

Denver, Colo., July 17, 1912

**See p. 26 for terms**

Board of Park Commissioners  
Denver, Colorado.

Gentlemen:-

In pursuance of your instructions, I submit the following memorandum in regard to the matters brought to my attention during my present visit to Denver:-

MOUNTAIN PARK PROJECT

I need not enlarge upon my keen appreciation of the importance and value of the project as a whole, but will at once offer certain suggestions as to procedure.

Withdrawal of Public Lands.

The first line of work to take up is to follow up the action of the previous unofficial committee in approaching the State and federal authorities with a view to safeguarding temporarily all the existing State and federal lands in and near the region from alienation and from any encumbrance or injury that might be likely to embarrass the most perfect and complete realization of the project. I suppose this means, first, getting into personal touch with the proper State officials, and, second, with the local representatives of the Department of the Interior, to whom the authorities in Washington will undoubtedly refer back any questions for report, and without whose lively and friendly interest prompt action by the Government will be difficult to secure. But it means also, of course, following the matter

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through the Departmental channels at Washington and securing (if it has not already been done) the temporary withdrawal from entry of all the Government land in question. In this connection, also, it is desirable to get in touch with the local and the Washington officials of the Forest Service, so as to get from them and from the Department of the Interior a clear understanding of the situation in respect to present and prospective Forest Reserves, National Parks and National Monuments within a considerable radius about Denver. It would be well also, in this connection, at the proper time, to see that the Colorado congressional delegation and other influential people accessible to you are properly posted in regard to the excellent bill now before Congress, with the backing of the Administration and the support of the American Civic Association, for the organization of a Bureau of National Parks in the Department of the Interior, intended to provide proper administrative machinery in place of the present chaotic condition under which the National Parks are administered.

Cooperation with State and County Road Authorities.

The second line of work is to get in close touch with the state and county officials concerned with the layout and construction of roads in the region and, by holding out the prospect of material expenditures by your commission upon roads that will also serve their purposes, induce them to take your commission fully into their counsels, so that as far as practicable every dollar hereafter spent upon roads within the region may be part of a consistent general plan, and so that all the roads that will form a part of the main circuit of Mountain Park drives shall come up, in all respects, to the standards which your commission may adopt for that main circuit. If a road to be built by the state or county authorities is so situated as to form a part of that circuit but would be constructed by the state or county with lower standards as to width, gradient, or otherwise, than your commission may decide upon as desirable, it would doubtless be practicable to secure a change of plans by contributing to the additional cost, provided your technical advisers are brought into consultation with the state or county authorities at a sufficiently early stage before their plans are too fully crystallized.

Surveys.

The third line of work is the preparation of adequate surveys. I understand that the Land Office has been requested to re-survey the property lines of the region, and that an

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official report has been made upon that request. This should be followed up to see just where the matter now stands, and negotiations should be entered into at once with the Land Office and with the Geological Survey in regard to a complete cooperative survey covering not only property lines but topography and suitable for the purposes of your commission and the highway authorities in laying out a system of roads and parks as well as for the usual purposes of the Land Office and the Geological Survey. From past experience elsewhere, I am confident that such arrangements can be made to the mutual advantage of all parties. It is not unlikely that there would be considerable delay in securing the necessary congressional authority and appropriation for the Geological Survey to make an actual start upon the field work of such a survey for joint purposes; but I have no doubt that an informal agreement could be reached very promptly as to the character of the survey, scale, degree of accuracy and detail, and so forth. The City could then at once undertake, on its own account, the most pressingly needed surveys, doing them in accordance with the specifications agreed upon with the Government authorities, and any expenditures thus made by the City would be regarded as contributions toward its share of the total cost, the Government subsequently completing the mapping of the whole district in a similar manner.

I suggest in this connection that I be given a letter from the chairman of the commission or from the Mayor to the Secretary of the Interior, asking for the cooperation of the Government in the surveying of the region, and authorizing me

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to confer with him about the matter. I can then take the matter up personally with the officials both of the Geological Survey and of the Land Office and report back to you a proposition acceptable to them and to the Secretary of the Interior.

#### Designing.

The fourth line of work, to which the first three are only contributory, is to plan the actual results at which to aim and the practical steps for attaining them.

Undoubtedly the first three chief things to be accomplished are: first, the provision of a system of first-class roads, giving the public convenient access to the best of the mountain scenery; second, the protection of at least the more important parts of that scenery, by any and every means which may be found expedient, from defacement by fire, by indiscriminate logging operations and injudicious exploitation of other sorts, or by mere neglect and carelessness; third, the opening to the public for general use of sufficient areas, in addition to the roads, to provide liberally for resting places, picnic places, camping places, and ultimately for shelters and hotels and other facilities, so situated as to give to the public the fullest possible opportunities for the enjoyment of the mountain scenery.

The idea of providing, ultimately, at least two means of approach from Denver to the Mountain Park region seems undoubtedly wise, but also, on account of the cost of improving and maintaining two first-class roads from Denver to the mountains, it seems wise to concentrate actual road improvements at the start upon that part of the system which can be made

most effective with the least possible expenditure. Clearly this is to be secured by using the existing road to Golden and starting the mountain road construction from there, presumably with state and county cooperation, probably utilizing some of the ridges which run westward and southwestward from the vicinity of Lookout Mountain.

The exact locations for the roads must be studied in detail upon the ground, keeping always in view three distinct factors: the beauty of the scenery to be exhibited by the road, the excellence and economy of the road as an engineering proposition, and the disposition of the several landowners in regard to settlement for the land and rights in land requisite for the construction of the road and for reasonably safeguarding the scenery which it is the purpose of the road to exhibit. In general the process would be: first, to determine the best lines for the roads with a view only to the quality of the scenery and the engineering excellence and economy of the roads, but keeping always in mind the possibility of alternative routes; second, to determine the desirable boundaries of the land ~~or~~ and rights in land to be acquired for the roads, not necessarily taking a uniform width or an equal width on both sides of the road, but aiming to secure the protection of the foreground of all important views from the possibility of obstruction by the uncontrolled growth of trees or erection of structures upon immediately adjacent private land, and also to secure sufficient land at important points for picnic grounds, resting places, etc.; third, to negotiate with the landowners for options on the desired lands and rights, keeping in view the

alternative possibilities, and negotiating also, where desirable, with the owners along alternative routes; and, fourth, to take by eminent domain, at a single operation, all the lands and rights required for the completion of a given link in the system up to a point from which alternative routes will still remain open. Piecemeal acquisition, committing the City to certain additional requirements, would raise the value of the intervening lands and subject the City to the probability of extortion.

It is somewhat questionable whether the separate links in the chain, each of which should be taken in one operation, can be expediently so far reduced in size in all cases as to bring the cost of each within the limits of a single year's tax levy, and it might therefore be expedient either to accumulate the funds over more than a single year, if that is legally possible, or to issue bonds; but plainly it is desirable at the start to reduce the size of these links or units ~~in size~~, so far as practicable, so that not only ~~they~~ a complete link may be acquired out of the annual tax levy but an actual beginning made upon construction.

If I were to be charged with the responsibility of planning such a system of roads and property acquisitions as outlined above, I should begin by making a careful reconnaissance of the whole region, largely on horseback, in company with a competent assistant, discussing my ideas and suggestions fully with him in the field and over such maps as can be made immediately available. I should then leave him to work out the scheme in detail with the aid of additional surveys in the locality where

it seemed best to make a beginning; and to verify and correct my general conclusions as to the rest of the project by some further reconnaissance pending the extension of the Government topographical survey to the rest of the region. After he had worked up definite projects for the first link of the system and before any definite negotiations were entered into with landowners, I would review the plans in detail on the ground and report them to the commission for approval. The negotiations would be conducted by whomsoever the commission might think most competent to conduct them in each case, but the landscape architects ought to be kept in close touch with the negotiators so as to provide for modification of the plans to meet the exigencies of negotiation as freely as possible without sacrifice of important ~~points~~ features of design.

Apart from the acquirement of property immediately along the lines of the main route, as outlined above, including certain obviously desirable offshoots or branches to points of peculiar interest, it will certainly be desirable to make careful inquiry into the possibility of indirect control over and protection of much more extensive areas of mountain scenery visible from the road and from its chain of park lands held by the City.

So far as concerns Government land now or hereafter included in forest reserves or national parks, there should be no difficulty in securing the adoption of a policy which will conserve the scenery and make it available for the enjoyment of the public as well as if it were under the direct control of the City.

Concerning such parcels of state land as cannot expediently be acquired as parts of the City's Mountain Park project, it would seem desirable to discuss with the state authorities suitable methods of providing for their protection from fire and for their systematic economic use for grazing and timber production, or otherwise, in a manner not inconsistent with the beautiful qualities of the mountain scenery of which, as seen from a distance, they form important parts.

Of the very large extent of privately owned lands over which the eye must range in almost any of the larger views among the mountains, but a small fraction is of value or can ever be of value, for other purposes than grazing and the growth of timber. It ought to be carefully considered whether it may not be possible to bring about a certain extent of cooperation among the owners of the timber and grazing lands under state control, and perhaps with the assistance of your commission, certainly so far as concerns protection from fire, from which the property losses as well as the damage to scenery are evidently very serious, and probably also in regard to such systematic management of the timber cutting and grazing as will give the best permanent economic returns to the owners and at the same time avoid serious denudations, erosion and other evils from which the public at large also suffers. Such systematic regulation of privately owned timber and grazing lands is common in Switzerland and in Germany, and I understand has been tentatively tried in Pennsylvania in connection with the postponement

of taxation on timberland until the harvesting of the timber crop. At all events, a general system of guarding against the timberland fires ought certainly to be installed in connection with the acquirement of Mountain Park property and the building of roads by the city, through the installation of telephone lines to a few lookout stations, and through keeping rangers on guard at the critical seasons.

Southern Approach to Mountains:  
Platte River Valley and Bear Creek.

While it seems best to concentrate construction for the present in that part of the Mountain Park region now reached by the Golden road, it is important to proceed with plans for a suitable approach to the mountains in the vicinity of Morrison, presumably up the valley of the Platte and the valley of Bear Creek. This route has a great deal of natural beauty, and so much of it as lies along the Platte within City limits is of great importance apart from its relation to the Mountain Park project, because it furnishes the best possible outlet to the south from the City by road on low grades and because the inevitable growth of manufacturing industries and of a large laboring population along the lower slopes on both sides of the Platte Valley will call for the acquirement of parks in this locality. The improvement of the Santa Fe Road as a through line is already in hand, and it is important to take up the question of throughfares and park lands in this valley as a

single large proposition before the situation becomes any more complicated by isolated improvements and rising land values.

The same methods which apply to designing the location of roads and park acquisitions in the mountains apply, with suitable modifications, to the Platte River and Bear Creek projects.

#### THE CIVIC CENTER.

The land acquired for the Civic Center follows, in its somewhat peculiar shaped outline, a tentative general plan for improvement which had been prominently before the public in the form of a perspective drawing, and in the light of which the public approved the acquisition of the property. I do not understand that this preliminary tentative suggestion for improvement is in the slightest degree binding, but its main features certainly deserve respectful consideration.

I find that the principal feature of that drawing, which makes the main axis of the plan an extension of the main axis of the Capitol, undoubtedly right. The proposed location of a building balancing the present library building on the opposite side of this main axis, in the block bounded by Acoma and Bannock streets and by Fourteenth and Colfax avenues, also seems to me desirable as a matter of design. The land in question, as a part of the Civic Center property, was acquired for park purposes, and according to the opinion of your counsel cannot be alienated by the City or used for the erection of public

buildings in general. The building shown in this location, however, upon the preliminary tentative plans, was proposed as a possible art museum, and there have been so many precedents for the erection of art museums in parks that I have little doubt the courts would permit the erection of such a museum on this site. Certainly the general effect will be far more agreeable with such a building balancing the library than without it. The location is in every respect suitable for an art museum and should in my opinion be reserved for that purpose.

Assuming for the present that, in accordance with the opinion of your counsel and in accordance with the original sketch plans, no building other than the suggested possible art museum and purely ornamental park structures are to be erected within the limits of the land acquired, the form and character of the surrounding buildings are matters of the greatest importance. The rather antiquated and inadequate condition of the City and County buildings makes the possibility of new buildings for those purposes in connection with the Civic Center a live question, and if the Mayor's suggestion of erecting a series of closely adjacent buildings of moderate size, instead of one or two large buildings, were adopted, even the immediate future might see the Civic Center to a great extent enframed by public buildings in such a manner as to produce a notably dignified and beautiful effect, comparable with some of the finer civic centers of Europe. If the Civic Center should be to a large extent surrounded by public buildings, of course it will be a matter of regret

that the additional land to be acquired for buildings could not have been purchased at the same time as the park land upon which they front - for obvious reasons of economy. But this costly method, making two bites of a cherry, is characteristic of American cities. It is seldom that sufficient land is secured both for a proper open space and for the public buildings which find their most effective and appropriate location upon its margin. The Cleveland civic center project was one of the notable exceptions to this unfortunate rule. In that case the open space and the surrounding buildings were planned, in outline, as part of a single project, and in the acquirement of land both were considered at the same time. If that course had been followed at Denver, I am not at all sure that the line demarking the land to be used for buildings from the park land would have been drawn exactly where it was, but the line having been drawn, the presumption is strongly in favor of respecting it. This is true not only because of the serious, if not insuperable, legal difficulties of encroaching with general public buildings upon land acquired for park purposes, but also because it is a fundamental principle of sound public policy to adhere consistently to any general plan once deliberately adopted, unless it can be shown to be fundamentally wrong. Especially in park work, in order to justify a radical change of plan it is not enough that a new administration or a new designer, however competent, should think a somewhat better plan might have been devised, because that change of mind is likely to occur with any change of personnel, and the most fatal of all mistakes in park work is vacillation of purpose and frequent change of plan.

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Any respectable plan consistently followed will give better results than can be obtained from successive conflicting plans, even though each of the latter be a work of extraordinary genius in itself.

In this case, a complete and careful study of the possibilities of the situation as regards the relation of the open space to surrounding building-masses, either public or private, was not attempted before the taking was made, and no physical improvements of any kind have yet been begun, so that the presumption in favor of the original plan is less strong than usual. Under the circumstances, I think it would be best, not only to prepare a plan in which all buildings except the proposed art museum shall be kept outside of the present park limits, but also to study out the best and most reasonable design that can be made without regard to that limitation. If the latter should prove to be, upon the whole, materially and indubitably better, it might justify an attempt to change the present boundaries of the park land.

In any event, whether those boundaries remain as at present or are modified, and whether the surrounding buildings are to be public or private, it is of great importance to regulate their height. In the absence of drastic general regulations as to the height of buildings under the police power, such as are frequent in European cities, this can only be done by acquiring easements in the surrounding property. Just what can be done will depend largely on the attitude of the landowners and the point at which they will feel themselves to be seriously damaged. It would be desirable to limit the height of build-

ings in the blocks along the north and south sides of the Civic Center and along the Capitol grounds to a height that will allow four stories, and to limit structures within the Civic Center and lying to the westward of it within a ~~section~~sector of about 30 degrees from the Capitol steps (including the best of the mountain view) to an elevation not exceeding the cornice of the library. The latter will permit of three ordinary stories in the vicinity of the Civic Center and increasingly more as the land falls to the westward. The building in the whole of the block bounded by Colfax and Sixteenth avenues, Broadway and Lincoln street, out, if possible, to be limited in height to about four stories, in order to make sure of keeping open the interesting vista upon the Capitol dome up the length of Sixteenth street, as well as for the protection of the Civic Center.

In view of the prevailing heights of buildings in Denver, it should not be a costly matter to impose building height limitations such as I have suggested. To go further and prescribe a definite cornice height and certain other controlling architectural characteristics for all new buildings hereafter to be erected facing the Civic Center, would clearly be desirable from the artistic standpoint, as has been suggested by Mr. Benedict and perhaps by others; but clearly, also, it would impose what might be a very serious financial encumbrance on the property. My experience with the acquirement of much less drastic easements in the East leads me to suspect that, if the City definitely made up its mind to bring about such complete and positive control of the design of the sur-

rounding structures, it would be more economical to buy the land outright and to sell or lease for building purposes under restrictions, which would give a really effective control over the design of the structures to be erected. It is, furthermore, obvious that, if the City can be expected to acquire property around the Civic Center for public buildings from time to time in the future, as funds become available and the buildings become necessary, it would be a costly policy to pay first a substantial sum for imposing drastic building restrictions and afterwards pay for the lots too.

On the other hand, I do think it of decided importance that in preparing plans for the Civic Center preliminary architectural studies should be made to indicate the main characteristics that are to be desired in the surrounding buildings, whether public or private, as to cornice height and in other respects. With such studies as a guide, it would be possible to deal intelligently with the abutting owners, imposing by eminent domain such general restrictions as the majority may be willing to accept without demanding exorbitant compensation, and endeavoring to persuade them to adopt voluntarily as many as possible of the other features set forth in the plans as desirable.

All I have said about the Civic Center design is more general and less definite than I could wish. The fact is that the problem is a very perplexing one, and I have been entirely unable in the time I have devoted to it during the week I have been in Denver to reach any more definite conclusions. It is

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a matter for careful, unhurried study over the drawing board. If you commit the problem to me, I shall want to take as much time as may be necessary to hit upon a plan which I can recommend with confidence, and in the execution of which both the City and myself can justly take pride. Moreover, the architectural elements in the problem are so important that I should not want to rely wholly upon my own judgment and that of my own office, but should want to obtain the cooperation of an architect of exceptional ability. I have in mind Mr. Arnold W. Brunner, of New York, one of the designers of the Cleveland Civic Center, an architect of national reputation and a man peculiarly skillful in dealing with the sort of problems which are here presented. If your board approves, I will consult with Mr. Brunner immediately upon my return to the East, and if I can obtain his cooperation will report to you a definite proposition for our joint services in preparing the plans.

SEVENTH AVENUE AND WILLIAMS STREET BOULEVARDS.

For the boulevards extending from Cheesman Park via Seventh Avenue and Colorado Boulevard to Sixth Avenue, and via Williams Street, Fourth Avenue, Gilpin Street, Third Avenue and Downing Street to Speer Boulevard and Marion Parkway, no designs have been prepared, and at your request I have given considerable thought to their treatment. Their width is less than that of most of the boulevards recently improved, and to adopt throughout the same general plan elsewhere followed - that is to say,

a drive on each side with a central parking strip - would produce a less agreeable effect than where the central parking space is of more generous proportions. Moreover, there is some tendency to monotony of effect in your boulevard system, in any case, forced by the rectangular street system to which the boulevards have been obliged to conform, and this reason also invites a different treatment, even if it is no better in itself. I would therefore recommend the adoption of a single central driveway for the major part of both these boulevards, with wide decorated parkings at the sides. Also, I would further vary the effect by interrupting the continuity of the design at certain critical points: specifically, on Seventh Avenue at Madison Street, which is at the summit of a long slope from either direction, and where provision might well be made in the design for the ultimate location of a monumental feature of considerable importance; and near York Street, where there is another convex break in the grade of the boulevard, much more slight but enough to make a difference in treatment highly desirable; on Williams Street at Sixth Avenue, where the carline crosses and where there is a sharp convex break in the grade of the boulevard so that the two portions cannot be seen from each other as parts of the same visual unit.

It would seem desirable, in designing the area lying between Cheesman Park and the south side of the Seventh Avenue boulevard from High Street to Williams Street, to keep open a narrow vista upon the longitudinal axis of the Cheesman memorial and to provide for the future erection of some striking

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monumental feature on the intersection of that axis with the axis of Seventh Avenue. When the enclosing trees shall have attained a sufficient height, this long vista between dark foliage masses with a gleaming white object at either end will be a very fine one. Even without the second vista point, it will be fine if the foliage is properly managed.

I have not had time to work up definite plans embodying the above ideas, but will do so promptly upon my return to my office, if you so desire.

#### Bridge Across Cherry Creek.

For the bridge across Cherry Creek at the end of the Williams Street-Downing Street boulevard, a preliminary sketch design is on file in your office, which contemplates a very wide skew bridge with a parking in the middle. In my opinion this should be discarded in favor of a much simpler and less costly bridge square with the channel. ~~as~~ I believe, in view of the complication of car track alignment, a more convenient and better looking as well as more economical solution of the problem can be thus secured. This has become a very live question on account of the damage to the present old bridge by the recent flood, and I beg to urge the importance of a thorough engineering study of the whole Cherry Creek problem without hampering limitations, as it would be a very extravagant policy to spend any more money upon permanent bridges across Cherry Creek, or upon the restoration and improvement of the channel, without first arriving at a well founded decision upon the number of cubic feet per second which the bridge openings and the channel should

be made to carry, taking all factors into account. The expectable volume of flood water, the possibility and cost of partial or complete diversion or impounding at points higher up the stream, and the possibility and cost of securing increased capacity by changes in the bridges, in the bed of the channel or otherwise, the value of the results to be obtained in each case, and every other aspect of the problem, ought to be considered by engineers not only of thorough competence but who would approach the subject wholly without bias or personal prejudice, and whose judicial conclusions would be accepted as such without obscurement by local partisan feeling.

PROPOSED RESTRICTIONS ALONG PARKWAYS.

As instructed, I have examined the petition of certain property owners requesting that the City acquire by condemnation certain easements in property adjacent to parkways in the Montclair Parkway Suburban Improvement District No.1, and have also made a cursory examination of the property in question. There is no doubt whatever that the taking of easements as specified in the petition would tend to protect and enhance the public value of the parkways and the existing investment of public funds therein, that it would be a legal and proper proceeding, and that ~~it~~ they ought to be taken unless it should appear upon investigation that it would involve the payment of much heavier damages than the petitioners seem to expect. I would suggest that a hearing be given upon the subject, and that such of the abutters who did

not sign the petition be invited to express their views specifically on each of the provisions of the proposed restrictions.

As at present informed, I have only the following suggestions to offer for amendment: It would be well to include, after the provision that the restrictions shall continue for a period of 30 years, that the restrictions may be continued in force along not less than one mile of parkway, with or without lessening, after the expiration of thirty years by action of the council upon petition of a majority of the lot owners.

It is a question whether the petition required for lessening the restrictions should be state as coming from 80 per cent. of the lot owners or from the owners of not less than 80 per cent. of the frontage of the parkways; and similarly as to the clause which I suggest referring to a majority of lot owners.

Also, it is question whether the requirement limiting the possibility of a lessening of the restrictions to at least one mile of parkway as a minimum unit should not be modified so as to permit each of the short branch parkways to be treated as an independent unit even though it be less than a mile in length. It might readily happen that conditions would arise affecting the character of one of these branch parkways, independently of the rest of the system, and calling for special relief.

In regard to this whole matter of restrictions on land adjacent to park and parkways, discussed at the last meeting of the commission, it seems quite essential that each locality, often a very small locality, must be considered on its own merits and the restrictions adapted in detail to the local conditions. Any general ordinance covering a whole park district

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can seldom accomplish what is needed without seriously damaging property owners in some localities and therefore involving unjustifiable expense upon the district. Whether each set of local restrictions is adopted by the City under a separate ordinance or by separate action of the park board under a general authorizing ordinance, is a matter of procedure upon which I am not in a position to speak.

MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS.

In going over the parks my attention has been drawn to a number of miscellaneous matters, concerning which I have given some oral suggestion and comments to your superintendent and to members of the commission. Of these the more important were the following:--

Vicinity of Museum in City Park:

The surroundings of the museum in the City Park are naked looking, the building is stilted in appearance, and the interesting formal design below the building lacks support in its surroundings and richness of detail. The whole appearance of the place can be vastly improved by carefully designed planting, especially the planting of dense formal groves of trees to the right and left of the axis above the terrace occupied by the octagonal basin. The effect desired will not be secured until the trees have had some years of growth, but they ought to be planted without delay. In a case of this sort the exact design of the planting ought to be studied with as

much care and skill as the architectural treatment of an important building.

Cheesman Memorial:

What I have said of the bareness and lack of enrichment by proper planting in the surroundings of the City Park museum may be repeated as to the surroundings of the Cheesman Memorial. Of course, no tree planting should ever be so done as to impair the view of the mountains from this wonderful place of outlook, but the beauty of the building would be greatly enhanced by a proper background of tall tree foliage, and something should certainly be done in the way of minor planting to enrich its immediate surroundings on the side toward the view and take away from the barren, glaring look of the foreground. Of course, the finish and character of the architectural work of the terraces which surround the building is unfortunately out of keeping with the distinguished character of the building itself. But even accepting this as inevitable for the present the introduction of proper garden vegetation which would soften and obscure, while enriching, the architectural frame of the design, would be a very great improvement. For this, also, a carefully studied planting plan ought to be made.

Montclair Civic Building:

A few suggestions were made for minor improvements in of the grounds the design/, mainly through planting, of which the superintendent

took note and for which no further specification or plan is needed.

Inspiration Point.

The one indispensable improvement for this extraordinarily impressive and beautiful outlook point is the permanent protection of the view by control of the slope from the terrace down to the stream below. When water becomes available at this point, trees should be established upon the ridge for shade and background, but the hillside below the terrace should be rigorously kept in its natural condition as a typical dry Colorado hillside, just as the view in its larger way is typical of the noblest natural scenery of the State.

Probably a shelter building will be needed for the convenience of visitors to Inspiration Point, but it ought not to be undertaken until a completely thought-out general plan has been devised covering every feature of this wonderful spot. It is so magnificent a thing for any city to possess that every least element in its treatment and in the treatment of its immediate surroundings should be made to play its part in promoting the deep and noble impression that is carried away from this spot by every visitor.

Maintenance Matters:

I have offered certain suggestions to your superintendent, which we both hope will prove of some help to him in dealing with the costly and perplexing problem of park irrigation.

This problem has, of course, received constant thought for years, but I believe it will repay still further and more thorough study, not only upon the mechanical side, in an effort to devise means and methods for getting the greater results from a given quantity of water and a given annual cost for labor and equipment, but also in a thoroughgoing consideration of many features of park design, in hopes of working out types of landscape beauty more appropriate to the climate than those borrowed from eastern conditions. This is a large and difficult subject and it is not safe to predict any very notable results, but I cannot help feeling (as my father felt before me, out of a great breadth of experience in landscape work) that it ought to be possible in Colorado and in the dry Southwest to develop certain types of landscape treatment costing less to maintain than the usual imitation of Eastern landscape work, and at the same time presenting a beauty that would be more nearly indigenous - something that would strike the visitor from the East as ~~beautiful~~ a different kind of thing - instead of a not always successful imitation of the sort of thing that can only reach its highest perfection in a moist climate.

These are generalities, but I think that by studying the parks with these points in mind, as well as the general principles of good design, which are alike the world over, it should be possible to make suggestions of detail that would help your superintendent gradually to increase still further the large return which the people of Denver are getting from the money expended on the parks.

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In the above report and the oral suggestions made during my visit, I have covered the ground about as well as I could in a brief visit of consultation. I do not think it would pay you for me to prolong my stay at present. To go further means, on the one hand, to get down to the preparation of definite plans, most of which I can do more effectively and at less cost in my office, with subsequent review upon the ground before final submission; and, on the other hand, to get started upon the consideration of a great many details which cannot be properly dealt with unless a great deal of time is given to them and unless they are systematically followed up. That implies an arrangement for continuing consulting services.

The extent and nature of the services which it would seem worth while for your board to ask of a landscape architect at the present juncture, and the rapidity with which the various pieces of work can best be done, are so difficult to determine with any degree of accuracy that I find it very difficult to submit any definite proposition for compensation. The usual method of my firm is to charge a fee for the personal professional services of members of the firm and to charge in addition to that for the services of technically trained assistants (such as draftsmen, plantsmen, inspectors, and so forth) during the hours exclusively devoted by each to the work of any client, at a rate per hour intended to cover a proportionate share of all the general expenses of the office and a small margin of profit. In addition, we charge for travelling expenses, sunprints, photographs and other special expenses incurred exclusively for each client. Our personal professional fee is sometimes fixed upon the basis of so many dollars per acre, as in the case of land subdivisions and large parks, where the amount of work to be done is in a manner standardized. Sometimes it is an arbitrary lump sum fixed in advance. Sometimes it is in the form of a periodical retainer or salary. Sometimes it is left indefinite, and we send in bills from time to time for what we think the services are worth.

In the present case, apart from the civic center plans, for which a separate proposition can be made as soon as I have consulted with Mr. Brunner, I think the only practicable way is to

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fix a retaining fee, to be paid in quarterly installments and subject to adjustment up or down, by mutual agreement, in case the work should prove to be more or less than at first estimated. Such an agreement would be terminable by either party on reasonable notice. Before proposing the amount of the retainer, I would like to consult with my partners; but if the general form of arrangement, as above suggested, is acceptable, I will send a draft of an agreement immediately upon my return to Brookline.

Respectfully submitted,

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NOTE: Source document is memorandum from F.L. Olmsted, Jr. to Board of Park Commissioners, typed from photocopy December 2006. Text in bold on first page was handwritten in original.

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