

SHANAHAN LANDSCAPING

Fall 2022 Newsletter

A Luminary In The Field of Landscape Architecture - Celebrating 200 Years!

by Mike Shanahan

Widely known as, “The Father of Landscape Architecture,” Frederick Law Olmsted (1822-1903) achieved great things during his lifetime with others and on his own.

Born in Hartford, Connecticut, Olmsted took an interest in nature and farming at a young age. Early on in his career, he pursued farming on Staten Island, NY. As an agriculturist and custodian of the land, he improved the soils while growing crops.

Olmsted was an extraordinary writer. He wrote about a variety of topics, including conservation, his travels in the United States and abroad, social reform, and landscape architecture to name a few. His publications included books, articles, reports, and the like.



Leading up to a dedicated career in landscape architecture, Olmsted was secretary of the U.S. Sanitary Commission and at one point was superintendent of a mine in California. At the age of 43, he committed himself to the

landscape architecture profession. Calvert Vaux, an English architect, convinced Olmsted to return to New York from California to pursue construction of Central Park after the two received first place in a design competition for the Park.

Olmsted & Vaux eventually formed a business partnership. They designed and planned

landscape projects across the United States and Canada. There were projects that Olmsted completed with business partnerships and as a solo practice during his career. Projects included parks, universities, communities, high end residences, and others. In addition to Central Park, a number of landscape designs from a significant list completed during Olmsted’s time include Prospect Park, Franklin Park, Jackson Park, U.S. Capitol grounds, Niagara Falls State Park, Mount Royal Park, Biltmore Estate grounds, Stanford University, Yale University, and Cornell University.

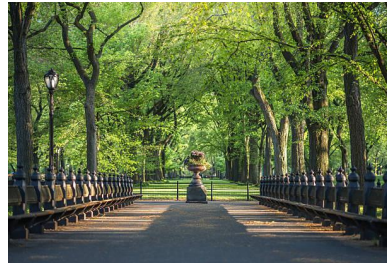


Olmsted’s approach to landscape design was picturesque, pastoral, and rural in nature with

the goal of seeing designs come to life. With the design of parks and other projects, he wanted people from all walks of life to have access to natural scenery for enjoyment, restoration of the soul, and as an escape from the rigors of city life. The foundation for his designs were inspired and influenced by his experiences and travels throughout the United States and abroad to places such as Europe. He built on that foundation as he gained more experience doing his life’s work, while transforming the American Landscape for the benefit of society.

Today, there are organizations that manage the upkeep of parks and landscapes designed by Olmsted. Some of these include the Central Park Conservancy in New York, NY, Architect of the Capitol in Washington, D.C., Olmsted Parks Conservancy in Louisville, KY, and others. These groups are devoted to protecting and beautifying these parks and properties for all to enjoy now and in the future.

Central Park
New York, NY



Stanford University
Stanford, CA



Biltmore Estate
Asheville, NC



Niagara Falls State Park
Niagara Falls, NY



Franklin Park
Boston, MA

