

Evolutionary Infrastructure: Marginal Landscapes as Critical Infrastructure Boston's Back Bay Fens

KATHY POOLE

University of Virginia

Landscapes as Evolutionary Infrastructures

Landscapes like parks and public squares are more than important elements in the city. They are infrastructures, *basic components of urban living, elements necessary to accommodate congregated living*. One of the ways that landscape infrastructures are most important is their ability to evolve over time, to take on various forms, functions, and dynamics in relation to the surrounding city.¹ They embody expressive relationships that mirror changing cultural relationships between nature and city. They are physical relationships with a potentially powerful role in structuring the city. They are social relationships that demonstrate the value of landscape infrastructure in making places.

As evolutionary infrastructures capable of assuming numerous roles, urban landscapes are critical to the *continuous* project of building cities. This essay demonstrates these potentials through Boston's Back Bay Fens, an exemplar in urban design, civil engineering, and landscape architecture. The investigation considers the Boston landscape throughout its life as an urban landscape, from its relatively unmanipulated 17th c. marshland form to its current debates.²

The contemporary Back Bay Fens area of Boston is a remnant of the original fen that encompassed over 1000 acres.³ Boston's original fen was a tidal wetland that also received drainage from three water bodies: the Muddy River, Stony Brook, and the great Charles River. The bay both separated and joined the bulbous head of Boston from Cambridge and Roxbury and South Boston, the latter connected only by a thin sliver known as The Neck. This essay considers not only the infrastructure roles of the built landscape of the park but also the roles of the park *land*—the Back Bay Fens landscape in all its forms both preceding and post-dating the construction of the park proper.

The Fens evolutionary story expands our repertoire of how built natural infrastructures, can

contain wide-ranging, powerful, and creative potentials for *contemporary* landscape design, particularly in landscapes' abilities to continually reinvigorate citizens' understandings of their places within the city. The Fens also demonstrates how "evolutionary" infrastructures—infrastructures whose expressions change over time—have a unique ability to accommodate changing populations and accommodate the increasing diverse populations of the city, particularly marginalized groups and expressions that have no other place within the designed city.

Wild Territory (-1802)

In 1630 Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes described the marsh landscape of the Great Bay (as it was called) as an overgrown tangle of windblown trees, filled with an array of wildlife and "one human."⁴ It was murky territory, ambiguous land that was not quite land but not quite water. Subject to diurnal tides, it literally shifted beneath people's feet, making it quite undependable. This murky territory was proximally near the "owned,"



Fig. 1. Boston in 1775. *Carte du Porte et Havre de Boston*, Chevalier de Beau_rin (Courtesy Harvard College Library Map Collection).

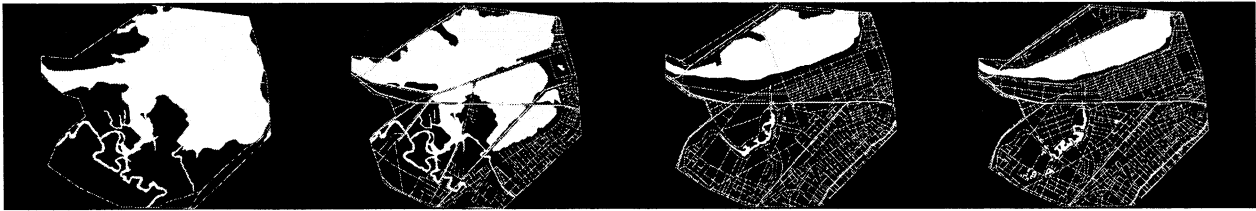


Fig. 2. Back Bay's evolution over time.

platted, and bustling territory of central Boston. Yet, conceptually, it was a world away. In fact, most accounts of it are 'remote'—from somewhere else—reporting it as a place that colonists liked to view passively.⁵

The coupling of expansiveness and uncontrolability imprinted Back Bay as a place of untamed, *wild* creatures that could only do colonists harm. Some of those wild creatures were human. It kept French and English troops literally 'at bay' in their military encampments. Nonetheless in April 1775, the British attempted to capitalize on the Bay's murky, shrouding qualities when they crossed the Charles River portion of the bay, prompting Paul Revere's famous cry that "the British are coming."⁶

The fens' wild qualities also allowed the marsh landscape to serve important infrastructural functions. As a shifting landscape that could not be (literally) settled, it allowed only transitory human inhabitation, primarily men whose intents were to *catch* those wild creatures, "the haunt of duck hunters, [and] fishermen" as well as "mudlarking boys," children who enjoyed frolicking in the mud.⁷ For approximately a century and a half, it served as a version of the increasingly popular 'urban wilds,' those remnant landscapes within the city that maintain access to the city's former nature, a natural landscape not filled with human intention.

The marsh's wildness also bolstered the city's conceptual understanding of itself. Functioning as a *reciprocal* to the built city, the fens made distinct the sense of the city as a 'cultured' entity and not a savage territory that the British accused it of being.

Productive Landscape (1803-1821)

By 1803 growing land availability pressures of Boston took precedence over impressions of the land being dangerous territory—at least in part. Few took up residence in the low lands, but land-poor colonists began looking for free ways to raise livestock. The Back Bay's marshy lands, adjacent to the traditional grazing land of Boston Common, made them obvious choices, particularly once grazing was banished from the Common. The marsh lands were also obvious choices because they were filled with salt hay. In such a vast marsh, cows grazed freely without danger of outcompeting one another and without the need for cattle owners to own land. When it was time to slaughter, the owners simply went out to 'hunt' them.

The marshes were also valuable hay crops for those whose land was not large enough to support hay feed for their animals. Citizens need not own this crop land. They merely needed to load hay on gondolas from the bay and on carts from landside. And finally, increasing numbers of Bostonians fished and dug clams for subsistence and for sale at the market.

Therefore, during the early years of the 19th century, the Back Bay landscape shared oftentimes forgotten values of urban landscapes. It supported productive citizens in positive ways that not only served them personally but also served the larger city.

The landscape's activities had no direct economic benefit to the city's official economic tally, what might metaphorically be likened to a 'gross national product.' Nonetheless, the landscape served the city well by contributing to the city's less official but perhaps more important 'gross urban product.' By supporting the subsistence of residents, it contributed to Boston's economic stability.⁸ It was a productive landscape that did work for the city's developing urbanity.

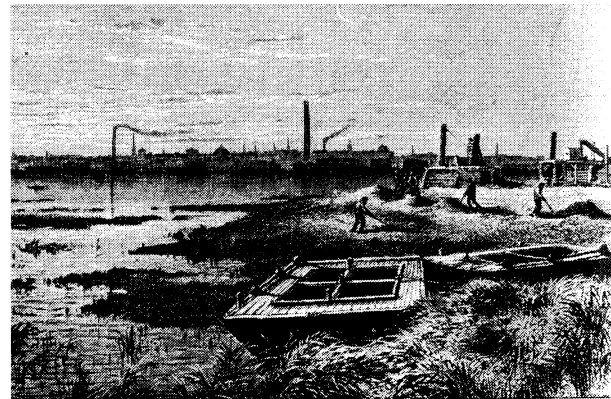


Fig. 3. Salt hay harvesting in the marsh.

Unsanctioned Activities (1821-1849)

The productivity of the fens landscape grew exponentially with the 1813 actions of Uriah Cotting and his business partners when they petitioned for "liberty to build a Mill Dam."⁹ The fifty foot wide causeway was composed of a gravel toll road along the river side and on the bay side was a plank walk planted with poplars. A short cross dam divided the bay in two. At high tide water passed through floodgates, moved through sluices, and generated power as it passed into a receiving Basin. At low tide, the water drained back through Mill Dam sluices into the Charles River. The industrial mecca anticipated by Cotting never materialized, in part because the anticipated tidal energy proved highly overestimated. The greater reasons were the railroads that came in 1835. The Boston + Worcester and the Boston + Providence converted the "waste" land into an important transfer station for goods. Soon the Back Bay was a bustling industrial complex.

Intentional, physical public access—as opposed to mere visual access—subdued some of the landscape's wild associations and brought new infrastructural possibilities. People began to enjoy being *in* the marsh. People cut ice from the shallow marsh waters. The Mill Dam became a fashionable place. People promenaded. Irish immigrants by the hundreds enjoyed big rigger boat races from along the Mill Dam.¹⁰

Simultaneously, the marsh continued to retain its 'wild' qualities, albeit subdued, and therefore allowed unsanctioned activi-

ties to occur without retribution. The marsh landscape hosted activities that could not occur in more codified and behaviorally restricted urban landscapes. And it harbored urban needs and citizens that the built city could not. Contemporary accounts report that a walk on the Mill Dam meant that couples could court in the early evening hours without fearing observation.¹¹ And the Mill Dam's breadth, length, and straight run made it a favorite place for sleigh racing, impossible on city streets. Small tipcarts dumped household garbage, while others hoed through the ashes and took away chairs, bottles, and other "unconsidered trifles."¹² Trash dumping enabled some citizens to rid themselves of unwanted rubbish while other citizens gathered what they needed. And finally, the marsh took on a long lasting marginal activity when in 1827 the city obtained permission to flush sewage into the fen. Functionally the tides' natural flushing took the waste out to deeper waters, helping stem the city's cholera outbreaks—at least to a degree. Urbanistically the fens landscape became an official municipal utility, a sewage infrastructure.

The fens were no longer a reciprocal landscape to the city. The marshland had established a median ground, a wonderfully ambiguous landscape infrastructure that could hold many expressions and serve many urban infrastructure needs.



Fig. 4. "Waste" land becoming integrated with the city (Courtesy Boston Public Library).

Coordinated Infrastructures (1850-1869)

Within ten years of the railroads' coming, the ever increasing quantity of sewage and the ever decreasing tidal flushing caused citizens to *continually* complain of "the abode of filth and disease" from which "every western wind sends its pestilential exhalations across the entire city."¹³ Feces rested on these flats at low tide. A simmering public movement for sewage reform heated to a boil.

The sewage reform issue deserves a more thorough treatment than can be accommodated here. It suffices to say that the Boston Board of Health concluded that the "mills were of little profit to anybody and nuisance to everybody...and that it was desirable to fill the Receiving Basin...and to convert it into solid land."¹⁴ The City negotiated a tripartite agreement between the Commonwealth, the City, and two corporations. They developed a plan and began filling land at a frenzied pace. All to-

taled, they filled over 800 acres, an unprecedented urban design effort.

Based on Haussmann's and Alphand's Parisian infrastructure efforts, Back Bay was transformed into a particularly well-orchestrated and unified collection of infrastructures—an impressive urban design effort: evenly-distributed, planned streets, orchestrated topography, positive surface drainage, understandable lot layouts, street trees, a park-like boulevard, sculpture, and a set of deed restrictions to ensure its 'proper' development.

The prescriptive urban design came with a social cost. Forty of what John Charles Olmsted called "the cheapest kind of dwellings" were condemned. He continued to say that unless some extensive and expensive improvement of the whole valley were to be soon made, it was seemingly inevitable that this "squalid and unsanitary occupation of it would cover all parts of this valley and discourage good occupation of the neighborhood."¹⁵ Both turn of the century and contemporary writers have referred to these citizens pejoratively as "squatters" and their dwellings as "squalid shacks" and "shanties".¹⁶ However, a closer inspection of period images suggests that the dwellings were merely typical of most 18th century Americans. These Bostonians, pejoratively called "marsh people," were ordered out to make way for Boston's new fashionable and elite neighborhood. Socially and financially more endowed citizens took the places of the "marsh people" who were financially unable to remain unless they were able to secure positions in the Back Bay residents' houses as servants or other service personnel. Randomly placed wooden houses and vegetable gardens were traded for unified, deed restriction-bound brownstone walkups and tree lined boulevards. Where Back Bay had earlier accommodated a variety of activities and social classes, it was now a unified urban design, as one 1872 visitor nicely summed it up, "a class environment of an unusually homogenous kind."¹⁷

Civic Infrastructure (1869-1882)

The populations of Stony Brook's watershed had increased so dramatically that the City Board of Health's annual report speculated that "there is not probably a foot of mud in the river, in the basins...that is not fouled with sewage."¹⁸ In heavy rains sewers backed up into residents' houses. Plus, the openness of the vast bay, much loved by many Bostonians, was quickly becoming filled with four and five story buildings that threatened to obliterate the city's intimate relationship with the natural landscape. In 1869 prominent citizens and business people petitioned Boston City Council to take lands to preserve unbuilt landscapes within the city by making them parks. The desire for maintaining open space and solving the sewage problem coalesced into a unique synthetic infrastructure solution for its time, a stormwater park, a public landscape infrastructure concerned with aesthetics that also provided important municipal services—flood control and a kind of sewage 'treatment.'

The City of Boston hired Frederick Law Olmsted to design

Back Bay Park (later to become the Back Bay Fens) to fulfill its unique specifications for a park (which would have been linked to stormwater no matter who designed it). As others have argued, Olmsted designed “ecologically” by reconstructing the biotically degraded fen. But more importantly, Olmsted wanted to maintain the *full* aesthetic, the complete *sensibility* of the former fens landscape—its expansiveness, the waving of the marsh grasses, the blustery winds, the tidal flux. His landscape embraced citizens’ memories as well as the site’s ecological memory. The design was no mimic of the historical landscape. It was clearly transformed into a contemporary urban expression. What Olmsted delivered was a landscape rooted in the history of the city and its collective memory.

It was not a cultured park aesthetic of the 19th century elite. Rather, it was a ‘common’ one, an ordinary landscape of flat land and marsh-like plantings. It was a landscape valued by 200 years of ordinary citizens. As such Olmsted chose an aesthetic expression that enhanced the project’s ‘urbanity,’ a landscape design that is meaningful to *all* residents, regardless of social class, and a design that contributed to citizens’ *understandings* of the entire city.

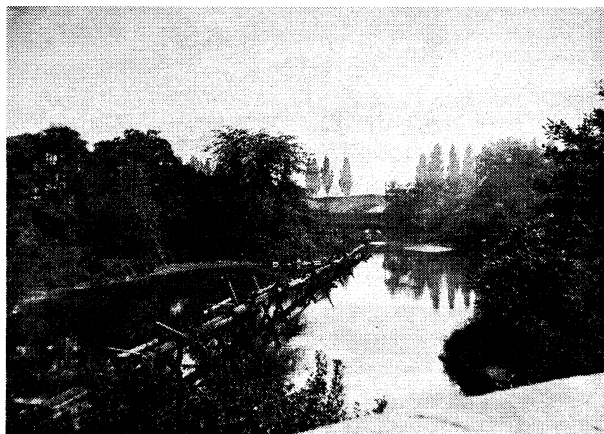


Fig. 5. Transformation of ecological memory into urban expression (Courtesy Olmsted National Historic Site).

Municipal Utility (1888-1901)

Because of the creative conjoining of park and stormwater utility, the Fens functioned as everyone had intended. Stony Brook was encased in two, 9' rubble stone tunnels; the brook was then diverted through a gatehouse just as it reached the Fens and channeled into a 7' brick bypass conduit that released it into the Charles River. The Muddy River's dry weather flow supplied the Fens' water; but in heavy rains, a gate valve allowed it to be diverted through its own bypass tunnel to the Charles River. Thus, only diluted sewage entered the Fens, and the Fens effectively functioned as a storage basin for stormwater for the Back Bay area. But the city grew, and soon the Fens was overwhelmed with sewage. Consequently, the city built the

Commissioners Channel, a new channel and new bypass channel that would avert sewage being discharged into the park.

The problem was that the city constructed the Commissioners Channel *before* constructing its link to the bypass channel. Raw daily sewage flowed into the Fens for two years until it was diverted to the Stony Brook bypass conduit in December 1889. Plus the Fens was used on numerous occasions as a temporary holding tank for dewatering sewage- and deposition-laden portions of the marsh that were being filled for development.

So distasteful were the conditions that the boats introduced in 1896 were not-surprisingly removed in 1901 because of “lack of patronage,”¹⁹ a sentiment echoed in accounts of people avoiding the park. By 1901 the Fens was transformed from being *primarily* a park landscape that also functioned as flood prevention to being a municipal sewage landscape that hardly functioned as a park.

It is true that the city chose a plan of action that would allow the Commissioners' Channel to remain unfinished for eight years. It is also true that the city chose to intentionally tarnish what had been a very expensive public landscape works, 85 million in today's dollars. Yet, these actions reinforced the landscape's ability to accommodate perhaps its most marginal infrastructure, sewage. And at least for a time, it helped citizens better understand the *workings* of the city—in all their aspects both pleasant and putrid.

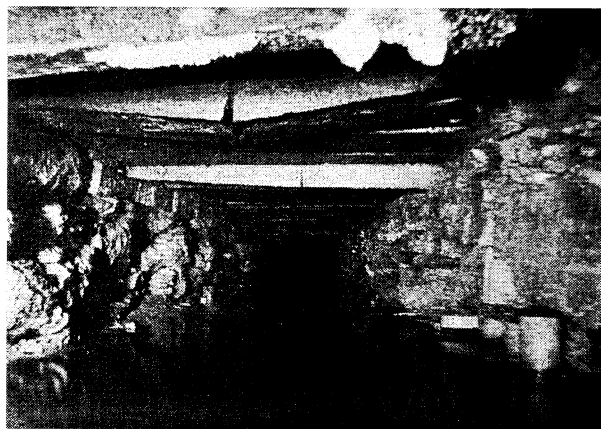


Fig. 6. Conduit beneath Back Bay Fens for sewage and storm waters.

Institutional Magnet (1901-1928)

Once a clear solution for the sewage problem was defined, the Back Bay Fens became a magnet for a number of prestigious corporations that then occupied its periphery: Massachusetts Historical Society, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Simmons College, Emmanuel College, Wheelock College, and Forsyth Dental Clinic.²⁰ The two most notable were Boston Museum of Fine Arts and Harvard Medical School both of which successfully lobbied the city to redesign the park so that their buildings were “in closer relation with the Fens.”²¹ To be a part

of the Fens was an asset. Thus, park and institutions were conjoined.

So conjoined were they that residents and administrators began to complain of the Fens' "misshapen," "ruined," and "overcrowded" trees that (according to Olmsted, Sr.'s stepson John Charles Olmsted) were not appropriate among \$100,000 buildings.²² The Parks Department began to replace Olmsted's semi-native, marsh-like choices to those more likely found in traditional gardens and tidy up the waterway's scruffy edges. And once the dam was constructed on the Charles River, the Fens was no longer tidal, prompting administrators and designers to completely realign the Muddy River, the water course that structured the Fens.

As *partner* to the institutions, the Fens still fulfilled desires and activities specific to parks. But to some degree, it was relegated to being a mere foreground to the institutions, a stage setting for the institutions that comprised the main events. The Fens began to operate less as a field of conceptual substance in its own right and more as null ground—open space—into which other things were inserted.

One of those things was a series of active recreational fields. And another of those things was garbage. In essence, the city accomplished its recreational infrastructure goals through *another* urban infrastructure—landfilling. The marshes were filled with excavated material from various subway construction projects, a combination of coal and wood burning ashes, common city garbage, and "old boilers, bricks, and up-rooted plumbing,"²³ Just as it had in the 18th c., the park served the larger city by providing a place for it to cheaply dispose of unwanted excavation material, ashes, and rubbish. A highly visible, upscale urban infrastructure of a park *simultaneously* fulfilled a marginal infrastructure need of waste disposal.

Grounds for Collective Civic Expression (1929-1950)

In 1929 Bostonians quit filling the Fens with garbage and instead began filling it with expressions of civic ideals. The first of these expressions was the Fens Rose Garden. Its archways and brocade treatment so expressive of the city's valuing of public gardens that it was more than doubled to its present size three years later. The Victory Gardens site was a playfield until WWII when the federal government launched a campaign supposedly aimed at stemming a potential food shortage and investing people personally in the war effort. The result was Boston's expression of its patriotism in the form of the Victory Gardens much as we know them today. Boston's more codified war memorials took form in the 1949 polished granite monument that remains today. Citizens have continued to add monuments since: the Korean War and the Vietnam War (1989); the Temple Bell (a peace offering from Japan); monuments to sports heroes like Roberto Clemente; and famous citizens like John Everett (a pilgrim forefather) and Katherine Bates (writer of the poem that became the revered alternative American anthem

"America the Beautiful").

The point is that originally the Fens' primary aesthetic vision was of one man, Olmsted. Yet, once his vision was literally overturned in the earth, the Fens became a ground for a *collection* of civic expressions, a place for Bostonians to display a series of values that the city as a whole understood about itself.



Fig. 7. Rose Memorial Garden foregrounding Boston's Museum of Fine Arts (Courtesy Boston Public Library).

Displaced Landscape (1950-1982)

By the 1950s the larger Back Bay area was an eclectic collection, too. It included hospitals, movie theaters, concert halls, music conservatories, women's colleges, religious colleges, art museums, historical societies, and corporate 'institutions' like the Seagram Company and Fenway Park. The businesses and residents were just as diverse. Leonard Bernstein lived among hardware store owners, and soon-to-be famous artists lived near prostitutes.

But in the 1960s many of the same institutions threatened the healthy diversity. The economic dynamics are fascinating but too complex to thoroughly examine here. Suffice it to say that the burgeoning of tax exempt institutions, large scale urban renewal efforts in the name of 'progress,' and a nationwide exodus to the suburbs caused Back Bay to lose much of its middle class, an important stabilizing force for the neighborhood and caretaker group for the park.

The result was the influx of new populations. Those without the money to patronize drinking *establishments* turned to the Fens as their outdoor bar. One cleanup effort resulted in the collection of ten thousand beer cans, but this reportedly did "not even scratch the surface."²⁴ Plus, lack of maintenance allowed homeless people to 'construct' dwellings within overgrown shrubberies and inhabit unkempt, unused buildings like the Clemente field house.

Phragmites, an aggressive dense-growing reed, was introduced in the Fens sometime in the 1950s or 1960s to provide a nesting area for ducks. By the 70s it was so visually impermeable that it provided a habitat of sorts for a new displaced group—homosexual men. Since then gay men have cruised the Fens

looking for companions. Some men are looking for very short term relationships, which occur in the phragmites, which is 25' high and 30' deep along parts of the Fens waterway. The vegetation is so dense that the Fens now has a complex of 'sex rooms.' Many of these men are married or others who do not want to reveal their homosexuality. The landscape provides an opportunity for men to show themselves locally yet cloak themselves from the rest of society—a precarious yet functional balance.²⁵

Olmsted had always meant for the Fens to be a place of "persons brought closely together, poor and rich, young and old, Jew and Gentile."²⁶ He got more than his wish in the 70s when the Fens provided some groups a sort of refuge from the social mores of the majority. As a social infrastructure, it offered the city a landscape for those who did not have another place within the city.



Fig. 8. 'Sex Rooms' in the Back Bay Fens.

Repository of History (1983-1996)

Back Bay mounted a recovery in the 1980s. 'Recovery' was a key concept for a park that was in such a degraded state. Bridges, walks, and buildings were literally crumbling. Vegetation was overgrown and noticeably untrimmed. Much of the original diversity had been lost, particularly the understory trees and shrubs. Volunteer and invasive plant species confused the park's aesthetic. And drainage was uncontrolled.

Sparked by a resurgent interest in landscape history and in Olmsted himself, the plan helped garner a constituency which spurred the State Legislature in 1983 to call for "the preparation of plans...and for the rehabilitation and *restoration* of the Olmsted parks in the Commonwealth," including the Back Bay Fens.²⁷ And the position of restoration is still the strategy in effect, best described by Pressley Associates/Walmsley Associates' 1983 plan, in which they propose that the Fens' strategy be one of "Adaptive Restoration... the accommodation of new [post-Olmstedian] uses while preserving the "look" of the original scenic composition."²⁸ Apparently, the Fens is a valuable infrastructure as a historical repository of many times and values and expressions—a pastiche of the city's history.

Making Cities

With this plan still operating as a conceptual guide, the Fens has steadily been improved since the 80s. But its pivotal moment is now. Together active citizens groups, the Parks Department, Boston Water and Sewer Authority, and other municipal authorities have landed a \$19 million* coup and secured approval for the Fens to be dredged and its banks regraded. With this effort, Bostonians have the chance to exercise urban design in ways that we should perhaps all be exercising.

The Back Bay Fens demonstrates how expanding public landscapes' roles can accommodate the increasing diversity of urban populations. It has continually accommodated—even nurtured—citizens, activities, and social conditions that have been unwelcomed and shunned by more codified and restrictive built landscapes: becoming recycling territories; housing those without property; offering workplaces and food sources for those without conventional employment; sheltering homeless displaced by more restrictive politics; providing cover for socially shunned citizens; accommodating a diverse population not as actively fostered elsewhere in the city; and providing a welcomed territory for typically disdained municipal infrastructures like sewage treatment, stormwater control, and landfilling. And only in rare moments has accommodating these marginal roles disallowed or diminished more codified activities and populations that are accepted *anywhere* in the city.

The Back Bay Fens also demonstrates how built natural infrastructures can further citizens' understandings of the city: the municipal services and urban processes that make it work; the values it holds collectively; the relationship of those collective values to those that are outside mainstream mores; and the range of relationships to nature from contrast to it to foreground for it.

To find these creative intersections expands not only the city's aesthetic expressions but also provides more forums for citizens to exercise more aspects of their citizenship.

And finally the Back Bay Fens also demonstrates how landscapes, as marvelously amphibious structures, landscapes able to transform themselves into new structure that serve the city's *changing* needs. The Fens' evolution demonstrates the value of shifting our view of designed urban landscapes from being static infrastructures conceived at a singular moment to being dynamic urban structures that can continue to be active agents in the city.

Were the city to value the Fens' legacy of continually providing a *place* for that which the city rarely gives place, it might allow one of the Fens' most important histories to resonate into its future. Were the city to ensure that the Fens' future designs continue to enrich citizens' understandings, it might continue to offer creative models of urban design. Were the city to value the Back Bay Fens' ability to continually evolve, it would demonstrate what all urban landscapes, as infrastructures, have the opportunity to accomplish: to define urban territories in which *all* citizens might shape the city of their imaginations and the city they wish it to *become*.

For a full-color, multimedia presentation of the image accompanying this essay, contact the author at kpoole@virginia.edu for access to the larger Back Bay Fens project website, currently under construction.

NOTES

- ¹ For a more complete historical account and discussion of the Back Bay Fens' infrastructural roles, look for the author's article forthcoming in *Landscape Journal*.
- ² The essay builds upon the important work of my predecessors, in particular, Cynthia Zaitzevsky, Anne Whiston Spirn, and Catherine Howett. What distinguishes the essay is its departure from their consideration of the Fens as an infrastructure at *singular* moments in time, either when Olmsted originally designed it and/or in the present day.
- ³ By definition, a fen is a peat-accumulating wetland that receives some drainage from surrounding mineral soil and usually supports marshlike vegetation.
- ⁴ Howe, 1.
- ⁵ Barbara W. Moore and Gail Weesner, *Back Bay: a Living Portrait* (Boston: Century Hill Press, 1995), p. 8.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁸ Many thanks to Camille Wells, who in her usual collegial manner,

helped a hunch take historical form.

- ⁹ Arthur Muir Whitehill, *Topographical History of Boston*, p. 100.
- ¹⁰ Oscar Handlin, *Boston's Immigrants 1790-1880: a Study in Acculturation* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1959), p. 157.
- ¹¹ Whitehill, *op. cit.*, p. 101.
- ¹² Whitehill, *op. cit.*, p. 32.
- ¹³ Moore and Weesner, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
- ¹⁴ Moses King, *The Back Bay District and the Vendome* (Boston: Moses King, 1880), p. 5.
- ¹⁵ John Charles Olmsted's comment is found in his "Perambulatory Tour" with Arthur Shurtleff in A. A. Shurtleff, October 7, 1910. *Notes On Perambulatory Trip Through the Park System With Mr. Olmsted and Mr. Pettigrew*.
- ¹⁶ John Freeman refers to them as "squalid shacks" in John Freeman, *Report of the Committee on Charles River Dam* (Boston: Wright & Potter Printing Co., 1903), p. 195. Weesner refers to them as "shanties;" *op. cit.*
- ¹⁷ John Brinckerhoff Jackson, *American Space: the Centennial Years 1865-1876* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1972), p. 128.
- ¹⁸ *Main Drainage*, pp. 19-20.
- ¹⁹ Moore and Weesner, *op. cit.*, p.8.
- ²⁰ In part the Fens was riding on the coattails of Back Bay, as the district had always been planned as a district for prestigious institutions. Yet, these corporate entities made clear choices to locate directly adjacent to the Fens and to orient their structures to take best advantage of it.
- ²¹ *30th Annual Report of The Board of Commissioners for the Year Ending January 31, 1905*. Boston Parks Commission., p. 7.
- ²² Shurtleff, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-15.
- ²³ *The Fenway*. Boston 200 Neighborhood History Series (The Boston 200 Corporation, 1976).
- ²⁴ *Record American*. Friday, July 10, 1970. Text by David Rosen, Photos by Earl Ostroff and Richard Chase.
- ²⁵ The balance is precarious because that same cloaking makes the Fens a landscape of fear. Numerous muggings and hate crimes have been leveled against queer couples and individuals in the Fens. The landscape that allowed a community to develop also makes it a dangerous one.
- ²⁶ Frederick Law Olmsted. *Parks and the Enlargement of Towns*.
- ²⁷ Pressley Associates/Walmsley Associates, *The Emerald Necklace Plan for Restoration*. (Boston, 1983).
- ²⁸ Walmsely/Pressley Joint Venture. 1989. Emerald Necklace Parks Master Plan. Prepared for the Department of Environmental Management, Homestead Historic Preservation Program.