

REPORT ON A
PARK SYSTEM
— FOR —
LITTLE ROCK
ARKANSAS



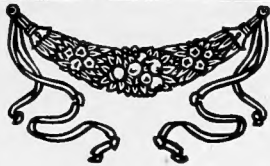
JOHN NOLEN
CAMBRIDGE, MASS



LANDSCAPE
ARCHITECT



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PARK SYSTEM
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SB 483
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Preface

In submitting Mr. Nolen's report to the citizens of Little Rock, we can not refrain from expressing a feeling of pride that the first step toward the acquirement of a system of parks and boulevards has been made. We now have a comprehensive plan prepared by an expert. We believe that the recommendations embraced in the report are feasible and that many of them should be carried out now; but it should be remembered that Mr. Nolen does not advise that all of his plans be put into immediate execution, for the cost of doing so would more than offset the benefits derived. The public should acquire as much land for parks and rights-of-way for boulevards as possible with the money available, after setting aside a portion of the money to build necessary roads, drives, walks, etc. The improvement and beautification of the areas acquired would follow gradually as a matter of course.

We suggest a large improvement district as the vehicle for carrying through to execution these splendid plans. This district should embrace the entire city of Little Rock and the surrounding property affected by the proposed improvements. In order that the property owners may know to what extent they are taxing themselves, a limit of expenditure should be provided. From a study of the requirements in other cities, and after a careful consideration of the local conditions, we believe that no attempt should be made at present to raise more than four hundred thousand (\$400,000.00) dollars. And the bonds issued to secure this amount should not begin to mature for five years, and should

then be retired gradually, through a period of twenty years. In this way the burden will not fall heavily on anyone and the tax will be cheerfully paid by all patriotic and progressive citizens.

We invite your careful perusal of the contents of this report and bespeak your assistance and support in this movement to make our city bigger, healthier and more beautiful. Suggestions concerning these plans, and new ideas will be welcomed. Please write or phone one of the undersigned if you have something to recommend.

Respectfully submitted,

LITTLE ROCK PARKWAYS ASSOCIATION.

W. L. Hemingway,

J. N. Heiskell,

J. Merrick Moore,

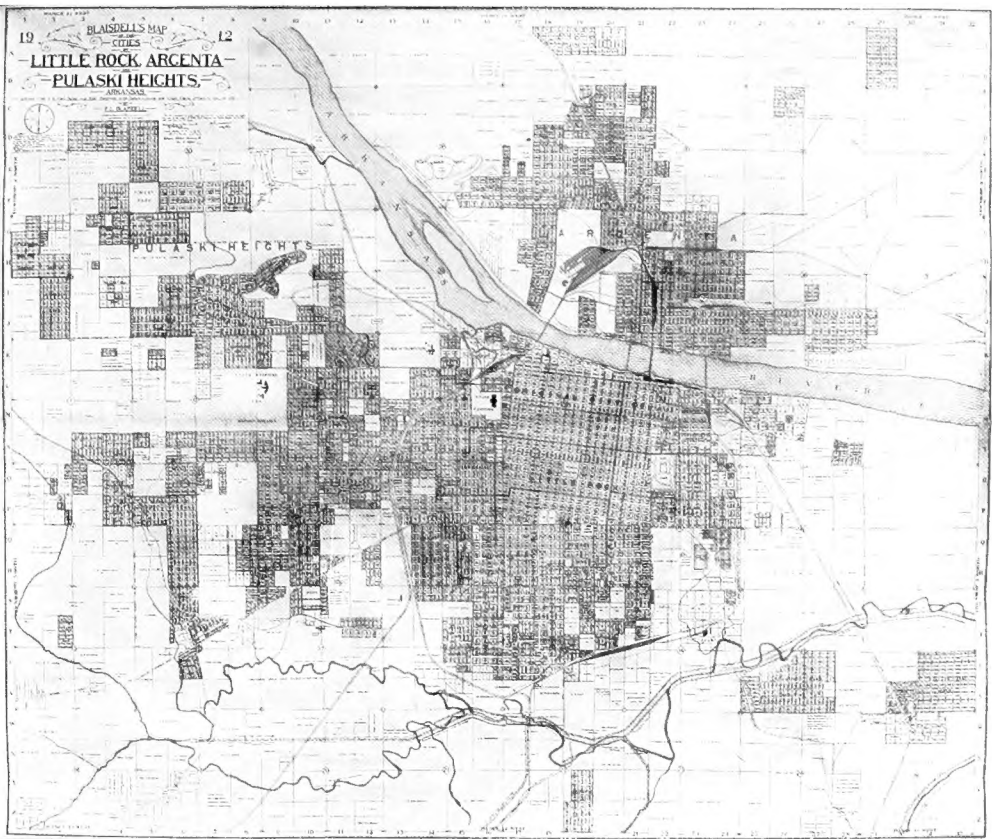
S. W. Reyburn,

G. B. Rose,

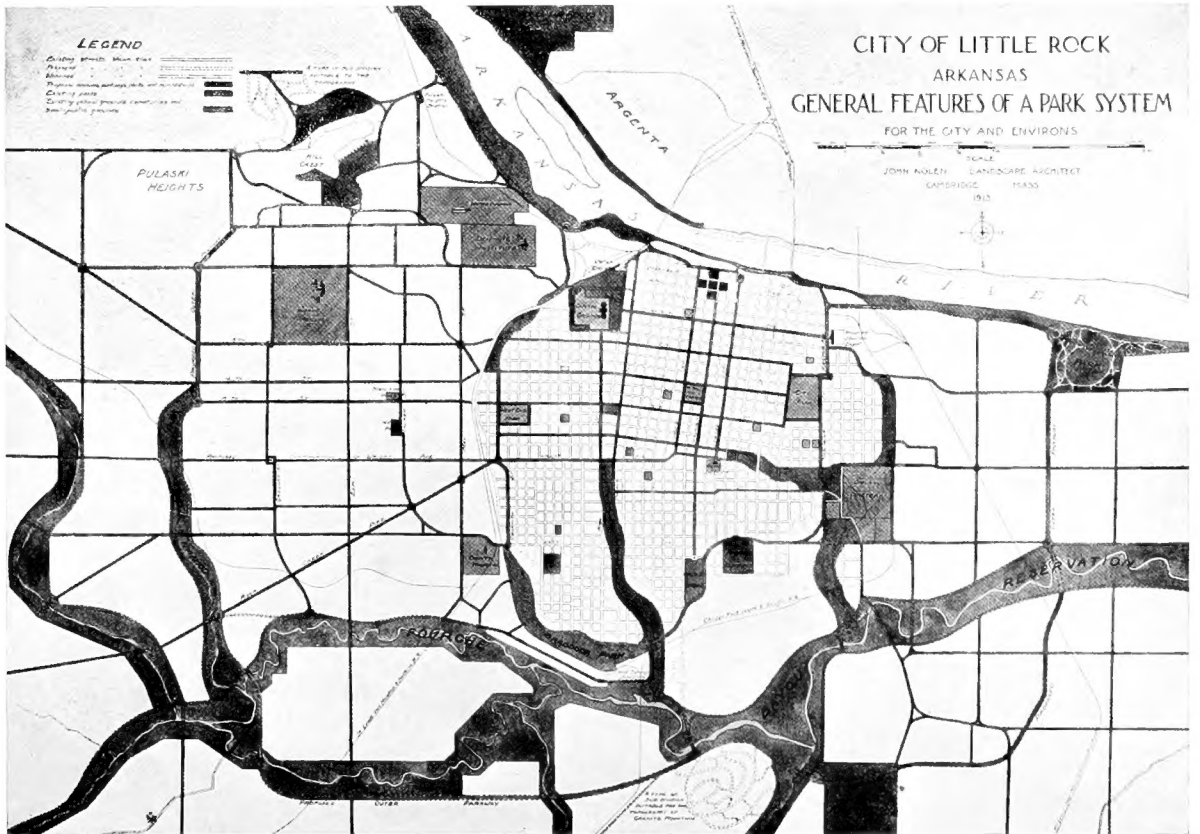
C. L. Thompson,

Executive Committee.

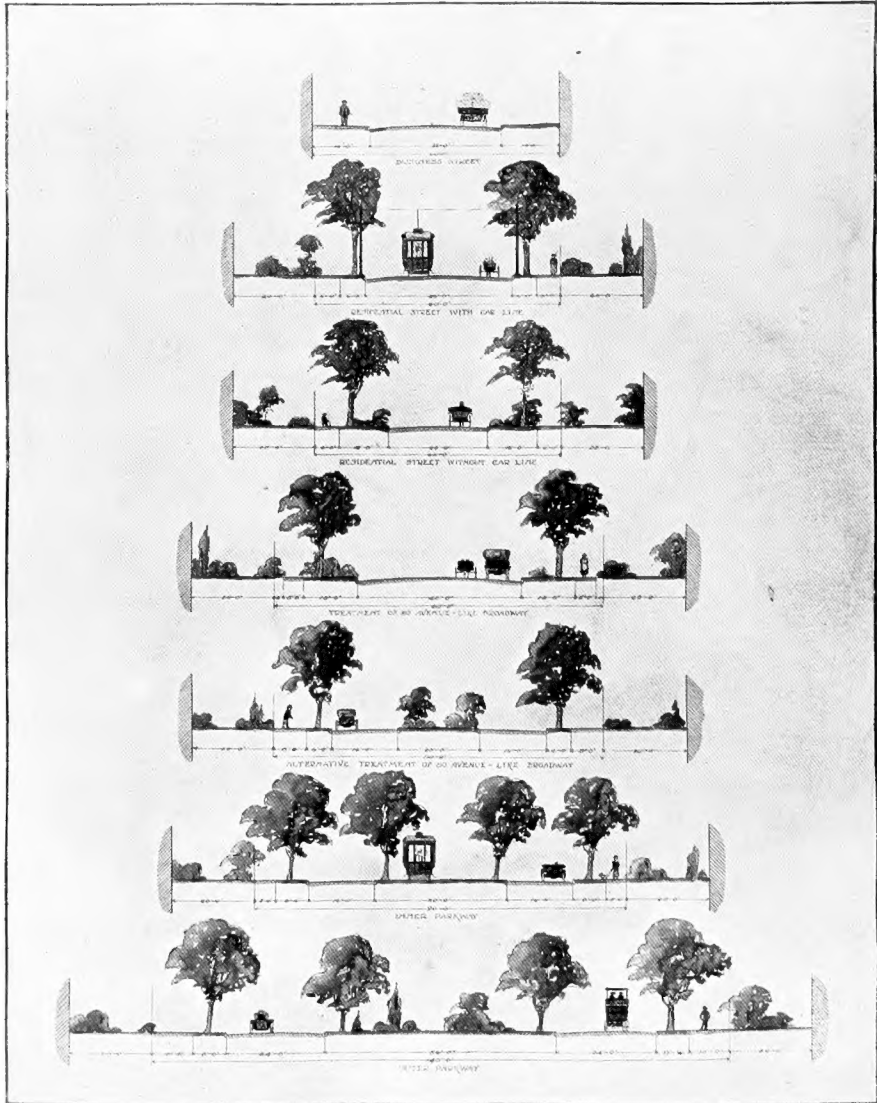




REDUCED MAP OF CITY.



SAME MAP SHOWING AREAS TO BE IMPROVED. (FOLDED MAP IN BACK IS AN ENLARGED COPY OF THIS.)



SUGGESTED TREATMENT FOR STREETS AND AVENUES.

Introduction

I.

In the reservation of parks it should be clearly understood that the primal end is neither to beautify, nor to add a luxury, to the city's possessions. On the contrary, it is the profoundly important matter of securing a reasonably high standard for property development. Without reservations for parks, playgrounds, etc., and the proper platting of streets, the more influential and independent citizens will go beyond the city to pleasanter regions where streets shall be laid at easy grades, conforming to the topography, and where ample reservation of open spaces will secure for all time the pleasant prospects appropriate to a region of homes.

These are features which people in cities which have passed through the experience of park reservation have learned to appreciate and would not do without. Park reservation serves a distinctly practical purpose, providing always an element of permanence to a neighborhood which serves to fix the real estate values in the region. Owners facing a park know the outlook is thus secured for all time, and they build and settle with confidence. Business in some instances may encroach, but the desirability of the region, as far as open spaces are concerned, can never be seriously impaired, and property with secured advantages passes always at a premium over property unsecured.

By some who have not followed the history of American park reservation, the question may still be asked of what use

are these parks? Why do we need them at all? Why not secure the large return from the same land devoted to business? Why not continue the building of brick and stone over an unbroken area indefinitely as the city develops? The answer is that cities can never be wholesomely and economically built in this way. Especially in our rapidly growing American cities, it is vitally necessary to recognize certain laws on which wholesome development depends; precisely as we recognize laws on which the physical development of the individual depends. Never have cities entirely failed to appreciate the need for freedom and elbow room, so to speak; for contact with nature; for relief from the artificial and mechanical.

A certain ratio should be maintained between the population of a city and the area reserved for open spaces. As the city develops, it is a short-sighted policy that fails to maintain this ratio—a policy which leads eventually to low property valuation, to slum conditions and to ill-favored succeeding generations. A certain complement of fresh air, of open space, of touch with nature, proves in the experience of cities vitally essential for wholesome development. Response to this need results in high grade development and in sound, unfluctuating values—two of the chief factors in civic well-being.

Description of Areas

II.

The areas recommended for acquisition and development have been classified as follows:

- A. City Squares, Civic Center and Capitol Grounds.
- B. School Grounds and Athletic Fields.
- C. Main Avenue System.
- D. Encircling Parks and Parkways.
- E. Reservations.

Brief descriptions of these areas follow and their location has been indicated on the accompanying plan, entitled, "General Features of a Park System for Little Rock and Environs," scale 1,200 feet to the inch.

A. CITY SQUARES, CIVIC CENTER AND CAPITOL GROUNDS.

1. Two blocks bounded by Fourteenth, Fifteenth, High and Pulaski Streets.

These blocks, occupied at present with property of low valuation, occur about equidistant from the Capitol Grounds, West End Park, Mount Holly Cemetery and certain blocks southward along High Street considered for reservation. They also occur at the important intersection of Pulaski, High, and Fourteenth Streets. Such a breathing space in the heart of this section will

prove one of the most useful and practically remunerative acquisitions in the park system.

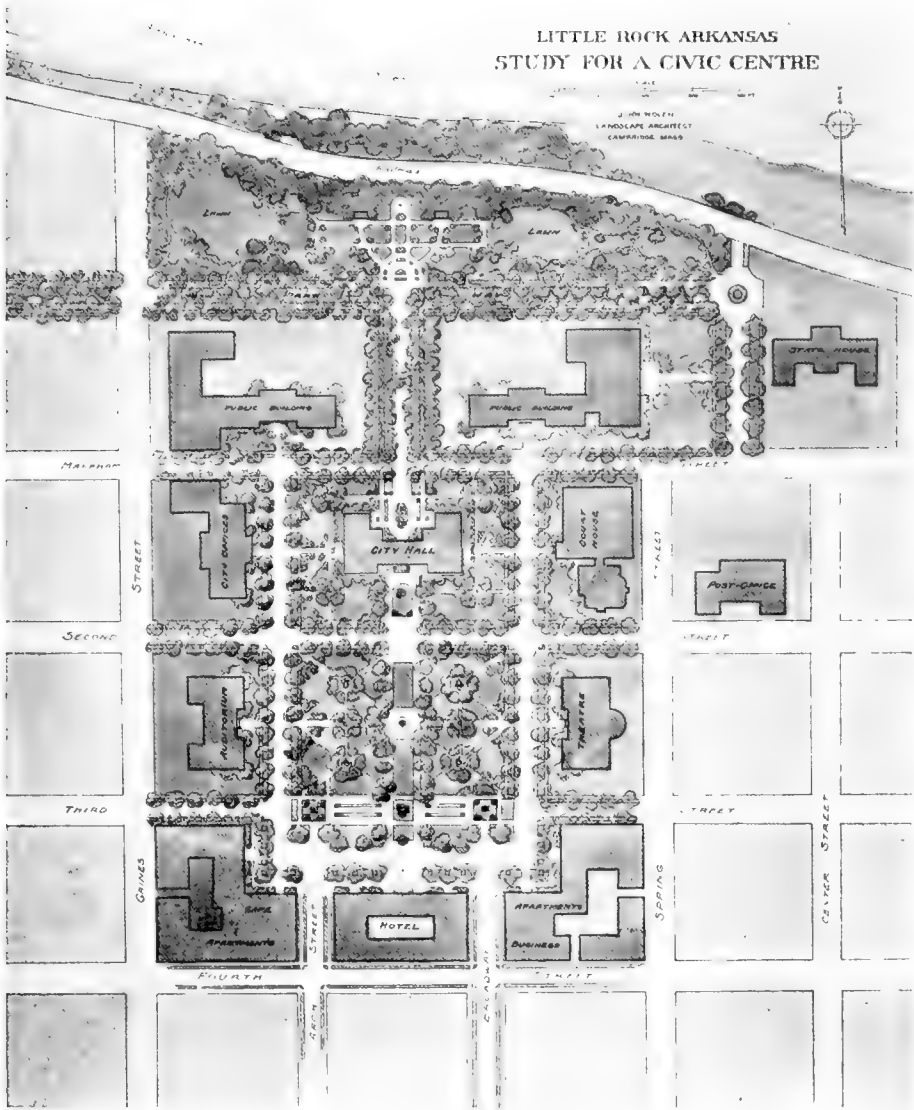
2. The Civic Center.

Little Rock at present has no distinct plan for grouping its public buildings. The advantage not only in having related departments of public administration closely associated, but in securing by means of a consolidated group of well-designed buildings a dignified and appropriate center, toward which the interest of citizens may repeatedly turn, is important. In the neighborhood of such a nucleus as at present exists in the City Hall, the Postoffice and the new Court House, the city should reserve certain blocks to provide an appropriate setting for these buildings and suitable sites for still other civic, county, or State buildings to be erected in the future. Detailed calculations by those competent to make them would probably show that the community would best adopt a decisive, carefully thought-out policy for securing the necessary land in the near future. Such calculation by those able to estimate the city's ability to undertake and carry out the project would probably show that even a considerable outlay would be largely compensated for at once by increased valuations in the immediate region of the civic center, and that future returns from the adoption of so definite and permanent a policy would justify many times over the initial expenditure.

We present two schemes, however, one to meet that condition in which, after careful investigation, there would seem no practical means for securing more land than merely to define a civic center. Such a scheme would none the less be an important step toward civic improvement.

LITTLE ROCK ARKANSAS
STUDY FOR A CIVIC CENTRE

J. HEN MOULTON
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT
CAMBRIDGE MASS.



PLAN FOR CIVIC CENTER.

In this case we recommend the reservation, as a public square, of the block opposite the present City Hall and fire house, and west of the old court house and its new annex. With the reservation of adequate building sites on the two other blocks facing the square, Little Rock could secure a grouping of public buildings that would definitely fix a civic center.

The second scheme, however, suggests a more adequate provision for the future. It boldly attempts to break up the monotonous checker board system of uniform blocks and streets. It proposes the reservation of two blocks south of the present City Hall and fire house, the first of these between Markham and Second Streets, to become the building site for a new City Hall. Furthermore, it proposes the widening of these blocks by the deflection eastward and westward respectively of Broadway and Arch Streets, making virtually new thoroughfares in the civic center, and reducing the area of all the blocks east, west and south facing the civic center open space. In these new blocks there would be adequate building sites for three new municipal, county, or federal buildings. One of these would probably be required for city offices, a second might be an auditorium, and a third could serve no better purpose than a subsidized municipal theatre, where the production of good plays and opera would be as distinct an attraction as the city could well offer to prospective residents. Furthermore, two sites on Markham Street would provide adequately for a future museum and library, such as the city in course of time must require. At the opposite end of the civic center the central block shows a hotel, and at either corner, apartment houses, the one providing an adequate cafe, the other, shops facing outside the civic center. The whole group would

tell distinctly as a unit—the administrative heart of the community. Properly designed in detail, the buildings would show to advantage from every point of view. Connection is shown between the proposed City Hall and the proposed inner parkway by a broad avenue, thus closely linking the civic center with the encircling parks. The land between the parkway and the railroad tracks is also shown in reservation.

Such a group, if the right means of carrying it out can be found, would be the most economically justifiable, for it means the elimination of uncertainty, repetition, reduplication; it means concerted effort upon a single perfectly definite and appropriate scheme. It is earnestly hoped that there will be sufficient faith in the stability of civic purpose in Little Rock to adopt the larger and much better plan.

3. The Old State House.

To this fine example of characteristic Southern architecture and to its grounds, a word of genuine tribute is due. It would be difficult to reproduce in a modern building the qualities of this old structure; at the same time its historic value is unique. As the city develops, it is the most important building to preserve—a significant relic of excellent beginnings in the early decades of the State. Its grounds, quite in the spirit of the building, are suggestive of parks in southern Europe, a result partly of easy attention to their appearance, an effect readily lost by too scrupulous care. Due attention, of course, is not given to neatness, but this is still possible without disturbing irregular margins of the walks, moss in the pavements and about the fountain, and informal branches of trees and shrubs. With the addition of a little care-

ful planting, these grounds may become a lovely and truly appropriate setting for the building.

It is recommended also that the river front of the building be given especial attention. Here lies the possibility of developing fine outlooks over the water, for constructing possibly a terrace walk, for planting trees and shrubbery, and for securing in a few years at comparatively small cost one of the most beautiful and characteristic gardens in the heart of a Southern city.

4. The Capitol Grounds.

In the new Capitol, Arkansas has a building of great beauty, for which the present grounds form a very inadequate and unsatisfactory setting. The acquisition of all areas not already a part of the grounds existing between Wolf, Victory, Seventh Streets and the tracks of the Iron Mountain is practically a necessity to secure appropriate surroundings. Furthermore, owing to particular adaptability for park purposes of the land beyond the railroad, and its location for the most part in a valley between the city and what must eventually be the most important western extension, it is recommended that the Capitol grounds be extended to include whatever land between the railroad and the river may not actually be required for railroad purposes. The shallow stream of Rose Creek within a comparatively small area in this section winds through exceedingly varied scenes, now over a pebbly bed surrounded by scattered cypress, now through a meadow with groups of willows, now through a little grove, and now through a rocky ravine—of small proportions but much beauty—under a bridge at a point suggestive of a beautiful permanent structure in keeping with surrounding nature, and

thence on to its junction with the Arkansas River, westward of the Rocky Bluffs. Such natural features are precisely the elements to determine the site of a park, and while it has been impossible to fix any definite areas on the general plan, whatever sections may not actually be required by the railroad may with particular appropriateness form connections between the Capitol grounds and the River Bluffs.

According to recommendations of this report, the river front would in any case be reserved, but this section north of the Capitol between Baring Cross Bridge and the mouth of Rose Creek, deserves especial consideration, and might appropriately have definite connection with the Capitol grounds. Here the bank rises to an imposing elevation above the water, and at one point is fortified against the current by fine rocky bluffs. Nowhere nearer the city are the views of the river finer or on a larger scale. The bank, where soil permits, is overgrown with shrubbery and vines, and heavily wooded; nearer the water, willows help to retain the sand of a beach constantly in use by the boys. A combination of circumstances and conditions makes this, of the entire shore, the most suitable for park purposes. At the top of the bluffs the proposed inner parkway follows somewhat the lines of Riverside Avenue. Walks and overlook should be constructed nearer the edge of the promontory, and there should be bathing facilities in some form, for which at present a demand so obviously exists.

Such a reservation may be entirely separate from the Capitol grounds, or, with the intervening Rose Creek, may be more or less closely connected. The Capitol, in any case, should have dignified and adequate surroundings extending northward to the



THE BEAUTY OF THE OLD STATE HOUSE.



THE POSSIBILITIES OF THE NEW CAPITOL.

railroad. Whatever else is reserved will help to secure a beautiful entrance to the city, and may save from otherwise objectionable development the low-lying region adjoining the Capitol. Especially strong is the recommendation for an ample foothold on the bank of the great river at the finest point in its course near the city.

B. SCHOOL GROUNDS AND ATHLETIC FIELDS.

1. School Grounds.

The development of the school grounds to serve the purposes of play and open air gymnasia is one of the most important steps already taken by Little Rock toward the realization of a complete park system. The reservation in most cases of an entire city block for school purposes is an excellent custom. Two suggestions, however, are important; first, that areas much larger and capable of more satisfactory development for play purposes can usually be secured by locating the school building otherwise than in the center of the block; and second, that the planting of hardy shrubs and trees about the buildings and along the boundaries and sometimes as enclosures for sections devoted to various purposes of play, will be a genuine improvement. The growth and practicability of such planting depends largely on the selection of species. Careful plans by a competent landscape architect had best in all cases be prepared to secure permanent results at small cost.

2. Athletic Fields.

While the school grounds offer an opportunity for the sand boxes and apparatus used by little children and small boys and girls, there should also be provided two further classes of play-

fields where boys between ten and sixteen and from sixteen upwards can have opportunity for the rougher and more seriously organized games.

The extent to which city streets are used, often contrary to existing law, for ball playing, is evidence of the demand and need for these playfields. It is the fullest encouragement, not the repression of these wholesome impulses, which is desirable. The recommendation is made that three new playfields for the older boys and men, besides that already established at West End Park, be reserved; one in the easterly portion of the town beyond the tracks of the Rock Island Railroad, a block not yet precisely determined; one beyond the southerly termination of Main Street on a site well adapted for a playfield, and later described under D, 10, Park and Playfield; and a third at the junction of Fourteenth Street and Elm Street. The two latter should probably be reserved for negroes.

The recommendation is also made that frequent playfields be reserved to meet the requirements of smaller boys, for the most part between the ages of ten and sixteen years. These boys will not congregate naturally at a great distance from home, and such a playfield should be, under ideal circumstances, within half a mile of every boy. Where playfields are not otherwise provided, they should be given a place in the plan for development of every park of considerable extent. Localities occur in most of the sites recommended for park reservation and described under heading Encircling Parks and Parkways.

C. MAIN AVENUE SYSTEM.

In the development of a city's traffic system, particular planning in the way of wider planting strips and perhaps restrictions on abutting property should be given certain avenues designed more expressly for the use of pleasure vehicles. Such shaded driveways may profitably occur without interfering with traffic interests of business about every half mile in either direction.

Since the question of shade for a large portion of the year is vitally related to the comfort of every individual who uses the pavements, the planting of these avenues, as of all planting strips in the city, is one of the most practical matters for consideration. An occasional well-shaded block is an illustration of what can be done to secure protection from sun and heat. To secure similar results for the entire length of all streets will prove one of the most gratefully accepted efforts of whatever commission has this in charge. Low hanging mulberries, euonymus, or myrtles, in this climate with comparatively little care, will overarch the walks, while larger trees more widely spaced will give practically unbroken shade for vehicles.

Streets recommended as shaded avenues are:

1. Broadway extending from the Civic Center to Arch Street Grove.
2. Center Street from the Old State House to the Blind Institute.
3. Commerce Street from Eighth to the encircling parkway.
4. Rector Avenue from the River to Ninth Street, thence adjoining the park as McAlmont to the Bragg estate.

5. High Street from the Capitol to Braddock Park.
6. Victory Street from the Union Depot to the park at the junction of Fourteenth and High Streets.
7. Pulaski from Water Street to encircling boulevard.
8. Gaines Street from Water Street to Wright Avenue.
9. Capitol Avenue from the Capitol to Rector Avenue.
10. Eighth from the parkway at Rice Street to Rector Avenue.
11. Eleventh Street from the parkway at Thayer Street to the City Park.
12. Fourteenth Street from West End Park to McAlmont Street.
13. Seventeenth Street from Griffith Street to McAlmont Street.
14. Wright Avenue from Griffith Street to Pulaski Street.
15. Twenty-first Street from Pulaski Street to McAlmont Street.
16. Twenty-sixth Street from Griffith Street to encircling boulevard.

D. ENCIRCLING PARKS AND PARKWAYS.

While the reservation of open spaces toward the present business center of Little Rock is practically prohibited on account of high land valuations, there is still the opportunity of securing an excellent series of encircling parks, each serving a particular purpose in its immediate district and in the city as a whole. The

connection of these areas by means of a continuous parkway brings the series into a complete system very much more effective in serving the community than were each reservation isolated.

The following description indicates the adaptability of each section for park purposes, and its relation to the system as a whole.

1. The River Bank.

To reserve the water front for the public and to protect it from private occupation is especially important. At present much of the bank is taken up with untidy and unsanitary shacks of squatters; still more is taken up with business which derives no particular advantage from river front location. At practically no point near the center of the city has the public suitable access to the shore. Wide reservations will prove feasible eastward and westward of the city where extraordinary luxuriance of vegetation offers desirable material in the development of a park. Nearer the center of the city, on the other hand, public holdings may of necessity be narrower, may even require filling and terracing into the river, but in any case should provide a continuous walk, and, if possible, a driveway. In the accompanying sketch we have shown a drive twenty-four feet wide extending from the proposed parkway near the old State House, where it passes by subway under the railroad tracks, thence along the river front, crossing the old levee and making connection eventually with Rector Avenue. Subways for carriages or foot passengers should make connection also from the other streets leading down to the water. The feature even more important than the drive, however, is a broad walk, at least ten feet wide, which should make an appropriate promenade along the city's river front.

The construction of such a drive and walk will, it is likely, involve far less expense if one or both are not entirely above the highest high water level. Such rises in the river are of short duration, and to good road construction occasional inundation could do no injury. With an adequate planting of trees and shrubs to screen the railroad and unsightly objects, and to enframe the views from particular points, the river front can be made far different from what it is, and a source of constant pride and enjoyment to the entire community. Acquisition of the entire river front is recommended, securing it for recreation and for such public landings as the purposes of commerce may require.

2. Upper Rose Creek.

In the development of a connected system of reservations, the upper course of Rose Creek should be included. From the River Bluffs and the Capitol Grounds a connection should be made with West End Park, three quarters of a mile distant. Something more than a mere parkway in the center of this region, which extends on either side of the railroad and promises to develop for residential purposes, will be more and more urgently required. Several blocks and parts of blocks extending roughly between Thayer Avenue and the junction of Marshall and Fifth Streets should be reserved, giving ample width on either side of the stream, providing the connecting link in the parkway and a development of the region to serve purposes of rest and play and the special needs of the neighborhood. As yet there are few houses on the blocks in question and the many fine trees will prove desirable features in the park.

3. West End Park.

This area of approximately twenty-five acres, ought more fully than it does to serve immediately the purpose for which it was reserved. We suggest a plan for development showing provision for a full sized ball diamond, a grand stand and bleachers which may be increased to meet a large demand of spectators. Provision is also made for tennis playing, with a number of courts adequate to sustain considerable popular interest. A field house equipped with shower baths and lockers is shown between the ball field and the more rural section of the park. On pleasant evenings band concerts should be given from a terrace on the east of the field house, the people gathering on the surrounding lawn. To this portion of the park appropriate access should be given by entrances more or less formally designed, and a system of walks and paths should make circulation through the region easy and delightful. A small depression at one side is a natural suggestion for a pool, one bay of which might be adapted especially for wading. Adjoining this a small lawn enclosed with shrubbery should be devoted to the games and play of little children who might be brought thither by attendants. A small shelter expressly at their disposal should be provided as well as sand boxes, a pergola and benches. In all this section the care of the trees is important and the existence of any particular desirable ones should determine location of walks. Such a park will serve a daily usefulness in the lives of many neighboring dwellers.

4. Griffith Street.

From West End Park, a continuation of the parkway should extend toward the southerly portion of the town. Griffith Street

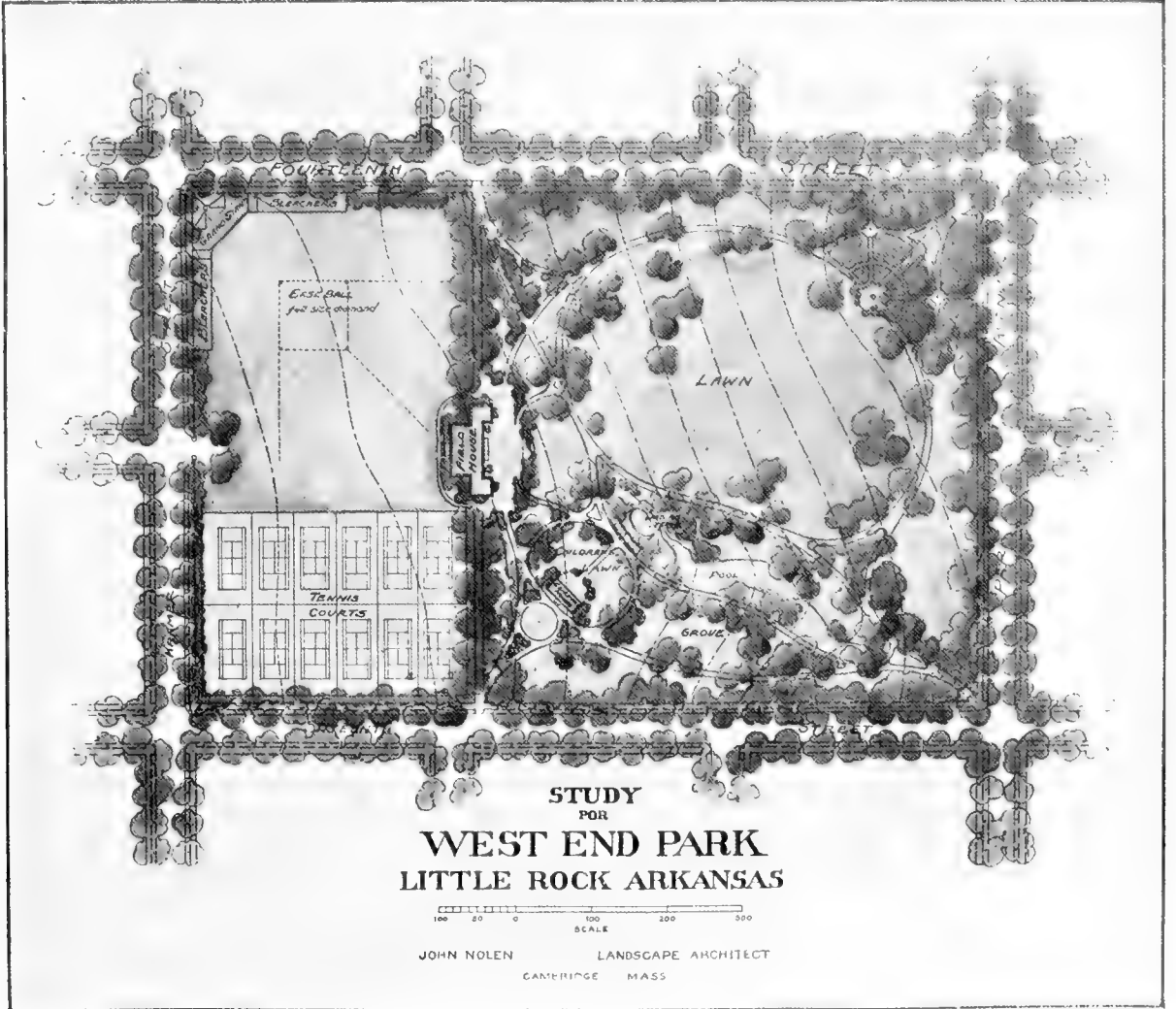
in this region has particular advantages as a route for a part of the way. The grades are good, there are few obstructions to widening, the trees are fine, and the surrounding property of great interest and beauty.

5. Riffel and Rhoton Estates.

Beyond the logical extension of Twenty-fifth Street the Parkway, leaving the straight half mile stretch of Griffith Street, should follow in pleasant curves the topography of the somewhat irregular section beyond. A rough wagon road, at present a good bridle path, suggests a possible course and the recommendation is made that a tract roughly of fifty acres through this somewhat low rolling country be reserved for the particular purpose of inducing a higher standard for residential development in this attractive section of the town. The topography of the region and its many excellent trees, including unusual groups of old hornbeams, suggest its larger service to the community in the form of a reservation.

6. Atwood Estate.

Adjoining the Riffel and Rhoton property, but on a higher level and commanding a considerable outlook, is a broad, slightly rounded field of twenty to forty acres—according as one considers the bounds—between Twenty-seventh, Twenty-ninth and Wolf Streets. This, it appears, has already been selected for an open space. As a common or green, which the spot strongly suggests, the reservation unquestionably would be appropriate.



STUDY
FOR
WEST END PARK
LITTLE ROCK ARKANSAS



JOHN NOLEN LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT
CAMBRIDGE MASS

7. Braddock's Park.

From the lower levels westward of Thirty-first, Thirty-second, and Thirty-third Streets, the parkway should follow a rising grade into a parallel with Thirty-fourth Street, thence, avoiding corners and abrupt turns, across High into Thirty-fifth Street, thus making the connection with Braddock's Park. This interesting grove, largely of oaks and nut trees, is situated on a high bluff entirely concealing from its highest points the railroad that runs at its foot. The outlook is one of the best within the city, extending unobstructed across the Fourche Basin, marked with its characteristic cypress tops, to the ridge of Granite Mountain beyond. Within the park the westward slope falls steeply. Half way down, a small stream, dammed in its course, forms a pool. Farther down, the woods become dense and heavy. These are elements to be considered in the development of a park. Use might still be made of the pavilions already there, or of more substantial ones, for purposes of amusement or eating. Many smaller trees should be taken out giving the larger ones opportunity for reaching their fullest development. Vistas, outlooks and open lawns should be arranged in accordance with the plans of development. Turf on the dry pebbly hill top would probably be difficult to grow and expensive to maintain, but there are other serviceable ground covers, and together with shrubbery and a convenient system of paths, the spot could be given a new and delightful character such as only those who are familiar with such results can foresee. An area of some eighty acres is recommended for acquisition, considerable more than that to which at present the name Braddock's Park is applied. The region westward toward Thirty-fourth Street, which is steep and difficult to

utilize for residential purposes, and a few lots on the south side of Thirty-fifth Street should be included in the park. The latter would give the opportunity for adequately widening Thirty-fifth Street as a parkway.

8. "Swaggerty."

From High Street, Thirty-fifth Street descends in grade to a small stream of which "Swaggerty" seems to be the popular name. This stream derives especial interest from its location in the midst of what should be an important residential section. Between Nineteenth and Twentieth Streets, it flows southward in a ditch on the left hand side of High Street. Beyond this it flows through a succession of varied scenes in one block after another, diverging more and more widely from High Street. There are good trees, oaks, sweet gums, willows, nut trees in many picturesque groups; there are thickets of vines and shrubbery, elder, elderberry, grape, greenbriar, wistaria, and several viburnums. There are broad pools, attractive bends, an open pasture and a grove. The handling of such a stream is an important matter both for developers of adjoining real estate and for the community at large in its efforts to realize a higher standard of surroundings. Two courses are open, either the covering of the stream at large expense, using it as a sewer and in the course of time filling over it to make building lots, or, on the other hand, leaving the stream open, preserving its trees and shrubbery, keeping its attractive banks and curves, crossing it with appropriate bridges, reserving land of sufficient width on either side, saving the expense of putting the stream underground and of filling, giving up many possible building lots, but very greatly adding to the valuation of prop-

erty adjoining. The latter course seems altogether preferable, especially as the stream occurs in the heart of a region where a serious need for open space is sure to arise. The reservation shown on the plan, indicating a mean width of three-hundred feet, will provide a succession of resting places and playgrounds which will greatly add to the attractiveness of the region to prospective home seekers.

9. Arch Street Grove.

The parkway from Thirty-fifth Street should make a good connection with Arch Street Pike possibly at its junction with Thirty-third Street. Thence on a slightly rising grade following Arch Street it should form one of the bounds to a grove of much value for park purposes at the logical extension of Broadway. Here are about thirty acres of good trees, oak, ash, hickory, on an even southerly slope at the termination of a main north and south axis of the city. Such a grove at this point should be regarded as a fortunate occurrence and secured at once for the park system.

10. Park and Playfield.

Beyond the logical easterly termination of Twenty-seventh Street the parkway should continue at easy grades following possibly, other considerations permitting, the natural brow of the hill, avoiding always sharp turns, and making connection with Rock at Twenty-fifth Street or Commerce at Twenty-fourth Street. This will have the advantage of providing a suitable termination for practically all the important north and south streets from Spring to Commerce in a broad, tree planted, encircling driveway.

Furthermore, beyond the parkway to the south and beyond the termination of Louisiana, Main, Scott and Cumberland, there lie two adjoining regions particularly suited for park purposes, the one, an irregular tract full of trees and dense thickets of luxuriant shrubbery, with a stream winding through it, and the other an open field of twenty-five acres, level enough for the purposes of play, and having at its northern end a rounded hill providing good outlooks over the fields and to the wooded slopes beyond the Fourche.

In this region an ample playfield for boys and men, as well as sections devoted to small boys and children, will greatly repay its reservation. The adjoining section about the stream being unusually attractive should likewise be reserved.

11. Bragg's Creek.

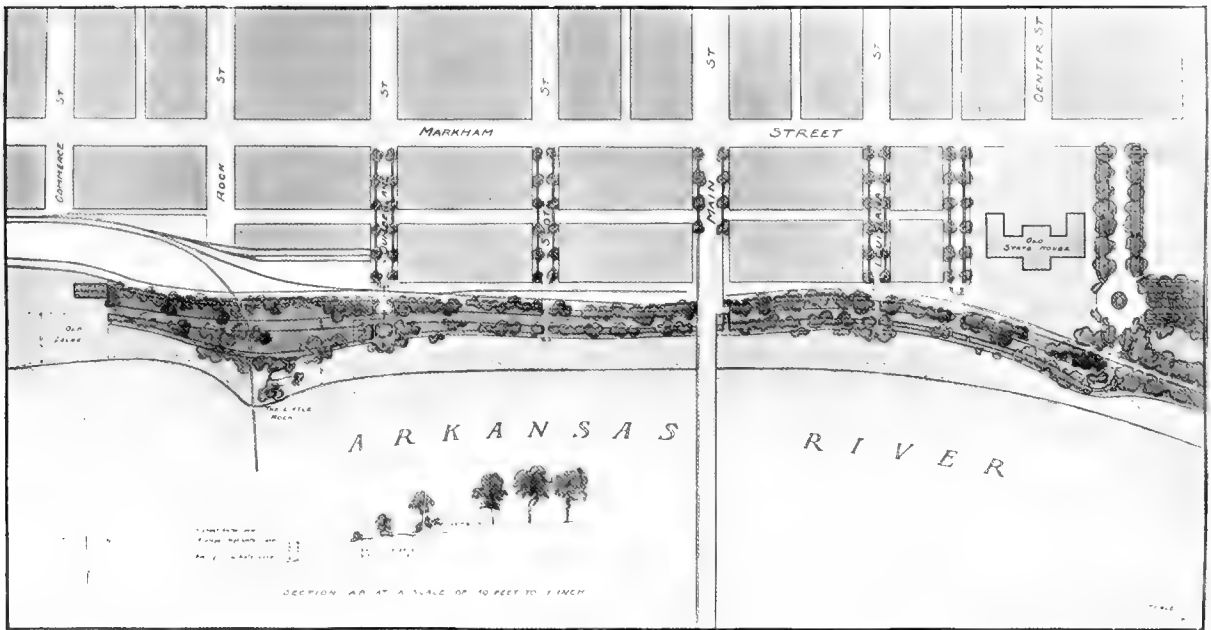
From the junction of Commerce and Twenty-fourth Streets, if this should prove, after closer detailed study, the precise location for the parkway, a connection should be made with Twenty-sixth Street crossing Bragg's Creek and following Twenty-sixth Street eastward past the Confederate and Federal Cemeteries and probably at a future time, continuing beyond Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway into the suburban country eastward. For the present, however, the most important branch of the parkway would make connection with McAlmont Street passing to the north of the cemetery. Returning, however, to the crossing of Bragg's Creek and Twenty-sixth Street, we find another interesting stream draining the easterly section of the city, its three tributaries flowing from Fifteenth and East Streets, from the City Park, and from the region of the High School Playfield.



OUR RIVER FRONT AS NATURE PRESENTED IT TO US.



AS WE HAVE USED IT.



PROPOSED TREATMENT FOR THE RIVER BANK.

The main body of the stream flows through Oakland Cemetery, thence south under the tracks of the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway, to the Fourche Bayou beyond. The High School Playfield and several adjoining blocks, through which the western source of Bragg's Creek flows, are important for consideration. Here, in what must eventually be the heart of the city, is the opportunity for still securing four or five blocks as open space and playfield. It is an opportunity likely soon to be lost without prompt action. Following the westerly branch of Bragg's stream, which through these blocks is provided with a variously walled and covered channel, we come just beyond at the junction of Nineteenth and Rock Streets to a broader open channel, over-arched with trees and banked with considerable luxuriance of shrubbery. At this point begins what, for park purposes, is one of the most naturally suitable places in the city. The great trees, the winding stream, the number of pleasing and varied scenes, the rolling contour of the ground, very suggestive in spots of typical English scenery, make the place particularly desirable for park reservation. The city has already a small holding south of Vance Street but the entire region ought to be secured forming a park continuous with the athletic field and its adjoining blocks. The opportunity for acquiring so beautiful a piece of pasture as that north of Twenty-first would be extraordinary in any city.

12. City Park.

Beyond the junction of Commerce and Twenty-fourth Streets and before the parkway connects with Twenty-sixth Street, an important branch should make direct connection with McAlmont Street and Rector Avenue, bringing the City Park thus more

closely in relation to the system. In the development of the City Park it is suggested that a larger use be made of shrubbery and that care be taken to allow this to attain its full natural development with as little pruning as possible. It is also suggested that an appropriate name be chosen commemorating either a citizen or suggestive of the higher poetical aspects of the spot. In Paris they give such names as Elysian Fields to their Public parks and whoever speaks the name has his thought tinged with the ennobling suggestion of the classic playfield. The custom of New York in giving so colorless a name as Central Park to its most beautiful possession is hardly one to be followed.

14. The Cemeteries.

In many of the Southern cities the Cemeteries possess great beauty. Solemn and sacred aspects are tempered with the delight of luxuriant vegetation. It becomes a pleasure to visit the spots, to note a rare shrub flowering here, a fitting monument erected there, on every side the evidence of sensitive care and devotion in realizing a scene of great beauty. Good plans, careful supervision, systematic attention to the planting and cultivation of trees and shrubs, will make the cemeteries of Little Rock objects of great pride. The National and Confederate Cemeteries already are examples of neat and careful gardening and of good taste in the construction of masonry walls. Still finer results can be obtained by the larger use of shrubbery. To the masonry walls attention should be called, especially as this is a standard for the good workmanship in all similar construction in the park system.

14. Lower Bragg's Creek.

Passing the cemeteries and thence under Twenty-sixth Street, Bragg's Creek flows through a meadow already considered for residential subdivision. This area still requires drainage and the stream with its thickets of elder and hawthorn and its fine cypress trees should be kept open, the central feature of a neighborhood park.

15. East Side Bank.

As the parkway turns at the southeast corner of the cemeteries, it rises to a higher level than the railroad, some forty to sixty feet below.

For an extent of nearly a mile the steep intervening bank is one of considerable interest, not only for its outlook over the eastern country, but for the great luxuriance of the vines which in many cases overwhelm trees of large proportions. It is hard to see how this region of so abrupt a grade could be better utilized than for purposes of a park. All its healthy and larger trees should be preserved, every vine and shrub should be carefully considered, and a detailed plan for development should be prepared.

E. RESERVATIONS.

1. Hill Crest and the Grounds of the Waterworks.

In the neighborhood of Pulaski Heights the views become imposing in all directions. The grounds of the waterworks, which will probably always be open to the public, are well located, giving fine views along the river in either direction and across the

Capitol grounds and the city to distant plains beyond. The adjoining region called Hill Crest possesses much ground so irregular as to be far more suitable for park uses than subdivision. The steep ravines, the high promontories, the particularly fine outlooks, should all be included in an extensive reservation in this region. On the map, however, it has been impossible to indicate such a reservation otherwise than with an outline purely suggestive, since the selection of such areas must always depend on actual topographical conditions and upon the best subdivision into blocks and house lots of the surrounding areas. To secure the largest results it is necessary to consider the region as a whole—to reserve the areas most suitable for parks and to subdivide compactly where the grades are most suitable for subdivision into house lots.

It is important to note in this connection the many fine outlooks on the ridge road extending westward beyond Forest Park. Here are views comparable to the finest in the environs of almost any American city. Both southeastward and northwestward broad expanses of country extend to distant horizons. In Little Rock's outlying park system of the future these should form prominent features.

2. Coleman's Creek and Rock Creek Parkways.

With the extension of the city, successive ring parkways will be required to make adequate connection between suburbs without going to the center of the city as often as is still necessary in the case of cities poorly planned. For these parkways no better location can be found than the stream courses. Coleman's Creek and Rock Creek, respectively four and five miles from the center



A TYPICAL SCENE FROM AN AREA SELECTED FOR A PARK



ANOTHER SCENE FROM A PROPOSED PARKWAY.



A PRETTY ALLEY TREATMENT.

of the town, are well located, and the pleasant varying scenes along their courses—pastures, meadows, deep woods and sunny groves—should be secured while still easily within reach.

4. The Fourche Basin and Granite Mountain.

The Fourche Basin and the rocky slopes beyond are Little Rock's most important regions for a forest reservation. The Fourche lowlands, full of impressive trees and luxuriant undergrowth, have many aspects suggestive of unwritten romance. Though part of this region is subject to periodic inundation, the absence of low vegetation, the traces of slime on the tree trunks, its solitude and impressive silence convey a sense of unwholesomeness and dread, perhaps a unique aspect for a reservation. On higher levels green pastures surrounded by unbroken forest suggest pleasant picnic grounds. Still higher, on the rocky slopes of Granite Mountain, the views become more and more extensive over the city and surrounding country. All of this land is the sort which well may serve the community of Little Rock as does Fontainebleau and St. Germain serve the community of Paris, as does Epping Forest the community of London, or the Middlesex Fells, Boston.

In the possible event of deflecting the Fourche through a partly artificial channel into the Arkansas west of the city, the region might become less subject to inundation. This, however, has little effect upon the desirability of the site for the purposes of a public reservation. The submerged section is under water only a few days in the year, and while this makes it less suitable perhaps for picnic parties its unique character is only the more interesting to people walking or riding through to higher regions

beyond. Furthermore the enormous cypresses and the undergrowth of hawthorn and alders together with the slow moving current of the stream are important elements out of which much can be realized. The construction of a few drives and walks through the region, ready access to various points of destination, to outlooks, summits and picnic grounds and a wise policy in the administration of the timber to serve the twofold object of the preserving the finest scenes and securing the largest financial return are steps toward the best development of the Fourche and Granite Mountain region.

4. The Eastern Bayou.

To these lovely oases great tribute is due, for no scenery is more characteristic of the South. Surrounded often by tall cypresses, they are gems of natural beauty readily adaptable for park purposes. The city should carefully protect them from injury as the suburban country grows, and should secure at the proper time each of these so-called lakes together with suitable shore margins and the connecting creeks.

In conclusion, may I express my appreciation of the hearty co-operation that I have received from the city and county officials, from the Parkways Association, and from the citizens of Little Rock generally.

Respectfully submitted,

JOHN NOLEN,

Landscape Architect.

Cambridge, Mass.,

December 4, 1913.



CITY OF LITTLE ROCK ARKANSAS GENERAL FEATURES OF A PARK SYSTEM

FOR THE CITY AND ENVIRONS



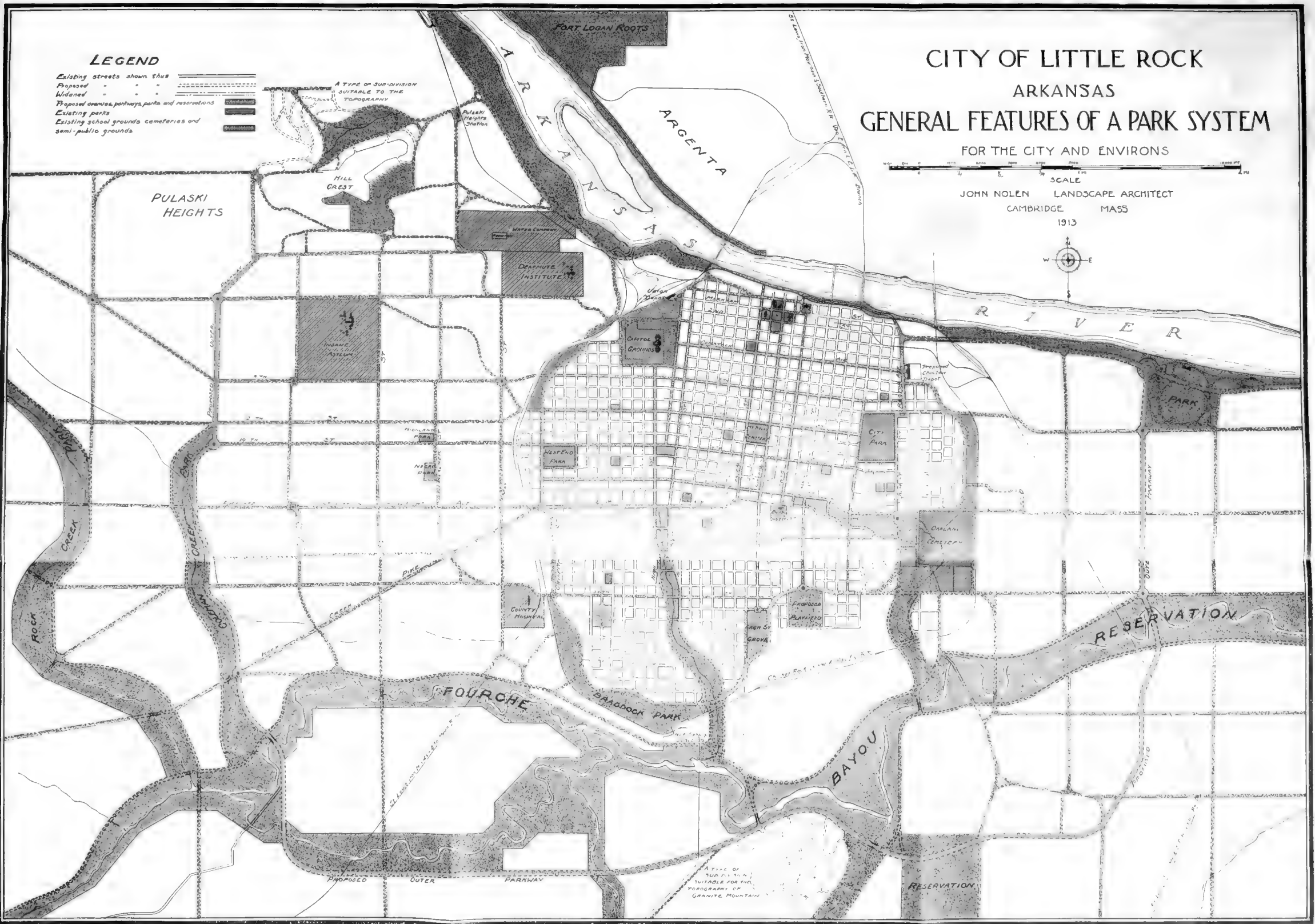
JOHN NOLEN LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT
CAMBRIDGE MASS
1913



LEGEND

- Existing streets shown thus
- Proposed
- Widened
- Proposed avenues, parkways, parks and reservations
- Existing parks
- Existing school grounds, cemeteries and semi-public grounds

A TYPE OF SUB-DIVISION
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