

Friends of Seattle's Olmsted Parks Collection, 1903-1998

Overview of the Collection

Creator	Friends of Seattle's Olmsted Parks
Title	Friends of Seattle's Olmsted Parks Collection
Dates	1903-1998 (inclusive) 1903 1998 1903-1927 (bulk) 1903 1927
Quantity	3 reels of microfilm, 45 drawings
Collection Number	5801-03
Summary	Copies of Olmsted plans for selected Seattle parks, as well as microfilm reels containing job files.
Repository	Seattle Municipal Archives Seattle Municipal Archives Office of the City Clerk City of Seattle PO Box 94728 98124-4728 Seattle, WA Telephone: 206-233-7807 Fax: 206-386-9025 archives@seattle.gov
Access Restrictions	Records are open to the public.
Languages	English

Historical Note

Seattle's park system was largely designed by the Olmsted Brothers landscape architecture firm from Massachusetts. John Charles Olmsted created a master plan in 1903 that laid out a 20-mile-long system of parks and boulevards from Seward Park to Ravenna Park and west to Fort Lawton. Olmsted also encouraged the creation of playgrounds throughout the city so that all residents would have one within a half mile of their homes.

Seattle's citizens were enthusiastic about Olmsted's plan and passed \$3.5 million in bond measures to enhance the city's parks. Within eight years, Seattle's park acreage had doubled, with the addition of such parks as Seward, Ravenna, Leschi, and Green Lake. The Olmsted firm continued its work for the city, and by 1937 had designed 37 parks and playgrounds, as well as the grounds for the 1909 Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition.

Content Description

Through a grant from the King County Landmarks and Heritage Commission, Friends of Seattle's Olmsted Parks (FSOP) gathered information on and copies of Olmsted documents related to Seattle public projects, in an effort to make the collection more accessible to researchers. The Seattle Municipal Archives was one of the repositories chosen for deposit of the materials.

Included in the collection are copies of some of the Olmsted plans for selected parks, including: Lincoln (on Capitol Hill), Washington Park, Cowen, and Schmitz parks. A guide in the repository contains a plan inventory index, showing locations of drawings at the Department of Parks and Recreation, the Seattle Municipal Archives, and the University of Washington. The drawings were copied from the originals at the Olmsted National Historic Site in Brookline, also known as Fairsted. Color slides were also taken of additional plans; these have not yet been deposited at the Seattle and researchers should contact FSOP directly at seattleolm@aol.com.

Three reels of microfilm from the Records of the Olmsted Associates (Mss. 20,112.2) from the Library of Congress form part of the collection as well. Reels 95, 96 and 97 contain job files for work in Seattle which includes correspondence, memoranda, trip reports, and other material. The guide indexes the reels to specific parks and job numbers. For a complete listing and index of all the microfilm reels, go to the Library of Congress online catalog at <http://catalog.loc.gov/> and search for "Olmsted Associates."

The guide to the FSOP collection also contains photocopies of the Olmsted Plan Index Cards created for each plan or drawing listing date, draftsman, plan number, and other information. Photocopies of the Fairsted Plan Inventory, listing plans related to each job number, for a portion of the collection at Fairsted are also included in the Guide.

Use of the Collection

Preferred Citation

[Item and date], Friends of Seattle's Olmsted Parks Collection, Record Series 5801-03. Seattle Municipal Archives.

Administrative Information

Location of Originals

Library of Congress; and National Park Service, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site.

Detailed Description of the Collection

The following section contains a detailed listing of the materials in the collection.

Friends of Seattle's Olmsted Parks Collection, 1903-1998

Description	Dates
Resource Guide	

Description**Dates**

Contains project background, researcher instructions, and indexes.

Olmsted Plan Inventory Index, Microfilm Index, Index Cards, Fairsted Plan Inventory Lists

Contains index to plan inventory, including key to database; index to microfilm reels; photocopies of index cards relating to plans and drawings; and inventory of Fairsted plans.

Olmsted Plan Reference Copies

Reproductions of Olmsted maps and plans. Small reproductions are in comb-bound booklet; larger reproductions also available.

Microfilm

Seattle job files, including correspondence, memoranda, trip reports, and other material.

Reel 95: Records of the Olmsted Associates, B129-B130

Reel 96: Records of the Olmsted Associates, B130-B131

Reel 97: Records of the Olmsted Associates, B131-B133

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms :

Landscape architects--Washington (State)--Seattle

Parks--Washington (State)--Seattle

Corporate Names :

Olmsted Associates

Geographical Names :

Cowen Park (Seattle, Wash.)

Lincoln Park (Seattle, Wash.)

Schmitz Park (Seattle, Wash.)

Seattle (Wash.)

Washington Park (Seattle, Wash.)

Form or Genre Terms :

Drawings

Microfilms

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