

POSITION PAPER NUMBER 3: PROPOSED FOREST PARK MASTER PLAN
Board of the Lake Forest Preservation Foundation, November 15, 2010

This Position Paper supplements our comments to the Parks and Recreation Board on April 19, 2010, and the City Council on May 17, 2010, supporting: (i) the revised Forest Park Master Plan statement that Simonds' and Hotchkiss's visions are to be the "organizing framework for rehabilitating the park's landscape", (ii) the appointment of the Forest Park Project Board, and (iii) studies relating to the retention and use of the Ring Road.

It is the consensus of the Board of Directors of the LFPF that the Forest Park Project Board and its several Focus Committees are well qualified to implement a Master Plan with due consideration of the principles of historic preservation. We also rely on the fact that HPC review for Certificates of Appropriateness (CofA) will be required prior to presentation of the Design Development and Construction plans to the City Council.

Our concerns at this time are (i) that the deliberations and decisions of the Project Board and its Focus Committees are consistent with the Simonds and Hotchkiss visions and (ii) that final decisions meet the criteria for Certificates of Approval (CofA) by the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). Therefore, we respectfully offer the following recommendations:

A. Guidelines for Cultural Landscapes Forest Park is a contributing property in the Lake Forest National Register Historic District. It is also a "Cultural Landscape" as defined by the Secretary of the Interior, with "Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes" requiring a cultural landscape plan for each of the subjects listed below.¹

1. **The Ring Road:** Maintain the Ring Road as a one-lane carriage road with a pervious surface, and allow automobile circulation.
 - a. Simonds' plan designated a one-lane carriage road, likely with a pervious surface. Simonds designed Forest Park in accordance with his vision of a public park: "...a place to show **natural scenery** observed from different points of view. One will wish to stop at certain places where the views are especially good, and there seats should be provided. In going about, one will either walk upon paths or lawns, or ride in wheeled vehicles upon drives....The walks and drives are primarily of convenience..."²
 - b. To preclude the possibility of driving on the Ring Road to view the Lake from the top of the bluff violates Simonds' vision for the Park. To remove the Ring Road is to demolish the Park's most significant historic structure and would warrant disapproval of a CofA by the HPC.
 - c. Minimal parking, screened with shrubbery in the massing style of O. C. Simonds, should be allowed in an area near the historic vistas to the Lake and include spaces for those with mobility issues. Parallel parking along the east side of the Ring Road should not be allowed. Forest Park was designed as a respite to enjoy nature, not as a service area for the Beach, and should not become one.

¹ http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/hli/landscape_guidelines/index.htm ; Also "Brief 36: Protecting Cultural Landscapes," National Park Service.

² Simonds, O. C., *Landscape Gardening*, University of Massachusetts Press, 2000, pages 236-237, 238.

2. **The Vistas:** Restore Simonds' original vistas as documented in his plan and verified by historic aerial and other photographs. Consider the appropriateness of additional vistas, respectful of Simonds' design principals, from the wooded area south of Simonds' historic landscape.
3. **Auxiliary Structures:** Auxiliary structures, to include but not limited to, bluff stairs, seating, memorials, signage, lighting, bike racks, picnic tables, trash receptacles, bird houses, and drinking fountains, should be "subordinate to the general landscape effects"³ as Simonds envisioned park structures to be. The existing streetlights are historic structures, and should remain in the Park. The "Belvedere" stairs also are an historic element and should not be widened.
4. **Horticulture:** Planting should conform in the central historic area and in treatment of renovated areas to Simonds' original design and vision for parks.⁴ Plant material should conform to Simonds' plant list, avoiding species now known to be invasive. All horticultural elements should be reviewed by horticultural experts, such as those at the Chicago Botanic Garden and The Morton Arboretum (designed by Simonds). The Design-Development documents should include a Maintenance Plan and an Implementation Strategy, as prescribed by the National Park Service.⁵

B. HPC Review: The Project Board should seek the *ongoing* advice and approval of the HPC as it moves through the Design Development Phase and the Construction Implementation Phase. The HPC should not be asked to approve a Final Plan as a case of first impression.

It is the intention of the Preservation Foundation's Board to monitor the proceedings of the Project Board, its Focus Committees, and the HPC to ensure that the members of the LFPF and the public are kept current on developments. However, we do not purport to have any direct representation on the Project Board or any of its Focus Committees and, to the extent that any of our members are serving thereon, they are doing so solely in their individual capacities.

³ Ibid, page 246.

⁴ Ibid, page 240.

⁵ "Brief 36: Protecting Cultural Landscapes," National Park Service.