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## Editor's Note

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

"That is precisely what landscape gardening should do, I think, make improvements by design which nature might by chance."

(FREDERICK LAW OLNSTED, 1875)

The process of environmental design, by Olmsted's definition, was the search for a realistic solution to a condition or problem found in nature and not solely a limited exercise in decoration.<sup>1</sup> Design involved the use of technology and creativity to reconcile higher social, ecological, and aesthetic needs. This translation of human concerns into environmental forms required, according to Olmsted, the successful collaboration of related professions ranging from architecture to engineering.

While Frederick Law Olmsted is, perhaps, best known for his larger public commissions such as parks and parkways, college campuses, and planned communities, he did, during the last few decades of his career, undertake a considerable number of private commissions. Several of these residences including *Berry Hill* (1885) and *Stone Acre* (1884) are located in the Newport area and were discussed as part of a series of articles by Richard Champlin for *Newport History* entitled *Newport Estates and their Flora*, (*Newport History*, Numbers 178, 179, 182, 185). In this edition of *Newport History*, Richard continues his series with an article on the landscaping, designed originally by Olmsted, of *Beacon Rock*.

Frederick Law Olmsted was a pioneer in ecological conservation. His designs are responsive to the totality of the environment and precipitate a dialogue between nature, the land, sea, and air, and natural forms. The clarity and classical order of *Beacon Rock* stresses Olmsted's desire for a rational co-existence between humanity and the environment.

— J.A.R.

1. Fein, Albert, *Frederick Law Olmsted and the American Environmental Tradition*, 1972, p. 28.