all these wealthy people, who, with good intentions... and of course the draining of public life anyway, you know, [which] I think... has so much to do with the absolute explosion of the corporate media.

> But, what happens along with this private sponsoring of the park--see, is that the people who run the conservancies have to find funds. That's why they do this, part of what their job is...
>
> *--is to find funds.*
>
> ...So that the park can be restored. And in Central Park, a lot of it isn't just ecological, because there are so many fences. Like half the Sheep Meadow is fenced off; it's so weird. You go up there and there are all these fences, all the way across the sheep meadow. And people are allowed onto one half of the sheep meadow and the other half there's a sign that says 'Being Reseeded.'
>
> So, what happens is that these private entities go for corporate funding. And they negotiate arrangements with them. And of course the corporations want to be a presence in the park. They are a much more--because they use images and because they have the funding---they are a very powerful presence in the park. And *they* know what they're doing. You know, like Health Valley--this is the one that really stunned me. And I go up to the park to get away from being bombarded by, you know, our techno-corporate culture. But, I'm coming up out of Bethesda Fountain, up the stairs to the plaza and what do I see but this *huge*, I mean *monolithic* plastic blow up of Health Valley ranch dressing. I mean it must be--well I'm about six feet. It must be about be about 25 feet high, and it's huge, and it's plastic. There it is. And there's no way I can get around it.

One of the dilemmas in renewing parks through appeals to corporate funds is that the initiative and the decision-making comes down from above, rather than up from the public. Jill is always looking for a politics of grass-roots empowerment. In catering to corporate interests and the good intentions of the rich and powerful,the park conservancies are antithetical to a progressive political process:

> But ultimately with those experiences, it's still provided by... It doesn't come from the people. In other words, the experience of it doesn't create a stronger bond of solidarity or awareness or 'This is our park' or presence. It's an organized presence, but it is bought and paid for--you know what I mean? Untold resources. And they know what they doing. The thing about dealing with that is to create a community presence, and the issue is how do you do [that?]

One of Jill's objections to the fencing around the Prospect Park project is that it communicates a negative message to park users. She thought that an ecological

restoration project like this should be done with people, so that they their awareness of nature and natural processes deepens. Humans need to know they are:

> Responsible! Responsible. We are a part of the natural world and we are responsible, and that's the truth.
> *So building these fences...*
> Right, these wire fences.
> *...it's saying 'You were responsible' but 'You are not'...*
> "Ah, oui... sure sure, all those kinds of... And all of that goes on, all of that gets communicated-- 'You are not to be trusted,' you know, 'The public'-- but, you know, I've tried to talk to some of the people who work for the Conservancy in Central Park, and... they get very, you know, worker aristocracy-proprietary: 'Well, we've seen people trample all over the place blah blah blah blah blah' -'What, you're anti-nature?'

Jill agreed that there may be a legitimate public purpose in doing environmental restoration and in restricting access to the area:

> Oh, I don't have any problem with that-- It's how... I mean, are you going to do it in a way that stimulates people to be more aware that they can be responsible. You know?

"The park was made for the people:" Jill thought people somehow knew that. The fencing implies that "human social interaction really isn't good for the park." Social interaction, she thought, was the park's greatest historic value. Jill had read the recent Rybczinski book on Olmsted, *A Clearing in the Distance* (1998), and recalled Olmsted having said that "the park 'will be a place, will be a space, where, which and for Jew and Gentile, by their mere presence, it will be a democratizing experience.' It's sort of like a level playing field. I think that's his democratic vision."

As it turned out, one of Jill's favorite places was the Vale of Cashmere. The following excerpt begins with our arrival there:

> Oh, pretty--now come on! Oh, punkin!--that is so wonderful! Look! I've never seen it like this (the spray fountain in the Vale of Cashmere.) But this is so lovely. God, this is-- this is the best I've ever seen it. I think it would be so great to come out some morning and write

> or think or read a book--I mean, I just think [it's not safe] because nobody's around. But also, because nobody's *gonna* be around.
>
> This is enchanting. See, I love this, I think this is neat. I think this is one of the neat things about city parks, just this kind of thing. I don't care if it's-- people say 'It isn't nature.' Well, it's not supposed to be. That's not what... I mean, with a park this big you can have a lot of different kinds of experiences. It's a fantasy-- 'Vale of Cashmere'-- Victorian exoticism. And I must say I can handle it better, historically, than the Belvedere Castle. To me it's historical, a historical artifact, although it functions in the present. So it's beautiful.

We sat on a bench looking at the fountain in the pool and talked some more about the place of landscape architecture in a supposedly natural park. I wondered whether something like the Vale of Cashmere could be done elsewhere in the park woodlands, something as artistic and expressive of our own time as the Vale is of the late Victorian period:

> I'll tell you a good example, an excellent example. In Central Park there is and has been, ever since I've ever been going there--20, 25, 30 years--there is the Arthur M. Ross Pinetum. Now, for years, I would see the sign, and it was always 'horticulture,' you know, like a botanic garden-- like it wasn't very interesting. It's like, here's a sign, 'These are pine trees.' That's what was communicated.
>
> You see, this is exactly what I'm talking about. Gotta go up there and see it. Really gotta. It's a stand of pine trees. Well, three or four years ago, they did something and it's so eye-... What they did was astounding! And they did something like this, although not as fancy. I can't, I don't know if I can describe it to you. Like, I'd have to, you'd have to see it. Because I don't know myself. I love it. That's why I love it, 'cause I can't figure out why. All of a sudden, it's like they--they just made a whole space--with this pinetum as the sort of focal point, and all of a sudden, I'm seeing pine trees. I mean I'm *seeing* pine trees. Not just pine trees as objects, as objectified, but pine trees. Like, Hey, all of a sudden I'm noticing--which is what presumably Arthur M Ross intended in the first place--and it is stunning! It is just gorgeous. I mean, it's so simple, you know, *so* simple.
>
> And, ever since then, I've noticed pine trees, wherever I am--if I'm in another part of the park, I notice a stand of pines. If I go out hiking... I went to the Catskills 'cause they have so many pine trees. It made me think about pine trees, *notice* pine trees... and feel a lot more relaxed with pine trees. I know this sounds really weird. But just--more aware, rather than 'Oh, there's a pine tree.'

In this last excerpt she suggests a role for contemporary landscape architecture in shaping and organizing natural features to make them vivid and memorable. Jill makes several other points: she recognizes the need to do something with a stressed and degraded natural area, but seeks ways of doing it that build on people's sense of responsibility for the world they live in. In the parks she sees opportunities to bring people together "on a level playing field" to organize politically around issues of public space and environmental restoration. Personally, she loves rambling all around the park, but feels unsafe in many of the more secluded areas. Like others, Jill appreciates the way the park combines wild-seeming wooded areas with designed gardens.

Bonnie, Ellen, and Jill provide a picture of the park values of some white, middle class women who visit the park interior. There are many visitors like Bonnie and Ellen who are pleased with the woodlands campaign, who find the ecological work and the artistry all good and the fencing prudent. Others, like Jill, while not against ecological restoration, have criticisms of the way it is being done. One woman could not understand why the management persists in fencing off the little beaches on the upper ponds so that her toddler son and others of his generation can only see the ducks through a fence.

The next few individual portraits, of black and latino participants, reveal strong feelings for the natural landscapes of the park but less definite ideas about the woodlands restoration than among the white participants portrayed above.

VII.B.4. Maria

Maria is a Equadorian-American schoolteacher, 26 years old, who in 1999 was coming to the park at least weekly with her four-year-old son, "to get away from the city.

It's the only place in Brooklyn that allows you to be yourself. It gives you a little bit of the country." Maria has used Prospect Park for...

> ...about a year and a half. It's the first thing I asked my landlady-- 'Where's the nearest park?' Most of the time I'm coming here with [my son] Alex but... I like, even if I'm just going home--I work in Williamsburg so I like to pass by the park on my way home--I just like, I *love* the feel of the bicycle path, so I'll do a one-around, and then I'm on my way home. I try [to come] at least once a week but sometimes I'm here three times a week 'cause I have a four year-old and we like to fly kites. And we come here, to this area—
>
> *The meadow here?*
>
> Yeah, the meadow. You can say I'm almost here every single day.
>
> *You ride your bike to work?*
>
> Yeah, I ride my bike everywhere-- If I have to go to 59th Street I'll take it there. I'll take ferries, I'll do anything with my bike.
>
> *Have you been in any of these wooded areas here?*
>
> No, I've never been in a wooded area. I had a bad experience with camping, so it would kind of like bring back those memories. I went to the Adirondacks, camping-- I was lost for two days, without water. I was only ten. But that was my fault...
>
> *So, for that reason, going into any woods...* Any woods! But I did it last year again with Alex, I went camping for three days. And he loved it and I was terrified but he kept me company. I have to get over the fear. It's ridiculous, you know-- I'm 26 years old, I have to get over that ten year-old experience. So, but I have noticed that as soon as the sun goes down I like to get outta here as quickly as possible.
>
> *The darkness makes it seem...*
>
> Yeah, it makes it seem a little unnervy, I'm kind of leery about things, leery about what might come. Maybe that's just my fear; nothing's really happened, it's not like I've ever heard of any bad experience.
>
> Maybe I'm misanthropic but I don't come here to socialize. I come here to just be on my own for a little bit. And this park allows you to do so. Even on a crowded day, I've found a nice big open space just for me, and that's great about this park. I like the events too that happen. African dance... I got to see a Mozambique performer, a person from Angola... And that was great. From Cape Verde as well... Yeah, that was wonderful. I also speak Portugese so, that was wonderful. I heard all those people.
>
> I did live in Arkansas for two years when I was small, and I actually had a horse, and it brings me back to that time. It reminds me, especially this meadow, and another one too, further that way, which is just open meadow and kind of reminds me of that time when I had Susie (the horse) and... apple picking in the fall... And I'm glad also that for

> Alex this is something he's going to grow up with--going to the park, playing and running, kicking a soccer ball.

Maria and her son would sometimes visit the playground in their neighborhood, but Alex was "constantly asking, 'Can we go to the big park?'" and Maria too clearly prefers to come here:

> The kids here in the city are so, are kept indoors obviously, it's from one building to another building, one room to another room... and, uh, the park is that little escape like I was saying earlier, that allows him to breathe a little clean air for a little bit, you know. It's really wonderful; it's great for the spirit.

In the park she finds a coherent natural environment that can stand in for the agricultural hinterland of Arkansas. This environment stirs pleasant memories of childhood and assuages her anxiety about rearing her son in the city. For her son, the park is a setting for playful activity. In this regard the issue is space enough to run and fly kites, where the body can extend itself and engage in a range of motor activity in an environment of forgiving surfaces. Here, Alex can

> ...jump and run and... just be a kid, which is something I feel so--I was so guilty--I used to be very guilty about having a kid here in the city, and then... finding this park was really helpful and kinda took away a little of that guilt... I would go visit my family in Arkansas and I'd say to myself, 'You know, this is the way kids are supposed to be raised--in the open air and the open fields and they don't come back for dinner and you can run and hide and climb trees and ride a horse if you want to.'

In this passage Maria values the park as an extensive, varied, and unstructured environment for play. The old idea of providing safe places for children to play is embodied in the playground, where a flat ground for athletic games may be combined with structures for climbing and swinging. Prospect Park anteceded the playground era, and Olmsted and Vaux did not provide special facilities for children. The five playgrounds in Prospect Park today are all remodelings of facilities built originally in the Moses years. Several other participants talked about the park in accordance with Maria's

idea of an unstructured environment for activity, in contrast to the highly structured, contained environment of typical play facilities. Not many children, if any, get to possess the park in the way Maria describes--running, hiding, climbing trees, not returning home until after dinner—but the idea in this image is of a place that invites activity and stimulates the child's imagination.

It is not clear how much Maria knew of the Woodlands Campaign, but she was emphatic in her support of ecological restoration in the park. She saw it as plants and natural surfaces versus facilities such as playgrounds:

> Of course, this is wonderful what they're doing. Absolutely. When you asked me if there's anything I would add to this park—No! I think the less you deal with little doo-dads here and little playthings for kids, the more natural the park seems, the more like, the way God put it on this earth—although I don't think there are any parts left, right. I mean, I think it's all man-created, even Central Park, isn't it?
>
> *Well, there were pastures and woods here at the time...*
>
> Right, but a lot of it has been manipulated. So, no, I think it's wonderful. I think the more natural, the more back to nature we get the better.
>
> *You wouldn't fill it with basketball courts and hard surfaces...*
>
> No, no—or more carousels or something like that. No, absolutely not. I detest those little parks. Yeah, I really do. I hate that fake grass or all those little jungle-gym things—I hate it.

A person who does not go into the woods may not have had a clear idea of what the Woodlands Campaign involves. What was important to Maria was probably not the architectural aspect of the project but that it represented a commitment to bringing the natural phenomena of the park back to life over the building of new facilities.

These excerpts from my interview with Maria describe the park as something like the rural environment that many city dwellers come from. This idea is not so much about being beautiful or about nature per se, but about the coherence and completeness of the setting. The success of the park's design is in not looking designed at all. Maria's

memory is of a farm and farm life, not of woods, and while she approves of the Woodlands restoration, it is the open, pasture-like spaces of the park that attract her.

VII.B.5. Rodney

Rodney is a 50 year-old African American man who works as a messenger. We met two weeks earlier, while he was showing his brother around the park. Rodney used the park when he was younger and living in Brooklyn, but had spent many years in Washington, D.C. Back in New York, he came to know midtown Manhattan well from his work as a messenger. He told me how he used to enjoy spending his free time on the weekends going into Manhattan, where he would often see a movie at the cut-rate Worldwide cinema on Eighth Avenue. Then he would often go to Bryant Park to hang out. He showed me how he put beer into a plastic thermos to keep the police from bothering him. He would sit in Bryant Park drinking beer and playing his Pokemon, and sometimes enjoy the free events that go on there. Rodney had started coming to Prospect Park two months earlier—he liked the more expansive natural setting and not having to take the long subway ride to midtown. Prospect Park allowed him to do a lot of walking, as well hanging out:

> I usually stay in probably about three hours. I liked to come through here years ago on my bike. I get my little beer and play my Pokemon, you know... All this... it's very peaceful for me.
>
> I just wish I could have got here much more in the summertime, you know, brought the family with, could have like little picnic, and have a little cookout, or just enjoy the park. I mean, cause you know just the city, especially parts of Brooklyn are so, you know what I mean, with the--on the main strips--is nothing but confusion... My sister, nephews and stuff, you know, we get a couple a barbecues 'n stuff out, and sodas 'n chips, and pick a beautiful spot, and really enjoy the summer, you know.
>
> But bringing the family back you know, bring them back to a close-knit thing, you know--cause all they do now is like sit up and... cause we have one 'a those wide-screen TVs where all they want to do is play those arcade games, and my sister, you know, she has the doggone

> cable thing where she can watch all the movies so she's basically like stay in bed all day, you know, because she's retired and everything, and just do that. I'm the only one who's basically active. Like, uh, look I done worked all week, I'm gon' get outa here and enjoy this park and people and, y'know, do the park. This is like my, uh, haven.
>
> Of course, I don't have to cook Sunday dinner no more. You know, cau' the family, they love my cooking. You see, I'm a professional—I used to be a professional cook. Not a chef, but I used to be paid good money just to cook... But I said no, those two days I get off, it's time for me to be in myself... instead of slaving over a hot stove. Cause normally I'd come in here about one or two... and I'll stay maybe til about 3:30, 4:00, and then I have to deal with screaming hollering, 'Why these dishes been cleaned so I can cook y'all know I don't like cookin...' And we got a washer, a dishwasher—we could just throw the stuff in the dishwasher, make sure everything is ready, you know, when they're too lazy... got all the comforts, you know, and don't even try. Oh my God. So that's what I go through. I said 'No more Sundays.'

At the time, Rodney was sleeping in his sister's living room in Crown Heights in an apartment full of children and young adults because he did not make enough money to get his own place. In the park he had control over his personal space:

> It puts me, uh, I don't know, I just feel totally relaxed, like I say, with the hustle and bustle of Manhattan where I work every [day] and then coming home to a house full of nephews and great nephews and nieces and—yes, a lot of family in the house—and, uh, there's very little space that you can go to call your own and just to be by yourself. So this park right here, like a, like heaven to me. I come in here and I get my thoughts together... I play my pokemon. I feel real great. And sometimes when I go back home, even though I rejuvenize, I actually feel like, I still be kind a' depressed cause I'm back with the madness again.
>
> I mean, words can't really express how you feel when you come through here, you know what I mean? It's alright with me. You know, everybody is, is, there's no arguing and fussing, everybody seem to be trying to have a nice time, know what I'm saying? Yeah. Absolutely peaceful.
>
> Like, if I had millions and trillions of dollars, I would actually have a—my backyard would be like this. I'd have a backyard like this. Acres and acres of wooded land just like this where I could go in the backyard and just... I would leave the park as it is. People could still come and everything... They'd be doing the same thing they did right now, just as my property, that's all.

He took me to his customary spot, the rustic shelter at the tip of the Peninsula. He likes sitting in this private place by the water where he can play his Pokemon as well as look out at other people and their activities on the water or on the far shore:

> Yeah, this is like a focal point. Yeah I can see everything. You can sit down too at the same time. And most people when they see people sittin' back here they really don't come back here. You know what I mean, they might intend it but when they see us, 'Oh, okay.' And they just keep going on. So you have a reasonable amount of, you know, privacy. So it's cool. This is what I do.

The rustic shelter afforded some temporary personal space that he lacked at home. Rodney felt that there was an understanding in the park about privacy. When he sat there, people who approach would generally maintain a certain distance from him and will soon leave. In this place he had contact with others, but the amount of contact was up to him.

Even though he walked a lot on the job, Rodney enjoyed walking in the park:

> I really shouldn't be walking but I am. You know, I be walking. I love to walk. I don't know why. Cause you see, my job consists of walking. Yeah, but you see it's different when I'm walking cause, there, I'm walking because I gotta get there, I gotta get there. But this particular walking is a different walk, this walk is like a cruise walk. You know, a cruise and so, that's why I like it. It ain't helping my knee but I guess it helps my heart, though, huh.

Rodney was unfamiliar with the woodlands work. Tending toward the southern and eastern sides of the park, he had not been up through Rocky Pass and seemed unfamiliar with the Long Meadow. He had no quarrel with the project or with the fencing:

> I have seen a lot of the parts, uh, fenced off; it doesn't bother me because I wasn't no type that make short cuts anyway, so it really doesn't affect me at all. I enjoy the park very much. For them to gettin' the park back to its natural state somewhere, I think is good, it's a good idea. But I see where a lot of parts of the park, where people... um... has been

> trampled, and you could see different paths where people took, hanging out. It does make the, um, seem kind of like a eyesore, so for them to clean up certain areas and to be able to restore the park back to its originality, I think is great.

He also thought that fencing off a few acres out of the hundreds still accessible was no problem:

> The work they're doing or whatever they're doing, the space that we got--the park is so big--that, there are as many areas we could still go to play soccer, we could still have our little cookout, our little picnics and like this, so I don't feel that there's handed us any bit that we can't find a little spot to throw our little blanket down and still enjoy ourself.

Several other people made the reasonable point that the size of the park leaves plenty of space elsewhere. Rodney's magnanimity came in part from his inclination to view the park as a benign place where everything is right with the world:

> I mean, if I'm comin' out to enjoy the beautiful weather and the trees and hear the birds singing and all that kind of stuff, or look at the pond or look at people having fun, or I'm doing my own little thing, one little fence is not going to bother me one bit. And I'm a Virgo, which means I'm very critical in a lot of things sometimes, I can be real (crusty?), you know.

Part of the appeal of Prospect Park was that it cost him no money to enjoy. Rodney stayed away from some other fondly remembered places because they now charge admission fees. These include the Botanic Garden and the Prospect Park Zoo:

> I would like to have go over to uh botanical garden, that's another park that I love, but only thing with that is, since I haven't been in there in many years, I think they charges now, I'm not sure. Just like even with the zoo right here used to be free but now that it's open, have a chatto sort of thing--I think I said the word right--you have to pay like seven bucks you got to go in there to see the animals now.
>
> *Oh, seven? That's hefty.*
>
> I think it's seven dollars. You know, I'm not going to pay seven dollars go in and see the... but see with the animals it's more out, they're not like caged in like they were before, so. You know, so that's all good but I...

Like some other participants, Rodney liked the park's natural-growing-wild style:

> I think they doing the right thing. Because I mean, if this going to be a park, I mean, everywhere you go, who wants to see... totally, I mean the grass trimmed down into one sort of... you know like, trimmed like, you know what I mean... manicured sort of... You know to me it's somewhat artificial... it's not really in its natural state.

Someone who had more to say on the subject of groomed versus wild was Lisa, a young adult who was walking her dog through the park with a friend.

VII.B.6. Lisa

Several participants said that Prospect Park seemed natural, not from a lack of built spaces but for being not too manicured. One was Lisa, a young African American woman, also a teacher, walking her dog with a woman friend. I joined them as they were leaving Rocky Pass; we walked across the Long Meadow to Meadowport Arch:

> [I come] at least once a week... walking my dog. I was actually here on Monday. I teach and my kids were here releasing fish into the lake. So I was showing [my friend] where we released the fish, and telling her the few things I learned about in the process. We were just saying that we walk around often in different places and then can't later figure out how to get there, or we'll get there again but not by the same route... I think I go to almost every space in the park but not all the time and... I couldn't tell you where they were. Which I love! I love that [you can get] lost here. But the trails and the forest are really important to me.

Lisa made a point about seemingly natural greenery, as opposed to contrived garden effects:

> You know there are two big parks in New York, Central Park and this park. [Her friend:] *"Central Park is more crowded."* And Central Park is also more constructed. This feels more like a neighborhood park but bigger, and it also just feels like more of a natural space than Central Park does. Central Park feels more like, you know, a garden. I mean, it's still an amazing space but... I prefer this park. When I first moved to Brooklyn I would come here and, you're walking through the woods and, y'know, here you can look around and not see any tall buildings. You

> can't do that in Central Park. And here you can go into the woods and forget that you're actually in the city, which is great.
>
> I mean I think that it's... really vital to have a space in an urban area that's a large green space. For your peace of mind. I also think it's important for kids to have access to it. You know, there's something that you-- and I don't know what it is, but there are things that you learn from being in nature that you can't learn from... work or film or culture-- nature is (inaudible).
>
> *And nature particularly in the sense of green, unconstructed stuff?*
>
> "Yeah, exactly. Yeah, walking around in, like, the botanical gardens is a very very different experience. Which is also great, beautiful, but... I'm not afraid to sit on things here; I'm not afraid I'll damage any, you know, precious, expensive plants.

Surely one difference between film or culture and experience of natural settings concerns the body. Film and culture, as well as much work today, require mental attention while much of the time the body sits inert. Natural environments engage both mind and body. Whether the park is a work of art or not, as a natural setting it affords the physical freedom to move around among forgiving surfaces and not just gaze passively at natural phenomena. Lisa appreciates the beauty of the garden but the freedom to roam around the varied terrain of a big park with a dog is something not available to her in a garden—or in the city streets:

> [My dog] loves hiking, so it's great that I can take her out into the woods so she can explore. As a dog owner, it's great having a huge space to run around in, and with other dogs.

Lisa was impressed by the transformation wrought by the Woodlands Campaign:

> Oh, it was amazing--I was so excited, yeah! Because I came here before they started doing any work and it's amazing--the difference is incredible. So excited... for it to be open again. I mean, then, you know—the down side of that is that this neighborhood has become a lot more popular. I think once they open this space up a lot more people are going to come to the park, so it's not going to be as quiet as... Cause it's beautiful. Certainly if I had kids I'd bring them here more often.

Her delight in the new profusion of plant life was balanced with regret that the area would be fenced for so long:

> I think that kind of defeats the purpose. I think that there's something to be said for preserving the space of nature within, you know, [but] it's also a public space, it's also here in the middle of an urban area where people want to have access to it, and I'm not sure how it is that you... If this was a park in the middle of Wisconsin or something you wouldn't have to worry so much about huge numbers of people coming and destroying anything, but here, just because of traffic, you're going to get a lot more damage.

Like Jill, Lisa suggested having some guiding feature to keep people on the trail but not a high fence:

> It wouldn't really keep people out but it would psychologically... [people] would think to stay out, and it wouldn't be as unattractive as chain link fences. But if it were important to keep traffic out of certain areas, that's another way to do it.

She thought more public education was necessary:

> It also has to do with educating the public about why it's important... to stay on trails or to not walk through, you know, an area where the plants are [fragile], and I think that if you have... more public education, especially if you have rangers walking around educating, I think that's the other way to change the culture, so that people feel more... so people *know*—you know. 'This is why you shouldn't walk over here.'

VII.B.7. Robert

The last participant I want to quote at length is a Jamaican immigrant fifty-seven years old. Robert is an inveterate park user, and although he has a wife and grown children, Robert comes here by himself:

In the summertime I come to the park a lot—maybe sometimes three days a week. When I come home from work, I used to come in here and run... depends on my condition. I run all the time. When I can't run, I walk. When I come in here sometimes [I hear] the drummers—you know the drummers that come over there in the summer time? Yeah, in that case, I'll be in the park twice for that day. I come in the morning and I run, and then I come back in the evening and go and listen to the drummers. That's really nice, especially [during] the Caribbean festival... I go to the park over at the band shell when they have the concert over there. I go there all the time, oh yeah. I use this park all the time; I appreciate this park. I do! Yes I do. I do. Cause I like to walk, I like to run, I like to be alone, I like... quietness. I like the birds, I like the trees, the people... so on. I'm kind of a loner in a lot of ways.

Where I'm from... there's trees everywhere-- I'm Jamaican, you know--there's trees everywhere... I'm not a city guy, I'm from the country, so I'm used to nature... so I have to have it! So I appreciate this, so I just come and look at the trees. In Jamaica the trees don't turn red! You know, so this--I love this! The trees are always green all year round. But here, I like the different colors. I like the park.

Right, it is amazing in the fall.

I love it, I love it... I just love it. This is my New England.

Robert chose his route through the park so as to see particular trees he expected to be colorful that day. Two locations he sought out were the Long Meadow near the Tennis House and along the southern lake shore. Robert was engaged with more than just the natural aspect of the park. He was very interested in protecting, maintaining, and restoring the more designed parts, places like the Rose Garden, the Vale of Cashmere, the Pergola (at the Ocean-Parkside entrance), and what's left of the lookout area at the top of Lookout Hill:

They should do somet'ing about Lookout Hill up there, they should do something about that. Such a nice place up there on top of that hill.

How would you improve it?

I [would say] they should build like a observatory, and you go up there and you can look all over Brooklyn, right on top of the hill there. Restore it! You can see it was nice, long ago, when the park was new. You see it was a nice place, with gardens and everything up there. They should restore it.

Robert did not strike me a historic preservationist, yet he was obviously drawn to landscapes and pretty good at reading the signs of former activity. The architectural lineaments of the Rose Garden are an obvious sign of a once-elegant place. On Lookout Hill, however, it is harder to see that anything much was ever there. Still, Robert has exactly the right idea about what Olmsted and Vaux wanted there: an observatory, romantic plantings, if not exactly a garden; and a "nice place" for people to gather and take in the view.

Of the Rose Garden, he said,

> Another place they should restore-- you know on that side where they have the fountains over there? On the Flatbush side? It used to be a beautiful place. I feel bad when I go t'rough that place. It still-- even now it looks good! And it's neglected and abandoned! But still, you know, you get a nice impression. That this could be great, you know? Bring it back.

The Vale of Cashmere, which adjoins the Rose Garden, was troubling to Robert as well:

> That fountain gives me the creeps. The first time I was there I saw some, some tough-looking guys sitting there... So I don't visit over there that much.

The woodlands campaign had drawn his attention mainly in having restored Rocky Pass path to public use. He had gone into the work area that morning (the gates had been opened to allow a "greenathon" fund-raising route to pass through the project site. He spoke about it in terms of way-finding rather than landscape architecture:

> Matter of fact I just went t'rough there... they opened up up there, so I went t'rough there, where they opened up. Opened that gate, you go up by the fall[s] and the stream, and I walked through-- I was looking for a way t'rough because one day I was walking in the park and I saw them (inaudible) a path up the hill right over here, so I think I could go right through, but I couldn't. Yeah.

> The only time I'm in the park late at night is when I go to the concert over at the band shell. Then I could walk over, from home. That's why I appreciate the road (Rocky Pass)! Make it so much easier cause before that road I had to go right around, or you can walk t'rough, up through the hill, or up through--illegal you know, but, you could do it, you know, cause it's a short cut. But I take the road now. Before that you have to go right around, or walk through the bushes. Course, you don't want to hear... (he laughs).

For someone so appreciative of the park's gardens and pastoral scenery, Robert had little to say about the woodlands restoration beyond these remarks about the new "road." Yet he called for restoration of designed, constructed places like the Rose Garden. Robert's perspective echoes the critique of the white participant who talked about the inside-outness of making the stream into a perfect image of itself while leaving the formal elements to neglect and decay.

Robert had been greatly impressed by an official sign care and concern at another location:

> One thing impressed me. There was a, there's a br- what do you call it, a... a art, way up, near to the exit at Grand Army, and there were some pieces of stone that were laying down along the path there, [and I wondered] 'Where these stones came from?' And I've passed them for years and years and years, and I said 'I wonder where they came from.'
>
> *I know just what you mean, that one place (Endale Arch).*
>
> Exactly! And one day I saw them put back the stones on the bridge there, put back where they came from. That was very impressive. I didn't think anybody noticed those stones beside myself. They were there for *years*. I was very impressed, that somebody saw that and restored that thing. I was really impressed. And I said these stones, wherever they came from, they're abandoned. They're just there. Matter of fact, I was even saying they should--if they're not going to use them any more they should just set them and make a seat for people to sit on. But they did take them and put them back where they came from. This is impressive. At least somebody's looking...

Here is a regular user and park lover who deeply appreciates this relatively small and simple act of restoration: putting large carved stones back into the arch structure, stones which had lain around on the ground for who knows how many years. At the

same time, the multi-million dollar construction project which restores numerous artistic embellishments and replants whole landscapes, he notices mostly for reopening an important path through the hills. Robert made a similar observation about the Pergola, the entrance structure at Parkside and Ocean Avenues, which is capped by an arbor. Robert had had noticed work going on around the entrance:

> I'm not sure exactly what it's going to look like, but at least they're doing something. Guys would hang out there and it was dirty. I was wondering--the vines that grow over the canopy. But one side is like bare or only have, you know... I wonder if they could plant the other side, to cover the whole thing. *Well, maybe they will. Cause it's designed for vines, that's the whole point of that structure.* Exactly. And the left side over here-- there's only one vine, it's not enough to cover the whole of that side. The right side, this side is covered. The other side is half covered; we need another vine.

Talking to Robert, it seemed that the work of the Woodlands Campaign was good but perhaps beside the point, or at least unremarkable. To him, artifacts like the Pergola, Endale Arch, and the Rose Garden were more significant. Perhaps because of the loss of symmetry, the deterioration of these artifacts pained him, and he took great pleasure when someone finally took the trouble to put the stones back where they belonged.

> There's a lot of things that could be done... I don't think they can bring back the park like it was originally, you know, but maintain it.

In spite of the proliferating construction work around the park--Robert had also noticed the sidewalk reconstruction along the park perimeter and construction activity at the Boat House--he was not sure that management or many other users really cared about taking good care of the park:

> A lot of people don't care. You see that (some litter)? I could never do this. I pick up litter all the time, anything, I do it all the time. Yeah... This is a park! People come to relax and have a nice atmosphere. They don't want to see that. ...Matter of fact, you know what I think? I see a lot of park rangers and stuff, but do they enforce anything? But I never see them, I don't know if they enforce the rules. Not necessarily locking

> up people or, you know... I hope they do... I don't accuse them of not doing anything, but maybe they should do a little more.

Like many black participants, Robert was also drawn to the present-day cultural happenings in the park.

> Ah sure, the drumming. The drumming. Oh sure. The drumming is excellent. They're supposed to be building a place for them, right? It's a good thing for the park. The drumming's great. And then they have the food festival every year. And the... I love it!

VII.C. CONCLUSION

At the outset of this research, I thought I might find some difference in how people responded to the Woodlands Campaign according to ethnicity or race or class. As these data show, there are differences in response to the work, but the differences fall into no easily discernable demographic pattern. These participants were all not only park users, but users of the wooded interior region of the park. All were people who enjoy walking through the natural landscapes. Talking to non-users or to users who keep to the playgrounds or to the circuit drive would have produced different data, but perhaps with similar implications for the woodlands restoration. The non-user would be unfamiliar with the park landscape and the restoration work, but likely still find the idea of restoration appealing.

The point of talking only to users already in the restoration vicinity was to find out about the values and uses among the population who visit the woodlands and are likely to be interested in issues of restoration, preservation, management control, public access, and so on. Even without finding clear differences among different groups, the information gained in my research is relevant to the issues surrounding restoration.

Most of my participants cared very much about the natural qualities of the park. They came here for the open environment of greenery, wildlife, water, fresher air, and natural surfaces. The participants were equally interested and affected by the many cultural aspects of the park: its sociable gathering places, musical performances, its artifacts and designed places, and the features that express human cultivation of nature, such as the fields and meadows and ornamental trees and shrubs.

Prospect Park is a highly cultivated landscape, full of architectural ornaments, valuable specimen trees, pastoral scenery, and busy recreation areas. There is not much of a sense here of nature in the wild. After doing this research, I find that one of the most interesting questions about the Woodlands Campaign is the influence in it of the wilderness ethos of the environmental movement. There is a strong dose of nature worship in the project, notably in the restrictive fencing, also in the decision to plant so thickly that walking off the official paths will necessarily damage plants. One lesson of the dissertation data is that even among nature lovers, many people value a natural environment for opportunity of bodily mobility and haptic experience as much or more than for visual pleasure. Scenic values are important to them, but so are the pleasures of roaming freely, exploring hidden places, finding private spots away from the city hustle to sit and relax. People also want children to be able to run, climb, wade in the water, fish, and generally have a kinetic, multi-sensory environmental experience. The Woodlands Campaign treats the park landscape more like a museum exhibition to look at but not touch.

A second important lesson from the data is that many participants took great pleasure in areas outside the woodlands—often features and phenomena different from those of the restoration. Rodney, for example, enjoyed his perch on the edge of the lake. Robert loved to spot the specimen trees standing singly and in groves against backgrounds of open ground: these were the trees that showed their structure and fall color to advantage. Robert also placed some importance on the neglected formal areas of

the park, hoping for signs of care of these places. Maria loved the pastoral groves and meadows but avoided the woods. Jill sought out soft woodland paths, thrilled at the sight of ducks on the water, and delighted in the intimate, garden-growing-wild quality of the Vale of Cashmere.

These two dimensions of park users' experience of nature in the park--opportunity for action and variety of sensory enjoyment—belong within the park's pastoral design heritage. The park is not a piece of preserved wilderness but a thoroughly human construction. Its natural features as well as its artifacts are deeply symbolic of the human history of living in, using, and shaping nature. The participants in this study loved the open fields that seem like agrarian landscapes. Many people were drawn to particular trees--not the undifferentiated mass of woods but individual trees and groves of trees. These attractions grow out of cultural relationships to natural phenomena, trees you can plant and care for, and that give shade; trees that have been developed through horticulture for branching habit, flowering, or fruit. For many people, especially immigrants from the Caribbean and Latin America, the trees and fields of the park recall the productive agricultural landscapes of their native countries. People also loved the formal places in the park, the little gardens, fountains, and the Boat House on its lagoon. And people knew that the park was a designed landscape.

J. B. Jackson (1972) once observed that if the English deer park was Olmsted's official model, his unofficial model was the New England countryside of his youth. At that time, much of New England was a landscape of subsistence farms, upland sheep and cow pastures, small woodlots, and tidy rural villages. Thoreau had to travel far from Concord to find a real forest—all the way to Katahdin. The chief inspiration of pastoralism is its sense of cultivating the land as a setting that sustains life and work. Of the two traditions of wilderness and pastoralism, pastoralism seems more meaningful to the participants in this study.

This dialogue in the park between cultivation and wilderness leads back to the dialectical relationship of culture and nature in Prospect Park. The identity of each is realized partly in the other. The nature of the park is a product of culture. Parts of its nature seem wild, others more symbolic of cultivation. Not only the meadows, but the old, abandoned gardens and many of the individual trees have the character of settled landscapes. It is a good thing to protect the woodlands and revive their biological systems, but doing it within a wilderness model closes off many of the ways in which people relate to natural phenomena.

Chapter VIII. FINDINGS SUMMARY

In this chapter I summarize the findings from each of three major research methods: (1) historical and archival, (2) management philosophy, and (3) ethnographic field work.

VIII.A. Findings from the Historical Research

The park was created to promote polite, healthful recreational behavior and moral improvement. It was primarily a social environment rather than one managed to preserve nature or create habitat. Olmsted's theory of personal and social experience was at the basis of the design criteria. Thus the form the park took was carefully planned to engender a certain experience, a refreshing and salubrious personal experience and a democratic, communal social experience.

As a democratic space it was paternalistic, its form worked out in an upper-class design idiom. The working class was welcome but correct behavior was modeled by the park's many middle and upper class patrons and encoded in the park's genteel aesthetic formula. The upper-class neighborhoods taking shape around the park contributed to the genteel tone. In fact, the park and its connecting parkways were seen as fundamental to the project of building a series of safely upper-class suburban districts on the outskirts of Brooklyn.

The vision for the park ignored the deeply rooted local agricultural traditions of Kings County in favor of English aesthetic landscape practice. The idea of providing green open space for a growing city did not embrace any of the existing local agricultural lands or vernacular recreation practices. The herds of grazing sheep and deer and the pastoral meadows were freely taken allusions to agrarian English landscapes and royal hunting forests, rather than to local farming landscapes. The park would be an aesthetic

rather than a productive landscape, designed for recreation, social encounter, sensory delight, tranquillity, and recuperation from stress.

Olmsted and Vaux were adherents of the three-part aesthetic formula of pastoral, picturesque, and sublime. Olmsted emphasized the superior importance of the pastoral ideal throughout the design. The picturesque ideal was employed in a secondary capacity, mainly in the Ravine section of the park, which is the object of the Woodlands Campaign. The sublime ideal was to be realized mainly in expansive views available from the Lookout. Keeping these views open was dependent on regular pruning and thinning of trees. The lack of such maintenance has long since left the summit of Lookout Hill thickly screened by woods.

Paths were laid out within the park to bring walkers into the woodland areas where they could, in many places, stray off the paths to walk under the trees. There were open groves of trees and grassy clearings where people could sit, lie down, or picnic, often with a view over water or through the trees to one of the meadows. The designers provided many facilities to attract and support social activity in the wooded regions. Among the most substantial of these were the Concert Grove, Dairy Cottage, Lookout, and the never-built Refectory. Later improvements building on the precedent of providing spaces for social experiences included the Music Grove and the 1905 Boathouse.

VIII.B. Values of the Prospect Park Alliance

The park management and Prospect Park Alliance are focused on the material resource rather than on user experience. The emphasis is on perfection of the park's topographic and architectural form and on restoring good working order to both facilities and biological systems. This is not to say that people are left out of the picture: the Administrator has worked over the years to promote the park by staging numerous events and operating programs that have the effect of bringing people into the park, raising its

profile, and improving its reputation as a safe and agreeable resort. Still, the focus is on the park as object. The ecological restoration and historic preservation projects in the Woodlands and elsewhere focus on the physical resource itself, making the biological communities function as well as possible and restoring the forms and contours of the original landscape architecture.

Management philosophy reflects a transition beginning in the 1960s to valorizing the park as an artistic rather than a recreational resource. The recreational emphasis of the Robert Moses era produced utilitarian facilities sometimes heedless of the Olmsted and Vaux design. The park drives were widened and in places straightened out. The drives were furnished with standard highway fixtures such as cobra-head street lights that were unsympathetic to the picturesque aesthetic. The Parks Department built playgrounds, ballfields in the meadow, a skating rink, a zoo, and a band shell for live performances. This approach was not unlike that of earlier eras, in which management, ever attentive to shifts in usage patterns, would make periodic changes in the material fabric of the park as well as in programming to accommodate new activities.

The shift to curatorial management in the 1960s marked a new vision of the park as an abused artistic resource, even an artwork, that could now be restored. It also marked a new emphasis on form. So, rather than treating the park as a social and recreational resource to be adapted and updated to reflect changing tastes and needs, the park became an object of interest in itself. Its formal qualities came to be seen as historic, artistic and venerable. Later, its biological systems too came into focus as resources debilitated from long neglect and, like the artistic forms, in need of conservation and restoration.

Management in the 1980s found a vacuum in public support for the park. Attendance was down, the park was in poor condition, and relatively few people spoke out on the subject. The Administrator began community outreach to counteract the apathy and drum up enthusiasm for the park. The outreach efforts sought to promote the

new idea of the park as a natural and cultural treasure and not just a flexibly adaptable pleasure ground. Management was and remains willing to bring just about any kind of event into the park as a way of generating interest and developing the park constituency. A great deal of effort goes into such promotion, and most of the staff employed by the Prospect Park Alliance, as opposed to the Parks Department, work in advocacy, fundraising, planning and design, and other administrative tasks rather than on playground supervision or grounds and facilities maintenance. However, except for the work involved in restoring lost features of the original design, management is largely unwilling to alter the form itself; the public relations are all about valorizing the park as an artistic object. At the same time, the biological systems are accorded the quasi-sacred status of untouchable wilderness. Apart from the very minor alterations to accommodate the drummers and the Haitian musicians at the Grumbwa, management resists any lasting material changes. Thus the many events staged in the park, from bicycle races to Gay Pride, are all ephemeral. They transform the park for a day or two and then are gone, leaving no permanent marks.

VIII.C. Field Work

III.C.1. The User Study

The User Study data indicated heavy usage in the recreational areas of the park, such as the playgrounds, the circuit drive, and picnic areas. The data on values similarly indicated a general preference for these more populated areas. At the same time, respondents expressed a liking for the natural features of the park, especially for the trees, flowers, shade, meadow views, and water areas. Walking, visiting playgrounds, relaxing, picnicking/cooking out, and being there "with the family" were all highly ranking activities.

The User Study looked for differences among users along class and ethnic lines. The data indicated an affinity among black and Latino constituents for socio-cultural and

recreational activity. Latinos especially came for family and peer group activities, often for picnics with ancillary games like volleyball. In fact, few of the picnicking parties in the park were white. Whites, instead, were more likely to visit for private, aesthetic experience, or for exercise. Whites were also more likely to come alone or in dyads than in familial groups. Activities like relaxing and hanging out were cited most by blacks. People who cited "walking" were preponderantly white and black, rather than Latino, as were runners, rollerbladers, and cyclists. In general, white visitors were middle and upper-middle class, and most of the poor and working class users were people of color.

The highest ranking meanings of the park were "relaxing tranquil" and "appreciating nature/wildlife." People of color tended to talk about the park as a place to go that afforded things to do. Blacks more than others were attracted by things relating to other people--either by the drumming and band shell performances and other cultural festivities, or by the presence of different kinds of people in the park. Whites, and blacks to a lesser extent, saw the park as an important civic resource. People of color were more likely than whites to see the park as a safe place.

The interior woodlands were not especially popular or well liked. Many people, especially Latinos, did not recognize the existence of a forest as distinct from the rest of the park. People tended to stay away from the woodlands, partly from safety concerns: some were afraid of getting lost in the woods, others of being assaulted. Several people spoke of the problem of finding their way through the park interior. Trash and safety were widespread concerns, although only safety concerns were correlated with negative impressions of the woods.

Racism was a particular problem for black participants. Several talked about being made to feel uncomfortable in the woods or on the "white" side of the park. Many blacks thought the maintenance was uneven, favoring the white side and leaving the "black" side in relative disrepair. A few interpreted the appearance of Woodlands Campaign fencing in 1996 as an effort to keep blacks on "their" side of the park.

VIII.C.2. Dissertation Field Work

The interviews I conducted in and near the woodlands for my dissertation research drew from a subset of visitors who know the park well enough to feel comfortable in the interior. A large proportion of this group visit the park to enjoy nature--persons who notice and appreciate natural phenomena in their daily and seasonal variety. In many ways, these are the ideal constituents of a landscape park. Many of these users come in to run or bicycle or picnic or to attend concerts too, but they also, and perhaps primarily, come just to be in the park.

I expected to find that an affinity for the park woodlands and for the work of the Woodlands Campaign would sort out along class and ethnic lines. Based on the User Study data, I thought that white professionals would be the major supporters of the woodlands work. I expected blacks to object to the work, to find it fussy, unduly expensive, restrictive, and exclusive. I thought some would see it as a palliative for white, middle-class tastes and possibly as repugnant to their own values. Latinos, I thought, would have little noticed the work.

Instead, I found both favorable and unfavorable opinions cutting across the demographic categories. Among my research participants, well-educated whites were both the strongest supporters and the severest critics of the work. Most blacks and Latinos I interviewed had not noticed the project much, or had only noticed the fencing having blocked off paths. Yet these participants generally liked the idea of management doing work of this kind.

My research was designed not only to gauge responses to the Woodlands Campaign but to develop a typology of park values among a diverse group of users. Such a broad portrait of users' values and activities provides a better basis for evaluating the cultural appropriateness of the Woodlands Campaign. From this perspective, the great joy of the park for most of my participants is in roaming through it. As in the User

Study data, walking was the most popular single activity among my research participants, nearly all of whom loved the spaciousness of the park and the predominance of natural phenomena. People had all sorts of favorite places and features—a well loved tree, an ornate arch or pavilion, an obscure woods path, the fountain and pond in the Vale of Cashmere, the summit of Lookout Hill, and so on. The variety of sights and other sensory pleasures in the park seems to be central to these users' experience. Walking on soft surfaces, the feeling of wind, sun and shade, the contrast in moving between great open spaces and dark, enclosed ones, are among the pleasures of walking in a park environment. I must note that few of the favorite places were within the restoration area, or of the type of landscape that the Woodlands Campaign is reproducing. The favorite cultivated tree, pastoral view, or garden-in-the-woods in most cases was found somewhere else.

The park environment invites a release from normal standards of behavior. To wave one's arms, jump and run, to sit and lie down, wade in water, and to climb upon or swing from something, makes up a particular set of bodily experiences that a park environment affords. This bodily freedom was of great importance for my research participants.

At least as important as these impressions of the natural environment is the encounter with other people. Participants noted the variety of other people and took pleasure in seeing other people enjoying themselves. Nearly everyone was able to find the right balance, for them, of public and private in the park--that is, being able to find an unoccupied space when they wanted to. Thus people found the park in general pleasingly populated rather than describing it as "crowded." The woodlands were an exception to this rule, as numerous participants described them as not populated enough, especially on weekdays.

My participants interested themselves in what I am calling the relationship of culture to nature in the park. People knew that this was a designed environment and gave

much thought to the ostensible contradiction of a designed yet natural place. People noticed and enjoyed pondering the contrast between the formal elements—architectural and landscaped—and the informal, "natural" features of trees, water, and field. A related set of values involved people's judgment of the management's priorities, effectiveness, and so on. An interesting issue here was a difference for some users between reconstruction projects as such and signs of concern by the staff itself. Fences, project construction signs, earth moving equipment and the like were not necessarily equated with management doing a good job. On the other hand, seeing people at work planting things, or noticing the repair of a bridge, gave much satisfaction to some of my participants.

All these park values—walking, sensory diversions, bodily freedom, enjoyment at seeing others, and thinking about the meanings of the park's features, contribute to the sense of getting away from noise, stress, cramped quarters, and so on. This very Olmstedian idea of release and refreshment was a prominent user value.

VIII.C.3. Comparison of User Study and Dissertation Research Data

As noted above, my two bodies of field data have divergent results. Where the User Study indicated a preference among people of color generally for sociable, populated places with ample recreational facilities, all my dissertation research participants were drawn to the more unbuilt landscapes of woods and fields. The difference in sampling locations used in the two research efforts explains some but not all of the difference in results. The important point, I believe, is that the User Study missed a strong "naturalist" constituency among people-of-color users. Of course there are many users for whom recreation facilities, sports, picnics, and cultural events are the

major attractions of the park. But the naturalist constituency is not only white and well educated.

Many of my research participants expressed a preference for Prospect Park's "natural" landscape in comparison to Central Park's more manicured appearance. At the same time, most participants in both studies expressed an affinity for open groves, clearings, and vistas, rather than for the woods per se. I suggest that this idea of the "naturalness" of Prospect Park is consistent with the dominant preference of research participants for pastoral landscapes rather than woods. People like the visual spaciousness of Prospect Park, where the pastoral idea survives much more intact than in Central Park (the usual referent in comparisons favoring Prospect Park.) Central Park is rich in picturesque details and striking contrasts of sylvan foreground against urban background. As a pastoral landscape, it cannot rival the three spacious viewsheds in Prospect Park: the lake, the Long Meadow, and the Nethermead; where buildings, fences, roads, and other intrusions remain minimal. I argue that these spacious but simply detailed landscapes, with woods in the background, are what people mainly have in mind when they say that Prospect Park seems more natural. My data suggest that this is especially so for Latinos, African Americans, and West Indians.

A few, mostly white participants talked about really liking the woods. Jill and Bonnie, for example, were true woodland devotees. At least two other white participants were equally fond of the woods, although one of them was too fearful to take the more secluded paths. By contrast, neither Robert, Maria, nor Rodney were drawn to the really wooded areas. One West Indian man, a photographer, was an exception; he made

extensive use of the woods to take pictures. Two people of color I interviewed talked about the woods in connection with single-track mountain biking.

The racial feelings that came out so strongly in the User Study data were much less in evidence in the dissertation data. The people of color I consulted in the wooded areas for my dissertation research did not say much about racism. Many of them commented favorably on the social diversity of the park, indicating their satisfaction with a place that seems to bring so many different people together. No person of color discerned any invidiously racial consequences of the Woodlands Campaign, although one man saw causal links between park restoration in general and real estate development and tourism in the area. Some white participants speculated on the racial implications of restoring an area adjacent to the perceived "white side" of the park rather than an area associated with people of color. Other white participants implied a fear of finding themselves on the "black" side of the park, or objected to the groups of mostly black boys on bikes.

The two bodies of data confirm each other in some respects. In both, the drumming and other cultural events are very important for African Americans and West Indians. The dissertation data indicates too that some of the greatest walkers are also loyal attendees of the drumming circle.

The User Study indicated that the idea of the park as a place to go with things to do--to hang out and relax, get away from things, have fun—was more salient for people of color than for whites. This idea becomes more refined with the dissertation data. The park is clearly important as a place to go for all these participants, but some differences are apparent. Ellen exemplifies the idea of the private, aesthetic experience of the long,

solitary walk through natural landscapes. Her pleasure in encountering other people is strictly private. Maria also seeks a private experience but her emphasis is on opportunity for action (for her son and herself) in a natural environment that affords free bodily movement. For Jill, the solitary, aesthetic walk includes a gregarious interaction with people she meets along the way. Rodney, a poor person, emphasizes hanging out and the relaxation that comes from "cruise" walking. Robert loves the solitary aesthetic ramble too but is equally devoted to the cultural events in the park, where solitude is not the thing.

Important in regard to the notion of a "place to go" is the prominence of what we might call inhabitable places in the narrative descriptions of experience. Robert, for example, desires restorations of the Rose Garden and the Lookout—both focal points in the layout of the park and places that invite lingering, and perhaps imply dwelling. Jill's itinerary includes a stop in the Vale of Cashmere, and Ellen takes me to the Oriental Pavilion in the Concert Grove. Rodney takes me to a favorite rustic shelter on the lake shore, and Maria's visits sometimes include stops at the Music Pagoda and at the Eleventh Street playground, where she works out on the parallel bars. The presence of these inhabitable places plays a significant role in people's enjoyment of the park, especially in encouraging people to situate themselves in a natural landscape. They make the park available to a wider variety of human needs than scenery alone.

Safety is a major concern in both bodies of data, especially with regard to the woodlands. People fear both assault and getting lost. The User Study indicates that most users keep out of the woodlands in part from such fears. The dissertation data reveals how different users negotiate their fears of the woods. Jill and Ellen take the opportunity

of a walk with a researcher to explore paths they admit they would not take by themselves. Bonnie enters the woods only on weekends when other people seem more numerous. One man said he liked the woodland paths the best but was too fearful of assault to take any but the heavily used "main" path through the Ravine.

It is not clear from my research whether the Woodlands Campaign will reduce or exacerbate people's fears for their safety in that area of the park. The restoration includes thick planting which reduces visibility. The low visibility of the woodlands in general is the cause of anxiety over getting lost and being assaulted. In this respect, the restoration will not help matters. On the other hand, the aesthetic quality of the restored landscapes may attract more users on a regular basis, and the presence of others is perhaps the most effective factor in alleviating safety concerns.

Knowing how important safety is to the user experience and to the success of any public space in attracting the public, it seems fair to ask why the Woodlands Campaign did not make at least some attempt to design the restoration with safety in mind. The reason, it seems to me, is that park officials are consumed with perfecting the material form of the park. They seem to have no attention left over for considering social and individual experience as a part of the framework for planning and design decisions. On this note, we turn to the next and final chapter, in which I evaluate the Woodlands Campaign in light of the findings of this research.

Chapter IX. DISCUSSION

The stream in Prospect Park flows out of the upper ponds, through the winding ravine and downhill to the Nethermead Arches, where the land flattens out and the current slows. At that point the stream changes its character in ways that illustrate the potentialities of a natural landscape park in a big city as well as the limitations of the Woodlands Campaign.

Figure IX-1
STREAM BELOW NETHERMEAD ARCHES

This place, just below the Arches, is of very interesting, spatially complex character. To one side stands the Arches, a massive stone bridge with three passageways underneath it—one for pedestrians, the central one for the stream, and the third to accommodate a bridle path. The foot path provides the main connection between Long Meadow and the Nethermead/Boathouse/Concert Grove sections of the park and so has a lively pattern of use. Behind the path rises a planted embankment. Ahead and to the right, the sloping open ground of the Nethermead is marked by two handsome specimen

trees, a pin oak and a rare osage orange, which drops squishy, green seeds the size of oranges in the fall. A short distance beyond these big trees is a water fountain that includes a low faucet just for dogs.

This is a space well defined by strong architectural elements: the spatial closure made by the Arches and the adjacent slopes; the edge of the stream and its wooded opposite shoreline, the directionality of the path, and the unfolding expanse of the Nethermead. It is a border area: the watered, woodland edge so symbolic of human habitation and biological productivity (Jackson, 1994; Wilson, 1992). In it are all the landscape elements identified by Olmsted as ideal for settlement or a bivouac: open ground, trees for shade and fuel, water at hand, and protected positions to pitch your tent (Beveridge and Hoffman, 1997). This place has the four qualities of natural recreation areas advocated by Kaplan, et al. (1998): complexity, mystery, coherence, and legibility.

The path curves slowly to the left, bordered by the stream and groups of trees along its bank. In an early photograph looking toward the arches, the stream bank is thick with shrubbery and set off from the path by a low iron fence. No trees are present. Today in the area around the stream, trees unintended by the original designers embower the stream and block the view of the arches. The ground surface is bare, hard-packed dirt. The fence and the shrubbery are gone; hardly any herbaceous plants grow here, but trees provide sun-dappled shade. A few of these are valuable specimen trees--a giant turkey oak and, across the stream, a plane tree. Most, however, are younger, hardy weed varieties that survive here despite heavy foot traffic over the stream bank: norway maple, black locust, mulberry, black cherry. The path lies close to the streambed and pedestrians walking in a southerly direction can see sunlight reflecting off the rippled water surface. Rocks and boulders lie in the stream, closely spaced and flat enough to step on. One boulder stands improbably upright like a plinth. Someone has gotten hold of a heavy wooden plank—perhaps taken from the construction zone upstream of the Arches--and thrown it across the stream to make a bridge.

Here is an environment that attracts attention and invites action. There is level ground on the other side of the plank bridge, with a steep hillside behind it to the left. To the right, a broad, soft-surfaced path leads into the woods. People walking down through the scenic gorge of the Ravine and coming out into this more open, level ground, pause when they reach the suddenly accessible stream. The far shore beckons. They may cross over to the other side, setting off down the wide path or scrambling up the hillside. Others just pause before continuing on their way. Meanwhile, there is activity to notice—dogs and children playing in the stream, the adult supervisors looking on, striking up conversations with one another. It is a friendly, happening place, a scene that invites joining in. If the adults have children and/or dogs with them, there is no question of not stopping here.

What could be more fun than a shallow stream and a jury-rigged bridge to cross it? Often other children are already here, running, hopping, crossing back and forth over the bridge. Arriving children quickly make friends. The activity attracts more activity. Sticks lie around, convenient for use as tools in fording the stream or for impromptu construction projects. There are stones waiting to be moved around and perhaps frogs to be caught. The curious osage oranges lie around in fall, waiting to be picked up and tossed. Dogs scramble in and out of the stream, shaking off the water, tails wagging.

This place affords opportunity for action. Here a child can play in a whole, integral setting that presents moderate challenges and numerous possibilities. The physical environment supports a lively social environment, and the two interact. But as a matter of natural ecology, the trampled streambed and denuded banks make for a degraded aquatic regime. Frogs live elsewhere along the waterway but have been hunted and chased away from here. Invasive species grow luxuriantly on the opposite shore. Plant diversity is low; the understory so desirable as habitat and food source for wildlife is only intermittent. Across the stream, erosion gullies mar the steep slope up to Central Drive.

There is no management of the streambank ecology, no planting or loosening of the soil, no provision for the human presence in a way that minimizes environmental impact. For example, surfaces of wood or stone could be installed to allow access to the water while taking some of the pressure off the compacted soil. Just as Robert took the replacement of stones in Endale Arch for a sign of park staff taking care of things, an observer of the scene here might hope for some sign of care and concern. Instead, the procedure in New York City parks seems to be to let things run down to a sate of crisis, then hire a contractor with borrowed money to rebuild the site just like new. Indeed, that is the plan here: the whole area of the stream below the Nethermead Arches is soon to be enclosed within a fence and restored to some meticulous approximation of the original design.

What will that look like? We have only to look on the upstream side of the Nethermead Arches to find out. Ravine III, the third phase of the Woodlands Campaign, is complete from Boulder Bridge all the way down to the Arches. Within the Ravine III project area, only the main path through Rocky Pass is open to the public. A branch path following the stream is fenced off. Beyond the seven-foot-high, chain-link fence, shrubs and young trees have been set out in profusion on the sloping banks. Erosion cloth covering the soil is visible through the plants. The streambed has been carefully reconstructed, the rocks and boulders arranged to simulate the romantic ideal of a mountain stream. The flowing water collects in picturesque pools and gurgles over occasional weirs.

Hardly anyone pauses here, for there is nothing to do and nothing stands out to command one's attention. The flowing water can be heard from the path but it is difficult to see the stream clearly through the vegetation, woodland-like in its completeness. Even after the fences come down, the landscape is designed to discourage efforts to approach the water. With each year the plantings grows more impenetrable--a lush, serene background without views or focal points.

This contrast in landscapes illustrates the dilemma posed by the restoration project. On one side of the Nethermead Arches lies an ecologically degraded environment from which park users nevertheless derive intense pleasure. On the other side one finds an ecologically regenerative but invisible and inaccessible waterway. What is needed is some way of connecting ecological regeneration with the human presence that gives life to places.

IX.A. Benefits of the Woodlands Campaign

For most of those who venture into the woodlands, the restoration work is a welcome change from decades of neglect. The work is increasing the biological diversity of the plant life, which will have a corresponding effect on the wildlife. The new plantings are diverse, including shrubs as well as trees, plants that produce various nuts and berries and pleasant scents and floral effects. The new environment enhances the enjoyment of nature and with it feelings of relaxation and release. For users like Ellen and Bonnie, the new environment of the Woodlands Campaign stands for an imagined natural world outside the urbanized areas of the eastern seaboard, one where people are a minor presence.

As a historic preservation program, the Woodlands Campaign is creating scenic effects that woodland visitors are likely to appreciate. Examples of this are the two Caribbean immigrant men who each admired the woodwork of the new rustic bridge on Rocky Pass path. These men knew nothing of Olmsted and Vaux's rustic-bucolic architectural style, but the decorative log construction of the bridge for them was a symbol of craftsmanship and a reminder of the more rustic ways of the Caribbean Islands. This example also illustrates the ways in which artistic touches can be powerful symbols of other places and other cultures. In this case the symbolism was unintended:

imagine the possibilities of deliberate artistic references to the homelands and cultural artifacts of some of Brooklyn's resident populations.

IX.B. Problems of the Woodlands Campaign

Is the Woodlands Campaign consistent in its priorities and its values with the values of park users? Yes and no. My field research data indicate that most users are pleased by the idea of improvements to the woodlands. Even users who have paid little attention of their own to the work nevertheless comment favorably on the project. The work has created some of Bonnie's favorite places in the park--places which, she admits, did not exist in the years when she would roam freely through the unfenced and unrestored woods.

IX.B.1. Restricting Freedom of Movement

It is just this freedom to explore and discover, unfettered by fencing, that the Woodlands Campaign has so willingly sacrificed. The freedoms of opportunity for action and variety of sensory experience are severely curbed by the Woodlands Campaign, and not only by the fencing.[16] The idea of culture in dialogue with nature came out strongly in the data. But the Woodlands Campaign is different from other places in the park that express this dialogue, such as the old Rose Garden, which provide places for people to gather. Provisions for the human presence in the new woodlands are limited mostly to paths. There will be some rustic shelters, but these are for solitary repose, not public gathering. The Woodlands Campaign is pretending to look not constructed, and to resemble a wilderness scene as much as possible.

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[16] Apparently there was some dissension among staff in planning the fencing program: some staff members I spoke with said they had argued strenuously for long-term fencing, which suggests that others advocated greater public access.

XI.B.2. An Infusion of Wilderness

The word "Adirondack" often turns up in the guided tours and in other verbal descriptions of the Ravine, usually with the assertion that Olmsted and Vaux sought to reproduce an Adirondack mountain stream. I find no evidence of Olmsted using the word "Adirondack" in connection with Prospect Park, but its connotation of a great and remote wilderness is so potent that the usage persists.

The literature indicates a persistent cultural whiteness to wild land, or wilderness, recreation sites (Cheek & Burch, 1976; Cronon, 1996; Katz, 1998; Taylor, 2000; Wilson, 1992). Wilderness proponents, members of wild land conservation organizations, and most hikers and campers in state and national parks, are white. As the critics cited above also demonstrate, wilderness is a cultural construct of middle class, urban, largely white North Americans. The notion of wilderness as pristine nature infuses the spirit of the Woodlands Campaign.

Olmsted and Vaux clearly did try to reproduce the scenic effects of a mountain stream, but within a completely open, accessible, and inhabited woodland environment. The stream was a picturesque effect, a wilderness "quotation". The Prospect Park Alliance takes the wilderness theme much more literally, making the whole woodland section of the park as wild and non-human as possible. My research indicates that people of different class and ethnic backgrounds are pleased by the work. It did not come across to anyone as having been done by or for any one privileged group. On the other hand, the elements of the park that have some association with human culture, dwelling, or livelihood were the ones to which people were most attached. The appropriateness of wilderness as a model for the regeneration of a multicultural park is questionable. The pastoral/picturesque tradition has more to teach about the human relationship to nature—which, in a park, is really about providing places for people to encounter one another.

IX.B.3. Race and Woodlands Use

Although most users of Prospect Park are people of color, a combination of cultural preference and discriminatory effect leaves considerable ethnic variation from one place to another. From my experience spending many weekday and weekend afternoons along the upper ponds and on the Rocky Pass path, most passersby were white. It took much more effort to find people of color in that area to participate in my research. Some of the people of color I interviewed were in the Nethermead and the Music Grove--open areas adjacent to the woodlands but really a different kind of environment.

There are two woodland user groups who consist predominantly of people of color: the teenage boy mountain-bikers and the gay "cruisers". Many mountain bikers keep to the paved paths, some of which provide steep gradients and thrilling descents. Others try out the scary and dangerous desire-line paths that take the steepest downhill routes. Few of these remain in the Midwood-Quaker Hill area where new planting, erosion cribbing, and widespread fencing have sharply limited the opportunities, but perilous chutes remain all around Lookout Hill and on Breeze Hill. For these young people, the park's hilly open ground presents an opportunity for an exciting recreational activity of mobility. Mountain biking is destructive to plants and soils and reflects an anti-Olmstedian relationship to nature. It is an activity that the management tries to eliminate.

The gay sex scene in the Midwood and Rose Garden area is another kind of opportunity for action. In this case, the relatively underutilized woods provide cover for illicit activity. The cruising may be more damaging to the natural environment than the mountain biking: it creates warrens of desire-line paths and produces a particularly sordid kind of litter. The cruising is also a deterrent to others. For many people wanting a quiet walk in the woods, encountering men seeking sex spoils the tranquil mood, and next time they walk elsewhere. Management does not speak about cruising with the explicit

disapproval it uses for mountain biking, but it seems safe to suppose that one objective of the Woodlands Campaign is to generate enough mainstream activity in the woods to drive away the cruisers. From a management perspective, these uses of the park pose real challenges. But the opportunity available of working with user constituencies to solve management problems is too seldom taken, as I discuss in the following section.

IX.C. Management Style

If the users and their attitudes were made a basis of planning for the park, there might be other priorities in front of the Woodlands Campaign. These might include more facilities for mobile visitors, more picnicking/cookout accommodations, more seating, or better walking surfaces on the paths. Instead, the Woodlands Campaign is devoting enormous resources to a section of the park that relatively few people use. The Woodlands Campaign clearly did not emerge from any study of user preferences. It was conceived in a staff retreat and executed through the persistence of staff members and the Prospect Park Alliance. As the fencing so obviously demonstrates, the public is mistrusted in all of this. The Alliance does have a community outreach program, known as the Community Committee, where it enlists community leaders in building support among their constituencies for the Alliance's program.

I attended several meetings of the Community Committee while at work on the User Study. In my experience, the Prospect Park Alliance kept a very tight rein on the committee's work. There is a certain discourse of community outreach for urban parks, and it revolves around processes and strategies of bringing people into the park, modifying public behavior, and winning public support for an agenda of historic preservation and ecological restoration. The park officials were in firm control of this discourse. There were always six or more park officials present at these evening meetings who, after a preliminary round of socializing over catered food and soft drinks, would make oral presentations on progress, issues, and agendas. These presentations

conveyed much information, perhaps too much information, on the management's activities--things such as park programming to involve youth in the park or the monies proposed for various capital projects. There was some gloating over the park's organized and committed activism. For instance, so-and-so had attended the recent National Association of Olmsted Parks conference where Prospect Park had been shown to be so far ahead of parks elsewhere in its level of planning, fundraising, and community involvement. The intended effect on the participants was to compel an urgent desire to climb onto this happy bandwagon.

The meetings would break up into smaller working groups, with park officials sitting in on the working groups, followed by a plenary session in which the different groups reported on their discussions. Committee members who proposed ideas outside the Alliance's way of thinking were quickly made to feel that their questions were foolish and ill-considered. At a meeting in March, 1998, the park Administrator dismissed someone's suggestion that musical performances in the Long Meadow be not just classical music with a brisk "We do that anyway." An official cut off another discussion with the remark: "This is an interesting discussion but we've got to move on." In a discussion of the barbecuing policy, a woman suggested putting attention on where barbecuing is allowed, rather than just posting "No Barbecuing" signs where it is not. Two or three park people jumped at this, exclaiming that barbecuing is allowed nearly everywhere--as if to say "How foolish!" With regard to the Woodlands Campaign there were numerous discussions of building recognition of the forest and forest values out in the residential communities. The Woodlands Campaign itself, surely, was never open to public discussion.

Notable in my research data is the depth of knowledge and interest among users, as evidenced by the ones I had the good fortune to speak with. Every one of the users quoted in the previous chapter had ideas and insights that could be a great resource to the park management on any one of the concerns and problems that emerge from my data.

Wayfinding, safety, trash accumulation, access restrictions, and uses for old buildings are all perennial management issues that my participants discussed with great interest and intelligence. The Prospect Park Alliance seems not much more interested in enlisting the ideas and cooperation of users like these in solving the problems of the park than it was in basing its plans and policies upon the available user value data. The one aspect of the user experience in which management has taken interest has been behavior modification: How to move people into less populated areas, or move soccer players off the most battered fields, or stop boys from riding their bikes down the hillsides, and so on. Otherwise, the user experience is not regarded as something to incorporate within planning and decisionmaking. Thus plans and programs are decided on and evaluated at headquarters, fences and admonishing signs are put up, and park officials pursue funding to aid them in this Sisyphean task of persuading the usership to do as management would like.

IX.D. Management Alternatives

Even within the constraints of historic landscape preservation, there are other choices for preservation and restoration activities than the ones made here. In a pastoral composition like Prospect Park, woods are secondary in importance to the open views over meadows, water, and groves of trees. Open views are not just for looking; they also invite movement.

IX.D.1. Restoring the Pastoral Landscape

Prospect Park still has its meadows, but many of the views intended by the designers have been lost from lack of maintenance. Lookout Hill, for example, was supposed to be a major attraction, providing views out over the lake, the countryside, to the ocean on the horizon. The planting plan for Lookout Hill called for evergreens as well as deciduous species, perhaps to suggest greater height. Today, Lookout Hill is

thick with deciduous woods that block panoramic views from every possible vantage point. The hilltop is used as a dumping ground for cuttings and clippings. Breeze Hill, similarly, was planned to provide views out over the waterway that wraps around it. Today, the top of Breeze Hill is a lifeless space, much of it paved, with no views of the lake or the Lullwater.

Part of the aesthetic of meadows is in the tall, rippling meadow grasses full of wildflowers. Meadow grasses are not just beautiful but provide important wildlife habitat. A restoration project of the Olmsted parks in Louisville, Kentucky, includes restoring wild grasses and wildflowers to portions of the meadows there (Landscape Architecture, 1998). In Prospect Park, the meadow grasses are mown close, like lawns, and the grass is worn down to dirt in the flatter areas. Meadow restoration would involve something like the work in Louisville, although it would have to be balanced against the needs of the public for smooth ground.

Many people talked about flowers, liking to see flowers and wanting to see more. Remnants persist of the ornamental plantings of earlier periods, but so much more could be done to bring color and variety to the landscape throughout the warmer seasons. How to make the woods attractive to people? Create wide, inviting paths and open spaces planted with shrubs, fruit trees, and other plants that produce effects of depth, mystery, and intricacy. Open up vistas out to the meadows and water surfaces. Make places for people to inhabit the woods--not just paths but shelters, benches, and grassy clearings where people can sit or recline in sun or shade, and places where people can approach the water.

It is clear that the original design was full of features that attracted and accommodated human activity: the immense investment in facilities such as the Concert Grove, the Lookout, the Dairy, attracted large gatherings for specific purposes, and brought activity to the remoter regions. The pathways of the park were planted to bring out varied, beautiful, complex effects of light playing against the texture and pattern of

leaf and branch. Trees and shrubs were massed for aesthetic effect and to shape spaces in ways that made them inviting, mysterious, and delightful. Views were important--views over open meadows, views over water, views out over the surrounding country.

Figure IX-2
LULLWATER FROM THE NETHERMEAD
Historic view of Lullwood Bridge in middle ground and the Cleftridge Span in the background. Both are now obscured by growth of trees.

It would be completely consistent with the historic design to plant ornamental shrubs and trees throughout, to open up views and make clearings, rather than letting the woods close in the vistas.

One of the best preserved public landscapes of Olmsted pedigree is the Arnold Arboretum in Boston. The arboretum is both a research institution operated by Harvard University and a public city park. Throughout its 265 acres, the arboretum reveals the Olmstedian principle of using varied terrain and carefully placed plantings to create a picturesque and pastoral landscape of uncommon unity and beauty. Views abound here--over meadows and water, and from hilltops out over the cityscape. The hilltops are dramatic events, where the climb to the top is rewarded by views: from one hilltop, there is a view south to a distant range of wooded hills beyond the city limits. The highest hilltop affords a striking view out over the city to the northeast where all the tall

downtown buildings are visible in the distance. Although these hills are well planted with great varieties of trees and shrubs, consistent maintenance from the beginning has retained the visual openness of the Olmsted aesthetic. At the hilltops are pleasant, intimately scaled places to sit.

A natural brook flows through the grounds, along which landscape architects have created a rhododendron path. The dirt path follows a winding route through the rhododendrons for a few hundred feet, with several footbridge crossings to the deep Hemlock woods on the opposite shore. This is an extremely intimate place shaped by masses of rhododendrons and Hemlock trees around a picturesque brook where the water is completely accessible. Doubtless the brook's accessibility creates problems of soil compaction and erosion, but they are tolerated for the benefit of giving people such closeness to the water amid a seasonally dazzling floral display.

Figure IX-3
BROOKSIDE PATH AND BRIDGE, ARNOLD ARBORETUM

Like Prospect Park, Arnold Arboretum has a circulation system of paved roads and footpaths. Automobile traffic is excluded from the roads. Most of the paths have soft earthen surfaces, allowing walkers more complete

contact with the natural setting than on the mostly paved paths in Prospect Park. The footpaths wind around the open, grassy hillsides. There are no dead spaces, no boring stretches. Everywhere the walker is pulled along by the promise of something exquisite just around the corner, over the next hill. The great variety of shrubs and trees mean that, except in winter, something is always in bloom.

It may be pointed out that Prospect Park receives much heavier use than a specialized ground like Arnold Arboretum, and that the care of plants can never be the highest priority in a city park as it surely must be in an arboretum. That is true. Still, the Arboretum shows what an Olmsted landscape that has been kept up over the years can be like. It shows the value of bringing people into the most intimate connection with natural surfaces, and how even the most dazzling floral displays in a pastoral, naturalistic setting can seem natural and uncontrived.

Figure IX-4
WOODLAND PATH, ARNOLD ARBORETUM
This path has a fine-gravel surface with
grassy clearings among the trees.

IX.D.2. The Circulation System

A seminal aspect of the Olmsted and Vaux design for both Prospect and Central Parks was the grade-separated circulation system. A restoration program could involve the reinterpretation of that design element so as to accommodate modern modes of mobility. As it is, the circuit drive accommodates automobiles, pedestrians, runners, bicyclists, and people on roller blades, with nothing to separate them but lane markings painted on the pavement. There are many accidents. Could not some thought be given to revising the circulation system so as to separate these modes from each other and, in doing so, preserve the spirit of the design? Perhaps the bridle paths could be rehabilitated as part of a network of mountain bike trails, as has been done with the carriage paths at Acadia National Park.

IX.D.3. Gathering Places and Urban Woodlands

Another important, now neglected, aspect of the Olmsted and Vaux design was the relationship between natural scenery and gathering places. Part of the problem of the park interior today is a lack of places that attract and generate human activity. In years past, the Dairy attracted people into the heart of the Midwood. The Boathouse brought activity to the Lullwater. The Music Grove brought crowds of concert-goers into the Nethermead. There were other attractions over the years--the Camera Obscura and later the Old-Fashioned Garden on Breeze Hill, a model boathouse on the Peninsula, a refreshment shelter in the Concert Grove, the well at the foot of Lookout Hill, a menagerie in

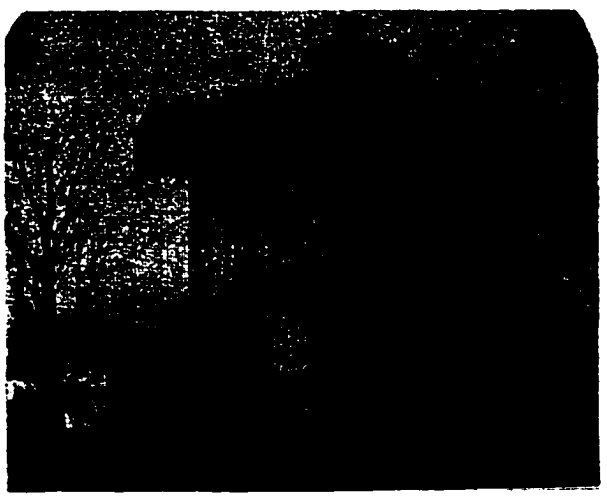

Figure IX-5
CAMERA OBSCURA, BREEZE HILL

the Midwood, and "swan boats" on the upper ponds.

Today gathering places are nearly all on the perimeter. To its credit, the management is working with the National Audubon Society to make a nature center in the old Boathouse, which will bring some activity into that region of the park. Some research participants said they would like to see some kind of restaurant or cafe use of the Boathouse, which would be a beautiful place to sit and look out at the water. Still, an Audubon center is something.

Much could be done to support picnicking activity in Prospect Park. Picnicking could be designed into the landscape architecture of the park so that the picnic areas were beautiful, restful, and able to withstand heavy use with little impact. There could be shelter in wet weather, and restrooms and playgrounds could be integrated with picnic areas. In the 1870s, visitors could purchase food, drink, and picnic supplies, and rent lawn games and furniture at the Dairy. This complex had sociable sitting areas both indoors and outdoors. The Dairy not only supported picnicking, it made for a reassuring human presence inside the park's most wooded section. The "Picnic House" of today is rented out for functions. The amenities it provides to park users are limited to restrooms, a candy machine, and public telephone.

Liberty State Park, in Jersey City, has a stunning picnic grove located near the water, giving wide views out to the bay. It is planted with plane trees set in an orthogonal grid pattern. The ground surface is of course red gravel. Tables and cookout grills are interspersed among the trees. At the center of the picnic grove is a play structure for children. A big open field lies next to the grove. Nearby is a visitor center where people can get snacks and beverages as well as park information. The picnic grove is convenient to a parking lot and bus stop. Here, the landscape architects, working in a modernist idiom and using careful siting, have made a handsome and hugely popular picnic facility. It is a model of how design can make an ordinary park feature into something beautiful.

IX.D.4. Public Art and Cultural Motifs

The cultural activity exemplified in the drumming circle was important to people of color. Here is an opportunity to design a space for the drumming that reflects its importance to its constituency. The use of plants, building materials, and public art that made connections to the African and Caribbean origins of the drummers and their listeners, structures and places of gathering that were beautiful and spatially complex, could make an extraordinarily meaningful place. Restrooms could be provided, and suitable places for the crafts and food vendors to operate. The facility could be carefully sited to be prominent yet not interfere with circulation on the circuit drive.

IX.E. Recommendations

I shall conclude with some management recommendations for Prospect Park and parks like it. First, it is important to broaden the administrative focus from the resource itself to include social process. An important element of social process is the user's experience, which can be discovered and described by the methodology used in this study. Qualitative data on experience gathered in this way can become a basis for planning and design. Consider the issue of safety: the fear of getting lost and other anxieties related to wayfinding came up in the field data. In this regard, I found that the reopening of the main path through Rocky Pass and the Ravine was a revelation to some participants. They had not realized how easily the path enables them to move between the Lullwater-Nethermead area and the Long Meadow. Conversely, the data suggested that some people take circuitous routes through the park because of the difficulty of wayfinding and that many others do not travel into the interior at all. A limited amount of field research with park users could inform a wayfinding study aimed at noting where orientation and wayfinding come easily and where they become difficult. Such a study could then be a basis for making alterations of the landscape to improve wayfinding, such as creating landmarks, opening up sightlines, and installing maps and signage.

Another aspect of experience demonstrated in this study is the idea of "opportunity for action," illustrated in the stream setting described at the beginning of this chapter. Any plan for regenerating such a popular, naturalistic public space should acknowledge and support people's right to use their bodies in various ways: climbing, wading, fast movement, and so on. This means designing features for access and use as well as for restriction and exclusion. In other words, it may be a legitimate design purpose to keep users off certain steep slopes and stream banks, for example, but there should also be places where they can clamber around and wade in the water. The landscape architecture should be such that not every incidence of straying off a designated path results in environmental damage.

Social process as community building was at the heart of the Olmstedian vision for Prospect Park. The revisioning of the park thus far privileges the artistic and the ecological elements of the design, leaving the social realm to take care of itself. Giving priority to social process and individual experience would arguably be more faithful to the spirit of the original design than a program that fusses over design details. Yet rebuilding the Dairy just as it was in 1872 would make no more sense than it does to leave social experience out of the regeneration formula. The park needs fresh thinking about how to incorporate a significant social experience into the wooded regions.

It has been remarked that community is frayed and even nonexistent in today's atomized and hyper-commodified urban civilization (Cranz, 1993; Putnam, 2000). In providing an open, public space for people to gather and encounter one another, Prospect Park already is a significant community resource. One of the strengths of both Prospect and Central Parks is the vitality produced by the immediate spatial relationship of park and adjoining neighborhood. On the east side of Prospect Park, the West Indian community makes use of the adjacent park space for the drumming events and other cultural practices. Two of my research participants stressed the park's importance as a gathering place for the Lesbian community in Park Slope. However, the project of park

regeneration affords an opportunity for building community that goes beyond this traditional park role of providing passive settings for group activity. Here is the chance to engage disparate groups in actively building a community resource.

What form should that take? One answer is implied in the Prospect Park Alliance's attention to ecological regeneration. The park's degraded biological regimes are an appropriate subject of renewal, but up to now it has been a "top-down" project where the park management holds all the cards. My research shows great interest among an assortment of users in the park as an expression of nature and culture, and support for the idea of regenerating the plants, soils, and water ecologies. These users and others like them would welcome the opportunity to work together with managers on an ecological regeneration project. One idea is to transcend the pleasure ground framework by incorporating food production into the park's nature narrative. Urban gardening has become a widespread movement, and there are models available of including community gardens within public parks. There are also institutions at hand with interest and expertise to assist with such an undertaking, notably the Brooklyn Botanic Garden and the Brooklyn Center for the Urban Environment. Why not open some of the more forlorn areas of the woods to gardening projects, allowing park users direct experience of caring for the park environment?

People come from all over to garden plots at Floyd Bennett Field and at Fort Tilden, within the Gateway National Recreation Area. In Boston, a portion of Olmsted's Back Bay Fens has been given over to community gardening since the Victory Garden movement of World War II. Design formalists complain that the gardens and other modifications of the Fens detract from Olmsted's unitary design concept, but by other accounts the Fenway Victory Gardens are among the most beautiful, vivid features of the park system. Surely they also offer a fine example of how to build community around a natural resource. There are lots of good reasons for bringing a productive element into the park: among them, the rich agricultural history of Kings County, the agricultural

origins of many of the park's users, the many existing models of urban and community-based agriculture, and the need to involve people in taking care of the park to reverse the past neglect and misuse of its interior regions. Productive elements already exist in the park. The ginkgo trees on the Peninsula in Prospect Park are notable food source for Chinese residents who, with no organization or encouragement from management, scour the ground in the fall to pick up the ginkgo seeds. Fishing in the lake is a subsistence practice for some people, despite the park rules against keeping fish. These practices express a more profound relationship to nature than just looking at scenery.

Growing food and flowers can be part of the local response to the challenge of encouraging urban people to concern themselves with the environmental health of the planet. I have already argued that opening up the woodlands, making clearings and other gathering places would be a historically correct policy. Introducing productive landscapes into the woodlands would be one way of creating spaces that would have utility, beauty, and meaning, and would also generate the kind of activity that would increase feelings of safety. Such gardens could have small garden houses, or "casitas," of the type that people build in vacant lot gardens. These structures would serve as informal gathering places and be strongly symbolic of the idea of dwelling in a natural landscape.

Trees themselves are a source of food production. Why not plant hillside orchards of flowering and fruit-bearing trees? Fruit trees are beautiful and have a long history of intimacy with the human world, of being planted, cared for, nurtured, and providing sustenance. Elsewhere people have organized community projects around tree-based agriculture on public lands (Donahue, 1999). Planting and operating an orchard in Prospect Park could be another vehicle for involving people in an ecological and educational project in the park that marries nature and culture.

The water system poses another issue: it makes no sense ecologically to use public drinking water imported from the Catskills as a water source for Prospect Park. This is a misuse of the supply of drinking water obtained at great cost to the taxpayers.

At times of drought, the flow of water has had to be turned off, which harms the aquatic habitat of the whole system. In addition, the additives present in city water combine with sunlight so as to create an unattractive, slimy green surface over the more placid water bodies in the summer, notably the Lullwater (Tupper Thomas, personal communication, 1997).

The system was designed originally to pump water from the underground aquifer, with the lake acting as a giant recharge basin. With the expansion of the city water supply in the twentieth century, the earlier system was abandoned. Now, with increasing demands on city water and little prospect of major new reservoir projects, it may be time to finally make the park's water system into a sustainable, self-sufficient water cycle. Possibly the system could serve as a natural stormwater drainage and purification basin for surrounding neighborhoods, rather than continuing the current practice of draining all stormwater runoff into combined sewers that periodically overflow the capacity of the sewage treatment system. Crandell (2001), Cranz (1993), and Spirn (1995, 1998) are among the thinkers who call for acknowledging and making use of the natural processes at work in urban ecosystems.

The Prospect Park Alliance has used the idea of sustainability in promoting its management approach to the woodlands ecosystem, but sustainability should involve more than soils and plants; it should involve the users of the park and the surrounding urban communities. A project that depends on excluding people's access to a portion of their park is not truly sustainable. A project that repeats the ecological mistakes of the original design—making the slopes impracticably steep, concealing the park's very constructedness, and pretending that the park is something apart from the city around it—misses the wider meanings of sustainability.

I have already pointed out the historical appropriateness of reviving the circulation system to accommodate modern modes of locomotion. The park could work with the many existing organizations of runners, cyclists, and even mountain bikers to

rework the path system to better serve these recreational activities. Such organizations could also be a source of valuable volunteer labor in building and maintaining trails. Hiking and birding organizations might be interested helping with improvements to the woods paths, such as removing old asphalt surfaces, laying down softer yet durable walking surfaces, installing signs, and building guideline structures that encourage walkers to stay on the paths. It might make sense to divide the existing circuit drive into a narrower roadway for motor vehicles and a separate surface for mobile park visitors who need a smooth surface, like cyclists and rollerbladers. Many runners run along the grass margins of the drive, forming hard-packed dirt paths. Runners' groups would likely be interested in thinking with management about how to create a running surface within or alongside the drive that provides a satisfactory alternative to the paved surfaces that damage so many runners' knees.

The Prospect Park Alliance is probably correct in claiming that management alone cannot take care of the park, that instead, users must be brought into the equation as stewards. The potential for doing so depends on meeting the users on their own terms; in involving people in ways that build on their interests, skills, and experience. Trying to persuade all of Brooklyn to see Prospect Park as a work of art and its woodlands as a sort of nature sanctuary is a hopeless task. Meeting users on their own ground, so to speak, will involve a creative rather than literal interpretation of historic significance. It will also require sharing with users some of the authority and control vested in the Administrator's office. But the gain will bring many blessings to both the park and the people.

Appendix A

User Study Interview Form

PUBLIC SPACE RESEARCH GROUP

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY CENTER
OF THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
33 WEST 42nd STREET, NEW YORK, N. Y. 10036

PROSPECT PARK ALLIANCE
NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS

Date & Day of week_____ Interview #_____
Time_____ Interviewer Name_____
Weather Conditions_____
Interview Location_____
Context

Park Visit

1. How did you get to the park today? (Mode of transportation)

__Walk __Rollerblade/Skate __Bus __Taxi
__Bicycle __Subway __Car __Horse
__Other_____

Probe: Do you usually come to the park by [repeat mode of transportation]? If no, then how do you usually come to the park?

2. How long did it take to get here? (Travel time)_____

3. Why did you choose this park? (Choice)

4. What entrance did you use (Entrance)

__Grand Army Plaza
__Garfield Place-P.P.W.
__Third Street-P.P.W.
__Litchfield Villa-5th Street
__Ninth Street-P.P.W.
__11th Street-P.P.W.
__Bartel-Pritchard Circle
__10th Ave.-P.P.S'W.
__16th St.-P.P.S'W.
__Vanderbilt Street-P.P.S'W.
__Greenwood Ave.-P.P.S'W.
__Park Circle
__Parkside Ave.-Grecian Shelter
__St. Paul's Place-Parkside
__Parkside-Ocean Aves.
__Ocean Ave.-Drummers
__Ocean Ave. Playground
__Lincoln Road
__Willink (at Flatbush & Ocean Aves.)
__Zoo
__Lefferts Homestead
__Other_____

Probe: Do you usually enter from [repeat the entrance]? If no, what entrance do you usually use?

Probe: Are there any other entrances that you use?

5. How often do you come to the park? (Frequency of visits)

	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
Every day.....	_____	_____	_____	_____
Two or three times a week.....	_____	_____	_____	_____
Once a week.....	_____	_____	_____	_____
Two or three times a month.....	_____	_____	_____	_____
Once a month.....	_____	_____	_____	_____
Less than once a month.....	_____	_____	_____	_____

6. How long has it been since your last visit? (Last visit)_____

7. How long have you been coming to the park? (Visits over time)_____

8. Who came with you today? (Visit group)

__Alone	__My spouse/Partner	__A group of friends	__A team
__My family	__A friend	__An organized group	__Other_____

Probe: Do you usually come with others or alone?

9. Where do you live? (Neighborhood)
Neighborhood_____ Zip Code_____

Park Activities

10-a. What are all the activities you plan to do (or have been doing) in the park today? (Today's activities)
Note: Mark 'Today's activities' on the list below with a "_".

10-b. What other activities do you do in the park? (Activities in general)

Probe: Is there anything else you like to do in the park?
Note: Mark 'Activities in general' on the list below with an "x".

__Relax	__Bicycle	__Watch sports event
__Sunbathe	__Jog/Run	__Play baseball
__Picnic/cookout	__Rollerblade/Skate	__Play softball
__Meet friends	__Ice Skate	__Play volleyball
__Walk in the park	__Ride Horseback	__Play cricket
__Walk roadway	__Fly kite	__Play frisbee
__Go fishing	__Watch people	__Play soccer
__Visit playground	__Read	__Ski
__Walk dog	__Visit Greenmarket	__Go sledding
__Attend performance	__Visit zoo	__Other_____
__Attend educational program	__Visit carousel	_____
__Attend party	__Visit Lefferts Homestead	
		_____
__Ride trolley	__Volunteering	

11. (Omitted)

Park Knowledge (with map when appropriate or with verbal cues)

12. What places have you been to in the park? (Places visited)

13. What places in the park do you know about? (Other places)

14. Have you been to [give examples, e.g., the Nethermead or Forest]? (Underutilized/natural areas)

15. Omitted. (Local names)

16. Are there any places you don't feel comfortable going to, and why? (Fears)

Park Meaning

17. Does the park have any special meaning for you? (Park meaning)

    Probe: Does it remind you of anything? Do you have any special memories related to the park?

18. Omitted. (Homeland parks)

19. Are there any events or activities that occur in the park that are related to your family, ethnic, religious, or cultural group? (Cultural events)

    Probe: What are those activities? How often do you attend?

Park Evaluation

20. What do you like best about the park? (Likes)

    Probe: Is there anything else you like about the park?

21. What do you like least about the park? (Dislikes)

    Probe: Is there anything else you dislike about the park?

22. What's changed here in the last ten years? (Changes)

23. Are there any changes you would like to make? (Desired changes)

Probe: How would you do it?

P. P. Alliance Agenda

24. Have you heard of the Prospect Park Alliance? (Alliance knowledge)

Probe: Do you know what it is?

Demographics

25.Sex: ____Male ____Female (Sex)

If you don't mind my asking,

26. How old are you? (Age)

27. What do you do for a living? (Occupation)

28. Household Income range (Income)

Note: The income range depends upon number of persons in the household. Mark the range that applies in table below.

Household Size				
1 Person	__Less than 12,000	__12,000 to 27,000	__27,000 to 40,000	__40,000 +
2 Persons	__Less than 15,000	__15,000 to 31,000	__31,000 to 47,000	__47,000 +
3 Persons	__Less than 17,000	__17,000 to 35,000	__35,000 to 53,000	__53,000 +
4 Persons	__Less than 19,000	__19,000 to 39,000	__39,000 to 59,000	__59,000 +
5 Persons	__Less than 21,000	__21,000 to 42,000	__42,000 to 63,000	__63,000 +
6 Persons	__Less than 23,000	__23,000 to 45,000	__45,000 to 67,000	__67,000 +
7 Persons	__Less than 25,000	__25,000 to 48,000	__48,000 to 71,000	__71,000 +
8 Persons	__Less than 27,000	__27,000 to 51,000	__51,000 to 75,000	__75,000 +

29. What is the highest level of education you have completed? (Education)

__Grade school __High School __College [2-year or 4-year] __Graduate

30. What do you consider to be your ethnicity (nationality) or race? (Ethnicity)

31. Where were you born? (Country of Origin)

Other

32. Is there anything I haven't asked that you think I should? (Other)

APPENDIX B

Utterances that Define Code Categories in Dissertation Research Data

SENSORY EXPERIENCE

SENSORY
Bad energy
It's alive: All this is energy.
Feel of the woods
Off pavement
Soft path, hard path
This feels better (wood-chip path)
Needs to be experienced
Chance to play in the woods by yourself
Many times softer for my feet (running)
It rolls everything up (running on ground amid trees)
Just want to enjoy the woods
Listen to nothing, see nobody
You get to see the seasons
Earth
Information about who we are
Golden place (Midwood)
Leaves make different sounds
Walk through the woods
Sniffing (smell of meadow)
Contrast of coming out into light
Walking different from running through

SPACE
Enough of park for this and that
Acres of wooded land (his dream)
Need more parks, space
Plenty of other open areas
Very little space you can call your own (life at home)
Not big enough
Edge woodlands all that's left
Small
Room to stretch
Not crowded
Seemed finite

WAY-FINDING
Can't get through
Is there a beginning and an end? (Lookout Hill)
This is the closest path?
This is wonderful! Easy to get here! (Rocky Pass)
Favorite path
Why I appreciate that road (Rocky Pass).
Could get lost

ROUTE
Loop
Route
Carroll St entrance (over the wall)
Walk to beautiful, ornate garden
(Would run on ridge)
Walking down the meadow
Walk through to get to library, green market
Stay in park a little longer (detour)
Indian trail

BEAUTIFUL
Beautiful
Colors
Changing colors
Lovely to me
Gorgeous
Serene, quiet, beautiful
Fantastic (view) in winter (Lookout Hill)
That's lovely (ducks swimming)
Pretty
Delightful
Glorious (fall color)
Lush
Enchanting (vale)

NICE
Still get nice impression
Nice!
In a nice place
Pleasant

THINGS NOTICED
Purple flowers
Taking in the trees
Trees
Look at the duck!
There's a rose! (remnants left over)
Punkin!
Noticing
Like fountains
Pretty tree! But exotic and unnatural.
Listen to this rivulet/ Hear the stream
Sun on water
Stump
Thrilling/ Awe (battle plaques)
Horses

EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE

DISCOVERY
Something different every time
Surprised it was there
I bring people here, say 'Look at this'

GET AWAY
Get away from techno-corporate culture
Cannot get away from the...
Come when there's nobody here
Privacy

RELEASE
Think
Relax
Release stress
Unwind
Ease my mind
Feel refreshed
Time measured in other things/ Different dimension
Far from anything (e.g., stress, city itself)

FEAR
People would jump me
Tough-looking guys
Don't go into woods by myself here a lot
Isolated and enticing
Violent crimes
'Don't go into the woods'
As a woman leery in this park
Fear of natural world (should encourage people)
Nervous
Scary
Different place (on weekdays vs. weekends)
Park at night

SAFETY
Safe
Familiar

MEMORY
Nostalgic (about being here at 9th St)
Associations
Pretty part never ended
Exciting/ stunning (bird activity memory)
Always woods nearby

FUN
Fun/Play

SECRET
Secret grotto (Vale)
Dark and secret woods
Secret places
Hidden lush spot (Vale)

LOVE THE PARK
I appreciate the park
I love it!
Love this park!
Where my heart is

FREEDOM
Free
Freedom
Free to wander
Not constrained
Invisibility

NATURE, ENVIRONMENT, & DESIGN

NATURAL
Softball fields natural (but not basketball court)
Manicured not natural
Wonderful (dead tree)
Leave the dead trees! Donít prune!
Am I really in Brooklyn? (sound of bull frogs)
Natural condition of beauty and joy
Closest thing to nature
Nature as female

CULTURE-NATURE
We tend to think we're above it all
Back to civilization
Monument of architecture and environment
Not supposed to be [nature]
Formal
Beautiful unrestored and overgrown
Not city, somewhere else
Nature or design better?
Olmsted design not natural
Hills want to fall down
Not self-sustainng
People seem contained and small (the way they ought to be)
Enclosed space: hint of natural environment
We're all too close (in city)
Defend it!
Buildings too high over trees
What passes for civilization these days
Nature behind a fence/ Wilderness enclosed like a museum
True expanse of nature around whole world, ourselves a brief interruption
Parking lot too big

ART
Preserve architecture

Beautiful architecture (tunnel)
Amazing design
Beautifully sculpted stone
Ornamental things

OTHER PLACES
Cunningham Park
Forest Park
My New England
Bryant Park
Cheap theatre
Places to go/ Museum/ Library
Central Park
Pinetum
Delaware Water Gap

PATH
Make path [for bikes]?
New path
Trailed out

FOREST/VEGETATION
Overgrown
Wild
It's a garden, park (not woodland)
Durable forest
Wooded
Worthy of contemplation and enjoyment
Sanctuary
'Deep romantic chasm' (Coleridge)
Ominous
Undergrowth (Leave it alone)

WILDLIFE

PROJECT/PARK MANAGEMENT EVALUATION

NEGLECTED
The way it looks
Neglected and abandoned (Rose Garden)
Disappearing (garden)
Deserted (weekdays)
Horror show/ Couldn't go anywhere
Wrecked
Boring and annoying
Contained, damp, forbidding
Workaday part
Like a ruin (rose garden)
Walk through bushes

PROJECT
Looks nicer/ Upgraded
Visible, noticeable difference
Looking good (for the birds)
Not sinister or a wreck any more
Looks like gov't installation
Simple
Peaceful
Serene, quiet, beautiful--then a fence!
Fake looking rocks
[Trying to make] beautiful, idyllic
Perfectly squared-off stream
Vanity project
Sanctuary: safe here for birds, animal life
Time will tell (whether right thing to do)

FENCING
Fences
No short cuts/ Doesn't affect me

MANAGEMENT
Not doing anything with this area (Lookout Hill)
Taking time and concern
Setting up a challenge (blocking bike trails)
Do they enforce anything? Never see.
At least they are doing something
They are trying/ Theyíre working
Painful and difficult efforts
Impressed
Impressive (hand planting)

CONTROL
I can't go back there and sit
Controlled space
Overuse justifies restriction
Curfew
Start of bigger thing/ Conspiracy
Keep it open
Certain restrictions will come down

FACILITIES
Most benches destroyed or gone
Bring people in (softball)

RACIST
Racially motivated

RESTORE
Would be nice area to picnic (Lookout Hill)
Should restore (Rose Garden, Lookout terrace)
Bring it back!
Didn't think anybody noticed those stones beside myself
Vines--need another
Back to its natural state
Maintain it!
Maintained woodlands (of cemetery)

TRUST
Human interaction not good for park (message)

Respectful of people
Separates people
'You are not to be trusted'
Responsible
Not trusting people, locking park up

Doesn't come from the people
Something needs to happen
Tourist attraction

GENTRIFICATION
Gentrification
Real estate

SOCIAL-CULTURAL EXPERIENCE

BAD BEHAVIOR
Eyesore, litter: This is a park!
Have dogs on leash
Destroy the greens
Beer cans and condoms
They just trample
Cannot stop people
Stop mtn. biking
Not so good things in these woods
Crazy stuff

PEOPLE
Can see everything and talk to people
About people
Love people
Woods are crowded
Whole flocks of men
Overused
Different languages

CULTURAL EVENTS
Drummers
Caribbean festival
Bandshell events

FAMILY
All get back together

DEMOCRATIC PLACE
Democratizing space
Level playing field
Park for everybody (ainít like lím in your back yard)
Meeting and greeting each other/ Stolling

TIMES CHANGED
Didn't have softball in 1850s
Lot of people partake in sports [now]

PUBLIC LIFE
No public money
Draining of public life
Corporate media
Social fabric
Misanthropy
Private sponsoring

PERSONAL

PREFERENCE
I have to have it!
I like it like this
Green
Water
Nature girl
I'd be more open in the open/ One with the universe
Always lived near a park
Like to be alone
My own little paradise/ Haven/ Heaven
Giving up the woods to them (like to think I'm fighting back)
Love being outdoors
Always enjoyed/ liked the woods
Got interested (in gardening)
Really dying to/ wanted
My tradition
Haven't done/ Never knew/ Never been
Always alone
Close observer (N'mead arches, lowered passageway)

COST
Too expensive

ACTIVITY

ACTIVITY
Play music
Bike
Walk
Walk down the meadow
Meditate
Walk with a friend (early morning) (Memory?)
Love to walk/ Cruise walk
Roam
See a lot
Beer
Pokemon
Hang out
Moon around

Read
Think
Listen to opera
Write

OTHER

OTHER
(Cribbing) for walking up
Islanders
No jobs for men
Need leadership
People want fantasy
Favorite places weren't there

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