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**CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT
FULLER BROOK PARK
WELLESLEY, MASSACHUSETTS**



Prepared for

Wellesley Natural Resources Commission

Halvorson Design Partnership

Prepared by

Shary Page Berg FASLA

Fall 2004

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Wellesley Natural Resources Commission
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1. INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

Fuller Brook Park in Wellesley, Massachusetts is a linear park established by the town in 1899 for the dual purpose of improving drainage in flood-prone areas and providing parkland near the center of town. Its physical character has evolved over the past century as the needs and priorities of the community have changed. Initially a natural area with extensive wetlands, the watercourse has been made narrower, straighter and deeper to improve surface drainage. The original landscape of woodlands and fields has assumed a more managed appearance, with mown lawns and ornamental plantings now interspersed with more natural vegetation. The path that runs along Fuller Brook functions as a heavily used pedestrian corridor and as part of Wellesley's extensive trail system. The town's main trunk sewer also runs along the park corridor, and periodic sewer construction projects have caused disturbance of the park landscape.

The dual mandates of Fuller Brook Park, which are sometimes at odds with each other, have presented a management challenge and involved multiple town agencies for more than a century. In recent years, increased recreational use and new emphasis on protecting natural resources and historical values have raised additional issues. Questions regarding the stewardship of the property, especially landscape treatment, have intensified as the park's infrastructure has aged and pressures on it have increased.

In late 2003 Wellesley's Natural Resources Commission, in conjunction with the Department of Public Works, commissioned Halvorson Design Partnership to prepare a master plan for Fuller Brook. The purpose of the project was to document the natural, historic and aesthetic values of the park and to make recommendations for revitalizing it "in the spirit of its original creators." This Cultural Landscape Report was included as part of the Fuller Brook Park Master Plan to document the park's history and to evaluate its historical significance. The report has five primary goals, each of which is linked to a chapter of the report:

- to provide a historical framework or context for Fuller Brook Park
- to document the physical evolution of the park
- to assess the current condition of the landscape and to identify key landscape features
- to evaluate the historical significance and integrity of the landscape
- to make preservation treatment recommendations

Janet Hartke Bowser, Director of the Natural Resources Commission (NRC), was the town's project manager for the Fuller Brook Master Plan. Members of the Natural Resources Commission all provided input, as did Steve Fader and Cricket Vlass of the Department of Public Works (DPW). The Wellesley Historical Society and Wellesley Free Public Library were the primary historical repositories consulted for this project. The files of the NRC and DPW relative to Fuller Brook were also reviewed, as were Massachusetts Historical Commission files.

Information on landscape architects who were involved at Fuller Brook Park was obtained from the following sources: Olmsted National Historic Site, Brookline, MA (Olmsted firm); Center for Lowell History, University of Massachusetts, Lowell, MA (Warren Manning); Special Collections Department, Parks Library, Iowa State University, Ames, IA (Warren Manning); and Phillips Library, Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, MA (Ernest Bowditch). Funding for this project was provided by the Town of Wellesley through its Natural Resources Commission.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Fuller Brook Park is historically significant at the local level as an example of landscape architecture and community planning and is also noteworthy for the involvement of three prominent designers. The following themes have shaped the park's creation and management over the past century and should inform future stewardship.

- **Drainage and Parkland**

Fuller Brook Park was established in 1899 for the dual purpose of improving drainage and providing parkland. These two mandates, which sometimes conflict, establish the fundamental purpose of the park. Drainage concerns have generally shaped major policy decisions and physical changes.

- **Linear Corridor**

Fuller Brook Park was built as a unified linear park extending from Dover Road to Maugus Avenue. It has become segmented by construction of the high school in 1936 and by changes at Hunnewell Field, where both the brook and the path largely disappear. Today Fuller Brook Park is perceived as two distinct segments broken by Hunnewell Field and the high school rather than as a single park.

- **Multiple Designers**

The park does not reflect a single design, but is a collective work with many influences. Three prominent designers advised on Fuller Brook Park during its early years but their work was conceptual and did not include detailed design. John Charles Olmsted of Olmsted, Olmsted and Eliot was consulted briefly in 1897. Warren H. Manning, who trained at the Olmsted office before establishing his own firm, was involved in land acquisition and initial construction of the park. In 1915 Ernest W. Bowditch, an engineer and landscape designer who was also involved in the design of Wellesley's sewer system, made recommendations for extending the park and for a boulevard along Fuller Brook.

- **Evolving Landscape Character**

Fuller Brook has not had a static character but has evolved over time as town needs and priorities have changed. The general trend has been away from a natural landscape of winding watercourse and woodland vegetation to a more engineered stream bed and a park-like landscape that includes ornamental trees and shrubs as well as native plants.

- **Natural, Cultural and Recreational Resource**

Fuller Brook Park originated as a natural landscape and retains values associated with its natural resources, including water resources, flood storage, vegetation and wildlife. It is also valued as a cultural resource and as an example of park and regional planning. Finally, Fuller Brook Park is a much-loved recreational resource that includes a multi-use path that is part of the town's trail system.

2. CONTEXT: PUBLIC OPEN SPACE IN WELLESLEY

In order to evaluate the significance of a landscape, it must be placed within a larger intellectual framework known as a historic context, which discusses it in relation to other properties associated with a given theme. The primary historic context for Fuller Brook Park is the public open spaces of Wellesley, which are described in this chapter. Fuller Brook Park can also be considered within the larger framework of park development in Massachusetts, particularly Boston's Emerald Necklace and the Metropolitan Park System, both of which are discussed briefly.

SHAPING WELLESLEY'S LANDSCAPE CHARACTER (1635 – 1880s)

Settlement and Early Land Use

The first small group of English settlers arrived in the Wellesley area from Watertown around 1635. They gradually began to change the landscape, building houses, clearing fields and improving the trail system. The entire area soon became part of the 300 square mile Dedham land grant. Algonquin Indians, many of whom had been converted to Christianity by John Eliot, already occupied the area but their population was soon depleted by illness and by imprisonment during King Philip's War. On April 18, 1681 Chief Maugus and his wife Waukeena conveyed their lands to the township of Dedham for "five pounds in money and three pounds in corne." Two hundred years later this land became a large part of the present town of Wellesley.

In 1711 the town of Needham broke away from Dedham, incorporating present-day Needham and Wellesley (then called West Needham). The recorded population was 250. Farming continued to be the primary livelihood for most families, although there were also several small mills along the Charles River. In 1773 the meetinghouse burned, increasing tension between East and West Needham. The following year a new meetinghouse was erected in East Needham. West Needham began to assert its independence but the Revolutionary War intervened, superseding local politics.

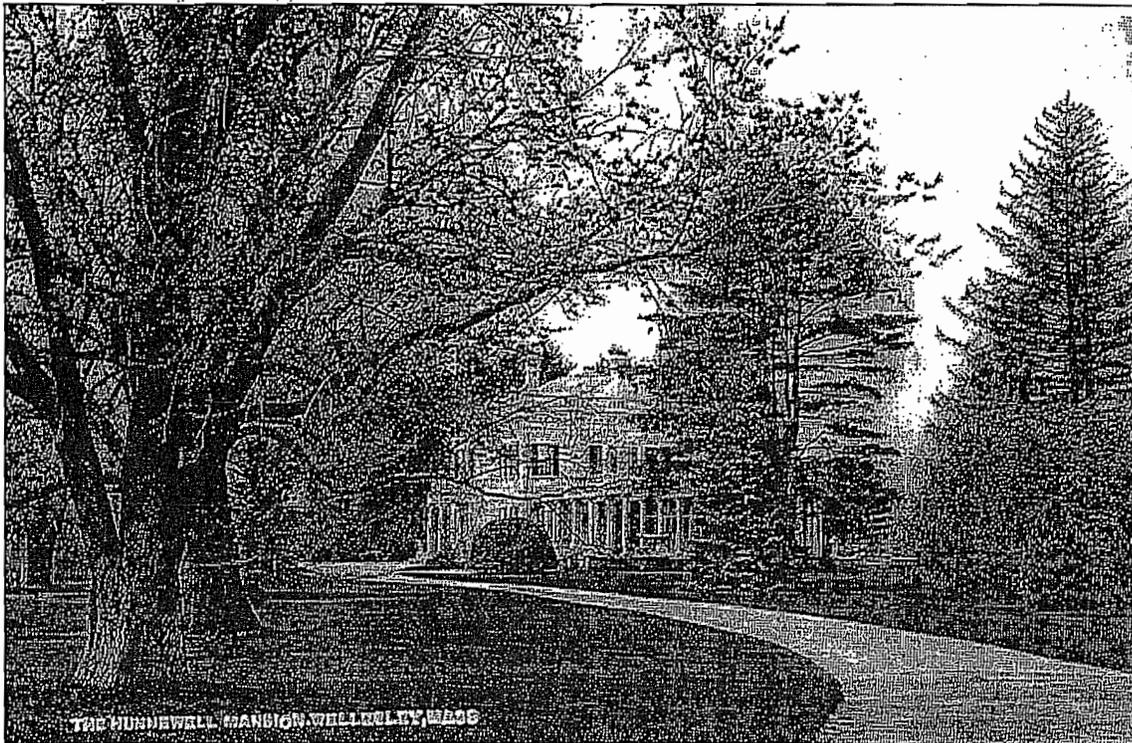
By the early 1800s West Needham had become a distinct town with a small village center. Most people still farmed for their livelihood. Typical crops included corn, fruits, string beans, poultry, cucumbers, eggs, cheese, tomatoes, herbs, apples, flax and squash. The village of West Needham was described in Nason's *Gazetteer of Massachusetts* as "a church, one or two stores of the common country kind, a junction of several roads, and a few dwellings, scattered rather than clustered" and a place where "drowsy influence hung over the land and pervaded the whole locality."¹ Later Wellesley became a group of villages, which still exist as the Fells, the Square, the Hills, the Farms and the Falls.

New transportation routes created during the early nineteenth century linked Wellesley with the outside world. The Worcester Turnpike (Route 9) was built as a toll road between 1808 and 1812, connecting Wellesley with Boston and New York. It provided convenient access to Boston markets for sale of farm products and brought urban residents to the country for health and recreation. The Boston and Worcester Railroad built through Wellesley in 1834-35 made access to Boston even easier, prompting an influx of visitors who came to enjoy the scenic community and healthy environment. Many visitors initially stayed at the Elm Park Hotel but some soon established summer residences and eventually year-round homes. By mid-century the town was still small and fairly primitive with heavy reliance on agriculture, but there were also many new residents who worked in Boston. The 45-minute commute seemed a small price to pay for living in such a bucolic place. Wellesley also developed a reputation as a convalescent area, especially for those with consumption.

New Landscape and Civic Influences

The mid-nineteenth century was a period of rapid physical and social change in New England, with a resulting growth of cities and rise of suburban living, due in large measure to improved transportation systems. In the changing social and economic climate, rural estates were a means of displaying one's wealth and social status. Two prominent themes of the day were interest in scientific agriculture and ornamental horticulture, both popularized by Andrew Jackson Downing (1815-1852). Initially a pomologist, Downing was best known as editor of *The Horticulturist* and author of books advocating landscape improvements as a reflection of moral rectitude and civic pride.

As West Needham became more accessible and better known, a new generation of wealthy residents began to acquire large land holdings in town, creating lavish mansions in landscaped settings. Among the most influential of the new land owners was Horatio Hollis Hunnewell (1811-1902) who had made his fortune as an investment banker and railroad entrepreneur. His home "Wellesley" designed by architect Arthur Gilman and completed in 1852 was the town's first mansion. Hunnewell also designed and built the first topiary garden in the United States, which was laid out on seven terraces and covered three acres along the shore of Lake Waban.² The house and gardens were mentioned in a posthumous edition of A.J. Downing's book on landscape gardening. Over time other estates were built throughout the town but especially near Lake Waban where they included homes for several of the Hunnewell children as well as the estate of Henry Fowle Durant.



Post card view of the H.H. Hunnewell estate (Wellesley Historical Society)

The community's most notorious estate was that of William Emerson Baker who purchased farmland in Wellesley and Needham in the 1860s. Baker ultimately acquired 800 acres that he converted to an amusement park containing formal gardens, lakes, fountains, animal displays, grottoes, games and rides. Baker staged lavish special events and even built a hotel to house visitors. After his death in 1888, most of the features associated with the amusement park disappeared.³

Residents placed high value on the scenic character and bountiful natural resources of the town and made a conscious effort to preserve and enhance their community. Among the earliest civic improvements were the American elms planted along the major streets of the town, including Washington Street, in the 1860s. This project, undertaken by the Tree Society, established a precedent for municipal tree planting and ornamental horticulture.

Meanwhile creation of regional infrastructure also impacted the community, with construction of the Cochituate Aqueduct through town in 1848 to transport drinking water from Lake Cochituate to Boston. In 1876-77 the Sudbury River Aqueduct, also part of Boston's water supply system, was built through Wellesley, opening in the 1890s. Both remain part of Wellesley's open space system today, although the Cochituate Aqueduct now carries local storm drainage rather than Boston's water.

The community soon attracted a new type of land use that took advantage of the bucolic setting. In 1875 Wellesley College for women opened overlooking Lake Waban. The site, owned by Henry Fowle Durant, was considered ideal because of its pure air and healthy water. The campus, although greatly expanded, still retains much of its spacious landscaped character. It was followed by several other schools and colleges: Dana Hill established in 1881 as a preparatory school for Wellesley College; Tenacre Country Day School established in 1910; and Babson Institute (later Babson College) established in 1923 to provide business education.

PARK AND PARKWAY PRECEDENTS

Boston's Emerald Necklace

Boston was a leader in the nineteenth century American park movement. Early park advocates offered initial visions for Boston's municipal parks, but in the 1880s and 90s landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted Sr. was responsible for refining these concepts and for enlarging the definition of urban park to include parkways and park systems. One of Olmsted's best known and most successful projects was Boston's Emerald Necklace, a system of parks extending from the Back Bay Fens to Franklin Park, with all units of the system linked by tree-lined parkways.

Olmsted's park designs were grounded in two major principles. He believed strongly in the social value of parks as places where people of all classes could mingle. His smaller parks and portions of the larger parks were designed to meet this need. He also embraced the restorative value of nature and felt that parks should be places where people could escape completely from urban sights and sounds and find tranquil surroundings that would act as an antidote to the pressures of urban life. This he accomplished in large areas called landscape parks, where the natural landscape was subtly enhanced to heighten the experience of the park user. Olmsted also stressed the importance of preserving natural features such as streams, arguing that doing so would be less expensive than filling them and forcing them into underground culverts. His design for Boston's Back Bay Fens, which transformed sewage infested tidal flats into a meandering lagoon, was a brilliant expression of this concept.⁴

The park system that Olmsted designed for Boston also included a network of parkways, which he envisioned as continuous pleasure roads linking residential neighborhoods with parks. The inspiration was derived in part from European boulevards, especially those in Paris, where Olmsted was impressed with the separation of carriages from carts and other heavy traffic, and the wide strips of lawn and rows of trees. However, unlike the straight European boulevards, Olmsted's parkways followed the contour of the land. Some parkway corridors even expanded to integrate natural features such as streams, as along the Muddy River.

Metropolitan Park System

The second precedent that would have been in the minds of Wellesley residents in the 1890s was the Metropolitan Park System. One of the people primarily responsible for the creation of Boston's metropolitan parks was Charles Eliot, a young landscape architect who had apprenticed at the Olmsted firm. In 1890 Eliot suggested that landscapes should be preserved "just as the Public Library holds books and the Art Museum pictures -- for the use and enjoyment of the public."⁵ A few years later Eliot argued that open space was an essential feature of urban communities, placing it in the same category as water supply and sewage treatment, but noted that because of other priorities, most communities were not able to act boldly to acquire park land. This was the nucleus of an idea that led to the creation of the Trustees of Public Reservations in 1891 and the Metropolitan Park Commission (MPC) in 1893.

In 1893 Eliot and journalist Sylvester Baxter were hired by the newly formed MPC to lay out the principles of the proposed Metropolitan Park System and to recommend priorities for land acquisition. The report proposed five types of landscapes for inclusion in the metropolitan system: ocean frontage; shores and islands of the inner bay; tidal estuaries; forest uplands; and small squares and playgrounds in populated areas. For each landscape type, recommendations were offered regarding specific properties. The term reservation was used, rather than park, for the larger MPC properties to distinguish them from smaller more urban parks and to emphasize that the land was being reserved in more or less its natural state. Eliot also included pleasure drives, known as parkways, in the reservations, many of them running along river corridors. In several articles on forestry, Eliot articulated principles for stewardship of the large reservations, which he saw as managing the forests to preserve the inherent scenic qualities of the landscape.⁶ Eliot became a partner in the Olmsted firm in 1893 and continued to work on the metropolitan parks until his untimely death in 1897, when the work was taken over by John Charles Olmsted and his brother Frederick Law Olmsted Jr.

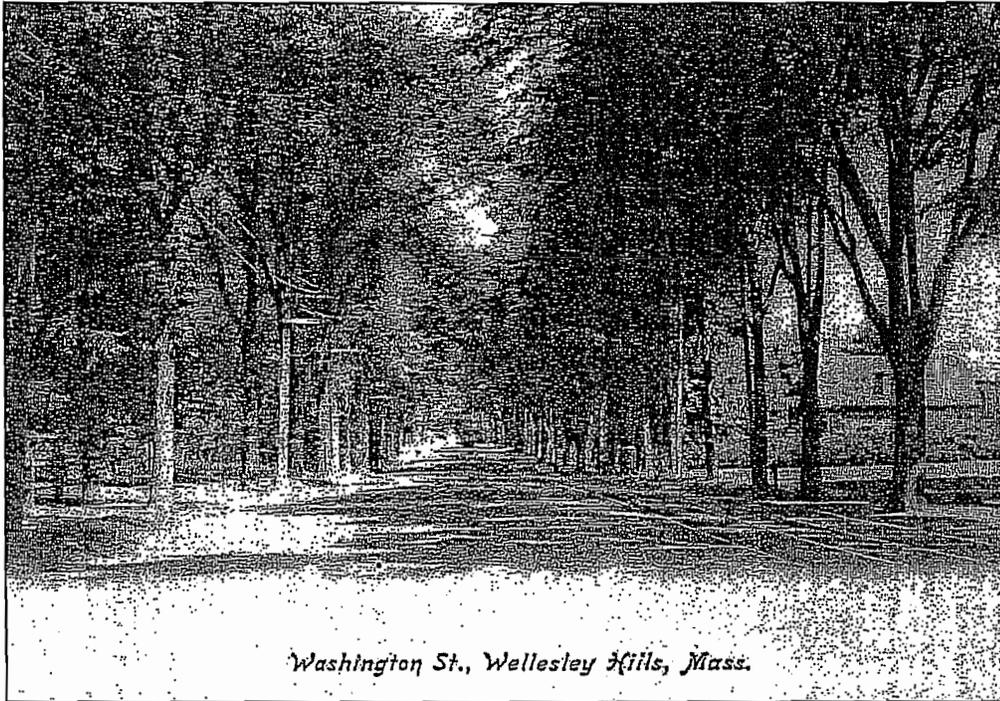
Of most direct relevance for Wellesley was the proposal to include lands along Boston's three major river estuaries in the Metropolitan Park System, especially the Charles, which offered two very different conditions. The banks of the lower Charles were heavily industrialized and the water was sufficiently polluted to endanger public health. Eliot envisioned damming the lower section and acquiring the adjacent lands to create a park-lined basin. The section of the Charles River upstream from Watertown was much more pristine. Here the goal was to preserve the natural scenery that still existed and where possible to construct a road or footpath along the river edge. Land acquisition for the Charles River Reservation was underway during the late 1890s, including land acquired by the MPC in the eastern part of Wellesley.⁷

EVOLUTION OF WELLESLEY'S PARKS AND PUBLIC LANDSCAPES (1880s – present)

"The charm of the Town of Wellesley consists in its refined rural atmosphere, its pleasant homes, its delightful drives and its landscaped scenery, and no enlarged description of its enchanting outlooks, its elegant residences, its public buildings, its hills and vales, its calm waters and rugged ledges can be otherwise than futile and unsatisfactory."⁸

Shaping a New Community

On April 6, 1881 the town of Wellesley, previously part of Needham, was formally incorporated as an independent community with a population of 2,500. The new town, known for its natural beauty and gracious estates, was named for Isabella Pratt Welles, wife of H. H. Hunnewell, one of the town's leading citizens. Through the precedent set at his own estate and in his gifts to the town, Hunnewell was instrumental in establishing a town-wide appreciation of well-designed public spaces, mature trees and ornamental horticulture, three elements that remain important characteristics of the community today.



Wellesley's tree-lined streets, especially Washington Street shown here around 1900, were highly valued by the community. (Wellesley Historical Society)

Wellesley's first civic buildings, the town hall/library and the railroad stations, were set in carefully landscaped grounds, an important statement regarding the stature and sophistication of the new town. Hunnewell donated the town hall and library, designed by George Shaw and Henry Hunnewell (son of H.H.), and the surrounding park, which he laid out himself as an arboretum. The town's three railroad stations designed by prominent architects such as H.H. Richardson and the firm of Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge, with landscape by Frederick Law Olmsted Sr., were another important statement about the quality of the town, and the importance of the railroad to the community. Other civic improvements soon followed including a public water system, municipal street lights, concrete sidewalks in the village, a fire department, "illuminating gas," Woodlawn Cemetery, and a new Unitarian church. In 1893 a Town Improvement Committee was established, consisting of three members from each village.

Park Commission's Early Years

"It has been said that "the growth of any community along the lines of ornamental horticulture indicates progress in the area of culture and refinement." It is evident from the taste of her citizens that Wellesley will not be found wanting in these graces.⁹

Wellesley's first park commissioner Josiah G. Abbott was elected in 1889 with additional commissioners joining him in subsequent years until the full complement of three park commissioners was achieved. Responsibilities of the Park Commission included formulating park policies and setting priorities for maintenance and improvements of the town hall park (which was initially maintained by H.H. Hunnewell) and the grounds of the railroad stations. Parks were listed as a separate appropriation category for the first time in 1896, with a budget of \$500. In 1897 the Wellesley Park Commission hired the firm of Olmsted, Olmsted and Eliot to assess possibilities for the community's parks. John Charles Olmsted, the senior partner in the firm at that time, visited Wellesley in January and prepared a written

report dated February 9, 1897.¹⁰ The primary focus of the report was on Fuller Brook, but it also included general recommendations, which are described here.

The report began by praising Wellesley for its natural beauties and its "comparative freedom from objectionable features," describing the town as "a pleasing landscape composed of gently rolling fields, groves and woods, breezy hills, pretty brooks, beautiful ponds with woody borders and one of the most charming rivers in this part of the country." In language that is similar to other Olmsted reports of the time, the report enumerated the physical assets of the community and praised the citizens of Wellesley for their good judgement. It then described problems associated with some of Boston's more densely settled neighborhoods and urged Wellesley to acquire park land to protect the rural character of the community and plan for long-term recreational and circulation needs.

The report urged the community to set aside between one-eighth to one-quarter of the whole area of the town for public open space that should be conceived as unified system of "public pleasure grounds and drives" pointing out that if action were taken promptly while land was still inexpensive, the cost would be far less than it would in the future. Important features cited in the report included: the Charles River, Lake Waban and the highest hills of the town. The report also recommended that there should be small neighborhood parks and playgrounds, that the town water supply be protected, that provisions be made for sewage disposal, and that low-lying land be acquired for flood control. An integral feature of the proposal was a series of parkways, based on those in Boston's Emerald Necklace, which would connect the various parks and open spaces and provide an alternative to the town's main thoroughfares that were heavily used for commercial purposes.

The year 1899 began a period of growth and change for the Wellesley Park Commission. It took over maintenance of the town hall grounds, acquired a small donation of land on Laurel Avenue that became known as Shaw Common, and assumed responsibility for shade trees, which had previously been under the jurisdiction of the Tree Warden. By far the biggest and most visionary undertaking of the year, however, was the creation of Fuller Brook Park, a linear park established to improve drainage and create parkland near the center of town. The evolution of Fuller Brook Park is described in Chapter 3.

Wellesley's park system continued to grow rapidly during the first decade of the twentieth century. In 1901 H.H. Hunnewell donated an 18-acre parcel on the south side of Washington Street as a "playground for the young and old of the town" with the stipulation that the town make improvements. Within a few years football and baseball fields were built and drainage work was underway so that additional parts of the field could be used. Elm Park at the corner of Washington Street and Worcester Turnpike was added in 1908. Like many of Wellesley's parks it featured a carefully selected palette of trees, shrubs and flower beds, reflecting the tradition of ornamental horticulture established by H.H. Hunnewell. The clock tower was added in 1928.

By 1913 the Park Commission divided its work into two categories: first, the care of 50 acres of parkland including: Town Hall Park, Hunnewell Playground, Wellesley station grounds, Shaw Common, Elm Park, Ware Park, Sawyer Park, Peabody Park, Indian Springs, Newton Lower Falls (Metropolitan Park Commission land maintained by Wellesley) and the following triangles: Dover and Washington Streets, Cottage and Grove Streets, St Mary's Lower Falls, and Walnut Street and the aqueduct. These were established parks that required primarily routine maintenance of turf, shrubs and trees.



Elm Park as it appeared before construction of the clock tower. (Wellesley Historical Society)

The second category of work was the park and drainage areas along Fuller Brook, which comprised 75 acres of land, much of it originally swamp, and about 11,500 lineal feet of brook.¹¹ The commission reported that the brook was gradually being put in order, which involved deepening and straightening the channel and sloping its banks so that they would not erode. During the 1910s there were also proposals to make substantial additions to Fuller Brook Park and to create a parkway along the brook, most of which were never implemented. One change that did occur was construction of the town's main trunk sewer along Fuller Brook between about 1915 and 1921, causing considerable disruption to the landscape.

After World War I Wellesley, like many communities, faced new challenges. The first was creating a suitable memorial to the town's war veterans. It was characteristic of Wellesley that the community chose to establish a memorial grove at Hunnewell Field, with one white pine planted for each of the 329 Wellesley residents who had served during the war. The grove was designed by landscape architect Arthur Alexander of Wellesley, one of the veterans. A precedent for commemorative trees had already been set during the Civil War when Wellesley resident Franklin Stevens planted "Trees of Peace" in front of his house on Worcester Street.

The 1920s and 30s were a time of rapid growth for Wellesley as a community and for its park system. By 1923 there were 135 acres of parkland, and the staff and budget continued to grow. The depression years of the 1930s brought a new interest in active recreational programs, many of which occurred at Hunnewell Field. Construction of a new high school southeast of Hunnewell Field in 1936 occurred on land that had previously been parkland. The high school brought more users to the area and created pressure for additional playing fields at Hunnewell Field. It also prompted improvements to the section of Fuller Brook east of Forest Street, which high school students used to get between home and school.

Post-War Evolution of Parks and Recreation

Two post-World War II changes had a direct impact on Wellesley's park system. One was the town's increased emphasis on recreational programs and facilities, part of a national trend, which diverted funds

and manpower away from existing parklands. The problem was exacerbated by the fact that the park system had been neglected during the war years. The second change was the rapid post-war growth of the community. Between 1954 and 1964 alone, the population increased by more than 25% between, from 21,000 to 27,000. The dramatic increase in population, with a large number of young families, resulted in even greater demand for recreational services and facilities.

Hunnewell Field was one of the areas that saw the greatest changes in the post-war years. Construction of the new high school in the 1930s had already brought more pressure for recreational facilities, which accelerated after the war with a new skating pond/rink in 1950. This was followed in 1961 by filling two acres in the southern section of the park to create additional land for recreation. Additional changes were made in the early 1970s that improved the athletic fields but further altered Fuller Brook.

The post-war reorganization of town departments reflected the changing emphasis. In 1946 the Park Commission became the Park and Recreation Commission whose responsibilities fell into two distinct categories: development and management of parklands; and recreational programs and facilities. In 1947 the office of Town Engineer was established, reflecting the importance that infrastructure had in the rapidly growing community. In 1955 a Department of Public Works (DPW) was established that integrated all town maintenance and infrastructure functions, including engineering, into a separate department. The former Parks Department became a division of the DPW. Recreation, which was concerned primarily with programs, was a separate department.

Since 1955 Wellesley's parks have been under the jurisdiction of the DPW, which is primarily concerned with maintaining the infrastructure of the town and is generally considered to have an engineering perspective. Initially responsibility for parks and trees fell under the jurisdiction of the highway superintendent. In 1976 a separate Park and Tree Division was created within the DPW with a landscape architect as superintendent. It had with responsibility for parks, recreation areas, trees and other open areas. Under this new structure, the town tried to articulate its approach to park stewardship more clearly.

By this time administration of the town's parkland had become increasingly complex, with multiple town departments and boards involved, often with conflicting goals. The Wellesley Conservation Council, established in 1958, functioned as an advisory group on conservation issues and a land trust to acquire conservation land. The Conservation Commission was established in 1961 but had little authority until the passage of the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act in the 1970s. Civic groups also maintained a strong interest in Wellesley's parks and natural areas. Garden clubs were active, particularly with regard to beautification efforts.

Wellesley's Natural Resources Commission (NRC) was established as a town department in 1980 to create a more comprehensive approach to management of Wellesley's parkland, particularly natural areas such as Fuller Brook. NRC's three sub-committees: long range planning, landscape advisory and wetlands protection, reflected its multiple missions. Under the new management structure, the Park and Tree Division of the DPW retained responsibility for park operations and maintenance, while the NRC had an advisory role on natural resources and park policy.

In 1981 Wellesley celebrated its centennial with the addition of Centennial Park, a new 42-acre park on Oakland Street. By 1984 the Park and Tree Division of the DPW was responsible for 856 acres of parks, playgrounds, conservation areas, traffic islands, school grounds and approximately 4,700 street trees. At the same time that its responsibilities increased, funding for maintenance was reduced. The Park and Tree Division refined its system of seven maintenance zones to make best use of limited resources. The dialogue between the DPW and the NRC regarding park management continues today, with input from other town departments, civic organizations and individual citizens.

WELLESLEY'S CULTURAL LANDSCAPES TODAY

Wellesley is a scenic community that has worked hard to retain its strong sense of place through stewardship of publicly owned landscapes, through working relationships with private and institutional owners, and through the regulatory process. A critical aspect of informed stewardship is systematic identification and evaluation of areas that contribute to community character and that contain significant natural and cultural resources. Wellesley, like most Massachusetts communities, has an Open Space Plan that identifies landscapes with significant natural resource or open space values. It has not made a similar inventory of landscapes with cultural or historical values. The list that follows includes some of Wellesley's most significant and best known cultural landscapes. A more comprehensive study using the methodology of the Department of Conservation and Recreation's Heritage Landscape Inventory Program and the Massachusetts Historical Commission's historic survey procedures should be undertaken to document these landscapes and to identify others that may have cultural and historical values.

Small Municipal Parks and Landscapes

- **Hunnewell Park /Town Hall Park** (established 1887, 10.23 acres, 525 Washington St.) Grounds surrounding town hall were Wellesley's first municipal park. Land and building donated by H.H. Hunnewell, who also laid out the grounds. Significant as a designed landscape and arboretum. Town hall listed on National Register (NRIND 04/30/1976), nomination should be revised to include landscape. Larger 26-acre area that includes Town Hall Park, the grounds of the Wellesley Free Library, the police station, Morton Park, Simons Park and Post Office Park is now referred to as Town Hall Arboretum. In 1985 there were over 550 trees of 80 different species.¹²
- **Hunnewell Playground/Hunnewell Field** (established 1901, 49.1 acres, including high school grounds, Washington Street between State and Rice Streets) H.H. Hunnewell donated 18 acres as a "playground for the young and old of the town." Over the years the town has added recreational facilities. The low-lying areas along Fuller Brook have been substantially altered since the 1960s. Also includes World War I Memorial Grove.
- **Wellesley Farms Railroad Station Landscape** (established 1880s, acquired by town 1957, unknown acreage, Croton Street Extension) Station designed by H.H. Richardson, original landscape by Frederick Law Olmsted Sr. Station is listed on National Register of Historic Places (NRIND 02/14/1986).
- **Elm Park/Clock Tower Park** (established 1908, 1.24 acres, Washington St. & Worcester Turnpike) Elm Park was established on site of former hotel, clock tower added 1928.
- **Shaw Common** (established 1899, .48 acres, Laurel Avenue, Spruce Park Road) A small early park near Fuller Brook.
- **Sawyer Park** (established 1912, 1.2 acres, Forest Street and Wellesley Avenue) A small early park near Fuller Brook.
- **Peabody Park** (established 1912, .64 acres Abbott Street and Livermore Road) A small early park near Fuller Brook.

- **Indian Springs Park** (established 1909, 1.25 acres, Hillside Road)
Natural area along Cochituate Aqueduct near Wellesley Farms Station with historical associations.
- **Maugus Hill** (4.8 acres)
Indian site and 19th century reservoir with dramatic vistas. Named for Algonquin chief.

Large Municipal Parks and Other Civic Landscapes

- **Fuller Brook Park** (established 1899, 33.4 acres, Dover Road to Maugus Avenue)
Established to improve drainage in flood-prone areas and create parkland near the center of town. Linear waterway park extending along Fuller Brook. Managed as a semi-natural park and as part of Wellesley's trail system.
- **Morse's Pond** (acquired by town in 1920s, approx. 50 acres, western edge of town between Worcester and Central Streets) Pond was the site of an ice house. Boston Ice Co. (1902-1927) sold the property to the town. The beach was developed in 1934 under a Works Progress Administration grant and opened in 1935. Pumping station built for Water Department 1937 and bathhouse in 1938.
- **Rocky Ledges** (date acquired? 15.5 acres, north end of town at Weston Border)
Natural upland area with dramatic regional views. Adjacent to Boulder Brook Reservation.
- **Longfellow Pond** (200 acre site between Oakland Street and Route 9)
Pond, marsh, field and woodland located in Town Forest along Rosemary Brook. Dammed in 1815, site of 19th century industry and ice house. Used for aquifer protection and recreation.
- **Woodlawn Cemetery** (established 1880s, 39.3 acres, Brook Street near Great Plain Ave.)
Wellesley's first large rural cemetery, privately owned.
- **Other Cemeteries and Burial Grounds**
Small cemeteries and burial grounds associated with individual churches.
- **Urban Streetscapes**
Wellesley's tree-lined streets and public spaces are an integral part of the scenic and historic character of the community. These include gateway avenues (such as routes 9 and 16); scenic roads (Wellesley has designated six scenic roads under state enabling legislation); and many small squares and triangles.

Regional Parks and Landscapes

- **Charles River Reservation** (established 1890s, 94.5 acres, NE & SW edges of town)
State-owned regional park. The Charles River forms the boundary of Wellesley on the northeast and southwest and is itself a significant cultural landscape feature. Includes Hemlock Gorge and Echo Bridge.
- **Elm Bank** (19th century estate, mostly in Dover, Washington Street near Natick line)
Former Cheney estate now state-owned parkland and watershed land. Part is leased by Massachusetts Horticultural Society. Portion is listed on National Register (NRDIS 07/10/1987).¹³

- **Cochituate Aqueduct** (constructed 1846-48, 50.5 acres (town-owned portion))
Built to transport drinking water from Lake Cochituate to Boston. Extends 5.2 miles from Route 9 near the Natick town line through Wellesley to Newton and the Charles River. Listed on National Register as Cochituate Aqueduct Linear District (NRDIS and NRTRA 01/18/1990).
- **Sudbury River Aqueduct** (constructed: 1876-1877, 43.7 acres, runs east/west through southern part of town) Includes Waban arches at confluence of Fuller Brook and Waban Brook. Listed on National Register as Sudbury Aqueduct Linear District (NRDIS and NRTRA 01/18/1990).

Institutional Landscapes

- **Wellesley College Campus** (established 1875, 397 acres (main campus), Central Street)
Scenic site overlooking Lake Waban on land that was previously the estate of Henry Fowle Durant. The campus, although greatly expanded, still retains much of its spacious landscaped character. Has been evaluated for NR. The Nehoiden Golf Course, which is owned by Wellesley College, abuts Fuller Brook Park to the west.
- **Dana Hall School** (established: 1881, 50 acres, Grove Street)
Established 1881 as a preparatory school for Wellesley College. Abuts Fuller Brook Park at Grove Street.
- **Tenacre Country Day School** (established 1910, 14.5 acres, Grove Street)
Private school initially part of Dana Hall School.
- **Babson College** (established 1923, 169.5 acres, Wellesley Avenue and Forest Street)
Campus includes former Convalescent Home on Forest Street, begun in 1879 as part of Children's Hospital, provided care and fresh air for children suffering from TB and other diseases including polio. Babson campus also includes former Channing Sanitarium on Wellesley Avenue which was a private hospital for patients with "mental and nervous ailments."
- **Massachusetts Bay Community College** (established ?, 85.8 acres, Oakland Street)
Former estate?
- **Wellesley Country Club** (established: 1910, 70 acres (?) Forest Street and Wellesley Avenue)
Site of former town poor farm. Leased by Country Club in 1910. Sixty-six acres became a golf course and the former almshouse became the clubhouse. A nine-hole course, two tennis courts and a croquet area were built. The property was purchased from the town in 1921. Additional land purchased in the 1960s.

Residences and Suburban Neighborhoods

- **Hunnewell Estates Historic District** (late 19th century estates, Washington Street and Pond Road. Note: district extends into Natick.) Includes H.H. Hunnewell's home "Wellesley." Pinetum and Topiary Garden are under conservation restriction. District also includes The Oaks (1871) designed by Henry Hunnewell of Shaw and Hunnewell for Arthur Hunnewell (H.H.'s son) and his wife. Six-hole golf course added in 1892, the first documented course in New England. Listed on National Register (NRDIS 04/14/1988).¹⁴
- **Cottage Street Local Historic District** (late 19th century residential district, Cottage Street, Weston Road, Waban and Abbott Streets) Local historic district (LHD 04/21/1980).

- **W. E. Baker Estate (Ridge Hill Farms)**
Former 19th century estate and amusement park between Grove Street and the Charles River near the Needham line that once had elaborate gardens. Area west of Sabrina Lake now Guemsey Sanctuary and Susan Lee Memorial Sanctuary owned by Wellesley Conservation Council, Inc.

A 1990 historic survey of residential areas in town, covering only the period since the town's incorporation in 1881, recommended eight areas for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places:

- **Belvedere Estates**
Period of significance 1896 – ca. 1930. Individually eligible properties: 5.
Property off Abbott Road was originally owned by Judge Josiah G. Abbott who purchased 100 acres in 1863. After his death 55 acres became prime residential land. In 1903 was laid out as residential subdivision by the Olmsted Brothers, with the area known as Belvedere.
- **Albion Clapp's Cliff Road/Old Cliff Estates**
Period of significance: 1860s – 1930s. Individually eligible properties: 7.
Former Cliff Road estate of prominent early Wellesley citizen and developer.
- **College Heights/Curve Street Area**
Period of significance: mid-1870s – 1930s. Individually eligible properties: 3.
Residential neighborhood near Wellesley College.
- **Dana Hall Area/Elmdale Park**
Period of significance: 1905 – 1936. Individually eligible properties: 1.
Residential neighborhood near Dana Hall School.
- **Glen Road Area/Riverdale**
Period of significance: ca. 1914 – 1925. Individually eligible properties: 0.
Residential neighborhood in Wellesley Farms area at northern edge of town.
- **Cedar Street and River Ridge**
Period of significance: 1880s – 1910s. Individually eligible properties: 0.
Residential area in eastern section of town.
- **Cliff Estates**
Period of significance: 1929 – ca. 1940. Individually eligible properties: 1.
- **Wellesley Gardens and Sunny Acres**
Period of significance: 1920s. Individually eligible properties: 0.
- **Indian Springs Neighborhood?** Mentioned in Open Space Plan.

End Notes

- ¹ Quoted in Elizabeth M. Hinchcliffe, *Five Pounds Currency, Three Pounds of Corn, Wellesley's Centennial Story* (Town of Wellesley, Massachusetts, 1981), page 25.
- ² For additional information on Hunnewell's estate, Wellesley, see Alan Emmett, *So Fine a Prospect, Historic New England Gardens* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1996), pages 84 - 99.
- ³ The Wellesley Historical Society compiled an exhibit on the Baker estate in 2004.
- ⁴ For additional information on Olmsted's park designs see Cynthia Zaitzevsky, *Frederick Law Olmsted and the Boston Park System* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1982) and Charles E. Beveridge and Paul Rocheleau, *Frederick Law Olmsted, Designing the American Landscape* (New York: Rizzoli, 1995).
- ⁵ Charles William Eliot, *Charles Eliot Landscape Architect* (Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1971, reprint of 1901 edition), page 318.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, Many of Eliot's essays can be found in the biography written by his father.
- ⁷ Background material on the Boston and Metropolitan park systems is drawn in part from a National Register nomination for the Metropolitan Park System prepared by PAL Inc and Shary Page Berg in fall 2002.
- ⁸ Joseph Fiske in 1884 *History of Norfolk County*, quoted in *Five Pounds Currency, Three Pounds of Corn, Wellesley's Centennial Story*, page 50.
- ⁹ *Annual Report*, Town of Wellesley, 1907.
- ¹⁰ Letter Olmsted Brothers to J.W. Peabody, Olmsted Brothers Files, Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Job #2371, A Series, Reel 26, Frames 717 - 731. See Appendix B for full text of this letter. Special thanks are due to Olmsted scholar Arleyn A. Levee for calling it to my attention.
- ¹¹ Today Fuller Brook Park is only 33.4 acres. Land that was previously part of Fuller Brook Park is now part of the high school grounds and Hunnewell Field.
- ¹² Margaret Klein Wilson, *Walks in Wellesley, Exploring Wellesley's Open Space* (Wellesley, MA: Wellesley Conservation Council, 1991), page 32.
- ¹³ For additional landscape history of Elm Bank, see Allyson M. Hayward, "Elm Bank, The Evolution of a Country Estate in Dover, Massachusetts" in *Journal of the New England Garden History Society*, Vol. 8, Fall 2000.
- ¹⁴ For landscape history of Henry Sargent Hunnewell's estate The Cedars, see Allyson M. Hayward, "'A Rather Wild and Picturesque Place,' Henry Sargent Hunnewell at the Cedars" in *Journal of the New England Garden History Society*, Vol. 6, Fall 1998.

3. SITE HISTORY

This chapter traces the history of Fuller Brook Park from its establishment in 1899 to the present. It documents the physical evolution of the landscape, describes use of the park over time and delineates the physical characteristics and features that contribute to its historical significance. Information is drawn primarily from the town's annual reports and from maps and newspaper articles. No design plans have been found for Fuller Brook Park other than a few engineering studies and there are few historic photographs.

Fuller Brook Park was a visionary creation for its time, undoubtedly influenced by Boston's Emerald Necklace and by the Metropolitan Park System, both of which are described in the preceding chapter. The story of Fuller Brook Park reflects the contradictions and complexities that the multi-purpose park has faced over the years. A primary theme is the tension between its dual mandate of improving drainage and providing parkland. A secondary theme is the many additional pressures that the park has faced over the years, threatening its unity and character.

EARLY YEARS OF FULLER BROOK PARK (1899 - 1915)

Planning for Fuller Brook

The town's annual reports indicate that in 1897 the Wellesley Park Commission hired the firm of Olmsted, Olmsted and Eliot for a preliminary visit at a cost of \$100. The archives at the Olmsted National Historic Site have no plans or photographs for this project. However, the firm's written records for this period, which are housed at the Library of Congress, indicate that John Charles Olmsted visited Wellesley in January/February 1897 at the invitation of Park Commissioner Joseph Peabody.¹ Olmsted's report of February 9, 1897 offered general recommendations for Wellesley's parks, as well as specific advice regarding Fuller Brook. Excerpts from the report pertaining to Fuller Brook are included here, the text of the full report can be found in Appendix B. Some paragraph breaks have been added to make the text easier to read.

The Fuller Brook section of the report began with an expression of concern about the potential health hazard caused by low-lying swampy areas and the need for town to assume responsibility for sanitary improvements.

"If these swamps are left in private hands, it is probable that but little will be done toward remedying their unwholesomeness. On the contrary, it is inevitable, judging from experience elsewhere, that the unhealthy conditions will grow worse and worse. The natural surface drainage will be crowded upon so those floods will become decidedly troublesome. The swamps will become polluted by the overflow and seepage from cesspools and vaults; silt largely mixed with manure from road wash and from gardens and lawns will accumulate on the low lands, both choking natural drainage channels and producing beds of putrid vegetable matter in moist places, breeding virulent diseases as well as unhealthy conditions."

"No one land-owner can by any degree of intelligent improvement of his own land rid himself of danger from evil conditions existing in the vicinity. The only remedy lies in the carrying out of a well-considered general scheme of improvement by the public authorities, partly directly and partly through the regulation of the private use of land."

"Whoever comes to study such a scheme of land drainage will find the problem enormously simplified if the town lays out a road on each side of the principal brooks and swamps and takes the land between for public pleasure grounds. Thus will proper routes be provided for future sewers; the natural water courses can be cheaply enlarged from time to time as the need becomes evident: considerable areas of low, wet lands will be saved from contamination and be preserved in their natural beauty or drained and smoothed for playgrounds. . . ."

"Experience proves that many low and unwholesome tracts of land gradually become covered with the dwellings of laborers and others too poor to pay for better land, or influenced by a misguided desire for economy, and by stables and manufacturing establishments of a kind injurious to the values of neighboring residences. In other words, the wet lands of a thickly settled town usually become its slums. . . The danger of such slums in Wellesley may seem to be very remote. Nevertheless, the conditions exist there which have produced such results elsewhere, and it is surely only a matter of time when Wellesley will be afflicted with its slums like most other towns, if it does not take effectual means to prevent them . . ."

The report then commented on the plan that had been proposed by the Park Commissioners, urging that the park and parkway begin at the intersection of Washington Street and Worcester Street, rather than at Abbott Street as initially proposed, with consideration given to eventually extending east to the Charles River. The report recommended a corridor at least 120' wide for this section. From Forest Street the route would continue down Caroline Brook (then known as Kingsbury Brook) with space widening out between the two roadways where the floodplain was wider. The relatively low area between Forest Street and present day State Street, much of which is now Hunnewell Field and the high school grounds, was proposed as a large playground and ballfield. The park would then continue down Fuller Brook to Waban Brook.

The plan suggested a minimum width of 150' for a park with a parkway on each side, with a 200' wide corridor if a trolley line were also included, widening in places of natural beauty to 300'. The report also suggested a dam near the intersection of Fuller Brook and Waban Brook to alleviate problems in the marshy area upstream from the Charles River and recommended extending the park up Waban Brook to Lake Waban, ending in a concourse on the shore of the lake.

There were five justifications for the project. First, that it could be carried out in phases and that each phase could stand on its own. Second, that the land was held in large tracts where additional roads would be needed anyway. Third, that managing the wetland would be more costly than a park in the long-run. Fourth, that the park would provide a suitable route for a sewer through the most populous part of town. Fifth, that the park and parkway right-of-way could also provide a route for a trolley at a moderate expense.

The Olmsted report concluded,

"we beg to say that while to many of these projects may at first seem wild and impracticable, yet we venture to hope they deserve the earnest consideration of all thoughtful and public-spirited citizens."

In a March 1899 letter to the citizens of Wellesley the Park Commissioners laid out proposed principles and rationale for the establishment of Fuller Brook Park based on the suggestions of the Olmsted firm. A copy of the full text of the letter is reproduced on the next page.

WELLESLEY, MASS., March 1, 1899.

TO THE CITIZENS OF WELLESLEY:—

The following is an outline of the plan recommended by the Park Commissioners of Wellesley for the FULLER BROOK IMPROVEMENT:—

1st.— That the Town acquire control of the banks of Fuller Brook from its junction with Charles River to the large marsh drained by it; also this marshy track and the banks of the small brook running into it from the direction of Forest Street; also the banks of Waban Brook— this taking to include all of the low, wet land, and a sufficient amount of the higher land to give opportunity for the construction of driveways.

2nd.— That the Brooks be cleared, deepened and straightened, so that the surplus water may be readily carried away.

3rd — That driveways be constructed, and the land treated as a natural Parkway.

This land can be acquired by the Town now more cheaply than hereafter. Its ownership by the Town will prevent its use for undesirable purposes.

The deepening of the channel will tend to remove any unhealthful conditions which may now exist, in the present poorly-drained condition of the land. It will also give a much-needed outlet for the drainage of the streets in the central part of the Town. No other plan than the deepening of Fuller Brook offers equal promise of remedying the nuisance created by stagnant water near our main streets and residence sections. This cannot be accomplished except by Town ownership. This property can also be made useful in the future in connection with a system of sewers.

The development of the property as a Parkway will give the Town an attraction which will continually increase in importance, and which will add to the value of real estate throughout the Town.

This plan has been under consideration for several years. It has been recommended by the several boards of Park Commissioners. It has been examined and fully approved by Mr. John C. Olmstead, of Olmstead, Eliot & Olmstead, and by Mr. J. Warren Manning, who are generally looked upon as the best authorities on such matters. No important change has been suggested and no serious criticism made.

The most complete development suggested includes the securing the land, improving the brooks, building two driveways, one on each side of the reservation, ornamental plantings and a public playground. This will cost \$40,000 to establish and \$3,000 a year for keeping up. This will give the town a complete and first-class development, at a cost no greater in proportion than other similar towns have expended for such purposes.

The playground and one of the driveways can well be omitted, which will reduce the cost to \$25,000 and the cost of maintenance in proportion. This gives a complete development so far as it goes, and is the plan which we desire to recommend to the Town. Under either of these plans the cost should be spread over a long term of years by an issue of bonds.

A third plan is to acquire the land and take care of the drainage problem, leaving further development untouched. It is probable that the land could not be obtained on so reasonable terms for this project alone as it can when the owners have a prospect of more direct benefit. The Town ought, however, to do this at least for its own protection and welfare. This will cost \$10,000, while the expense from year to year will be a small one.

We ask your usual careful consideration for this important matter.

Very respectfully yours,

ISAAC SPRAGUE,
JOSEPH W. PEABODY,
F. H. GILSON,

Commissioners.

*Park Commissioners 1899 letter laying out the basic concepts for Fuller Brook Park
(Wellesley Historical Society)*

The Park Commission stated that progress had already been made on a system of public parks and reservations for the town and pointed out the importance of the park system for public welfare. One of the accomplishments noted by the Commission was that the banks of the Charles River at the eastern end of town had already been acquired by the MPC. The commissioners took the bold step of urging that the town acquire the low, wet land along the entire length of Fuller Brook from its junction with the Charles River to the large marshy area near Great Plain Avenue. They also recommended acquisition of the eastern tributary of Fuller Brook known today as Caroline Brook and the banks of the Waban Brook between Washington Street and the Charles River. In all cases the acquisition should include the low, wet land along the waterway and some adjacent higher land for park use.

The commissioners also recommended that Fuller Brook be cleaned, deepened and straightened, so that surplus water would be carried away; that "driveways" be constructed, and the land treated as a natural parkway. The term "driveway" as used by landscape architects in the late nineteenth century referred to carriage roads designed for pleasure traffic through a park or between two parks. The word "parkway," which was frequently applied to Fuller Brook, was sometimes used to mean the same thing, but could also mean a linear park with paths along its edges.

The Wellesley Park Commission justified the proposed land acquisition at Fuller Brook and its tributaries on the basis that the land was still relatively inexpensive and that town ownership would prevent future undesirable uses. Deepening of the Fuller Brook channel would eliminate unhealthful conditions due to the poorly-drained state of the land; would provide an outlet for street drainage in the central part of the town; and might also be useful in future construction of a sewer system. Development of the property as a parkway would give the town, at small expense, an attraction that would increase in importance and add to the value of real estate throughout the town. As the improvement would be permanent and would increase in value, the Park Commission recommended that the cost be spread over a term of years by a serial issue of bonds.

In their 1899 Annual Report the Park Commission reported:

*"The original plan has been fully indorsed (sic) by several of the leading experts of the country and no important change has been suggested. We have had surveys made by Mr. Frank L. Fuller, with his well-known thoroughness, and plans drawn by Mr. Warren H. Manning, who has wide experience in improvements of this nature."*²

Land Acquisition

² In 1899 the Park Commission received \$25,000 to begin acquisition of the core section of Fuller Brook Park from Cottage Street to Abbott Road. The section of Fuller Brook west of Dover Road towards the Charles River; the branch of Fuller Brook running south from Hunnewell Field towards Needham; and Waban Brook, all of which had initially been proposed, were omitted from later plans. The section of Fuller Brook Park from Abbott Road to Maugus Avenue, which was not part of the original park proposal, was a later addition acquired in 1910. The park was extended west from Cottage Street to Dover Road in the 1920s.

Warren Manning, a landscape architect who had worked at the Olmsted office and established his own practice in 1897, was hired by the town in 1899 to establish the boundaries of Fuller Brook Park.³ He delineated proposed boundaries on a map, which were then staked out on the ground. Where there was disagreement over how much land was to be acquired, negotiations ensued between the town and the land owner. Land acquisition was completed within a few years for the core area of the park, although there were later additions to round out the park boundaries.

By the end of 1900 much of the western section near Cottage Street had been acquired and acquisition was proceeding eastward towards Smith (State) Street and east of Rice Street (near the present high school). Deeds clearly indicated that the land was being acquired for the dual purpose of drainage and parkland. Once the initial acquisition had been made, owners sometimes made donations of adjacent parcels that had no economic value, typically small pieces of land or low lying areas.

In 1901 H.H. Hunnewell donated 18 acres along Fuller Brook as a recreation area with the stipulation that the town make improvements. The new park, located east of State Street, was initially called Hunnewell Playground but since 1930 has been referred to as Hunnewell Field. Northern sections of the park were relatively dry but the southern section along Fuller Brook was wet and swampy. The Park Commission reported in 1902:

*"The addition of the playground tract to the land adjoining, already owned by the town, and which had been acquired for drainage and park purposes, enlarges the opportunity for development of this section for recreation purposes and has thereby given an added value to both properties."*⁴

By 1903 land acquisition along Fuller Brook for both drainage and parkway purposes was nearly complete between Cottage Street and Abbott Road. As the town acquired land, it made a study of the existing trees and shrubs, and began the initial work of broadening and cleaning the channel to improve the drainage system of the town. No plans or photographs have been found to date but it is almost certain that Warren Manning oversaw this work as well, as he had particular interest and expertise in plant materials.

In 1910 the Park Commission extended Fuller Brook Park east, acquiring a strip of land 80' wide from Abbott Road to Maugus Avenue and Washington Street. Two years later the Park Commission recommended acquiring a narrow strip of land along Fuller Brook west from the existing park to the Charles River for watershed protection and drainage. The section from Cottage Street to Dover Road was acquired in the 1920s, but the park was never extended west of Dover Road into the area that is now the Nehoiden Golf Course.

Initial Improvements

As soon as the land was acquired, the Park Commission began basic improvements to broaden and deepen the channel. No design plans have been found for this work and it is likely that none existed, as the initial work was primarily clearing away debris and rough grading the channel. The Park Commission reported in 1903:

*"... while the Commission have kept in mind the matter of drainage as being fundamental, yet in acquiring land, due regard has been exercised for future treatment as a parkway. With slight exceptions, sufficient land has been taken to provide for a roadway, paths, and planting spaces, so that the land taken will answer for all time, and the town will reap a portion of the benefit accruing from the turning of swampy areas into good, hard land."*⁵

This 1905 description is one of the few early records of Fuller Brook Park's appearance,

*"A part of the parkway was given a summer ploughing; the alders and useless under growth were cut and cleared away. Further cultivation will be necessary before a permanent lawn can be made here. A fall ploughing was also made near the bridge on Grove Street with a view to planting the coming spring."*⁶

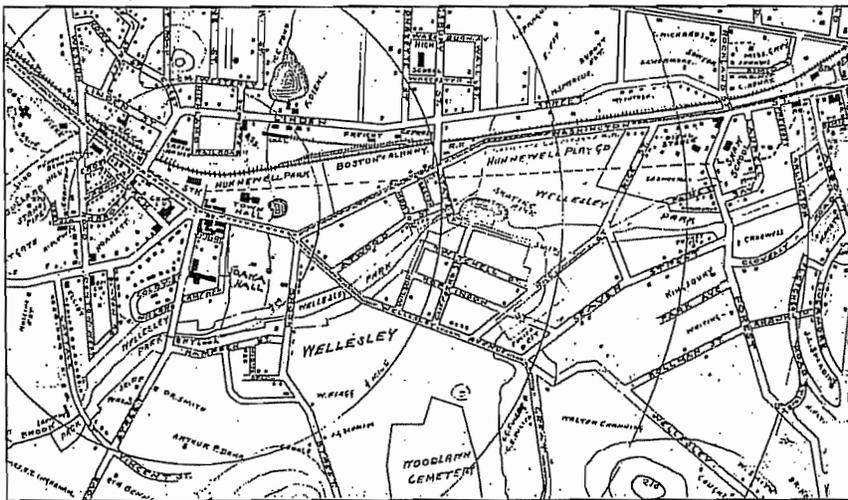
By 1908 the Park Commission reported that lowering the stream bed of Fuller Brook between Cottage Street and Abbott Road had been completed. It was now about 2 1/2' to 3' lower than it had been, transforming former bog land into useful hay fields, with a long-range plan of making it fit for recreational use. The Park Commission cautioned however that yearly cleaning of the brook channel would be required and that sloping of the banks back more or constructing stone walls at the sharper angles would also be useful in some places to prevent undermining of the banks. Willows and water birch were also used to stabilize the slopes. With the basics of drainage out of the way, the Park Commission turned its attention to creating a more park-like landscape, suggesting in 1907,

*"It is proposed to plant shade trees and build a pathway as far as possible along the parkway next summer. There the public may enjoy a brookside byway, free from the dangers of electrics and autos, and see the development and progress of what will ultimately be a place of healthful enjoyment, and one of Wellesley's beauty spots."*⁷

In 1908 the Commission proposed "natural planting and grouping of shade and ornamental trees in such a manner as to eventually produce the most pleasing effect" and planted ten varieties and over 400 trees. The following year they reported that specimen evergreens had been planted at the Grove Street entrance, that several fields were being cultivated and that hay was being grown in some areas.

*"The planting already begun along the proposed boulevard will be continued wherever planting is necessary. A careful study is being made of the existing conditions and environment in order to gain the highest results in harmony and pleasing effect that such planting will ultimately produce. It is proposed in the first place to develop the sections of the parkway which are crossed by streets and also to make the bridges and their parapets more attractive as these places come more frequently under the eye of the public. A beginning has been made to this end on Grove Street, Brook Street and also Wellesley Avenue."*⁸

During this period, routine maintenance was carried out on a regular basis, which typically involved removal of debris and cleaning and repair of culverts and drains. Spraying was also done for gypsy and brown tailed moths. The rough grading that had taken place in earlier years was refined in problem areas, with the brook sloped back to prevent undermining of the slopes. Hay was still being grown along some parts of Fuller Brook Park while other areas were slowly becoming more park-like.



Detail of 1910 town map showing extent of Fuller Brook Park in 1910. Fuller Brook still flows through Hunnewell Field as a relatively natural stream. (Wellesley Historical Society)

By 1913 the Park Commission had two separate divisions, the first was responsible for the town's small parks and the other for the parkland along Fuller Brook. By this time Fuller Brook comprised 75 acres of land, much of it originally swamp, and about 11,500 linear feet of brook, with small areas still proposed for acquisition. The Park Commission summarized the situation:

*"The brook is gradually being put in order, the end deepened, channel straightened and the banks sloped to the proper angle so that they will not wash badly. The lowering of the bed is gradually draining the surrounding property so that it can be developed as meadow and mowed for grass. Portions of the brook some 4,000 feet including the prospective addition will need to be straightened and lowered wherever feasible to continue the draining of ponds, holes and swamps adjacent. This work will do away with a large portion of the mosquito nuisance in town. The entire area of the brookway requires mowing or to have the shrubs trimmed and sprayed where necessary for scale and moths. The brook channel must also be inspected spring and fall, clearing out accumulated rubbish and repairing the banks."*⁹

EXPANSION AND NEW IDEAS (1915 – 1945)

Sewer and Transportation

While the initial improvements to Fuller Brook helped to improve the town's drainage system, there was no central sewage system in town and untreated effluent was still flowing into Fuller Brook. In 1902 the town's Committee on Sewerage had prepared a lengthy report laying out options for resolving the sewage problem and Frank L. Fuller (who had done the initial surveys for Fuller Brook Park) was engaged as the engineer for the sewer project. After that the project languished for several years until 1910, when Ernest W. Bowditch was hired as engineer of the Sewer Department. Construction of the town sewer began in 1915 with Charles Fuller as manager and Bowditch as engineer, with A. Stewart Cassidy as his representative.

Wellesley opted to connect with the Metropolitan District Commission's regional sewer system rather than establish an independent system. By 1921 construction of the sewer was completed, with the main trunk line running along Fuller Brook. The town's annual report indicated that the sanitary condition of brook below and at Grove Street was much improved. While the basic objective had been met, the parkway corridor was in disrepair, with several dumps along the park considered a problem.

At the same time that Wellesley was facing the need for a sewer system, other infrastructure needs were pressing as well. With growing population and increased use of automobiles, traffic was already crowding the town's squares and main roads, especially Washington and Central Streets. The Park Commission proposed in 1913 that a road be built along Fuller Brook from Maugus Avenue to Dover Road, ideally with connections to Washington Street at both ends.

In 1915 Ernest Bowditch, the engineer who was hired by the town to oversee design of the sewer, was also commissioned to address other town infrastructure issues.¹⁰ Like his predecessors at Fuller Brook Park, J.C. Olmsted and Manning, Bowditch took a broad view of his mandate and addressed several inter-related issues: drainage, parkland, sewer construction and transportation. Bowditch suggested four areas for acquisition, which were similar to those that had been proposed in 1899: land extending west from Fuller Brook Park along the sewer line to the Needham line; lands along Rosemary Brook to protect water supply; a connecting link between the aqueduct and the Metropolitan parks; and the upstream section of Fuller Brook Park which extended south from Hunnewell Playground.

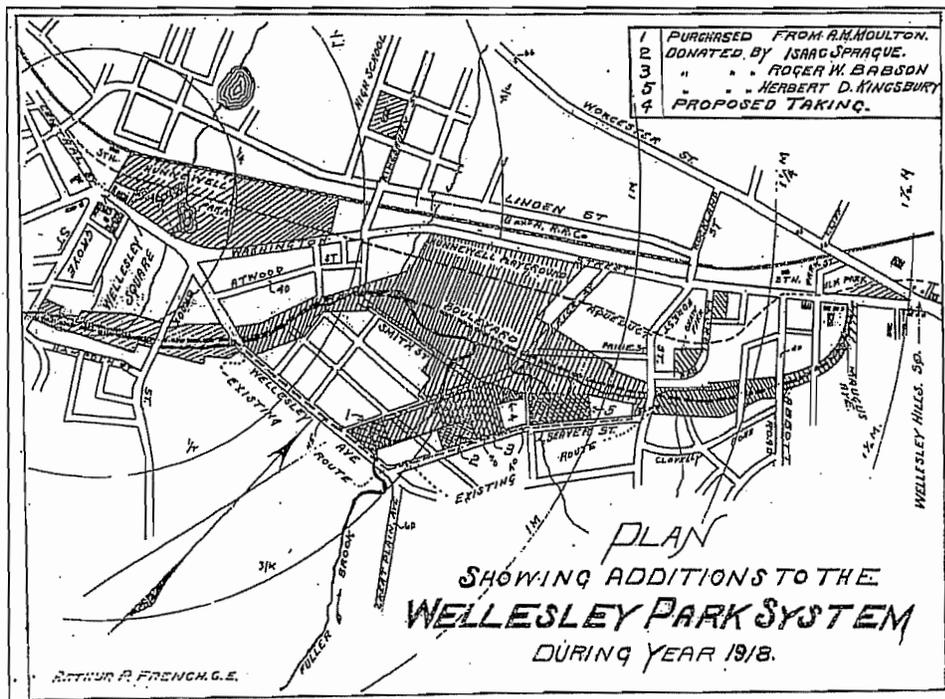
Bowditch also recommended that a parkway (in the modern sense of a road for pleasure vehicles) be built south from Maugus Avenue and Washington Street along the upstream section of Fuller Brook to the Needham line following the line of the sewer. The dual purpose was to provide an additional transportation route and to facilitate sewer maintenance. Bowditch recommended a second parkway extending west from Cottage Street along Fuller Brook and the sewer right of way into Needham. While only a 16' strip of land was needed for the sewer, the 200' corridor that he proposed was based on the idea that the road corridor and adjacent sidewalks would be 100' wide and that there should be a 50' setback for all buildings on either side of the boulevard.

The section of Fuller Brook Park west of Cottage Street was added in the 1920s (without boulevard) but it stopped at Dover Road, where it still ends today. Warren Manning, who had laid out the initial land acquisition lines for Fuller Brook Park, was consulted about boundaries in the Cottage Street to Dover Road segment in 1914, although it seems likely that his role was minor at this time. This was his last documented involvement at Fuller Brook.

The bold proposals for additional parkland and parkways persisted for several years, but ultimately they were not implemented. With the advent of World War I, priorities shifted and other matters took precedence within the town. However, the town continued to make minor additions to Fuller Brook Park to round out the boundaries.

Parkland Expansion and Improvements

Construction of the sewer between 1915 and 1921 caused major disruption of the entire length of Fuller Brook Park. It left the park in poor condition with much of the earlier landscaping ruined by the heavy construction. It also established a major piece of infrastructure in a fragile landscape, setting up a pattern of cyclical construction that has become an integral part of Fuller Brook Park.



Map from 1918 Annual Report showing proposed land acquisition at the eastern end of the park.

Meanwhile, the town restored the damage done to the landscape by sewer construction and continued maintaining the brook corridor in good condition to facilitate drainage. Elimination of the “mosquito nuisance” was increasingly mentioned as justification for waterway improvements. By 1917 the western section of the channel had been restored from Grove Street to Hunnewell Playground. Interest was also growing in the eastern section of the park, where land had been acquired but not yet improved. In the 1920s filling and clearing was done on the section between State and Caroline Streets, and the path was gradually extended east to Maugus Avenue and Washington Street. A. Stewart Cassidy, who had worked with Bowditch and later became town engineer, was hired to prepare plans for additional bridges. By 1922 there was growing demand for construction of a crossing of the parkway at State and Smith Streets to accommodate increased traffic. In 1928 the Park Commission also approved lay out of Cameron Street across park land, with the stipulation that it be consulted about the design of the bridge. The present stone bridge, designed by Cassidy and built in 1930, was considered a standard for all future bridges, including the Wellesley Avenue bridge, which was rebuilt in 1931.

Depression Era Landscape Improvements

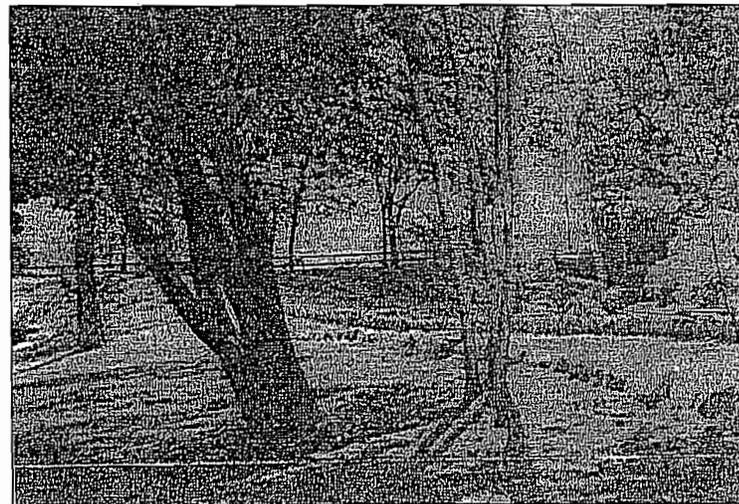
Extra manpower available during the Depression allowed for enhancement of the park landscape, including several new pedestrian bridges and improvements to the path and plantings. During the early 1930s work was concentrated at the western end of the park, especially the section between Dover Road and Wellesley Avenue where the watercourse was straightened and realigned.

It was also a time when the character of the watercourse and the landscape came under closer scrutiny. A proposal to undertake major deepening and straightening of the brook generated multiple opinions. While some Wellesley residents advocated a more finished park-like look, others preferred that the park remain natural, a debate that continues to the present day. The Park Commission’s 1933 Annual Report summarized the dilemma:

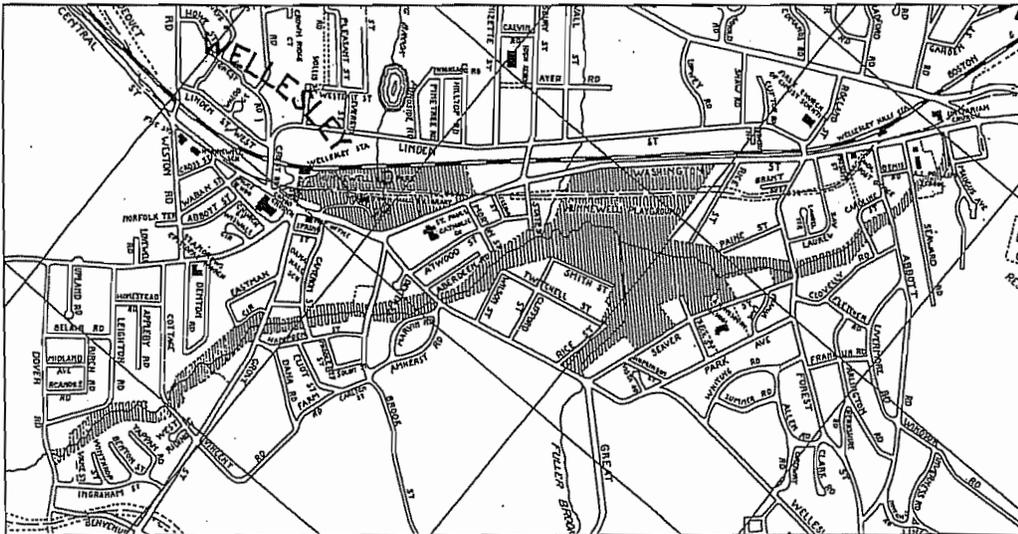
“The work has been postponed from year to year for two reasons, the main one being of expense, the other being that when widened it should also be straightened, which would take away more or less of its character as a brook. The Commission hesitated about spoiling any of the natural features which it possessed; also, the brook was again becoming stocked with trout and was affording the local fishermen some sport, and that portion of the brook improved would be for some time spoiled as a trout brook.”¹¹

As usual, drainage considerations prevailed, and in 1933 the selectmen allocated funds to widen Fuller Brook to an average of 9’ on the bottom to increase runoff and prevent flooding, with Caroline Brook (then an unnamed tributary) widened to 5’. This was necessitated in part as mitigation for the increased drainage caused by construction of new homes and streets. As part of the project a new channel was cut across a bend near Dover Road, straightening the brook and eliminating the need for two bridges. The Park Commission’s description of the work reveals its growing interest in the quality of the landscape and the increased importance of the path as a pedestrian route. Footbridges were added at Leighton and Appleby Streets to facilitate access across the brook and by this time snow was plowed on portions of the path to allow for winter use.

“Beginning at Dover Road the banks of the brook were sloped, unsightly brush and trees removed, and parkland graded and seeded. A number of previously hidden large oaks were brought into the landscape and vistas up and down the brook opened up. About 400 ft from Dover Road an outcropping of conglomerate was brought into the picture.”¹²



These three pictures from the Townsman in August 1934 are among the few early photos of Fuller Brook Park. (Wellesley Historical Society)



1935 Map of Wellesley showing Fuller Brook Park. Note the natural course of the brook through Hunnewell Field that still existed at that time. (Wellesley Historical Society)

In 1936 construction of the new high school was begun on former parkland southeast of Hunnewell Field. Up until this time, Fuller Brook Park had been a relatively unified landscape which flowed largely uninterrupted along the southern edge of Hunnewell Field. Construction of the high school began a process of segmentation of Fuller Brook Park that accelerated in the post-war years as new recreational facilities were developed in the south part of Hunnewell Field. The presence of the high school also prompted further parkland improvements along the eastern section of Fuller Brook Park (the section now known as Caroline Brook), particularly improvements to the path system, which was heavily used by the high school students. This was followed by extension of the road system in the area. State Street, Smith Street and Rice Street, which had all been discontinuous roads, were extended and connected in a semi-circular arch that defined the edges of Hunnewell Field.

The hurricane of 1938 heavily impacted Fuller Brook, causing damage to many of the trees. The early 1940s was a time of limited staffing and budgets for the park department due to wartime priorities.

RECONCILING MULTIPLE NEEDS AND VISIONS (1945 - PRESENT)

Post-War Years

After World War II the town's emphasis shifted to recreational programs and facilities, diverting funds and man-power away from Fuller Brook Park. The problem was exacerbated by the fact that the park had been neglected during the war years; with stream channel clogged, plantings overgrown, paths deteriorated and bridges crumbling. The post-war building boom also had a direct impact on Fuller Brook as more impermeable surfaces were created, which in turn caused increased run-off.

Efforts at Fuller Brook were geared towards reducing the maintenance backlog and accommodating increased use. Basic drain repairs were undertaken and debris was removed from the brook channel. The path was widened in heavily used areas, such as near the high school, and sections were paved with bituminous. To accommodate the increased traffic in the center of town, State/Smith Street was relocated with a new stone bridge constructed. Several older bridges were rebuilt, including the pedestrian bridges at Leighton and Appleby Roads. There was also pressure to create new recreational facilities at Hunnewell Field. At this time Fuller Brook was still referred to as Fuller Brook Parkway and sometimes

as Fuller Brookway. It was described in the town's 1953 park inventory as a "2 1/2 mile nature walk" extending from Dover Road to Maugus Avenue and was considered a single unit. There was no mention of Caroline Brook as a separate entity.

Drainage Revisited: An Engineered Brook

Several major storms in the mid-1950s temporarily overloaded the Fuller Brook drainage system, flooding nearby homes and causing substantial damage to the stream corridor and adjacent parkland. In 1955 the DPW superintendent issued a major report on town drainage. He concluded that increased development was causing faster run-off and more frequent flooding, and that the situation was exacerbated by poorly maintained catch basins and the condition of the town's stream and brooks. Sand used on the streets was flowing into catch basins and into the town's waterways, decreasing the capacity of the streams and brooks, and aggravating flooding. Immediate actions were to provide regular maintenance of catch basins and to reduce the use of sand on town streets. By 1956 the DPW was able to report that many of the smaller drainage problems had been solved. In 1957 the town also began a program of installing curbing for road longevity, appearance, drainage, maintenance and traffic control.

The problems at the major brooks were considered more serious. The town requested and received a special appropriation for matching state funds to improve the major waterways of the town, beginning with Fuller Brook. Because of the highly charged nature of the issue, Fuller Brook drainage improvements were placed under direct control of the selectmen.

The work was directed by the Massachusetts DPW's Division of Waterways. The primary focus was on straightening, deepening and widening the brook to drain flood waters away from developed sections of town into the Charles River. Full engineering treatment took place mostly in the western section of the park, from Dover Road to Grove Street. Stream-edge vegetation was removed; the banks were cut back to a 1:1 slope and turfed; the stream bed was lowered; new larger culverts were installed at a lower elevation; concrete channel liners were placed along the edges of the brook; and new concrete vehicular bridges were built at Dover Road, Cottage Street and Grove Street. The visual effects were dramatic, transforming the stream from a semi-natural waterway into an engineered channel with turfed banks.

There was a public outcry against the heavily engineered approach, with numerous articles in the *Townsmen* decrying the loss of the natural landscape and arguing for a gentler more holistic treatment of Fuller Brook. The DPW justified its actions in its 1959 Annual Report but also admitted that the new scheme was not as maintenance-free as originally planned.

"The Fuller Brook Project, from its inception, has been most controversial. However it is the firm belief of the Department that the appearance and utility of the finished product will more than justify the time and money spent upon it, and the sacrifice of the trees which were removed. Perhaps it should be observed that the three new bridges which were constructed were badly needed and that the Town's share of the appropriation for the project scarcely equals the cost of these three structures. In early statements regarding the project, it had been indicated that upon its completion the Department had no plans for mowing the area. Experience gained over the past year, however, indicates that at least the slope of the banks along the brook should be mowed regularly in order that at times of heavy run-off debris flowing down the brook will not collect in any one spot and form eddies which would result in excessive erosion."¹³



Pre-construction view of Fuller Brook near Grove Street, 1958. (NRC files)



Post-construction view of Fuller Brook near Denton Road, circa 1958. (NRC files)

By 1959 the emphasis had shifted to mitigating the visual impacts of the work with plantings and the town sought advice from civic groups. New plantings between Dover Road and Cottage Street included 25 dogwoods, 23 flowering trees, 239 evergreens and 175 maples. The appearance was park-like, with scattered trees and shrubs on closely-clipped turf, bringing a more manicured look to the landscape than had previously existed. The DPW credited the Wellesley garden clubs for design and supervision and commented in their 1960 Annual Report.

"In a few years these newly planted trees and shrubs should present a most effective appearance and this section, which once resembled swamp land, will add substantially to the beauty of the Town and afford a place for passive recreation."¹⁴

Work was also undertaken at other problem areas along Fuller Brook during the late 1950s. Drainage under Washington Street near the Star Market at State Street was an ongoing problem. The brook was lowered where it emerged from the Aqueduct to the point of discharge into Fuller Brook and the heavily silted drain was cleaned. Improvements were also undertaken to increase the flow near Rice Street and the high school, a perennially swampy part of Fuller Brook. By 1960 the DPW reported that there was still minor flooding in some parts of town but that the drainage system was adequate for all but the most unusual storms.

Grading, landscaping and planting continued from Cottage Street to Grove Street in 1961-62. Upstream from Grove Street weeds and trash were removed along the brook to improve its appearance and to eliminate health hazards. Improvements at Fuller Brook continued through the 1960s but the approach was less heavy handed than it had been in the late 1950s. It was characterized by the DPW as combining hydraulic requirements with beautification, creating "a beautiful park-like atmosphere." Hydraulic improvements consisted primarily of clearing brush and silt from the stream channel and cleaning culverts. Landscape treatment consisted of grading, seeding, replanting and upgrading of paths. Deteriorated footbridges were rebuilt at State and Morton Streets. Work also continued in the perennially problematic channel at Hunnewell Field between the aqueduct and the skating rink.

The DPW explained the new approach in the 1964 annual report,

"Various areas of park lands have been improved during the year with particular emphasis on operations concerned with the cleaning of water courses. The basic policy is to leave the waterways as near their original conditions as possible, eliminate areas where debris can accumulate, destroy breeding areas for undesirable rodents and mosquitoes, remove sources of pollution, and generally upgrade natural areas for the enjoyment of the residents. Examples of the work that was completed in 1964 include Fuller Brook from State Street to Wellesley Avenue, and from Grove Street to Cottage Street."¹⁵

In 1968 the Army Corps of Engineers proposed to construct a dam on Fuller Brook near the town incinerator that would dramatically alter the area, covering up to 285 acres, including part of the incinerator site. This area was located in the southern section of town upstream from Fuller Brook Park. The intent was to slow runoff into the Charles River, reducing flooding downstream. It was a direct opposite of the approach that the town had taken for nearly a century, which was to encourage rapid drainage away from developed sections of the community into the Charles River. Ultimately the project was canceled and the town purchased a portion of the proposed dam site as conservation land to be used by the high school for biological studies.

Segmentation: Changes at Hunnewell Field

During the first part of the twentieth century the northern section of Hunnewell Field was developed with recreational facilities while the southern section, through which Fuller Brook flowed, remained in a fairly natural state. Construction of the high school in the 1930s interrupted the continuity of Fuller Brook Park and brought more pressure for recreational facilities in the area.

The post-World War II emphasis on recreation and the proximity of the high school placed even greater pressure on the section of Fuller Brook that passed through Hunnewell Field. The new skating rink/pond built in 1950 was the first major post-war change. In 1961 500' of Fuller Brook in the southeastern section of Hunnewell Field was placed in an underground conduit to create two additional acres of land useable for recreation and athletic purposes.

In 1970 the DPW proposed to enclose more of Fuller Brook in a culvert to create additional space for recreation at Hunnewell Field. There was considerable debate about the impacts of the project. The Conservation Commission wanted to find a way to improve the athletic fields without piping a long section of Fuller Brook or losing a number of large trees behind the football field. Discussions were held with the School Committee and the Park and Tree Board about land swaps in connection with proposed additions to the high school. Ultimately in 1972 the Planning Board approved the relocation of Fuller Brook at Hunnewell Field.

Finding a Balance

During the 1970s the town continued with remedial/maintenance work at Fuller Brook on an ongoing basis and tried to articulate its stewardship approach more clearly. The challenge was to balance the demand for efficient drainage and increased recreational facilities with the public desire to preserve natural resources. In 1976 a separate Park and Tree Division was created within the DPW with responsibility for parks, recreation areas, trees and other open areas. As part of this effort the Park and Tree Division implemented a zone management plan to guide care of different landscape types.

Wellesley's Natural Resources Commission (NRC) was established as a town department in 1980 to create a more balanced approach to management of Wellesley's parkland, particularly natural areas such as Fuller Brook. NRC's three sub-committees: long range planning, landscape advisory and wetlands protection, reflected its multiple missions. Under the new management structure, the Park and Tree Division of the DPW retained responsibility for park operations and maintenance, while the NRC had an advisory role on natural resources and park policy.

By the early 1980s Wellesley was facing drainage problems in the area surrounding Fuller Brook and a new trunk sewer was needed. In 1981 a Surface Drainage Master Plan was prepared by Camp Dresser & McKee. As in earlier studies, the importance of regular maintenance was stressed, with emphasis on keeping the brook cleared of overhanging limbs and debris that would impede flow. While planning studies stressed the importance of routine maintenance, there were never adequate funds to accomplish the necessary work. When maintenance funding was cut in 1984, the NRC argued that it was wiser to stop maintaining an area than to spray. The Wetlands Protection Committee of the NRC along with the DPW developed brook maintenance standards "to expedite work which restores brooks while bringing work which alters brooks under review."¹⁶

Meanwhile replacement of the main trunk sewer along Fuller Brook in the early 1980s caused considerable disruption, with many complaints from abutters. This was followed by planting of trees, shrubs and bulbs along the entire length of Fuller Brook. Several maintenance improvements were made, and additional benches and sitting stones were also included.

In the early 1990s a proposal was made to establish a "Rhododendron Botanical Park" at Fuller Brook, with a proposed pilot project between State Street and Wellesley Avenue. One aspect was the idea of using plantings to define boundaries between public and private land. The town was concerned about maintaining the proposed plantings and noted that similar plantings at town hall had not done well. Specific concerns were the frequent need for weeding of mulch beds and that mulch beds and groundcovers would be leaf traps in the fall and would make mowing more complicated. As the project was to be privately funded, there was also concern that commemorative plaques would be intrusive.

The debate about maintenance and vegetation management continued into the 1990s. In 1997 the issue was raised about how to make best use of the limited resources available. A distinction was made between aesthetics and need as one way of clarifying priorities. The NRC also stressed that policy decisions should not be made on an operational level by the DPW.

Conclusions

The story of Fuller Brook Park has been one of balancing the dual mandates of drainage and parkland, which are often in conflict with each other. In general the cycle has been that periods of flooding and drainage problems have been followed by intensive efforts to streamline the brook to drain storm water away from flood-prone sections of town, usually involving heavy construction and major disruption, followed by restoration of the park landscape. These competing mandates have also been played out in the evolving management structure of the agencies responsible for Fuller Brook Park, from Parks Commission to Parks and Recreation Commission to DPW to DPW in conjunction with NRC.

Over the past century the park has also faced additional pressures and new mandates. It has resisted some, such as the suggestion of making the pedestrian path into a boulevard. But it has also been a victim of the need for additional recreation and parkland, which is most evident as Fuller Brook passes through Hunnewell Field and past the high school. Another major source of pressure has been development along the edges of the park. It is no longer the rural area set aside a century ago but an increasingly suburban area with buildings along the entire perimeter of the park, encroachments by private land owners in some areas and dramatically increased use.

Despite all these changes, Fuller Brook Park is surprisingly true to its original mandate. It continues to function as an effective drainage corridor when properly maintained and is a remarkably rural respite from the pressures of urban life. When Frederick Law Olmsted described the restorative value of a natural landscape in his 1870 essay on "Public Parks and the Enlargement of Towns" he was urging the Boston Park Commission to create the park system later known as the Emerald Necklace. However, he could have been articulating the importance of Fuller Brook Park when he wrote,

"We want a ground to which people may go after their day's work is done, and where they may stroll for an hour, seeing, hearing, and feeling nothing of the bustle and jar of the streets, where they shall, in effect, find the city put far away from them . . . Practically what we most want is a simple, broad, open space of clean greensward, with sufficient play of surface and a sufficient number of trees about it to supply a variety of light and shade . . . We want a depth of wood enough about it not only for the comfort in hot weather, but to completely shut out the city from our landscapes."¹⁷

End Notes

- ¹ The influence of the Olmsted office, especially John Charles Olmsted, is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.
- ² Town of Wellesley, Annual Report, 1899.
- ³ Manning is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.
- ⁴ Town of Wellesley, Annual Report, 1902.
- ⁵ Ibid., 1903.
- ⁶ Ibid., 1905.
- ⁷ Ibid, 1907.
- ⁸ Ibid., 1909.
- ⁹ Ibid, 1913.
- ¹⁰ Bowditch is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.
- ¹¹ Ibid., 1933.
- ¹² Ibid., 1934.
- ¹³ Ibid., 1959.
- ¹⁴ Ibid., 1960.
- ¹⁵ Ibid, 1964.
- ¹⁶ Ibid, 1984.
- ¹⁷ Frederick Law Olmsted, "Public Parks and the Enlargement of Towns" reprinted in *Civilizing American Cities: A Selection of Frederick Law Olmsted's Writings on City Landscapes*, ed S.B. Sutton (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1971) p 52-99.

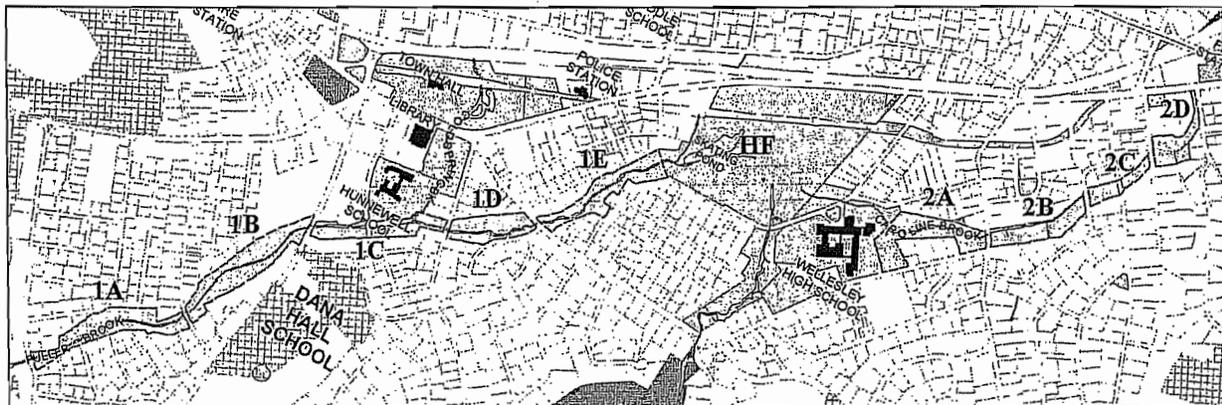
4. EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Cultural Landscape Report provides a general description of the characteristics and features within the park, which will be supplemented in the accompanying Master Plan by a more detailed analysis of various aspects of the site, especially vegetation. Current conditions are also addressed in Chapter 5, where they are evaluated in terms of their relationship to the historical significance of the park.

This chapter is organized by segment, beginning at the western or downstream end of the park. Although the park was conceived as a single unit, it is now has two distinct sections, which are separated by Hunnewell Field and the high school. The downstream section of the park, known as Fuller Brook, includes segments 1A-1E. The upstream section, known today as Caroline Brook, includes segments 2A-2D.

Within the discussion of each segment, the description is organized into subtopics that describe various aspects of the landscape. These are: landscape character (including setting, spatial organization, vegetation, topography and views); stream/drainage (including stream characteristics and drainage structures); circulation (including paths and roads); and structures and furnishings (including bridges, furnishings and signs). Other topics such as use and condition will be addressed in the Master Plan.

Fuller Brook Park, owned by the town of Wellesley, is a roughly 2 1/2 mile linear park comprising 33.4 acres that extends from Dover Road on the west to Maugus Avenue and Washington Street on the east. The park is variable in width, ranging from roughly 100' to 250' wide. Key elements of the park are Fuller Brook and its tributary Caroline Brook, and the park landscape, which includes both natural and built features.



Map showing segments of Fuller Brook Park. (Base map by Wellesley GIS)

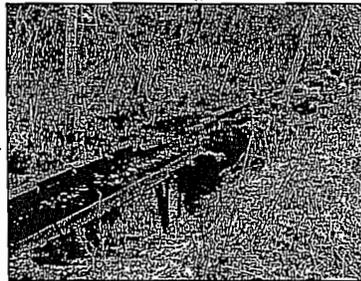
SEGMENT 1A: FULLER BROOK - DOVER ROAD TO COTTAGE STREET

Landscape Character



1A-1

Segment 1A, located at the western or downstream end of Fuller Brook Park, is one of the most spacious and rural sections of the park, with Wellesley College's Nehoiden Golf Course to the west and single family residences on large lots abutting the park on both sides. The houses along the northern edge are generally well-screened while some of the houses to the south are more visible, with lawns running right to the edge of the park. Vegetation within the park is varied, ranging from natural woodland, which occurs along much of the northern edge of Segment 1A, to areas of lawn interspersed with trees to ornamental plantings. Open areas such as that west of the Leighton Street footbridge (photo 1A-1) contribute to the park-like character of the landscape. A puddingstone boulder along the path between Vane and Winthrop Streets is a prominent natural feature.



1A-2

Stream/Drainage

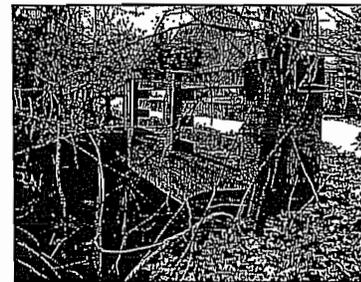
The portion of Fuller Brook from Dover Road to just east of Grove Street was lowered and lined with concrete curbing (photo 1A-2) in the late 1950s. In general this section of the stream bed is narrow and deep with steep sides. Most of the curbing still exists but it has shifted over time and is no longer effective in channeling the watercourse. There is minor erosion in some areas.



1A-3

Circulation

Dover Road marks the western edge of Segment 1A, Cottage Street marks its eastern edge. There are also several streets that dead end at the park: Vane Street, Winthrop Street, Benton Street, Tappan Street on the south, and Appleby Road on the north. Leighton Road runs parallel to Fuller Brook for several blocks. The main park path (photo 1A-3), which is gravel-surfaced and about 4' wide for most of Segment 1A, runs south of Fuller Brook for this entire segment. There are short intersecting paths at Leighton Road and Appleby Street, where there are also footbridges.

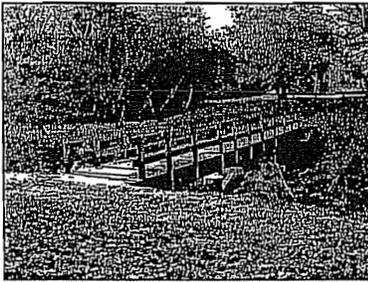


1A-4

Structures and Furnishings

There is one vehicular bridge that is considered part of Segment 1A, at Dover Road (photo 1A-4). It is a two-lane bridge with concrete structure and rails, which was built as part of the drainage improvements of 1958-59. The east side is planted with junipers. The Cottage Street bridge is described in Segment 1B.

Structures and Furnishings continued



1A-5

Segment 1A also has two footbridges. Footbridges were first built at Leighton Road and Appleby Street in the early 1930s, the current bridges (photo 1A-5, Appleby Street footbridge) are late 1980s replacements with steel stringers, concrete abutments, and wooden decking and rails.

Along the path on the southern side of the brook, there are several benches. There are trail posts at Dover Road and Cottage Street.



Map of Segment 1A. Dover Road is to the left, Cottage Street is to the right. The white line marks the boundaries of the park. This segment of Fuller Brook Park is wider than many of the other segments. All segment maps are at approximately the same scale.



View near Benton Street.

SEGMENT 1B: FULLER BROOK - COTTAGE STREET TO GROVE STREET

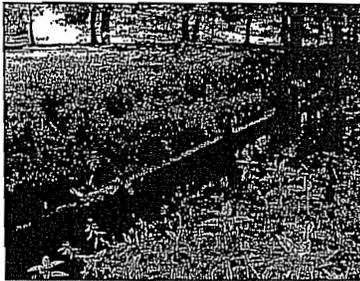
Landscape Character



1B-1

Segment 1B continues the relatively rural character of Segment 1A, particularly at its western end where houses are set back from the park and well-screened by vegetation. Vegetation within the park is varied, ranging from natural woodland, which occurs along much of the edge of Segment 1B, to areas of open lawn to ornamental plantings at bridges. Open lawn areas with scattered trees, such as that west of Grove Street (photo 1B-1), contribute to the park-like character of the landscape.

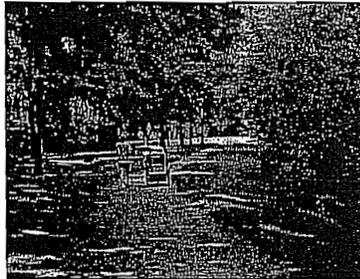
Stream/Drainage



1B-2

The portion of Fuller Brook from Cottage Street to just east of Grove Street was lowered and lined with concrete curbing (photo 1B-2) in the late 1950s. Most of the curbing still exists but it has shifted over time and is no longer effective in channeling the watercourse. In general this section of the stream bed is narrow with steep sides and largely inaccessible due to grade and shrubby vegetation along the stream edges. There is some erosion between Cottage and Grove Streets.

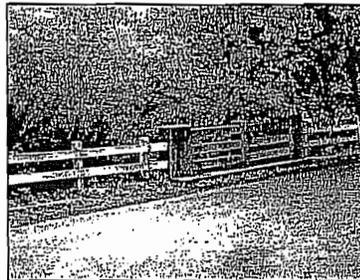
Circulation



1B-3

Cottage Street marks the western edge of Segment 1B and Grove Street marks its eastern edge. There are no intersecting roads in this segment, but Denton Road dead ends just north of the park and there is a pedestrian right-of-way from the end of the road to the park. The main park path (photo 1B-3), which is gravel-surfaced and about 4' wide for most of Segment 1B, runs south of Fuller Brook.

Structures and Furnishings



1B-4

The bridges that mark the ends of Segment 1B are the Cottage Street (photo 1B-4) and Grove Street bridges. Both are two-lane vehicular bridges with concrete structure and rails. They were built as part of the drainage improvements of 1958-59 and are similar in style to the Dover Road bridge. Segment 1B has no footbridges.

Along the path on the southern side of the brook, there are several benches of varying types. On the north side there is one bench east of Cottage Street. There is a trail kiosk at Cottage Street.



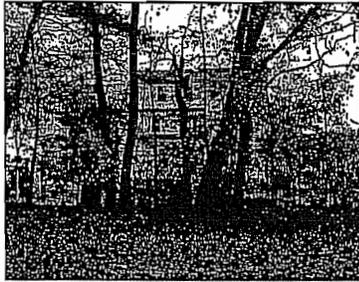
Map of Segment 1B. Cottage Street is to the left, Grove Street is to the right. The path is faintly visible running south of the brook.



View looking east towards Grove Street.

SEGMENT 1C: FULLER BROOK - GROVE STREET TO BROOK STREET

Landscape Character



1C-1

Segment 1C from Grove Street to Brook Street is divided into two short blocks. The block between Grove and Cameron is narrow but feels larger because it is well-screened (photo 1C-1) from surrounding land uses by vegetation and in some places by changes in topography. Single family houses lying along the south side of the park are barely visible through the vegetation. On the north side there is a large brick apartment building near Grove Street (*elderly housing?*). The section east of Cameron Street is dominated by the adjacent Hunnewell School and its playground, which is very close to the brook and path.



1C-2

Vegetation in Segment 1C generally has a woodland character with naturally occurring plant associations (photo 1C-2), especially on the south side of the stream. This character is reinforced by the fact that woodland continues onto adjacent private property along the entire south side of Segment 1C. The only area of open lawn is the north side of the park east of Cold Spring Brook near Brook Street, which is similar to some of the park-like areas in Segment 1D.

Stream/Drainage



1C-3

In Segment 1C, the stream bed is narrow and deep at its western end, and wide and meandering at its eastern end. It has a more natural appearance than Segments 1A and 1B because it does not have riprap or curbing. East of Grove Street there is a change in grade marked by a flume. There is erosion east of Grove Street and sediment deposit and erosion east of Cameron Street. East of the Hunnewell School, Cold Spring Brook enters Fuller Brook from the north. The Grove Street flume (photo 1C-3) is a narrow structure creating a channel about 30' long and 8-10' wide with granite block side walls reinforced with concrete at the bottom and outer edges. The concrete bottom creates a small waterfall at the west end.

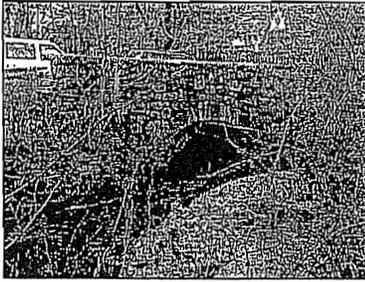
Circulation



1C-4

The main park path (photo 1C-4) runs along the south side of the stream from Grove Street to Cameron Street and on the north side from Cameron Street to Brook Street. This section of path, which is heavily used by school children, is paved with asphalt and variable in width, typically about 4'. Sections east of Brook Street are low and poorly drained in places. There is a worn path on the north side from Grove Street to Cameron Street and on the south side east of Cameron.

Structures and Furnishings



1C-5

The Cameron Street bridge (photo 1C-5) is a two-lane vehicular bridge of mortared fieldstone face with a single arch and stone parapet without a capstone. It is crescent shaped in plan and there is evidence of a former lamp post mounted on the bridge. It was designed by engineer A. Stewart Cassidy and built in 1930. The Brook Street bridge is discussed in the following section.

There is a late twentieth century pedestrian bridge over Cold Spring Brook with wooden structure and rails and concrete abutment. It is similar to the Leighton and Appleby footbridges, although the rails are more widely spaced. Near the Hunnewell School, three large stones function as informal benches. There are small trail posts at Grove and Cameron Streets.



Map of Segment 1C. Grove Street is at the left, Cameron Street is in the center, Brook Street is at the right. Dana Hall School is at the lower left. Hunnewell School is just off the map at the upper right. Cold Spring Brook enters Fuller Brook from the top (north) near the right edge of the map.

SEGMENT 1D: FULLER BROOK - BROOK STREET TO WELLESLEY AVENUE

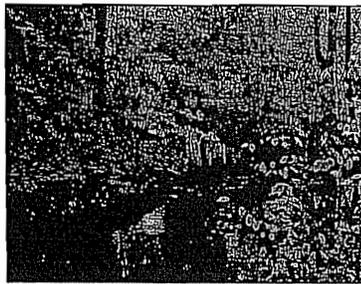
Landscape Character



1D-1

Segment 1D is a particularly pleasant portion of Fuller Brook Park, largely because this part of the park has a secluded character that belies the close proximity of the adjacent neighborhood (photo 1D-1). Houses are well-screened along the entire length of this segment.

The south side of the brook is wooded, with a more open landscape on the north, consisting of lawn areas with scattered trees along the path and a narrow strip of woodland beyond. Some areas on the north side near Wellesley Avenue are low and wet.



1D-2

Stream/Drainage

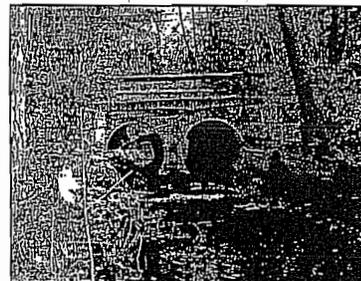
Fuller Brook is generally wide and meandering in Segment 1D and is at nearly the same grade as the path. It has natural appearance and none of the engineered character of Segments 1A and 1B, due in part to the dense multi-story woodland vegetation along the edges of the stream (photo 1D-2). Fuller Brook is less visible from the path than it is in Segment 1C because of the heavy vegetation.



1D-3

Circulation

Segment 1D is one of the shortest segments in Fuller Brook Park and is a single unit without any intersecting roads. It is bounded on the west by Brook Street and on the east by Wellesley Avenue. The asphalt paved path runs along the north side of the brook for the entire segment and is heavily used by school children and others. There is also a worn path on the south side from Brook Street to Marvin Road, which runs along the southern edge of the park near Wellesley Avenue.



1D-4

Structures and Furnishings

The Brook Street bridge (photo 1D-4), like the other bridges along Fuller Brook, is a two lane bridge although Brook Street is narrower than most of the other cross streets and thus less of an intrusion into the park. The Brook Street bridge is earlier and far rougher in its construction than the other stone bridges. It consists of two large round culverts with concrete surrounds, large rough granite block abutments and a wood rail fence along Brook Street, which contributes to the rural character. The Wellesley Avenue bridge is discussed in segment 1E.



Map of Segment 1D. Brook Street is to the left, Wellesley Avenue is to the right. Note: This map is at the same scale as the other aerial views of Fuller Brook Park. It is smaller because this segment is considerably shorter than the other segments.



View west near Wellesley Avenue.

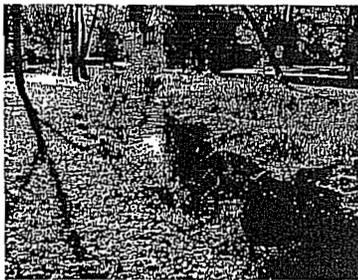
SEGMENT 1E: FULLER BROOK - WELLESLEY AVENUE TO STATE STREET

Landscape Character



1E-1

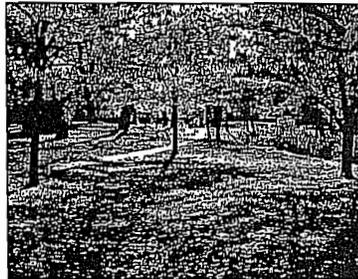
Segment 1E is a relatively long segment, unbroken by road crossings. Parts of it have a fairly natural character, like a path through the woods (photo 1E-1). The western portion of the segment is wooded and natural on the south side, with single family residences on the north that are partially screened by vegetation. In the eastern portion of this segment there is a strong distinction between the south and north sides. Vegetation is heavier on the south and generally screens the adjacent residences from the park. On the north side, highly maintained lawns extend all the way to the brook, creating the impression that the land is actually private property rather than park land.



1E-2

Stream/Drainage

The stream channel (photo 1E-2) is wide, shallow and meandering, similar to its character in segments 1C and 1D. There is a narrow strip of vegetation along both sides but because it is low and the elevation of the brook is close to that of the path, the brook is clearly visible. There is a sediment deposit at the Morton Street footbridge.



1E-3

Circulation

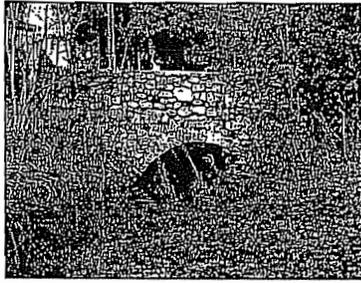
Segment 1E extends from Wellesley Avenue on the west to State Street on the east. The path (photo 1E-3) runs along the southern edge of Fuller Brook for the entire length of Segment 1E. It has an asphalt surface, is approximately 4' wide and receives moderate use. There are no cross streets but Morton Street dead ends just north of the park. There is a short cross path between Morton Street on the north and Willson/Twitchell Streets on the south.



1E-4

Structures and Furnishings

The Wellesley Avenue Bridge (photo 1D-4) is a two lane vehicular bridge, crescent-shaped in plan, with single arch, battered dressed granite block walls in random ashlar pattern, granite block coping with slight overhang. Initially built in 1891, the bridge was refaced in 1931 with redesign by A. Stewart Cassidy. There are no pedestrian bridges in Segment 1E. Cut granite blocks are used for benches east of Brook Street and there is a trail post at Brook Street.



1E-5

The State Street Bridge (photo 1E-5) is a two-lane arched vehicular bridge, with mortared boulder walls and parapet, and a concrete sub-structure. The current bridge was built in 1949 when State Street was relocated. The Morton Street footbridge has granite block abutments with concrete deck and wooden rails. The structure is similar to that of the Grove Street flume but the deck and rails are recent replacements. There is a memorial bench east of Wellesley Avenue and trail markers at major intersections.



Map of Segment 1E. Wellesley Avenue is at the lower left and State Street is at the right. Part of Hunnewell Field is visible at the far right.

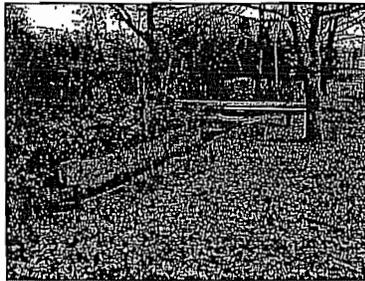


View west towards State Street.

HUNNEWELL FIELD



HF-1



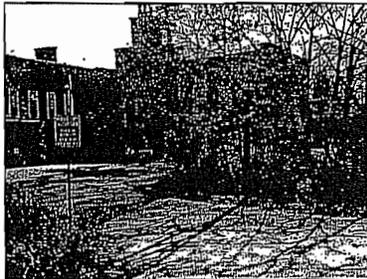
HF-2

Although not officially considered part of Fuller Brook Park today, Hunnewell Field is important as one of two missing links that break the continuity of the park, dividing the Fuller Brook section on the west from the Caroline Brook section on the east.

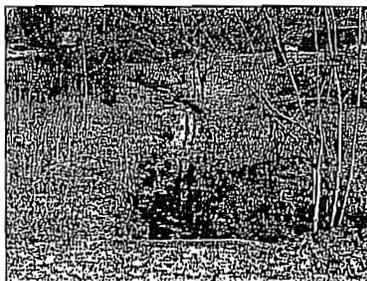
Hunnewell Field, which is bounded by Washington Street on the north, State Street on the southwest, Smith Street on the south and Rice Street on the southeast is a 49.1-acre recreation area, the core of which was donated to the town by H.H. Hunnewell in 1901. Fuller Brook initially continued through it as part of Fuller Brook Park but over time the brook and the adjacent path have been rerouted and marginalized. Remnants of the path and brook (HF-1 and 2) can still be found but they are dominated by the adjacent recreational facilities.

At Hunnewell Field there are three distinct tributaries flowing into Fuller Brook. Abbott Brook flows from the north, Caroline Brook flows from the east and the main section of Fuller Brook flows into Hunnewell Field from the south.

WELLESLEY HIGH SCHOOL



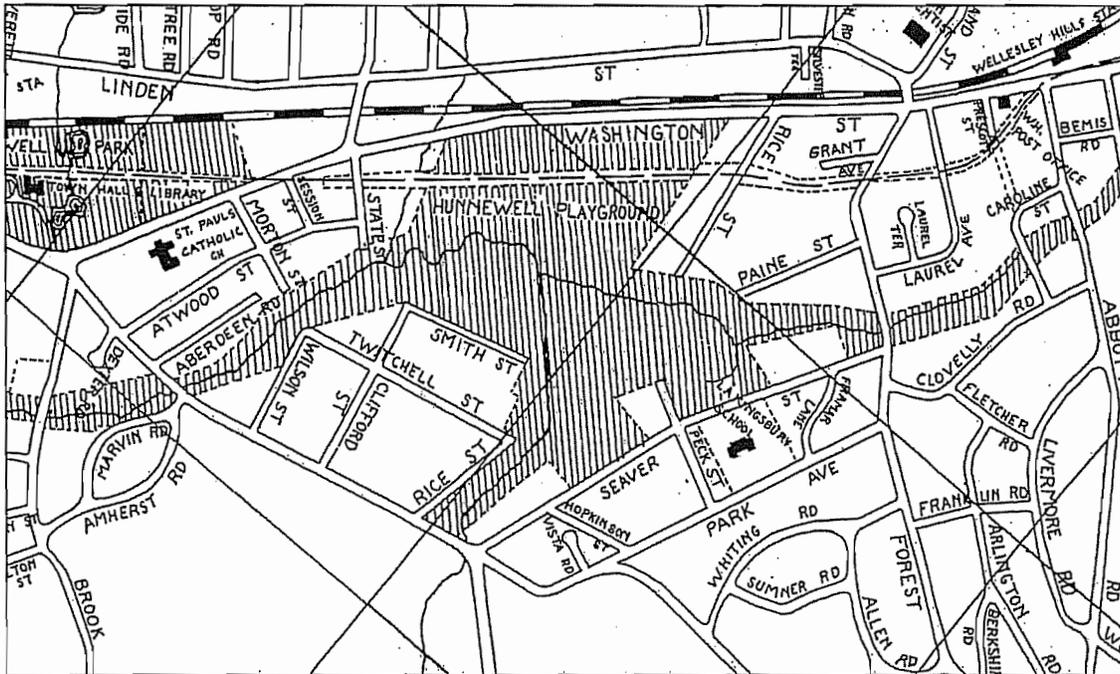
HS-1



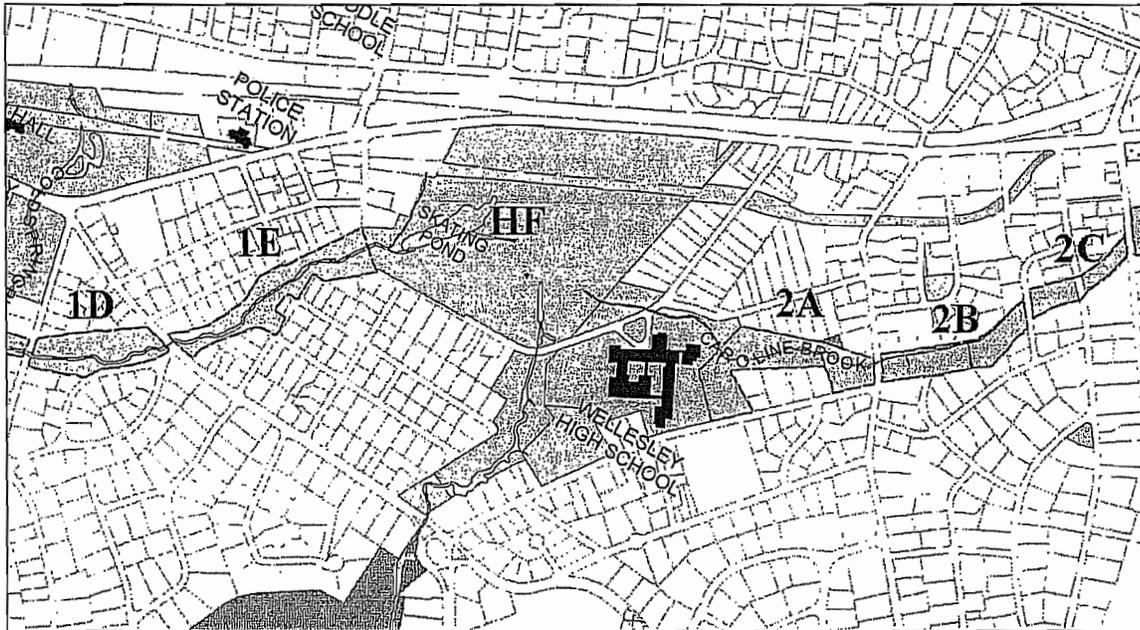
HS-2

Wellesley High School (photo HS-1) was built in 1936 southeast of Hunnewell Field on land that was formerly part of Fuller Brook Park. In order to accommodate the building, the land was filled and the central tributary that is now called Caroline Brook was relocated into a narrow channel (photo HS-2) running between Paine Street and the high school. There is no separate path along the high school although there is a sidewalk along Paine Street. As at Hunnewell Field, the high school breaks the continuity of both the brook and the path.

The wide expanse of Rice Street and the lack of clear signage reinforce the separation between the two sections of Fuller Brook Park. When the path does begin east of the high school it is poorly marked and hardly recognizable as part of the same park that lies to the west of Hunnewell Field.



Detail of 1935 map showing the Hunnewell Field (then called Hunnewell Playground) area as an integral part of Fuller Brook Park. Note the alignment of Fuller Brook and its tributaries as they flow through Hunnewell Field. (Wellesley Historical Society)



The same area today with Fuller Brook Park divided into two distinct sections by Hunnewell Field and the high school. (Base map by Wellesley GIS)

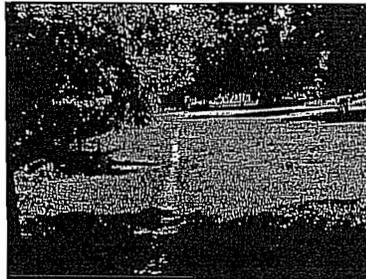
SEGMENT 2A: CAROLINE BROOK - PAINE STREET TO FOREST STREET

Landscape Character



2A-1

The section of Fuller Brook Park east of the high school marks the beginning of the eastern half of the park, known as Caroline Brook. Here the park landscape is dramatically different than anywhere else in the park. Just beyond the high school the path enters a wooded wetland (photo 2A-1) which extends for much of Segment 2A. This area is generally unkempt, overgrown and much wilder in character than any other segment of the park. Ironically it is this segment that is most like the original pre-park landscape. It is a relatively wide section with houses well screened. As Segment 2A approaches Forest Street it rises in elevation and the path moves through an area of open lawn (photo 2A-2).



2A-2

Stream

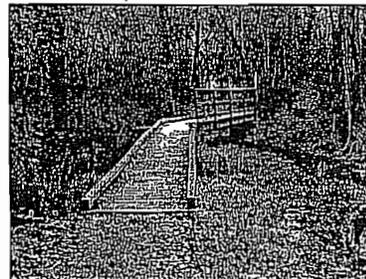
Immediately north of the high school the brook runs in a narrow, deep channel for a short distance before widening into the wooded swamp. The brook (photo 2A-3) is wide and meandering and the channel is less well defined through the swamp but becomes narrower near Forest Street. A distinctive feature in this segment is that the manholes of the sewer line are raised several feet above the ground plane.



2A-3

Circulation

Segment 2A begins at Paine Street just east of the high school and ends at Forest Street. The path through the swamp is about 4' wide and earthen, with wood chips in wetter areas. As it approaches Forest Street it becomes a single track (photo 2A-2) that is far narrower than the rest of the Fuller Brook Park trail system.



2A-4

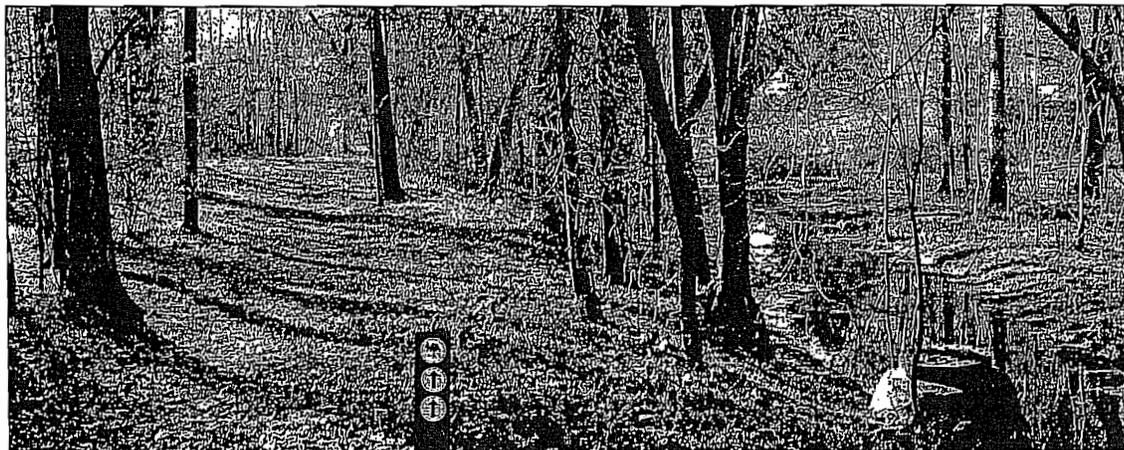
Structures and Furnishings

There are two culverts, one at either end of this segment. A culvert with a mortared fieldstone headwall carries Caroline Brook under the high school access road. A large culvert with headwall of granite blocks carries Caroline Brook under Forest Street.

A late twentieth century boardwalk and low pedestrian bridge (A2-4) carries the path over the wettest part of the swamp.



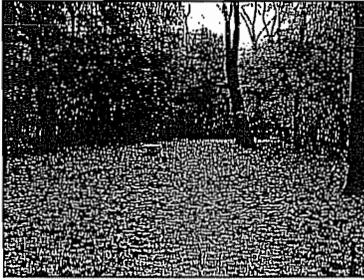
Map of Segment 2A. Wellesley High School is at the left, Paine Street is at the top, Forest Street is at the right, Seaver Street is at the bottom.



View along path through wooded portion of Segment 2A. Note the raised manhole at the lower right.

SEGMENT 2B: CAROLINE BROOK - FOREST STREET TO CAROLINE STREET

Landscape Character



2B-1

Segment 2B begins at Forest Street and continues east to Caroline Street. Although Caroline is a relatively minor street, it marks a significant transition in the character of the park as there is no above ground brook east of that.

Segment 2B is characterized by a relatively wide swath of open lawn with woodland (photo 2B-1) on both sides. Residences are well screened by woods throughout this segment, giving it a rural character despite the proximity of the houses. Another characteristic that separates this segment from Segments 1A-E, where the brook is a central feature of the park, is that here it runs along the northern edge and is largely invisible from the path. There are distinctive ornamental peeling birches either side of Forest Street, which is one of the most noticeable uses of ornamental plantings in the park.



2B-2

Stream/Drainage

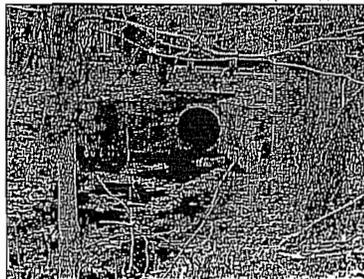
Caroline Brook, an intermittent stream that runs along the northern edge of the park, emerges from a culvert (photo 2B-2) just west of Caroline Street, but is underground east of that. Two small channels run north/south across the park, emptying into Caroline Brook (photo 2B-3). There is some erosion and some wooden cribbing along parts of Caroline Brook.



2B-3

Circulation

The width of the path (2B-1) is variable through segment 2B and is surfaced with several different types of stone mixes. In general the path through the Caroline Brook section of the park is not as heavily used as the Fuller Brook section.



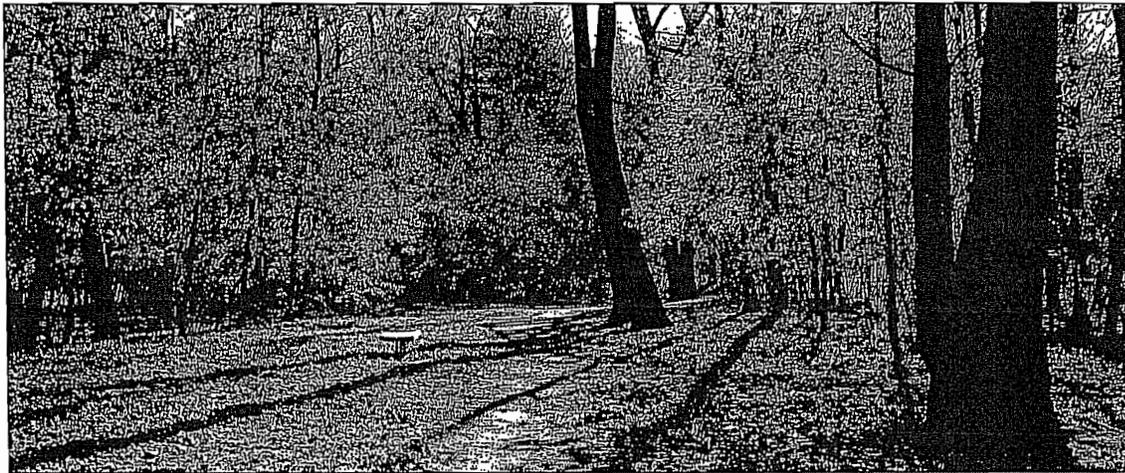
2B-4

Structures/Furnishings

There are several small culverts that carry the brook under the path and a larger granite-faced culvert (photo 2B-4) that carries it under Forest Street. There are several benches along this segment and telephone pole guardrails are used to mark the western end of the segment at Forest Street.



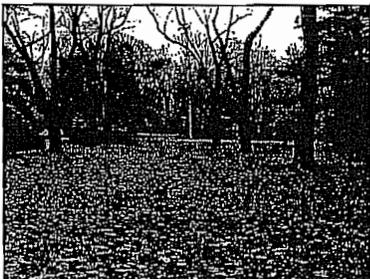
Map of Segment 2B. Forest Street is on the left, Caroline Street is on the right. There are no intersecting roads. The path is visible in the center of the park while the brook runs along the northern (top) edge. The upper right corner of the segment is where Caroline Brook emerges from underground pipes.



View west along path. The brook is out of sight at the far left (north).

SEGMENT 2C: CAROLINE BROOK - CAROLINE ROAD TO SEWARD AVENUE

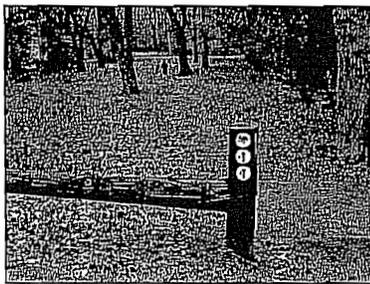
Landscape Character



2C-1

East of Caroline Street there is no stream, which alters the character of the parkland, making it a linear park but no longer a brookside park. From Caroline to Abbott, the park is a roughly 60' wide corridor of open turf with a row of deciduous trees on either side backed by woodland. There are specimen plantings along the roadways including flowering crabs. The section from Caroline to Abbott (photo 2C-1) is particularly well screened and park-like. The section from Abbott to Seward is narrower and is also more closely bounded by buildings and an adjacent parking lot, making it less secluded.

Circulation



2C-2

Segment 2C begins at Caroline Street. It is bisected in the middle by Abbott Street, Seward Road forms its eastern edge. For the entire length of this segment, the path is narrow and is surfaced with dirt, gravel or stone dust.

Structures and Furnishings

Telephone pole guardrails (photo 2C-2), many of which are deteriorated, mark the road edges at several cross streets in the Caroline Brook section of the park.



Map of Segment 2C. Caroline Street is on the left, Abbott Street is in the middle and Seward Avenue is on the right. This segment is relatively short and is broken in the middle, making it seem even shorter.

SEGMENT 2D: CAROLINE BROOK - SEWARD AVENUE TO MAUGUS AVENUE

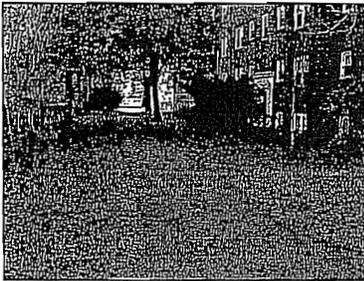
Landscape Character



2D-1

The section between Seward Street and Maugus Avenue is largely comprised of Phillips Park (photo 2D-1), a large open lawn area with basketball court, baseball field, picnic table and trash cans, that is very different than any other section of the park. There is chain link fence along the western edge of Phillips Park, and also ornamental crabapples. Adjacent buildings are generally close to the park and are not well screened, giving this segment less of the secluded character associated with other parts of Fuller Brook Park.

Circulation



2D-2

At Phillips Park the path runs along the north side of the park, becoming asphalt from the basketball court east. After Phillips Park, the path (photo 2D-2) moves north along west side of Maugus Avenue to the intersection with Washington Street. There is also vehicular access (for service vehicles) into Phillips Park from Maugus Avenue.

Structures and Furnishings

This is the only section of Fuller Brook Park with active recreation facilities. There are no historic structures associated with this section and no brook.



Map of Segment 2D. Seward Road is to the left and Maugus Avenue to the right. Phillips Park is in the lower center and is shown as four separate parcels of land. Washington Street is just off the upper right.

5. ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

The purpose of this chapter is to evaluate the historical significance and integrity of Fuller Brook Park using criteria established for the National Register of Historic Places. This evaluation is based on three factors: understanding of the applicable historic context as described in Chapter 2; knowledge of site history as presented in Chapter 3; and familiarity with existing site conditions as documented in Chapter 4. The three major components of this chapter are a statement of significance, an evaluation of integrity, and descriptions of character defining features.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Historical Overview

By the time Wellesley was incorporated as a town in 1881 it already had a strong tradition of civic pride and landscape improvements. This was due in large measure to H.H. Hunnewell, who had established a landscaped estate in the community and later donated a town hall/library and adjacent park to the town. During the 1880s the town created a municipal government and community infrastructure, including a Park Commission established in 1889. Two years later the town appointed a committee to look into the drainage system of the town. These two inter-related themes of park and drainage are central to the identity of Fuller Brook Park. In 1897 the Park Commission hired John Charles Olmsted of Olmsted, Olmsted and Eliot for a site visit and consultation regarding Fuller Brook.

In 1899 the Park Commission published its recommendations for Fuller Brook, which included acquiring the low land along the brook and its tributaries, as well as some of the adjacent higher ground. It also recommended that Fuller Brook be deepened and straightened for public health and flood control, and that paths be constructed along the brook and the land treated as a linear park. Landscape architect Warren Manning, formerly of the Olmsted office, was hired to direct the initial work at the park.

Land acquisition and initial improvements at Fuller Brook were ongoing through the early twentieth century. Most of the land was initially swamp. The process of park making was one of straightening and dredging the brook channel and using fill from the channel to create solid ground along the park corridor. During this early phase, improvements were rudimentary and the work was more land reclamation than creating a designed landscape. The regraded land was largely open fields, some of it was mowed for hay and other parts were used for growing potatoes. No design plans or photographs have been found from this period. By 1913 Fuller Brook Park had grown to 75 acres and about 11,500 lineal feet of brook, with only minor additions of land after that.

Around this time the town was looking to Fuller Brook Park to meet two additional town needs, sewer and traffic. Ernest W. Bowditch, who was designing the town's water and sewer system, was also hired to study the relation between park and sewer developments. The town sewer was constructed through the parklands along Fuller Brook between 1915 and 1921, causing considerable disruption. Bowditch also recommended that a boulevard be built along the park from the junction of Maugus Avenue and Washington Street to the Needham line following the line of the sewer, but this was never implemented.

The 1920s and 30s were a time of landscape improvements at Fuller Brook Park. The work was done under the supervision of the Park Commission, apparently without involvement of a landscape architect. After sewer construction was completed in 1921, the land along the brook was regraded using fill from sewer construction, and the path was improved with the goal of creating a continuous footpath along the

length of the park. Several new pedestrian bridges were built and some planting was done. During the 1930s a gravel-surfaced path was completed from Dover Road to State Street and the path was extended east into the Caroline Brook area on land previously acquired but not improved. This was partly to accommodate access to the new high school built southwest of Hunnewell Field in 1936 on land that had previously been part of Fuller Brook Park. Ongoing work was also underway to widen and deepen the brook, despite objections from some residents who felt this would detract from its value as a natural resource. It was during this period that Fuller Brook Park began to assume a more park-like appearance, although most of it was probably more wooded than it is today.

After World War II, the town placed heavy emphasis on recreational facilities and programs, with relatively little attention to Fuller Brook. In 1955 the park system, including Fuller Brook Park, was placed under the jurisdiction of the newly formed Department of Public Works (DPW). Around that time Fuller Brook was heavily impacted by two hurricanes, causing serious flooding. In the late 1950s the town and the state DPW undertook a drainage improvement project along Fuller Brook that involved straightening, deepening and widening the brook channel, removing trees, reshaping the banks, installing concrete block edging, and construction of new bridges and larger culverts at Dover Road, Cottage Street and Grove Street. There was a public outcry opposing this engineered treatment and only the western section was completed.

In the 1960s the town established a new approach of leaving the waterways in a more natural condition while eliminating areas where debris could accumulate; destroying breeding areas for rodents and mosquitoes; removing sources of pollution; and upgrading natural areas. While some residents preferred that the landscape be as natural as possible, others advocated a more horticultural appearance, with planting of ornamental trees and shrubs along with natural species.

Wellesley's recreation needs continued to grow during the second half of the twentieth century, with particular pressure for new facilities at Hunnewell Field. A series of incremental changes resulted in the rerouting of Fuller Brook through the park and placing large portions of it in conduits. This further fragmented the continuity of Fuller Brook as an open waterway and as a linear park.

The Natural Resources Commission was created in 1980 (?) with responsibility for park policy, while the DPW continued operational responsibility. The intent was to balance conservation and landscape values with engineering concerns. In the 1980s a new trunk sewer was installed along Fuller Brook from the high school to Grove Street, creating substantial disruption. After the work was completed, the landscape was rehabilitated, with new footbridges and plantings.

Areas of Significance

The National Register has established four criteria for evaluating historical significance. A property must meet one or more of these criteria to be considered eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. A property may be determined eligible at the local, state or national level. Fuller Brook Park appears to meet Criteria A and C at the local level. A formal determination of eligibility should be made by the Massachusetts Historical Commission before a National Register nomination is undertaken.

Criterion A - Properties that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

Fuller Brook Park meets Criterion A as an example of visionary town planning in the category of community planning and development. Wellesley was a progressive community that met multiple municipal goals in the creation of Fuller Brook Park, which combined a storm water drainage system with

a linear park, and also became a utility corridor with the completion of the town's main truck sewer in 1921. The town's early recognition of the importance of municipal infrastructure and its integrated planning was bold for a small newly-established community but also typical of the care that Wellesley took in preserving and enhancing the scenic aspects of the town. Wellesley was undoubtedly inspired by Boston's Emerald Necklace park system created in the 1880s and by the Metropolitan Park system established in the 1890s. Both represented national precedents for visionary park planning and for integration of parks and wetlands as multi-purpose landscapes.

Criterion B - Properties associated with a significant person in American.

Fuller Brook Park does not meet Criterion B as there is no significant person (other than the designers listed below) with direct associations to the park.

Criterion C - Properties that embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction.

Fuller Brook Park meets Criterion C as an example of late nineteenth century park planning that embodies the ideals of several nationally prominent landscape architects of the period: John Charles Olmsted, Warren Manning and Ernest Bowditch. Each of these men contributed to the initial creation of the park but their role was as planners rather than designers. They all helped to establish the principles and uses of the park, and Manning was responsible for laying out the initial boundaries. However, none of them could be considered designers of Fuller Brook Park, as their role was conceptual and the park landscape was actually created long after their involvement. Another person who contributed to the physical appearance of Fuller Brook Park was A. Stewart Cassidy, who designed several of the bridges in the 1930s.

Criterion D - Properties that have yielded or may be likely to yield information in history or pre-history.

Although members of the Algonquin tribe occupied the Wellesley area, neither pre-historic nor historic archaeological significance is likely, as the Fuller Brook corridor has undergone substantial regrading and disturbance over the past century.

Period of Significance

The period of significance for a historic property is linked directly to the analysis of significance. The period of historical significance for Fuller Brook Park extends from 1899 when the park was established to the mid-1950s. This date marks a transition in the appearance of some sections of Fuller Brook Park and also corresponds with the 50-year cut-off date generally recognized by the National Register.

Site Boundaries

Fuller Brook Park consisted of 75 acres of parkland by 1913, with minor only additions after that. Today the park consists of only 33.4 acres. Land southeast of Hunnewell Field that was previously part of Fuller Brook Park was transferred to the School Department in the 1930s and over time sections of Fuller Brook Park have been incorporated into Hunnewell Field. The boundaries of Fuller Brook Park today include the nine numbered segments (1A-E and 2A-D) discussed in Chapter 4.

Designers Involved at Fuller Brook Park

John Charles Olmsted (1852 – 1920)

John Charles Olmsted, the stepson of Frederick Law Olmsted Sr., was a landscape architect and planner who spent his entire professional life at the Olmsted office. He became a partner in 1884 and in 1898, after the senior Olmsted's retirement, he and his brother Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. formed Olmsted Brothers, where he was senior partner until his death in 1920. He was also a founding member and first president of the American Society of Landscape Architects. J.C. Olmsted was described by one of his associates as a "man of few words, fond of detail, . . . [with] a broad grasp of large scale landscape planning" who "carried to completion a vast amount of work quietly with remarkable efficiency."¹

John Charles Olmsted was a skilled designer and an advocate for systematic planning, who urged municipalities to buy as much parkland as possible in anticipation of future needs and the growth of the community. He argued that liberal provision of parks in a community was one of the surest manifestations of civilization and progressiveness of in its citizens. He also urged that a park system should be planned comprehensively and that the purposes to be accomplished should be clearly defined at the outset. These ideas were reflected in his park work for major cities across the country.

J.C. Olmsted's role at Fuller Brook Park was limited to an initial consultation in January 1897, arranged through Park Commissioner Joseph Peabody. All that remains is his site notes, which offer a description of the pre-park appearance of Fuller Brook and some of his initial ideas about the park. However, his influence is evident in the March 1899 letter from the Park Commissioners to the citizens of Wellesley, which made bold proposals for land acquisition and anticipated that the area would one day be valued as a linear park and transportation corridor.

Warren H. Manning (1860 – 1938)

Warren Manning was highly regarded as a landscape architect and planner during his lifetime but is not well-known today.² As a young man, he worked at his father's nursery business in Reading, Massachusetts, where he developed expertise as a horticulturist and landscape gardener. From 1888 to 1895 he worked at the Olmsted firm where he became superintendent of the planting department. While there he worked closely with Frederick Law Olmsted Sr. on many projects, including the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893 and the Biltmore estate in Asheville, North Carolina, which Manning considered one of his most important projects. He also worked closely with Charles Eliot on survey of the newly established metropolitan parks and with John Charles Olmsted.

In 1896 Manning started his own business which he continued until the time of his death. Initially he worked primarily on design projects, some of which he took with him from the Olmsted office. His design practice soon became national in scope. He also became interested in large-scale planning, advocating community involvement as an essential component of the planning process. He developed a practical approach to this in the form of community days, in which citizens undertook civic projects such as building a park. In 1899 Manning was one of the founders of the American Society of Landscape Architects. His notable projects include the Harrisburg Pennsylvania park system; a landscape design for the Stan Hywet estate in Akron, Ohio; a city plan for Birmingham, Alabama; and his pioneering work in national planning.

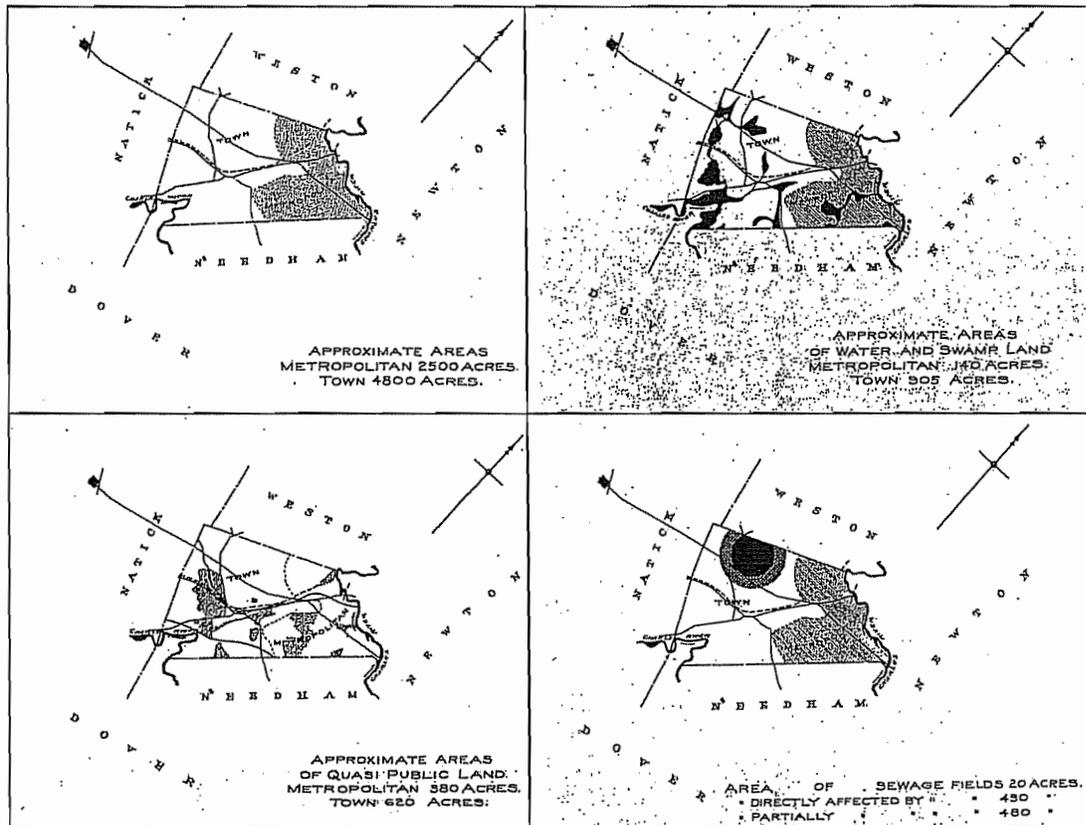
Manning was the landscape architect who was most directly involved in the creation of Fuller Brook Park. He was hired by the town in 1899, worked intermittently on the project until 1907 and was consulted again in 1914. Having apprenticed at the Olmsted firm, he would have been well-aware of the

firm's approach and may have been recommended by the Olmsted for the job. Manning's primary responsibility was to lay out the boundaries of the park, working with surveyors and landowners to establish initial boundaries that were marked in the field before they were finalized. He was most likely also responsible for the plant inventory that was done at that time. He may have advised on the initial drainage work, which consisting primarily of deepening and straightening the brook channel and filling the wetlands adjacent to the brook.

Ernest W. Bowditch (1850 – 1918)

Bowditch was a native of Brookline, Massachusetts who worked as a surveyor, draftsman and landscape gardener. He established his own office in 1871, frequently working in association with prominent architects or landscape architects, including the Olmsted firm. Initially he worked primarily as a consultant to other firms, but over time he became known in his own right as a designer of estate grounds, residential subdivisions and parks, including Rockefeller Park and Shaker Lakes Park in Cleveland.

Toward the end of his career Bowditch became involved in regional and community planning. This was his role in Wellesley, where he was initially hired to oversee planning for the community's water and sewer system. He conducted a series of analyses of the town's growth, geology, hydrology etc as part of this effort. He also made recommendations regarding extensions to Fuller Brook Park and creation of a boulevard along the brook to alleviate traffic on Washington Street. Most of these recommendations were not implemented.



These are some of the town planning studies that Bowditch undertook for Wellesley in 1907. (Wellesley Historical Society)

EVALUATION OF INTEGRITY

Integrity is the authenticity of a property's historic identity or the extent to which a property evokes its appearance during a particular historic period. While evaluation of integrity is often a subjective judgment, particularly for a landscape, it must be grounded in an understanding of a property's physical features and how they relate to its significance. The challenge is even greater when the landscape is primarily significant as an example of park planning, rather than a specific design. In this case it is the general concepts that matter most, rather than specific physical attributes.

The National Register identifies seven aspects of integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. Retention of these qualities is essential for a property to convey its significance.

Location is the place where the historic property was constructed or the historic event occurred. This remains constant for Fuller Brook Park, although the park has been substantially reduced in size since 1913, as portions of it have been converted to use for the high school and Hunnewell Field.

Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure and style of a property. Fuller Brook Park is not a single work of design but a landscape that has evolved over the past century as changes were made by many people. Despite loss of some areas and changes in others, most segments of Fuller Brook Park continue to reflect the nineteenth century park planning ideas that shaped the landscape and the drainage improvements that were also fundamental to the park.

Setting is the physical environment of a historic property. This has changed slowly as the surrounding neighborhood has evolved from largely undeveloped land to twentieth century suburban neighborhood. For the most part adjacent land uses are residential, small in scale, and most buildings are set back from the park and screened by vegetation.

Materials are the physical elements of a landscape, which in this case include plant materials, brook, path and structures such as bridges. While the actual materials have changed over time as plantings have evolved, the brook has been realigned or bridges have been replaced, there has been a consistency of the general character of the materials since the 1930s.

Workmanship includes the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular period. This is most evident in the character of built features such as the stone bridges. Despite some problems areas, it is also reflected in the general quality and arrangement of the plant materials.

Feeling, a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period, remains a strong contributing aspect of most of the park.

Association, the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property, remains strong, reflecting continuity of use that extends back to 1899.

Overall, segments 1A-E and 2A-C retain integrity as part of Fuller Brook Park. Segment 2D has lost much of its linear park quality with the addition of playground equipment.

CHARACTER DEFINING FEATURES

A character-defining feature is a prominent or distinctive aspect, quality or characteristic of a historic property that contributes significantly to its historic character. The following descriptions are organized by the same four categories as Chapter 4. Landscape character, the subtle interaction of landscape elements such as spatial organization, vegetation and topography, is the backbone of the Fuller Brook landscape. The brook and associated drainage structures are discussed next. Circulation, which includes paths and roads, is discussed third. The fourth category is structures and furnishings, which includes bridges, furnishings and signage. Where applicable, background is provided on the evolution of landscape characteristics or individual features.

Landscape Character

Setting

Fuller Brook Park runs through several residential neighborhoods in Wellesley. When the park was established in 1899, the park corridor included extensive wetlands and there were few houses nearby. As drainage improved over time, more houses were built, with an acceleration of building during the mid-twentieth century. Today the park is surrounded single family homes for most of its length. The majority of these are on large lots and are set back from the park. In some cases there are open lawns that extend directly to the park and feel like an extension of the park land. In other cases houses are screened by vegetation, giving the park a more rural character. Generally boundaries between private and public land are not clearly delineated, allowing an expansive and fluid quality to the landscape.

For the most part, Fuller Brook has evolved as an integral component of its neighborhood. The abutting properties function as a frame and context for the park. In a few cases, fences or rigid plantings create a sharp boundary line that seems at odds with the character of the park. In other cases, residential plantings appear to extend into the public parkland. There are a few buildings of large scale or that have been built very close to the park, which give a more urban character and intrude on the park landscape.

Spatial Organization

For most park users, the experience of Fuller Brook is one of moving through a narrow park landscape with the brook and the path at its core, framed by varied passages of scenery that are shaped largely by vegetation. Within the park corridor, the arrangement of park elements is informal and responds to the natural condition of the landscape rather than to formal geometry. An essential quality of Fuller Brook Park is its linearity, which is broken by intersecting paths and by cross streets.

Topography

For most of the length of Fuller Brook Park, the topography is relatively level with variations of only a few feet. Before the park was established, the topography was even flatter, with broad expanses of wetland adjacent to the brook. A critical part of creating the park landscape was straightening and deepening the stream channel to carry runoff away from the center of town. Much of the dredged material was used to fill adjacent areas, creating usable land in previously swampy areas. The park topography was established in more or less its present form by the 1930s, with relatively minor alterations after that. Since the topography of the park is somewhat unnatural, with the streambed artificially lowered to improve drainage, frequent dredging has been needed over the years to retain these grades. The most controversial period in the history of Fuller Brook Park was the use of more heavily engineered banks in the late 1950s to retain a constant slope, which was stabilized at the bottom by concrete curbing.

Vegetation

Vegetation is a particularly critical aspect of Fuller Brook Park and one that has evolved significantly over time. Before the park was established, most of the area was wetland with natural plant associations.³ Park Commission records from the early 1900s indicate that detailed records were made of the existing vegetation as the park was laid out. Unfortunately these records have not survived. The current wooded wetland east of the high school is probably the area that most resembles what the Fuller Brook area would have looked like at that time, although there may also have been some wet meadows.

The goal of the initial park improvements from roughly 1900 to 1915 was to lower the brook and to create useable land along its edges. Descriptions of the park during this period indicate that the park landscape was still rough meadow or cropland, with areas of natural woodland. The major process of transforming the area into a park-like appearance occurred during the 1920s and 1930s. The landscape was not well documented at that time but probably was primarily natural woodland plant associations with small areas of lawn and ornamental plantings near bridges and road crossings.

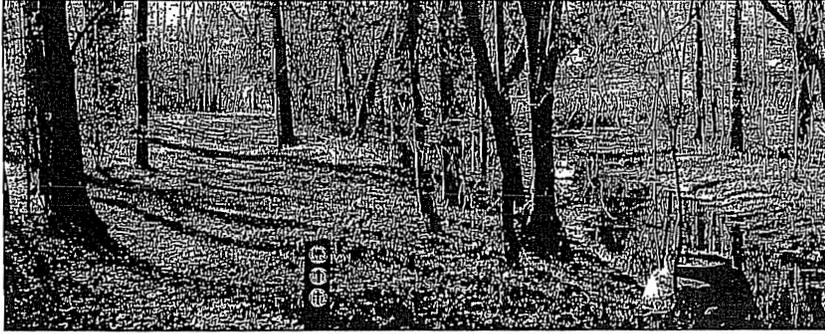
Over time as the area around the park has become built up and the park has become more heavily used, the park vegetation has assumed a more open character. It includes a mixture of landscape types such as natural forest, stream edge vegetation, park-like landscape of open lawns with scattered trees, and small areas of ornamental plantings. The characteristics of plantings and vegetation are discussed in more detail in a separate study that accompanies the park Master Plan.

Vegetation is both the most fragile and most visually important aspect of the park landscape. Documenting what exists and articulating a clear vision for its preservation is probably the most important thing that the Master Plan can accomplish.

Stream/Drainage

Many sections of Fuller Brook appear to be a natural stream but it is actually heavily manipulated watercourse. Fuller Brook was initially a meandering shallow channel that spread wide into adjacent wetlands. From the beginning an important goal of the Fuller Brook project was to improve drainage. The process was one of straightening and lowering the channel to drain the adjacent lands and speed up the flow of the brook towards the Charles River. Town records indicate ongoing cycles of cleaning and deepening the brook to retain the relatively unnatural course of the realigned brook. Over time some sections were relocated and/or channelized, as in front of the high school and through Hunnewell Field. The most dramatic changes occurred in the 1950s when the western section of the brook was lowered even more with the slopes cut back and concrete curbing was placed at the base of the slope to help retain it. This gave that section of Fuller Brook a very engineered appearance that caused considerable public outcry. Today remnants of that treatment are still visible from the Grove Street flume west to Dover Road.

Drainage structures associated with Fuller Brook include several flumes (Grove Street, Morton Street and east of State Street) which appear to be early twentieth century and contribute to the character of the landscape. There are also various culverts which are typically smaller and less distinctive. A few have distinctive stone headwalls. Also related are the visible aspects of the sewer line, especially the raised manhole covers east of the high school. These features are not contributing.



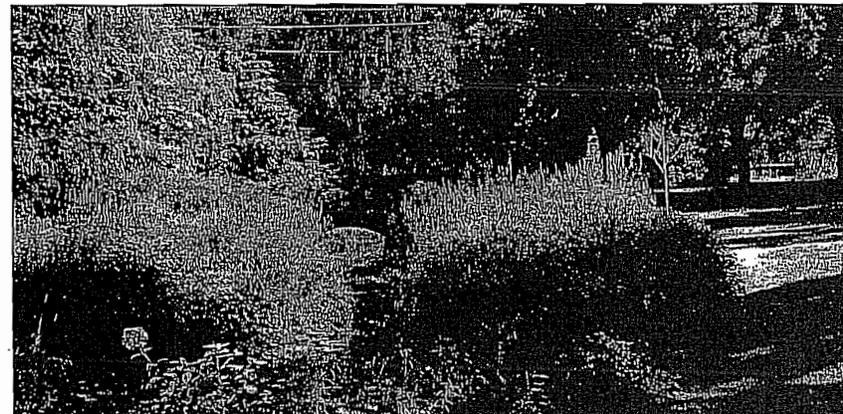
The wooded swamp of Segment 2A is probably most like the pre-park appearance of the landscape.



Some segments along Caroline Brook still retain this woodland character.



This view of Segment 1B shows the mix of woodland and open lawn that characterizes much of Fuller Brook Park today.

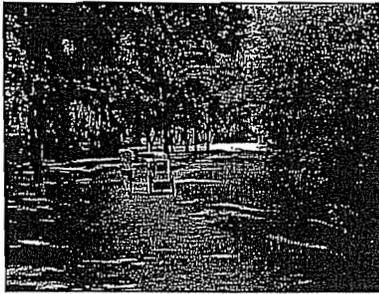


Stream edge vegetation is also characteristic of much of Fuller Brook Park.

Circulation

The idea of a continuous path along the brook was a central concept of Fuller Brook Park from the beginning although it was not completed until the 1930s. Today the path extends along the entire length of the park except where it is broken by Hunnewell Field and the high school. The width and surface material vary along the route, depending largely on use. Thus it is the presence of a pedestrian path that is character defining rather than the materials associated with the path. There are also secondary cross paths in several locations, including Leighton Street, Appleby Road, and Morton Street. These date to the 1930s and are also integral features of the park.

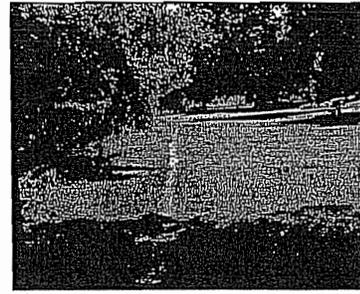
Most of the cross streets existed when the park was established. Several have been added since, especially in the area around Hunnewell Field. They include Cameron Street, State Street, Rice Street, and Paine Street. Today there are more cross streets, which break the continuity of the park experience, and all are busier, with higher speed traffic.



Typical gravel path



Asphalt-paved path



Narrow section of path

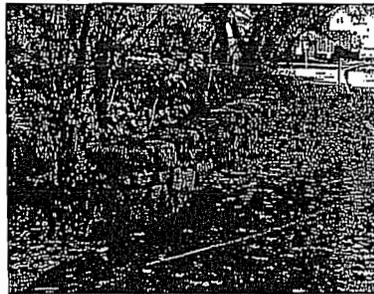
Structures and Furnishings

Bridges

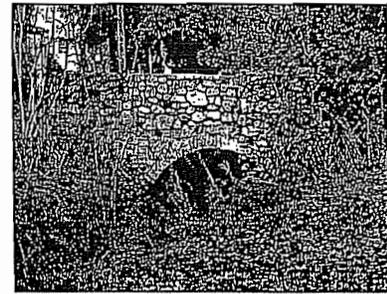
There are seven vehicular bridges associated with Fuller Brook Park. All carry two-lane local roads over the brook. The oldest appears to be Brook Street bridge, which is a rough vernacular bridge with two large round culverts with concrete surround, large granite block abutments and face (latter patched with brick) and a wood rail parapet. There are also three arched stone bridges. The Cameron Street and Wellesley Avenue bridges were designed by A. Stewart Cassidy in the early 1930s specifically to enhance the park. The Cameron Street bridge is of mortared fieldstone while the Wellesley Avenue bridge is of granite blocks in a random ashlar pattern. The State Street bridge is similar to the Cameron Street bridge, although it was built in 1949.



Cameron Street Bridge



Wellesley Avenue Bridge



State Street Bridge

The three bridges at the western end of the park, Dover Road, Cottage Street and Grove Street, were built in the late 1950s as part of a major drainage project. All three are similar in style with a concrete structure and rails. The four earlier bridges are contributing features of the park while the three later bridges are not.

Most of the pedestrian bridges were initially built when park improvements were made in the 1930s. The notion of pedestrian bridges contributes to the intended character of Fuller Brook Park but most of the existing bridges (Leighton Road, Appleby Road, Cold Spring Brook and east of the high school) are entirely late twentieth century structures and therefore noncontributing. The Morton and State Street footbridges have modern decking and rails but the substructures of these bridges are of large granite blocks, probably late nineteenth or early twentieth century. They are similar to the stonework associated with the Grove Street flume and they should be considered contributing features within the park.

Furnishings and Signs

All park furnishings and signs are of late twentieth century origin and they should be considered noncontributing resources. These include benches of various sorts, guardrails, kiosks and trail signs, as well as the playground equipment in Phillips Park.

¹ Quoted in Charles A. Birnbaum and Robin Karson, editors, *Pioneers of American Landscape Design* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2000, page 282.

² Sources for Manning include, Stephen Alan Conant, "Democracy by Design: Warren H. Manning's Contribution to Planning History" (Master's thesis, Tufts University, 1984), Susan Child, "Warren Manning 1860 – 1938: The Forgotten Genius of the American Landscape" in *Journal of the New England Garden History Society*, Volume 1, 1991 and *Pioneers*.

³ John Charles Olmsted's notes from his 1897 site visit, which are at the Library of Congress, offer some additional information about the appearance of the park at that time.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

While a Cultural Landscape Report sometimes includes detailed preservation treatment recommendations, this report was prepared as part of a Master Plan, which will include comprehensive recommendations for all aspects of Fuller Brook Park. Thus, the treatment recommendations here offer policy guidance for Fuller Brook Park rather than specific design recommendations. The recommendations are in two parts. The first section identifies the fundamental historical values of the park, while the second offers preservation principles for landscape treatment.

APPROACH

Treatment definitions established by the National Park Service (NPS) are geared towards structures and to landscapes with a clearly defined appearance, such as a park designed by a well-known landscape architect or a battlefield associated with a specific event. Fuller Brook Park presents a challenge because it is an evolved landscape that was shaped by many different influences over more than a century. The preceding chapters document the history and current appearance of the park and evaluate its historical significance according to NPS criteria. For the most part, character defining features are discussed in terms of the underlying principles that have shaped the landscape rather than the specific form and details of individual features.

The *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties* identify four possible treatments for historic properties: preservation, rehabilitation, restoration and reconstruction. For a landscape like Fuller Brook that has changed over time and must continue to evolve to meet the multiple demands and changing needs of the community, rehabilitation is the most appropriate treatment. It would allow changes that improve the utility or function of the park to make possible its efficient use while preserving those portions or features that are important in defining its significance. Restoration of the landscape to an earlier period is neither feasible nor desirable at Fuller Brook Park, nor can reconstruction of an earlier landscape be considered an appropriate treatment in this situation. Preservation, an approach that would freeze the landscape as it currently is, does not fully recognize the past history of landscape evolution or the need for some ongoing change.

Fuller Brook Park has seen many changes over time but for more than a century there has been an underlying vision for this land as a park and as a drainage feature that was first articulated in the March 1899 letter from the Park Commissioners. Despite some physical changes, these underlying principles have largely been respected as the park has evolved. Before any modifications are made to the landscape, changes should be carefully evaluated for their impact on the character-defining features, as described in Chapter 5, and for their adherence to the following guidelines, which provide a framework for decision-making.

TREATMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Historical Values of the Park

- **Drainage and Parkland**

Since its creation in 1899, Fuller Brook Park has had the dual purpose of improving drainage in flood-prone areas and providing parkland. Drainage concerns have typically shaped major policy decisions and physical changes, which have generally been followed by landscape improvements. These fundamental purposes, which sometimes conflict, remain central to the identity of Fuller Brook Park today.

- **Linear Corridor**

Fuller Brook Park was conceived as a unified park corridor along an open brook. The park has become fragmented over time, especially at Hunnewell Field and the high school. Today Fuller Brook Park is perceived as two distinct sections, Fuller Brook and Caroline Brook. Despite these changes Fuller Brook Park is still valued as a much-loved recreational resource that includes parkland and a multi-use path.

- **Transportation Corridor**

Early concepts for the park also emphasized the importance of Fuller Brook as a natural “parkway,” which meant a linear park that provided an alternative to Wellesley’s busy downtown streets for pedestrians, bicycles and initially for horseback riders. Fuller Brook Park continues to function as an important non-motorized transportation corridor and a critical link in Wellesley’s trail system.

- **Evolved Landscape Character**

The landscape of Fuller Brook has evolved over time as town needs and priorities have changed. Changes have been cyclical, usually precipitated by drainage-related construction. Different sections have a distinct landscape character based on natural features and adjacent land uses. The general trend has been away from a natural landscape of winding watercourse and woodland vegetation to a more engineered stream bed and a more park-like landscape that includes some ornamental trees and shrubs as well as native plants. The quality of the landscape, especially the vegetation, is central to the identity of the park.

- **Natural, Cultural and Recreational Resource**

Fuller Brook Park, like most large public parks, originated as a natural landscape and retains values associated with its natural resources, including water resources, flood storage, vegetation and wildlife. The park is also valued as a cultural resource with artifacts ranging from stone bridges to flumes and as an example of visionary regional planning.

- **Stewardship**

Fuller Brook Park has a complex management history that has always involved multiple town agencies. The town must continue to acknowledge the multiple purposes of the park and reconcile competing interests. Another aspect of stewardship is maintenance, which has varied over time, with a general pattern of less funding available for maintenance today than during the early years of the park. Maintenance priorities should be carefully prioritized with the fundamental principles of the park in mind.

Preservation Principles for Landscape Treatment

- **Landscape Character**

Preserve the park landscape “in the spirit of its original creators” recognizing that there are many sub-landscapes, each appropriate to different areas within the park.

Reinforce the visual and ecological diversity of the landscape.

Support the ecological health of the landscape and work to reduce invasive species.

Use primarily massed plants and natural plant associations.

Restore/enhance degraded areas of the landscape.

- **Drainage/Hydrology**

Assure that Fuller and Caroline Brook continue to function as an effective drainage system in a manner that also respects the landscape character of the park.

Continue current approach of retaining natural appearance of brook while assuring that it functions as an effective drainage system.

Address specific problem areas as needed to prevent erosion and enhance flow.

- **Circulation**

Enhance quality of Fuller Brook path system as a multi-modal non-motorized transportation corridor.

Create stronger pedestrian linkage within Fuller Brook Park, especially in areas that are not currently accessible.

Improve areas where path is degraded or does not function well.

Improve ease of access for those with limited mobility.

Explore options for greater consistency within the Fuller/Caroline Brook path system.

- **Structures and Furnishings**

Preserve man-made features that serve as focal points within the landscape.

Preserve character defining historic structures such as bridges and flumes.

Use a palette of modern structures and furnishings that are unobtrusive and consistent with the park character.

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MAPS (all maps are from the Wellesley Historical Society unless otherwise noted)

1775. *Township of Needham*. (1976 reconstruction by Vaun S. Raymond published in "Five Ponds Currency, Three Pounds Corn: Wellesley's Centennial Story")

1856. *Map of the Town of Needham, Norfolk County, Mass.* Henry F. Walling.

1881. *Index Map, Town of Wellesley, Norfolk County, Massachusetts*.

MAPS continued

1897. *Atlas of the Town of Wellesley, Norfolk County, Mass.* Boston: Geo W. Stadly and Co.

1907. "Planning Studies." Boston: Ernest W. Bowditch, Engineer. (set of blueprints showing studies regarding various planning and infrastructure issues for town of Wellesley)

1910. *Map of the Town of Wellesley, Mass.* Compiled from town plans by Arthur P. French. (Delineates town park land.)

1915. *Map of the Town of Wellesley, Mass.* Compiled from town plans by Arthur P. French. (Delineates town park land.)

1918. *Plan Showing Additions to the Wellesley Park System During Year 1918.* Arthur P. French. (Published in town's 1918 Annual Report.)

1920. *Map of the Town of Wellesley, Mass.* Compiled from town plans by Arthur P. French. (Delineates town park land.)

1930. *Survey of Town Hall Area, 1"=80'.* Arthur A Shurtleff, Landscape Architect, survey compiled by A. Stewart Cassidy.

1938. *Map of the Town of Wellesley, Mass.* Prepared by Gleason Engineering Corporation. (Delineates town park land.)

APPENDIX A: CHRONOLOGY

- 1836 Map of Needham shows Fuller Brook as Dewing's Brook. House near the brook bears the names of both Fuller and Dewing. (Walks in Wellesley:22)
- 1881 April 6. Town of Wellesley incorporated, formerly part of Needham.
- 1889 Josiah G. Abbott elected (first?) park commissioner. (Town of Wellesley Annual Report 1889, hereafter referred to as AR 1899)
- 1890 Charles Shattuck elected park commissioner. \$1,000 appropriated for Depot Park. (AR 1890)
- 1890s Sudbury Aqueduct opened. Included a bridge at Waban Arches as it crosses Fuller Brook. (Open Space Plan, hereafter referred to a OSP:9)
- 1891 Town established committee to look into the drainage system of the town. This was prompted in part by conditions adjoining the Fuller estate. (AR 1891)
- 1892 Noah A. Plympton elected park commissioner. (AR 1892)
- 1893 Isaac Sprague elected park commissioner, replacing Allen Kingsbury. Town Improvement Committee established, consisting of three members from each village. Spent about \$500 on surveying for proposed street north of Washington Street. New stone bridges built over brook at Wellesley Avenue. (AR 1893)
- 1894 Joseph W. Peabody elected park commissioner. (AR 1894)
- 1896 Parks listed as separate appropriation category for the first time, \$500 voted. (AR 1896)
- 1897 Park Commission hired Olmsted, Olmsted and Eliot for a visit and report, cost \$100. (AR 1897)
- 1899 Park Commission letter laying out principles for Fuller Brook Park. (AR 1899)
- 1899 Fuller Brook project received \$25,000 for land acquisition, improvements and development for public use.
- "The original plan has been fully indorsed (sic) by several of the leading experts of the country and no important change has been suggested. We have had surveys made by Mr. Frank L. Fuller, with his well-known thoroughness, and plans drawn by Mr. Warren H. Manning, who has wide experience in improvements of this nature. . . ." (AR 1899)*
- 1900 Fuller Brook land acquisition ongoing. Development begun in section between Grove and Cottage streets. Result has been satisfactory, deepening channel has carried away surplus water. Careful study of existing trees and shrubs shows that the value of the improvement will be fully realized. Town acquired land east of Rice Street. (AR 1900)
- 1901 H.H. Hunnewell donated 18 acres on Washington Street as a "playground for the young and old of the town." Town to make improvements. At Fuller Brook town has acquired 85% of land needed between Abbott Road and Cottage Street. Some disagreement with owners over price. Preliminary work in opening up the channel has produced a marked improvement. (AR 1901)
- 1902 Land acquisition at Fuller Brook ongoing, 90% complete between Abbott Road and Cottage Street. About six more acres needed to complete continuous stretch of town lands through this section. Further work done in broadening and cleaning the channel, improving street drainage system of the town. Annual Report contains lengthy report by Committee on Sewerage laying out proposals that have been under investigation for several years. Frank L. Fuller engaged as engineer for sewer project.

"The addition of the playground tract to the land adjoining, already owned by the town, and which had been acquired for drainage and park purposes, enlarges the opportunity for development of this section for recreation purposes and has thereby given an added value to both properties." (AR 1902)

- 1903 Land acquisition between Abbott Road and Cottage Street nearly complete for both drainage and parkway purposes, about 70 acres acquired along 1 1/2 miles of watercourse.

"... while the Commission have kept in mind the matter of drainage as being fundamental, yet in acquiring land, due regard has been exercised for future treatment as a parkway. With slight exceptions, sufficient land has been taken to provide for a roadway, paths, and planting spaces, so that the land taken will answer for all time, and the town will reap a portion of the benefit accruing from the turning of swampy areas into good, hard land."

"During the past year some further work has been done on clearing the channel at various points, but the principal permanent work has been done between Grove Street and Brook Street. The Highway Department have cooperated by deepening the culvert under Grove Street. The brook channel in this section has been deepened and widened, and such of the excavated material as was suitable deposited on the line of the roadway. This section of roadway when completed as well as other sections that might be built, will be found to be for convenience to the citizens who have occasion to pass between the neighborhoods thus connected." (AR 1903)

- 1904 Park properties include Hunnewell park and playground, squares and triangles, as well as Fuller Brook. At Fuller Brook, still a few sticky land acquisition issues. Lowering of Fuller Brook to the grade established on surveys should be continued until completed. (AR 1904)

- 1905 Town now owns 100 acres of parkland, some of it unimproved. Fuller Brook listed this year under heading of "Drainage and Parkway."

"A part of the parkway was given a summer ploughing; the alders and useless under growth were cut and cleared away. Further cultivation will be necessary before a permanent lawn can be made here. A fall ploughing was also made near the bridge on Grove Street with a view to planting the coming spring."

"The bed of the brook beneath Brook Street was successfully lowered and paved. The widening and deepening of Fuller Brook, between Brook street and Wellesley avenue, was also accomplished in keeping with the final development of the park system. The brook should be cleaned below Cottage street and above Wellesley avenue, as far as the Hunnewell Playground, next summer if possible." (AR 1905)

- 1906 Planting at Hunnewell Park and other small parks. References to baseball and football fields at Hunnewell Playground. Work ongoing on drainage system linked with drainage of Hunnewell Playground. Fuller Brook drainage also important for health. (AR 1906)

- 1907 Culvert lowered on Wellesley Avenue. Extensive digging to establish required grade. Bed of Fuller Brook generally lowered from 2 1/2 to 3' from Cottage Street to Hunnewell Playground and from Forest Street to Abbott Road, transforming bog land into useful hay land, with long-range plan of making it fit for recreational use. Road begun between Abbott Road and Forest Street.

"It is proposed to plant shade trees and build a pathway as far as possible along the parkway next summer. There the public may enjoy a brookside byway, free from the dangers of electricians and autos, and see the development and progress of what will ultimately be a place of healthful enjoyment, and one of Wellesley's beauty spots."

"It has been said that "the growth of any community along the lines of ornamental horticulture indicates progress along the lines of culture and refinement." It is evident from the taste of her citizens that Wellesley will not be found wanting in these graces." (AR 1907)

- 1908 Lowering of Fuller Brook completed. Yearly cleaning will be required. This can be remedied by greater sloping of the banks or by constructing stone walls at the sharper angles. Willows and water birch used to prevent undermining. Ten varieties and over 400 trees planted along the Parkway last spring.

"Commission proposes natural planting and grouping of shade and ornamental trees in such a manner as to eventually produce the most pleasing effect." (AR 1908)

- 1909 Fuller Brook cleaned, drainage working well. Several fields cultivated and hay grown. Specimen evergreens planted at Grove Street entrance. Soil at Fuller Brook is good, plants should do well.

"The planting already begun along the proposed boulevard will be continued wherever planting is necessary. A careful study is being made of the existing conditions and environment in order to gain the highest results in harmony and pleasing effect that such planting will ultimately produce. It is proposed in the first place to develop the sections of the parkway which are crossed by street and also to make the bridge and their parapets more attractive as these places come more frequently under the eye of the public. A beginning has been made to this end on Grove Street, Brook Street and also Wellesley Avenue." (AR 1909)

- 1910 Land along a large stretch of Fuller Brook was lowered to the water's edge and sloped back to prevent undermining. Still growing hay in some locations. Brook cleaned. Spraying for gypsy and brown tailed moths. Park Commission took a strip 80' wide extending north from Abbott Road to Washington Street to extend parkway, plans underway. (AR 1910)

Ernest W. Bowditch employed as engineer of Sewer Department. (Townsmen, 4/3/1931, in WHS files)

- 1911 Fuller Brook again cleaned and deepened, several cross drains installed and an 18" pipe laid from Arlington Road to Abbott Road. Sloping sides of brook will result in great savings along the parkway. Considerable clearing and burning of underbrush necessary in parkway. (AR 1911)

- 1912 Park Commission recommended acquiring narrow strip of land along Fuller Brook from Cottage Street to Charles River for watershed protection and drainage. (AR 1912)

- 1913 The work of the Park Commission is in into two divisions: first, the care of 50 acres of parkland including: Hunnewell Park and Playground, Wellesley station grounds, Elm Park, Ware Park, Sawyer Park, Peabody Park, Indian Springs, Newton Lower Falls (MPC land maintained by Wellesley) and the following triangles: Dover and Washington Streets, Cottage and Grove Streets, St Mary's Lower Falls, and Walnut Street and the aqueduct. These parks require grass cutting and care of trees and shrubbery.

"The other portion of the work is parkway and drainage areas along the brook. This comprises 75 acres of land, much of it originally swamp, and about 11,500 lineal feet of brook. Next year we expect that this will be increased by about four acres of land and 1500 lineal feet of brook. The brook is gradually being put in order, the end deepened, channel straightened and the banks sloped to the proper angle so that they will not wash badly. The lowering of the bed is gradually draining the surrounding property so that it can be developed as meadow and mowed for grass. Portions of the brook some 4,000 feet including the prospective addition will need to be straightened and lowered wherever feasible to continue the draining of ponds, holes and swamps adjacent. This work will do away with a large portion of the mosquito nuisance in town. The entire area of the brookway requires mowing or to have the shrubs trimmed and sprayed where necessary for scale and moths. The brook channel must also be inspected spring and fall, clearing out accumulated rubbish and repairing the banks."

"Increased traffic is already crowding our squares and Washington and Central Streets. The Park Commission believes that the need for greater traffic capacity should be met by a street along the brook. This would avoid the heavy damages that would arise if Washington Street were widened and would develop a large amount of territory for purposes of taxation. Eventually the new street should extend from east of Wellesley Hills Square to Dover Road, perhaps with connection to Washington Street on the way to Natick and South Natick. All reports of the sewage problem so far made have indicated that the main trunk sewer must run along the same line. The topography has been carefully surveyed from Maugus Avenue to the junction of Fuller and Waban Brooks and up Waban Brook to Washington Street. We think the time has come when the entire matter should be reviewed and the scheme completed for the entire roadway, taking into consideration the building of trunk sewers and the straightening of the brook." (AR 1913)

- 1914 Routine work of caring for 50 acres of parks and 75 acres along the brook done as usual. Gypsy moth a problem. Hunnewell Playground maintained for baseball, football and tennis. Easterly portion underdrained and planted with potatoes. Skating rink not flooded this year because of complaints of flooding last year.

"In the matter of lands along the brook between Cottage and Dover Streets, which Msrs. Ingraham and Rollins propose to give the town, we have consulted with Mr. Warren Manning, the landscape architect who has previously advised the Board and we have determined the maximum amount of land that we should like to acquire and the minimum which will be useful to the town. These lines have been staked upon the ground. We expect to complete the transfer before long."

"If the town accept the act allowing it to enter the Metropolitan Sewer it will need these lands and those of the College which lie adjacent to Fuller brook. If the sewer is built the construction of a boulevard along the same route should be provided so far as feasible. Such a boulevard will develop the property along its course and relieve Washington Street of much of its through motor traffic. We hope that some gift or taking in connection with these improvements may provide a site for the needed Department building. The present statute forbids the use in this manner of any land dedicated to Park purposes." (AR 1914)

- 1915 Routine maintenance along brook while planning for sewer construction.

"We have employed Mr. Ernest W. Bowditch, the same engineer who is designing the water system, to study the relation between park and sewer system developments; this employment was with the approval of the Sewer Committee. As the town has already learned from the report of the Sewer Committee, the location finally determined for the main sewer is through the parklands, along Fuller Brook and its branches. Mr. Bowditch has made a study for a boulevard to extend from the junction of Maugus Avenue and Washington Street down to the Needham line following the line of the sewer. This will also serve as the road necessary for the care and maintenance of the sewer. The Sewer Committee has made takings of land from the end of the park land west of Cottage Street, through the lands of Ingraham, Wellesley College, Shaw, Lee, and Shaw again to the Needham line. The Sewer Committee could make for their purposes a taking only 16 ft. wide. While these takings have been made, no settlement with the owners has yet been reached. It seem imperative that the town should at this time secure a strip of land 200 ft wide including the sewer takings to extend from the end of the present park lands to the Needham line; we say 200 ft. as minimum width since the ultimate development of the boulevard, bridge paths and sidewalks may require a width of 100 ft. It is desirable also to secure a setback for all buildings of at least 50 ft. more on each side."

"We think that the time has now come when the town should undertake to build a certain part of this Fuller Brook parkway each year so that in the course of five to ten years, as the town may determine, we shall have a complete road from Maugus Avenue and Washington St. to the Needham line. This roadbed should be built of the same material and be of the same style as the Massachusetts Highway construction, an eighteen foot road with five foot gravel edges. . . We also think that when the town gets control of Fuller and Waban Brooks to the junction of the Charles

River we should commence systematically to lower the channel of the brook. There is a fall of some 30 ft. from the point where Fuller Brook crosses the Needham line to the junction of Waban Brook and Charles River. A fall of a foot in a mile will give fair current in a brook with good clear channel. This fall will permit us to lower the brook channel to drain all this territory, substantially increasing the area in the town available for cultivation and at the same time doing away with the most of the breeding places for mosquitoes. The College is doing much in straightening and deepening the channel of Fuller Brook from Waban Brook back to Dover Street. We wish this year a special appropriation of \$200 to continue this work, commencing at Dover Street and working up stream as far as this amount will permit, and shall hope to receive a similar appropriation for several years until the work is accomplished."

Lands proposed for acquisition:

1. Along the sewer from the western end of Fuller Brook Park to the Needham line
2. Lands along Rosemary Brook to protect present waster supply.
3. A connecting link between aqueduct and Metropolitan parks.
4. Lands from Fuller Brook south from Hunnewell Field to the Needham line to provide for future sewer and drainage developments. (\$500 appropriated for engineering services). (AR 1915)

Construction of sewer begun with Charles Fuller as manager and E.W. Bowditch as engineer, with A. Stewart Cassidy as his representative. (Townsmen, 4/3/1931 in WHS files)

- 1916 Primarily routine maintenance on 50 acres in 13 separate parks and triangles throughout town and two miles along the brook that are kept free of insect pests and require other attention at times. Special appropriation of \$150 for straightening and deepening Fuller Brook between Grove and Cottage Streets, completing a permanent channel from Hunnewell Playground south to about 400 ft beyond Cottage Street. Similar appropriations recommended until all brookways in town are acquired and put in order. This will largely eliminate the mosquito nuisance.

No progress this year in development of the boulevard along the brook. Last year a plan was made for it to serve both as a boulevard and for maintenance of sewer trunk line. Sewer Commissioners have provided fill materials suitable for road building at several points in the parkway. Park Commission again recommends construction of a roadway parallel to Washington Street because of excessive traffic. A start was made several years ago beginning at Grove Street and going northerly some 330 feet. Continuation of the boulevard to Wellesley Avenue will, with existing streets, make a route paralleling Washington Street from Grove Street to Abbott Road. This width of this roadway should at first be 20 ft and later be increased if needed. (AR 1916)

- 1917 WWI intervened in proposed plans. Morton estate on Washington Street put under jurisdiction of Park Commission, increasing number of parks to 14 and their area by more than five acres. Planted with potatoes to help in war effort. Filling between Cottage and Grove has been continued. (AR 1917)

- 1918 About four acres acquired on Rice and Seaver Streets east of Wellesley Avenue, rounding out holdings in the vicinity. Protection of these low-lying lands will ensure better use for the higher ground. Main channel of Fuller Brook to easterly crossing of Wellesley Avenue now town owned. Progress made on the acquisition of brook channel between Wellesley Avenue and Needham line. Little progress made in land acquisition along the brook west of Cottage Street.

"It is desirable that the town acquire as soon as possible all brookways and drainage areas within its bounds."

Park Commission hired A.S. Cassidy to prepare plans for bridges. Park Commission recommending construction of parkway from Grove Street to Maugus Avenue to connect Wellesley Village and Wellesley Hills. This will permit lowering the brook channel where necessary so that marshes along the Needham-

- Wellesley line near Cartwright Street can be eliminated and other low lying spots drained. Will also reduce mosquito nuisance and increase arable land. (AR 1918)
- 1919 Work between Grove and Cottage Streets underway, area now presentable in appearance. Boulevard continued between Grove Street and Wellesley Avenue. Many pines planted around this time. (AR 1919)
- 1920 Work underway on parkway east of Brook Street. (AR 1920)
- 1921 Filling underway at Cottage and Brook Streets for parkway. Footpath from Caroline Road to Abbott Street improved. Plan is to eventually to construct a continuous footpath along the whole length of the parkway. Sanitary condition of brook below and at Grove Street is much improved since sewage has been diverted to the MDC sewer system this year. Dumps along parkway are becoming a problem. (AR 1921)
- 1922 Waste material from sewer construction used in footpath from Seaward Road to Maugus Avenue, also in filling proposed crossing of parkway at the State Street. Forest Street to State Street work proposed. State Street bridge repaired. Footpath from Grove Street to Cottage Street will be completed this year. There is growing demand for a crossing at State and Smith streets – this is mostly a traffic problem. (AR 1922)
- 1923 On the Parkway (i.e. park lands bordering the brook) there is extensive clearing to be done. Some progress made on brookside path which depends on waste material for grading so it advances slowly. Rough grading has been completed and trees have been planted at Cottage Street. Improvement has been made at Forest and Seaver Streets. The cart road toward Caroline Street has been widened and graded part way, brush removed and rough grading done. Some pine and cedar trees will be planted in the spring. The area from Forest to Caroline Street is very unsightly. There are now 135 acres of parkland. (AR 1923)
- 1924 Progress made in clearing brush along the brook. Little progress made on path this year. Grading done at new bridge completes path from Grove to Cottage Streets. Fill at Forest and Seaver Streets will enable construction of the path from Forest towards State Street. The Seaver Street path was constructed except for surfacing. Flowering shrubs will be planted as they are available. State Street bridge raised and rebuilt after truck damage. Park budget now \$7,000. (AR 1924)
- 1925 Cottage Street dump open again. Maintenance done on brookside path between Seaward Road and Forest Street. Path has been extended from Forest Street toward State Street about 400 feet with material from sewer construction. Seaver Street path widened and raised and ready for surfacing. Material gathered at Forest and Seaver Streets was used for grading and path building. Caroline Street crossing graded and surfaced, grading done on park land adjoining, also on cart road toward Forest Street. (AR 1925)
- 1925 Survey of the section of Fuller Brook east of Dover Road shows it much more curvilinear and irregular than it is today. Acquisition of the western section of Fuller Brook Park complete. (DPW files)
- 1926 Cottage Street dump graded, seeded and bordered by planting of perennials and shrubs. Brookside path begun at Wellesley Avenue toward Brook Street. Path from Rice Street to Seaver Street nearly completed. Forest and Seaver Street corner cleaned and graded, grass seed sown. As opportunity arises, plants and shrubs will be added. Lots of pine trees in nursery. Also many plant contributions at Wellesley Avenue. Parkway on west side graded and work done on path. (AR 1926)
- 1927 Section of path from Grove Street to Cottage Street completed to a width of 8'. About 300' of path completed from Wellesley Avenue toward Brook Street. Material for path from Forest Street toward State Street salvaged from Seaver Street sewer construction and will be used to extend the path during 1928. Considerable fill was placed at the Seaver Street end which will made the grade much easier at this point. An experimental dam was made above the bridge near Seaver Street to hold back the water at the small brook to provide a slide for the children of the Kingsbury school. The Twitchell Street path was raised about one foot, drainage pipe laid, and the bridge removed. Snow can now be ploughed from this path, a short cut to the Kingsbury School. The west side of Forest Street has been graded and seeded. (AR 1927)

- 1928 No progress made on brookside path this year. On parkway adjoining Seaver Street about 350 evergreens were planted, more planned for next year. Park Commission approved layout of Cameron Street across park land, with stipulation that they be consulted about bridge. (AR 1928)
- 1929 [Fuller Brook continues to be referred to as brookside path.] Grading and filling done Forest Street to Caroline. From Forest Street to State Street, regrading beginning at Forest Street end. Path from Wellesley Ave to Brook Street will be extended. Work will begin on a path and bridge from Benton Street to Leighton Road during the summer. Park Commission requests full-time superintendent. (AR 1929)
- 1930 No progress on brookside path this year. The extension of Benton Street to the park line has obstructed the footpath, which is much used as a shortcut to Cottage Street. This path should be extended from Cottage Street to a junction with the proposed path from Leighton Road to Benton Road. It is currently a rough path that was partly constructed in 1929. Major work on Hunnewell Field (plan in annual report). Park department now has power mower to replace horse drawn mowing equipment. Stone arch bridge with parapet constructed at Cameron Street, design by A. Stewart Cassidy, construction by George and Joseph Welch. We expect this bridge to set the standard for all future bridge across Fuller Brook. (AR 1930)
- 1931 Unemployment funds permitted extension of brookside path from Cottage Street to Benton Road. Footbridge constructed between Benton Road and Leighton Road. New face built on stone arch bridge at Wellesley Avenue crossing of Fuller Brook, design by Stewart Cassidy. The stone work is of the same character as the Cameron Street bridge. (AR 1931)
- 4/3/1931. 25th anniversary issue of Townsman has history of town departments. (Townsman in WHS files)
- 1932 Brookside path has been completed. Approach at Leighton Road bridge also complete, shrubs planted and light near bridge. Next year seeding and planting of perennials, shrubs and pine trees. Grading at Wellesley Avenue bridge completed, some hydrangeas and forsythias planted along the brook. At Marvin Road some work done along the brook. Filling is needed before planting can be done. (AR 1932)
- 1933 Change in course of brook near Dover Road makes it possible to construct path from Leighton Road to Dover Road, which will save the cost of two bridges. Work to start in 1934. Relocation of path at Wellesley Avenue and Brook Street and regrading on the south side was completed. Selectmen allocated funds to complete widening of the brook to an average width of 9' on the bottom.

"The work has been postponed from year to year for two reasons, the main one being of expense, the other being that when widened it should also be straightened, which would take away more or less of its character as a brook. The Commission hesitated about spoiling any of the natural features which it possessed; also, the brook was again becoming stocked with trout and was affording the local fishermen some sport, and that portion of the brook improved would be for some time spoiled as a trout brook. In considering with the Selectmen what major improvement could be made on the Park lands with the Park's proportion of the contributory fund, it was suggested by the Park Board and approved by the selectmen that this work should be started."
(AR 1933)

9/29/1933. Article on "Widening of Fuller Brook" by Park Commissioner George L. Abell.

"Beginning just below Cameron Street the brook was widened to a width of 9 feet on the bottom to within about 800 feet of the corner of Wellesley Avenue and Great Plain Avenue. The Maugus Hill branch (Caroline Brook?) was made 5 feet wide to Forest Street, as was also the drainage brook from the old football field and about 100 feet of the Sprague brook, or a total length of 5,300 feet 9 feet wide and 3,000 feet 5 feet wide, approximating about 4,000 cu. yds. of earth moved. When the widening is completed, the rate of flow in the brook will be much faster than at present, but as new streets are built the street water will increase so that eventually some of the bridge foundations will have to be lowered or by-passes constructed to take care of the additional run-off. That, however, is not to be expected for perhaps ten years in the future."
(Townsman in WHS files)

- 1934 A new channel was cut across a bend near Dover Street in anticipation of extending the path from Leighton Road to Dover Street. Beginning at Dover Road the banks of the brook were sloped, unsightly brush and trees removed, and parkland graded and seeded. A number of previously hidden large oaks were brought into the landscape and vistas up and down the brook opened up. About 400 ft from Dover Road an outcropping of conglomerate was brought into the picture. Connections were made with Vine Street and Winthrop Street. The path is not only an interesting walk but is of utilitarian value as a short cut to Grove Street. This summer we will try to connect it with Appleby Road, which will require a footbridge and filling. The path has been ploughed and sanded during the winter. (AR 1934)
- 1935 Path from Cameron Street to Brook Street started. (AR 1935)
- 1936 Extension of path from Cameron to State Street underway. New high school under construction. Proposed gravel surfaced path from Dover Road to State Street will be a short cut to the high school, a path for an afternoon walk and will provide access to the sewer trunk line. Some shrubs were planted at Abbott Road. Parkway Forest to Caroline closed to automobiles. Forest to Caroline area will be graded, with trees and shrubs planted as opportunity offers. State Street bridge is in poor condition. Filling and rough grading done at Appleby Road bridge, which connects with the path leading to brookside path and providing access across the brook. Filling for brookside path blocked drainage at Vane Street. (AR 1936)
- 1937 Primarily routine maintenance this year. Site of new high school was previously parkland. State Street bridge redone with wooden structure, should be stone. Extensive planting done between Cottage Street and Dover Road. Comprehensive study of whole brook is recommended, including survey. (AR 1937)
- 1938 September hurricane destroyed many trees. Now using more mechanized equipment. (AR 1938)
- 1939 Sewer line from Charles River to Abbott Road, a WPA project, completed. WPA workers cleared the brooks. (AR 1939)
- 1940 Park department complaining about inadequate budget. High school concerned about inadequate approaches. Park commissioners proposed to construct parkway between Forest Street and State Street on land previously acquired (not acted upon.) (AR 1940)
- 1941 Park department now has responsibility for 200 acres, emphasis on recreation. (AR 1941)
- 1942 Amendment to town zoning passed requiring a setback of 10' from all park land. (AR 1942)
- 1943-45 War influence impacting parks, emphasis on recreation. (AR 1943-45)
- 1946 Town established a community recreation program. Proposals for non-park use of parkland and abutter use of parkland becoming a problem. (AR 1946)
- 1947 Park and Recreation Department responsibilities now fall into two categories: preservation and development of parklands; and issues pertaining to use of parkland/recreation. (AR 1947)
- 1949 New bridge built at Leighton Road, area landscaped. Fuller Brook path resurfaced from Cameron Street to Brook Street. Path widened from high school to football field. New masonry bridge at State Street and Fuller Brook. (AR 1949)
- 1950 Position of superintendent of Parks and Recreation established. Repairs and improvements made to Leighton Road and Morton Street bridges. Skating rink established at Hunnewell Field. Recreation improvements at Hunnewell Field ongoing through 1950s. (AR 1950)
- 1951 Drain repairs and brook clearing at Fuller Brook. Office of Town Engineer established. (AR 1951)

- 1953 Fuller Brook described in park inventory as "2 1/2 mile nature walk" extending from Caroline Street to Dover Road. Referred to in another place as Fuller Brookway, Dover Street to Maugus Avenue. (Note: Caroline Brook not identified as separate entity.) Lengthy report by new superintendent, mostly about recreation. (AR 1953)
- 1954 Fuller Brook heavily impacted by hurricanes, will take several years to repair damage. Grass cutting at Fuller Brookway mentioned in annual report. (AR 1954)
- 1955 Former Parks Department now part of Department of Public Works. Engineering is also in DPW. Recreation is separate. Major report on town drainage in DPW Superintendent's report. Increased development causing faster run-off and flooding. Emphasis on maintaining catch basins; sand run-off a problem, flow into storm drain system, decreasing capacity of streams and brooks and aggravating flooding. Town has received special appropriation for matching state funds to improve the major brooks of the town, which will be implemented at Fuller Brook. (AR 1955)
- 1956 Many small drainage problems solved. Fuller Brook drainage controlled by Selectmen. (AR 1956)
- 1957 Work underway at Fuller Brook to alleviate drainage problems. Work done by Mass DPW Division of Waterways, cost shared by state and town. Work involves straightening, deepening and widening the brook, construction of new and larger culverts at Dover Road, Cottage street and Grove Street. Selectmen expressed frustration over delays. See essay by Barbara Mahie for more detailed information. Installation of curbing a priority of the town DPW for road longevity, appearance, drainage, maintenance and traffic control. (AR 1957)
- 1958 Construction underway at Fuller Brook, replanting anticipated next year, town seeking advice from civic groups. Drainage under Washington Street near Star Market still a problem. Brook lowered where it emerges from Aqueduct to point of discharge into Fuller Brook.

Many articles and letters to the editor re Fuller Brook in Townsman. (WHS files)

- 1958-60 Portion of Fuller Brook channelized. More was planned but there was a public outcry. Photos from this period show banks with slope of about 1:1 with mowed grass and few trees in river channel. Rails on pedestrian bridge painted.
- 1959 State Street widened from Washington Street to Morton Street. Seaward Road widened from Washington Street to Park Street. Curb installation ongoing. Replanting at Fuller Brook: 25 dogwoods, 23 flowering trees, 239 evergreens and five maples planted between cottage and Dover. DPW credits Wellesley garden clubs for design and supervision. Similar work proposed next year from Grove Street to Cottage Street.

"The Fuller Brook Project, from its inception, has been most controversial. However it is the firm belief of the Department that the appearance and utility of the finished product will more than justify the time and money spent upon it, and the sacrifice of the trees which were removed. Perhaps it should be observed that the three new bridges which were constructed were badly needed and that the Town's share of the appropriation for the project scarcely equals the cost of these three structures. In early statements regarding the project, it had been indicated that upon its completion the Department had no plans for mowing the area. Experience gained over the past year, however, indicates that at least the slope of the banks along the brook should be mowed regularly in order that at times of heavy run-off debris flowing down the brook will not collect in any one spot and form eddies which would result in excessive erosion." (AR 1959)

- 1960 Still minor flooding in some parts of town but town feels system is adequate for all but the most unusual storms. Vegetation management underway at Fuller Brook, including pruning and replacement of shrubs that did not survive. Efforts underway to establish lawn area between Cottage and Dover Streets, 170 maples planted in this area. Dutch elm disease still a problem, maples frequently used as replacements.

"In a few years these newly planted trees and shrubs should present a most effective appearance and this section, which once resembled swamp land, will add substantially to the beauty of the Town and afford a place for passive recreation." (AR 1960)

- 1961 Park land along north side of Fuller Brook from Grove Street to Cottage Street regraded with dredge material from Longfellow Pond. Upstream from Grove Street weeds and trash removed along the brook to improve appearance and eliminate health hazards. DPW hopes to extend park maintenance improvements to other parts of the "Brookway." Appropriation made for improvements to Hunnewell Field, including 500' of conduit to contain Fuller Brook, making two acres of land useable for recreation and athletic purposes. New conduit will be installed at lower elevation, which anticipates lowering of Fuller Brook from Grove Street to State Street. Improvements made to Fuller Brook in area of Rice Street. (AR 1961)
- 1962 Grading, landscaping and planting accomplished along Fuller Brook between Grove and Cottage, lawn area established. Hope to continue improvements south from Grove to Dover "will become one of the Town's beauty spots." Cameron and Brook Street bridges in poor condition. Section from Grove Street to Brook Street in poor condition, town would like to extend improvements and reconstruct bridges. Improvements to skating area near State Street, dredging to create lagoon. (AR 1962)
- 1963 Town currently has 75 acres of parkland, acquisition of Cochituate Aqueduct from the MDC will add 53 acres. (AR 1963)
- 1964 Between 1954 and 1964 the town's population grew by over 25% from 21,000 to 27,000.
- "Various areas of park lands have been improved during the year with particular emphasis on operations concerned with the cleaning of water courses. The basic policy is to leave the waterways as near their original conditions as possible, eliminate areas where debris can accumulate, destroy breeding areas for undesirable rodents and mosquitoes, remove sources of pollution, and generally upgrade natural areas for the enjoyment of the residents. Examples of the work that was completed in 1964 include Fuller Brook from State Street to Wellesley Avenue, and from Grove Street to Cottage Street."* (AR 1964)
- 1965 Grading and seeding completed from State Street to Wellesley Avenue. Footbridges have been rebuilt at State and Morton Streets. Hunnewell Field football field area also improved. (AR 1965)
- 1966 Area from Wellesley Avenue to Morton Street upgraded, combining hydraulic requirements with beautification, creating "a beautiful park-like atmosphere." Improvements made along brook adjacent to Star Market, process consists of clearing brush, grading and seeding. Also undertaken adjacent to hockey rink and along aqueduct "so as to provide a minimum of maintenance to allow for pedestrian use in a rural area." (AR 1966)
- 1967 There are now 174 acres of town-owned parkland compared with 97 acres in 1955. Clean-up along Fuller Brook included grading at Wilson and Clifford Streets, and installation of a colored walkway from State Street to Wilson Street. More work at Hunnewell Field. (AR 1967)
- 1968 Army Corps of Engineers proposed dam on Fuller Brook near town incinerator which would dramatically alter the area, covering up to 285 acres. \$4,000 from conservation fund used to purchase 22,000 sq. ft. lot on Great Plain Avenue. The property is divided by Fuller Brook and will be left in its natural state. Used by the high school for biological studies. (AR 1968)
- 1972 Planning Board approved relocation of Fuller Brook at Hunnewell Field. Conservation Commission also involved, wanted to find a way to improve athletic fields without piping Fuller Brook or losing large trees behind football field. Discussion with School Committee and Park and Tree Board about proposed land swaps in connection with proposed additions to the high school. (DPW files, AR 1972)

- 1973 Drainage in Fuller Brook area improved from Wellesley Avenue to Brook Street in consultation with abutters and town engineer. Proposal to plant azaleas along Fuller Brook "to make this one of the most spectacular areas in Wellesley." (AR 1973)
- 1975 Major sewer construction proposed along Fuller Brook. (AR 1975)
- 1976 "A philosophy of stewardship as a responsibility of ownership of park lands" affirmed by DPW and supported by Park and Tree Board as consistent with Wellesley's historical view of the integrity of its park system. Park and Tree Division of DPW now separate from Highway Division, will concentrate on parks, recreation areas, trees and other open areas. Heavy use/demand for ballfields an ongoing issue, also public desire to increase emphasis on natural resources. (AR 1976)
- 1977 Park and Tree Division developed zone management plan. State Street Pond dredged. (AR 1977)
- 1978 Town's fiscal year changed from calendar year to end of June. Park and Tree Board will be replaced by Natural Resources Commission. Board of Public Works now officially designated as park commissioners. Problems of encroachment on town-owned land in State/Smith Street area. Paving of bike path along Fuller Brook between Cameron and Grove Streets completed. (AR June 1979)
- Citizen concern about erosion along Fuller Brook between Cameron and Brook Streets. Brook has not been cleaned in many years, used to be done annually. (Natural Resources Commission files, hereafter referred to as NRC)
- 1979 DPW Park & Tree superintendent Len Phillips prepared maintenance plan for Caroline Brook. (NRC files)
- 1980 NRC established with three sub-committees: long range planning, landscape advisory and wetlands protection. Fuller Brook described as a "greenbelt and bikeway." (AR FY 1980)
- 1980s New trunk sewer installed along Fuller Brook. (Town Engineer Steve Fader)
- 1981 Wellesley celebrated its centennial. Surface Drainage Master Plan prepared by Camp Dresser & McKee. Many storms, brooks cleared of overhanging limbs and debris which would impede flow. Park and Tree Division of DPW responsible for park land and street trees, works closely with NRC. Encroachment of private use on public land necessitated surveying in some areas along Fuller Brook. Centennial Park established. (AR FY 1981)
- 1982 Wellesley now has 680 acres of parks, playgrounds, conservation areas, traffic islands and approximately 4,695 street trees. Seven maintenance zones identified by Superintendent Len Phillips. Leighton Avenue footbridge under construction. (AR FY 1982) Exchange of parkland at State Street? (NRC)
- 1984 Park and Tree Division now responsible for 856 acres including school grounds. Funding for maintenance has been reduced. NRC believes it is wiser to stop maintaining an area than to spray. Wetlands Protection Committee of NRC and DPW developed Brook Maintenance Standards "to expedite work which restores brooks while bringing work which alters brooks under review." (AR FY 1984)
- Sewer construction along Fuller Brook created mess, caused complaints. (DPW files)
- 1985 30th anniversary of DPW. Improvements at Fuller Brook Park after sewer construction last year. Trees, shrubs and daffodil bulbs planted along entire length of Fuller Brook. Additional benches and sitting stones installed. Appleby Road Footbridge built. (AR FY 1985)
- 1986 Hurricane Gloria caused damage in parks. Mention of Philips Park on site of former Phillips School. (AR FY 1986)
- 1992 Parking problems at Smith Street near high school track. (NRC files)

- 1993 Proposal made to establish "Rhododendron Botanical Park" at Fuller Brook. (NRC files)
- 1995 Rhododendron project still alive, with proposed pilot project between State Street and Wellesley Avenue. Town concerned about maintaining proposed plantings and noted that similar plantings at town hall had not done well. Project to be privately funded, concern about too many plaques etc. (NRC files)
- 1995 In response to abutters making improvements on town land, NRC suggested that some boundary markers be installed so it is clear what is public land. (NRC files)
- 1995 Emergency drain crossing approved to avoid dangerous icing condition on Smith Street. Issue raised at that time about role of NRC in permitting and maintenance issues. (NRC files)
- 1996 Complaints received about road race markings still visible. (NRC files)
- 1997 NRC discussed vegetation management along Fuller Brook. The issue was raised by limited resources of the DPW and distinction was made between aesthetics and need. There was concern that decisions were being made on an operational level by the DPW. (NRC files)
- 1997 Residents concerned about safety at intersections. Report by McDonough & Scully Inc. (DPW files)
- ca. 1999 New footbridge built at Caroline Brook east of high school. (DPW files)
- 2003 Fuller Brook Park Master Plan commissioned by NRC.

APPENDIX B: OLMSTED BROTHERS PROPOSAL FOR WELLESLEY PARKS

Note: The following letter was written by John Charles Olmsted of Olmsted Brothers to Wellesley Park Commissioner J.W. Peabody. The original is in the Olmsted Brother Files at the Library of Congress Manuscript Division, Job #2371, A Series, Reel 26, Frames 717-- 731.

9th February, 1897

Mr. J. W. Peabody,
Chairman of the Park Commission, Wellesley, Mass.

Dear Sir:-

Having, at your request, examined your project for the preservation of a portion of the valley of Fuller Brook by means of a parkway, we beg to submit the following report:-

The Town of Wellesley is notable among the many beautiful suburbs of Boston for its natural beauties and for its comparative freedom from objectionable features.

Most of the town is a pleasing landscape composed of gently rolling fields, groves and woods, breezy hills, pretty brooks, beautiful ponds with woody borders and one of the most charming rivers in this part of the country.

With so much natural beauty all about them, it can hardly be supposed that the inhabitants of Wellesley are in pressing need of a park, if by park is meant a large tract or land belonging to the public and devoted to the enjoyment of nearly natural scenery; such for instance, as is Franklin Park in Boston or the Woods of Lynn. Many a house in Wellesley commands views as pleasant as are to be found in Boston's great park, and every citizen can enjoy these views whenever so minded by strolling along almost any street in the town. That this remarkable rural beauty is appreciated is to be clearly inferred from the general character of most of the dwellings are indicative of refined tastes in those who live in them. Not only are there many citizens with a taste for the rural beauties of the town, but these persons undoubtedly have attracted, and will continue to attract others of refined taste to the town. In this way its scenery is both directly and indirectly the great asset of the town and of its land-owners. That this is true can readily be realized by any one who will imagine the town devoid of attractive scenery. Were it a level plain of gravel and sand without water, heights, trees or turf, it would be worthless for farming, and who would pay hundreds of dollars an acre for house sites in such a dreary place? It is pretty safe to say, from this point of view, that three-quarters, if not nine-tenths, of the present market value of the land of the town is due to its scenery. But what will become of the scenery of the town and its attractiveness as a place of residence for refined people who can afford to live in a pleasant place, if the process of selling off land in fifty-foot or one hundred-foot lots goes on indefinitely? Surely there will be practically nothing left of it. Those who are now buying lots in open land and building their homes upon them are able to enjoy the fine prospect over the unoccupied lands beyond them. Soon they will be shut in and crowded by other houses so that they must go to a distance to enjoy the scenery. Later, houses will occupy all the land for miles and the town will become as devoid of rural beauty and natural beauty as Somerville, or as Roxbury, once a most charming suburb. The north slope of Aspinwall Hill in Brookline is covered with expensive homes, yet how hideous is such a jumble of architecture, when seen from an opposite hillside, without the harmonizing and softening effect of lofty trees and gardening among the houses and without the contrasting effect of occasional stretches of open land or water bordered by woods. A town like Wellesley, lying at such a distance from the city that is reasonably certain not to be built up as closely as is the city within the fire limits, should be carefully planned well in advance of extensive building with the special object of making it a pleasant place in which to live in a suburban way. It seems to us that in order to preserve any noticeable effect of rurality, about as much space ought to be devoted to commons, playgrounds, pleasure grounds and reservations of scenery as is taken for streets.

Most will agree that this would be a very desirable and pleasant thing to do, but many will object that it is impossible to accomplish it, owing to the enormous cost involved. We are inclined, nevertheless, from our observation and experience, to believe that it would not be wholly impossible for the Town of Wellesley to

gradually acquire, partly by gifts from public-spirited citizens, as in Springfield and Hartford, a system of public pleasure grounds which would eventually occupy a total area equal to from one-eighth to one-quarter of the whole area of the town, and to fit them for the public use step by step, according as the growth of population would require and the growth in taxable wealth would permit.

It will add much to the value of any one public pleasure ground if it can also be made part of a chain or system of similar ground and connected with others by pleasure drives or parkways.

It is well, therefore, to begin by imagining a tentative but comprehensive general scheme for a system of public pleasure grounds and drives, even though it may seem somewhat chimerical. If such a scheme is kept in mind, every ground that is acquired can be made a decided step toward the accomplishment of a general plan, and in the course of a few generations the desired result may be realized, while a hand-to-mouth, scrappy method of procedure is not at all likely either to encourage the citizens to do that which might be done or to yield as great a return in pleasure and in rise of land values as the following of a plan would do.

It is hardly conceivable that Wellesley is going to do no more than Somerville had done to preserve natural beauty within her borders. Cambridge was, but a few years, in the same condition as Somerville, but she is redeeming herself as best she may, but at enormous expense, by acquiring and making ready for the use of her citizens Fresh Pond and the shores of Charles River. Wellesley may do far better at a fraction of the cost, if she will only secure the needed land in time.

Some of your thoughtful citizens, while enjoying the natural beauties of the town, will occasionally realize that these beauties are surely being destroyed, and will ask themselves whether it would not be prudent to take some precautions against the loss of some specially valuable features in the landscape, the destruction of which may be imminent. Other citizens of a more practical turn of mind will urge playground, and others small pleasure grounds for the benefit of neighboring real estate. Others again will favor reservations for the sanitary improvement of the ill-drained places. It is to be hoped that these various motives may lead to actual results, and if they do, they should be wisely guided and controlled.

Let us consider a comprehensive scheme as it should be, supposing the financial requirements could be met. We have not the data needed to enable us to give facts and figures, but we can hint at certain possibilities, and any one who is curious to pursue the enquiry further can make examinations and estimates which will satisfy him as to whether the hints are worth following up.

By far the finest landscape feature of Wellesley is the Charles River. Our first impression is that it would be best to have two public parks on the river: one a small forest park at the mouth of Waban Brook and the other a meadow park near the pumping works. Thus each end of the town would have a park, and yet they would be of distinctly different character. Then a riverbank drive should form part of the street system of the town and whatever narrow strips of land it might be necessary or convenient to leave between this road and the river should belong to the public and be made well furnished with trees and smaller growths appropriate to a river bank. Were the towns on the opposite side of the river to restore (?) the right bank in a similar way, the locality would eventually become noted as one of the most attractive residence districts about Boston. The land-owners could well afford to give the land needed for the river road and shore reservation because of the increased value which it would give their remaining lands. As for the forest park, it is to be hoped that land-owners would give the land as a matter of liberality, since there would be no profit in doing so. If the land needed is not likely to be improved much for the residences, and if it is not likely to double in value sooner than in fifteen or twenty years, the town would lose nothing financially by reason of its inability to pay for these parks. Perhaps a generation hence, when land begins to rise more rapidly in value or is more urgently needed for public pleasure and convenience, the town will be wealthy enough to pay for parks as well as Newton is now able to.

Lake Waban is another very attractive landscape feature, but it is already too late to secure all its shores. The public should have at least a small pleasure ground facing on the lake, conveniently accessible from the present center of population, and other pieces of land on the shores of the lake should be acquired as needed, or as they can be economically bought.

One or two pleasure grounds might well be secured when circumstances permit on one or two of the highest hills of the town, as has been done in Boston in the case of Roxbury Old Fort, Charlestown Heights and Mt. Bellevue.

Of small pleasure grounds consisting mainly of open grass land, the town should eventually have several, if possible, so situated as to serve both as playgrounds for various localities, and as breaks in the monotonous succession of houses and fences which will eventually occupy the greater part of the area of the town.

In the choice of such minor pleasure grounds, various practical matters have to be taken into consideration.

For instance, the town could well afford to take a considerable area of land to protect its water supply.

In several cases it would be well worth while to take swampy or low lands and gradually improve them for use as playgrounds.

It would be a wise precaution for the town to take a tract of land in the northern part of the town for use as a sewage disposal farm. As population grows about it, the sewage, which would at first, for economy, be flowed upon the surface, could be taken care of by a system of small tile drains without offence to the neighborhood, and the surface could then be kept in turf and be treated as a park or used as a playground.

In connection with some of these possible pleasure grounds or playground, it might be found practicable to develop a scheme of parkways with more or less informal reserved spaces between two roadways. Some of these parkways might on a smaller scale resemble the Muddy River Improvement between Boston and Brookline. A glance at the map will show that in addition to the suggested river drive, which would be the finest possible parkway, it would probably be profitable to have a broad parkway through the heart of the town from the new Hemlock Gorge Reservation on the Charles River at the east end of the town to or near the hill upon which is the reservoir: thence to Fuller Brook and along and on both sides of this brook to the Charles River again, with a branch to Lake Waban, as you have suggested.

It is quite within the bounds of possibility that such a parkway would eventually be one link in a great chain of parkways extending up and down the Charles River and by way of Boylston Street through Newton to a connection with the new Commonwealth Avenue extension, and with the proposed Boylston Street widening or parkway which the Town of Brookline is now considering. Such connections with other parkways and with playgrounds would make it much more useful and would add much to the value of land facing upon it. Both in Newton and in Wellesley, Boylston Street, while admirably situated for a trunk line of electric cars, is too narrow, and in places too steep, to well serve that purpose. A route could no doubt be selected for a parkway with a central reservation for electric cars, which would not be far from Boylston Street, and yet be on much better grades and pass through land so little occupied that the land needed for a broad parkway could be obtained at much less expense than would be needed for land to widen Boylston Street, and at the same time yield both the land-owners and the town greater profits through the rise of land values and increased tax receipts. We called the attention of some of the gentlemen interested in the Newton Boulevard or Commonwealth Avenue extension to this principle and the result has, we believe, amply justified us.

There is another aspect of the park and parkway problem which is undoubtedly of great practical importance and which should have careful consideration by all your citizens, and that is the sanitary improvement of the town. There are a number of swampy places in the town- not very large, but big enough to contain all the conditions needed to produce malarial diseases and to be in other ways a decided menace to health. If the improvement of these swamps is not looked after by the town, it is certain that much ill health will be caused, and ill health due to other causes greatly increased in severity and duration. If these swamps are left in private hands, it is probable that but little will be done toward remedying their unwholesomeness. On the contrary, it is inevitable, judging from experience elsewhere, that the unhealthy conditions will grow worse and worse. The natural surface drainage will be crowded upon so those floods will become decidedly troublesome. The swamps will become polluted by the overflow and seepage from cesspools and vaults; silt largely mixed with manure from road wash and from gardens and lawns will accumulate on the low lands, both choking natural drainage channels and producing beds of putrid vegetable matter in moist places, breeding virulent diseases as well as unhealthy conditions. No one

land-owner can by any degree of intelligent improvement of his own land rid himself of danger from evil conditions existing in the vicinity. The only remedy lies in the carrying out of a well-considered general scheme of improvement by the public authorities, partly directly and partly through the regulation of the private use of land. Whoever comes to study such a scheme of land drainage will find the problem enormously simplified if the town lays out a road on each side of the principal brooks and swamps and takes the land between for public pleasure grounds. Thus will proper routes be provided for future sewers; the natural water courses can be cheaply enlarged from time to time as the need becomes evident: considerable areas of low, wet lands will be saved from contamination and be preserved in their natural beauty or drained and smoothed for playgrounds. In some cases the expenditure which private owners might otherwise be compelled to make for filling low lands sufficiently to make them salable will be saved or expended in more valuable ways. In other cases a moderate expenditure by the public for deepening natural channels thus taken from numerous private owners will result in draining or affording opportunity for the ready drainage of considerable areas of private lands adjoining, thus adding to their value through rendering them wholesome and attractive to build on, and consequently increasing the wealth of the town and its income from taxation.

Experience proves that many low and unwholesome tracts of land gradually become covered with the dwellings of laborers and others too poor to pay for better land, or influenced by a misguided desire for economy, and by stables and manufacturing establishments of a kind injurious to the values of neighboring residences. In other words, the wet lands of a thickly settled town usually become its slums. The inhabitants of such slums, through ignorance, carelessness and poverty, not only pollute the soil on which they live more than more fortunate people, but the dampness, not to say wetness, of the soil and the crowding together of houses, thus shading the soil, prevent the air and sunlight from oxidizing the foul matters. These unhealthy conditions largely produced by human action (or inaction) in turn react upon the people exposed to them, making them more unhealthy and more vulnerable to the attacks of disease, and at the same time by depressing their physical condition break down their moral natures and cause them to become still more depraved and ignorant. The danger of such slums in Wellesley may seem to be very remote. Nevertheless, the conditions exist there which have produced such results elsewhere, and it is surely only a matter of time when Wellesley will be afflicted with its slums like most other towns, if it does not take effectual means to prevent them.

The sanitary and engineering aspects of this problem of caring for swamps in towns were touched upon when the preliminary plan for the improvement of Muddy River was devised in 1880 and a comprehensive discussion of the subject will be found in the admirable report of the late Mr. Albert F. Noyes to the City of Newton, published in 1898.

The particular improvement which you have outlined to us and which we have examined on the ground commends itself to our judgement as a wise and probably profitable project and one which, owing to the rapidity with which land is built upon in its vicinity, should be prosecuted without delay, both as an extremely desirable, and in fact to some extent absolutely necessary local improvement, and as part of a general system of public pleasure grounds which the town as a whole, having regard to its health and comfort as well as pleasure, should seriously consider and in some shape definitely adopt as a plan to be gradually carried out.

Your scheme we understand to be as follows:

A parkway to begin at Abbot Street opposite the grounds of the Wellesley Club and to extend thence southwesterly along the brook to Forest Street. Such a beginning is open to the objection that it is insignificant and undignified. So far as the general public is concerned, it begins nowhere in particular. If the town is to lay out such a parkway, it should at least begin on the main street of the town- Washington Street- and at the Wellesley Hills Station, or, better still, at the crossing of Washington Street and Worcester Street, and it should be so located as to permit of being extended to the Charles River, at the water works or at Hemlock Grove Reservation. If it be impracticable by reason of high land values to connect with the Washington Street and Worcester Street crossing, the parkway should be devised that it could be carried south of Maugus Hill in the future. By parkway in this case is meant an avenue at least one hundred and twenty feet wide, with a central reservation.

From Forest Street southwesterly, following down Kingsbury Brook, the parkway could widen out so as to provide space between the two roadways for the brook to be retained with natural borders.

Your suggestion that a sufficient tract of the nearly level upland lying between the brook and the aqueduct and between Forest Street and Kingsbury Street be taken to form a large playground and ball field strikes us as a most admirable and practical one. A playground at this point would be centrally located with reference to the more densely populated parts of the town and the expense of it could, therefore, be justly borne by the town. The broad area of swampy land about the junction of Kingsbury Brook with Fuller Brook should certainly be controlled by the town, whether any other part of your suggested parkway is taken or not, for it is certainly a menace to the health of citizens of a large part of the town.

From Kingsbury Street the parkway would continue down Fuller Brook to the junction of Waban Brook, the outlet of Lake Waban.

If the parkway has two roadways, but no provision for an electric railway, a minimum width of one hundred and fifty feet would generally serve all practical purposes, but it would probably save considerable expense in filling the roadways and slopes and would certainly tend to the preservation of very much more of the natural beauty of trees and shrubs to take usually a width of two hundred, and occasionally three hundred feet. This would also permit of the location of a high speed electric railway on the turf adjoining one of the roadways when the growth of a population or the interests of the land-owners demanded. Such a provision for a future electric railway has been made in Brookline along the Pond Avenue border of Leverett Park.

From Fuller Brook the parkway would extend up Waban Brook to Lake Waban, ending there in a concourse on the shore. This would be an admirable terminus of the parkway.

At and near the junction of the two brooks there is considerable march which forms a menace to health. We have no doubt that the cheapest remedy for this unhealthy condition would be a dam near Charles River and the formation of a pond at a height sufficient to flood back to solid upland on all sides. With the widening and deepening or damming of Waban Brook above this proposed pond a fine extension of the pleasure beating waters of the town would be secured. By providing runways with rollers at each of the dams, but little difficulty would be experienced in transferring boats from Lake Waban to Charles River.

It is to be hoped that some of the wooded land west of Waban Brook and bordering on Charles River could be secured as a public pleasure ground.

It is to be noted in favor of this scheme first, that it could be carried out in sections and that each section would have a value as a local ornamental ground sufficient to justify its cost. Second, that the land is now held in such large blocks that one of the two side roads of the parkway, or a road equivalent to it, would be necessary in any case in order to develop the land, and further that, owing to the swampy borders of the brook and the impossibility of any one land-owner properly draining the land, both the proposed roads would inevitably be required to properly develop the land for sale where the larger swamps are, even if no parkway were contemplated. Third, the town and land-owners, if no such parkway is built, will undoubtedly have to spend, from time to time, thousands of dollars for open ditches, walled ditches, pipe drains and brick or stone culverts, covered masonry break-channels, filling low pieces and providing pile foundations for buildings in deep much swamps. Much of this expense would be saved by carrying out the proposed parkway. Fourth, a scientific route for the main sewer of the most populous part of the town will be provided, so that the expense of acquiring a special right-of-way for the sewer may be saved. Fifth, a well-located separate right-of-way for a fast electric street railway can be provided in connection with the parkway at a very moderate expense for land and the cost of grading it can be postponed as long as desired.

In conclusion, we beg to say that while to many these projects may at first seem wild and impracticable, yet we venture to hope they deserve the earnest consideration of all thoughtful and public-spirited citizens.

Yours respectfully,

Olmsted Brothers