interesting because it embodies many of his most cherished residential landscape ideas.

Olmsted always held that the contemplation of quiet pastoral scenery—a passive, non-authoritarian, and beautiful presence—was therapeutic. It encouraged people to become civilized, to develop that “combination of qualities which fit [a man] to serve others and to be served by others in the most intimate, complete and extend[ed] degree imaginable.” Even the most modest home landscape could induce “a quiescent and cheerfully musing state of mind” where “the eye is not drawn to dwell upon, nor the mind to be occupied with, details.” Fairsted’s modest but considered “rurality” (Olmsted’s word for abundant nature held serenely and productively in check by man) conveys this mid-nineteenth-century suburban ideal.

By the time Olmsted moved permanently to Brookline in 1881 (where at first the family rented a house), he was both a wide-ranging intellectual and a truly effective activist. His urban parks, the works for which he is best known, gave reality to what has been called a utilitarian transcendentalism. They were to be restorative, both for the individual and the crowd, especially through the power of “unconscious recreation.” He also intended them to be democratic, bringing different classes together harmoniously. This concept, which resonates with Emersonian thought, was set apart by Olmsted as the highest value scenery could afford. His suburban planning, though intended only for an upper middle-class elite, was also intended to offer restorative powers but in a residential setting.

Finding Brookline

Olmsted had moved to Brookline because he found work in the Boston area which interested him, and he had a wide circle of congenial friends and colleagues there. Chief among them was the architect Henry Hobson Richardson. Richardson, who lived in Brookline himself, urged Olmsted to settle there when he began his large-scale work on the Arnold Arboretum, the first portion of Boston’s park system, which he designed in the late 1870s. The deciding factor for Olmsted was the rural yet progressive atmosphere that he found so civilized, an atmosphere fostered by the same intellectual ideas he had found compelling as a young man. It seemed very different from the corrupt and money-grubbing New York City Olmsted was leaving with relief; a city which, as he saw it, was incapable of wholehearted civic effort.

The Brookline that Olmsted observed was a template for the suburbs he wished to create. The town had transformed itself from conservative agricultural village to liberal suburb without losing its character or intimacy. For him, it stood as proof positive that well-planned suburban communities could accommodate change and stress, could benefit the cities of which they were a vital part. If the great nineteenth-century moral and social question of how to reconcile idealism and materialism, family and community, rural and urban values, could thus be answered in Brookline, why could it not be answered in every planned community in America?

Brookline’s transformation had been speeded by the mass arrival of Boston’s rich merchants as summer residents beginning in the 1820s—an odd variation on Brookline’s settlement history as a summer pasture for livestock! Over the next fifty years, many of these summer residences became elaborate gentlemen’s farms, supported by their owners’ large city incomes. By comparison, life at Fairsted was modest and some of its immediate surroundings were redolent of an older, simpler order. At the nearby corner of Walnut and Warren Streets, a triangular green marked the earliest center of the town, which once held a schoolhouse (1713), Congregational meetinghouse (1715), and cemetery (1717). But the population center shifted when Brookline Avenue opened in 1821, and by the 1880s the Walnut and Warren neighborhood was largely residential—only the green, and a new, fashionable Unitarian church on the site, remained to mark the spot’s older civic history.

Olmsted bought a “farmstead” of two acres: like many Brookline “farms,” it produced only orchard fruit, firewood, and a little summer grass for cattle. Nineteenth-century atlases show the hundred-and-more acre properties of Boston Brahmin families cheek by jowl with residences the size of Fairsted or smaller.
Unflattering family pictures can shed light on family dynamics. Here, Mary Perkins Olmsted, in checks, dominates a July 1885 gathering at Fairsted. Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., looks attentively out from behind her. At left stands John Charles, Mary’s oldest child and Olmsted’s partner and righthand man, caught in a blink that unwittingly illustrates his retiring character. Marion, the spinster daughter who never left home, is at far right, while two unidentified women complete the group. Missing is Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., then fifteen years old and known as “Rick.”

Though many were tenant houses belonging to the larger neighbors, such a wide range of adjoining property sizes also reflected a hierarchy of income that must have seemed attractively democratic to Olmsted.

The Olmsted Family

Olmsted arrived with his wife of twenty-four years, the tiny, doughty, acid-tongued, competent Mary, who would live to be ninety-one, and with three of their seven children. John Charles, aged thirty-one, and Marion, aged twenty-two, were both Olmsted’s stepchildren; Frederick, thirteen years old, was Olmsted’s only biological son and the apple of his father’s eye. Marion would live at home all her life, a victim of Victorian spinsterhood and her own nervous temperament. Frederick would become his father’s most trusted colleague and confidant in the years just before Olmsted’s retirement in 1895, when failing mental abilities hastened Olmsted’s retirement. Frederick would inherit Fairsted on his mother’s death in 1921.

John Charles was already the firm’s office manager and a partner (1884) in the earliest Fairsted years. In photographs he is short, delicate-featured, bespectacled, serious, and reticent-seeming to the point of remoteness. Because Olmsted Sr. traveled on business so extensively during the 1880s, it is John Charles who is credited with actually transforming the threadbare sketch of a farm into a place that looked like an illustration from the most influential treatise on picturesque home landscape in the nineteenth century, A. J. Downing’s Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening.
The 1904 survey by White & Wetherbee, Civil Engineers, accurately indicates the final footprint of both home and office, as well as the location of the different landscape features.

A. Hollow          H. American elm
B. East office entrance   I. South lawn
C. Front door        J. West slope
D. Entrance arch & circular drive   K. Garden; after 1926, parking lot
E. Cucumber magnolia    L. Office courtyard
F. Rock garden        M. Laundry yard
G. Conservatory    N. 1880s cutting garden & coldframes
ever, because John Charles lived at home there are few written records about the making of Fairsted’s landscape, as he and his stepfather quite naturally talked it over instead.

From what Olmsted wrote about the physical and emotional benefits of well-designed landscapes, both public and private, and from the lists of outdoor practices that nineteenth-century women’s household management and gardening books prescribe, one can begin to reconstruct how this family and their servants used their tiny green haven. We can assume that residential Fairsted was intended for quiet pastimes, not sports, and for the kinds of outdoor household work and garden production common at the time.

We can also assume that the south and west, or residential, sides were used mostly by the women of the family, since their lives were so much more homebound than those of Olmsted or his sons and employees. Sitting for contemplation or for reading aloud to children, walking for health, light gardening, with a male gardener to help with the heavy tasks, painting to elevate the mind, all were some of the outdoor activities recommended for women by educator Catherine Beecher and garden writer Jane Loudon. (The works of both women were widely circulated, both in serial and in book form.)

Where would such activities have taken place? Although no actual description exists, there are some clues in planting as well as design. A friendly, flow-

By 1885, when the sixty-year-old Olmsted stood in the wintery landscape of Fairsted, he had completed projects such as Central Park and Riverside in Chicago that became national models. In his remaining years in Brookline his office would carry out hundreds of projects, among which the most influential were the Boston park system (begun 1878), Stanford University campus (1886–1891), and the World’s Columbian Exhibition (1888–1893).

His nephew, stepson, and partner, John Charles Olmsted, photographed him in the Hollow, Fairsted’s sunken garden, against a rugged outcrop of Brookline’s characteristic sedimentary rock, Roxbury puddingstone. The ledge defines the shape of the little garden as well as the local context.
John Charles’ 1900 winter view from the second story of the house surveys Fairsted’s entrance gate and drive turnaround. Wild-looking plantings, which screen out Warren Street and yet harmonize with the natural growth on the rocky ridge beyond, carry out Olmsted’s residential ideal: to offer both domestic privacy and unity with the larger landscape and the community.

Every little area lay just around the corner to the west of the conservatory on the south front. It was tucked into the sunny angle between the laundry yard lattice fence and the path that led to the production area of Fairsted: the original flower garden and cold frames (west of the barn and parallel to it), and the vegetable garden. (The locations of both the flower garden and the vegetable garden were changed at least once; they eventually were merged together in the enclosure which in 1926 became the firm’s parking lot.) This little area, close to but not part of the
service end of the house, was planted with shrubs such as deutzia, weigela, rose of sharon, lilac—all familiar creatures of the New England dooryard garden, the traditional domain of women. These plants, with the exception of lilac, are not seen elsewhere at Fairsted in the early years.

This end of the lawn, bright, protected from the wind by the bulk of the house and from intrusion by its distance from the street, would have had a particularly domestic and private atmosphere. It combined the old-fashioned floweriness so often associated with women with proximity to the household end of the building. The conservatory, which is located towards the west end of the house and whose large glass panes command a view of almost the entire south landscape, would have been the closest position for overseeing the kitchen areas and the working gardens to the west—the household “engine,” and traditionally the “business side” of the house for women. Similarly, the presence of a door to the drafting rooms and the use of the house front door to enter the partners’ office might be said to mark the east entrance front as the “men’s side.”

Together with the continuous stretch of lawn which curled around the south front and gave onto the entrance drive circle, the rock garden was the landscape attraction that linked the south and east exposures. Where the lawn is expansive, a place to walk companionably or to pull out chairs to sit in the fresh air, the rock garden seems intended for more solitary purposes. Its paths are narrow for two abreast and were originally screened from the lawn by plantings, many of them evergreen. One can imagine this was a place for private, contemplative strolls, both for the family and members of the office staff. Here the eye could rest absent-mindedly on an embroidery of groundcovers, and on the details of lichen- and moss-covered rock, patterns as abstract as thought itself.

The Office

Olmsted’s first office improvement to the existing structures was very simple: in 1884, at the same time that other changes were made to his new dwelling, he added about ten feet to the north parlor of the farmhouse to accommodate a long drafting table. Later office enlargements slowly extended the north end of the house even farther toward Dudley Street, in workmanlike angular increments that fit in nicely with an old barn that had been joined to the rear of the house sometime in the eighties. By 1904 the final footprint was complete.

For more than fifteen years (until Harvard founded the first formal training program in 1900), the home office at Fairsted was effectively the only school of landscape design in America, providing practical experience in design and execution, urban planning, and horticulture. Every landscape vignette at Fairsted can be seen as a miniature version of some larger idea of Olmsted’s: for instance, the rock garden is reminiscent of Central Park’s Ramble. It would be difficult to trace exactly how these surroundings influenced the work of firm members, but all of them doubtless absorbed something of Fairsted’s essence, whether they stayed with the firm or set up independent practice. Echoes of Fairsted’s quiet, shaggy, green imagery resonate in many of their works. Warren Manning’s quarry garden at Stan Hywet, in Akron, Ohio, and Percival Gallagher’s ravine garden at what is now the Indianapolis Museum of Fine Art both seem like variations on the Hollow, the signature sunken wild garden at the Fairsted front entrance turnaround. Besides enjoying the best design apprenticeship, young staff members also found themselves in one of the horticultural and botanical centers of the nation. Less than five minutes’ walk up Warren Street lay Holm Lea, Charles Sprague Sargent’s estate filled with botanical introductions from afar. The Arnold Arboretum, directed by Sargent, was located in neighboring Jamaica Plain, and not much farther away were the Cambridge Botanic Garden of Harvard University, Mount Auburn Cemetery, and the Boston Public Garden, all rich with horticultural collections. Reports of what was in bloom on a single day at any one of these places sometimes ran to fifty plants.

Olmsted’s Ideals Embodied at Fairsted

Olmsted’s career was fueled by an optimism about human progress, but a guarded optimism. He looked to what were then progressive ideas:
fresh air, sanitation, new transportation methods, and contact with what he called "Nature," to preserve or restore the values of an older, vanishing society in a larger, more urban, more complex world. He looked back in time to the small town, in memory a golden Hartford, Connecticut, where he had grown up in the first half of the nineteenth century, in what was then the new republic, before the Civil War and the turmoil that accompanied industrialization. The "communitiveness," as he called it, of that tight-webbed life of shared values and efforts, which at the same time respected the individual, was his ideal. For him, social engineering to create on a larger scale that healthy, thoughtful, neighborly state of mind began with the wise design of public space, which in turn was rooted in the design of the home and its surroundings. Air, light, orderliness, beauty, and easy access to the outdoors were all part of his program for domestic life.

Olmsted's often-repeated desire to blend residential design into the larger surrounding while still preserving privacy emerges at Fairsted. It was to be a part of the town in its apparent openness, but also a family retreat. Two design elements ensured that this double purpose was served. The choice of a spruce pole fence to encircle the property was one such element. Sinuous, malleable, cut to fit over every root and rock it traversed, and made of the rustic, natural materials Olmsted preferred, the fence is airy, a screen rather than a wall, because the poles don't fit together tightly. The front entrance creates the impression of openness while actually preventing the passerby from seeing in. The arching driveway gate piled with vines is welcoming, but the little turnaround mound directly within, topped with a tree whose root crevices still sprout jack-in-the-pulpits in spring, hides the front door almost until the visitor arrives.

Interpreting Design

The design of residential landscape changed dramatically between the time that Olmsted created the Fairsted landscape—the 1880s—and the period to which it is now being restored—the late 1920s. The shift can be measured by comparing Fairsted with the landscapes made during the teens and twenties by the firm, as well as by other contemporary practitioners, such as Charles Platt, Albert Davis Taylor, or Ellen Shipman. In those fifty years, the American economic climate changed enormously, and with it the taste of the firm's residential clientele, who were the rich and influential, many of them newly rich. They traveled frequently to Europe, and they read magazines such as House & Garden [first published in 1901] and House Beautiful [1896], whose only subject was the life they could enjoy with their wealth. Photographs in these mass magazines promoted the use of historical architectural detail and gave to designed space a visual meaning that had never before been available to laymen unable to read a plan. A new professional class, landscape architects, stood ready to create such space. From the late 1890s up to the 1929 crash, lavish architectonic formality seemed imperative and there was money, talent, and labor available to achieve it. Even in Brookline, where the hilly topography of ledges and bogs is better suited to naturalistic treatments like that at Fairsted, great formal gardens were carved out, such as Charles Platt's designs for Mr. and Mrs. Charles F. Sprague's Faulkner Farm [1897] and Mr. and Mrs. Larz Anderson's Weld [1901].

Fairsted had almost none of the garden features that from the turn of the century onward became standard in the designs of the Olmsted firm for this new clientele, on small properties as well as large. At Fairsted there was neither rose garden nor herb garden; neither Japanese garden, nor water garden. No extensive supporting facilities existed, such as a greenhouse or a hot bed. There was a vegetable garden, a cut flower garden, and at various times in different locations cuttings were grown on, plants heeled in, and bulbs and annuals tested. But a visitor did not find a walled court, a collection of boxwoods, an allée, or a formal vista. Garden seats, Chinese ornaments, stone or turf terraces with flights of steps and balustrades, mossy statues, clipped hedges—none. There was no summer house or pergola or shingled child's playhouse, no sundial, nor any trace of historically accurate—or even inaccurate—"period style"—no Colonial Revival, French, or English architectural details. There was no tall stone wall, no
wrought-iron entrance gate with urn-topped posts, no landscape program that progressed from symmetry near the house to pastoral informality at the edges of the property.\textsuperscript{12}

The difference between Olmsted Sr.’s work and the later work of the firm is not just a change in taste; it reflects differing ideas as to how best to achieve social and political ends through landscape architecture. Olmsted Sr., whose landscape philosophy was progressive and socialist, had always been reluctant to undertake private residential work for the very rich.

\textit{Above, Mrs. Henry V. Greenough’s formal garden, an Ellen Shipman project of 1926, exemplifies the trend towards compartmented design on smaller properties in Brookline and other suburbs. Brick walls, a controlling axis that ties the garden to the house, sculptural ornament, and richly planted perennial beds are typical of Shipman’s work. Such features can also be found in many private gardens laid out nationwide by Olmsted Brothers in that same decade.}

\textit{Below, the landscape plan, unlike Fairsteds’, would not be a surprise today. The walled garden has a well-equipped vegetable-and-cutting garden tucked compactly behind it; steps lead down to a pool whose oval shape is echoed by the lawn. A winding path invisible from lawn or house circles the tree-screened property. Two pocket gardens fill the lot corners. A bank of naturalistic plantings and a wild pond It’s a brilliant solution for the owner of a small suburban property who wants it all: privacy, formal and natural beauty, changes in level, the use of water, and home produce. Compactness, symmetry, formality, and an absence of connection with the landscape beyond are what chiefly differentiate it from a home landscape of Fairsteds’s date.}\textsuperscript{13}
He did so ambivalently, and generally only when some aspect of it served a purpose beyond the client’s personal satisfaction. For instance, he embarked on George Vanderbilt’s Biltmore, in North Carolina, because he felt an arboretum and privately managed forest would exemplify national goals for conservation and arboriculture. While the Olmsted brothers certainly did not neglect the public sphere, they clearly felt no such ambivalence about expensive private display designed for its own sake, if one is to judge from the large body of elaborate estate work they executed.

At Fairsted, among the most striking original features (all of which still survive) are a great elm standing in an irregular pool of lawn, and the “borrowed scenery,” a view over the meadow and groves of the adjoining property. But most significant of the original survivors is “the Hollow,” a rugged little garden that lies next to and below the house entrance, a deep dimple in an outcropping of Roxbury puddingstone. Any “improver” except Frederick Law Olmsted would have filled it in when grading the grounds. He kept it—the kind of geological reminder of place that appears everywhere in his work.

If the Hollow stands as an emblem of Olmsted’s respect for wild nature, then the continuity of the 1.74-acre landscape, which flows without breaks like a Japanese screen painting, illustrates how he viewed the relationship between interior and exterior—or between man and his manmade surrounding. The sense of unbroken flow persists even as one walks slowly through the former living quarters of the house, where the rock garden, lawn, borrowed pasture view, and shrub bank melt into one another through the old wavy window panes. It is Olmsted’s ideal landscape, tamed and in miniature: a continuous whole, an ideal he expressed again and again in writing about both natural and designed landscape. Describing Yosemite in 1864 he said “… not in one feature or another, not in one part or one scene or another, not any landscape that can be framed by itself, but all around and wherever the visitor goes, constitutes the Yo Semite the greatest glory of nature.”

The landscape at Fairsted is indeed “all around,” unlike the firm’s later, more architectonic projects. When the Beaux-Arts concept of extending the axes and lines of the house outdoors took hold shortly after the turn of the century, compartment, or “room,” gardening was the consequence. Each indoor room has its outdoor counterpart. This sequenced architectural feeling (one that still usefully rules in the small spaces of today) is very different from that of Fairsted’s integrated, organic design.

Interpreting the Plantings

Fairsted’s original plantings, so different from those found in large estate gardens of the early twentieth century, shaped the design as much as did the requirements of use, or any idea of ideal landscape form. By the twenties, hybridizers were producing compact forms of shrubs and dwarf or fastigiate forms of trees to suit smaller properties. By contrast, Fairsted’s shrub plantings were species, or older cultivars, with wide-sprawling branches. Just a look at Fairsted’s roses is telling. There is not a tea rose to be found. Instead there are big hardy shrub roses: American native Rosa lucida (now R. virginiana) with its clear yellow fall foliage; beautiful but dangerously invasive Rosa multiflora, with its staggering fragrance and huge bouquets of translucent single white flowers; Rosa spinosissima, the old “Scotch Briar,” with its creamy flowers and ferny foliage. Native American shrubs—such as staghorn sumac (Rhus typhina), inkberry (Ilex glabra), and summersweet (Clethra alnifolia)—show up on the plan of 1904. Both these plants and the species roses were used by Olmsted in the Boston parks, perhaps indicating their presence at Fairsted in the 1880s as well. Generally, the landscape depended on contrasting plant forms and foliage textures for its effect, rather than on blossom.

In its use of large species forms and American natives for even the smallest suburban landscape, Olmsted’s original planting aesthetic was indeed different from that of the 1920s. It had been equally distinct from that of his contemporaries. His taste as a young man had been formed at the same time that a taste for the picturesque in a domestic setting finally became popular in America, fifty years or so after its vogue in England. But Olmsted’s version of the picturesque at Fairsted was even wilder, less
In summer, perhaps as early as the twenties and certainly by 1935, the date of this photograph, a chair and table had appeared in the shade of the Hollow. The narrow foreground path circles a central bed and the ledge of Roxbury puddingstone looms beyond. The reconstruction of the wooden entrance arch can be seen at the upper left.

Vines grew everywhere. Photographs taken at the turn of the century show house walls and fences dripping with climbers, many of them fast growers to thirty feet or so: Dutchman’s pipe (Aristolochia macrophylla, formerly A. durior), Japanese winter-creeper (Euonymus fortunei var. radicans), bower actinidia (Actinidia arguta), the American shrubby bittersweet (Celastrus scandens), Virginia creeper (Parthenocissus quinquefolia), and Boston ivy (P. tricuspidata, formerly Ampelopsis tricuspidata), wisteria (probably Wisteria sinensis), and English ivy (Hedera helix).

What such a display of almost tropical intensity meant to Olmsted is expressed in an 1863 letter to Ignaz Pilat, the Austrian horticulturist of Central Park. Writing from Panama, Olmsted describes the “jungled variety and density and intricate abundance” of the isthmus, saying it “excited a wholly different emotion from that produced by any of our temperate-zone scenery . . . excited it instantly, instinctively and directly. If my retrospective analysis of this emotion is correct, it rests upon a sense of the superabundant creative power, infinite resource, and liberality of Nature—the childish playfulness and profuse careless utterance of Nature.”

How to duplicate this in the Ramble in Central Park, Olmsted asks himself. He cites the Virginia creeper, so much in evidence at Fairsted, as perhaps the best temperate-zone

Overleaf: Plan #33, the 1920s reworking of the Hollow, refreshed the green framework and groundcovers and saw the judicious removal of shrubs that had outgrown their original locations. The small garden was groomed as a display garden and, besides the plants listed here, quantities of other corms and bulbs were added for a continuous succession of bloom from early April through August.
PLANTING FOR "HOLLOW"
TO ACCOMPANY PLAN NO. 33
File No. 673

Olmsted Brothers
Landscape Architects

October 5th, 1923.

1. Cotoneaster horizontalis, 14 plants
2. Juniperus communis, 6 plants
3. Hosta sieboldiana, 2' apart, 30 plants
4. Taxus cuspidata, 10 plants
5. Taxus cuspidata capitata, 7 plants
6. Taxus repandens, 4' apart, 36 plants
7. Pachysandra terminalis, 9" apart, 1859 plants
8. Taxus repandens, small size, 25 plants
9. Epimedium macranthum, 9" apart, 756 plants
10. Juniperus japonica, 11 plants
11. Juniperus chinensis pfitzeriana, 5 plants
12. Taxus cuspidata nana, 9 plants
13. Phlox subulata Metzgeri, 9" apart, 105 plants
14. Phlox subulata Vivid, 9" apart, 125 plants
15. Phlox subulata G. F. Wilson, 9" apart, 70 plants
16. Saxifraga cordifolia, large-leaved variety, 30 plants
17. Dryopteris marginalis, 1' apart, 50 plants
18. Dennstedtia punctilobula, 1' apart, 125 plants
19. Salix tristis, 1 1/2' apart, 170 plants
20. Diervilla trifida, 2' apart, 45 plants
21. Euonymus radicans acutus, 1 1/2' apart, 75 plants
22. Iris Prince Victor, 1 1/2' apart, 5 plants
23. Iris Ingeborg, 1 1/2' apart, 10 plants
24. Taxus canadensis, 3' apart, 50 plants
25. Hosta lancifolia, 1 1/2' apart, 80 plants

The list also included another 38 varieties of iris, a total of 639 corms. For instant effect, they were closely planted; for example, Iris cristata on 9-inch centers

A. Add a few rocks.
B. The existing gap to be filled in with shrubs from place, preferably rhododendron.
C. All of the rhododendrons to be taken out of here and used somewhere along southerly boundary of grounds. (Next Mrs. Gardner's)
D. Practically all of the existing shrubs on this slope to be eliminated, and perhaps used elsewhere on the grounds. The box, a crataegus, probably a pyrus are to be left; decisions will have to be made at the time of carrying out the work.
E. The vines growing up from the base of this rock probably to be eliminated. This is to be considered on the ground again.
F. It is worth considering rebuilding these steps.
G. It is worth considering rebuilding this walk and the platform with more artistic looking material.
H. Leave Crataegus pyracantha.
LILIES

Planted Fall 1924

Superbum - bright reddish orange, spotted.
Canadense - funnel shaped flowers: varying from yellow to orange; spotted inside.
Croceum - Bright orange flowers.
Henryi - flowers a rich deep orange-yellow. Fine foliage.
Regale - flowers, white, shaded pink; canary-yellow center.
Speciosum album - large pure white fragrant flowers.
Speciosum melpomene - pink spotted flowers; last 3 weeks or longer.
Testaceum - dull apricot, orange anthers.
Pardalinum Californicum - deep orange, maroon spotted; tips of petals, intense scarlet.
Parryi - flowers of soft yellow; conspicuous brown anthers.
Batemanni - clear glowing apricot flowers-Brown
Browni - large trumpet; inside, pure white; outside shaded chocolate brown.
Monadelphum Szovitzianum - pale citron-yellow to deep yellow.

Circles indicate only approximate locations, not areas occupied, and the numbers in circles indicate the number of bulbs planted.

A group of tall, pure white Lilium speciosum 'Album' (see arrow) greets the visitor descending the steps and is then silhouetted against the Hollow's steep south wall of greenery and stone when seen from the far end of the central path.
substitute. Years later, visiting England in 1892, he wrote to John Charles that the best ornamental grounds he saw were those in which the vines and creepers were outwitting the gardener.

Fortunately, in refurbishing this landscape after the turn of the century, the firm largely followed Olmsted's example by using common hardy plants like Virginia creeper or English ivy, all in great quantity. They grew well, quickly providing nature's "childish playfulness and profuse careless utterance." Quantities sometimes ran very large indeed: a memo of August 6, 1924, specifies ninety (!) sheep laurel (*Kalima latifolia*), one to one-and-one-half-foot-tall, for "planting about path in southeast corner of lawn." One wonders what thinning procedures were used; perhaps the nineteenth-century practice, "Plant thick and thin quick," which Olmsted Sr. used in his parks, was used here as well. Similarly, for ferns in the same corner, the hardiest, easiest-to-grow ferns are specified, such as hay-scented fern (*Dennstaedtia punctilobula*, formerly *Dicksonia punctilobula*), which is exceptionally drought-resistant.

**Planting Changes after Olmsted Sr.**

The only areas where planting schemes did change in the forty years between the 1880s and the 1920s were in the Hollow and the rear courtyard. Both of these areas, which are on the office side of the grounds, were planted more elaborately. The additions were predominantly notable for the bloom and seasonal appeal provided by bulbs and annuals, rather than for their year-round form.

The man with the most direct responsibility for the horticultural development of the grounds from 1910 through 1930 was Hans J. Koehler, who worked for the firm for forty years. Not a landscape architect, Koehler was a horticultural specialist who made most of the plans and plant lists for the Hollow and the rear courtyard. (Another longtime presence was Greenwood Kitt, the gardener, who worked on the place from about 1897 through 1922 and probably helped shape its horticultural character.) Koehler's great familiarity with garden plants introduced wider horticultural variety at Fairstede during the years of his employment. This change was also impelled by the firm's desire to have a showplace for clients, and its need to experiment with plants that could produce an unbroken sequence of bulb and perennial bloom in clients' gardens—a new concept of planting that became the rule at the turn of the century.

By 1930 the Hollow was still the "mass of shrubs and flowers" reached by "rough rock steps" that the budding landscape gardener Beatrix Jones (Farrand) described in 1894. But there had been changes in garden architecture, use, and planting. The alteration of the steps is a metaphor for the changes in general: at Koehler's suggestion, they were rebuilt in 1924 for an easier descent so that, although their location and rustic nature were retained, their roughewn appearance was reduced by regularizing the height and variety of the risers. The increased ease of access, and the use of a table and chairs for staff members at lunchtime, domesticated the Hollow in a way not envisioned before: it became a garden room instead of a remnant of nature that one glanced into or walked through for spiritual refreshment. By 1930 as many as forty-one different iris cultivars, twenty-three kinds of tulips (species, single early, cottage, and Darwin types are all represented), and thirteen lilies had been indicated for the Hollow. No planting list exists from the 1880s, but it seems doubtful that Olmsted Sr. would have included so many cultivated varieties of bulbs in this wild-looking place, given his expressed preference for keeping flowers in the garden and out of the landscape. Given his taste for subtle, overall effects would he have planted pure white, one-and-a-half-meter-tall *Lilium speciosum* 'Album' in the center of this diminutive wild garden as was done in 1924? Would he have proposed, as Koehler did in a 1911 memorandum to F. L. Olmsted, Jr., that "the coarse blackberry vines and some other coarse things on slope to the west of the rhododendron group under the *Cornus florida* are to be eliminated"? Cut back, perhaps; eliminated, no. Olmsted Sr. himself had written to John Charles in 1884 while the original landscape was being created, that he didn't "object to the cutting away of certain bramble patches if brambles are to take their place. . . ."

The reorganization of the employees' rear courtyard was even more radical in planting
changes and design intent. Koehler did the final 1925 plan, but undoubtedly it was approved by Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., then the firm's deciding voice on Fairsted matters. The yard was transformed from an unceremonious back areaway into a pleasant, modest entrance garden. Vines grew on the high walls of the new brick plan vault, and flowers bloomed in beds lining the sides of the courtyard and in a single bed set in a stone dust cement aggregate floor [presumably poured for practicality, before a garden was envisioned]. Within the context of the firm's work, the new courtyard design and plantings were neither original nor beautiful. Nonetheless, they are interesting historically because they mirror changed attitudes towards the workplace and the profession of landscape architecture. Further, they demonstrate the emergence of certain design conventions, such as symmetry, not seen before at Fairsted.

These improvements to the courtyard certainly indicate a change in the status of the firm's employees. Their growing numbers and the recognition of landscape architecture as a respected profession endowed clerks and other support staff [both men and women by the 1920s] with enough importance to assure them of more than a naked "back door." Then too, the 1926 automobile parking lot on the site of the former vegetable garden brought more people through this rear entrance.

By comparison with the Hollow, such a landscape comes across as less sophisticated, less considered and permanent in its plantings; it had less to do with the natural site and more to do with human use. Unlike the Hollow, which was essentially the older "front entrance garden" to the same office space, the courtyard did not have a stone path and steps, nor a refined array of shrubs for year-round structure, nor a choice selection of small

What in the earliest years of the firm was an unceremonious back door used by the staff had become a cheerful though modest office garden by the late 1920s. The pyramidal yews at either side of the path mark not only an entrance but also the use of symmetry not seen before at Fairsted.
Staff horticulturist Hans J. Koehler's planting study for the rear office courtyard makes the best of an unpromising space with an abundance of perennial border plants that are a hallmark of the firm's later style: iris, peonies, and a rambler rose, along with annuals such as sweet alyssum and tuberous begonias. In winter, yews and pachysandra make a sketchy evergreen framework.

bulbs and lilies. Instead, many of the courtyard plants were annual flowers, which provided the immediate appeal of summer color and fragrance for people hurrying in to work. Symmetry (more or less), tight pyramidal yews, the popular pink rose 'Dorothy Perkins' (introduced in 1902), and an edging of sweet alyssum marked it as a modest early twentieth-century suburban "cottage" garden whose planting aesthetic was very different from that of an earlier Fairsted.

John Charles Olmsted died in 1920, and the death of his mother followed in 1921. The house was rented in that same year, and Frederick Olmsted, Jr., moved to California with his family for most of the 1920s. Thus the early twenties became a turning point when the focus of Fairsted tipped away from the home and towards the needs of the firm. The emphasis turned now to the design elements that could illustrate possibilities for visiting clients. In the previous forty years, between 1883 and the early twenties, the Olmsted family's need for a soothing and private landscape had been equally important; it had served as a multiple-use, domestic fabric whose spatial patterns shaped and were shaped by daily life.

**The National Park Service Restoration**

The present restoration will return the design to its composition in the late 1920s. Those were the years when the firm's business was at its height but before the mechanical lawn-mower had erased many of the subtle curves where greensward meets shrub border. Nor had the growth of seedling invaders and the death of many mature trees changed the composition of the family side. In choosing the landscape of this period, the restoration intends to reestablish the delicate balance that still existed in the 1920s between the old residential landscape and that of the office, at the same time that it brings back the lush, profligate look so emblematic of Olmsted's original design and landscape philosophy.

**Endnotes**

This article is adapted from a longer essay written as part of a cultural landscape report prepared by the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation for the Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site of the National Park Service. It will be published in its entirety in 1997.

1 Frederick Law Olmsted (hereafter FLO) gives his definition of civilization most completely in "Notes
The Dudley Street entrance area reflects Fairsted's changing usage: first a vegetable garden for a family, then briefly considered as an experimental annual plot for the firm, it finally became in 1926 a parking lot for the expanded staff. The spruce pole fence, equally flexible in its own way, has been cut to fit the root flare of an Acer pseudoplatanus, at left.

on the Pioneer Condition, Section 2, Defining Civilization," in Ranney, 659.

2 FLO expressed his ideal of the domestic landscape in “Plan for a Small Homestead,” Garden and Forest (May 2, 1888) I: 111


6 For a discussion of women’s psychological illness in the 19th century, see Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre

7 Downing’s book, which first appeared in 1841, was reissued in eight editions throughout the century.


9 Hans J. Koehler, Blooming Date Notebook, March 6, 1910, to November 16, 1910, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site Plant File.

10 For “communitiveness,” see “Notes on the Pioneer Condition, Section 2, Defining Civilization,” in Ranney, 659.


15 FLO to Ignaz A. Pilat, September 26, 1863, in Ranney, 85.

Select Bibliography


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