



PLANTING FIELDS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



PLANTING FIELDS FOUNDATION PRESENTS A SYMPOSIUM CELEBRATING THE LEGACY OF RESIDENTIAL COMMISSIONS BY FREDERICK LAW OLMSTED AND HIS FIRM

October 19-21, 2022

*Symposium will be followed by a weekend of free public tours of Olmsted public and private estates on Long Island hosted by Planting Fields Foundation and The Cultural Landscape Foundation, **October 22-23, 2022***

OYSTER BAY, NY: As part of the celebration of the bicentennial of the birth of Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., Planting Fields Foundation, in conjunction with the National Association for Olmsted Parks (NAOP) and the Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site, will present a major two-day symposium to examine the residential projects of the Olmsted firm, spanning from 1857 to 1979. Bringing together experts in the fields of landscape architecture history and practice, this multi-day convening focuses on the impact of the Olmsted firm on residential landscape design, considering patronage, taste-making, and place-making for a private context; American landscapes and issues of equity; methods of sustainability in the stewardship of Olmsted designed landscapes; and decision-making models for assessment and management among other topics.

The symposium will be followed by a *What's Out There Weekend* of free public tours of Olmsted-designed landscapes on Long Island – from pleasure grounds and estate landscapes to planned communities and cemeteries, organized and hosted by Planting Fields Foundation and The Cultural Landscape Foundation (TCLF).

“We are thrilled to host this important conversation about Olmsted-designed landscapes and how they evolve over time”, said Gina Wouters, executive director of Planting Fields Foundation. “Planting Fields is one of the few extant private estates that is publicly accessible designed by the Olmsted firm, and we are particularly engaged with preserving, protecting, and documenting its past, present, and future. The symposium and *What's Out There Weekend* give scholars and landscape enthusiasts alike an opportunity to experience what the genius of Frederick Law Olmsted and his firm created on Long Island and particularly at Planting Fields.”

“Planting Fields provides dynamic and compelling programming throughout the year that appeals to a range of audiences,” said Charles A. Birnbaum, President & CEO of The Cultural Landscape Foundation. “During this year’s commemoration of Olmsted, Sr.’s birth, Planting Fields not only affirms its place in landscape history as a rare, intact Olmsted firm designed estate commission that possess a high degree of integrity, but it also advances its position as a significant ambassador for the Olmsted design legacy through its recent rehabilitation projects and this consequential symposium.”

Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr is best known for public parks and park system commissions, including perhaps most famously Central Park in New York City and the Emerald Necklace in Boston. Following his retirement, his legacy continued through the successor firm Olmsted Brothers (1898-1961), headed by Olmsted, Jr. and John Charles Olmsted. During its illustrious history, as transportation improvements extended suburban enclaves beyond city boundaries, domestic design increasingly became an important component of the Olmsted firm’s practice. Records indicate a number close to 3,000 projects over the life of the firm. For just the first three decades of the twentieth century they numbered more than 1,000 projects. Examining this legacy and helping the public to understand the inherent preservation and interpretation challenges in the face of climate change and often unbridled development is vital to the stewardship of these important places.

The convening opens the evening of Wednesday, October 19th at the Olmsted-designed private estate of La Selva, with a keynote address by legendary landscape historian John Dixon Hunt, who will discuss the legacy of placemaking. On Thursday, October 20, the morning begins at Planting Fields with a welcome by Gina Wouters, executive director of Planting Fields Foundation, followed by a presentation and discussion led by Witold Rybczynski on the layers of design and the history of landscape at Planting Fields. His presentation, entitled *A Country Place: The Houses and Gardens of Planting Fields, 1904-1930*, will set the stage for a morning of discussion on how landscapes evolve and change over time. Continuing the themes of Planting Fields and the evolution of landscapes, Patricia O’Donnell will present highlights from her firm’s 2019 Cultural Landscape Report for Planting Fields. Dedi Petri, president of the National Association for Olmsted Parks, will discuss the Olmsted legacy and its future, and luminary landscape architect Laurie Olin will lead a discussion on how contemporary landscape architects can both restore and update historic landscapes within the context of contemporary practice and climate pressures.

Friday’s convening begins with Charles A. Birnbaum, president of The Cultural Landscape Foundation who will present his lecture *The Olmsted in All of Us*, charting the rise of the Olmsted renaissance in the mid-1960s during both the height of Modernism and the waning years of the Olmsted firm’s practice. The day continues with a panel discussion on the evolution of Olmsted landscapes and presentations by Arlene Levee and Sara Zwede among others. For more information visit the [symposium webpage](#).

Following the conference, October 22-23, 2022, Planting Fields Foundation and The Cultural Landscape Foundation (TCLF) will host [What’s Out There Olmsted on Long Island](#), featuring a weekend of more than a dozen free, expert-led tours of significant landscapes designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. and his successor firms. Confirmed sites include: Bayard Cutting Arboretum (Great River), Caumsett State Historic Park Preserve (Lloyd Harbor), Cold Spring Harbor Lab (Laurel Hollow), Cold Spring Harbor Memorial Cemetery, Locust Valley Cemetery (Locust Valley), Oheka Castle (Cold Spring Harbor), Planting Fields Arboretum State Historic Park (Oyster Bay), and Welwyn Preserve (Glen Cove) – additional sites will be announced at a later date. These tours enable people to discover the design history of places they may pass every day but don’t necessarily know about. Expert guides provide rich stories, personal anecdotes, and keen observations about each site, landscape architecture, and garden design. All tours are free, but attendance is limited, and registration is required (registration will open approximately six weeks before the event).

These projects are all funded by the Robert David Lion Gardiner Foundation, which awarded Planting Fields Foundation \$177,000 for four projects that celebrate Olmsted 200. In addition to the symposium and *What’s Out There* weekend, Planting Fields Foundation will also present an exhibition on historic female landscape photographers in fall 2022 and release a new publication on Planting Fields in 2023.

TCLF will produce a printed guidebook for *What's Out There Olmsted on Long Island* that includes the tour sites (available for purchase and free as a downloadable PDF). Research gathered for the tours will have a long-lasting legacy, becoming part of TCLF's permanent [What's Out There Olmsted](#) digital guide, which launched on April 26, 2022, the bicentennial of Olmsted, Sr.'s birth, and includes more than 300 sites and 100 biographies of members of the Olmsted family and the firm's many employees, consultants, and collaborators. All of this material is nested within the broader [What's Out There](#) database, which features more than 2,400 sites, 12,000 images and 1,100 biographies. *What's Out There* is optimized for iPhones and similar handheld devices, and includes *What's Nearby*, a GPS-enabled feature that locates all landscapes within a given distance, customizable by mileage or walking time. *What's Out There* is a go-to resource for everyone from schoolchildren to scholars seeking trustworthy online information.

About Planting Fields Foundation

Created beginning in 1913 by insurance magnate William Robertson Coe and his wife, Mai Rogers Coe, heiress and daughter of Standard Oil partner Henry Huttleston Rogers, Planting Fields is an estate on Long Island's Gold Coast that is a historical testament to American art, architecture, landscape, and horticulture. Located in Oyster Bay, New York with landscape designed by the Olmsted Brothers Firm, the grounds feature 409 acres of greenhouses, rolling lawns, formal gardens, woodland paths, and outstanding plant collections. Designed as an integrated composition of the built and natural world, the original historic estate buildings and landscape remain intact including Coe Hall, a 65-room Tudor Revival mansion designed by Walker & Gillette. The interior of the house is a showcase of artistry and craftsmanship with a distinctly American aesthetic that features original ironwork commissions by Samuel Yellin and murals painted by artists Robert Winthrop Chanler and Everett Shinn. Planting Fields is included in the National Register of Historic Places. Founded in 1952 by W. R. Coe, Planting Fields Foundation is a not-for-profit public educational foundation chartered by the New York State Board of Regents. With regular exhibitions, conservation and educational programs, Planting Fields Foundation strives to preserve and make relevant to all audiences the heritage of Planting Fields. For more information visit www.plantingfields.org.

About the Frederick Law Olmsted Historic Site

The [Frederick Law Olmsted Historic Site](#) is located in Brookline, Massachusetts where Olmsted established both his home and professional landscape architecture firm in an old farmhouse on two acres of property he restored and renamed *Fairsted*. Fairsted also functioned as a family retreat intended for quiet pastimes and as a school specializing in environmental design for aspiring landscape architects. Today the site is administered by the National Park Service and includes the house with its century-old office and archives, and nearly one million records of Olmsted firm designs. The Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation is an outgrowth of the park and has made significant contributions to the field of landscape preservation.

About The Cultural Landscape Foundation

The [Cultural Landscape Foundation](#) (TCLF) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit founded in 1998 with a mission of "connecting people to places." TCLF educates and engages the public to make our shared landscape heritage more visible, identify its value, and empower its stewards. Through its [website](#), publishing, lectures, and other events, TCLF broadens support and understanding for cultural landscapes. TCLF is also home to the [Cornelia Hahn Oberlander International Landscape Architecture Prize](#)[®].

About the National Association of Olmsted Parks

The National Association for Olmsted Parks (NAOP), established in 1980, is a coalition of design and preservation professionals, historic property and park managers, scholars, municipal officials, citizen activists, and representatives of numerous Olmsted organizations around the United States. Its concern is the legacy of landscape work left by Frederick Law Olmsted Sr. and the firm continued by his sons. NAOP is the only national organization solely dedicated to preserving the Olmsted legacy by providing the advocacy, research, and education needed to protect, restore, and maintain these exemplary parks and landscapes. NAOP advances Olmsted principles and legacy of irreplaceable parks and landscapes that revitalize communities and enrich people's lives.

For more information contact gwouters@plantingfields.org