



DESIGN FOR A PARK.

A THESIS

FOR THE DEGREE MASTER OF SCIENCE.

August 1, 1895.

By Ulysses P. Hedrick.

revised

On the shore of Little Traverse Bay wealthy people from various large cities have established a number of summer resorts. The land in the locality has become so desirable for such purposes that in a few years all of it will be occupied. When this takes place there will be many features of city life, from which, the inhabitants of the resorts are trying to escape. It is proposed to establish several parks, of greater or less extent, in order that there may always be an air of freedom and roominess about these resorts. This thesis embodies a plan for one of these parks.

The prospective park consists of a quarter section of land lying between the town of Harbor Springs and an old and wealthy resort--Wequetonsing. The park land belongs to the resort corporation, and while, if a park is laid out, it will probably in a somewhat limited way be open to the public, yet it will be chiefly visited by the summer people and will belong especially to Wequetonsing. It will be used only about four months during the season--June, July, August, and September. The following is a description of the essential features of the land. On the south the quarter section is bounded by Little Traverse Bay, by Wequetonsing on the east, and on the north by a range of high wooded hills extending in places into the park. These hills cover the rest of a

half section, of which the park is a quarter, and the land belongs to resort people. The hills, ravines, and native woods of this upper quarter section are very picturesque, and though it will not be a part of the park, yet will be an attractive adjunct to it, all the more so since it is a fine quarry for small game and is the source of a perennial stream which flows through the lower quarter. Harbor Springs is on the west. On the half of the park next to the water the cottages and drives of Wequetonsing, and the houses and streets of Harbor Springs, come to the very borders of the park. On the upper half, separated from the lower by a bluff described hereafter, the adjacent property consists on both sides of fields.

On the south the shore line is very regular being broken only by one or two little bays. The shore here is a part of a curve and as such is very graceful; its trend is towards the southwest. The beach is sandy, the water which washes it is shallow, making an ideal bathing and boating place, moreover, it is well protected by Harbor Point so that these pastimes may be carried on in all kinds of weather. The bank of the lake is eight or ten feet high and distant from the water from two to five rods. Thinly scattered in clumps upon it are spruces, firs, and white birches, and it is

covered with a picturesque growth of low growing shrubs mostly of the Ericaceae family, intermingled with which are myriads of blue bells, dogbanes, Hypericums, Polygalas, and rock and wild roses; these, flowering in their various seasons, make the bank one of the most beautiful in the region. On the top of the bank and following it pretty closely is a boulevard, the possibilities of which are good. North of the boulevard the ground is dry and level and is covered with a fine growth of pine, firs, spruces, birches, and wild plants similar to those mentioned above.

Not quite a quarter of a mile from the shore is a bluff a hundred feet high. Midway between the shore and bluff the Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad passes, making an unsightly break in an otherwise beautiful woodland. The land between the railroad and shore is as described above; that between the railroad and bluff is semi-swamp, covered with conifers, mostly cedars, tangled and mixed in all conceivable forms--a picturesque place, but one hard to bring under hand.

The land on top of the bluff is what is called Indian land, cleared years ago and then allowed to grow up to woodland, the trees being mostly beeches, maples, small poplars, and red birches. Along the top of the bluff is another boulevard, from which a magnificent view of the bay, the lake,

and the neighboring towns and resorts may be had. About the middle of the park, a long drive, poorly constructed, climbs the bluff, thus establishing connections between the lower and upper parts. In the western part of the upper park is an open grassy space now used as a ball ground. East of this is a somewhat open space sloping to the south, from various parts of which fine views of the lake may be had. Near the northern boundary is an old Indian trail called Marquette's trail; along this trees and shrubs have been allowed to grow in charming negligence, and because of its picturesqueness and romantic associations it becomes a feature of some prominence in the park. Running north and south almost through the center of the park is a brook, which, in flowing over the bank makes a very fine cascade. Briefly, the principal features of the park have been enumerated. Let us now consider the chief requisites of such a park.

The primary requisite of a park is an expanse of green-sward, partly sheltered and adorned by trees and shrubs. The aim of the artist being to transcribe a picture from nature; in this the setting may be simple country woodland and meadow, or the picture may be placed on broken, rough, uneven ground. The first the landscape gardener calls the beautiful; the second, the picturesque. In this park we have both-- the

beautiful above the bluff, the picturesque below. Having in mind the material upon which we are to work, and the needs of the people for whom the park is to be made, we should select some quality that is to be the key note of the composition. In this park it should be retirement, release from convention, meadow and sylvan beauty. Recognizing, thus, the characteristic feature of the place, it is necessary to work in harmony with it, carrying out the central thought in every possible way.

But the park must be to some extent a place for recreation. There must be an open space for a play ground to include ball grounds, tennis courts, croquet, etc.; rustic seats should be provided in shaded and secluded spots and in sufficient number to present ample opportunity to all to enjoy the quiet which is so grateful to those who have temporarily escaped from the city. Boat houses, a bath house, picnic grounds, an amusement hall, and a restaurant must be furnished. Easy access to all buildings and beautiful places must be provided, requiring roads and walks skillfully designed. All these, however, to be incidental and subordinate to the controlling motive of the park, which, again, is to be essentially an ideal rural and sylvan retreat, the park getting its greatest value as this sentiment is expressed and

developed. So that not recreation, in the sense of amusement, but in the sense of refreshment arising from seeing simple beauty, is the office of the park.

In doing landscape work there are two methods of procedure, quite different in character and results. In accordance with one system, making a park is largely governed by the natural character and topography of the grounds. It seeks to find rather than to make pleasing effects, and by judicious adaptation of roads and paths to the existing surface to lead one to the various points of interest. This system may not produce results of highest artistic effects, but will best yield those which commend themselves to a lover of the beautiful in nature. Such a park is also attainable without excessive cost or tiresome delay.

By the other system a plan is presented according to well considered rules of art without much regard to the original shape of the surface which must be modified to conform to the ideal creation. A work of surpassing and rare excellence may in this way be produced, but its cost is great and the delay of its completion tedious.

In the case of this park there is but little embarrassment in making a choice between the two systems. The diversified character of the grounds, and the abundance of beautiful

spots give us a park filled with objects which need but little transformation. Our first care then must be to give easy access to all points of interest, the existence of which, necessitates a careful study of the lines for drives and walks.

At the first glance at the map it is seemingly wrong to have three drives almost parallel in so small a park, but in this case they ^{are} absolutely required. A boulevard very naturally follows the shore, and the one on the bluff as naturally follows the bluff. The drive between the railroad and the bluff is there as a matter of absolute necessity for communication between the town and Wequetonsing. While it need not be so pretentious as the others, yet it should be a perfectly kept drive, well shaded and well cared for. In planning the boulevards along the bluff and shore but little needs to be done in laying out the drives as they will follow the graceful contours of bluff and shore, but much care must be exercised in thinning out and grouping the trees so that vistas overlooking the lake may be had. Great ingenuity must be used with the long drive that circles around the upper park touching the foothills. The aim will be to pass as many picturesque spots in the woods that border the foothills as possible; as, herein lies the chief attraction of the drive,

there being huge rocks, cliffs, ravines, a creek, a spring, tangled wild woods, and giant forest trees to pass. Opportunity should occasionally be taken to emerge into the border of the meadow land, where being on higher ground a beautiful view may be had across the meadow, over the bay, and a glimpse of the land on the other side, or the blue lake more to the westward. This drive is one of the great possibilities of the park.

South of the railroad the drive^s will be much used, and they ^{and} ~~in~~ the immediately adjoining land may be treated more formally. The part of the drive going up the hill should do so very gradually, the bank above and below offering a splendid opportunity for the artistic planting of shrubs and vines. The old Indian trail leading across the upper part of the grounds cannot be improved upon, as the charm of its intricate tangle and picturesque wildwood, opening here and there into little grassy meadows is perfect. It may be used either as a bridle path or as a ramble.

Below the bluff plain walks, as are shown in the plan, will be constructed; above, the walks will follow the drives, but people will be allowed the freedom of the meadows and woods, that being one of the charms of the place. The most must be made of the greensward and woods. Encroachments upon

them by roads and walks are not desirable, not only because of the defacement, but because they divide and weaken the essential features of many beautiful scenes; they are to be considered a necessary evil, conveyances by which we see the beautiful--which is the scenery. The aim must be to make their width and alignment combine to the best advantage, gracefulness of proportion and convenience in use.

We will now proceed to the general design of the park, which may be best traced on the accompanying map, but the special character and distinctive features may be thus summarized.

I. The Playground, in the southwest corner, occupying, including Amusement Hall and surroundings, bath house and surroundings, grounds for various games, swings, and the shore drive, about twenty acres. It is designed for outdoor sports and popular festivities; tennis courts, ball grounds, croquet and kindred games will fully occupy the space allotted. A row of shade trees set in a bed of grass four rods wide extends around three sides of the playground; at the west end there is a small grove; these, afford ample facilities for shade and a resting places. It is designed that Amusement Hall be chiefly a lecture and concert hall with a gymnasium, bowling alley, and ball room, as subordinate parts.

Around both Amusement Hall and the bath house some formal gardening will be allowed, though garish colors in bedding designs and fancy exotics will be out of place.

II. West of the Playground are the drives connecting the various buildings. They inclose a space of nearly two acres which can well be treated in the so-called formal style. The appropriateness of formal gardening will be perceptible however, only if the outlines of the bed are simple and graceful, the colors low-keyed, and all in harmony. Around the buildings much may be done in the way of ferneries, rustic work, hanging baskets, and vines, though considerable skill must be exercised in order to make such work combine well with formal gardening. An abundance of water from flowing wells may be had to aid in the various effects desired around the buildings. In the space at the junction of the drives going to the dock a rock fernery supplied with water by one of these flowing wells, making a sort of a fountain, will produce a fine effect.

III. West of the park just described between the railroad and lake is an area of twenty-five acres called the Grove. Its chief attraction will be sylvan beauty. The forest trees of pine, spruce, white birch, and the wild flowers, with some thinning and trimming may be allowed to stand

as they are. Through the center of this area a large creek running north and south forms some beautiful pictures in its ramblings in and out, and in the cascades as it flows over the uneven ground. Since the ground is wet near the creek, a well constructed walk should follow it pretty closely. Rustic seats should be built here and there. Paths, not necessarily costly or particularly well kept, should lead from the various objects of interest, such as a spring, a handsome or picturesque tree, a boulder, a grassy spot in the woods, or a flowing well, and now and then a rustic house built for the convenience of picnic going people. In general, those frequenting this part of the park may have the freedom of the grounds without special regard to paths, though these should be so built that people will care to follow them. In the northeast corner of this area the forcing houses and offices are located.

IV. The land bordering the railroad can be treated very simply. Since it is a passenger road almost entirely, it will be best not to screen it from view, but rather let those that are riding have a pleasant outlook from the car windows. A well kept stretch of grass and a row of shade trees on both sides of the track will produce the best effect. On the north side of the track a walk forming direct communication between

Harbor Springs and Wequetonsing is a necessary rather than a beautiful part of the park. Though, if the grass is well kept and the trees rightly planted in the bordering grounds, thus forming a sort of a mall, common to many parks, the walk and environs will not be at all unsightly.

V. In the area, comprising about thirty acres, between the railroad and bluff, the object will be to show the wild beauty of the place. The ground is thickly covered with an exceedingly picturesque growth of cedar and hemlock, at the base of which ground pine, ferns, orchids, pitcher plants, and other wild flowers thrive. Here and there is an island of dryer land where the flora and sylvia changes; there are ravines, ~~and~~ rocks, trout creeks, and cascades, which make the possibilities of this place as a picturesque spot good. The cost of the drives and walks in this part of the park will be considerable because of the rough ground, and since the nature of the ground does not allow of one's getting off the roadway. Their number and position can best be traced on the map. The special features of this part of the park; are, the bluff, eighty to a hundred feet high and well covered with trees; the large creek forming a cascade over the bluff, and by the side of which, in order that none of its beauty may be lost, a flight of steps climbs the hill; and a picturesque ravine which the drives and walks cross and recross.

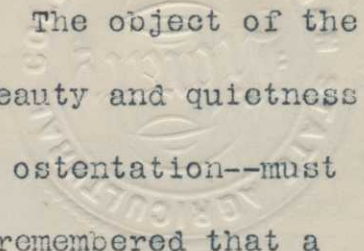
VI. The park above the bluff can be described with a few words. One of the primary efforts in a park characterized by the beautiful, rather than the picturesque, is to have open spaces as large as possible without their being monotonous or bare in appearance. Such spaces are the essential features of a naturalistic garden design. Though gay with flowers and fresh with verdure of trees, a park without one or two large stretches of lawn loses its character as a park and becomes simply a plantation. Grass is not only valuable for its beauty but its associations express much. It tells of fertile soils and refreshing showers. Abundance and prosperity are typified by luxuriant growths of grass. "There is an infinite beauty in the poetry of the meadow."

Two considerable expanses of greensward are to be obtained in the upper park. One in the eastern part contains about thirty acres, the other, farther west, about fifteen acres. The ground slopes to the south in both spaces and has unevenness enough to give mobility and variety to the landscape. The undulating and swelling ground suggests more life, but at the same time the sense of repose is as great. A prairie would simply be stagnation. Below the bluff the lawn should be close mown and velvety, but here the grass may grow tall and free. There should be about these spaces a sense of

freedom and roominess, a look of leisure and amplitude, there should be circles of shade, long grassy vistas, aisles and retreats, and inviting depths of sunshine and shadow. The drives should be so arranged that these spaces will be brought in view several times from different points with varying effect. Though seemingly simple, yet the groves which divide and surround these expanses of turf must be arranged with considerable artistic skill if best results are to be obtained.

The ground in the northern part of the upper park is rough and picturesque, especially that near the foothills. The flora and sylvan ^{are} entirely different from that below the bluff, since the ground is high and dry. The best practice here will be to allow nature to hold sway. The landscape gardener's work being to encourage her by planting ferns in the crevices, vines on the rocks, allowing the wild flowers to grow around and among them. Unhospitable thickets should be brought under subjection, rubbish removed, and foot paths constructed to the points of greatest interest.

In conclusion, throughout the whole work, it must be remembered that landscape gardening embraces principles which must be followed as closely as those of other arts. Unity, harmony, fitness, and utility, are regulated by as closely defined laws as those which govern the production of beautiful



creations and other artistic activities. The object of the park and its desired qualities--simple beauty and quietness as the antithesis to conventionality and ostentation--must constantly be kept in view. It must be remembered that a composition of organized beauty is to be produced, and not one with beautiful but unrelated details. The resources ^{of the park} are many and varied, and its scattered excellencies should be collected into one beautiful composition as far as a place of so diversified a character will allow.



