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ROADS DESIGNED FOR PLEASURE
British Influences on the American Motor Parkway

Paul Daniel Marriott

This thesis is submitted to the University of Edinburgh in accordance with the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the College of Humanities and Social Science. September 2015.

ABSTRACT

By 1800 the idea of pleasure driving, traveling through the landscape in a vehicle to appreciate nature and scenery, became not only popular, but also practical. What began in Britain as a recreational pastime for the upper classes soon found its way to the public parks of America and became the “Sunday Drive” of the early automobile era. This thesis demonstrates that a critical convergence of science and theory at the end of the eighteenth century propelled the development of the first roads constructed for no purpose other than driving for pleasure. Leading this movement was the renowned landscape gardener Humphry Repton.

This thesis will examine the convergence of theory and science, using Repton as the central historical figure. By tracing the dissemination of his writings on roads, it will demonstrate his influence on the design of pleasure roads in nineteenth century America and, by extension, the automobile parkways of the early twentieth century. To do so, it will focus on the transatlantic conversations of four men: John Claudius Loudon, Andrew Jackson Downing, Calvert Vaux and Frederick Law Olmsted, during a period which saw the ascendancy of the profession of landscape architecture in America with the development of the rural cemetery and New York’s Central Park. Beginning with Brooklyn’s Prospect Park it will establish the physical and philosophical origins of the first “park-ways” created to address metropolitan growth and pleasure driving, and assess the impact of the public health movement, through river reclamation, in defining the serpentine alignment that would come to distinguish the parkway form. Lastly, it will trace the legacy of these influences as American landscape architects designed a new class of pleasure roads expressly for the motorcar—culminating in 1925 with the Bronx River Parkway in Westchester County, New York—the first automobile parkway in the world.
I declare that this thesis has been composed by me and that the work contained within it is my own. I also declare that the work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification. In addition, I declare that minor excerpts (not more than 500 words each) were taken from previous publications and documents fully researched and authored by me:


I further declare that excerpts written for this thesis were included in the following article authored by me:


Paul Daniel Marriott
September 2015
## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract iii

Author’s Declaration v

Table of Contents vii

List of Illustrations x

Preface xv

Acknowledgements xxi

**Chapter 1**

**Introduction** 1

Framing the Research 7

Research Goals and Parameters 22

Study Period, 1750-1925 22

Researching the Parkway 25

Archival and Research Materials 26

Terms, Definitions and Notes 28

Pleasure Roads 29

The Automobile Parkway 30

The Three Classes of Roads 30

Additional Notes 31

Chapter Summary 33

Chapter 1 Illustrations 35

**Chapter 2**

**Humphry Repton and the Pleasure Drive** 41

Introduction 41

Early Life 44

Surveyor of the Highways 47

The Mail Coach System 49

Humphry Repton, Landscape Gardener 53

The Red Books 55

The Picturesque Controversy 56

Brown, His Predecessors and the Avenue 63

The Convergence 74

Road-Making 75

Vehicle Design 82

The Picturesque Movement 85
Chapter 6

The Bronx River Parkway

Introduction

The Bronx Parkway Commission

The Bronx Convergence

The Good Roads Movement

The American Conservation Movement

The Automobile

The Bronx River Parkway — “A Magical Parkway”

The Bronx Parkway Commission Reports

1907 Report of the Bronx Parkway Commission

1909 Report of the Bronx Parkway Commission

1912 Report of the Bronx Parkway Commission

1914 Report of the Bronx Parkway Commission

1915 Report of the Bronx Parkway Commission

1916 Report of the Bronx Parkway Commission

1917 Report of the Bronx Parkway Commission

1918 Report of the Bronx Parkway Commission

1922 Report of the Bronx Parkway Commission

1925 Report of the Bronx Parkway Commission

Chapter Summary

Chapter 6 Illustrations

Chapter 7

Conclusion

Appendices

Appendix 1, Library of Frederick Law Olmsted

Appendix 2, Robert Morris Copeland, Country Life

Bibliography
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Illustrations are located at the end of each chapter, beginning at the page numbers below. Letter (a) indicates a detail of the primary illustration; (x) a related, post viva voce, addition.

Chapter 1

1.1 Henry Hudson Parkway, New York, 1947
1.2 Metropolitan New York Parkway, no date
1.3 Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway, Washington, DC, 1935
1.4 Bronx River Parkway, New York, 1922
1.5 Colonial Parkway, Virginia, 2012
1.6 Saw Mill River Parkway, New York, no date
1.7 Palisades Interstate Parkway, New Jersey Section, no date
1.8 Garden State Parkway, New Jersey, 1957

Chapter 2

2.1 Norwich Mail Coach, 1827
2.2 Frontispiece, Red Book for Blaise Castle, 1796
2.3 Red Book for Sheringham Park, approach road, before, c. 1812
2.4 Red Book for Sheringham Park, approach road, after, c. 1812
2.5 Red Book for Blaise Castle, “The Approach,” 1796
2.6 Bramham Park, Yorkshire, 2014
2.7 Map of Menai Strait, Holyhead Road Commission, no date
2.8 The Boonsboro Turnpike, first macadam road in the U.S., 1823
2.9 Woburn Abbey, approach road, before, 1816
2.10 Woburn Abbey, approach road, after, 1816
2.11 Red Book for Sheringham Park, approach road, after, c. 1812
2.12 Approach road at Sheringham Park, 2013
2.13 View from approach road at Sheringham Park, 2013
2.14 Red Book for Blaise Castle, map, 1796
2.15 Detail, map, Red Book for Blaise Castle, 1796
2.16 Approach road at Blaise Castle, 1 of 3, 2014
2.17 Approach road at Blaise Castle, 2 of 3, 2014
2.18 Approach road at Blaise Castle, 3 of 3, 2014
2.19 Red Book for Blaise Castle, folly, 1796
2.20 Folly, Blaise Castle, 2014
2.21 Red Book for Blaise Castle, carriage drive, before, 1796
2.22 Red Book for Blaise Castle, carriage drive, after, 1796
2.23 Improvements to the public highway, Repton, 1816
2.24 View from Repton’s cottage, before, 1816
2.25 View from Repton’s cottage, after, 1816
Chapter 3

3.1 Landscape with Tourists at Loch Katrine, no date
3.2 Road in Usk, William Gilpin, 1792
3.3 Tintern Abbey, 2014
3.4 The road at Penmaenmawr, 1834
3.5 Doctor Syntax, 1809
3.6 Military Road at Loch Lomond, 1828
3.7 Derwentwater, no date
3.8 Falls of Kilmorock, c. 1835
3.9 Craig-Ellachie Bridge, no date
3.10 Falls of Foyers, c. 1835

Chapter 4

4.1 The National Road, no date
4.2 George Washington's *Universal Gardener and Botanist*, 1778
4.3 Potomac River, above Georgetown, 1795
4.4 Catskill Mountain House, 1830
4.5 Plan, Mount Auburn Cemetery, no date
4.6 Willow Avenue, Mount Auburn Cemetery, 1851
4.6x Père Lachaise Cemetery, Paris, 2015
4.7 Lawn-Girt Hill, Greenwood Cemetery, 1847
4.8 Illustrated plan of Greenwood Cemetery, 1847
4.9 Roads in Greenwood Cemetery, 1850
4.10 Carriages, Hyde Park Corner, 1838
4.11 Catskill Mountain House, Thomas Cole, no date
4.12 Plan, Central Park carriage drives, 1875
4.13 Transverse road, Central Park, 1859
4.14 79th Street transverse road, Central Park, no date
4.15 Carriage driving, Central Park, 1869
4.15a Detail
4.16 Carriage driving, Central Park, 1869
4.16a Detail
4.17 Telford paving, cross section, Central Park, no date
4.18 Telford paving, excavation, c. 2014

Chapter 5

5.1 Greenwood Cemetery, 2015
5.2 Plan, Prospect Park, 1871
5.3 Carriage Concourse shelter, Prospect Park, 1869
5.4 Avenue de l'Imperatrice, Paris, c. 1865
5.5 Street plan, Brooklyn Parkway, 1871
5.6 Plan, Brooklyn Parkway, 1871
5.6a Detail
5.7 Jamaica (Eastern) Parkway, Brooklyn, 1900
5.8 Jamaica (Eastern) Parkway, Brooklyn, 2015
5.9 Ocean Parkway, Brooklyn, 1894
5.10 Ocean Parkway, Brooklyn, 1890s
5.11 Plan, Buffalo Park and Parkway System, 1876
5.12 Gates Circle, Buffalo Parkway System, c. 1910
5.13 Gates Circle, Buffalo Parkway System, c. 1910
5.14 Plan, Buffalo South Park, Carriage Concourse, Lake Erie, 1888
5.15 Plan, Buffalo South Park, Carriage Concourse, Park Water, 1888
5.15a Detail
5.16 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, 1903
5.17 Plan, The Most Beautiful City in America, Boston, 1872
5.18 Plan, Back Bay Fens, Boston, no date
5.19 Plan, Emerald Necklace, Boston, no date
5.20 Muddy River Improvement, Boston, 1920
5.21 Parkway, Middlesex Fells Reservation, Massachusetts, no date
5.22 Parkway, Middlesex Fells Reservation, Massachusetts, no date
5.23 Vegetation management, Sangus Hills, before, 1898
5.24 Vegetation management, Sangus Hills, after, 1898

Chapter 6

6.1 Vista House, Columbia River Highway, Oregon, no date
6.2 Vista House overlooking Columbia River, Oregon, no date
6.3 Lincoln Highway, Nebraska, c. 1915
6.4 The Law Bulletin and Good Roads Magazine, 1895
6.5 Lookout Mountain Drive, Denver Mountain Parks, no date
6.6 Woodward Avenue, concrete road, Michigan, 1909
6.7 Driving through a Redwood, Yosemite National Park, 1918
6.8 Packard Phaeton automobile, 1912
6.9 Map, National Park-to-Park Highway, 1922
6.10 Automobile wreck, c. 1918
6.12 Map, Bronx River Parkway and Metropolitan New York, 1922
6.13 Drive along the Wissahickon, Philadelphia, c. 1872
6.14 Bronx River, tenement housing, before, 1914
6.15 Bronx River, river restoration, after, 1914
6.16 Bronx River, section destroyed by railroad, 1915
6.17 Bronx River, construction to divert the river, 1915
6.18 Bronx River, diverted river, 1915
6.19 Plan 1 of 5, Bronx River Parkway, Landscape Development, 1918
6.20 Plan 2 of 5, Bronx River Parkway, Landscape Development, 1918
6.21 Plan 3 of 5, Bronx River Parkway, Landscape Development, 1918
6.22 Plan 4 of 5, Bronx River Parkway, Landscape Development, 1918
6.23 Plan 5 of 5, Bronx River Parkway, Landscape Development, 1918
6.24 Detail, Plan 2 of 5
6.25 Detail, Plan 3 of 5
6.26 Bronx River Parkway, 1926
6.27 Bronx River Parkway, separated-grade intersection, c. 1926
PREFACE

For over twenty years I have been working as a landscape architect and planner in the field of historic preservation to identify and conserve historic roads—first as a program director at the U.S. National Trust for Historic Preservation, and since 2004 as principal of my own consulting firm, Paul Daniel Marriott + Associates, Historic and Scenic Road Preservation Planners in Washington, D.C. In the early years of this work I focused on the preservation of significant historic roads from imminent or reckless destruction. I began a career path researching historic roads when invited by the Westchester County, New York, Department of Planning to comment on proposed alterations and demolitions to the Bronx River Parkway by the Westchester County Department of Public Works. I remembered the Bronx River Parkway (constructed 1913-1925) from my landscape history class in my freshman year at the Pennsylvania State University. In fact, I had been so intrigued by the design of the parkway that, upon completing my degree, I drove the historic parkway—only to be deeply disappointed when discovering that the southern third of the parkway (south of Bronxville) had been rebuilt as a six-lane freeway in the 1950s. The northern two-thirds of the historic parkway (and its northerly extension, the 104 mile/167 kilometer Taconic State Parkway, constructed 1929-1963) still retained much of its original design integrity. My task, as a representative of the National Trust, was to identify preservation methods and strategies for this important segment of the Bronx River Parkway.

I quickly realized two important issues that would influence my work for the next two decades. Firstly, U.S. preservation policy provided little direction for managing historic roads and many professionals in the preservation field did not consider “roads” as legitimate historic resources—in fact, I was initially directed by the President of the National Trust to cease my advocacy for the parkway as it did not fit the mission of the organization. Secondly, I realized
that the successful preservation of historic roads could not be undertaken without careful study of and appreciation for modern function and safety. I began reading the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), *A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets*, better known as the “Green Book,” to familiarize myself with highway guidance. The result of my work, including having the Bronx River Parkway listed as one of the Trust’s “Eleven Most Endangered Historic Resources” in 1995 (the first time the organization recognized a road as “historic”), saw improved, but far from ideal, management of the historic parkway.

The Bronx River Parkway experience, and what I learned of U.S. transportation policy while working in Westchester County, became the basis for my first book, *Saving Historic Roads, Design and Policy Guidelines* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1998), in which I established three classifications for historic roads. Over the following years, I began working with an increasingly diverse collection of historic roads across the United States. With an emerging national conversation on the role of historic roads within the nation’s transportation system, I was asked by the America’s Byways Resource Center of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to write a citizen’s guidebook for historic roads. By this time I realized the preservation of historic roads, without an appreciation for the *history of roads*, was going to limit any advances in policy or management. Advocates and preservation agencies needed to understand the history of the theory, design and construction of America’s historic roads. In my second book, *Milestone to Mile-Markers, Understanding Historic Roads* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Transportation, 2004), I overcame the initial objections from FHWA and successfully included a chapter, “Discovering Your Heritage,” to provide a brief introduction to U.S. road history (from American Indian roads to the Interstate System in thirty-four pages).
I continued advocating for greater research and study into the history of roads. The conference proceedings of the Preserving the Historic Road conference I founded in 1998 contributed significantly toward this goal. Still, I found most of my work focused on the immediate needs, safety issues and policy decisions impacting America's historic roads. Like my clients, I was often tasked with learning the history of a road at the same time I was developing recommendations for its preservation. The first notable exception to this imperfect method was an invitation from the U.S. National Park Service in the autumn of 2006 to develop a treatment and management plan for a nineteenth-century carriage drive system at Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park in Vermont. The Park Service encouraged and supported my request to compile a comprehensive history of the influences and design of the twenty-mile (thirty-two kilometer) carriage drive system before preparing the management plan.

I traced the influence and origins of the park's carriage drives through three research courses: general trends and movements during the period of significance, the writings and philosophies on carriage drives of landscape architects known to have worked on the property, or known by the owners, and, the most obscure, specific actions related to the design and construction of the carriage drives at the Vermont property. Despite the absence of a design plan or written goal for the drives, their alignment, geographic range and diverse settings—within a relatively compact property of 550 acres (222 hectares)—demonstrated a sophistication of design and adherence to the theories promoted by the leading landscape architects of the period. The complexity of the system, the expense of its construction, the surprising quantity of written advice and the public acclaim by which the completed system was lauded in the press suggested to me an element of landscape history that had been largely overlooked by most histories. It also illuminated an aspect of the profession that appeared to be far more important, relevant and central to the design of landscape and the interaction within the
landscape by visitors. My initial and cursory foray into the archives yielded a complexity and quantity of historical records that suggested an important aspect of the profession of landscape architecture.

It was while in the Park archives that I first considered furthering my knowledge of the history of roads designed for pleasure through a Ph.D.

Through my research at Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller, I discovered an intensity of ideas and views articulated by leading nineteenth-century American landscape architects on the theory and practice of laying out pleasure drives. I was equally impressed by the newspaper archives chronicling favorable public discourse surrounding the Vermont carriage drives as well as detailed accounts of the development of carriage drives in U.S. public parks. I read the theories, plans and publications of Frederick Law Olmsted, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., Beatrix Farrand and Robert Morris Copeland—all with known associations to the Vermont property’s last two owners, the Billings and the Rockefellers. To address the evolution of the park’s carriage drive system in the twentieth century, I studied John D. Rockefeller Jr.’s simultaneous construction of both carriage drives and motor roads designed for pleasure at his Mt. Desert Island estate in Maine.

Nevertheless, at the completion of the National Park project I found myself once again drawn back to safety and policy issues for historic roads. In 2008 I was awarded a mid-career fellowship by the James Marston Fitch Foundation of New York to develop The Preservation Office Guide to Historic Roads for use by local, state and tribal governments. While the guide is heavily focused on preservation and transportation policy and law, I did, as with Milestones to Mile-Markers, include a chapter titled “Historic Periods of Road Building in the United States.” It was the structure of this guidebook that I used to organize my request to study at the Edinburgh College of Art (prior to its incorporation as a college within the University of Edinburgh in 2011). My initial study
proposal was to consider preservation policies and strategies for historic roads. It is from this position that I commenced my studies in Edinburgh in the autumn of 2010.

In the winter of 2011 I was asked to write the feature article for the first issue of a new journal, *Journal for America's Byways*. The journal was developed to advance research and scholarship to support the two-decade-old National Scenic Byways Program of the FHWA. I suggested a history of pleasure driving as an appropriate subject and, with the editor’s approval, embarked on a three-month program of research and writing. To my great pleasure the lengthy draft I presented to the journal’s editor was determined so instructive as an introductory conversation, that rather than edit it down, it was divided between the first two journals. The article “Roads Designed for Pleasure, A Brief History of the Origins of Scenic Driving and Automobile Touring in the United States,” was published in April and September 2011.

During the presentation of my first year’s research (part time) in the autumn of 2011, it was clear I was struggling with the direction and focus of my studies—trying to balance the history I knew was *important* with the policy I knew was *necessary*. After a series of extended conversations with some of my fellow students in Edinburgh, and peers in the United States, I was encouraged to shift away from the policy aspect of my research and focus on historical research. After consultation with my first supervisor, Catharine Ward Thompson, I made the decision to pursue a course of study researching the history of roads designed for pleasure.

It is here that I begin my dissertation *Roads Designed for Pleasure: British Influences on the American Motor Parkway*.

Paul Daniel Marriott  
Washington, D.C.
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The parkway as we know it to-day, exemplified in the systems in New York City, Long Island, and Westchester County, had its early beginning in 1901, fifty four years ago, in Inverness, Scotland. The origin of the idea, which led to the development of the delightful drives we are privileged to enjoy over the parkways in the New York Metropolitan Region, was in the little Scotch town of Inverness, so dearly beloved by Andrew Carnegie, the Laird of nearby Skiebo Castle. It was while the late Dr. William T. Hornaday, formerly Director of the New York Zoological Society, and Mr. William W. Niles, a Trustee of the Society, were visiting Scotland that the idea of protecting and rehabilitating little river valleys that had been despoiled was born.

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

“Every American who is in the habit of traveling, which is almost equivalent to saying every American....”

So begins the first line, in the first book written by English architect Calvert Vaux. Vaux with co-designer Frederick Law Olmsted designed and planned the first significant pleasure road systems in America, for Central Park in New York City and Prospect Park, across the East River, in Brooklyn. The parks’ carriage drives established both the engineering practices and landscape theories to develop roads designed for pleasure travel in the United States. Within fifty years, motorcars would be gliding along specially constructed automobile parkways based on these same principles (Figures 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3).

When opened, the touring drives constructed in Central Park and Prospect Park represented the fullest representation of a new recreational pastime—driving for pleasure. Pleasure driving emerged at the close of the eighteenth century in the United Kingdom after a convergence of technological advances in road construction and vehicle design aligned with the Picturesque

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Movement. As a result, a wholly new form of travel, driving for pleasure, reconsidered the traditional vehicular movement through the landscape to a predetermined destination, to one in which the landscape became the destination. For pleasure driving, the speed and directness of a road was secondary to the experience the road offered the Picturesque traveler. Facilitating this travel were two road typologies. The first, roads adapted for pleasure, resulted in the identification and promotion of existing public highways in scenic settings such as the Highlands of Scotland. The second was roads designed for pleasure. These newly constructed roads, designed in harmony with the local topography and built to showcase a variety of scenery and views, may be attributed to the work of landscape gardener Humphry Repton (1752-1818). His innovative designs and innate understanding of choreographing a landscape sequence based on the movement of a vehicle (what would later be termed kinesthetic design) established the theory and practice for roads designed for pleasure. This second road typology, from which the American motor parkway may be traced, is the focus of this thesis.

The American motor parkway is a distinctly American adaptation of the road designed for pleasure as conceived by Repton. Automobile parkways are pleasure drives fully integrated within a protected park corridor. Beginning with the first automobile parkway in the world, the Bronx River Parkway in Westchester County, New York (constructed 1913-1925), the United States embarked on an extensive program of parkway construction (Figure 1.4). The Mount Vernon Memorial Highway (constructed 1929-1932) and the Colonial Parkway (constructed 1931-1957), both U.S. National Park Service roads in Virginia, are representative of this earliest period (Figure 1.5). Westchester County, seeing the immediate benefit of the Bronx River Parkway, constructed additional parkways between 1923 and 1933 to connect newly established regional parks in the rapidly growing New York City suburb. The Saw Mill River Parkway, Hutchinson River Parkway and the Cross County Parkway created a network of green corridors in Westchester County, linking Long
Island Sound to the Hudson River via the integrated parkway system (Figure 1.6).

In the foreword to his book, *The American Landscape*, Christian Zapatka notes, “a look at the tree-lined roads that were built specifically for reaching parks, whether in or outside the city, is an essential part of any study of American landscape design.”

Many books on American landscape history suggest the importance of roads designed for pleasure (e.g., automobile parkways and scenic motor roads) and several suggest that the design and construction of automobile parkways is a uniquely American contribution to the profession of landscape architecture. In almost every instance such discussions begin with an unstated premise that people enjoy driving for pleasure, and that the design of specialty roads for pleasure driving arose from the natural authority of the landscape architect’s art. Why people toured along these roads that Zapatka states are “generically known as ‘parkways,’” and the purpose of such roads in the landscape has been assumed, but not defined.

References to parkways are written with such conviction and ownership by the profession of landscape architecture in the United States that it is noteworthy that no scholar appears to have traced the origin of what should more broadly be considered as roads designed for pleasure.

Many attribute the origin of the term “parkway” to Jamaica (Eastern) Parkway planned by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux as an approach to Prospect Park in Brooklyn. The imprimatur of Olmsted’s association with the first named “park-way” assigns a natural authority to the concept, but denies not only the pioneering work he and Vaux undertook in the design of the carriage drives in Central Park, but also the construction of earlier pleasure roads. Rural cemeteries in the first half of the nineteenth century and

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landscape theories from late eighteenth-century Britain, most notably those of Humphry Repton, provided both the theory and example for designing pleasure roads in the United States before Central Park.

Repton was the first landscape gardener to define the form and structure of a road designed for pleasure. He was uniquely positioned and qualified to respond to a convergence of technology and theory at the close of the eighteenth century that enabled, for the first time, practical and *pleasurable* touring in a vehicle. During this period, modern engineering practices for the construction of roads were significantly advanced, new technologies allowed for the manufacture of carriages that were safe and comfortable, and the Picturesque Movement elevated domestic scenery as a worthwhile destination. British engineers, such as John Loudon McAdam (1756-1836) and Thomas Telford (1757-1834), were at the forefront of these technological advances, while the writings of William Gilpin (1724-1804) romanticized and popularized picturesque touring. The earlier theoretical inquiries into landscape and beauty by William Hogarth, Horace Walpole and Edmund Burke, and represented by the landscape architecture of William Kent and Lancelot “Capability” Brown, placed the United Kingdom at the vanguard of this convergence.

Importantly, Repton’s books on landscape design, his published letters and the “Red Books” he prepared outlining design concepts for his clients, including carriage drives at Bullstrode, Blaise Castle and Sheringham Park, established the pleasure drive as a new road type and a new landscape typology. His concepts for a road specifically designed to showcase the scenic beauties of a site, enjoyed from a moving carriage, influenced nineteenth-century landscapes such as the rural cemetery and the country park in America, and served as the inspiration for the American motor parkway. Yet, for such a well-documented movement in landscape architecture, roads designed for pleasure, with the exception of the automobile parkway, have
been little studied. Even then, most references to automobile parkways address only their aesthetic form, rather than including the technological advances that were essential to their development.

A notable exception is *Driving Germany, The Landscape of the German Autobahn, 1930-1970* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007), by Thomas Zeller. He associates the style of the German autobahn as an adaptation of the American parkway form, and while he does not consider the autobahn as a road designed for pleasure, he describes the landscape structure, technological aspects and kinesthetic experiences that were essential to Repton’s concepts for pleasure driving. Zeller writes of the autobahnen:

> The roads were designed around the visual composition of landscapes. With the help of modern road building techniques, the experience of the car as a domesticated adventure machine could lead to views and vistas that made possible entertaining moments of surprise and eventful outings for the sake of driving.⁴

Importantly, Zeller states that the historic relationship of landscape and technology to the design of roads “has far too long remained unclear within historical scholarship.”⁵ To rectify the historical omissions regarding roads designed for pleasure and refute the narratives that have become accepted explanations for the American motor parkway, are goals of this thesis.

Therefore, this thesis will challenge the commonly held assertion that parkways are a uniquely American contribution to the profession of landscape architecture by demonstrating an unbroken line of landscape theory originating from Repton and guiding the design and planning of roads designed for pleasure up to the American motor parkways of the early twentieth century. The basis for this thesis is the conviction that pleasure

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drives were not incidental to the practice of landscape architecture, but an integral and highly relevant core aspect of the profession during its modern origins.

As an outcome, this thesis will illuminate the design theories, social structures and technological advances that influenced these roads, but have largely been omitted from most histories of the profession. Unlike the standard history of landscape architecture, where precedent and evolution are carefully tracked and commented on, the design of pleasure roads is typically undocumented and only referenced as an incidental aspect; no scholar has, as yet, connected the histories, established an origin, and shown the relationships from designer to designer, road to road, or nation to nation across the study period.

As a result of the literature review for this thesis, it became apparent that the larger question to be asked was not the origin of the American motor parkway, but rather the origins of driving for pleasure. Only by establishing the origins of driving for pleasure can an accurate portrayal of the need, desire and purpose of the automobile parkway be undertaken. Therefore, the following questions were posed:

• When did driving for pleasure, as a recognized leisure activity, begin?

• What social, intellectual and technological factors were required, recognized, or appropriated to facilitate pleasure driving?

• When were the first purpose-built roads designed for pleasure envisioned, designed or constructed?

• How did British theory and practice for pleasure roads influence the design of roads in the United States?

• Is the American motor parkway a descendant, in theory, design or practice, of the British road designed for pleasure?
FRAMING THE RESEARCH

The elision of pleasure roads and pleasure driving from the history of landscape architecture establishes a point of departure for this thesis. Pleasure driving in general and roads designed for pleasure in particular, are noticeably absent from the limited discourse on circulation systems in the landscape. Such omissions from the general narrative are made more glaring by the period accounts chronicling the popularity of pleasure driving and the technological achievements of the era. Repton stated the “road is a work of art.” The poet Robert Southey, while touring the Scottish Highlands with Thomas Telford, declared, “a fine road is a grand and beautiful work.” In 1850 American civil engineer W. M. Gillespie described Telford’s Highland roads as “unparalleled in the history of any country.” Regarding Jamaica Parkway, the New York Times enthusiastically predicted, “When complete it will be beyond all question the finest and most imposing boulevard in the world.”

Only with a critical inquiry into the social, design and technological influences that first shaped the pleasure drive, can claims of innovation or significance attributed to the American motor parkway be substantiated within the historical record. Indeed, the prominence of the American motor parkway in the literature draws attention to the larger omission of the design of roads by landscape architects and the origins of driving for pleasure. A literature review of landscape history books shows few references to circulation, much less the specifics of roads designed for pleasure prior to the Bronx River Parkway.

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6 Humphry Repton, Red Book for Sherringham [sic] (1812), unpaged.
To initiate the research inquiry for this thesis, a number of general survey and specialized books on landscape history were reviewed to summarize how pleasure driving and the automobile parkway are presented within the context of the evolution of landscape architecture. While secondary sources, several of the following books demonstrate how a narrative for the American motor parkway has been created (and repeated) with little investigation or critical inquiry into the philosophical or design origins of the parkway.

The most frequently cited definition for the parkway is from Norman T. Newton’s *Design on the Land, The Development of Landscape Architecture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971). The book, a standard text for U.S. landscape history classes for several decades, offers few insights into the origins of pleasure driving. In Chapter XV, “The English ‘Landscape Gardening School,’” *Design on the Land* makes no reference to the carriage drives or circulation systems in any of the landscapes or gardens referenced. The chapter passes briefly over the work of Vanbrugh and Bridgeman, noting Bridgeman as the “reputed ‘inventor’ of the ha-ha.” Slightly more text is devoted to the work of Kent and Brown—though still with limited descriptions of their design work. After a brief mention of Richard Payne Knight and Uvedale Price, and the Picturesque Movement, Newton turns his attention to Humphry Repton, a man he describes as “inventive and remarkably articulate” and the “profession’s first credible theoretician.” He notes Repton’s “Red Books,” but does not identify any property by name or location, neither does he reference Repton’s pleasure drives. In concluding the chapter, he notes the influence the English Landscape School had on the nineteenth century, and in particular the “ineffable charm” of the English landscape on Olmsted—establishing a causal relationship between British

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12 Ibid., p. 220.
and American landscape designers that will be examined in Chapter 4 of this thesis, “Transatlantic Conversations.”

In subsequent chapters in Design on the Land, Newton discusses Birkenhead Park, offering the desultory assessment that the “carriage road no doubt has done the job assigned to it.”¹³ The cursory Birkenhead reference appears to be the first acknowledgement of carriage roads and pleasure driving in the book. A brief mention of the rural cemetery, which he states is a “completely American invention,” introduces the chapter on Central and Prospect Parks, but includes no reference to the popularity of carriage driving along the well-engineered drives constructed for the cemeteries.¹⁴ Newton makes a brief reference to “carriage (now motor) drives” when discussing the organization of Central Park, and a further brief note of the “Circuit Drive” at Prospect Park, but inquiries into the design of the carriage drives as a prominent feature of each park are absent.¹⁵

What distinguishes Design on the Land for the purpose of this thesis is Chapter XXXIX, “Parkways and Their Offspring”—a twenty-four page introduction to the design of automobile parkways in the United States. It remains one of the most thorough summaries of the American motor parkway in a general landscape history book. The emphasis Newton places on the automobile parkway reflects the importance of the road type within professional practice and academia during a career that witnessed the most significant parkway development in the United States (1919-1992). The role of landscape architects in highway design (and the primacy of the parkway form in highway design) declined significantly in the 1960s. Not surprisingly, subsequent texts devote limited discussion to the parkway. Therefore, Newton’s views represent an authoritative summary on the subject, even though he offers few insights into the origins of pleasure driving.

¹³ Ibid., p. 229.
¹⁴ Ibid., p. 268. Most historians recognize Père Lachaise in Paris as the first rural cemetery.
¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 279, 284-285.
Like many landscape historians, Newton, even in the chapter on parkways, does not discuss or speculate on the origin of pleasure drives before Olmsted. Like others, he associates the first use of the term “parkway” with the approach to Prospect Park via Jamaica Parkway. While not identifying the philosophical or theoretical origins for the parkway, Newton does provide important clarity for the concept by defining the modern automobile parkway. His definition continues to be widely used:

But on the whole early “parkways” could more accurately be described as boulevards. It was only with completion of New York’s Bronx River Parkway after World War I that the modern parkway came into being with its clear set of distinguishing characteristics. The term now denoted a strip of land dedicated to recreation and the movement of pleasure vehicles (passenger, not commercial automobiles). The parkway was not itself a road, it contained a roadway. The strip of land was not just a highway with uniform grassy borders; it was of significantly varying width, depending on immediate topographic and cultural conditions. The roadway itself differed markedly from that of an ordinary highway in that it was meant for comfortable driving in pleasant surroundings, not merely for getting from one place to another as fast as possible. The alignment was accordingly one of gentle curves, designed for speeds in keeping with the times. Perhaps most important was the distinctive provision that abutting owners had no right of light, air, or access over the parkway strip. It was lack of the limited access factor that most clearly kept the early boulevards from functioning as parkways in the modern sense.

Design on the Land’s recognition of “parkways in the modern sense,” has been applied to earlier parkways incorrectly. Indeed, even Newton states that the first parkways “could more accurately be described as boulevards”—negating their legitimacy as the first parkways through his definition. His statement demonstrates that even he failed to make the connection of the automobile parkway as an evolution of the larger concept of roads designed for pleasure. His definition, while a valuable summation of the motor parkway, has been

16 Ibid., p. 596.
17 Ibid., p. 597. (Emphasis original.)
incorrectly appropriated to define earlier parkway models. Many historians have made similar assertions, suggesting the parkway as the logical outgrowth of the avenue or boulevard.

U.S. National Park Service Historian Timothy Davis explored the origins of the pleasure drive in his Ph.D. dissertation at the University of Texas at Austin, “Mount Vernon Highway and the Evolution of the American Parkway” (1997). He attributes the influence of the avenue as an important progenitor for the pleasure drive, citing urban historian Lewis Mumford when noting that, “the construction of special streets designed to cater to the sensation of rapid and pleasurable movement through visually striking surroundings dates back at least to the seventeenth century.”

While the evolution of the European avenue or boulevard is important to American city planning, such thoroughfares cannot be considered as roads designed for pleasure. Additionally, as shall be demonstrated in Chapter 2, “Humphry Repton and the Pleasure Drive,” vehicle design in the seventeenth century (and indeed most of the eighteenth century) did not possess the technology for comfortable travel or fast driving. The use of the avenue, as Davis notes, was for ceremonial or military purposes. Yet he reaffirms, “the self-conscious emulation of prominent European prototypes provided the primary impetus for the first phase of the American parkway movement, which began in the late 1860s and carried over into the early decades of the twentieth century.”

While aspects of Olmsted and Vaux’s first named parkway, Jamaica Parkway, reflect the linear structure of a traditional avenue or boulevard, its form was more coincidental to the realities of the existing street grid than the greater goal of connecting larger park units with “park-ways.” Indeed, as can be seen by the evolution of the parkway from a “land” corridor to a distinctive type of automobile road, every effort was made to ensure that the parkway corridor

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19 Davis, “Mount Vernon Highway,” p. 34.
expressed the landscape characteristics of the larger park units it was designed to connect, and self-consciously eschewed the formal elements of the avenue. This thesis shows that the avenue as a landscape form, particularly as a formal garden or estate construction, is a device utilized to demonstrate authority, order and scale, not designed to engage the traveler with the landscape. Davis continues, by noting that the “winding carriage roads of English landscape parks provided another important influence on American parkway designers.” He credits Repton as a designer of pleasure roads, but considers his work to be more an extension of the formal avenue than a unique and wholly new addition to the landscape. Davis states:

Repton’s conception of an appropriate park road was no less artificial than the preceding era’s avenues [...]. The picturesque park road replaced the transparent discipline of the formal avenue with the equally coercive but deceptively subtle and agreeable sensation that the road’s meticulously constructed views and tightly choreographed visual sequences were happy accidents of nature, which the viewer fortuitously encountered while wandering along a languorously winding path that the builder had not so much designed as discovered.

What is missing from this summation is the experiential aspect essential to the pleasure road. The road designed for pleasure engages its user in a recreational activity and, importantly, delineates its form and organizes its alignment to the topography of the site and the unique opportunities presented by the landscape. It is wholly dependent on the smoothness of the ride and the comfort of the vehicle to facilitate a pleasurable landscape engagement (requiring technology not available until the end of the eighteenth century). By contrast, the avenue is wholly independent from its host landscape, and any spectacular views or pleasant engagements with scenery are incidental to its form. Engagement with the landscape is secondary to its visual form or ceremonial purpose. Therefore, the pleasure

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20 Ibid., p. 38.
21 Ibid., p. 44.
road must be viewed as a new concept created from the philosophical and technological convergence that occurred around 1800. What Repton defined, was an entirely new road type—not a refinement of the historically significant, but entirely unrelated, avenue.

In *The Landscape of Man, Shaping the Environment from Prehistory to the Present Day* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1995) Geoffrey and Susan Jellicoe note that Repton “intellectualized” the connection between garden and park, and further note, “His place in history is established by his analytical writings, which were the first seriously to record the optical as well as the psychological sciences upon which the art was based.”22 Despite the introductory assessment of Repton’s contribution to the profession, the chapter “The English School” makes no reference to Repton’s scientific contributions, much less circulation or drives. Regarding the roads in Birkenhead Park, *The Landscape of Man* states, “Having no mansion and, therefore, no centrifugal point, perspectives were random and the drive peripheral.”23 The example fails to note why a carriage drive was a part of Joseph Paxton’s plan for the park, or associate the inclusion of such a feature with the popularity of carriage driving in Britain. As with *Design on the Land*, Birkenhead appears to be the first reference to pleasure drives in the book. *The Landscape of Man* makes no mention of the drives in Central Park, or the parkways of Boston when discussing Olmsted.24 Regarding design in the United States, the book states that Americans continued to copy European models into the nineteenth century, but that the start of the twentieth century, “was one of transition and between the wars landscape design had sufficiently advanced in public appreciation to be able to create the Westchester Parkways as a contrast to Manhattan [...].”25 *The Landscape of Man* states:

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24 Ibid., pp. 281-283.
The planning reaction in the USA against the gridiron, the car and sheer bigness, began by F.L. Olmsted, continued only spasmodically after the First World War. It was in recoil from Manhattan that the Westchester Park System was begun in 1922, spreading northwards from New York (Jay Downer, chief engineer; Gilmore D. Clarke, landscape architect) and linking all recreational areas in Westchester county. The concept of a parkway was new, since, unlike the classical boulevard, it was a road within a park.\textsuperscript{26}

The idea of a road “within” a park was not new when the Bronx River Parkway was designed (though it is possible the Jellicoes were using Newton’s parkway definition to define narrowly the Westchester system from which the definition originated). Indeed, serpentine and scenic roads existed in the private parks of the English Landscape School, and in the first public parks such as Birkenhead Park and Central Park. What \textit{The Landscape of Man} appears to be suggesting, is the concept of the increase in scale—from individual, self-contained properties or parks in the nineteenth century to a regional system of far greater size and geographic reach. Further, the planning for the automobile parkways was not a rejection of the car, as the Jellicoes suggest, but instead its logical and hopeful embrace. Gilmore Clarke, writing about the design origins of the Bronx River Parkway, made clear the purpose of the parkway that inspired the Westchester parkway system:

\begin{quote}
This parkway was not designed as an important arterial way, for during the first quarter of this century the speed of automobiles was generally limited to 25 miles per hour, and there was relatively little traffic. Rather, it was planned as a pleasant recreational drive connecting the system of parks in the Borough of the Bronx with the highways surrounding certain reservoirs of the New York City water supply system in Westchester County.\textsuperscript{27}
\end{quote}

The only additional reference to parkways in \textit{The Landscape of Man} is a prominently placed photo (and accompanying caption reference) of the Palisades Interstate Parkway, New Jersey Section, on the opening page of the

\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., p. 311.
chapter titled “The Western Hemisphere: The New World.”

Despite the prominent placement of the image, there is no further mention of the Palisades Interstate Parkway (or any other parkway) in the chapter the image purports to represent. Therefore, as a representative image, it may be considered as emblematic of both the broad agreement on the significance of the motor parkway as an important American contribution to landscape architecture and the notable absence of critical inquiry to justify such statements.

In *Invisible Gardens, The Search for Modernism in the American Landscape* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1994), Peter Walker and Melanie Simo note the importance of the “parkway” to twentieth-century landscape architecture in the United States. In noting the change in the profession between the era of Frederick Law Olmsted and World War II, *Invisible Gardens* notes:

> To trace these changes—including the demise of large, private country residences, the eclipse of horticultural concerns, and the new emphasis on site planning for public institutional clients—one could examine the careers of such transitional figures as John C. Olmsted, Frederick Law Olmsted Jr., Arthur Shurcliff, Fletcher Steele, Gilmore Clarke, Beatrix Farrand, and Lockwood de Forest. New Project types such as Charles Eliot’s ecological studies of open space reservations in metropolitan Boston (1896) and Clarke’s scenic Bronx River Parkway (1913), could be studied.²⁹

It is interesting that while Gilmore Clarke is identified as a “transitional” figure and the Bronx River Parkway identified as an important work, no explanation of the parkway’s design or theory is discussed.³⁰ The only additional reference to the parkway is made about the architecture of the parkway’s

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²⁸ Jellicoe, *The Landscape of Man*, p. 323.
³⁰ As shall be shown in the summary of the Bronx Commission Reports in Chapter 6, Gilmore Clarke is overly credited with the design of the Bronx River Parkway. Hermann Merkel and Charles Downing Lay were more influential in the final form of the parkway. Clarke is likely attributed to the design of the Bronx River Parkway due to his subsequent role as the landscape architect of the Westchester County Parkway System.
gasoline stations. The authors write, “One is reminded of the handsome stone service buildings along Gilmore Clarke’s state-of-the-art Bronx River Parkway.”31 For this thesis in particular, the text begs the important question: What made the parkway state-of-the-art?

*Design on the Land, The Landscape of Man* and *Invisible Gardens* begins the discussion of roads designed for pleasure with the American motor parkway. While all three books suggest the parkway to be an important contribution to the profession of landscape architecture, only Newton elaborates on the design of parkways. None discuss or speculate on the design origins of such roads, and each omits the details of circulation and roads when addressing the English landscapes, rural cemeteries and public parks that predate the automobile parkway. Only when more specialized landscape history books are consulted, does one find a greater discussion of the design and theory behind roads designed for pleasure.

In *The American Landscape* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1995), Christian Zapatka provides an admitted “selective survey” of the history of the American landscape. A native of the Washington, D.C. area, he notes the influence of the city’s avenues, park drives and parkways in shaping his views of the landscape. Not surprisingly, the book’s text and images represent one of the more comprehensive summaries of American pleasure roads. In the foreword Zapatka notes:

> […] Landscaped highways with a continuous right-of-way, can be traced back to Olmsted’s Eastern “Park-Way” of 1868 leading to Prospect Park in Brooklyn. An idea pioneered within a city context, it was taken to its logical extension in the form of commuter expressways and national parkways under the aegis of Roosevelt and Moses. These roads have become “ribbon parks” to be glimpsed from an automobile

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in pursuit of a suburban retreat or an encounter with the great outdoors.\(^{32}\)

In many ways, *The American Landscape* presents the history of American landscape architecture using the development of parkways, park roads, suburban drives and national highways as an organizing theme. Again, as with other landscape histories, the book begins with an unstated premise that driving for pleasure naturally resulted in these innovative roads.

In *Gardens and the Picturesque: Studies in the History of Landscape Architecture* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1992) John Dixon Hunt offers no further illumination on the discussion on roads designed for pleasure, but his work establishes important concepts for the origins of pleasure driving that are relevant to this research inquiry. In assessing the evolution of the Picturesque Movement across the eighteenth century from a painterly focus to a landscape focus, Hunt elucidates five factors “which helped to work these changes in picturesque expectations of landscape,” the fourth of which being travel.\(^{33}\)

While he does not describe the improvements to modern roads that facilitated travel to picturesque destinations, such improvements are implied by his discourse.

Fourthly, travel increasingly familiarized men with the great mountainous areas of Europe—the Alps, Snowdonia, the English Lakes, the Scottish Highlands: not only did these seem far less susceptible to translation into neoclassical languages, but Edmund Burke actually defined their sublimity largely in terms of the inexpressible. Travel, too, subtly and slowly undermined one of the key concepts of traditional aesthetics: the imitation of nature for Dryden meant human nature; increasingly now it meant nature.\(^{34}\)

Indeed, Hunt helps to tie the transition to landscape, aided by travel, ultimately to Gilpin. As shall be shown in Chapter 3, “Roads, Travel and the


\(^{34}\) Hunt, *Gardens and the Picturesque*, pp. 122-123.
Picturesque,” Gilpin was the first to consider a newly constructed road designed for pleasure.

The retreat from an academic picturesque [...] may be traced in the work of both the landscape designer “Capability” Brown and the painter Richard Wilson. Their work highlights and helps to explain the movement from a learned and universally translatable picturesque to one much more hospitable to the language of forms and to the vague, the local, the sentimental, and the subjective, all of which characterize the new picturesque of Gilpin and Price.35

In his most direct reference to roads designed for pleasure, Hunt includes a quote from Repton’s Red Book for Blaise Castle (1796):

It is remarkable that no attempt should have been made to render objects of so much beauty and variety accessible in a carriage, for however interesting the walks in hilly countries may be, they can only be enjoyed by great labour and exertion; they require health of body and vigour of limbs to enjoy their romantic wonders, while the aged and infirm have been excluded from the beauties of the place by the danger and difficulty of exploring them.36

Hunt elected to end his quote of Repton in Gardens and the Picturesque here. Continuing, in the next line of the quote from the original Red Book for Blaise Castle, Repton wrote:

I must therefore assume to myself the merit of shewing this situation in a manner before unthought of, and while I reserve some scenes for those who can walk to them, and who can climb steps or creep thro’ caverns, I must endeavor to display others from the windows of a carriage with all the interest of surprize and novelty.37

The former quote reflects the omission of access to the site by previous plans. However, it is in the extended quote where Repton made his most compelling statement on pleasure driving. By stating he was “shewing this situation in a

35 Ibid., p. 128.
36 Ibid., p. 161.
manner before unthought of,” he established himself as the originator of the modern pleasure drive. By choreographing scenery “from the windows of a carriage,” he demonstrated an understanding of kinesthetic design.

Hunt is one of the few authors who address Repton’s capacity for kinesthetic design. When describing the various views and prospects Repton provided at Blaise Castle, Hunt notes that they “may be taken as the visitor moves through the park.”

Still, even after recognizing Repton's ability to design for movement, Hunt, commenting on Repton’s Red Book illustrations states, “pictures cannot convey movement.” He then observes that Repton relied “mostly on prose to remind us of movement in a landscape.”

Even in the twentieth century with the technology of motion pictures, and today with the universal Global Positioning System (GPS), it remains difficult to capture the experience of motion within the landscape. In *The View from the Road* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1964), Donald Appleyard, Kevin Lynch and John R. Myer relied on individual static images, presented in sequence, to convey the idea of motion in their book on freeway design. Motion, according to Appleyard et al, is comprised of an infinite collection of individual pictures; Repton’s prose and detailed explanations on animation, an important aspect of this thesis, are among the first, if not the first, efforts by a landscape designer to express design based on mobility.

In Stephen Daniels’ book, *Humphry Repton: Landscape Gardening and the Geography of Georgian England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), considerable attention and detail are included regarding Repton’s designs for pleasure roads. In his introduction Daniels notes the general improvement to transportation during this period and Repton’s aptitude for designing roads:

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38 Hunt, *Gardens and the Picturesque*, p. 161. (Italics original.)
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid., p. 162.
Roads, in the form of approaches and drives, were a significant feature of Repton’s landscaping, shaping its social and scenic character. The junction of private and public circulation systems was, for Repton, a key site of his art, at the lodges of great parks, by the fence of his own garden.\(^{41}\)

Daniels divides Repton’s life and work within five domains: the road, the country, the picturesque landscape, the aristocratic estate and the urban periphery.\(^{42}\) His first chapter, “On the Road,” discusses Repton’s extensive career travels and early involvement with John Palmer to reform the mailcoach system.\(^{43}\) Daniels’ book suggests that Repton not only had a professional association with the design and construction of modern roads, but that through his travels and ease of correspondence he had personal familiarity with the function, comfort and utility of roads.

Repton spent much of his career on the road. Road travel helped to define his profession of landscape gardening: networks of commissions, working practices, theoretical principles, parkland designs. Moreover roads and travel largely shaped Repton’s sensibility: in addressing a range of moral and emotional issues through his works, in commissions for his clients and his many other published and unpublished writings. Repton expressed his concern with social order, financial probity and domestic stability in and through a career of high mobility.\(^{44}\)

Indeed, Repton’s familiarity with roads was made very personal in the introduction to his 1803 book, *Observations on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening*, when he stated:

> The whole of this work has been written in a carriage during professional journeys from one place to another, and being seldom more than three days together in one place, the difficulty of producing

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\(^{42}\) Daniels, *Humphry Repton*, p. 2.

\(^{43}\) Ibid., pp. 32–33.

\(^{44}\) Ibid., p. 27.
this volume, such as it is, can hardly be conceived by those who enjoy the blessings of stationary retirement or a permanent home.45

Unlike many authors, Daniels makes regular references to the role of approach roads and carriage drives in Repton’s plans. Daniels, through his writing, integrates the purpose, need and pleasure of circulation as a means to explain Repton’s work. Regarding Bulstrode in Buckinghamshire, Daniels notes:

At Bulstrode the existing drive went through the woods with ‘a total absence of interest or variety of objects’. The drive Repton designed touched almost every part of the estate and took in many kinds of scenery. Repton asks his readers to trace its course on the map through no less than forty-four stations. Going over knolls and dells and taking some sharp curves, the drive passes cottages, copses, various gardens, plantations, paddocks, sheep pasture, meadows, fields, rough ground, lawns, open groves, farmhouses, farmyards, drinking pools, green ways, common land, two villages, ancient trees and a Roman camp.46

Daniels’ work represents an important recognition of the role of roads and circulation in landscape history. He includes details of Repton’s approach roads and carriage drives in his description of each property, in much the same way as English Landscape School historians typically include references to belts of trees or ha-has—as an integral component of the whole design. In Humphry Repton, Daniels uses the road more as a metaphor for Repton’s work and life, than a discourse on the origin of driving for pleasure. Nevertheless, his references to mobility and circulation throughout the book represent an appraisal of Repton’s roads designed for pleasure within the broader context of the convergence of transportation, engineering and landscape theory at the close of the eighteenth century.

45 Humphry Repton, Observations on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening (London: T. Bensley, Bold Court, 1805), advertisement.
46 Daniels, Humphry Repton, p. 168.
Even the more specialized books, while suggesting the importance of roads designed for pleasure, provide limited references regarding the contribution of pleasure roads to the practice of landscape architecture. Few acknowledge the estate, cemetery and park drives developed prior to Jamaica Parkway and, with the exception of Daniels and Hunt, there is virtually no speculation on the origin of pleasure driving. In summary, while there is a considerable written record suggesting the significance of the American motor parkway, there is very little evidence to substantiate such claims.

RESEARCH GOALS AND PARAMETERS

The commonly held (and largely unsubstantiated) assertion that the motor parkway is a uniquely American contribution to the profession of landscape architecture, diminishes the design and technological achievements of the road designed for pleasure during the preceding century, both in the United States and in Britain. Therefore, as a research goal, this thesis seeks to document a direct transference of highway engineering and landscape theory for roads designed for pleasure, beginning in eighteenth-century Britain, imported directly to the United States in the early nineteenth century, incorporated into the public sphere and finally accommodated to the needs of the automobile in the early twentieth century.

Study Period, 1750-1925

This thesis established a study period beginning in 1750, a year cited by Stephen Daniels in *Humphry Repton* as the beginning of an era in which travel times between principal British cities were cut by two-thirds,⁴⁷ and cited by Max Lay in *Ways of the World*, as the date in which coach travel became

⁴⁷ Daniels, *Humphry Repton*, p. 27.
comfortable and reliable.\textsuperscript{48} The study period concludes in 1925 with the dedication of the Bronx River Parkway. This 175-year study period includes the convergence of science and theory that first enabled the construction of pleasure roads, and encompassed Repton’s professional career; marks the rise of the Picturesque Movement, and picturesque touring; traces the transatlantic conversation on pleasure drives between British and American landscape designers and theorists in the first half of the nineteenth century; records the inception and evolution of Olmsted and Vaux’s “park-way;” and concludes with the expression of these concepts as translated within the American motor parkway. Further, the thesis shows that Repton, through his Red Books and three principal published volumes, \textit{Sketches and Hints on Landscape Gardening} (1796), \textit{Observations on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening} (1803) and \textit{Fragments on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening} (1816) provided not only the first modern theory for landscape architecture as a profession, but also some of the earliest direction and guidance for the design and layout of pleasure roads. His theories on landscape design continued to be printed in the United States as didactic works into the first decades of the twentieth century.

For such a lengthy period of study (1750-1925), clear parameters were required to determine which roads designed for pleasure would be considered for study and analysis. I began by identifying roads and designers that reflected an adherence to Repton’s written theories, demonstrated the evolution of Repton’s ideas in the United States, and marked the eventual development of the American motor parkway. Within the United Kingdom an exclusive focus on Repton’s roads designed for pleasure necessitated a look at the private roads constructed for the landed aristocracy. These were supplemented by a general review of roads adapted for pleasure in Britain, and in particular the broader application of driving for pleasure found in the writings of the Picturesque Movement. Within the United States, the focus of

this thesis was within the public realm. This determination was made due to the rural cemetery and public parks movements most generally cited as hallmarks of American design during the nineteenth century. In addition, tracing the developments within the public realm provided the most compelling evolution of roads designed for pleasure with the stated goal of demonstrating the design origins of the American motor parkway—an entirely public entity.

Significant private roads designed for pleasure were constructed in the United States in the nineteenth century, such as those by Frederick Billings at his Woodstock, Vermont property and by Frederick Law Olmsted for George Washington Vanderbilt’s Biltmore Estate in Asheville, North Carolina. The initial literature review suggested these were not as compelling to the story of driving for pleasure in the United States. Further, as I conducted an archival study as a part of a management plan I prepared for the U.S. National Park Service for the carriage drives constructed by Billings in Vermont, my prior research suggested private estate roads reflected innovations from the public realm. Unlike Britain, where Repton developed concepts within private estates before the public parks movement, in the United States the private carriage drives of note followed after the advances in the rural cemeteries and public parks.

After 1925, the dedication of the Bronx River Parkway, the parkway’s development in the United States followed two distinct forms. The first, dedicated to the earliest principles of roads designed for pleasure (such as the Colonial Parkway and Skyline Drive) maintained a direct relationship to Repton’s theories. The second, combining the traditional aesthetic form of the road designed for pleasure, but constructed to address regional transportation goals in addition to recreational travel (such as the Westchester Country Parkway System, the Palisades Interstate Parkway and the Garden State Parkway), began shifting away from Repton’s theories.
(Figures 1.7 and 1.8). Design elements, developed initially to enhance the parkway traveler’s experience, such as limited-access and separate-grade interchanges, were soon viewed as innovations contributing to highway safety and efficiency. In the first decades of the twentieth century the parkway became the preferred planning response to the crowded urban arterials and new suburban development rapidly redefining America’s cities. Unfortunately, its adaptation to a commuter road gradually diminished the influence of the landscape on its design. As scenic alignments and sublime destinations were no longer essential to its identity, the parkway devolved to the freeway. In 1940 three roads reflecting the evolution of highway design opened: The Merritt Parkway in Connecticut, reflecting traditional parkway form, but designed as a commuter route; the Arroyo Seco Parkway in Los Angeles, planned as a parkway, but morphed into a freeway; and the Pennsylvania Turnpike, planned as a high-speed motorway with little consideration for the landscape or setting.

Researching the Parkway

The American motor parkway, as first developed, was a road designed for pleasure. Its design antecedents may be traced directly to the carriage drives and approach roads defined by Repton. The first parkways in America, however, were not roads designed for pleasure, in fact they were not considered roads at all. The term “parkway” originally defined a narrow strip of parkland extending from or connecting larger park units. Therefore to understand the parkway as one type of road designed for pleasure, it is important to trace the origin of the term parkway. While a number of U.S. cities developed parkways in the second half of the nineteenth century, for the purposes of my research questions, I elected to trace the innovations in the parkway form that most directly influenced the design of the Bronx River Parkway. As shall be shown in Chapter 5, “Defining the Park-Way,” Brooklyn, Buffalo and Boston best represented this study goal.
The Bronx River Parkway, dedicated in 1925, was identified as the conclusion for the study period (1750-1925). Therefore it is essential to determine both its form as a “parkway” as a liner park and to consider its form as a road designed for pleasure as articulated by Repton. To accomplish this research goal, I read the annual reports and minutes of the Bronx Parkway Commission, from 1906 to 1925, to trace the evolution of both the road’s construction and the changing terminology by which it was referenced over the intervening years. As shall be shown in Chapter 6, “The Bronx River Parkway,” the term “parkway” was never applied to the pleasure drive constructed by the Commission.

With regard to the term “parkway,” it took until the early decades of the twentieth century for the differentiation among the various parkway definitions to evolve into a standard definition. From a historical perspective, this thesis will argue that many historians and writers have used the term “parkway” as defined in its modern, evolved context to assess the first parkways, thereby distorting their analysis of historic events in park and transportation planning. Much as the application of the terms beautiful, picturesque and sublime shifted across the decades, so too, has the term parkway. Therefore, it is important to ensure that any study of the lands and roads that have been considered as parkways is viewed properly within the idiomatic context of their day.

Archival and Research Materials

Primary documents, such as reports, plans, minutes and personal letters were reviewed to establish the ideas and expectations for individual roads designed for pleasure. In addition, period dictionaries, professional journal articles, manuals and academic books were reviewed to determine the level of information accorded roads designed for pleasure. Original editions of
Repton’s three principal published volumes were read, as well as the original copies of the Red Books for Aston Park, Blaise Castle, Brandsbury, Newton Park and Point Pleasant. Principal libraries and archival facilities utilized were: the National Library of Scotland, U.S. Library of Congress, Butler Library and Avery Fine Arts Library at Columbia University, the Dumbarton Oaks Research Library, Oak Spring Garden Library and the Westchester County (New York) Archives.

In addition to primary and archival documents regarding design and construction, I read literature and reviewed articles in the press to demonstrate the popular interest in pleasure driving during the period of study. For example, the *New York Times* captured the public’s enthusiasm for the pleasure drives in Central Park, in a narrative style not found in the staid records of the Commissioners of the Central Park, when it stated, “In fact, there is no place in the country, or as far as we have seen in any other, where driving can be so perfectly enjoyed as on the avenues and broad roads of the Central Park […].”

For my research on metropolitan New York, I reviewed the *New York Times* archives for articles on Central Park, Prospect Park, the Brooklyn Parkways and the Bronx River Parkway. For each, I searched the data base using a number of key words (park, parkway, carriage, drive, avenue, road, pleasure, pavement and engineering), and searched each park or parkway for a time span beginning ten years before construction and ending ten years after the completion or dedication of the facility.

As an important aspect of my research is kinesthetic influences on roads designed for pleasure, it was imperative to experience the landscapes and scenery that influenced early writers and designers. I made a number of site visits to compare the historic written records to the extant features and contextual setting at a number of properties and sites. In Britain, I followed parts of William Gilpin’s, as well as parts of Telford and Southey’s tours of the

Scottish Highlands. I visited two of Repton's most important pleasure roads in England, Sheringham Park in Norfolk and Blaise Castle near Bristol, as well as the library at Felbrigg Hall (William Wyndham's library, near Sustead, used by Repton). To understand the European origins of the rural cemetery, I visited the Glasgow Necropolis. In addition, I participated in the 2014 Landscape Architecture Programme's field study; including historic gardens relevant to this thesis: Bramham, Rousham and Stowe. In the United States I visited Greenwood Cemetery, traced the carriage drives of Central Park and Prospect Park and traveled a number of historic parkways to corroborate theory with practice—including a survey of the first two parkways, Jamaica (Eastern) Parkway and Ocean Parkway in Brooklyn. Prior to commencing my studies at Edinburgh, professional practice allowed in-depth field studies of the Bronx River Parkway, Merritt Parkway and Palisades Interstate Parkway. Additional travel enabled me to visit Mt. Auburn Cemetery and the Buffalo Park and Parkway System.

TERMS, DEFINITIONS AND NOTES

During the historic period identified for study in this thesis (1750-1925), road terminology was highly specific and well understood. Terms such as drive, avenue and road would have been carefully used during the nineteenth century—their differences appreciated. This is not to suggest universal understanding and usage of the terms during the study period, but to serve as a reminder that terms used more casually today would have likely been more judiciously applied when describing pleasure drives. “Drives” defined rural or park roads designed more for leisure than for speed, generally curvilinear in nature and showcasing picturesque landscapes. “Avenues,” by contrast, referenced broader, straighter thoroughfares—tree-lined, gracious,

50 A post *viva voce* trip was made to Paris, December 29-31, 2015 to study Père Lachaise Cemetery and Avenue Foch (Avenue de l’Impératrice).
commodious and found in landscape parks and in urban settings.
“Boulevards” defined broad urban thoroughfares distinguished by a wide central median for planting. The definition of “parkway” evolved in the nineteenth century from a narrow park corridor suggestive of a boulevard to a more serpentine form responding to new efforts for river reclamation; both were intended as linear parks to connect larger park units. In the early twentieth century the “parkway” would come to define the serpentine automobile pleasure drive. “Roads” generally referred to longer utilitarian routes linking communities and towns. As the design theory for pleasure drives evolved over the nineteenth century, many of these terms acquired nuanced associations (an avenue referring to a broad pleasure drive, for example). For the purpose of this thesis, the term “pleasure” will serve as a general reference to a desired kinesthetic relationship with the landscape, and the term “road” will serve as a general reference term encompassing all types of vehicle routes. The term “pleasure roads” will be used as a general term encompassing the following more precise terms which are specifically defined for the purpose of this thesis.51

**Pleasure Roads**

**Roads Designed for Pleasure:**

Roads designed for pleasure are defined as roads specifically constructed to provide a route or circuit through the landscape, designed to showcase or access interesting natural or artificial features and scenery.

**Roads Adapted for Pleasure:**

Roads adapted for pleasure are defined as roads constructed for non-pleasure purposes but, due to topography, setting and scenery, were adapted (through discovery and promotion) as pleasure roads.

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51 These definitions were introduced in my “First Year Report” and were further refined for a presentation given the Landscape Institute Scotland in Edinburgh on July 23, 2014, entitled “Little Threads of Civilisation: A Brief History of Driving for Pleasure, With an Introduction to the U.S. National Scenic Byways Program.”
Driving for Pleasure:

Driving for pleasure is defined as vehicular travel that has no purpose other than the enjoyment of the journey—a destination is not required as the *experience* of the journey is the destination.

Pleasurable Driving:

Pleasurable driving is defined as a conscious decision to select a route for its aesthetic considerations or landscape setting for *destination* travel.

The Automobile Parkway

Beginning in 1925, after the dedication of the Bronx River Parkway, the automobile parkway may be defined as an attractive approach, or connection, between large park reservations, or between a population center and a park destination. The parkway corridor is designed to be of sufficient width to screen external development (where warranted) and facilitate an alignment of the pleasure road in harmony with the natural landscape. In addition to the pleasure road, space is typically allotted for recreational trails, pull-offs and scenic overlooks. All built elements (paving, curbing, lighting and structures—including walls, bridges and ancillary buildings) are carefully designed to reflect the parkway environment. Parkways are restricted to automobile travel and prohibit commercial traffic.

The Three Classes of Roads

In *Saving Historic Roads* (New York: Wiley and Sons, 1998), I established three classifications of historic roads. The purpose was to inform heritage decisions with standard definitions based on the *initial* intent for the road. The three types are: aesthetic, engineered and cultural. For this thesis, the definition for the “aesthetic road” is most applicable and will be used within the text:

Aesthetic routes represent historic roads for which the primary rationale for development was the design and provision of a specific
visitor experience. Aesthetic routes such as parkways and park roads have historically been intensively designed and developed for the purpose of leisure, recreation, and commemoration. They have a documented origin and construction date. Never intended as the fastest or quickest route, such roads typically follow the natural topography of the region and are most often associated with a designed landscape or park space. In urban areas, park boulevards and monumental avenues exhibit an equally high level of detail and composition. Aesthetic routes are roads for which the alignment and details are key to the experience. Special materials, plantings, lighting, and even building facades contribute to the character of these roads. Alterations to any component of these roads (alignment, details, and affiliated landscape) will significantly impact the historic integrity of the resource.\(^{52}\)

**Additional Notes**

**Extended Quotes**

This thesis uses a number of extended quotes to reinforce the concepts presented and arguments made in the narrative. For a topic that has received little attention and limited scholarly research, such extended quotes serve two purposes. Firstly, they demonstrate that roads and pleasure driving were a prominent component of the discussions framing the Picturesque Movement and the formative years of landscape architecture as a profession, as well as a topic of interest by the general public. Secondly, for future scholars, the extended quotes (particularly from primary resources) serve as a benchmark to evaluate or critique the findings of this thesis as the topic of roads designed for pleasure becomes more widely researched and discussed. Humphry Repton prefaced his lengthy description of “The Course of the Drive at Bulstrode” in his *Observations on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening*, by noting it might “appear tedious.” Nevertheless, he defended his decision to publish the full excerpt from his Red Book by noting the newness of the concept. Therefore, the entire quote, as intended by Repton, is reproduced in Chapter 2 (Section, “Repton and the Pleasure Drive,”

subsection, “The Carriage Drive”). This approach was applied to the writings of notable landscape architects, authors and the popular press included in this thesis to demonstrate the significant discourse surrounding this topic during the Study Period.

“Landscaping”
Stephen Daniels and André Rogger make frequent use of the term “landscaping” in their books on Repton. Both Dorothy Stroud and John Dixon Hunt also use the term at times. This thesis will not use the term “landscaping” as it is too general a reference for such a complex topic. “Landscaping” may be used as a noun, verb or adjective—the landscaping is attractive; the landscaping of the property has begun; or the landscaping materials are appropriate to the site. While the term is increasingly used in modern parlance, it is inappropriate when discussing a historical period in which landscape terms were carefully applied in literature, hotly debated among the “taste makers” and highly specialized based on accepted definitions for scenery (for example, the beautiful, picturesque and sublime). Landscaping, as a generic term, cannot express the complexities and nuances of the topics and theories to be discussed in this thesis.

Note on Units
This thesis will use the Imperial and U.S. Customary Measurements systems as the primary units for all measurements. As a history focused thesis, the use of such measurements ensures the most accurate representation of the original design intent for the sites and details discussed. To ensure the broadest accessibility to the concepts presented for the international reader, without unnecessarily interrupting the flow of the narrative, the following parameters have been established: Metric conversions will be provided for all references to primary area, distance and length measures to ensure that the broader patterns of roads designed for pleasure within the landscape are fully appreciated by all readers. Therefore the overall area of parks, length of roads
and relationship of sites to one another will be provided in both Imperial and U.S. Customary Measurements and the Metric System. All internal divisions, such as the width of streets, area of subordinate features (lakes or concourses) or size of building materials will use the Imperial and U.S. Customary Measurements only. In addition, all references to speed will be in miles-per-hour. No conversion to Metric will be used within any historic quotations.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

By the end of the eighteenth century, the idea of pleasure driving, traveling through the landscape in a vehicle to appreciate nature and scenery, became not only popular, but also practical. What began in Britain as a recreational pastime for the upper classes soon found its way to the public parks of America and later became the “Sunday Drive” of the early automobile era. This thesis will demonstrate that a critical convergence of science and theory at the end of the eighteenth century propelled the development of the first roads designed and constructed for no purpose other than driving for pleasure.

Around 1800, three factors converged and coalesced to make pleasure driving a reality: the development of modern paving engineering, the development of modern carriages, and the Picturesque Movement. From the intersection of landscape design and mobility arose an awareness of the concept of kinesthesia—design based on motion. The apex of the British Picturesque, the English Landscape School and Scottish engineering placed Britain at the forefront of theory and development for this new type of road designed for pleasure. Leading this movement was the renowned landscape gardener Humphry Repton. Repton, was not only ideally placed in history to benefit
from this convergence of science and theory, he was philosophically, socially and professionally attuned to the opportunity it presented.

This thesis examines the convergence of theory and science that enabled the design of pleasure roads, using Humphry Repton as the central historical figure. By tracing the dissemination of his writings on roads, it will demonstrate his influence on the design of pleasure roads in nineteenth-century America and, by extension, the automobile parkways of the early twentieth century. It is not the purpose of this thesis to overstate the importance of roads designed for pleasure within the history of landscape architecture, or exaggerate Repton’s attention to their design. Rather it is to demonstrate that roads designed for pleasure were important components of landscape architecture as a practice, and that the theories for their design, as first advanced by Repton, may be found in nineteenth-century pleasure drives of Olmsted and Vaux and the American motor parkways of the twentieth century.
Figure 1.1. Henry Hudson Parkway, New York City. May 27, 1947. Gilmore Clarke, landscape architect. Clarke’s parkway, with center median, is on the right. Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux’s serpentine Riverside Drive (c. 1880-1890) is on the left. Credit: Columbia University, Butler Library Rare Book Room, Papers of Gilmore Clarke.
Figure 1.2. A classic image of the American motor parkway. Location and date, unknown. Likely Metropolitan New York. Note the new tree and shrub plantings.
Credit: Columbia University, Butler Library Rare Book Room, Papers of Gilmore Clarke.

Figure 1.3. Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway, Washington, D.C., c. 1935.
Credit: District of Columbia Public Library.
Figure 1.4. Bronx River Parkway, Westchester County, New York, 1922. Credit: Courtesy of the Westchester County Archives.

Figure 1.5. Colonial Parkway, Virginia. Along the York River. Credit: Paul Daniel Marriott, 2012.
Figure 1.6. Saw Mill River Parkway, Westchester County, New York. No date. Gilmore Clarke, landscape architect.
Credit: Columbia University, Butler Library Rare Book Room, Papers of Gilmore Clarke.

Figure 1.7. Palisades Interstate Parkway, New Jersey Section. No date. Gilmore Clarke, landscape architect.
Credit: Photograph by Horace Gilmore. Columbia University, Butler Library Rare Book Room, Papers of Gilmore Clarke.
Figure 1.8. Garden State Parkway, near Red Bank, New Jersey. October 3, 1957. Gilmore Clarke, landscape architect. An example of post World War II high-speed parkways.
Credit: Columbia University, Butler Library Rare Book Room, Papers of Gilmore Clarke.
CHAPTER 2
HUMPHRY REPTON
AND THE PLEASURE DRIVE

INTRODUCTION

Humphry Repton (1752-1818) is recognized as one of the most influential of the great English landscape gardeners and an important figure presaging the modern profession of landscape architecture. His designed landscapes, introduced with his exquisitely prepared “Red Books,” and his published writings on landscape, design and taste, provide a visual and written record of an accomplished and articulate designer. His often reproduced Red Book illustrations presenting “before” and “after” landscapes, the “after” revealed by lifting an ingenious flap, represent some of the most accurate documentation for design intent from the historic period and reflect the skill and aspirations of a perspicacious and intelligent man dedicated to establishing himself as the heir to Capability Brown. Repton, later assisted by his sons John Adey and George Stanley, consulted on over four hundred properties during a professional practice spanning thirty years.

The purpose of this chapter is not to present a broad study on the works of Repton, but rather to establish his work and theories on roads and circulation
in the landscape as highly original and influential. It will be argued that the advances of technology during the late eighteenth century provided Repton with a unique opportunity to create roads designed for pleasure unavailable to Brown and his predecessors; that his response was the result of a convergence of new engineering techniques for road construction, significant innovations in carriage design and the aesthetic considerations espoused by the Picturesque movement; that Repton was the first landscape designer to associate attractive road design with vehicular mobility; and that his writings and theories influenced the design of pleasure drives throughout the nineteenth century and contributed to the development of the American motor parkway of the twentieth century.

Humphry Repton’s contributions to the history of landscape design are well documented. His successes and innovations were tempered by his professional failings, both self-expressed and as articulated post-hoc (e.g. Daniels, Rogger and Stroud) regarding his incomplete projects, his ongoing dispute with Richard Payne Knight and Uvedale Price over the Picturesque, his frustration with securing royal patronage and the devastating economic impact of the Napoleonic Wars on his late professional practice. Noticeably absent from the academic discourse on his legacy is his visionary approach to roads, mobility and scale. By establishing the first theories to define and manage the experience of moving through a landscape at a rate of speed dictated by a vehicle, he demonstrated an early awareness of the principles of kinesthetic design. Repton, through his thoughtful integration of road alignment, landscape setting, views and sequence defined the parameters for a new road type: the pleasure drive. It will be shown that this legacy, little cited and largely overlooked by scholars, is his most significant and enduring influence on the profession of landscape architecture.

Repton's career began as a period of enhanced mobility and communication altered the course of business and travel in Britain. Innovations in highway engineering and construction, and advances in the speed and safety of vehicles reduced journey times dramatically across the second half of the eighteenth century. Between 1750 and 1811 journey times between London and major cities were cut by up to two-thirds. This afforded Repton a previously unimagined geographic range in which to offer his services as a landscape gardener. As a result, he established a national consulting practice extending from Scotland, across England and into Wales. He maintained excellent communications with his clients via a modern postal system, which he helped to develop, forwarding his plans and drawings along an efficient network of post roads. His familiarity with post roads and turnpikes (his Memoirs note that “I had seldom traveled less than 1,000 miles each year”), and the opportunity to experience the different landscapes of Great Britain from the window of a carriage, must have influenced his strong opinions on public roads and scenery.

The condition of public roads during this period was the subject of much debate, investment, parliamentary inquiry and national pride. Jane Austen, writing during the height of Repton's career, made frequent references to roads, vehicles, travel and the Picturesque in her novels. In Pride and Prejudice she captured the changing attitudes toward travel as roads improved and journey times decreased. “And what is fifty miles of good road? Little more than half a day's journey. Yes, I call it a very easy distance.” While writers and aesthetes debated the merits of picturesqueness, Thomas Telford supervised the construction of a massive government-sponsored road-building project in the Scottish Highlands and the Holyhead Road in Wales. The great civil engineer built many of the roads that became de rigueur for the

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2 Daniels, Humphry Repton, p. 27.
serious picturesque tourist. The opening paragraphs of *The Heart of Midlothian* by Sir Walter Scott (published 1830) captured the palpably modern state of British mobility achieved during Repton’s era.

The times have changed in nothing more [...] than the rapid conveyance of intelligence and communication betwixt one part of Scotland and another. It is not above twenty or thirty years, according to the evidence of many credible witnesses now alive, since a little miserable horse-cart, performing with difficulty a journey of thirty miles *per diem*, carried our mails from the capital of Scotland to its extremity. Nor was Scotland much more deficient in these accommodations, than our richer sister had been about eighty years before [...].

But in both countries these ancient, slow, and sure modes of conveyance are now alike unknown; mail-coach races against mail-coach, and high-flyer against high-flyer, through the most remote districts of Britain. And in our village alone, three post-coaches, and four coaches with men armed, and in scarlet cassocks, thunder through the streets each day [...]⁵

By 1788, when Humphry Repton made the decision to establish himself formally as a landscape gardener, the whole of Britain was connected by a public communication and travel network of a complexity and breadth not seen since Roman times. For an experienced traveler and astute businessman such as Repton, the opportunities and advantages afforded by a new age of reliable roads not only facilitated the rapid growth of his business, but also introduced new concepts for circulation into his landscapes.

**EARLY LIFE**

Humphry Repton was born on April 21, 1752 in Bury St. Edmunds. He was the second child and first son of John and Martha Repton. The family moved

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to Norwich around 1762; in 1764 his father decided to continue Humphry’s education in Holland. John Repton accompanied his twelve-year-old son to the school of Mynheer Algidius Zimmerman in the Dutch village of Workum where young Humphry was to learn Dutch—a useful language for the mercantile career his father envisioned. There, Humphry met Zachary Hope of Rotterdam, with whom Repton’s father had made the financial arrangements for his son’s schooling. Hope invited Humphry for a visit with his family in Rotterdam. The family became so attached to Humphry during the brief visit that they invited him to live in their home and be educated with their son. Life with the Hopes provided tremendous advantages for young Humphry.

The Hopes, descendents of Sir Thomas Hope, Lord Advocate of Scotland in the first half of the seventeenth century, were among the pre-eminent merchant bankers in Europe. They owned elegant homes in Rotterdam and Amsterdam. As a part of the Hope family, young Humphry was introduced to the highest levels of society and learned to mix with “an easy manner and quiet enjoyment which was to be invaluable to him in later years.” During this time he learned to sing and play the flute and pursue his passion for drawing and painting. He was also afforded the opportunity to travel throughout The Netherlands, Belgium and Germany.

In 1768, at the age of sixteen, and having mastered Dutch, Humphry returned home to Norwich to begin the career his father had arranged in the textile business. He spent the next several years employed in the profession, but with little enthusiasm. Repton’s interest and talents were not in the mercantile arts, but the fine arts. He had become an accomplished singer and flautist, had an interest in poetry, and was particularly skilled in drawing.

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6 Stroud, Humphry Repton, p. 16.
7 Daniels, Humphry Repton, p. 30.
At the age of eighteen Humphry met Mary Clarke. The two were married in 1773. Repton established himself as a general merchant, but, as with the textile industry, he was not particularly interested in the work. In May of 1775 his first son, John Adey, was born. The expenses of a growing family (Repton had sixteen children; seven survived infancy), business losses and the death of his parents prompted Repton to leave Norwich.

In 1778 Repton settled in Sustead in Norfolk and established himself as a country gentleman. He used his parents’ legacy to purchase a small estate and moved his family into the Old Hall, a seventeenth-century brick house. Here he was introduced to William Wyndham, who gave him access to the extensive library at his estate, Felbrigg Hall. Wyndham introduced Repton to Joseph Banks, the botanist and naturalist, who later became the director of Kew Gardens, and Robert Marsham (1708-1797) of Stratton Strawless, an authority on trees and frequent contributor to Transactions of the Royal Society—one of the oldest scientific journals in the world. It is from Marsham that Repton acquired his knowledge of the planting and management of trees.\(^9\) It was also to Marsham that Repton credited the idea of the before and after scenes that became the most recognized feature of his Red Books.\(^10\)

Repton and Wyndham had a genial relationship, and Wyndham is known to have spent many happy hours visiting Repton and his young family at the Old Hall.\(^11\) In 1783 Wyndham was appointed Chief Secretary to Lord Northington, the newly appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. Wyndham took Repton to Dublin as his private secretary. It was during this trip that Repton visited the “Scalp”—a picturesque chasm on the road between Enniskerry and Dublin. Repton’s visit to the popular site and his recognition of the road as both a

\(^10\) Daniels, \textit{Humphry Repton}, p. 72.
picturesque element and the vantage point from which to enjoy the beauties of the landscape established an early appreciation of the connection between roads and access to scenery. The experience must have been memorable, as Repton referenced the Scalp in his design for the approach road at Sheringham nearly thirty years after his visit—“This spot if we may compare small things to great, is like a part of the road in the Wicklow mountains called the Scalp.”

Repton’s time in Dublin was short-lived. Wyndham, a Whig, disagreed with Northington’s administration of Ireland. After a short while he tendered his resignation and returned home to Felbrigg. Repton remained in Dublin until Wyndham’s replacement arrived and then traveled home via the Holyhead Road, the main road between London and Dublin, which had become a popular route for picturesque tourists. It is very likely he passed through Penmaenmawr, a famous section of the road recorded by many picturesque writers and diarists (see Chapter 3). During his return journey he made sketches of the road and Welsh landscape for a possible book, “Views in Wales,” but nothing came of the venture.

Surveyor of the Highways

“Surveyor of the Highways” was one of the duties Repton listed for himself when describing the responsibilities of living in the small village of Sustead in a letter to his friend Edward Chamberlayne, Esq. The letter reads as a paean to his happy life in the country (“Come and see how happy we are!”), and while his listed duties appear more as an amusing summation than burdensome tasks, the reference to surveyor of the highways included with

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12 Humphry Repton, Red Book for Sheringham [sic] (1812), unpaged.
13 This trip predated Telford’s improvements to the road.
14 Daniels, Humphry Repton, p. 32.
15 Ibid., p. 32.
16 Stroud, Humphry Repton, p. 22.
his roles as churchwarden, overseer and esquire, demonstrates his awareness for roads as a key component of parochial duties. It is unlikely Sustead’s remote location saw anything other than local traffic. Repton’s letter notes, “I don’t wonder you should be at a loss to find Sustead in your map!”

The Highways Act 1555, or the First Statute of Highways, was passed by an Act of Parliament in 1555. The law placed the responsibility of road maintenance on the local parishes.17 The act required that each year every parish elect “two honest persons” to serve as Surveyor of Highways and that every householder provide four days of statute labor (or provide an able-bodied substitute) for the public highways—this was extended to six days under The Highways Act 1562, or Second Statute of Highways.18 Statute labor was not abolished until The Highways Act 1835, therefore Repton’s parochial duties would have included organizing the men and materials to maintain the public roads in Sustead. If he did organize such public works, his oversight was likely limited to minor maintenance as the public roads of Norfolk, due to the well-drained soils of the region,19 were generally considered among the finest in England.

In his 1801 travel book, A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain, the Rev. C. Cruttwell commented on the public roads of Norfolk noting the “natural advantages of this county consist in good roads [...].” Cruttwell noted:

The roads are better in their natural state, with no other than the common parochial duty, than in almost any other county; so good, that no turnpike was thought of in Norfolk, till they became common in most other parts. In the seventeenth century they were so good, that Charles II. when he honoured the Earl of Yarmouth with a visit at

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17 America adopted the British model of local management and statute labor for public roads during the colonial period and it existed in some locations until the late nineteenth century.
18 The week after Easter, The Surveyor of Highways would announce four days (later six), prior to June 24 (the Feast of the Nativity of John the Baptist), during which the parish populace would undertake annual maintenance on the public roads.
19 Keith Zealand, Ranger for the National Trust, Sheringham Park, conversation with author, June 13, 2013.
Oxnead, is said to have observed, that Norfolk ought to be cut out in flips, to make roads for the rest of the kingdom; by which he undoubtedly meant to compliment the county upon the goodness of its roads above other counties.

Repton’s familiarity with the fine roads of his home county of Norfolk may have influenced his expectations for public roads as his work and travels eventually took him throughout the nation and across considerably less comfortable highways.

Despite his professed happiness, rural Sustead did not prove financially viable for Repton. His promise of a stable career, better suited to his skills and interests, ended abruptly when Wyndham resigned his post in Dublin. In 1783, shortly after his return from Ireland, Repton moved his family to Harestreet, near Romford in Essex. The move was planned as both temporary and strategic—placing Repton closer to the business environment and opportunities of the capital. Harestreet proved an ideal and happy location; Repton continued to work from the small cottage he purchased alongside the public highway (of which he wrote affectionately of its traffic in his last book) for the rest of his life.

**The Mail Coach System**

In 1784, Repton’s business prospects appeared to improve when he met John Palmer (1742-1818) of Bath. Palmer was engaged with a scheme to improve the postal services through the development of special mail-coach routes. Mail at this time was still delivered by the post riders introduced under the system established when Charles II organized the General Post Office (GPO) in

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1660. Likely seeing the opportunity to capitalize on modern roads and high-speed vehicles, Repton was “keenly interested in the project, even to the extent of investing his small capital in it [the project].”

Daniels notes, “Repton was familiar with the culture of travel, sufficiently so to appreciate its advantages in conditioning his new career.” His interest in partnering with Palmer in the mail-coach scheme demonstrates an early familiarity with roads and vehicles, and it is likely he and Palmer were aware of the new methods of scientific road building being introduced during this period. Such insight and awareness were likely learned from his father, John Repton, an excise officer whose duties took him on regular circuits around Suffolk and Norfolk where he made careful observations on land use and topography. When the family moved to Norwich, John Repton made his fortune in the stagecoach and wagon business.

Palmer, a theatre owner in Bath, organized a rapid stagecoach system to transfer actors and props efficiently between Bath and Bristol. Observing the faster speed of the stagecoaches over the post riders, Palmer believed a similar coach system could be developed to move the mails more efficiently. In 1782 he went to London to lobby the Post Office for the development of an experimental post route, but he met with resistance from GPO staff who did not believe the efficiency of the mails could be improved over the existing system of post riders. William Pitt (1759-1806), however, who wielded considerable influence as both the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Prime Minister during this time, was intrigued by the idea. In 1784 he approved Palmer’s privately financed mail-coach run between Bristol and London. The trial trip took just sixteen hours, nearly one day shorter than the post riders.

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22 Stroud, Humphry Repton, p. 25.
23 Daniels, Humphry Repton, p. 30.
24 Ibid., p. 30.
With the success of the experiment, Pitt authorized the designation of new postal routes. Palmer and Repton developed the nationwide concept for mail-coaches, with toll-free passage, armed guards and reduced rates for small parcels. By the spring of 1785 regular mail routes extended from London to Norwich, Liverpool and Leeds. By the end of the year, mail-coach service was introduced to Dover, Portsmouth and Carlisle; it reached Edinburgh in 1786. By 1790 the black and maroon “Royal Mail” carriages with “Post Office-red” wheels traversed forty-two mail-coach routes providing daily mail service to many communities in Britain. The inclusion of Norwich as one of the first postal routes may suggest the influence of Repton and his advocacy for a Norfolk route. A sketch prepared by Repton, c. 1785, depicting The Norwich Mail in a handsome coach with an ever-vigilant guard shooting a highwayman, further suggests his allegiance to Norfolk. The violent and bloody scene, beautifully drawn and surmounted by a cameo of George III, demonstrates the determination of Palmer and Repton to ensure their modern system would guarantee the safe and timely delivery of the mail at all costs (Figure 2.1).

The mail-coach system devised by Palmer and Repton revolutionized communication and society in Britain. It was so transformative, that Scott described the mail-coaches as “the chariots of Mr. Palmer” in The Heart of Midlothian. Robert Southey (1774-1843), writing under the pseudonym “Don Manuel Alvarez Espriella,” in Letters from England (published 1808) directly associated the mail-coach system with the rise of pleasure travel. In fact, Southey noted that travel, as a result of the mail-coach system and improvements in coach building, had become “one of the pleasures of the English.”

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25 Ibid., pp. 32-33.
Before this plan of Mr. Palmer's was established, the ordinary pace of traveling in England differed little from what it still is in other countries: an able-bodied man might walk the usual day's journey. Its effects have not been confined to the revenue. Other stages immediately adopted the guard, and became secure from robbers; they were stimulated to rival speed, and in consequence improvements in coach-building of some kind or other are every year discovered and adopted; even waggons travel faster now than post coaches did before this revolution. Hence traveling consumes at present so much less time, and is attended by so much less fatigue, that instead of being regarded as an evil, it is one of the pleasures of the English; and people, as is our case at this very time, set out upon a journey of two hundred leagues to amuse themselves.28

The familiar references to “Mr. Palmer” in The Heart of Midlothian and Letters from England demonstrated the notoriety of Palmer and the new post road system among the general populace. As Daniels notes:

A reformed postal system, with greater speed and security for small packages, accelerated the circulation of information: newspapers, magazines, bills, bank notes, prices, samples, patterns, correspondence of all kinds. [...] The mail-coach system symbolized the acceleration of social and commercial life and the formation of a new kind of national space [...].29

Palmer, who had been promised two-and-one-half percent of any increased revenues, profited handsomely from the enterprise. He was appointed Comptroller General of the Post Office in 1786. Repton received neither compensation nor recognition for his contributions to the endeavor. Financial security and a career suited to his skills and interests had once again eluded him.

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29 Daniels, Humphry Repton, p. 28.
HUMPHRY REPTON, LANDSCAPE GARDENER

In 1788, at the age of thirty-six, Humphry Repton established himself as a “Landscape Gardener.” It is a term he created, and one to which he gave a great deal of thought (Figure 2.2). His views on the practical arts of gardening and the artistic skills of the designer are clearly articulated—and are found as recurring themes throughout his project portfolio as he consistently showed an appreciation for practical and utilitarian details supporting the function of a place. Of particular note was his assessment of the Picturesque and his understanding of its application to his chosen profession (“the united powers of the landscape painter and the practical gardener”). He expounded on his choice of professional title, landscape gardener, in the introduction to his first book, *Sketches and Hints on Landscape Gardening*, published in 1795.

To improve the scenery of a country, and to display its native beauties with advantage, is an ART which originated in England, and has therefore been called English Gardening; yet this expression is not sufficiently appropriate, especially since Gardening, in its more confined sense of Horticulture, has been likewise brought to the greatest perfection in this country, I have adopted the term Landscape Gardening as most proper, because the art can only be advanced and perfected by the united powers of the landscape painter and the practical gardener. The former must conceive a plan, which the latter may be able to execute; for though a painter may represent a beautiful landscape on his canvas, and even surpass nature by the combination of her choicest materials, yet the luxuriant imagination of the painter must be subjected to the gardener’s practical knowledge in planting, digging, and moving earth; that the simplest and readiest means of accomplishing each design may be suggested; since it is not by vast labour, or great expence, that Nature is generally to be improved [...].

This broad and practical view of landscape gardening was developed during a shift away from the pastoral scenery of the English Landscape School to the more rugged landscapes valued by the Picturesque. It was also during a

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fundamental shift in society in which new commercial and mercantile wealth created a new class of gentry in the countryside. Between 1790 and 1815 (a period coinciding with Repton’s career as a landscape gardener) a great agricultural boom, brought about by the wars with France, saw two million new acres brought under cultivation by the Enclosure Acts.31 During this period of accelerated enclosure, as Ann Bermingham notes, there was a “dramatic and cultural discovery of the countryside” by the middle classes.32 Both Daniels and Hunt note that while Capability Brown worked mostly for the aristocracy, Repton had a much more diverse client base—people of means, but not necessarily the vast acreage and unlimited financial resources to “move” the earth.33 Daniels summarized the shift by noting Repton’s “practical” response to changing wealth. “Repton,” said Daniels, “made places as accessible as possible for the widest range of people.”34

For a man who committed himself to fill the role left vacant by the death of Lancelot Capability Brown, Repton was not constrained by Brown’s impressive legacy. As Hunt notes, “Repton was too attentive to the current needs and sites of his patrons to perpetuate aesthetics irrelevant to their situations.”35 Repton responded to the changes in society and landscape taste as he grew his practice into one of national prominence. Brown supervised much of the work for each landscape and park he designed. He left very few plans of his designs and wrote little of his theory or approach to landscape design.36 Repton, by contrast, often made only one visit to a property (or later in his career relied on his sons to conduct the site visit) and published three significant volumes on his views of landscape gardening and theory: Sketches and Hints on Landscape Gardening (1795), Observations on the Theory and

32 Bermingham, Landscape and Ideology, p. 10.
33 Daniels, Humphry Repton, pp. 1-2; Hunt, Gardens and the Picturesque, pp. 139-168.
35 Hunt, Gardens and the Picturesque, p. 140.
Practice of Landscape Gardening (1803) and Fragments on Landscape Gardening (1816). The content of each of these volumes was drawn heavily from the Red Books produced for his different clients.

The Red Books

Humphry Repton is most famous for his Red Books, exquisite summaries of his design recommendations prepared for many of his clients. Bound in red Morocco leather, from which they took their name, each book included text and illustrations detailing, by section, different aspects of his proposals for improvements. Red Books began with an introductory note summarizing the site conditions and often complimenting the owners on their “taste” in a manner we might today find overly sycophantic. Short chapters or sections followed detailing specific aspects of the property such as the approach road, plantations, the siting of the house, and walks and drives. Many of these were accompanied by watercolor illustrations, referenced in the text providing further explanation of his concepts. The illustrations were hand painted by Repton, an accomplished artist, and included both monochromatic and full color illustrations. His most ingenious feature was the occasional before and after illustrations included in most of the Red Books. These illustrations, also tied to the text, presented a view of one of the existing site conditions Repton wished to improve. On first view of the illustration, the landscape appeared in its existing state. As the text explained the nature of the proposed improvements, the reader could lift a flap (Repton termed a “slide”) and, by peeling back the old landscape, reveal the improved landscape. Each slide was precisely cut; most were hinged on one side and provided a tab and slot on the other side to reinsert the slide after viewed. As a result, the owner of the Red Book could experience the dramatic landscape revelation countless times when considering whether to invest in Mr. Repton’s ideas (Figures 2.3 and 2.4).
What made the slides particularly effective was that they typically covered only twenty-five to fifty percent of the overall illustration. As a result, aspects of the original landscape were identical to both the before and after images—suggesting a continuity of scene for the owner and, perhaps subliminally, suggesting that the flooding of a valley or the removal of a forest segment was an easily achievable undertaking within the larger contextual setting.

While Repton’s before and after illustrations have often been reproduced, his accompanying detailed notes, plans and static illustrations are not as well known. Of significance to this thesis is the considerable space he typically devoted to written descriptions of circulation and the number of illustrations he created depicting roads in the landscape (Figure 2.5).

**THE PICTURESQUE CONTROVERSY**

In 1794 Repton found himself the unexpected target of critical commentary on his view of landscape gardening in a poem written by Richard Payne Knight (1750-1824) to Uvedale Price, *The Landscape: A Didactic Poem in Three Parts*, and an essay by Uvedale Price (1747-1829), *Essay on the Picturesque*. It was, according to Daniels, a “co-ordinated attack on his work” brought on by the provocation of his success, his allegiance to Brown and his “implicit challenge” to their authority on the Picturesque.37 Or, as Repton recalled in his memoirs, “I was […] seriously attacked by two ingenious authors whose works are likely to outlive the squibs and crackers [satire and boasts] of fugitive assailants.” Knight and Price, he continued, “will probably preserve my name for future ages, while they were endeavouring to keep alive their own.”38

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37 Daniels, *Humphry Repton*, pp. 103-104.
What precipitated the controversy was a footnote in *The Landscape*, where Knight mischaracterized a recommendation by Repton to place his client’s coat-of-arms on the boundary markers at Tatton Park in Cheshire as a ridiculous plan to place the symbol on the milestones alongside the public road. He surreptitiously translated a minor detail in the Tatton Park Red Book into a sarcastic critique of Repton’s work and ignited a vicious public debate on the landscape gardener’s skill and taste.

Repton viewed the reference to his Red Book as a breach of professional propriety and placed an advertisement in *The Times* complaining about Knight’s unethical use of an unpublished document. *The Landscape* caused considerable debate in the world of the tastemakers, with different aesthetes and publications taking sides in the controversy; Repton, not without well-respected advocates, received letters of support from William Gilpin (one of the originators of the Picturesque), William Mason (author of *The English Garden*) and his old friend William Wyndham.39 Gilpin, whose picturesque tours through Britain were widely read and had written famously, “The more refined our taste grows from the study of nature, the more insipid are the works of art;”40 provided an important endorsement, as did William Marshall who condemned the attack in a review of Knight’s didactic poem for the *Monthly Review*.

The controversial footnote was attached to line 159 of the poem: “‘But in your grand approach,’ the critic cries.” The quotation marks suggest Knight used Repton’s own words against him. Line 162 continued the personal attack: “‘Each object should announce the owner’s state,” implying, perhaps, objects as mundane as milestones. The footnote, which also made an askance reference to Repton’s forthcoming first book, *Sketches and Hints*, is reproduced here in full:

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40 William Gilpin, *Three Essays: On Picturesque Beauty; On Picturesque Travel; and on Sketching the Landscape* (London: R. Blamire, 1792), p. 57. (Italics original.)
Mr. Repton, in his plan for improving Tatton park [sic], in Cheshire, with which he means to favour the public in the general collection of his works, and in which he has professedly detailed the principles of his art, suggests many expedients for shewing the extent of property, and among others, that of placing the family arms upon the neighbouring mile-stones; but as difficulties might arise among the trustees of the turnpikes, who might each wish to have his own arms on some particular stone, I flatter myself that the more direct and explicit means of gratifying purse-proud vanity which I here propose, may not be thought unworthy of the attention of those improvers, who make this gratification the object of their labours.41

Knight’s attack on the milestones reflects either a deliberate misrepresentation or careless misunderstanding of the term “merestones” (boundary markers) used in the Tatton Park Red Book. Regardless, the Tatton Park Red Book included an analysis of the eight “requisites” for the design of an approach road and a detailed explanation on the aesthetic benefits provided by the well-placed line of a road in the landscape. Even if Knight misunderstood the reference to merestones, a careful read of the Red Book would have demonstrated Repton’s sophisticated theories on approach roads—undermining the justification for Knight’s sarcastic comments. For example, the following lines from The Landscape suggest Repton designed a road of unnecessary length and for dubious benefit:

He, therefore, leads you many a tedious round,
To shew th’ extent of his employer’s ground;42

However, in his eight requisites for an approach road in the Tatton Park Red Book, Repton specifically cautioned against such approach roads of gratuitous length. The Red Book stated the “approach is a road to the house; and to that principally” and that “there should be no temptation to quit it; which will ever

42 Knight, The Landscape, p. 12. (Lines 165-166.)
be the case, if the road be at all circuitous.” In *Sketches and Hints* he presented one of his most strident defenses of this design principle (making reference to a “clown”) for the approach road at Cobham Hall:

> There seems to be as much absurdity in carrying an approach round, to include those objects which do not naturally fall within its reach, as there was formerly in cutting through an hill, to obtain a straight line pointing to the hall door.... Thus do improvers seem to have mistaken the most obvious meaning of an *approach*, which is simply this—A ROAD TO THE HOUSE. If that road be greatly circuitous, no one will use it when a much nearer is discovered: but if there be two roads of nearly the same length, and one be more beautiful than the other, the man of taste will certainly prefer it; while perhaps the clown, insensible to every object around him, will indifferently use either.

Repton was compelled to respond to the unprovoked attack on his landscape style and to defend the legacy of Brown, which also fell under Knight’s harsh criticism. He made last-minute additions to *Sketches and Hints* prior to its publication, adding a footnote to Chapter VII and an Appendix. Importantly, he added excerpts from the Tatton Park Red Book. His strong defense in *Sketches and Hints* of his principles is partly due to his anger that Knight published his didactic poem as he was selling subscriptions to his new volume—timing Repton viewed as particularly hostile.

Repton’s response in *Sketches and Hints* provided great insight into his innovative views on mobility and animation—concepts that today would be described as kinesthetic design. His differentiation between a painterly view and a landscape experience—“A great difference betwixt a scene in nature, and a picture on canvas [...].”—is repeated multiple times in his writings.

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43 Repton, *Sketches and Hints*, pp. 50-51.
44 Ibid., p. 49. (Emphasis and italics original.)
45 Stroud, *Humphry Repton*, p. 84.
46 Daniels, *Humphry Repton*, p. 113.
47 Ibid., pp. 110-112.
It was not my original intention to have treated of Approaches in this volume, as it is a subject that requires to be elucidated by many plates; but the publication of a didactic poem, * [49] where much is said on that subject, under the sanction and authority of two gentlemen of acknowledged taste, obliges me to defend not only my own principles, and the reputation of my late predecessor, Mr. Brown, but also the art itself, from attacks, which are the more dangerous, from the manner in which they are conveyed; and because they are accompanied by some doctrines, to which every person of true taste must give his ascent. Yet while I pay this tribute due to the merit of a work containing many things worthy of admiration, and while I acknowledge my personal obligation for being the only individual in my profession, to whom any degree of merit is allowed by the author of it, I feel it a kind of duty to watch, with a jealous eye, every innovation on the principles of taste in Landscape Gardening; since I have been honoured with the care of so many of the finest places in this kingdom.50

In a direct response to the attack on his approach road design for Tatton Park, Repton defended his proposals in Sketches and Hints by distinguishing between the “ostentatious approaches” criticized by Knight and those that arose from “novelty and variety:”

I perfectly agree with him [Knight], that those ostentatious approaches, from whence the whole scenery is spread before the stranger’s eye, as upon a map, are not to be justified; because they rob the mind of that pleasure which arises from novelty and variety, from expectation and surprise; but there is surely no more incongruity in marking the entrance of a park with some distinction, and displaying some of its beauties in the course of a road that must pass through it, than in showing, by the external appearance of an house, that it is the residence of great wealth or exalted station.51

49 Original footnote: “*The Landscape, a Poem by R.P. Knight, Esq., addressed to Uvedale Price, Esq.”
50 Repton, Sketches and Hints, p. 48.
51 Repton, Sketches and Hints, p. 52.
On the surface, Repton’s argument of “marking the entrance” with “some distinction” was a defense of his proposal to ornament Tatton Park’s merestones with the owner’s coat-of-arms. Yet, within Repton’s polite response was the fundamental argument of the Picturesque Controversy: the difference between the painterly approach to the landscape advocated by Knight and Price and Repton’s views of active engagement with the landscape through mobility and circulation. His response was written using terms (novelty, variety, expectation and surprise) that reflected the kinesthetic experience of an unfolding journey—the “pleasure which arises from novelty and variety, from expectation and surprise.” This juxtaposition of movement to the static painterly interpretation of landscape advocated by his opponents, established Repton as the first landscape designer to articulate a theory for design based on the movement of a vehicle in a landscape setting.

In his Red Book for Point Pleasant, prepared the following year in 1796, Repton continued his argument. Here, in an eloquent and pictorial analysis of the River Thames, he stated unequivocally, “motion is beyond the power of art.” The sublimity of the river landscape, he passionately argued, arose not from its beautiful form, but from its animation.

[...] the distant view of such a river [Thames] is not sufficient to gratify the mind, it is not the glitter, or the colour, or the pleasure boats on its surface; it is the vast body of moving element that distinguishes this magnificent object from the tame pieces of artificial water with which parks and gardens are frequently ornamented. Art can imitate the beauty, the shape, the winding, and even the breadth of a natural river; but its motion is beyond the power of Art, in that alone consists the sublimity and majesty of this river, for that awakens all the associated ideas of its uses to the community.52

Variety, as Repton noted in Sketches and Hints, “may be gratified by natural landscape, in a thousand ways that painting cannot imitate.”53 As Marie-Luise

52 Humphry Repton, Red Book for Point Pleasant (1796), unpaged. (Emphasis original.)
53 Repton, Sketches and Hints, p. 79.
Gothein wrote, “he was the first man to free himself from the exaggerated idea of a similarity between painting and landscape gardening. He laid his finger on the difference between them, caused by the constant alteration in the spectator’s point of view […]”54 Through the incorporation of the concepts of kinesthesia, Repton understood that the spectator in a vehicle on a road (or on a river) experienced different views while in motion along an alignment that was predetermined. Therefore, the landscape gardener had an opportunity to provide some structure to the randomness of the “constant alteration” of views Gothein noted. It is within this unique structure that Repton was able to employ his talents as a landscape gardener and choreograph a rich visual experience for the participant along a carriage drive. As David Watkin noted in The English Vision, The Picturesque in Architecture, Landscape and Garden Design:

Repton’s exceptional visual sensitivity, his awareness of space, of optical illusion and of the shifting tonal values of the changing seasons and times of day, made him conscious that the framed landscape painting must ultimately be inadequate as a guide to anyone entrusted with the shaping of earth, air, water, trees and buildings.55

Repton’s extraordinary attention to the details of roads and circulation, and his strong opinions and defense of the topic, were likely shaped by his personal experience with travel, vehicles and roads. As Daniels notes:

Repton spent much of his career on the road. Road travel helped to define his profession of landscape gardening: networks of commissions, working practices, theoretical principles, parkland designs. Moreover roads and travel largely shaped Repton’s sensibility: in addressing a range of moral and emotional issues through his works, in commissions for his clients and his many other published and unpublished writings. Repton expressed his concern

54 Marie-Luise Gothein, as quoted in Hayms, Capability Brown and Humphry Repton, p. 131.
with social order, financial probity and domestic stability in and through a career of high mobility.\textsuperscript{56}

In the long view of history, perhaps Hunt, in \textit{Gardens and the Picturesque}, offers the best evaluation of controversy and assigns to Repton the ultimate vindication and victory so elusive during his lifetime.

Repton certainly shared Knight’s skepticism with some of Brown’s more obvious mannerisms—serpentine water, belts and clumps of trees, smooth lawns right up to the house walls. But in his quarrel with Knight and Price over what revisions were required in landscape design after Brown he reveals a surer grasp of the intricacies of the aesthetic debate. He seems to me, therefore, less the “man of compromise” that Pevsner terms him, than an original contributor to the development of English landscape gardening, in both its theory and practice. And this originality derives from Repton’s recognition of the mediating force of both painterly conventions in landscape design and the social needs and conversations of his clients.\textsuperscript{57}

The Picturesque Controversy created an environment in which Repton was forced to articulate and defend his ideas on circulation and mobility.

\section*{BROWN, HIS PREDECESSORS AND THE AVENUE}

The advances in modern road construction and vehicle design, and the new views of the landscape introduced by the Picturesque provided Humphry Repton the opportunity to employ his skills as a landscape gardener in the design of roads and drives that was unavailable to Capability Brown and his predecessors.

Prior to Repton’s time, no technology supported the essential needs of the pleasure road—a comfortable vehicle in which to travel and a smooth all-weather surface over which to pass. Roads in gardens were designed as

\textsuperscript{56} Daniels, \textit{Humphry Repton}, p. 27.

\textsuperscript{57} Hunt, \textit{Gardens and the Picturesque}, p. 151.
ornaments, not pleasure drives. The avenues designed by the great French landscape designer André Le Nôtre (1613-1700) and his followers were created to express space and organize vast landscapes. While suitable for rides, they were, as Repton noted in *Fragments*, “monotonous.”

With Le Nôtre, and later Charles Bridgeman (d. 1738) in England, the concept of the avenue was not so much about mobility or travel experience as it was about spatial perception. At Versailles the avenue was not designed as a sequence of spaces, but rather as a singular element perceived from a defined vantage point. At the apex of continental formalism, the lengthy rows of trees and their corresponding visual convergence at the infinity point, or horizon line, suggested great distances to the observer without the need to experience travel along the avenue. Indeed, the repetition of the avenues, often cut through forests to facilitate hunting, had little to do with experiential travel. Similarly, the avenues designed by Bridgeman and others in the English countryside constructed a geometry that superseded nature and provided an experience only as varied as those forms and views that intersected the transit line of the surveyor. As the English Landscape School rose to prominence, avenues in Britain also served the useful function of connecting architectural follies in the landscape but, as with Versailles, the primary function of the avenues was more of a *visual correspondence* than a physical connection. Therefore, the design of the avenue was predicated on the departure and arrival points, with the connection between, secondary. The intended effect was one of order and beauty largely independent of the landscape through which the road passed (Figure 2.6).

In addition to geometric features in the landscape, Sarah M. Couch notes many avenues served important commercial purposes for silviculture—elms, in particular, being highly valued for timber, whereas horse chestnuts and limes

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(lindens), with less valuable wood, were valued for their ornamental forms. As a consequence, many avenues were cut down once their trees reached a commercially viable size. The destruction of a landscape feature, at presumably the height of its contribution to the comfort and enjoyment of a carriage traveler, further reinforces the notion that the avenue was more about the provision of geometry and structure, than the experience for the traveler.

Batty Langley (1696-1751) published his highly influential *New Principles of Gardening* in 1728. His book is often quoted for its fierce condemnation of “those wretched figures” of topiary. Through his condemnation of shrubbery clipped into architecture and animal forms, he established the moral authority for the influence of nature in the British garden. Moreover his references to reason, art and nature would come to define the Picturesque—in essence, establishing the philosophical basis for the English Landscape School and the Picturesque Movement.

And feeling that our British nation does at this Time consist of the most noblegrand [sic] Planters and Encouragers of Gardening of any in Europe, ’tis to be hoped, that, for the future, better Rules will be observed therein, that is, such as are consistent with Reason, Art, and Nature; and that such Plants as have received such former Injuries, may be restored to their proper and natural Shapes as soon as Time can operate the same.

In *New Principles of Gardening*, Langley is widely acknowledged to have introduced landscape concepts that broke down the formalism of the continental garden model. Langley’s book, while encouraging the move of landscape gardening toward a more naturalistic style, was primarily about horticultural practices. His limited recommendations on design remained

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grounded in many formal landscape structures, for example his “rural enhancements” (animals, hay-stacks and corn) were juxtaposed with traditional garden features (canals, fountains and cascades) in what he defined as a “rural garden.” While his book initiated a dialogue on many of the concepts that would come to define the English Landscape School, his discussion on avenues advanced no new ideas. He noted that “grand Avenues be planted from such large open Plains, with a Breadth proportionable [sic] to the building, as well as to its Length of View.”

Indeed, the avenue was presented as a highly structured and rigid landscape feature:

> The entire Breadth of every Avenue should be divided into five equal Parts: Of which, the Middle, or grand Walk, must be three Fifths; and the Side, or Counter-Walks on each Side one Fifth each. But let the Length of Avenues fall as it will, you must always observe, that the grand Walk be never narrower than the Front of the Building.

In an era in which the primary movement through a garden was on foot and in a limited area, Langley articulated important principles for choreographing movement in the garden such as “surprise” and “variety.” The following quote captures his concepts for movement, animation and engagement within the landscape. The kinesthetic descriptions were richly presented using adjectives and verbs carefully selected to carry the reader through his landscape.

> That those serpentine Meanders, be placed at proper Distances, large Openings, which you surprizingly come to; and in the first are entertain’d with a pretty Fruit-Garden, or Paradise-Stocks, with a curious Fountain; from which you are insensibly led through the pleasant Meanders of a shady delightful Plantation; first, into an oven [sic] Plain environ’d with lofty Pines, in whose Center is a pleasant Fountain, adorn’d with Neptune and his Tritons, &c. secondly, into a Flower-Garden, enrich’d with the most fragrant Flowers and beautiful Statues; and from thence through small Inclosures of Corn, open Plains, or small Meadows, Hop-Gardens, Orangeries, Melon-Gardens,

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62 Ibid., p. 194.  
63 Ibid., p. 201.
Vineyards, Orchards, Nurseries, Physick-Gardens, Warrens, Paddocks of Deer, Sheep, Cows, &c. with the rural Enrichments of Hay-Stacks, Wood-Piles, &c.

*Which endless are, with no fix’d Limits bound,
But fill in various Forms the Spacious Round.
And endless Walks the pleas’d Spectator views,
At ev’ry Turn the verdant Scene renews.*

These agreeable surprizing Entertainments in the pleasant Passage thro’ a Wilderness, must, without doubt, create new Pleasures at every Turn: And more especially when the Whole is so happily situated, as to be bless’d with small Rivulets and purling Streams of clear Water, which generally admit of fine Canals, Fountains, Cascades, &c. which are the very Life of a delightful rural Garden.64

Langley’s references to the traveler’s experience were applied to the wilderness walks within the park, not the avenues—an indicator that experiencing the landscape from a vehicle had yet to become comfortable or practicable. Nevertheless, his acknowledgment of “pleasures at every turn” for the pedestrian anticipated Repton’s philosophy for carriage drives.

While vehicle and road technology had yet to offer the components required for a pleasure drive, the English Landscape School advanced theories of movement and transition within the landscape. For William Kent (1685-1748), movement in the landscape was created by narrative. The Elysian Fields at Stowe, for example, provided a prescribed route in which a story was told. The structure of the narrative within the landscape, however, was conspicuous and dependent on the visitor’s knowledge of mythology and history. At Rousham, Kent continued a narrative landscape with statuary and structures referencing ancient Rome, but he also animated a section of the walk with a serpentine rill. Moving through dense woodland before entering a pool at the Vale of Venus, the rill was never experienced in full—always drawing the visitor along its watery and mystical course. Here, along the banks of the River Cherwell, Kent created a garden path in which knowledge

64 Ibid., p. 198. (Italics original.)
of the Augustan Age enhanced, but was less essential than at Stowe, to the full enjoyment of the landscape. The kinesthetic experience trumped the narrative. The same can be said of the design for Stourhead created by Henry Hoare II (1705-1785). For each garden room, visual clues were provided by axial vistas framing temples, statuary or grottos. For these gardens, mobility was associated with a story through which the visitor walked from site-to-site within a relatively compact space. At the great garden at Stowe, Capability Brown removed the narrative and used the landforms to create visual movement. The Grecian Valley at Stowe, his first major landform project, created visual movement that drew the eye of the viewer through the landscape.

Lancelot “Capability” Brown (1716-1783) is England’s most recognized landscape gardener. His portfolio of work is extensive and highly regarded. His views on avenues and circulation are less clear. As Christopher Hussey noted in his introduction to Dorothy Stroud’s Capability Brown, Brown did not write books on theory and practice or provide his clients with “prettily got up” presentation drawings, and few of his plans remain.65 That his practice occurred before the advent of modern roads and vehicles suggests his views on circulation and roads were more focused on utility and the organization of the landscape.

Thomas Whately (1726-1772) published his guide to English gardens, Observations on Modern Gardening, in 1770. As a professional contemporary of Brown, Whately’s views on roads and circulation provide an important insight into the topic for the period. Whether or not Brown agreed with his views, he certainly would have been familiar with Whately (who recorded many of his gardens in his book). Observations on Modern Gardening included detailed descriptions of roads and avenues in the chapter titled “Of Art,” noting the desirable qualities of a route with “natural easy sweeps [...]”

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presenting at every bend some new scene to the view.”

His inclusion of new scenes “at every bend” suggests a cognizance for kinesthesia rather than a slavish obedience to Hogarth’s “line of beauty.” Additionally, his volume was helpful to Repton during the controversy with Knight and Price as he held similar views on the Picturesque.

As Whately stated: “Gardening [...] is as superior to landskip [sic] painting, as a reality to a representation [...].”

Some of the most reliable insight into Brown’s views on circulation and mobility may be found in Repton’s writings. As Repton’s immediate predecessor, Brown’s work warrants additional research into his views on avenues and circulation.

In *Fragments*, Repton presented his own interpretation on the history of the development of avenues. It is included here not only as a historical summation on the development of the avenue, but also to demonstrate Repton’s interest in the topic of circulation and, by extension (and comparison), reinforce the assertion that Repton was fully conscious he was developing a new type of road designed for pleasure. Repton began by noting, “the fashion of Drives has, like all other fashions, passed from one extreme to the other.”

His history was presented as a philosophical introduction to his plan for Woburn Abbey.

Before I speak of the Drives at Woburn, I shall endeavour to trace the progress of fashion in Planting; by which I mean the various systems adopted at different periods for making trees artificial ornaments. The first was doubtless that of planting them in a single row at equal distances; and this prevailed in the gardens mentioned by Pliny.

The next step was in doubling these straight rows, to form shady walks; but fashion, not content with the simplicity of such an avenue of

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trees placed opposite to each other, invented the *Quincunx*, by which those straight lines were multiplied in three different directions.

As the eagerness of adopting this fashion could not always wait the tedious growth of trees, where old woods existed, they were cut through in straight lines and vistas, and in form of stars and *Pates d’oie*, which prevailed at the beginning of the last century.

Fashion, tired of the dull uniformity of straight lines, was then driven to adopt something new: yet still acting by geometrical rules, it changed to regular forms of circles and curves, in which the trees were always placed at equal distances. This introduced also the serpentine avenue for a road, of which there is a specimen in the approach from Bedford to Woburn Abbey which is not unpleasing.

The next bold effort of fashion was that of departing from the equidistant spaces, and trees were planted in patches of clumps, square or round, alternately shewing and hiding the view on each side of the road; and where no view was required, a skreen [sic] or double row of trees entirely shut out one side, while in the other the view was occasionally admitted, but still at regular intervals. This prevails in the Drives at Woburn.⁷⁰

In his summary of the avenues, Repton recalled a conversation with his father as a youth about the breakdown of the formal avenues of Brown. Such memories and familial observations between father and son suggest a man well prepared for the imminent convergence of landscape and technology.

I perfectly remember, when I was about ten years old, that my father (a man of such general observation, that no innovation or novelty escaped him) remarked to me the change which was then taking place in ornamental planting; and then, although little supposing how much it would become the future study of my life, I recollect his observing the discovery made by some ingenious planter (perhaps Kent or Brown), that the straight line might be preserved in appearance from the ends of a vista or avenue, without actually filling up all the sides; and thus alternate openings of views to the county might be obtained, without losing the grandeur of the straight line, which was then deemed indispensable. He then observed, that this would lead to the abolishing

of avenues; and, I believe, few were planted after that date, viz. the middle of the last century.\textsuperscript{71}

Repton continued his history of the drive:

About this time a total change in the fashion took place; and under Brown we were taught that Nature was to be our model, and that Nature seldom moved in a straight line. It was not therefore to be wondered at, that his illiterate followers should have copied the means he used, and not the model he proposed. They saw him prefer curved lines, and concluded that Nature abhorred a straight one. Hence proceeded those meandering, serpentine, and undulating lines in all their works, which were unfortunately confirmed by Hogarth's recommendation of his imaginary Line of Beauty. Thus we see roads sweeping round to avoid the direct line to their object, and fences gracefully and fancifully taking a longer course; and even belts and plantations in useless curves, with a drive meandering in parallel lines, which are full as much out of nature as straight ones.

Thus has fashion converted a Belt or screen of plantation, introduced by Brown, into a Drive quite as monotonous and more tedious than an avenue or vista, because a curved line is longer than a straight one.\textsuperscript{72}

While Capability Brown and his predecessors changed the theoretical framework of landscape design to elevate the beauty of nature, they were unable to advance any new concepts for vehicular movement within the landscape. The larger landscape remained a painterly and static backdrop to be appreciated from a manor house or prescribed locations (such as temples or follies) on the estate. The transition between each distant site and location was secondary to the prescribed points of interest. In other words, the movement through the larger landscape was not as important as the view of the landscape. During this period, circulation considerations were concentrated in gardens and designed for the range of a pedestrian. The participants’ fatigue and stamina determined the length of the walks, therefore the scale of personal interaction with the landscape was thus

\textsuperscript{71} Ibid., p. 173.
\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., pp. 173-174.
limited. Circulation, movement and transitions within the larger landscape could not be considered due to the absence of modern technology necessary to facilitate a pleasurable ride through the countryside. As a result, long-range touring was necessarily accommodated on horseback; and the freedom of that mode of transport required no fixed structure of roads or drives.

To be fair, Brown did create drives within the plantation belts he established at the periphery of many of his properties. It may, however, be more accurate to characterize them as serpentine avenues, rather than pleasure drives. It was not until the technological advances of Repton's era that the curvilinear road progressed from a landscape form to a kinesthetic experience. In *Fragments*, Repton defined the drive through Brown's work:

> Mr. Brown’s attention had generally been called to places of great extent, in many of which he had introduced that practice distinguished by the name of a belt of plantation, and a drive within that belt. This, when the surface was varied by hill and dale, became a convenient mode of connecting the most striking spots, and the most interesting scenes at a distance from the mansion, and from each other. But when the same expedient is used round a small field, with no inequality of ground, and particularly with a public road bounding the premises, it is impossible to conceive a plan more objectionable in its consequences [...].

Repton did not criticize Brown specifically, but he did criticize his “illiterate followers” for their wandering and purposeless drives. In a letter to Price, reprinted in *Sketches and Hints*, Repton defended the dignity of Brown’s drive through a belt and noted the unfortunate results of those who copied the style.

> If this belt be made of one uniform breadth, with a drive as uniformly serpentining through the middle of it, I am ready to allow that the way can only be interesting to him who wishes to examine the growth of his young trees: to every one else it must be tedious, and its dullness will increase in proportion to its length.

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73 Ibid., pp. 70-71.
74 Repton, *Sketches and Hints*, p. 73.
One of the first definitions of roads designed for pleasure is found in *Planting and Rural Ornament*, published in 1796. The lengthy and anonymous two-volume publication, attributed to William Marshall (1745-1818),\(^7\) devoted only two paragraphs to the design and purpose of roads in the landscape, but in these two paragraphs the purpose and theory distinguishing roads designed for pleasure from utilitarian roads may be clearly comprehended within the context and definitions generally ascribed to modern roads designed for pleasure.

The Road may be a thing of necessity, as an *approach* to the mansion, or a matter of amusement only, as a *drive* or a *ride*, from which the grounds, and the surrounding country, may be seen to advantage. It should be the study of the artist to make the same road answer, as far as may be, the two-fold purpose.

The Road and the Walk are subject to the same rule of Nature and Use. The direction ought to be natural and easy, and adopted to the purpose intended. A Road of necessity ought to be straighter than one of mere conveniency: in this, recreation is the predominant idea; in that, utility. But, even in this, the direct line may be dispensed with. The natural roads upon heaths and open downs, and the grassy glades and green roads across forests and extensive wastes, are proper subjects to be studied.\(^76\)

By declaring that a road could be “a matter of amusement only” to enjoy touring a park or the countryside, Marshall defined pleasure driving and established roads designed for pleasure as a distinct typology.

Roads designed or adapted for “amusement only” represented an entirely new concept in travel. Road travel prior to this age was unpleasant, unpredictable and unsafe. Roads were poorly constructed and poorly maintained, and vehicles uncomfortable. Writing in 1650 a German traveler described his

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coach as being “like four post bedsteads on four wheels.” Even among the wealthy classes, travel was a burden. An elaborate Dutch carriage, designed in 1571 for Queen Elizabeth I for the opening of Parliament, was reported to be so uncomfortable that the Queen was unable to sit for several days after one journey. Pleasure driving or touring in a vehicle was antithetical to the existing road network, available modes of conveyance and established forms of outdoor recreation and landscape appreciation.

THE CONVERGENCE

By 1800 the convergence of the necessary components to enable the development of roads designed for pleasure occurred. Driving for pleasure required three essential elements: a smooth surface over which to travel, a comfortable vehicle suitable for touring and a cultural awareness compelling travelers to explore the landscape. As a result, two technological advances and one social development were required: the development of modern roads and the development of safe and comfortable vehicles, and an appreciation for the natural landscape. By the end of the eighteenth century, the foundations of modern road engineering were established, modern touring vehicles were in their ascendancy and a rich literary and artistic conversation known broadly as the Picturesque Movement was compelling people to travel.

Repton best captured the convergence of these concepts (and the kinesthetic result of their union) in the description of his design for a new carriage drive for Blaise Castle near Bristol.

It may perhaps be urged that I have made [1] a road where nature never intended the foot of man to tread, much less that he should be conveyed in [2] vehicles of modern luxury, but where Man resides,

[3] Nature must be conquered by Art [...] I am not less afraid of those beautiful scenes in nature which defy the powers of my pencil to imitate; because I cannot shew on paper the effect of improvement where no change is proposed, and this is particularly the case at Blaise Castle. [...] I cannot describe those numberless [4] beauties which may be brought before the eye in succession by the windings of a road, or the contrast of ascending and descending thro’ a deep ravine of rich hanging woods.79

Within the context of the “Convergence,” Repton described a road designed for pleasure, meeting the three requisite elements and producing a desired kinesthetic result. The carriage drive at Blaise Castle was a pleasure road that: 1.) was constructed or engineered, 2.) was used by modern vehicles, 3.) responded to the Picturesque Movement and 4.) resulted in a pleasurable experience based on movement within the landscape.

The following sections address the three individual elements forming the convergence as defined by this thesis: Road-Making, Vehicle Design and The Picturesque Movement. 1800 has been selected as a central date based on the following historic events: for road-making, the establishment of the Holyhead Road Commission in 1816; for vehicle design, the publication of William Felton’s A Treatise on Carriages in 1794; and for the Picturesque Movement, the publication of William Gilpin’s Three Essays on the Picturesque in 1782.

Road-Making

The science of road-making, as road building was referred to during this period, advanced significantly at the end of the eighteenth century in Europe.80 The widespread application of scientific road-making methods,
beginning in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, rapidly accelerated the trend for improved journey times. Average travel times on the London-Bristol road, for example, dropped from three or more days in 1667, to thirty-eight hours in 1716, to twenty-five hours in 1774, to sixteen hours in 1784 on the first Royal Mail coach run, to fourteen hours in 1800 and twelve hours in 1832.  

Three engineers were largely responsible for creating the foundation for modern paving technology: Pierre-Marie Jérôme Trésaguet, Thomas Telford, and John Loudon McAdam.

Pierre-Marie Jérôme Trésaguet (1716-1796) came from an engineering family and was appointed Director General of bridges, roads, and municipal works in France in 1775. France was generally considered to have the finest, best constructed, and best maintained road network in Europe. One of Trésaguet’s major contributions was the introduction of angular stone, rather than rounded gravel—the sharp faces of broken stone binding together to form an interlocking structure.

The Trésaguet pavement employed pieces of quarried stone about 200mm [8 inches] in size and of a more compact form than in earlier methods. The pieces were shaped to have at least one flat, narrow side, which was placed on a cambered formation. The pavement structure thus resembled a cobbled road rather than a stack of flat stone slabs. Hammers were then used to wedge smaller pieces of broken stone into

Definition 1: “To raise from the ground; to make a fabric, or an edifice,” “Construction” (n.)
Definition 1: “The act of building; fabrication.” “Construct” (v.) “To build; to form; to compile; to constitute.”

82 Definitions of the Trésaguet, Telford, and McAdam paving methods have been taken from Lay’s Ways of the World. His book was found to have the most accurate summary for each paving method. The inclusion of his definitions ensures the accurate and consistent representation of each method in this thesis.
83 The Trésaguet method was used for the early sections of America’s first federally financed public highway, the National Road, in Maryland and Pennsylvania. While the system worked well for France’s well financed and maintained road network, it did not perform well on the heavily traveled and under-financed National Road—Trésaguet’s top surface of protective gravel, intended to be regularly raked, quickly wore away and exposed the foundation structure, leading to road failure.
the spaces between the larger stones. Next, a fuller thickness of broken stone was applied to produce a level surface. Finally, the running surface was made with a layer of smaller 25mm [1 inch] broken stone. The broken-stone running surface performed two functions. First, it permitted a smoother profile to be produced by adjusting the thickness of the layer. Second, it protected the larger stones in the pavement structure from the action of iron wheels and iron-shod hooves.\textsuperscript{84}

Thomas Telford (1757-1834), a stonemason from Scotland who ultimately founded the British Institution of Civil Engineers, is best known for his bridges and canals. He first became involved with the science of road-making when commissioned by the British government in 1801 to report on transportation measures to halt the population exodus from the Scottish Highlands. Nicknamed the “Colossus of Roads,” Telford supervised the construction of 920 miles (1,480 kilometers) of roads in the Highlands and directed the Holyhead Road Commission between 1815 and 1830.\textsuperscript{85} Telford built on the work of Trésaguet, reconsidering the structure of the road foundation and improving drainage.

Telford used 300 x 250 x 150mm \([12" \times 10" \times 6"]\) partially shaped pitchers, still with a narrow, flat face on the natural formation, but with the other faces closer to vertical than in Trésaguet’s method. The longest edge was transverse to the traffic direction, and the joints were broken relative to adjacent transverse courses—in the manner of conventional brickwork, but with the smallest faces of the pitcher forming the upper and lower surfaces of the course. Broken stone was wedged into the spaces between the slightly tapering near vertical faces to provide the layer with effective lateral restraint.

Telford kept the natural formation level and cambered the upper surface of the blocks, often using masons to knap (shape) the tops of the blocks. Indeed, ex-stonemason Telford’s pavement required more masonry work than the Trésaguet system, and he put more emphasis on stone quality than did his predecessors. The natural formation was often called \textit{bottoming}, and the layer of blocks was called \textit{pitching} or \textit{rock bottom}. On top of this rock bottom Telford placed a further 150mm [6 inch] layer of pieces of stone no bigger than 60mm [2.5

\textsuperscript{84} Lay, \textit{Ways of the World}, p. 73.

Telford’s system relied on an impervious surface structure to prevent water from weakening the construction. He also raised the pavement structure above the surrounding ground, or drained the nearby area if elevating the road wasn’t practicable.

In 1808 Telford was asked to report on the conditions of the road between Shrewsbury and Holyhead and make recommendations for a preferred route. At that time there were twenty-four turnpike companies managing the road between London and Holyhead; seven between Shrewsbury and Holyhead. The road between London and Shrewsbury followed the course of an old Roman road. From Shrewsbury to Holyhead the road followed a number of old routes and was in extremely poor condition. With a desire to improve communication between Dublin and London after the Act of Union in 1800, the Royal Mail attempted to operate mail-coaches between the two capitals beginning in 1808. The condition of the road, particularly in the Welsh mountains, and especially on the island of Anglesey, was perilous. The mail-coaches could not travel west of Shrewsbury. For a nation newly accustomed to the efficient and reliable conveyance of all matters of correspondence, the Holyhead Road was a noteworthy gap in the nationwide system of post roads.

In 1811 Parliament issued a report and recommendations on Telford’s work, but no action was taken until 1816 when the Holyhead Road Commission was established. The first act of the commission was to acquire the seven independent turnpike commissions to consolidate construction, management and administration of the new road. Road construction was arduous in the mountainous terrain of Wales, and the Menai Straits posed a particular challenge on the road to Holyhead (Figure 2.7). Here Telford designed the

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86 Lay, Ways of the World, pp. 74-75.
Menai Bridge, the longest suspension bridge in the world when it opened in 1826. The Holyhead Road was considered a triumph of modern engineering in Britain and was well known in America.

John Loudon McAdam (1756-1836) developed the first practical modern road construction process, and his name is still remembered today when referencing “macadam” pavements. He was born in Scotland, but after his father died in 1770 was sent to New York City to live with his uncle. In New York he was married and helped to found the New York Chamber of Commerce. His family sided with the Loyalists during the American Revolution and he was a member of the British reserve forces. After the war he no longer felt welcome in the United States and returned to Scotland in 1783.

He first became involved with road-making as a trustee of the Ayrshire Turnpike in Scotland in 1787. He was appointed Surveyor of Roads for the Bristol Turnpike in 1816. He wrote a booklet “Remarks (or Observations) on the Present System of Roadmaking” in 1816 and *A Practical Essay on the Scientific Repair and Preservation of Public Roads* in 1819. In 1823 he was called before Parliament during an inquiry on modern road-making practices; in 1827 he was appointed Surveyor General of Metropolitan Roads for Great Britain.

His important contribution was the development of a road building system that did not require the heavy stone structure base of the earlier systems. McAdam argued that a layer of broken angular stones would behave as a coherent mass similar to the expensive stone structures of Trésaguet and Telford.

In his empirical observation of many roads, McAdam particularly noted the effectiveness of using small pieces of broken stone, the disruption caused by large pieces of stone, and the efficacy of breaking large
stones into smaller pieces. He realized that 250mm [10 inch] layers of well-compacted, broken, angular pieces of small stone would provide the same strength and stiffness as, and a better running surface than, a more expensive pavement based on a foundation of carefully made and placed large stone blocks. Further this course of broken stone would reduce the stresses on the natural formation to an acceptable level, provided the formation was kept relatively dry and drained.\(^\text{87}\)

The McAdam method also solved the vexing problem of rutting or tearing of the road surface by modern higher speed vehicles. Unlike the wider and heavier wheels of older vehicles which tended to compact the surface of the road, the larger and narrower wheels of modern carriages, designed to allow for greater speeds, were destructive. McAdam’s pavement solved the problem of high speed and narrow iron wheels causing rutting of the roads through the use of an angular interlocking stone surface—or road metal—made of stones averaging less than one inch (2.5 centimeters) in diameter. With his method, it was difficult for the carriage wheels, averaging four inches (ten centimeters), to have as severe a negative impact on the surface. While McAdam’s paving process did not require the expensive construction of a stone camber, it was, like Trésaguet’s and Telford’s, labor intensive—requiring larger rock to be broken by hand to create the angular gravel (Figure 2.8).

By all accounts, McAdam was a practical engineer with little recorded interest in the landscape. One of his most important considerations was keeping his roads dry, which meant preventing any roadside environment that would keep the road in shade. Trees, in particular, he viewed as a liability. He is quoted from his *Remarks on the Present System of Roadmaking* in the “Memorial on Public Roads” (1822):

> The fences themselves on each side form a very material and important subject, with regard to the perfection of roads; they should in no instance be more than five feet in height above the centre of the road,

\(^{87}\) Ibid., p. 77.
and all trees that stand twenty yards from the centre of it ought to be removed. I am sure that twenty per cent of the expense of improving and repairing roads is incurred by the improper state of fences and trees along the side of it, on the sunny side more particularly.\textsuperscript{88}

McAdam and Telford were employed by the government to design and build essential roads, canals and bridges. Aesthetic considerations or artistic embellishments to their structures, or the alignment of their roads to showcase picturesque landscapes, were of little or no concern to Parliament. As will be noted in Chapter 3 with Telford, some engineers did appreciate the intersection between the road and the landscape. Part two of the “Memorial on Public Roads” referenced the writings of the engineer William Lester, who took a more aesthetic approach to the need to keep roads dry. In many ways, his attitude toward road maintenance reinforced Repton’s views of access to scenery from public roads.

If Agricultural Societies would grant honorary premiums to those surveyors of highways, who keep the greatest length of hedges, by the sides of their roads, under five feet high, it probably might stimulate them to beautify and enrich their country by this necessary attendance.\textsuperscript{89}

Like Repton, Lester valued the beauty of the British countryside. As he continued he sounded Reptonian in his opinion of “traveling through a well cultivated country” and his admiration for the “noble class” of tenants largely responsible for the needed maintenance along the public highways:

“The pleasure and instruction received in traveling through a well cultivated country, the hedges of which are clipped by the highway side (as is the case in some parts of England), is such that should induce the land proprietor to grant some favours to the tenant whose industrious exertions produce such comfort. […] It is the land-owner that can give this taste to the country around his dwelling; and if he is a lover of


\textsuperscript{89} William Lester, \textit{A History of British Implements and Machinery}, p. 198, as quoted in Lester, “Memorial on Public Roads,” unpaged.
good roads and clean traveling, he will give up, for the good of the community, all those little precarious advantages that may be derived from the produce of hedges that grow by the road side.\footnote{Ibid., p. 199.}

The advances made by the three engineers in the science and art of road-making were employed in the construction of public roads and turnpikes from the late eighteenth century until the mid-nineteenth century. The rise of the railways, with greatly improved speed, economy and comfort, effectively terminated the massive public highway building programs such as the Holyhead Road; road-making in the second half of the nineteenth century, particularly in the United States, was dominated by a new road type, the pleasure drive.

Vehicle Design

Both road-making and the Picturesque required a response to the natural environment. The former a typically perfunctory response, pitting the natural topography against a desired goal to connect two points by a road, the latter a thoughtful, calculated and aesthetic appreciation evaluating scenery and views. Vehicle design, the second component of the convergence, was important in its role as a facilitator of movement, but, unlike road-making and the Picturesque, was wholly independent from the landscape. Therefore its contribution to the development of roads designed for pleasure will be noted as transformative, but not as essential to understanding the design and construction of pleasure drives.

It was not until the last quarter of the eighteenth century that the “vehicles of modern luxury” as Repton described the carriages in his Red Book for Blaise Castle, became available. In his book \textit{Ways of the World}, Max Lay notes that it was only around 1750 that coaches had reliably replaced horseback riding as the dominant form of personal intercity travel, and only in the early
nineteenth century that coaches could reliably provide faster service than riding horseback. As already noted, Robert Southey’s fictitious, but observant, Spaniard associated the “improvements in coach-building” with the rise of pleasure travel.

The advances of the modern carriages of this period are best summarized by London coach-maker William Felton in his definitive *A Treatise on Carriages: Comprehending Coaches, Chariots, Phaetons, Curricles, Whiskeys, &c.*, printed in 1794.

The Art of Coach-Making has been in a gradual state of improvement for half a century past, and has now attained to a very high degree of perfection, with respect both to the beauty, strength and elegance of the machine: the consequence has been, an increasing demand for that comfortable conveyance, which, besides its common utility, has now, in the higher circles of life, become a distinguishing mark of the taste and rank of the proprietor.

The invention of the horizontal elliptical spring by Obadiah Elliot in 1804 permitted lighter and lower coaches—their lower center of gravity allowing for increased speeds of travel. Unlike the carriages of the past, these new vehicles were designed for no commercial function. Another important improvement was the development of safer brakes. Traveling uphill or downhill had historically been hazardous—Telford conducted trials to determine the maximum gradient at which a wagon’s rolling resistance could counteract gravity, and an Irish act of 1805 restricted the maximum grade on mail coach roads to three percent. Therefore, travel by carriage in the hilly or mountainous countryside valued by the Picturesque, for purposes other than necessity, would have been viewed as an undue risk prior to the modern carriage.

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94 Ibid., p. 88.
Modern carriages quickly evolved into a new class of pleasure vehicles for which speed and views determined the design of the vehicles. The vehicles typically traveled between four and eight miles-per-hour when the horses were walking or trotting—a leisurely pace for touring. Some pleasure vehicles, designed for speed, could approach thirty miles-per-hour. The phaeton was particularly valued for its speed and open views of the landscape.

A phaeton is *par excellence* the carriage for road work: the seat is sufficiently high to afford an uninterrupted view all round, there is nothing in front of you to obstruct your prospect, and, the driver and his companion being placed well forward, there is a minimum of movement; indeed, the seat is as comfortable as that of an armchair—more so than many. Even the much-envied front place of a four-in-hand is in no way superior; it is slightly more elevated, truly, but what you gain in one way you lose in others. In a phaeton, whilst you are sufficiently raised to see over the hedges, you do not even miss a single wayside wild-flower and you can easily converse with a passing native or chance wayfarer without dismounting; and, besides, there are many who can afford the more humble conveyance who could never reasonably hope to be master of a coach—that must be left for the wealthy few. And one great charm about a driving tour is to be master of your conveyance, and with a sympathetic companion this is assured [...].

Ownership of pleasure vehicles increased dramatically during the nineteenth century, even with the rise of the railways as the dominant form of transportation. In Britain the ownership of fine carriages for pleasure driving increased from 15,000 in 1810, to 440,000 by 1900. In 1891, London issued 22,204 carriage licenses. Southey’s peripatetic Spaniard chronicled the rapid increase:

[...] a thousand carriages drive about the streets of London, where, three generations ago, there were not an hundred; a thousand hackney

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coaches are licensed in the same city, where at the same distance of time there was not one [...].98

It is difficult to conclude whether the rise of pleasure vehicles spurred the design and construction of new pleasure drives, or the opening of new pleasure drives spurred the increased ownership of pleasure vehicles. What may be concluded is that a new appreciation for natural scenery and the rise of picturesque touring resulted in an increase for both.

The Picturesque Movement

Of the three elements defining the convergence that occurred around 1800, the Picturesque Movement is the most important, for it is within the aesthetic of the Picturesque that the physical form and kinesthetic reasoning of the road designed for pleasure was established. This aesthetic form and structure influenced the design of such roads well into the twentieth century—culminating in the iconic structures and landscapes that defined the American motor parkway in the first half of the century. The significance of the Picturesque, beyond the Convergence, was the longevity of its influence. Therefore, the essential association of the Picturesque Movement to road-making and vehicle design will be presented here as the final component of the convergence to place the movement within this particular discussion of Repton’s career. The following chapter, “Roads, Travel and the Picturesque,” will address its theoretical origins, kinesthetic applications and association with roads and travel, beginning with the earlier works of Hogarth, Walpole and Burke, and continuing with an inquiry into travel writers, including Gilpin, who were contemporaries of Repton.

The Picturesque, as noted by Hunt, “was invoked at different moments to explain different aesthetic experiences.”99 The Picturesque Controversy, introduced earlier in this chapter, represented a particularly intense moment of debate and disagreement regarding the term and its application to the landscape. As noted, traditionalists, such as Knight and Price, held to a traditional, painterly application of the term, while others, such as Gilpin and Repton, associated the term with a particular type of landscape.

William Gilpin (1724-1804) was an artist, Anglican cleric, schoolmaster and author. In 1748 he anonymously published A Dialogue Upon the Gardens of the Right Honourable the Lord Viscount Cobahm at Stow. In this first literary foray into gardens and the landscape he was not, according to Hunt, particularly skilled in his dialogue, but as Hunt further noted Gilpin possessed an “instinctive attention” to the transformations taking place in landscape gardening.100 It was in his Dialogue that Gilpin first used the term “picturesque.”101

In 1782 William Gilpin published Three Essays: on Picturesque Beauty; on Picturesque Travel; and on Sketching Landscape. In his opening letter to William Lock, Esq., he seemed to anticipate the Picturesque Controversy when he distinguished between painting and the natural landscape.

A published work is certainly a fair object of criticism: but I think, my dear sir, we picturesque people are a little misunderstood with regard to our general intention. I have several times been surprised at finding us represented, as supposing, all beauty to consist in picturesque beauty—and the face of nature to be examined only by the rules of painting. Whereas, in fact, we always speak a different language. We speak of grand scenes of nature, tho uninteresting in a picturesque light, as having a strong effect on the imagination—often a stronger, than when they are properly disposed for the pencil. We every where

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99 Hunt, Gardens and the Picturesque, p. 106.
101 Hunt, Gardens and the Picturesque, p. 179.
make a distinction between scenes, that are _beautiful_, and _amusing_; and
scenes that are _picturesque_. We examine, and admire both.\textsuperscript{102}

While this thesis is focused on the application of the Picturesque to mobility,
Gilpin’s introduction is a reminder that the journeys undertaken, and the
roads adapted for or designed for pleasure to accommodate such travel,
derived from a cultural imperative to study, engage and record the dramatic
landforms, richly textured scenery and fleeting atmospheric effects of the
natural landscape. For these travelers, Gilpin articulated the emotional and
kinesthetic response to moving through the landscape.

The first source of amusement to the picturesque traveller, is the
_pursuit_ of his object—the expectation of new scenes continually
opening, and arising to his view. We suppose the country to have been
unexplored. Under this circumstance the mind is kept constantly in an
agreeable suspense. The love of novelty is the foundation of this
pleasure. Each distant horizon promises something new; and with this
pleasing expectation we follow nature through all her walks. We
pursue her from hill to dale; and hunt after those various beauties, with
which she every where abounds.\textsuperscript{103}

Repton read Gilpin’s works (and references him in _Observations\textsuperscript{104}_) and
Gilpin’s comments on picturesque travel had a direct relationship to the
concept of pleasure driving being articulated by Repton.\textsuperscript{105} While many of the
roads sought by the picturesque traveler of the nineteenth century would be
roads adapted for pleasure, the rise of scenic touring would establish the
concept of a pleasure drive and lead to the construction of roads specifically
designed and constructed for pleasure. Indeed, Repton’s skill at providing
dramatic prospects can be seen in Gilpin’s writing: “Nor is there in traveling a
greater pleasure, than when a scene of grandeur bursts unexpectedly upon
the eye [...].”\textsuperscript{106} Compared to Repton’s language: “the other is no less

\textsuperscript{102} Gilpin, _Three Essays_, pp. i-i.
\textsuperscript{103} Ibid., pp. 47-48.
\textsuperscript{104} Repton, _Observations_, p. 50.
\textsuperscript{105} Daniels, _Humphry Repton_, p. 79.
\textsuperscript{106} Gilpin, _Three Essays_, p. 44.
interesting where it bursts out on one of those magnificent landscapes so pleasing in nature, yet so difficult to be represented in painting.”  

Foreshadowing the pleasure drive, Gilpin stated, “a winding road itself is an object of beauty.”  

Repton, in the Tatton Park Red Book wrote: “nothing is more beautiful than the distant glimpse of a road winding up a hill.”

In an era just before the development of well-engineered roads and comfortable carriages, many early advocates of the Picturesque naturally considered the landscape from fixed points in space. Repton, embracing the new technologies translated the static picturesque with his introduction of theories to design roads based on motion and mobility. His use of roads and drives with fixed stations connected by a planned landscape experience created multiple vantage points in a single landscape. His use of plantations, landscape screens and natural topography controlled the “picture” and ensured the most dramatic effect for the viewer.

REPTON AND THE PLEASURE DRIVE

With the different elements of road-making, vehicle design and the Picturesque Movement approaching their apogee at the exact moment, Humphry Repton decided to establish himself as the heir to Brown and advertise his services as a landscape gardener; his affinity for pleasure roads might be considered an obvious response to a historic convergence. Such logic is too simplistic. While there may be no doubt that a landscape designer would have eventually (and likely quickly) assimilated the elements of the Convergence and achieved the realization of the pleasure road, Repton alone was uniquely positioned by his education, occupations and travels to seize the

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107 Repton, Observations, p. 73.
108 Gilpin, Three Essays, p. 56.
109 Humphry Repton, Red Book for Tatton Park (1792), unpaged.
opportunity history had presented. As Daniels notes, his experience before establishing himself as a landscape gardener made him familiar with modern transportation and travel.

Movement, by foot, horseback or carriage, and with it a shifting field of vision, was already a defining feature of English parks and pleasure grounds, whether in highly programmed circuits, or in freer range walks and rides. What distinguishes Repton’s designs is the prominence he gave to routeways, to their exact traffic, direction, position, size, shape, construction and management, to their precise role in articulating the landscape, both in views from roads or pathways and views that incorporate them.110

Examination of his written record reveals a consistent, methodical and informed understanding of roads and road design. While Repton never declared an intention to define a new road type, analysis and synthesis of his writings on roads suggest he was fully cognizant of both the opportunity and his historical role in defining the pleasure drive. The absence of such a conscious declaration is not surprising. In an era lauded for establishing the speediest and most essential connections among British cities and market towns, and constructing the most intensive road infrastructure since the Romans, the accommodation of pastoral landscapes and picturesque situations was not part of the pressing job of mobility. As Repton viewed his roads as part of the landscape of private estates, it would have been difficult to envisage the large-scale construction of public roads designed purely for pleasure.111

In Britain the impressive gains in communication, access and commerce, created high functional expectations for the national road network. Repton identified a greater application arising from the advances in road-making. He saw the intersection of the modern road with the landscape as an opportunity

110 Daniels, Humphry Repton, p. 47.
111 As shall be shown in the next chapter, Gilpin envisioned a pleasure drive around Derwentwater in the Lake District. His visionary plan is best considered a theoretical inquiry as it far exceeded the financial and administrative realities of the period.
for a new type of road designed to provide access to places of beauty. When developing plans for Blaise Castle in Bristol he wrote:

It is remarkable that no attempt should have been made to render objects of so much beauty and variety accessible in a carriage, for however interesting the walks in hilly countries may be, they can only be enjoyed by great labour and exertion; they require health of body and vigour of limbs to enjoy their romantic wonders, while the aged and infirm have been excluded from the beauties of the place by the danger and difficulty of exploring them. I must therefore assume to myself the merit of shewing this situation in a manner before unthought of, and while I reserve some scenes for those who can walk to them, and who can climb steps or creep thro’ caverns, I must endeavor to display others from the windows of a carriage with all the interest of surprize and novelty.  

It may seem unremarkable, but the idea of providing a drive to showcase “romantic wonders” was nothing short of revolutionary during an era in which the primary connection of different communities to one another occupied considerable time and expense. That Repton further recognized the needs of the “aged and infirm” was extraordinary. Such considerations reflected the thought process of a man fully aware of the opportunities at such an incipient moment. Indeed, Repton all but acknowledged development of a new road type when he characterized its style “in a manner before unthought of” and designed to be enjoyed from the “windows of a carriage.” At Blaise Castle, Repton defined the road designed for pleasure—a road constructed to display scenery, with all the “interest of surprize and novelty,” viewed from a moving vehicle.

It required not only the insight of an artist, but also that of a traveler to identify the intersection between roads and landscape experience. Just as Repton married the “practical gardener” to the “landscape painter” to create his title of landscape gardener, it can be suggested his road theories married the landscape gardener with the practical traveler. Repton envisioned the

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road not only as a basic transportation element, but also as a landscape feature that could be utilized for a number of different aesthetic applications.

Viewing the road as a landscape feature meant viewing the function and design of the road through a different lens. While the engineer saw the road through the geometry of horizontal and vertical alignment, with the goal of the most direct route along the easiest grade, Repton saw a landscape application to alignment, with the goal of an enhanced landscape experience. By re-envisioning the most rudimentary elements of road alignment, Repton converted horizontal alignment, the curvature of the road, and vertical alignment, the rise and fall of the road, and translated them from elements of efficiency to facilitators of experience. His understanding of the aesthetic possibilities of thoughtful alignment is well recorded. In a post-Brownian era where avenues were no longer in favor, Repton found pleasing the vertical alignment of the avenue at Langley Park, which “climbs up an [sic] hill, and, passing over its summit, leaves the fancy to conceive its termination.”

Interestingly, his comment came at the end of a critical discussion on the disadvantages of the avenue. His ability to detach the favorable experience of the vertical alignment from the avenue at Langley Park demonstrated great insight into his ability to manipulate the horizontal and vertical alignment of a pleasure drive to its finest advantage.

In addition to the manipulation of the horizontal and vertical alignment of the pleasure road to enhance the kinesthetic experience of the landscape, Repton also considered the line of the road as an attractive element when viewed from the manor house or a station along the carriage drive. Referring to the Red Book for Wembly [sic] Park near London, Repton wrote:

> The contrasted greens of wood and lawn are not sufficient to gratify the eye; it requires other objects, and those of different colours, such as

\[113\] Repton, Sketches and Hints, p. 23.
roads, water, and cattle; but where these natural objects cannot be easily had, the variety may be obtained by artificial means, such as a building, a tent, or a road; and perhaps, there is no object more useful in such countries than a good coloured gravel road, gracefully winding, and of course describing those gentle swells of the ground, which are hardly perceptible from the uniform colour of grass land.

The approach-road to the house will be a feature on the lawn, both as seen from thence, and also from the high ground about the park.\textsuperscript{114}

Repton reached a similar conclusion on the value of a road to enhance the overall landscape effect at Tatton Park in Cheshire:

\begin{quote}
A gravel road when it gracefully follows the natural slopes of the ground is one of the most pleasing circumstances in a good landscape, indeed many pictures which are not enriched by buildings of some kind or other would be very defective in their composition and colouring if a road could not be introduced [...] nothing is more beautiful that the distant glimpse of a road winding up a hill, and nothing more disgusting than the same degree of curvature undulating without reason across the plain.\textsuperscript{115}
\end{quote}

The skill with which Repton organized carriage drives by alignment, sequence and station allowed for tours of immense pleasure and diversity, even on relatively small sites. By manipulating the alignment, Repton could extend the real, but more importantly perceived distance of the road, by using natural or artificial features to justify its course, without making it seem needlessly long—an affectation he disliked.

Beyond his skills as a landscape gardener, Repton educated himself in the scientific aspects of road-making. He was conversant in civil engineering practices, drainage and safety—aspects of road design he would have been familiar with during his work on the mail coach system—but sought additional insights. He wrote:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{114} Ibid., p. 39.
\item \textsuperscript{115} Humphry Repton, Red Book for Tatton Park, as quoted in Daniels, \textit{Humphry Repton}, p. 48.
\end{itemize}
[... ] I had to acquire much practical knowledge of engineering, which was not to be obtained without some expense. From personal intercourse with the men of celebrity of those days I learned much. But the civil engineers of those days were chiefly engaged in cutting canals, constructing sluices etc., and it was not difficult to understand all they had to teach. Each followed in the track he had been accustomed to, and there were only a very few scientific men who attempted to strike out any other course.¹¹⁶

His search for civil engineers “who attempted to strike out any other course” represented a commitment to acquiring and using the latest engineering techniques for the design of his roads. Indeed, Repton’s conception of his pleasure roads was far beyond that of a landscape ornament or a circuit for pleasure driving. It was an analytical study and sustained advocacy for an entirely new landscape form. His roads were both artistic and functional, and he excelled in the understanding of both aspects of design. His genius lay not only in his designs based on a new landscape paradigm defined by motion and speed, but in a clearly articulated understanding of practical needs for construction, maintenance and safety. He noted “it can never be right to endanger the safety by unnecessary obstacles.”¹¹⁷

Repton provided frequent and thoughtful observations about the practical necessities for the safety and function of roads. In the following text from *Fragments*, he acknowledged the need for safety while also criticizing its thoughtless application without regard for the landscape setting. His comments showed unusual perception into human behavior and natural responses to safety—associations he also made within the context of sublime scenery.

It has often occurred to me, in walking along Westminster Bridge, that this has not been sufficiently attended to. The large lofty Ballustrade is

so managed, that the swelling of each heavy balluster exactly ranges with the eye of a foot passenger; and from a carriage, the top of the ballustrade almost entirely obstructs the view of the river. Thus one of the finest rivers in Europe is hid, for the sake of preserving some imaginary proportion in Architecture, relating to its form or entablature, but not applicable to its uses as a defence for safety, without impeding the view. If it be urged that we should judge of it from the water, we should consider that this bridge is seen by an hundred persons from the land to one from the water. By the aid of an open upright iron fence, the most interesting view of the river might be obtained, with equal safety to the spectator. I have sometimes seen a drive or walk brought to the edge of a precipice, with out any adequate fence; but good taste, as well as good sense, requires to be satisfied that there is no danger in the beauties we behold. We do not caress the speckled snake or spotted panther, however we may admire them.\textsuperscript{118}

Repton’s comments echo modern conflicts between the provision of safety and appreciation of scenery. His statement of “good sense” when confronted with “danger” is similar to the modern transportation concept of “expectancy” used in U.S. highway policy and defined in the \textit{Policy on the Geometric Design of Highways and Streets}.

Driver expectancies are formed by the experience and training of drivers. Situations that generally occur in the same way, and successful responses to these situations, are incorporated into each driver’s store of knowledge. Expectancy relates to the likelihood that a driver will respond to common situations in predictable ways that the driver has found successful in the past. Expectancy affects how drivers perceive and handle information and modify the speed and nature of their responses.\textsuperscript{119}

In Repton’s \textit{Memoirs} he recounted the carriage accident of “one of my earliest professional acquaintances” in vivid detail. Repton’s account was not sensational—it was a serious commentary on the dangers of travel. Such observations reflected but another aspect of his cognizance for safety.

\textsuperscript{118} Repton, \textit{Fragments}, p. 9 (footnote).
It is of this lady that I would relate the following anecdote. As she was traveling in an open carriage, with her infant son in her arms, his father alighted to alter something wrong in the reins, and while standing in front of the horses, they suddenly took fright and dashing him to the ground, ran off at full speed with his wife and child. She saw and knew her husband was killed on the spot. In this state of horror, instead of fainting or losing her presence of mind, she pressed her baby closer to her bosom, and resolved to save him if possible. After flying with the most frightful rapidity for some distance, she carefully wrapped the infant in her shawl and cautiously watching her opportunity she tossed it on such part of a hedge as might best break its fall. Soon after she leaped from the phaeton herself, and flew back to her child. It was unhurt and sleeping as calmly as in its cradle.\textsuperscript{120}

Roads, whether serpentine drives showcasing scenery, the history of formal avenues, the approach to a stately home or the safety of the traveler, occupy considerable comment by Humphry Repton. His passionate statements “I call the Approach [road] the most essential”\textsuperscript{121} and “I delight in movement,”\textsuperscript{122} conveyed a sense of new opportunity for landscape design based on mobility.

Repton distinguished between two types of roads designed for pleasure, the approach and the drive.

**The Approach Road**

Repton's approach road was designed to connect the estate house to the public road. Repton believed the road should be relatively direct and avoid any unnecessary detours contrived solely to extend the length of the road, i.e., a deceit to aggrandize the vastness of an estate. The approach was intended as an attractive introduction to the property and an opportunity to present some of the outstanding features of the site. While Repton intended the approach to be relatively direct, he did not intend the straight line of the avenues of earlier decades, nor did he subscribe to an overly serpentine

\textsuperscript{120}Humphry Repton as quoted in Gore and Carter, *Humphry Repton’s Memoirs*, pp. 92-93.
\textsuperscript{121}Repton, *Fragments*, p. 161.
\textsuperscript{122}Ibid., p. 234.
alignment unless the topography or natural features dictated such a course. Repton also considered “naturalistic” features designed for the landscape, such as a water feature, a logical reason to depart the most direct route to the house.

In defining his intention for the approach road, Repton used the metaphor of the architectural arrangement of a house to convey effectively how the approach road should differ for each property type: “convenient, interesting and in strict harmony with the character” of the landscape. From *Sketches and Hints*:

> The road by which a stranger is supposed to pass through a park or lawn to the house, is called an approach; and there seems the same relation betwixt the approach and the house externally, that there is internally betwixt the hall or entrance, and the several apartments to which it leads. If the hall be too large or too small, too mean or too much ornamented for the style of the house, there is a manifest incongruity in the architecture, by which good taste will be offended; but if the hall be so situated as not to connect well with the several apartments to which it ought to lead, it will then be defective in point of convenience. So it is with respect to an approach: --it ought to be convenient, interesting, and in strict harmony with the character and situation of the mansion to which it belongs.”

In his Red Book for Tatton Park, Repton outlined the eight “requisites” for an approach road:

> The requisites to a good approach may be thus enumerated:

First. An approach is a road to the house; and to that principally.

Secondly. If it is not naturally the nearest road possible, it ought artificially to be made impossible to go a nearer [sic].

Thirdly. The artificial obstacles which make this road the nearest, ought to appear natural.

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123 Repton, *Sketches and Hints*, pp. 48-49.
Fourthly. Where an approach quits the high road, it ought not to break from it at right angles, or in such a manner as robs the entrance of importance; but rather at some bend of the public road, from whence a lodge, or gate, may be more conspicuous; and where the high road may appear to branch from the approach, rather than the approach from the high road.

Fifthly. After the approach enters the park, it should avoid skirting along its boundary, which betrays the want of extent, or unity of property.

Sixthly. The house, unless very large and magnificent, should not be seen at so great a distance as to make it appear much less than it really is.

Seventhly. The house should be at first presented in a pleasing point of view.

Eighthly. As soon as the house is visible from the approach, there should be no temptation to quit it; which will ever be the case, if the road be at all circuitous; unless sufficient obstacles, such as water, or inaccessible ground, appear to justify its course.124

Repton’s eight requisites for Tatton Park was one of his most often cited directions for pleasure roads. The clarity of his intent and the universality of its application to a variety of road types and landscape settings may be found in the design of many pleasure roads and within the writings of many nineteenth and twentieth century landscape designers, landscape architects and civil engineers.

Repton provided one of his most detailed explanations of the approach road, its design, purpose and misuse, in his Red Book for Woburn Abbey (Figures 2.9 and 2.10). As in other areas, Repton felt compelled to back his arguments with historic references. The section closes with yet another reference (a quote), though more favorable, to Knight’s Didactic Poem. Repton’s Woburn Abbey Red Book section titled “Approaches” was reproduced in Fragments as follows:

124 Ibid., p. 50.
As there is no part of the arrangement of the grounds at Woburn where so much alteration seems necessary as in the Approaches, I shall take this opportunity of enlarging on the subject, by an inquiry into the cause of the errors so often observable in this most essential part of Landscape Gardening.

I call the Approach the most essential, because it is self-evident, that if there be a house in a park, there must be a road to it through the park: but the course of the line in which that road should be conducted has been the source of much discussion and difference of opinion. Utility suggests that the road should be the shortest possible: it was for this reason (I suppose) that in former times the straight line was adopted, accompanied by rows of trees leading to the front of the house, which was probably the origin of avenues. The first grand approach to Woburn was of this kind; but experience having pointed out the monotony of a long Avenue, where the house is always seen in the same point of view, Le Nôtre boldly conceived an idea, which was realized at Woburn, at Wanstead, and in front of some other palaces, viz. to obstruct its course by placing a large round basin or pond in the middle of the avenue, which not only obliged the road to pass round it, but by acting as a mirror, shewed the house doubled in its reflection on the surface, and thus increased the importance of its architecture. Such an expedient is beneath the dignity of Art, which should display her works naturally, and without puerile ostentation. The straight line in front of a house might be the shortest from the house to the road at one particular spot; but when it is remembered that approaches are generally necessary from oblique points, it is obvious that they can seldom be brought with propriety to one immediately in front [...].

When the oblique line was adopted, and a road brought through the park, instead of taking a straight line, it was discovered that, with very little deviation, some interesting parts of the scenery might be shewn in the approach; and by degrees its first object, that of being the nearest way to the house, was changed into that of being the most beautiful. Hence have arisen all the absurdities of circuitous approaches, so aptly ridiculed by a modern poet in describing improvers, who

“lead us many a tedious round
“To shew th’ extent of their employer’s ground.”

125 Repton, Fragments, pp. 161-163.
Repton's attention to the approach road, which he noted is a "most essential part of landscape gardening"\textsuperscript{126} was not only based on his theories of practical circulation and ornamental aspects, but also on his astute observations of human nature and human perceptions. Repton understood that it was via the approach road that the “first impressions” of a property would be established in the minds of visitors. Therefore, it was within the singular context of the approach road and the design of the approach sequence, that the character of a property must be introduced. As with many of his observations it remains relevant and insightful within the modern context.

There is no principle of the art so necessary to be studied, as the effects produced on the mind by the first view of certain objects, or, rather, that general disposition of the human mind, by which it is capable of strongly receiving \textit{first impressions}. We frequently decide on the character of places, as well as of persons, with no other knowledge of either, than what is acquired by the first glance of their most striking features; and it is with difficulty, or with sudden surprise, that the mind is afterwards constrained to adopt a contrary opinion.

Thus, if the approach to a house be over a flat plain, we shall pronounce the situation to be flat also, although the ground immediately near the house be varied and uneven; whilst, on the contrary, if the road winds its course over gentle hills and dales, and at length ascends a steep bank to the house, we shall always consider it as standing on an eminence, although the views from the house may be perfectly flat.\textsuperscript{127}

At Sheringham, Repton applied his understanding of first impressions and expectations to his design for the Upshur estate. Noting that “we are apt to consider ourselves arrived” when formally entering the grounds of a property, he again showed insight into human nature and expectations. Modern gateway theories recognize that symbolic features (a gatehouse, monument, sign) announcing arrival establish an expectation for the property or place

\textsuperscript{126} Ibid., p. 161.
\textsuperscript{127} Humphry Repton, as quoted in Loudon, \textit{The Landscape Gardening and Landscape Architecture of the Late Humphry Repton}, p. 243. (Italics original.)
and heighten the anticipation of arrival at the destination.\textsuperscript{128} Of particular note in his Sheringham comments was his articulation of “measured distance” compared to “apparent distance.” By distinguishing between the two, Repton demonstrated an astute awareness of human nature. While his proposed entry was no closer to the house than that from the old road, he recognized the new entry would be viewed as closer since the visitor would consider himself arrived when formally entering the property. Importantly, Repton understood that the experience after the gateway or arrival point, the approach road, must be distinct and suggest a changed landscape experience.

It fortunately happens that the three roads from Aylsham, Holt, and Cromer, all meet at the summit of the hill, from whence the public roads descend steeply towards the two towns of Upper and Lower Sheringham [sic], and at this spot, I propose to enter the premises, and proceed to the House along a line of approach, the most easy, natural, varied, and beautiful; and as it is nearer than the public road, it places the new Site exactly at the same measured distance with the old one from the three Post Towns, while the apparent distance will be shortened by a mile, because we are apt to consider ourselves arrived at a place as soon as we have passed the gate of the Grounds or Woods or Park belonging to it.\textsuperscript{129}

With the alignment determined, Repton described the approach road:

At a very humble distance, but for the same reason, I propose to cut boldly into the narrow ridge of hill which so compleatly [sic] divides the view towards the sea from the land view in the line of the approach. & so far from smoothing down the sides of the road at this place, it may be left steep & abrupt as the soil will bear, & since a road is a work of Art, let the aid of Art be avowed where it is necessary to subdue Natural difficulties in giving ease of grace to a very steep descent. –This spot if we may compare small things to great, is like a part of the road in the Wicklow mountains called the Scalp & will form at Sheringham [sic] one of the most striking stations, from whence the


\textsuperscript{129} Repton, \textit{Fragments}, pp. 201-202.
Repton described Sheringham as “my most favourite work,” and his approach road may be considered among his finest drives (Figures 2.11 and 2.12). From the gatehouse, the approach road runs along a high ridge with views to the North Sea occasionally revealed through the woodland. As the road descends to the manor house it enters a cut far less dramatic and approaches the Upshur’s residence nestled against a hill far less lofty, than depicted in the Red Book. Despite the artistic license, for which Repton was often criticized, the effect is as striking as that when lifting the flap of the Red Book for the first time. In this particular instance, it may be argued that Repton’s exaggeration was a conscious decision not to distort the landscape, but to capture the kinesthetic “burst” created by his brilliant alignment of the road—a real feeling that could not be captured by a realistic portrayal of the topography of the site (Figure 2.13).

Repton’s most complex and highly engineered approach road was constructed for Blaise Castle (Figures 2.14 and 2.15). The expensive undertaking demonstrated the investment in roads designed for pleasure that many landowners were willing to make. The approach road at Blaise is particularly instructive as an example of this investment as an existing public highway provided ready access to the manor house via the Village of Henbury. The approach for Blaise Castle was created solely to provide a picturesque drive introducing the dramatic landscape of the site. The roughly one mile (1.6 kilometer) drive commenced at a castellated gatehouse and proceeded through a variety of woodland scenes before reaching a series of switchbacks descending into a ravine, then crossed a picturesque bridge and ascended through a final woodland before emerging at the great lawn of the house. Massive stone retaining walls up to fifteen feet (five meters) maintained a

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130 Repton, Red Book for Sherringham [sic], unpaged. (Emphasis original.)
131 Repton, Fragments, p. 195.
gentle and consistent grade despite the rugged topography (Figures 2.16, 2.17 and 2.18). Repton described the approach road:

A stranger to the shapes of the ground in this romantic Place would be at a loss to account for the crooked and distorted lines represented on the map, which can only be explained by stating, that a deep ravine crosses the wood and seemed at first to render hopeless all attempt to make any approach except thro’ the village of Henbury. I trust however that the line of road will be found perfectly easy and accessible on the ground, however violent it may appear on paper, and that when Time has thrown its ivy and creeping plants over the rawness of new walls and fresh hewn rocks, the approach will be in strict character with the wildness of the scenery, and excite admiration and surprise without any mixture of terror which tho’ it partakes of the sublime, is very apt to destroy the delights of romantic scenery.132

When compared with the extensive carriage drive for Blaise Castle, the approach road met Repton’s objectives for directness of line and ease of access.

The Carriage Drive

The drive, as defined by Repton, was designed to provide a pleasure driving circuit through the property. As the purpose of the drive was relaxation and scenic enjoyment while in the property, its length and limitations were determined only by the extent of the property. While Repton did not place the necessity for directness on the drive as he did on the approach, he still insisted the alignment be logical and natural within the landscape. He stated the “road of approach to a house ought not to be circuitous, the drive is necessarily so; yet this should be under some restraint.”133 Length for the sake of length was a concept Repton eschewed for any type of road and he devoted considerable text to criticizing those who designed drives of excessive curvature and length.

133 Repton, Observations, p. 65.
The carriage drive at Blaise Castle traversed the dramatic topography of the property and ascended a hill on which the castle folly, from which the house took its name, was situated. From this vantage, spectacular views of the River Severn and Bristol Channel could be enjoyed.

In the drive which I have marked out from the house to the castle, I shall avail myself of that vista thro’ the wood towards the river [Severn], which has always been considered as one of the striking features of the place, but instead of merely giving a glimpse of this singular effect like peeping thro’ a long tube that is instantly snatched from the eye; the road ought to continue for some time in the same direction, that the most careless observer may have leisure to view the delightful scene, and before he quits the spot entirely the whole expanse of water, of shipping, and distant mountains will pass before the eye.

There is a part of the Castle wood which is seldom seen, because it lies betwixt the two walks, and properly belongs to neither; but as the carriage road is obliged to make a very long detour to ascend with tolerable facility, it must pass thro’ that small lawn which surprises by its unexpected contrast with the other wild part of this thickly wooded precipice. From this lawn the first appearance of the castle is most picturesque [...].\textsuperscript{134}

The picturesque castle, strategically located about the mid-point of the carriage drive, was the most dramatic station on the circuit (Figures 2.19 and 2.20).

Repton organized his carriage drives by “stations” with each station representing a discreet or distinctive aspect of the landscape. The alignment of the drive provided the organizing structure. The stations created a cadence to the drive, providing spots of picturesque or sublime scenery. These were tempered by more subdued settings. While a passenger seated in a comfortable carriage would not experience the physical fatigue of such a lengthy journey, they could experience a visual fatigue if the journey did not

\textsuperscript{134} Repton, “Walks and Drives,” Red Book for Blaise Castle, unpaged.
offer an ever-changing visual experience. Therefore, by choreographing the sequencing of stations, Repton managed the entire visual experience of the drive. For the traveler, such artful machinations belied the intensity of the field investigation and design process undertaken by Repton to create what appeared a natural course through the landscape. For the traveler on the carriage drive the pleasing views, accidental prospects and shady ways, each happily (seemingly serendipitously) encountered en route, revealed the true genius of Repton’s design (Figures 2.21 and 2.22).

In the following text from Sketches and Hints, Repton continued his argument that motion was a requisite to understanding the landscape. His use of “pictures from each separate window” in this excerpt may also be considered the theoretical origin for his views on stations along his carriage drives.

A great difference betwixt a scene in nature, and a picture on canvas, will arise from the following considerations.

First. The spot from whence the view is taken is in a fixed state to the painter; but the gardener surveys his scenery while in motion; and from different windows in the same front, he sees objects in different situations; therefore, to give an accurate portrait of the gardener’s improvement, would require pictures from each separate window, and even a different drawing at the most trifling change of situation, either in the approach, the walks, or the drives, about each place.

Secondly. The quantity of view, or field of vision, is much greater than any picture will admit.135

Bulstrove, the home of the Duke of Portland, one of Repton’s earliest and most influential clients, had an extensive drive comprising forty-four stations along an approximately nine mile (fourteen kilometer) route.136 Due to the length of his recommendations for the drive at Bulstrove, they are often summarized by scholars for, to provide a full description, “would be far too lengthy an

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135 Repton, Sketches and Hints, p. 55.
136 Estimate of drive length taken from Repton’s “Map of Bulstrove” from Observations.
excursion,”¹³⁷ as Dorothy Stroud stated in her volume Humphry Repton. Such literary efficiency in books not devoted to roads can be understood, but the abbreviation of the thought and complexity behind the design of one of Repton’s most important drives diminishes the genius of his design. Stroud chose to end her description of the stations at what she termed “a flat stretch of ground, but none the less interesting.”¹³⁸ While she continued by noting Repton’s objective that “such occasional tameness gives repose,”¹³⁹ her desultory tone undermined the importance Repton placed on such breaks in his carriage drive. Gilpin recognized the necessity for such breaks when he observed: “A pause in a grand continuation of scenery, is often as pleasing as in a concert of music. It makes the eye in one case, as the ear in the other, more alert for every new exhibition.”¹⁴⁰

The drive at Bulstrode, as with all Repton’s drives, was intended as a singular experience. It was not designed to be traveled intermittently or casually, but as a progression of experiences and places. It is essential, therefore, to trace all forty-four stations to fully understand the interrelationship of the full design, and the beauty of the experience he intended. Even Repton recognized the lengthy description might “appear tedious,” but defended his excerpt as containing “principles which have not before been reduced to practical improvement”—suggesting, perhaps, his awareness for the first detailed description of a pleasure drive. Therefore, the complete description for the drive at Bulstrode, as reproduced in Observations, is presented here.

The numbered stations in the text correspond to numbered sites on Repton’s site plan included in the Red Book.

¹³⁷ Stroud, Humphry Repton, p. 41.
¹³⁸ Stroud, Humphry Repton, p. 41.
¹³⁹ Ibid., p. 41.
Course of the Drive at Bulstrode.

Taking the departure from the house along the valley towards the north, it passes the situation proposed for a cottage at No. 1, from thence ascends to the summit of the chalk cliff that overhangs the dell at No. 2, and making a sharp turn at No. 3, to descend with ease, it crosses the head of the valley and enters the rough broken ground, which is curious for the variety of plants at No. 4.

From the several points No. 1, 2, and 3, the view along the great valley is nearly the same, but seen under various circumstances of foreground: at No. 4, it crosses the approach from London, and passes through an open grove No. 5.

The drive now sweeps round on the knoll at No. 6, along a natural terrace, from which the opposite hill and the house appear to great advantage. From hence crossing the valley No. 7, among the finest trees in the park, it passes a deep romantic dell at No. 8, which might be enlivened by water, as a drinking pool for the deer, and then as it will pass at No. 9, near the side of the Roman camp, I think the drive should be made on one of the banks of the Vallum; because it is a circumstance of antiquity worthy to be drawn into notice, and by being elevated above the plain, we shall not only see into the intrenchment, but remark the venerable trees which enrich its banks; these trees are the growth of many centuries, yet they lead the mind back to the far more ancient date of this encampment, when the ground must have been a naked surface. Another advantage will also be derived from carrying the drive above the level of the plain. The eye being raised above the brouzing line, the park wall will be better hid by the lower branches of the intermediate trees. At No. 10, the drive is less interesting, because the surface is flat; but such occasional tameness gives repose,* [141] and serves to heighten the interest of subsequent scenery; yet at this place, if the drive be made to branch along the Vallum, it will pass over the most beautiful part of the park, on a natural terrace at No. 11, and this will join the inner drive returning down the valley towards the kitchen garden.

I am now to speak of the great woods called Fentum’s, Piper’s, Column’s, Walk Wood, and Shipman’s, in which a serpentine drive has been formerly cut, which no one would desire to pass a second time, from its length, added to the total absence of interest or variety of

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141 Original footnote: “*This great work being in a progressive state, the reader will observe that some parts of this drive are mentioned as not yet completed.”

142 Original footnote: “*The excess of variety may become painful, and therefore in a long drive some parts should be less interesting, or, if possible, should excite no interest, and be indifferent without exciting disgust.”
objects; but following the taste which supposes “nature to abhor a straight line,” this drive meanders in uniform curves of equal lengths, and the defect is increased by there being only one connexion with the park, while the other end of the drive finishes at a great distance across Fulmer Common. The first object therefore of improvement will be to form such a line of connexion with the park as may make it seem a part of the same domain, and this would be more easily done if the hollow way road under the park wall, could be removed; because otherwise the drive must cross the road twice at No. 12, as I suppose it to enter a field at No. 13, which might be planted to connect it with the Broomfield copse No. 14, from whence, after crossing several interesting small inclosures, with forest-like borders, it enters and sweeps through the wood Little Fentums No. 16, to join the old drive, or at least such parts of it as can be made subservient to a more interesting line. [The text makes no reference to Station No. 15, however No. 15 is indicated on the map.] After crossing a valley and streamlet at No. 17, and another at No. 18, it should ascend the hill of Piper’s Wood, in which there are at present no drives, and at No. 19 a branch may lead on to the common, as a green way to London. The drive sweeping round to No. 20. Opens on a view of the village and valley of Fulmer, with a series of small ponds, which, in this point of view, appear to be one large and beautiful piece of water: this scene may be considered the most pleasing subject for a picture, during the whole course of the drive. This would be a proper place for a covered seat, with a shed behind it for horses or open carriages; *[143] but it should be set so far back as to command the view under the branches of trees, which are very happily situated for the purpose at No. 20.[144]

Here, at the mid-point of the circuit, Repton paused the journey at the most spectacular view on the property. He provided a covered seat for repose and shelter from sudden storms. His choreography of the first half of the trip was exquisite. A variety of pleasant scenes and vignettes was presented, then, halfway between the start and Station 20, at Station 10, he provided a scene of “tameness” as a visual rest. His attention to kinesthesia was recorded in his notes on ascents and descents. His attention to detail was evident in his notation on the browsing line (the distance between the lowest level of branches beyond the reach of cattle grazing) and his alignment of the road to

[143] Original footnote: “*In long drives such attention to convenience is advisable; a thatched hovel of Doric proportions, may not only be made an ornament to the scenery, but it will often serve for a shelter from sudden storms in our uncertain climate; for this reason it should be large enough to contain several open carriages.”

minimize this reality of an agricultural landscape. Continuing the circuit from Station 20, Repton wrote:

From hence the drive descends the hill in one bold line No. 21, with a view towards the opposite wood across the valley. Having again ascended the hill in wood, there are some parts of the present drive which might be made interesting by various expedients. At No. 22. one side of the drive might be opened to shew the opposite hanging wood in glades along the course of the drive. At No. 23. a shorter branch might be made to avoid the too great detour, though there is a view into the valley of Fulmer at No. 24. worthy to be preserved.*[145] In some parts the width of the drive might be varied, and some of the violent curvatures corrected; in others the best trees might be singled out and little openings made to be fed by sheep occasionally; and another mode of producing variety would be to take away certain trees, and leave others, where any particular species abound: thus in some places, the birches only might be left, and all the oaks and beech and other plants removed, to make in time a specimen of Birkland forest, while there are some places where the holly and hawthorn might be encouraged, and all taller growth give place to these low shrubs with irregular shapes of grass flowing among them. This would create a degree of variety that it is needless to enlarge upon.

The course of the drive through Shipman’s Wood No. 26, may be brought lower down the hill to keep the two lines as far distant from each other as possible, and also to make the line easier round the knoll at No. 28, though an intermediate or shorter branch may also diverge at No. 27, towards the valley. There is some difficulty in joining this drive with the park without going round the gardener’s house; but as the kitchen garden must be seen from this part of the drive, and as it forms a leading feature in the establishment of Bulstrode, it will sometimes become part of the circuit to walk through it, and the carriages may enter the drive again at No. 31, I have therefore described two ways, No. 29, and No. 30, as I suppose the bottom of this valley to be an orchard, through which the drive may pass, or make the shorter line along the garden wall to No. 31.

The course along the valley is extremely interesting, and as some consider the farm yard and premises a part of the beauty, as well as the comfort, of a residence in the country, I have supposed one branch of

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145 Original footnote: “*I have distinguished, by Italics, some peculiar circumstances of variety, from having observed great sameness in the usual mode of conducting a drive through a belt of young plantation, where trees of every species are mixed together. There is actually more variety in passing from a grove of oaks to a grove of firs, or a scene of brushwood, than in passing through a wood composed of a hundred different species of trees as they are usually mixed together.”
the drive No. 32, to pass near a large tree, and the other to go on the bank at No. 33, and cross the corner of Hedgerly [sic] Green, which I suppose might be planted round the gravel pit; but when the drive enters the farm enclosures, it ought, if possible, to follow the course of the hedges, and not to cross a field diagonally. From No. 34. to No. 35, is perfectly flat, and follows the line of the hedges to the corner at No. 35, where a new scene presents itself, viz. a view towards the village of Hedgerley, in a valley, surrounded with woody banks. The drive now skirts along the hedge and passes at No. 36. a farm house, which might be opened to the field, and then enters Wapsey’s Wood, in which the first bold feature will present itself at No. 37, where the drive may come so near the edge as to shew the view along the valley, and the amphitheatere of wood surrounding these small enclosures: it then passes through the wood to a very large oak at No. 38, which may be brought into notice by letting the drive go on each side of it, and afterwards following the shape of the ground it sweeps round the knoll at No. 39, with a rich view of the opposite bank across the high road, seen under large trees; it then ascends the hill by the side of a deep dell at No. 40, and makes a double at No. 41, to cross the valley, that it may skirt round the knoll on the furze [a shrub] hill at No. 42, from whence it descends into the valley at No. 43, and either returns to the house by the approach from Oxford, or is continued under the double line of elms at No. 44, to ascend by the valley from whence the drive began.

To some persons this description may appear tedious, to others it will perhaps furnish amusement to trace the course of such a line on the map; but I have purposely distinguished by Italics, some observations containing principles which have not before been reduced to practical improvement.¹⁴⁶

Repton’s “tedious” description exemplified the finest organization and sequencing of a road designed for pleasure. The circuit was divided into roughly four equal sections with two scenic highlights at Stations 20 and 37, and two places of repose at Stations 10 and 31. His artful machinations resulted not in the staccato of forty-four individual stations competing for the traveler’s attention, but a seamless sequence across roughly nine miles (fourteen kilometers) of effortless alignment where the carriage happened upon delightful vistas and panoramas.

¹⁴⁶ Repton, Observations, pp. 69-72.
REPTON AND THE PUBLIC ROAD

Repton’s writings suggest not only an aptitude for the design of roads, but also a deeper understanding of their public function and enjoyment by travelers outside the pales and belts of his wealthy clients. Such observations and insights were readily applied to the many public highways adapted for pleasure and would prove invaluable as the pleasure drive moved into the public realm, as new roads designed for pleasure, in the second half of the nineteenth century.

In his analysis for Sheringham, Repton encapsulated his liberal views on public scenery, access and kinesthesia. While a callous interpretation of his views would suggest that mere notoriety not be equated with scenic beauty, a more sanguine interpretation, and one to which this thesis subscribes, is that public access to scenery, both physical and visual, was sacred to Repton.

The most celebrated places of this description which I have seen, are Mulgrave Castle in the North, Tregothnan and Mount Edgecombe in the West, and various places in Sussex, and the Isle of Wight in the South; yet much of the celebrity of these places may be derived from the permission liberally given to have them seen by the public; and, indeed the boasted beauty of the Isle of Wight is associated with the moving from one spot to the other, and the cheerful animation of its visitors and tourists [...].147

One of Repton’s strongest pronouncements on the importance of scenery and public roads is found in one of the least likely places—his design for the Royal Pavilion at Brighton.

Repton was keen to secure royal patronage to prove his skills to his detractors. He achieved his goal when asked to design the landscape for the Pavilion at Brighton. At the conclusion of his work he sought, and was given

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147 Repton, *Fragments*, p. 196.
permission, to publish his notes and drawings for the project by the Prince of Wales. *Designs for the Pavillon [sic] at Brighton* was published in 1808. What is significant about this publication for this thesis was not the design for the landscape, but the opportunity he took to comment on the scenery from public roads in England in his “Prefatory Observations.” As Brighton Pavilion was a small site, and one without an approach road or carriage drive, it is striking that Repton chose to harangue his reader with concerns regarding barriers erected alongside public roads. While it is true his “Prefatory Observations” addressed the important topic of taste, there were numerous other examples he might have cited, or examples where he could have demonstrated the good taste of the design at Brighton and an opportunity to ingratiate himself with the Prince of Wales beyond the introductory platitudes. The inclusion of remarks about public scenery and the experience of the traveler on the public road proved his passion for drives and the opportunity to showcase the landscape through the kinesthetic.

> It has frequently been observed, “that England would in time become the Gardens of Europe, by the continual increase in the number and extent of its improved places:” but the improvement of individual places has rather injured than benefitted the traveller, because all view is totally excluded from the highways by the lofty fences and thick belt with which the improver shuts himself up within his improvement.148

He reinforced and further clarified his argument in a footnote to this section, stating:

> This remark will be more striking, when exemplified by a comparison between a new place and an old one. In the former, a brick wall or close paling is put so near the road as to leave no margin of waste land, while the old hedgerow thorns and pollard trees are taken away, to make room for young plantations of firs and larch, and Lombardy poplars. How different from the ancient manorial domains! where the public road has a broad margin of herbage, enriched with thorns and spreading timber, under whose twisted branches the rough and knotty

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pale admits a view into the park, where romantic and decaying oaks denote the old proprietor’s taste and preference for picturesque objects [...].

Here he discussed the quality of the public road by valuing the “waste land” providing a “broad margin” of landscape associated with the road and offering a diversity of plant materials in the immediate roadside environment under the shade of “spreading timber.” He further noted the “view into the park” provided by this arrangement. His understanding of the roadside and views, as an important part of an experience that is beyond practical transportation, is very important. The structure of road, roadside and landscape setting is essential to the theory of pleasure driving where the road is but a component of a larger landscape structure necessary for a pleasurable journey.

This argument was repeated in Fragments where he continued his arguments against the enclosure of land. While it is possible these arguments represent Repton’s politics and his general interest in the welfare of his countrymen, the fact that he included scenery and views from the road, in addition to access restricted, further supports his understanding of the kinesthetic and scenic structure of a road.

In passing through a distant county, I had observed a part of the road where the scenery was particularly interesting. It consisted of large spreading trees intermixed with thorns: on one side a view into Lord ****’s park was admitted, by the pale being sunk; and a ladder-stile placed near an aged beech tempted me to explore its beauties. On the opposite side, a bench and an umbrageous part of an adjoining forest invited me to pause, and make a sketch of the spot. After a lapse of ten years, I was surprised to see the change which had been made. I no longer knew or recollected the same place, till an old labourer explained, that on the death of the late Lord the estate had been sold to a very rich man, who had improved it; for by cutting down the timber, and getting an act to enclose the common, he had doubled all the rents. The old mossy and ivy-covered pale was replaced by a new and lofty

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149 Repton, Designs for the Pavillon at Brighton, p. ii. (Footnote.)
close paling; not to confine the deer, but to exclude mankind, and to protect a miserable narrow belt of firs and Lombardy poplars: the bench was gone, the ladder-stile was changed to a caution against man-traps and spring-guns, and a notice that the foot-path was stopped by order of the commissioners. As I read the board, the old man said, “It is very true, and I am forced to walk a mile further round every night, after a hard day’s work.” This is the common consequence of all enclosures: and we may ask to whom are they a benefit?

“Adding to Riches an increased Store,  
“And making poorer those already poor.”151

His language here was stronger than his general plea for visual access to the landscape in his Brighton Pavilion notes; in *Fragments* it became politicized, “to exclude mankind,” and provocative, “man-traps and spring-guns,” in his efforts to register his disapproval with his views of the rights of all Englishmen. As with Brighton, he used the public road, and its opportunity to showcase the beauties of the landscape, to make an argument that is more sophisticated than his disapproval of the Inclosure Acts (Figure 2.23).

Late in life he wrote affectionately about the street life on the public road outside his garden fence at his residence in Harestreet in Essex (Figures 2.24 and 2.25).

I have obtained a frame to my Landscape; the frame is composed of flowering shrubs and evergreens; beyond which are seen the cheerful village, the high road, and that constant moving scene, which I would not exchange for any of the lonely parks, that I have improved for others; some of their Proprietors on viewing the scene I have described, have questioned my taste; but my answer has always been, that in improving places for others I must consult their inclinations; at Harestreet I follow my own. Others prefer still life, I delight in movement; they prefer Lawns fed by their own Cattle; I love to see mankind; they derive pleasure from seeing the sheep and oxen fatten, and calculate on the produce of their beef and mutton: perhaps they might not object to the butcher’s shop which I have taken some pains to hide, giving the preference to a basket of roses. This specimen may serve to shew how much may be effected by the foreground; how a

151 Repton, *Fragments*, pp. 193-194. (Italics original.)
very small object, aptly placed near the eye, may hide an offensive object ten times as large; whilst a hedge of roses and sweet-briars may hide the dirt of a road, without concealing the moving objects which animate the Landscape. Such is the lesson of quantity and appropriation.152

Repton’s views on public scenery and public access to scenery were passionate and translated his theories of pleasure drives, designed for the landed gentry, into a philosophical approach to circulation and the provision of scenery in the pleasure grounds and public parks of the nineteenth century. Repton’s democratic views and interest in social reform were easily aligned with the reform movements of the nineteenth century. What can be demonstrated, through his written record and completed projects, is a capacity to design roads for specific experiences and to utilize his skills as a landscape designer, as a mail coach organizer and as a frequent traveler to incorporate beauty and efficiency.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presents evidence to support the argument that Repton’s theories for the organization of roads established the framework for nineteenth-century pleasure drives and the twentieth-century American motor parkway. Repton identified the features and parameters that would come to define roads designed for pleasure as: the alignment to the natural topography of the site, the variety of settings and experiences, design for changing aspects of views, the provision of stations marking points of interest or transition, the provision of a comfortable ride and ease of grade, the provision of safety features and the perception of safety, and scenic views and viewsheds from public roads.

152 Ibid., p. 235.
Based on his books, folios and letters, Humphry Repton's pattern of consistent comment regarding the design and layout of pleasure drives is evident. Importantly, Repton presages the scenic drives and parkways of the nineteenth and twentieth century by addressing not only landscape architecture issues of site, layout, views and scenery, but also components of roads designed for pleasure that today would be recognized as paving and construction methods, safety and function, road classification (by intended use or function), public space, and travel and tourism.

Combined, Repton's principles for approach roads and drives form the core theory for roads designed for pleasure. His writings can be seen interpreted (and reproduced) across the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century as pleasure drives move into the public realm—particularly in the United States.
Figure 2.1. “The Mail Coach in a Thunder Storm on Newmarket Heath,” 1827. Etching and aquatint depicting the Norwich Mail, by Richard Gilson Reeve (1803-1889), after James Pollard (1792-1867).
Credit: Yale Center for British Art.
Figure 2.2. Frontispiece from the Red Book for Blaise Castle in Bristol, 1796. The center panel is the professional calling card for “H. Repton, Landscape Gardener.” Credit: Bristol City Museums, Galleries and Archives.
Figure 2.3. Red Book for Sheringham Park in Norfolk, c. 1812. Before image. From Repton’s *Fragments on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening*. Credit: National Library of Scotland.

Figure 2.4. Red Book for Sheringham Park in Norfolk, c. 1812. After image revealing the approach road. From Repton’s *Fragments on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening*. Credit: National Library of Scotland.
Figure 2.5. Red Book for Blaise Castle, 1796. Notes on “The Approach” road. Repton’s extensive written comments in his Red Books are not as well known as his before and after illustrations. Many Red Books include detailed written notes for approach roads, carriage drives and walks. Credit: Bristol City Museums, Galleries and Archives.

Figure 2.6. An avenue at Bramham Park, Yorkshire. The gardens, designed by Robert Benson, 1st Lord Bingley, between 1700 and 1730, represent the formalism of continental European gardens and the adaptation of avenues in the French tradition. Credit: Paul Daniel Marriott, 2014.
Figure 2.7. "Map of that part of the Menai Strait which includes the sight of the new bridge and Swilly Cribinnau and Britannia Rocks." Holyhead Road Commission. [Parliamentary Archives: HL/PO/PB/3/plan26]. Credit: <www.parliament.uk>

Figure 2.8. "The First American Macadam Road – 1823," as depicted by U.S. Bureau of Public Roads artist, Carl Rakeman (1878-1965). Macadam paving on the Boonsboro Turnpike in Maryland, 1823. Note the three grades of stone surfacing (background) and the iron ring used to grade stone sizes (foreground, left). Credit: U.S. Federal Highway Administration.
Figures 2.9 and 2.10. Woburn Abbey approach road, from *Fragments*. Left: “Before it was Altered,” Right: “As it has Been Altered.”

Credit: National Library of Scotland.
Humphry Repton and the Pleasure Drive

Figure 2.11. Red Book for Sheringham Park, c. 1812. After illustration showing Repton’s approach road. From Fragments. Credit: National Library of Scotland.

Figure 2.12. Sheringham Park, Norfolk. Photograph depicting the approach road as designed by Repton. Repton often exaggerated topographic effects in his Red Books to emphasize his design concepts. Credit: Paul Daniel Marriott, 2013.
Figure 2.13. Sheringham Park, Norfolk. View of the North Sea from Repton’s approach road. Credit: Paul Daniel Marriott, 2013.
Figure 2.14. Red Book for Blaise Castle in Bristol, 1796. Map depicting the approach road (in orange), the carriage drive (in green) and walks (in brown). The gatehouse (see Figure 2.2, top) is to the far right. The castle folly (see Figure 2.2, bottom and Figures 2.19, 2.20) is located in the center left and the manor house is located upper right. Credit: Bristol City Museums, Galleries and Archives.

Figure 2.15. Detail of Blaise Castle Red Book map. Note the switchback curve on the approach road between the Cottage and the Bridge. Credit: Bristol City Museum, Galleries and Archives.
Figure 2.16. Blaise Castle. Approach road between the Gatehouse and Cottage. Credit: Paul Daniel Marriott, 2013.

Figure 2.17. Blaise Castle. Approach road nearing switchback. Credit: Paul Daniel Marriott, 2013.
Figure 2.18. Blaise Castle. Approach road at switchback. Note the masonry wall and generous turning radius.
Credit: Paul Daniel Marriott, 2013.
Figure 2.19. Red Book for Blaise Castle, 1796. Blaise Castle folly showing carriage drive. Credit: Bristol City Museums, Galleries and Archives.

Figure 2.20. Folly at Blaise Castle, Bristol, as seen from the location of the carriage drive. Credit: Paul Daniel Marriott, 2014.
Figure 2.21. Red Book for Blaise Castle, 1796. Before image of carriage drive depicting view of Bristol Channel and River Wye.
Credit: Bristol City Museums, Galleries and Archives.

Figure 2.22. Red Book for Blaise Castle, 1796. After image of carriage drive depicting improved view of Bristol Channel and River Wye.
Credit: Bristol City Museums, Galleries and Archives.
Figure 2.23. “Improvements,” to the public highway from Fragments, 1816. Top: after. Bottom: before. Repton’s ironic use of “improvements” is a caustic commentary on the loss of public scenery from the public highway. Note the warning sign in the top image: “Man Traps.” Credit: National Library of Scotland.
Figure 2.24. “View from My Own Cottage, In Essex,” from *Fragments*. 1816. Before image. Credit: National Library of Scotland.

Figure 2.25. “View from My Own Cottage, In Essex,” from *Fragments*. 1816. After image. Credit: National Library of Scotland.
CHAPTER 3
ROADS, TRAVEL AND THE PICTURESQUE

INTRODUCTION

As a part of the convergence of road-making, vehicle design and the Picturesque introduced in the last chapter, the Picturesque Movement was the most influential of the three in establishing the philosophy and aesthetic form for roads designed for pleasure, and would shape their design well into the twentieth century. As an aesthetic movement, the Picturesque represented a subjective association applied to the landscape rather than a technological response (such as roads and vehicles) placed within the landscape. The scientific advances in road-making and vehicle design that revolutionized travel at the end of the eighteenth century were fully independent from the Picturesque Movement and landscape design. While this thesis argues their significant contribution to roads designed for pleasure, it is important to remember their origins as technological responses to general transportation needs—not innovations conceived for the ease of picturesque touring. Nevertheless, the rise of the Picturesque during such a formative period in transportation history represented new opportunities to explore the countryside in comfort, convenience and safety, and across distances
unimagined a few years earlier. As a result, Picturesque travelers and writers increasingly included descriptions of the roads adapted for pleasure that they explored in their quest for the Picturesque. The wealth of landscape study, investigation, debate and theory focused on the natural landscape, at the same moment that access to the natural landscape was first becoming viable, inspired visionary ideas to redefine the road from an object of utility to an element of beauty.

As Humphry Repton was the first landscape designer to create roads designed for pleasure, it is important to consider the underlying shift regarding attitudes toward the landscape during his lifetime, namely, the shift from the pastoral beauty espoused by the progenitors of the English Landscape School to the rustic scenery valued by the Picturesque Movement. As a result, windswept trees, rocky crevices, free flowing waters and other irregular landscape forms and silhouettes, eschewed by the English Landscape School, were elevated as desirable landscape attributes. The foundation of picturesque touring, as articulated by William Gilpin and elucidated in the many travel guides produced during this period, was built on the evolution of artistic and landscape theory across the eighteenth century, and provided a philosophical framework for Repton’s work.

The term “picturesque” evolved in meaning from its original definition to express a subject worthy of a painting to represent a type of landscape by the close of the eighteenth century. In 1801 A Supplement to Johnson’s English Dictionary listed six different definitions for the term and noted, parenthetically, “Though this word (of so extensive a meaning) has no place of its own in Johnson [Johnson’s Dictionary], he was not unacquainted with it: for he uses it in his 5th interpretation of prospect.”¹ Between 1755, when Johnson’s Dictionary was first published and 1801, the term “picturesque” had

transitioned from a secondary definition to define a landscape component (a prospect), to a complex term used to define the character of a landscape type. The first two definitions for “picturesque” in the 1801 *Supplement* define the word as typically used by Gilpin and Repton; the third and fourth definitions listed are the only two that make reference to “painting.” As Carl Paul Barbier notes, this “multiplicity of meanings testifies to the success of the word once Gilpin transferred it from the realm of art criticism and made it available as an instrument—admittedly a pictorial instrument—for the analysis, the description, and finally the representation and recording of natural scenery.”

This chapter examines the relationship of pleasure roads to the Picturesque Movement by identifying the intersection of philosophical and artistic values that occurred prior to the convergence that occurred around 1800. It traces the theoretical evolution that culminated in the Picturesque Controversy that weighed the painterly approach to the landscape advocated by Knight and Price against the active engagement with the landscape through mobility and circulation advocated by Repton. It shows that the rise of picturesque touring established a cultural norm for scenic travel and facilitated an engagement with the scenery based on movement; that a correlation between the quality of the road and the experience of the landscape was identified; that the aspects of animation and mobility became recognized as contributors to the landscape experience and that their study and analysis fostered an early awareness for kinesthesia; and, lastly, that roads adapted for pleasure possessed the qualities of the Picturesque by circumstance, rather than by design.

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Humphry Repton’s ideas on landscape and pleasure roads were influenced by a collection of articulate and passionate writers, friends, acquaintances and adversaries, each engaged in advancing a new view of landscape and scenery during the second half of the eighteenth century. Their work was based on the writings of earlier theorists such as Edmund Burke, William Hogarth and Horace Walpole. While the works of Burke, Hogarth, Walpole (and others) cannot be viewed as didactic instructions on road-making, or considered as an approbation of pleasure driving, their analytic views, quest to understand how individuals related to nature, interest in the effects of movement and atmosphere, and efforts to define scenic structures and relationships, established the theoretical foundation for roads designed for pleasure. That their writings, well in advance of the development of modern roads and vehicles, were so easily applied to roads designed for pleasure, demonstrated the breadth of their aesthetic inquiries and, by extension, the legitimacy of the road as a designed landscape feature.

The classification of landscapes may be attributed to Edmund Burke (1729-1797). His book, *A Philosophical Enquiry into Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, first published in 1757, was highly influential in assessing and evaluating landscapes. His writings are considered the foundation of modern landscape theory. In defining “the beautiful,” Burke used the example of traveling in a vehicle—thereby associating pleasure, landscape and movement within a single experience.

Most people must have observed the sort of sense they have had on being swiftly drawn in an easy coach on a smooth turf, with gradual ascents and declivities. This will give a better idea of the beautiful, and point out its probable course better, than almost anything else.3

While this quote likely referenced travel over verdant turf in a private estate, its idyllic contrast to the reality of being jostled and jolted in a carriage along a public highway, would have certainly resonated with Burke’s more peripatetic readers—especially people like Repton who were traveling more often and across greater distances as the century progressed. In fact Burke made clear that reality in the sentence following his often quoted description on being “swiftly drawn,” when he stated: “On the contrary, when one is hurried over a rough, rocky, broken road, the pain felt by these sudden inequalities shews why similar sights, feelings, and sounds, are so contrary to beauty [...].” In other words, Burke correlated the appreciation of the landscape to the quality of the road. Thus, by using the animation of a vehicle to define a landscape experience, Burke anticipated the shifting view of the Picturesque from a painterly (and static) view of landscape to a kinesthetic engagement with scenery.

References during this period to mobility, movement and animation would today be referred to as kinesthetic design. Direct references to kinesthesia (or kinesthetic design), or other studies of movement and the environment such as proprioception, phenomenology and exteroception would not have been used by Burke and his contemporaries, as such terms did not exist in the eighteenth century. These areas of study evolved during the second half of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, and were focused initially on movements of the human body, muscle reactions and an individual’s physical responses to the immediate environment. It would not be until later in the twentieth century that kinesthetic design became associated with landscape architecture (see Chapter 7). Nevertheless, these recognized fields of research might be considered as refinements of emerging understandings of human form and movement that had much earlier origins. As early as 1557 the Italian scholar Julius Caesar Scaliger described the position-movement sensation as a “sense of locomotion.” Scaliger’s awareness of the body’s

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4 Burke, On the Sublime and Beautiful, pp. 300-301.
movement without consciousness of the mechanical process of movement, can be broadly applied to landscape design. As noted in Chapter 2 Batt Langley’s detailed description of being “insensibly led through the pleasant meanders,” established fundamental kinesthetic concepts for his “rural garden” a quarter century before coaches overtook horses as the dominant form of travel. His use of the term “insensibly” further suggests he desired the passage through the garden to be effortless—such as a natural body response to the landscape—with the visitor focused on the delights of the garden and not preoccupied with following the path. Langley’s belief that good garden design “should be always presenting new objects, which is a continual entertainment to the eye, and raises a pleasure of imagination”5 established a central tenet of landscape gardening that would be applied to roads designed for pleasure.

William Hogarth (1697-1794) was a painter, engraver, cartoonist, satirist and writer who influenced artistic dialogue and conversation for much of the eighteenth century. Hogarth’s The Analysis of Beauty (published 1753) introduced method to the appreciation of art by detailing how natural responses to beautiful things were driven by factors that could be studied and measured to understand the human response to beauty. His fastidious explanations, widely comprehensible to his readers through his use of familiar objects such as candlesticks, nosegays and horns, or the anatomy of the human body, addressed concepts as diverse as composition, proportion, and action. Noticeably absent from the discussion were references to natural features and the landscape—only occasionally summoned by Hogarth to make his points. While landscape architects and historians often cite his “line of beauty” as an important influence on the English Landscape School, it was his broader analysis and interpretation of artistic form that had the greatest impact on landscape design in the eighteenth century. By providing an enlightened and rational discourse on the understanding of beauty, supported

by the universality of reason and observation, the application of his ideas to landscape design and the natural environment, well beyond his “line of beauty,” is a reasonable supposition. In fact, Hogarth used the example of an ordinary cornucopia to distinguish between waving and serpentine lines—the finest expressions of each he described as the line of beauty (waving) and the line of grace (serpentine). The union of these two lines introduced the concept of three-dimensionality within landscape theory. Importantly, for this thesis, Hogarth used one of his few references to nature to introduce more complex kinesthetic concepts to his waving and serpentine lines.

The eye hath this sort of enjoyment in winding walks, and serpentine rivers, and all sorts of objects, whose forms, as we shall see hereafter, are composed principally of what, I call, the waving and serpentine lines.

Intricacy in form, therefore, I shall define to be that peculiarity in the lines, which compose it, that leads the eye a wanton kind of chace [sic], and from the pleasure that gives the mind, intitles [sic] it to the name of beautiful: and it may be justly said, that the cause of the idea of grace more immediately resides in this principle, than in the other five, except variety; which indeed includes this, and all the others.

That this observation may appear to have a real foundation in nature, every help will be requir’d, which the reader himself can call to his assistance, as well as what will be suggested here.

In this excerpt, Hogarth identified “intricacy” as a facilitator of “pleasure” and an opportunity for visual stimulation within the landscape. This could be interpreted, for the design of a pleasure road, as creating the perception of discovery (“a wanton kind of chace”) by carefully managing the alignment of the road (“the lines, which compose it”), suggesting, perhaps, a choreography of landscape experiences designed to delight the viewer with a sense of individual discovery rather than the stasis of ostentatious display at a formal viewpoint. Indeed, Hogarth noted that an individual’s own movements could

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7 Hogarth, *The Analysis of Beauty*, p. 33. (Italics original.)
affect the perception of a place. “It is a constant rule in composition in painting to avoid regularity. When we view a building, or any other object in life, we have it in our power, by shifting the ground, to take that view which pleases us best […].”

In the final chapter of *The Analysis of Beauty*, “Of Action,” Hogarth addressed the movement of the human body in terms of poise and balance, and its interaction with others in the form of dance, specifically the minuet and country dancing.

No doubt, as the minuet contains in it a composed variety of as many movements in the serpentine lines as can well be put together in distinct quantities, it is a fine composition of movements.

The ordinary undulating motion of the body in common walking [...] is augmented in dancing into a larger quantity of *waving* by means of the minuet-step, which is so contrived as to raise the body by gentle degrees some what higher than ordinary, and sink it again in the same manner lower in the going on of the dance.

Hogarth’s description of the minuet raising and lowering the body “by gentle degrees” is similar to Burke’s use of “gradual ascents and declivities” in his explanation of a coach traveling through the landscape.

Published before the advent of modern roads and carriages, it is not surprising that Hogarth’s chapter “Of Action” made no reference to pleasure travel. Nevertheless, his analysis of the “serpentine lines” and the “waving” of the minuet may be equated to the engineering principles of horizontal and vertical alignment in highway design. The importance he ascribed to “action” as a chapter, and his detailed analysis of the human form and its movement may be viewed as an early expression of kinesthesia.

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8 Ibid., p. 29.
9 Ibid., p. 109.
Despite its limited references to nature, *The Analysis of Beauty* established design and kinesthetic concepts that were highly applicable to architecture and the landscape. As Hogarth wrote, “I am thoroughly convinc’d in myself, however it may startle some, that a completely new and harmonious order of architecture in all its parts, might be produced by the following method of composing [...].”

Importantly for landscape designers such as Repton, his concepts tying the human body to motion could be extrapolated to the design of pleasure roads as new technologies and a modern landscape narrative emerged at the end of the eighteenth century.

Horace Walpole (1717-1797) in his treatise, *The History of the Modern Taste in Gardening*, first published in 1780, offered a comprehensive history of landscape design from the Garden of Eden to Capability Brown. It may be observed that the primary purpose of the history was less a comprehensive assessment of landscape history, but more a summation of the historic eras and evolutions leading to the modern style in England. As Hunt noted in his introduction to the 1995 reprint, “Walpole was the first to attempt a narrative of modern English garden design.”

As with Burke and Hogarth, Walpole established important concepts for landscape theory, the Picturesque and mobility. He astutely associated the origins of the English Landscape School and the Picturesque with a distinct national view toward landscape and scenery by observing, “good sense in this country had perceived the want of something at once more grand and more natural.”

He expressed a belief that modern taste in landscape gardening was rooted in the English countryside. Then, after chronicling Continental formalism as applied to the English Landscape, noted, “It is more extraordinary that having so long ago stumbled

10 Ibid., p. 43.
on the principle of modern gardening, we should have persisted in retaining its reverse, symmetrical and unnatural gardens.”\textsuperscript{13}

*The History of the Modern Taste in Gardening* makes almost no references to roads or circulation. Probably written in the 1750s and 1760s, Walpole’s essay also predated the introduction of modern roads and vehicles that were essential to the development of pleasure roads. In the period covered by his essay, gardening typically did not address issues of mobility, and circulation was more geometric (formal avenues), than kinesthetic. Walpole did, however, criticize the geometric rigidity of avenues for separating lawns and interrupting views; offenses he labeled “capital faults.”\textsuperscript{14} However, presaging what Repton would come to define as the approach road, Walpole did recognize that, “a great avenue cut through woods, perhaps before entering a park, has a noble air, and [...] announces the habitation of some man of distinction.”\textsuperscript{15}

As if foreseeing the development of roads designed for pleasure and anticipating the Picturesque Controversy that would entangle Repton with Knight and Price, Walpole introduced the concepts of movement, sequence and perception into the national discourse on the picturesque landscape. “In the mean time how rich, how gay, how picturesque the face of the country! The demolition of walls lying open each improvement, every journey is made through a succession of pictures [...]”\textsuperscript{16} A journey through a “succession of pictures” firmly established travel, movement and animation within the Picturesque and suggested Walpole understood the concepts of kinesthesia.

By the end of the eighteenth century, the term picturesque had shifted definitively from the domain of the art connoisseurs to the realm of the

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., p. 29.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., p. 50.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., p. 56.
landscape. Remarking on the scenery around Keswick, Robert Southey, writing under the pseudonym of Don Manuel Alvarez Espriella, used the words of his fictitious Spanish visitor in *Letters from England* (published 1808) effectively to conclude the picturesque debate between art and landscape.

A taste for the picturesque, if I may so far flatter myself as to reason upon it from self-observation, differs from a taste for the arts in this remarkable point,—that instead of making us fastidious, it produces a disposition to receive delight, and teaches us to feel more pleasures in discovering beauty, than connoisseurs enjoy in detecting a fault. I have oftentimes been satiated with works of art; a collection of pictures fatigues me, and I have regarded them at last rather as a task than as a pleasure. Here, on the contrary, the repetition of such scenes as these heightens the enjoyment of them. Every thing grows upon me. I become daily more and more sensible of the height of the mountains, observe their forms with a more discriminating eye, and watch with increased pleasure the wonderful changes they assume under the effect of clouds or of sunshine.17

Don Manuel Alvarez Espriella’s conclusion on the Picturesque was not unexpected. Southey’s perspicacious Spaniard had already commented on the vogue for picturesque touring earlier during his tour:

Within the last thirty years a taste for the picturesque has sprung up, -- and a course of summer traveling is now looked upon to be as essential as ever a course of spring physic was in old times. While one of the flocks of fashion migrates to the sea-coast, another flies off to the mountains of Wales, to the lakes in the northern provinces, or to Scotland; some to mineralogize, some to botanize, some to take views of the country, --all to study the picturesque, a new science for which a new language has been formed, and for which the English have discovered a new sense in themselves [...]18

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ROADS ADAPTED FOR PLEASURE: THE RISE OF PICTURESQUE TOURING

Picturesque touring connoted an expectation for certain types of scenery and an intimate engagement with the landscape. To access the often-remote destinations, existing roads possessing the finest qualities and accessing the finest scenery espoused by the Picturesque were identified, promoted and adapted for pleasure driving. By the end of the eighteenth century, the public roads in districts known for their picturesque scenery, particularly the Wye River valley, North Wales, the Lake District and the Scottish Highlands, became crowded with tourists seeking to capture an authentic landscape by prose or by pencil (Figure 3.1).

Early writers and aesthetes, such as Dr. Samuel Johnson (1709-1784) and James Boswell (1740-1795) established the premise for picturesque touring in an era still largely lacking the most basic structure of the public highway. Therefore, their descriptions of travel were intimately tied, by necessity, to the quality of the roads. Unlike Burke’s ethereal ride in his “easy coach,” Johnson and Boswell recorded the conditions of real public roads—many of which could not be traversed in a coach and, of those that could, often only with a great degree of difficulty or hazard. As a result, they were among the first to apply Burke’s correlation of the appreciation of the landscape to quality of the road. For example, on encountering a good road near Loch Ness, Dr. Johnson noted, “We went upon a surface so hard and level, that we had little care to hold the bridle, and were therefore at full leisure for contemplation.”¹⁹ Such pleasurable moments were rare along the unreliable and unpredictable roads that provided the only access to Britain’s most distant picturesque destinations. Johnson and Boswell’s observations of the landscape and public roads as travelers represented one of the earliest assessments of the conditions that made one touring route more appealing.

than another. More practically, they provided invaluable reconnaissance for would-be travelers in the early days of picturesque touring.

The 1782 publication of William Gilpin’s *Observations on the River Wye* is often credited with initiating the vogue for picturesque tourism in Britain (Figure 3.2). As Barbier stated in *William Gilpin: His Drawings, Teaching, and Theory of the Picturesque*, “The result was to inaugurate a new kind of travel literature: the picturesque tour, in which writings and illustrations complement one another and sing the praises of nature.”

The River Wye with its gorge, attractive settlements and rough landscape provided the best of picturesque touring from the comfort of a boat. Additionally, the Wye flowed directly past Tintern Abbey, one of the most iconic ruins associated with the Picturesque (Figure 3.3). By the end of the eighteenth century, at least eight pleasure-boats, outfitted for the needs of the Picturesque tourist (tables for drawing, shelter from sun and rain), were plying the Wye between Ross and Chepstow throughout the summer months. In an era in which modern roads, particularly in Wales, were still a rarity, the Wye tour offered the maximum of picturesque scenery without the discomfort of carriage travel on a rough road. As Malcom Andrews states in his book *In Search of the Picturesque*:

> River scenery, which was the particular attraction of the Wye tour, offered the connoisseur Picturesque pleasures of a very specific kind. Unlike travel in a jolting carriage, the smooth passage of the boat

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20 Johnson’s descriptions in *A Journey to the Western Isles of Scotland* provided more specific references to the relationship between the road and landscape, whereas Boswell’s commentary in *The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson*, the road was more often described by perfunctory references to connectivity and quality—still useful observations during this period.


24 Ibid., p. 109.
relaxed the tourist and encouraged concentration on the very steady unfolding of views.\textsuperscript{25}

In his \textit{Three Essays: On Picturesque Beauty[...]}, published in 1782, Gilpin explained his idea of the Picturesque as he sought to demonstrate its application by the transformation of a landscape from what may have been termed “beautiful” into one that was picturesque. As with Burke, he made a reference to a road to explain his concepts.

The shape is pleasing; the combination of the objects, harmonious; and the winding of the walk in the very line of beauty. All this is true; but the smoothness of the whole, tho right, and as it should be in nature, offends in picture. Turn the lawn into a piece of broken ground: plant rugged oaks instead of flowering shrubs: break the edges of the walk: give it the rudeness of a road: mark it with wheel-tracks; and scatter around a few stones, and brushwood; in a word, instead of making the whole smooth, make it rough; and you make it also picturesque.\textsuperscript{26}

Gilpin’s use of the “rudeness of a road” to explain the Picturesque, much as Burke’s use of the smoothness of a road to explain the Beautiful, suggests the universality of the “road” as a reliable reference that would have resonated with Picturesque travelers in both 1757 and 1782.

Most serious Picturesque travelers endured jolting carriages, bad roads and uncertain dangers in their quest for the Picturesque. As Andrews notes, “The devotion to Picturesque principles [...] the willingness to endure discomfort and even pain in order to ‘take the romantic views’, was something quite new in travel.”\textsuperscript{27} He notes, in particular, the perilous ledge road to Penmaenmawr, where “the threat to self-preservation in negotiating the famous pass over this headland offered one of the most intense experiences of the sublime in all Wales (Figure 3.4).”\textsuperscript{28} The road was known as a “terror of travellers” and

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{25} Ibid., p. 89.
  \item \textsuperscript{26} Gilpin, \textit{Three Essays}, p. 8. (Italics original.)
  \item \textsuperscript{27} Andrews, \textit{The Search for the Picturesque}, p. 150.
  \item \textsuperscript{28} Ibid., p. 131.
\end{itemize}
accidents were frequent.\textsuperscript{29} It was eventually improved with a safety wall, to the relief of Dr. Johnson,\textsuperscript{30} but to the dismay of another Picturesque critic, notable diarist John Byng (1743-1813), who lamented the new safety feature, citing his preference for the old experience “where no two carriages could pass, where no wall above the sea was built, and where people might feel anxiety, without being deem’d timid.”\textsuperscript{31} Whether timid or not, there is no doubt many a Picturesque traveler had in mind the words of Thomson’s well known poem, “A Storm of Thunder and Lightening,” while passing along Penmaenmawr’s precipitous ledge road.

[...] with mighty crush,  
Into the flashing deep, from the rude rocks  
Of Penmanmaur [sic] heaped hideous to the sky,  
Tumble the smitten cliffs [...]\textsuperscript{32}

Such conflicts between personal safety and the desire for an “anxiety” induced sublime experience were not unusual along the public roads in Britain’s most picturesque districts. For the design of his carriage drives at Endsleigh in Devon, Repton addressed this conflict between the terror of the sublime landscape and the fear that many had while viewing such scenery from a moving vehicle on a precipitous road—an unfortunate experience that, for many, transferred the awful power of nature into the palpable fear of careening over a cliff.

In the Drives through Leigh Wood, some advantage has been taken of the steepness; but it should be shewn as an object of beauty from the precipitous side of the road, and not as an object of terror, by making the roads too steep.\textsuperscript{33}

\textsuperscript{30} Cliffe, The Book of North Wales, p. 145.
\textsuperscript{31} John Byng as quoted in Andrews, The Search for the Picturesque, p. 131.
\textsuperscript{33} Repton, Fragments, p. 218.
Repton's juxtaposition of the beautiful and sublime in Leigh Wood at Endsleigh was complex and revolutionary. Here he established a distinction in the application of the terms between passive observation and active engagement. Repton recognized that the introduction of a carriage—subject to the skills of the driver and the behavior of the horses—removed the aspect of personal control over the landscape experience and placed it in the care of another. He understood that the terror of the sublime landscape, while on foot, might be augmented or mitigated by an individual's boldness or temerity, i.e., moving closer to the edge of a precipice or admiring it from a safe distance. However, in a moving vehicle all control of the experience was relinquished to individuals, beasts and technologies beyond the control of the Picturesque tourist. For such travelers, unnerved by precipitous ledges and frightened of dangerous curves, the public roads of Britain were a distraction from the scenery they were meant to enjoy. For Repton, the elimination of such extremes distinguished his designed carriage drives from the public highway.

The differing views between travelers such as Johnson and Byng regarding the correctness of an experience, and the expense of traveling to remote places like Penmaenmawr, were reinforced by the social strictures surrounding the early connoisseurs of the Picturesque Movement. Picturesque touring attracted a certain type of traveler—a “man of taste” trained in classical literature and painting, and familiar with the landscapes of Claude and Rosa. Not surprisingly, the increasing popularity of the Picturesque, its indecorous exposure during the Picturesque Controversy and spurious profiteers made the movement a subject of scorn and satire (Figure 3.5).

Before Gilpin’s book, picturesque touring had been on the rise. The ascendancy of the Picturesque Movement and the accompanying discussions and debates on beauty and sublimity shifted attention away from the pastoral

qualities of the agrarian landscape and drew attention to the beauties of wild places. Journals and travel guides fueled a new fascination with travel to the most distant corners of Britain.

The poet and diarist, Thomas Gray (1716-1771) was one of the first to embrace picturesque touring. A classical scholar and professor at Cambridge University, Gray was a close friend of Horace Walpole. He and Walpole traveled together for their Grand Tour in 1738. During a tour of Scotland in 1769, Gray traveled over the old military roads constructed by General Wade—newly fashionable among Picturesque travelers (Figure 3.6).

[...] next day returning down the river [Tay] four miles we passed it over a fine bridge, built at the expence of the Government,[35] and continued our way to Logie-Rait, just below which in a most charming scene the Tummel, which is here the larger river of the two, falls into the Tay. we [sic] ferried over the Tummel in order to get into Marshal Wade’s road (which leads from Dunkeld to Inverness), and continued our way along it toward the North. the [sic] road is excellent, but dangerous enough in conscience. the [sic] river often running directly under us at the bottom of a precipice 200 feet deep, sometimes masqued indeed by wood, that finds means to grow where I could not stand: but very often quite naked & without any defence. in [sic] such places we walked for miles together partly for fear, and partly to admire the beauty of the country [...].36

Gray’s juxtaposition of fear and beauty, “we walked for miles together partly for fear, and partly to admire the beauty,” was a reference to the sublime as defined by Burke, and a similar evocation of the terror along the cliff road at Penmaenmawr. During his tour of the Highlands in 1776, Gilpin described the military road along Loch Lomond as “one of the grand entrances into the highlands,” but, like Gray, recognized the inherent danger in many locations.

35 The letter notes the party departs Taymouth where the river “issues out of Loch Tay.” It is likely the fine bridge is the bridge over the Tay at Aberfeldy, designed by William Adam, the father of the noted architects John, Robert and James Adam.
This road is one of the grand entrances into the highlands; and a very formidable one it is. It runs along the side of a mountain, and is in many parts a mere precipice hanging over the lake; and tho secured sufficiently for travellers, is still a dangerous defile for an army. The difficulty of making it has been great. In several parts it is cut through the solid rock, which is left as a pavement; and the grateful traveller finds himself indebted (as an inscription with Roman brevity informs him) to the labours of Colonel Lascelles’s regiment.37

The construction of the military roads in the Highlands was a response to the Jacobite Rebellion of 1715. General George Wade (1673-1748) constructed approximately 250 miles (400 kilometers) of military roads to connect military garrisons, transfer troops and move supplies within the vast territory. The roads were designed to be sixteen feet (five meters) in width, but the challenging topography of the Highlands resulted in many roads being constructed at ten feet (three meters) wide. The first road constructed, between 1725 and 1727, connected Fort William to Fort George at Inverness via the south shore of Loch Ness. Wade also constructed roads from Dunkeld (considered the northern reach of reliable roads) to Inverness, Crieff to Dalmarnoch, and Dalwhinnie and Ruthvern to Fort Augustus (including the picturesque Corrieyairack Pass). The road from Crieff to Dalmarnoch included the most expensive bridge constructed during the project, the bridge over the River Tay at Aberfeldy, designed by the architect William Adam (1689-1748)—and likely the bridge referenced by Gray in his letter. General Wade retired from military service in 1747 and Major William Caulfeild (d. 1767) took charge of the ongoing works. Construction of the military roads ceased in 1767. They represented one of the most ambitious examples of roads constructed for utilitarian needs and, owing to the dramatic landscape in which they were inserted, often presented spectacular views. By the end of the eighteenth century, the well-constructed military roads were crowded with travelers in search of the Picturesque.

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In 1778, Thomas West published *A Guide to the Lakes in Cumberland, Westmorland and Lancashire*. The comprehensive guide to travel in the Lake District (312 pages with addenda) was organized by lakes and Lake District communities, presented in a recommended circuit West designed specifically for the Picturesque tourist.

By this course, the lakes lie in an order more agreeable to the eye, and grateful to the imagination. The change of scenes is from what is pleasing, to what is surprising; from the delicate touches of *Claude*, verified on *Coniston* lake, to the noble scenes of *Poussin* exhibited on *Windermere-water*, and from these to the stupendous romantic ideas of *Salvator Rosa*, realised on the lake of *Derwent*.38

Such a picturesque circuit, dictated by esoteric considerations for scenery rather than the inherent difficulties of *accessing* scenery in a remote region, represented a fundamental shift in the way landscapes could be introduced to pleasure travelers. Prior to the development of modern road-making, access to areas of rugged terrain was based entirely on the location and condition of the roads. West’s guide is one of the first examples of a tour route not dictated by the harsh realities of a rudimentary road network, but the opportunities presented by a modern road network to choreograph a pleasure tour based on the best views and prospects of picturesque sites and, importantly, engaging the road as a facilitator of scenic travel. The advantages presented by a modern road network in the Lake District and the relationship between good roads and picturesque touring, were acknowledged by West in his introduction to *A Guide to the Lakes*.

What may be now mentioned as a natural inducement to visit these natural beauties, is the goodness of the roads, which are much improved since Mr. *Gray* made his tour in 1765, and Mr. *Pennant*, his, in 1772. The gentlemen of these counties have set a precedent worthy of imitation in the politest parts of the kingdom, by opening, at private

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expanse, carriage roads for the ease and safety of such as visit the country [...]."39

West’s assertion that the roads were indeed “much improved” was substantiated by Gray’s record of the road conditions during his earlier tour. Like most travelers of the period, Gray made numerous comments on the condition of the roads during his tour of the Lake District in 1769 (West dates Gray’s tour as 1765), published posthumously in 1775 as Journal of a Visit to the Lake District in 1769. On October 6 Gray noted eight miles along the east-side of Bassenthwaite Lake, “the road in some part made and very good, the rest slippery and dangerous cart-road, or narrow rugged lanes but no precipices.”40 Two days later, on October 8 he left Keswick and “took the Ambleside-road” which he noted, “in some parts is not completed,” but found it to be overall a “good country-road thro’ sound, but narrow and stony lanes” and declared the road “very safe in broad day-light.”41

Roads represented an important, often perfunctory, component of many travel journals and travel guides (as evidenced by Gray), but their representation by West in A Guide to the Lakes reflected important aspects of the Convergence and the growing significance of modern roads within the public consciousness. Here, West distinguished among tracts, “bye-ways,” public roads, carriage roads and turnpikes in his detailed directions—demonstrating a familiarity with new classes of roads—and frequently rated the quality of the roads he listed. Unlike earlier writers, West’s descriptions of roads as “good” or “excellent” provided more than basic travel information; the appellations were paens to modern technology. References to “sixteen miles of excellent mountain road”42 or a notation that the “road is an easy

39 West, A Guide to the Lakes, p. 2. (Italics original.)
42 West, A Guide to the Lakes, p. 78.
descent of nine miles”\textsuperscript{43} lionized the skills of British engineers in constructing impressive roads through terrain that, only a generation earlier, would have been too difficult or dangerous to pass. The confidence in modern engineering to make such places accessible for safe and comfortable pleasure travel was noteworthy—“[The road] though upon the edge of a precipice that hangs over the river is nonetheless safe.”\textsuperscript{44}

While representing a contemporary view on modern road-making, \textit{A Guide to the Lakes}, also expressed the convergence of the Picturesque Movement with road-making. Unlike his useful assessments of road conditions ranging from “less agreeable” to “excellent,” numerous passages represented the road as a kinesthetic device facilitating picturesque touring.

The road continues winding through a glade, along the side of a rapid brook, that tumbles down a stony channel with water as clear as crystal. At the hedge-row-tree, under Rowlingend (a brawny mountain) turn, and have a new and pleasant view of the vale of Keswick. The road then has a gentle ascent, and the rivulet is heard murmuring below.\textsuperscript{45}

For several locations in the Lake District, West’s description provided additional travel information under a section heading titled “Antiquities.” These sections identified aspects of Roman heritage that West believed of interest to his readers. (Repton made a similar assumption when he identified a Roman encampment at Station No. 9 along the carriage drive at Bulstrode). Aside from these specific sections, Roman roads, or ways, were frequently mentioned as part of the local description. For example, in the section on Ambleside he used a recent archaeological find to imbue the modern turnpike road with a more romantic past: “[...] in forming the turnpike road through Rydal, an urn was lately taken up, which contained ashes and other Roman

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., p. 83.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., p. 96.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., pp. 129-130. (Italics original.)
remains, and serves to prove that the tract of the ancient road laid that way."\(^{46}\) For travelers familiar with the classical paintings of Lorrain and Poussin, proof of such an antique association enhanced their picturesque experience.

West’s guide, published ten years before Repton established himself as a landscape gardener, directed visitors to specific viewpoints on the lakes known as “stations”—a term, already noted, that Repton used to organize his drives. For Keswick, a town he noted as “renowned for nothing so much as the lake it stands near,”\(^{47}\) West’s recommended circuit for Derwentwater presented eight stations which he preface with: “I shall therefore point out the favourite stations round the lake, that have often been verified [he referenced the tour of Gray and another traveler].”\(^{48}\) Station IV was described as follows:

> From the top of Castle-crag in Borrowdale there is a most astonishing view of the lake and vale of Keswick, spread out to the north in the most picturesque manner. From the pass of Borrowdale is distinctly seen, every bend of the river till it joins the lake; the lake itself, spotted with islands; the most extraordinary line of shore, varied with all the surprising accompaniments of rock and wood; the village of Grange at the foot of the crag, and the white houses of Keswick, with Crosthwaite [Crostwaite] church at the lower end of the lake; behind these much cultivation, with a beautiful mixture of villages, houses, cots, and farms, standing round the skirts of Skiddaw, which rises in the grandest manner, from a verdant base, and closes this prospect in the noblest stile \([sic]\) of nature’s true sublime.\(^{49}\)

This excerpt, only a tiny fraction of the ten pages West used to present a stunning and memorable impression of the scene from Station IV, encapsulates the concept of the “station” as a carefully selected point from which to present striking vistas. West’s description captures many of the feelings, and several of the same sites, described by Gray during his earlier

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\(^{46}\) Ibid., p. 77. (Italics original.)

\(^{47}\) Ibid., p. 86.

\(^{48}\) Ibid., p. 87. West made a reference to Gray and another traveler.

\(^{49}\) Ibid., p. 94. (Italics original.)
visit. Such repetition should not suggest an absence of curiosity or rigor within West’s tour, but rather the universality of certain landscapes to capture the emotions of the viewer. Gray described the same view as follows:

[...] cross’d the meadows obliquely, catching a diversity of views among the hills over the lake & islands, & changing prospect at every ten paces [...] the very margin of the water, opens both ways the most delicious view, that my eyes ever beheld [...] to the left the jaws of Borodale, with that turbulent Chaos of mountain behind mountain roll’d in confusion; beneath you, & stretching far away to the right, the shining purity of the Lake, just ruffled by the breeze enough to shew it is alive, reflecting rocks, woods, fields, & inverted tops of mountains, with the white buildings of Keswick, Crosthwait-church, & Skiddaw for a background at distance.50

The lure of the Lake District, its topography, atmospheric conditions and picturesque scenes, made it a requisite destination in the study of the British Picturesque. It was here that Robert Southey made his home and here that Humphry Repton retreated for a rare break from his work to holiday with his sons. For many, including Gilpin, it was a place of repose and inspiration.

A ROAD DESIGNED FOR PLEASURE: WILLIAM GILPIN’S VISIONARY ROAD

In 1776, William Gilpin made a tour of Scotland, recorded in his Observations, Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty, Made in the Year 1776, On Several Parts of Great Britain; Particularly the High-Lands of Scotland (hereafter: Observations on the Highlands of Scotland), published in 1789. For the purpose of this thesis the most important chapter in Gilpin’s Observations on the Highlands of Scotland is not one chronicling his tours of the Highlands, but rather, one describing a visit to the Lake District on his return journey to England. Here, in a chapter that can only be described as visionary, he set forth a detailed plan to construct a new road designed for pleasure. Unlike the

roads adapted for pleasure that Gilpin had traveled and commented on in the Highlands, this was a concept for an entirely new road conceived solely for the purpose of displaying scenery to its best advantages along a touring circuit designed to delight the Picturesque traveler.

His sudden inspiration to define a new road type, after his tour around the languid lochs in the picturesque Highlands, may have stemmed from the great difficulty he had in making a simple circuit of “the lake of Keswick,” as he described Derwentwater, when he arrived in the Lake District (Figure 3.7). After the relative ease with which he traversed Scotland on a network of military roads, he noted, “we had some difficulty in finding even a bridleroad.”51 Then, reflecting on his tour he opined, “A circuit round the lake, naturally suggests the visionary idea of improving it.”52

The fine military roads of General Wade allowed Gilpin to focus on his sketching, writing and observing of all things Picturesque. Traveling comfortably along the Highland roads Gilpin was at liberty, as Burke had hypothesized, to devote his attention to the “sights, feelings and sounds” of the landscape. Thus, when presented with an exceedingly fine road around Loch Lomond, which he proclaimed as “one of the grand entrances into the highlands [sic],”53 Gilpin’s assessment of the landscape attained correspondingly heightened levels of consciousness and complexity. For Gilpin, Burke’s correlation between the appreciation of the landscape and the quality of the road reached an apotheosis at Loch Lomond. It was evidenced by his writing:

Tarbet lies upon the narrower part of the lake, from whence we took our rout [sic] to Luss, which commands the broader. The road accompanies the lake; and is exceedingly grand, and generally lofty, in every part. Water, and mountains are the removed part of the scene:

52 Ibid., p. 161.
53 Ibid., p. 16.
rocks and hanging woods adorn the foreground, among which, at every turn of the road, the lake appears to much advantage. The whole road is exactly that path upon the grand scale of nature, which is prescribed in the improvements of art:

—that path, from whence, the fight is led
Gradual to view the whole. Where’er thou windst
That line, take heed between the scene, and eye,
To vary, and to mix thy chosen greens.
Here for a while with cedar, or with larch,
(That from the ground spread their close texture,) hide
The view entire. Then o’er some lowly tuft,
Where rose and woodbine bloom, permit it’s [sic] charms
To burst upon the sight. Now through a copse
Of beech, that rear their smooth, and stately trunks,
Admit it partially; and half exclude,
And half reveal it’s graces. In this path,
How long fo’er the wanderer roves, each step
Shall wake fresh beauties; each short point present
A different picture, new, and yet the same.54

This poem, a masterpiece of Gilpin’s writing, is exceedingly important to the development of roads designed for pleasure. Within his beautifully composed lines are embedded many of the essential requisites for pleasure driving, including animation, sequence and engagement with the landscape. While he offered no additional explanation within his narrative, and no other was required for the student of the Picturesque, some additional elucidation is warranted within the overall context of this thesis and in advance of the discussion on his proposed pleasure road for Derwentwater.

In his poetry, Gilpin united the painterly origins of the Picturesque to the kinesthetic experience of the traveler. He directed the traveler to observe the area between the “scene” and “eye,” rather than the easy view of Loch Lomond. In other words, Gilpin directed the traveler to consider the composition and structure of the landscape between the road and the lake, i.e., the foreground and middle ground, as important, albeit less recognized.

54 Ibid., pp 15-16.
contributors to the enjoyment of the scene. Thus, by drawing attention to the blooming rose or the smooth trunks of the beech, his reader could consider how the different views of Loch Lomond were framed. Further, by valuing the dense habit of the cedar and larch, which “hide the view,” he not only asserted the value of limiting the view to heighten the anticipation of the experience, but also implied such segments were not inherently less interesting. For Gilpin, the view was not simply a static point along the road, but rather a complex sequence of landscape experiences leading to dramatic views that “burst upon the sight,” or subtler views captured by the kinesthetic experience created by the staccato of flashing beech trees which “admit it partially; and half exclude, and half reveal it’s [sic] graces.” As Finola O’Kane observed, Gilpin understood that “roads also set the scene for what followed.”

That the tour along Loch Lomond inspired Gilpin to poetic expression is worthy of note. Line-by-line, his poem reads as a series of vignettes awaiting capture by the Picturesque tourist with pencil or brush. That Gilpin placed these vignettes in a sequence suggested that each was intrinsically tied to the other or, as he concluded his poem, “A different picture, new, and yet the same”—an ideal metaphor for the alignment of a road designed for pleasure.

On his return home from the Highlands in 1776, Gilpin made his final stop at the Lake District. Four years earlier, in 1772, he had admired the scenery around Derwentwater. During this earlier trip, his party traveled along the east side of the lake from Keswick to Borrowdale (likely along the route of the current B5289 road) where he wrote of the lake:

 [...] he, who is in quest of the picturesque scenes of the lake, must travel along the rough side-screens that adorn it; and catch it's [sic]

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beauties, as they arise in smaller portions—it’s little bays, and winding shores—it’s deep recesses, and hanging promontories—it’s garnished rock, and distant mountain. These are, in general, the picturesque scenes, which it affords.56

During this second trip to the Lake District, Gilpin wrote in a noticeably less poetic style than on his previous trip. His admiration for the scenery of Derwentwater remained unchanged, but his enthusiasm appeared tempered by the difficulty in making a circuit of the lake. It can be argued his difficulty in “finding even a bridleroad” was cathartic. His sojourn in the Highlands instilled in him a new awareness for the impact of the road on his experience. For Gilpin the picturesque scenes that were the unintended consequences of General Wade’s military roads must have led him to speculate about the power of road-making to shape the landscape. If such picturesque scenery could have been exposed for the traveler through a military operation, a man of Gilpin’s intellect must have considered the possibilities of constructing a road designed to showcase the beauties of the landscape. Whatever the influence may have been, for Derwentwater Gilpin was inspired to propose a revolutionary new type road that would be “one of the grandest, and most beautiful rides in England.”

Tho we have seen the lake of Keswick many times; yet such a scene is an inexhaustible fund of beauty. It always presents something new. Our next undertaking therefore was to ride round the lake, which we had never done before.[57] It is about eleven miles in circumference. Amusing however as this circuit is, it seems to have been so little frequented, that altho we were under the conduct of an inhabitant of the place, we had some difficulty in finding even a bridleroad: and yet materials are so plentiful, that a little expence might easily make it commodious for wheels. Were the road better, the tour of the lake of Keswick would perhaps be one of the grandest, and most beautiful rides in England.58

57 During Gilpin’s 1772 visit, he only traveled along the east side of Derwentwater.
With this introduction to the landscape and the situation, Gilpin laid out a methodical proposal for the creation of a road designed for pleasure to circuit Derwentwater. It was a theoretical plan—no specific alignment was mentioned. Yet, for an abstract exercise, Gilpin’s plan was surprisingly comprehensive in scope and remarkably thorough in its details. His narrative was more scientific than poetic, and he addressed a range of issues far beyond the construction of a road, but highly relevant to the development of a road designed for pleasure. Here, in theory, may be found some of the earliest notes for concepts that would later inform the design of carriage drives and parkways, and provide guidance for issues later recognized as viewshed management, landscape planning, contextual assessment and regional planning. It was the penultimate step in the advance of Repton’s development of roads designed for pleasure. So, with a desire to make the lake more “commodious for wheels,” Gilpin set about to propose the most beautiful road in England.

A circuit round the lake, naturally suggests the visionary idea of improving it. If the whole lake (I mean the whole district of land and water, contained within the circumference of the mountains,) belonged to one person, a nobler scene for improvement could not well be conceived. This grand circumference, it is true, in all it’s [sic] vastness and extent, sets at nought all human power; and resists every idea of improvement: yet still in some parts an impression might be made. It might be rendered more accessible—it might be cleared of deformities—it might be planted—and it might be decorated.59

Within his parenthetical note that the project include “the whole district of land and water, contained within the circumference of the mountains,” Gilpin directly defines the road designed for pleasure as a pleasure drive within the recognized boundaries of a larger scenic landscape. Within this context he put forth four points to organize the concept.

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59 Ibid., p. 161. (Italics original.)
In the first place, it might be rendered *more accessible*. We have just seen how difficult it is to get round the lake in its present state. Half of its beauties are lost. An easy road therefore might be traced. I do not merely mean a good carriage road; but such a road, as might both form a pleasing line in itself; and shew the beauties of the lake to the best advantage. This improvement would require both taste, and study. Many a survey of the lake should be taken, both from the higher and lower grounds, to find out, where the road might open on some beautiful part, without losing its own beauty—where it might run obliquely, and give only catching views—or where it might entirely lose all view of the lake. A pause in a grand continuation of scenery, is often as pleasing as in a concert of music. It makes the eye in one case, as the ear in the other, more alert for every new exhibition.\(^{60}\)

Gilpin demonstrated an awareness for modern road-making when he noted, “I do not merely mean a good carriage road”—suggesting he considered a typical modern road to rectify the immediate access problem eminently doable. By also desiring the road to be a “pleasing line in itself” and show the lake scenery “to the best advantage,” he suggested the possibility of employing modern engineering techniques to rise above the rudimentary requirements of direct access and stable soils to consider, perhaps, a line dictated more by the opportunities to experience the picturesque landscape than the necessity of essential transportation. No doubt Gilpin would have been aware of the expense and potential complications to design such a visionary road around Derwentwater, but his ability to speak with such authority suggested an age in which the possibilities of technology might be harnessed for more than routine connections through the landscape.

Gilpin united site planning with kinesthetic design. He recommended a survey “from both the higher and lower grounds” best to locate the road and ensure its beauty within the larger landscape. As a part of the consideration of the alignment of the road, he outlined carefully detailed kinesthetic principles for the drive, noting places where the road would have direct views of the lake, filtered views of the lake and obstructed views of the lake—a more efficient

\(^{60}\) Ibid., p. 162. (Italics original.)
and strikingly less poetic assessment than his musings on beech trunks at Loch Lomond. He compared the diversity of views to a concert, noting, “A pause in a grand continuation of scenery, is often as pleasing as in a concert of music. It makes the eye in one case, as the ear in the other, more alert for every new exhibition.”

In addition to his detailed notes to make the road “more accessible,” Gilpin provided copious notes detailing deformities, planting and decoration. His desire to have the place “cleared of deformities,” other than a practical note to remove rocks or broken ground impeding the road, is largely a treatise on how to manage, or choreograph, the views of the lake from his proposed road. It is within this section that his poetic insights from Loch Lomond are translated into design guidance on managing the landscape “between the eye, and some beautiful part of the scene.”

But notwithstanding the beauties of nature, it may happen that some deformities, even in her operations may exist. We often observe the craggy points and summits of mountains not well formed; and the mountain itself not exactly shaped. With these things however we must rest satisfied.—Yet sometimes, in smaller matters, a natural deformity may be done away. An awkward knoll, on the foreground, may offend; which art may remove, or at least correct. It may remove also bushes, and rough underwood; which, tho often picturesque, are yet sometimes in the way. It may remove also a tree, or a clump, which may have placed themselves between the eye, and some beautiful part of the scene.61

Gilpin’s recommendations for “planting,” as applicable to the road designed for pleasure, were closely tied to his discourse on deformities. He advised that, “The chief uses of planting in scenery, are, to set off beauty, and to hide such deformities as we cannot remove.”62

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61 Ibid., pp. 163-164. (Italics original.)
62 Ibid., p. 165. (Italics original.)
He concluded his recommendations with a section on decoration or “the *addition of artificial ornament.*” In this section, after a discourse on the need to study the different qualities that grasslands and woodlands contributed to the Picturesque, he advised how and when structures (artificial ornaments or decorations) should be added into natural scenes. His narrative was instructive for both its direct recommendations for the pleasure drive around Derwentwater and its long-term implications for roads designed for pleasure. Gilpin’s advice, recommending the aesthetic response dictated by the Picturesque, presented a philosophical view toward structures in the landscape that would influence the rural cemeteries and country parks of nineteenth-century America. Both in Gilpin’s era and later times, the vocabulary of picturesque structures has been used to denote places of recreation and repose. As Bermingham noted, “While the Beautiful and the Sublime were aesthetics of space, the Picturesque was an aesthetic of the detail.” Important, when suggesting the addition of a new structure to the landscape, Gilpin noted its relationship to the road.

But perhaps you do not mean to build a *mansion*; but mean only to adorn the in virons [*sic*] of the lake, as a *wild park scene*. In that case little ornament will be wanting. If the ruins of a castle, or abbey *could be* built, and stationed with verisimilitude, and propriety, they would undoubtedly be a great ornament. Their station should be accommodated to the road, and walks; and yet must appear, not as if fixed by design, for the purpose of ornament; but as if naturally chosen. [...] 

For this thesis, his commentary on appropriate structures and their relationship, both physical and aesthetic, to the pleasure drive, establishes important precedents for the application of the Picturesque as an organizing philosophy for the American motor parkway of the twentieth century.

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63 Ibid., p. 167
I know no other ornaments proper to the environs [sic] of the lake, except perhaps a bridge or two; from which I should think, there might be great choice of situations. But I should wish the form of them to be that of the *rumbling brig* in Scotland*[^66*]; rather as joining rocky chasms, than as passages over rivulets. Of course therefore they should be so constructed, as to serve the purposes of the road. [...] The Alpine bridge also might have a good effect. Such a bridge is constructed only of a few rough pines, split, and held together by rafters, and pins. Chasms, over which such bridges might be thrown, are frequent about the lake. But here too you must follow the ideas of *probability* (which is *nature* as far as it goes) and throw the bridge over some part, where it appears really to be wanted.^[67]

As with Repton’s “scalp” for the approach road at Sheringham Park, the rustic bridge details advocated by Gilpin were well suited to the purpose of engaging the traveler with the natural landscape.

It is possible that the impressive gains in modern road-making between his tour in 1776 and the publication of his *Observations on the Highlands of Scotland* in 1789 resulted in a reconsideration of his original notes and the details of his visionary road. His experience of a road “so little frequented” that his party “had some difficulty in finding even a bridleroad,”^[68] may have prompted a desire for an improved road during his 1776 tour, and it is possible that what he published was the visionary concept for a road designed for pleasure penned during that tour. It is also possible that he elevated his initial concept for “not merely a good carriage road” due to the extraordinary advances in road-making over the ensuing years. The decade between his tour and the publication of his book occurred during some of the most impressive gains in speed and efficiency on the public roads in Britain, as noted in Chapter 2.

[^66]: Gilpin referenced a comment on pp. 124-125 in vol. I: “Here [near Dunkeld] nature had almost formed a bridge of rock, which is finished by art.”
[^68]: Ibid., p. 159.
Whether Gilpin’s visionary road was conceived in its entirety during his 1776 tour or augmented over the following decade is of minor importance to this thesis. What is important is his careful and comprehensive description of a road designed for pleasure, addressing all the components that would come to be recognized as essential to distinguishing roads designed for pleasure from other road types in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In his *Observations on the Highlands of Scotland* he detailed the fundamental components and essential kinesthetic relationships that, beginning with Repton, may be found in every road of this type. Most importantly, he defined the hallmark of the pleasure roads that would be constructed, beginning with Repton, when he stated, “I do not merely mean a good carriage road; but such a road, as might both form a pleasing line in itself; and shew the beauties of the lake to best advantage.”

Within this single sentence lies the most compelling argument for the influence of the Picturesque on roads designed for pleasure.

**LITTLE THREADS OF CIVILIZATION: THE PICTURESQUE TOUR OF ROBERT SOUTHEY AND THOMAS TELFORD**

In 1819, for a period of exactly six weeks, Thomas Telford, the distinguished civil engineer, and Robert Southey, the Poet Laureate of Great Britain, went on a tour of the Scottish Highlands to inspect the construction of Telford’s roads, bridges and canals. The projects were a part of a massive government-sponsored public works program to slow the depopulation of the highlands by providing modern infrastructure to support communication, commerce and travel. Their tour and itinerary were not unlike those of the many thousands who were seeking out the picturesque landscapes in the Highlands and other

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69 Ibid., p. 162.
70 In the preface to *Journal of a Tour in Scotland in 1819*, C. H. Herford noted the advanced skills and technique of Thomas Telford in “the practical arts and crafts” and describes his roads as “little threads of a higher civilisation.” p. xviii.
popular destinations in Britain. What distinguished their tour was the preeminence of the two men in their respective fields and Southey’s meticulous journal chronicling the trip—providing, for posterity, a record of the Convergence and its application to the understanding of roads within scenic settings. The stature of these two great men, and their sojourn into the Highlands, personified the union of technology with the landscape and illuminated the fertile intellectual climate of an age that was invigorated by such convergences. Southey’s journal of the tour, published posthumously as *Journal of a Tour in Scotland* in 1929, chronicled the trip.

The tour was probably planned by John Rickman, Secretary of the Commissioners for the Caledonian Canal, and a mutual friend to both men. The engineer and the poet had not previously met until being introduced in Edinburgh a few days before the tour. Southey described meeting Telford in the *Journal* noting, “There is so much intelligence in his countenance, so much frankness, kindness and hilarity about him, flowing from the never-failing well-spring of a happy nature, that I was upon cordial terms with him in five minutes.”71 In the 1929 Introduction to Southey’s *Journal*, C. H. Herford noted that Southey, “the man of letters was a little obsessed by the genius of the great engineer at his side, and rich as the *Journal* is in other kinds of observation, no ordinary tourist in quest (as it was then the fashion to be) of the ‘picturesque’ would have described so indefatigably as he, the canals, roads, bridges, docks and harbours they pass.”72

The *Journal* is an important account demonstrating the intersection between the science of modern road-making and the picturesque landscape theory that would influence roads designed for pleasure into the twentieth century. While the *Journal* was not published until 1929, and therefore cannot be suggested as a direct influence on the design or attitudes toward scenic roads

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constructed in the nineteenth or early twentieth centuries, it nonetheless captured a valuable intersection of art and science through the pairing of Britain’s Poet Laureate with the Colossus of Roads, and provides a fastidious record of the interest in roads within the picturesque landscape during this period. The stature of both men in their respective fields suggests that Southey’s commentary over the six-week tour represents both a highly articulate account of the Picturesque applied to the modern road and a technically competent report on the state-of-the-art road-making and construction of the time.

From the detailed accounts of engineering techniques, surveying and construction practices presented, Southey appeared to be an eager and competent student under the tutelage of the great engineer. His descriptions become more detailed and technical as the tour progressed, and his layman’s explanations provide a valuable insight into the engineering practices of the day that the more perfunctory technical reports of the period did not always articulate well. As a proponent of the Picturesque and admirer of modern engineering, Southey chronicled the places visited and techniques employed where landscape sensitivity and engineering combined to create beautiful roads in the Scottish Highlands. While Telford did not describe himself as a landscape gardener, his Highland works, when viewed through the lens of Southey’s commentary, suggest sensitivity to the landscape and an appreciation for design in concert with nature. This raises an important question: Did Telford have an appreciation for the beauty of the landscapes in which he worked? Southey’s *Journal* and an assessment of Telford’s executed works, such as the Dean Bridge in Edinburgh, or his elegant proposal for the new London Bridge in 1800, suggest a man with an artistic sensibility. Additionally, Telford’s personal letters to his close friend and confidant, Andrew Little, document an interest in landscape gardening.
In a letter chronicling his visit to Stowe, Telford demonstrated his familiarity with contemporary garden design and landscape gardeners. After a lengthy and detailed description of the gardens he noted, “I am not certain, but I rather think that the Grounds must originally have been laid out by Kent, what has been done since, I understand has been done under the direction of Mr Brown.”

Telford’s letter to Little is one of the longest and most detailed he wrote during their life-long correspondence.

Stowe is situated about a Mile and a half distant (westward) from the town of Buckingham; for about a Mile from Buckingham, the ground rises gently; on the summit is a Magnificent Triumphal Arch, of the Corinthian Order [...]. The Road from Buckingham to Stowe passes under this Arch after having continued in a direct line from the [ ] of the Town; through the Arch, still westward, the House of Stowe is seen on an eminence, and at the distance of about half a Mile but the driving way turns quite to the South, and between the situation of the Arch and that of the House, there is a Valley of considerable extent, which runs nearly North and South, with a small Valley from it in the middle, on the North side of the House and in a direction nearly West. The grounds surrounding the House, on all sides, consist of about 300 Acres, the outside Circle being called the Park, and that portion adjoining the House and the Gardens.

From the Triumphal Arch, we descended into the Valley, and found the Park divided from the Garden by a sunk fence which we did not perceive until we were very near to it; in the Line of this sunk Fence, and at the distance of 50 or 60 yards from each other, Stand two Pavilions with Doric Portio’s [sic], and they are directly fronting the House, up to which is an Avenue of about the same width, as the distance between the Pavilions, but we could not get directly to the House, from this place, because the bottom of the Valley is filled with a sheet of water, which likewise returns up the smaller Valley for a considerable way, so that the water in the Valleys form the letter “T” (shown upside down) reversed from the Pavilions. We turned to the North and passed the Water in the Main Valley by a Palladian Bridge [...].

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73 Letter from Thomas Telford to Andrew Little (presumed), June 24, 1795 (National Library of Scotland, acc. 12871, facsimile.)
74 Ibid. (Emphasis original.)
Telford’s letter continued with nearly five pages of garden detail. His descriptions of spatial relationships and notes on details such as “sunk” fences (ha-has) had the precision of an engineer, the insight of a landscape gardener and the delight of a tourist. Indeed, Telford closed his letter to Little with an enthusiastic promise: “In consequence of one hasty visit I shall have no objection to repeat this visit to pay my respects once more to my favourites, & correct the slips of my Memory [...]”\(^75\). Telford’s willingness to return to Stowe, suggests he enjoyed pleasure touring. Like Repton, he engaged in a nationwide practice. Traveling throughout Britain from the Highlands of Scotland to the Irish Sea in Wales, Telford, based on his letter from Stowe, likely was a keen observer of the British countryside. His decision to travel with Southey, rather than his aides-de-camp for the Highland projects, Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Gibb, further suggests an intention to make the inspection tour a pleasure trip.

At the beginning of the tour, Southey showed a practical insight into the construction of roads. He noted the loss of efficiency by engineering practices valuing straight lines at the expense of a logical response to the topography of the region—and he noted how a more efficient road might be a more beautiful road as well. Whether or not the observation was his, or influenced by Telford’s commentary en route, the narrative was effective. On the third day of their tour he described the road to Kenmore or Taymouth:

> Sixteen miles to Kenmore, or Taymouth. For the first mile you keep part of the way by the Dochart, which forms some fine remnants, or resting-places (we have no equivalent word) before it enters the lake. There is a good bridge over it. The remainder of the road (we were on the left, that is the northern side) is always within sight of the water, but considerably above it; and therefore for the sake of a shorter line, it goes up and down many hills, all which might have been avoided by keeping the shore: thus more is lost in time and labour than is gained.

\(^75\) Ibid. (Emphasis original.)
in distance, and in this instance the lower line would have been the more beautiful, or at least no beauty would have been lost by it.\footnote{Southey, \textit{Journal of a Tour in Scotland}, p. 40. (Italics original.)}

Southey’s ability to envision an alternate road alignment along the lake—and its aesthetic qualities—demonstrated a level of spatial awareness and imagination akin to a landscape architect or planner. Two weeks into the tour, Southey described a new road in “Strath Glas” (now Strathglass) near Inverness, noting it “remarkable” for both its scenery \textit{and} construction. He introduced the road with a picturesque description noting in great detail the features and activities of the scenes viewed from the road.

Here we turned aside, and went four miles up the river, along the Strath-Glas road—one of the new works, and one of the most remarkable of them, for the difficulty of constructing it, and for the scenery which it commands upon the Varrar. Three points deserve particular notice. The First is the Falls of Kilmorack; on the right bank, which is the opposite shore to the point of view, there is a small saw mill; a corn mill on the left bank, and some islanded pieces of rock and ground in the middle of the falls, connected by a few planks in one place, and in another by a frame which covers a salmon trap. The shores are high, the stream wide and rapid (for it is a considerable river), and the weres [sic] and falls form a scene singularly wild and complicated. On the one side, a lad was angling, knee deep in the water; on the other a woman was beating linen in the river—a practice which makes washing a cleanly and picturesque operation.\footnote{Ibid., p. 113.}

After introducing the new road with a poetic and picturesque description of the Falls of Kilmorack, Southey revealed a complex understanding of the impacts of modern roads (Figure 3.8). Demonstrating an appreciation of the relationship between roads and access to areas of scenic beauty, he made the following observation:

These falls were seldom visited before the new road was made. The last Minister of Kilmorack built a kind of summer house in a corner of the church yard, which commands one of the best points of view; and
this he did chiefly with the good natured intention of providing for strangers a place of rest and shelter.78

Continuing his detailed description after departing the Falls of Kilmorack, he noted the two other points deserving “particular notice” and completed his discussion of the new road by tying the art and engineering to the primary purpose of the Highland Roads—works he praised “of sure, solid, permanent utility”79—by referencing the aesthetic, social and economic benefits provided by the great public works project.

The road itself is an object which adds greatly to the beauty and interest of these scenes. It is carried along the side of the cliff, in many places it is cut in the cliff, and in many supported by a high wall—a work of great labour, difficulty and expense. We just went far enough to get one view into Strath Glas, a cultivated country which by means of this road is enabled to communicate with Inverness, and the civilized world.80

Southey’s reference to communication and “the civilized world” endowed Telford’s roads, bridges and canals with a social value far beyond essential transportation. It is clear from his writings that he viewed the public works projects as an invaluable investment in the Scottish people and society. At several of the sites visited during the tour, Southey was critical of the government for its parsimonious policies, which robbed the new infrastructure of a beauty and ornament that would have enhanced each element for little additional expense. Commenting on the Lovat Bridge, he noted the required cost-savings of a barrier wall over a more decorative (and expensive) balustrade railing.

A double line over the arches, which marks the road-line, gives a finish to the bridge, and perhaps looks as well, or almost as well, as

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78 Ibid., p. 114.
79 Ibid., p. 54.
80 Ibid., pp. 115-116.
balustrades—for not a sixpence has been allowed for ornament in these public works.\textsuperscript{81}

He made a similar comment regarding the railings on the “Craig-Elachie Bridge,” an iron bridge he described as a “noble work;” noting “the appearance of this fine bridge has been sacrificed for the sake of a saving, quite pityful [sic] in such a work.”\textsuperscript{82} From these statements, it is clear Southey not only valued Telford’s work, but also understood the longevity of the investment in national infrastructure. His criticisms of the government appear to be less about minor details or possibilities at particular sites, but more about expressing, through art and beauty, the significance of the Highland project (Figure 3.9).

Southey recognized the distinction between roads constructed for commerce and general travel, and roads designed or adapted for pleasure. While he commented on the futility of roads of inefficient layout, he also noted the unexpected opportunities for showcasing picturesque scenery that less adeptly engineered roads overlooked. Southey noted how a military road, not well surveyed from a useful travel perspective, which would have benefited from a more level routing, presented views that otherwise would have been missed.

General Wade’s road has opened the way to the only view of the Fall of Foyers, and perhaps the General did this designedly. But in proceeding to Fort Augustus, and indeed in most, or all, of his roads, he seems to have, like other road makers, followed the old horse track, instead of surveying the country like an engineer. Very often he crosses the hill with great difficulty and labour, when both might have been avoided by keeping the valley.\textsuperscript{83}

By contrast, Southey noted that the Commissioner’s new road south of Bonar, the Fearn Road, was both shorter in length and more beautiful in its scenic

\textsuperscript{81} Ibid., p. 116.
\textsuperscript{82} Ibid., p. 93.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid., pp. 178-179.
setting. Unlike General Wade’s road, this new road offered the best of efficiencies for travel while also offering great beauty of travel—efficiencies and views he noted were lost on the mail coach due to the absence of the population centers it necessarily served by design and logic.

Returned to Dingwall by the Fearn road, over the fells. It leaves the coast road about three miles south of Bonar, and joins it at Novar Deer Park, Sir Hector Monroe’s village. This is the Commissioner’s road, and cuts off twelve miles in distance; but the Mail Coach takes the line of the coast, the shorter way being over an uninhabited track. The traveller loses something by this, for the Fearn Road [sic] has been pronounced one of the most perfect lines in the Highlands. It is carried 700 feet above the level of Dornoch Firth; nor is there anywhere a finer specimen of roadmaking to be seen, than where it crosses one dingle on one side, and one on the other; the bridges, the walled banks, the steep declivities, and the beautiful turfing on the slope, which is frequently at an angle of 45, and sometimes even more acute, form a noble display of skill and power exerted in the best manner for the most beneficial purpose. The views over the bay are fine. From this high ground the lake above Bonar Bridge is seen, formed by Shin-water and Rappoch-water. The sand and gravel brought to the mouth of this lake by a third stream, the River Carron, have formed the strait where the Bridge is built. We looked down upon the old Highland road, in a part where a little old bridge of one arch over a rivulet, made a subject which an artist would not willingly have left without bringing away a sketch of the scene.  

While Southey made many keen observations on the picturesque scenes and settings viewed during the tour, the Journal also provides a primer in road-making and engineering practices of the day that other travel journals did not. Early in the journey, Southey described the Telford method for constructing roads.

The plan upon which he proceeds in road-making is this: first to level and drain; then, like the Romans, to lay a solid pavement of large stones, the round or broad end downwards, as close as they can be set; the points are then broken off, and a layer of stones broken to about the size of walnuts, laid over them, so that the whole are bound

84 Ibid., pp. 142-143.
together; over all a little gravel if it be at hand, but this is not essential.\textsuperscript{85}

While engineering techniques were often described in conjunction with the overall scene or setting throughout the \textit{Journal}, at times Southey provided a very detailed commentary of engineering practices. The following description of the road in the valley of the Spey detailed not only Telford’s philosophy toward the design of the road, but specific details about construction and drainage.

From this bridge his road begins, and we followed it twelve miles to Grantown; but the first part had been begun by the county, and therefore that their cost and labour might not be expended in vain, he [Telford] went over the hill to meet it, instead of keeping the course of the valley. One of his rules is that the road be always defined, if it be only by a line of turf on either side where nothing more is needed; for this defining prevents any excuse if the road is not kept in order by the Contractors. Toward the hill there is a low stone line. If the hill be cut away, it is walled a few feet up, then sloped, and the slope turfed; if there be no slope, a shelf must be left, so that no rubbish may come down upon the road. The inclination is toward the hill. The water-courses are always under the road, and on the hill-side back drains are cut, which are conducted safely into the water-courses by walled descents, like those upon the Mount Cenis road, but of course upon a smaller scale. This road is as nearly perfect as possible. After the foundation has been laid, the workmen are charged to throw out every stone which is bigger than a hen’s egg. Every precaution is taken to render the work permanent in all its parts.\textsuperscript{86}

Southey also identified moments and places that suggested the interests and curiosities of tourists. Such early tourist interpretation, combined with his comments on accommodations and service, provided early insights on modern views toward visitor services and facilities. Arriving in the Trossachs on the second day of the tour, he noted a “small inn where carriages stop, and guides are in readiness.”\textsuperscript{87} He ascribed the popularity of the area to Sir Walter

\textsuperscript{85} Ibid., p. 54.
\textsuperscript{86} Ibid., pp. 96-97.
\textsuperscript{87} Ibid., p. 29.
Scott. Near Nairn he noted “two stones are shown by the road side as marking the spot where the witches who prophesied [sic] to Macbeth were burnt alive.”\textsuperscript{88} Southey also chronicled the practical implications brought by the increased tourism in the Highlands when he noted, “Mr. Telford had written from Inverness to the Landlord at Fort Augustus, to secure beds, no unnecessary precaution in these touring times, especially for so large a party.”\textsuperscript{89}

Southey’s comments support the concept of public access to sites of scenic beauty. Based on his frequent comments on the “backward” and “filthy” habits of many of the people he observed in the Highlands, it is likely he envisioned this access for individuals of a respectable class. At the Falls of Foyers he criticized the owner of the property for not providing a path to access the cataract, and noted that the new military road provided the only view of the falls (Figure 3.10).

The ladies stept from the coach upon the wall, to look down the glen, and I went with Mr Telford some way down. It is not creditable to the owner of this property, that there should be no means of getting at the bottom of the Fall, and no safe means of obtaining a full view from any point, except from the high road, where it is so foreshortened as to be seen to great disadvantage.\textsuperscript{90}

Southey’s criticisms were not only directed toward perceived failings in tourism infrastructure. As the party began its return trip to Glasgow, and after Southey had experienced Telford’s new roads he was particularly critical, more so than at the beginning of the journal, of poorly constructed roads—even suggesting a satirical “punishment” for the owner of a poorly maintained road.

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{88} Ibid., p. 104.
\textsuperscript{89} Ibid., p. 181.
\textsuperscript{90} Ibid., pp. 177-178.
\end{flushleft}
The Perthshire road continues little more than one [mile], and glad were we to leave it. These roads are in the midst of Lord Breadalbane’s estates; and the punishment would not be more than he deserves for suffering them to continue this barbarous state, if his Lordship were condemned to be driven upon them from morning till night, till they should be compleatly reformed, at his charge.⁹¹

At the conclusion of the tour, after Southey had parted from Telford at Glasgow and continued home to Keswick, he noted he “proceeded by way of Wigton to Keswick. This road was preferred, that my fellow travellers might enter the Lake Country by Bassenthwaite, which is the best approach from the North, and a very fine one.”⁹² While it is hard within the context of his writing to determine if the “best approach,” or its description as “very fine,” referenced the quality of the road or the scenery, it is very likely, given his detailed descriptions and technical reporting, that he intended through the use of both adjectives to reference both the quality of the road and the scenery—a hallmark of roads designed for pleasure.

*Journal of a Tour in Scotland* demonstrates the interest that modern roads and civil engineering held during the period, as both a statement on modernity and as the vehicle by which comfortable access to landscapes of picturesque scenery might be accessed, viewed and appreciated.

**CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter outlines the importance of the Picturesque Movement as the progenitor of the aesthetic structure for roads designed for pleasure and establishes the concept of kinesthesia as an essential element to define pleasure driving. It demonstrates that early theorists, such as Burke and Hogarth, associated mobility and three-dimensionality with the landscape

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⁹¹ Ibid., p. 237.
⁹² Ibid., p. 269.
experience, and that early picturesque travelers and writers were highly
cognizant of the road as a facilitator of scenic engagement. For these early
travelers, Burke’s correlation of the appreciation of the landscape to the
quality of the road, was amply documented. Later, with the writings of Gilpin
and Southey, the peripatetic observations of the early travel writers were
meticulously considered, investigated and assessed during what may most
accurately be described as research tours resulting in the earliest
explanations defining the preferred alignment of a pleasure road. Their
conviction that modern engineering was both a scientific undertaking and a
facilitator of beauty would define a harmonious and fecund period during
which some of the greatest roads designed for pleasure would be conceived
and constructed, first with Repton in Britain and later in America.

The concepts and theories presented in this chapter were directly imported
and hugely influential in the development of roads designed for pleasure in
the United States. The writings of Burke, Hogarth, Gilpin and others served as
both philosophical and didactic underpinnings for the development of the
American motor parkway and may be found referenced in both landscape
theory and engineering publications in America well into the beginning of the
twentieth century.
Figure 3.1. *Landscape with Tourists at Loch Katrine*, John Knox. The publication of Sir Walter Scott’s narrative poem, “The Lady of the Lake,” popularized tourism in the Scottish Highlands. Credit: National Galleries of Scotland.
Figure 3.2. Illustration from Gilpin’s *Observations on the River Wye and Several Parts of South Wales* [...]. Gilpin wrote of this picture: “Through this kind of road we passed many miles. The Usk continued, every where, our playful companion: and if, at any time, it made a more devious curve, than usual, we were sure to meet it again, at the next turn. Our passage through the vale was still more inlivened [sic] by many little foaming rills crossing the road (some of them large enough to make bridges necessary,) and two ruined castles; with which, at proper intervals, the country is adorned.”
Credit: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Rare Book Collection, Washington, D.C.

Figure 3.3. Tintern Abbey. An iconic destination for the Picturesque tourist along the River Wye.
Figure 3.4. “Penmaen-Mawr, Caernarvonshire,” 1834. After Joseph Mallord William Turner, engraved by Willmore. Depiction of the road, likely after Telford’s improvements. Note the distant line of the ledge road, center left. 
Credit: Tate Britain.

Figure 3.5. “Doctor Syntax, Losing His Way,” drawn and engraved by Thomas Rowlandson, from William Combe’s Tour of Dr. Syntax in Search of the Picturesque, 1809. The travels of Dr. Syntax and his horse Grizzle parodied Gilpin’s Picturesque travelers. 
Credit: <www.oldroadsofscotland.com> [accessed September 8, 2015].
Figure 3.7. “Derwent Water” by John Glover (1767-1849).

Figure 3.8. “Falls of Kilmorock,” by Thomas Allom (1804-1872).
From Scotland Illustrated (London: 1835-1838).
Figure 3.9. Craig-Ellachie Bridge, Thomas Telford.
Credit: <www.electricscotland.com> [accessed September 8, 2015].
Roads Designed for Pleasure; British Influences on the American Motor Parkway
CHAPTER 4
TRANSATLANTIC CONVERSATIONS

INTRODUCTION

The first half of the nineteenth century, up to the American Civil War (1861-1865), marked an important transition period in landscape design and the development of roads designed for pleasure in the United States. It was an era in which American landscape gardeners began to view their work with increasing self-confidence and during which their British counterparts engaged them with professional parity for the first time. As a result, collegial transatlantic communications sustained a vital dialogue between British and American landscape gardeners and designers, that may be considered the first professional British-American collaboration in the field of landscape architecture. These transatlantic conversations are the focus of this chapter.

During this period, America moved from the imitation of European forms and ideas to the establishment of its own respected designers, who, rather than copying, began to interpret European models for an American context. The rise of the American Picturesque, in such tangible expressions as the Hudson River School of Painting, rural cemeteries and Picturesque tourism, established an appreciation for the unique qualities and features of the
American landscape and domestic scenery, culminating in the design of the picturesque carriage drives in New York's Central Park. Facilitating this evolution of design, and the embrace of pleasure driving, was the transference of the theories and concepts from Great Britain to the United States, especially those espoused by Repton, for roads designed for pleasure. This transference occurred principally through four influential landscape designers engaged in a vigorous transatlantic dialogue: John Claudius Loudon, Andrew Jackson Downing, Calvert Vaux and Frederick Law Olmsted. Through their interconnected personal and professional relationships, they introduced Repton’s ideas for approach roads and carriage drives to the United States.

This chapter examines the transatlantic conversation between British and American landscape designers and theorists up to the development of Central Park. It demonstrates that Repton’s concepts for roads designed for pleasure were widely read and reprinted in the United States. It will consider the early movements to recognize the American landscape, and by extension American scenery, as noble features worthy of consideration independent of European exemplars; demonstrate an abiding interest in British landscape theory even as American designers began to assert self-confidence in domestic design; and establish the origins of roads designed for pleasure as significant contributors to the development of American landscape architecture.

**AMERICAN BEGINNINGS**

Vehicle design, engineering, technology and attitudes toward the landscape would have made the concept of driving for pleasure incomprehensible during the early days of the United States. Overland transportation in the colonial period and in the first years of the new republic was difficult. Few roads were constructed, or “artificial”—as built roads were often referred to during the period—and maintenance was sparse. The few public roads that existed
were along the Atlantic Seaboard. Access to the western interior was by rough trails or aging military roads—rudely constructed and typically following the route of Indian roads established long before European contact. For many Americans, the vast interior was viewed as a wilderness to be secured, subjugated and domesticated for agriculture. Water travel, when available, was generally considered most reliable and comfortable. With the growth of the young nation, the authorization of turnpikes by state legislatures in the late eighteenth century, and the Congressional authorization of the National Road in 1806 to access the West—the first federally funded highway—the construction of roadways and the introduction of reliable all-weather paving techniques took on new importance (Figure 4.1).

Despite the picturesque, even sublime, landscapes through which many of these roads were constructed, the urgent need for basic transportation, limited funds and the ambitious undertaking to build the National Road to the West, meant that the aesthetic sensibilities of the Picturesque Movement, already beginning to wane in Britain, were not considered in the design of these early roads. For the early American traveler, interactions with nature were more likely the result of bothersome stumps in the middle of the road than carefully planned and constructed panoramic views. Such omissions, however, are not to suggest that Americans were unfamiliar with British ideas for landscape design or early concepts for roads designed for pleasure.

George Washington (1732-1799) was familiar with the latest trends in landscape gardening and employed the “English style” in the design of his Mount Vernon estate on the Potomac River. An approach road, designed in

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1 Christopher Colles (1739-1816) was an Irish-born engineer and surveyor. In 1789 he published A Survey of Roads of the United States (New York: 1798), the first road atlas in the new nation. Strip maps, each depicting approximately twelve miles, mapped the principal roads between Albany, New York and Williamsburg, Virginia—approximately 1,000 miles (1,600 kilometers). The maps noted important topographic features of use to the traveler as well as practical information on the location of bridges, fords, taverns and blacksmiths.
the naturalistic style, welcomed guests arriving by carriage at the West Gate. From this vantage, Washington introduced a three-quarter-mile long vista across a rolling green meadow to the mansion. Immediately after the impressive view, the drive diverged along a serpentine course through the woodlands and along the productive farm fields of the estate before returning to the formal axis (introduced with the vista) at the mansion grounds.²

The approach to this Seat is very pleasing. At the Entrance from the Road you have a View of the House at a Distance of near a mile. The Grounds on each Side of the Road are cleared of the underwood and the Saplings neatly trimmed so as to promise to form a handsome Wood in future.³

Washington’s decision to construct a serpentine approach road rather than a formal tree-lined avenue reflected a sophisticated adaptation of current British landscape concepts and demonstrated an aesthetic sensibility toward landscape and scenery that was a dramatic departure from the accepted axial design traditions brought by the colonists to the New World and still considered fashionable.

Washington had copies of Batty Langley’s *New Principles of Gardening* and William Marshall’s *Planting and Rural Ornament* in his library.⁴ His faculty for landscape gardening was further confirmed by the estimable accounts of his gardens and by the visitors who traveled to Mount Vernon to see them. Samuel Vaughan, an Englishman who settled in Philadelphia in 1783, visited Mount Vernon in 1787 and George Isham Parkyns, author of *Six Designs for Improving and Embellishing Grounds*, visited Mount Vernon in 1798.⁵ Vaughan

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² The landscape for Mount Vernon is generally attributed to the 1787 plan prepared for Washington by Englishman Samuel Vaughan.
prepared his famous plan of Washington’s grounds during his visit, documenting the landscape Washington had created and thereby suggesting the landscape was largely intact by 1787.

The naturalistic style of the grounds at Mount Vernon has been widely attributed to Langley, but within the executed landscape, and particularly the approach road, Washington’s design was extraordinarily advanced—especially given Langley’s rather limited guidance on landscape design and his deference to the avenue as an important organizing tool. His book, while perhaps inspiring Washington, cannot fully account for the executed designs at Mount Vernon. This suggests that Washington had a deeper philosophical understanding of Langley’s ideas shaped by his extensive travels, admiration for the American “wilderness,” practical experience as a surveyor and interest in scientific farming. As a result, he was able to translate Langley’s discourse into the expression of a new republican landscape at Mount Vernon—rejecting, for example, the formality of Langley’s approach avenue by appropriating, instead, his “pleasant Passage thro’ a Wilderness” for walks as a model for the approach drive. His rejection of the avenue was noteworthy, if Langley’s influence on the grounds is to be considered significant, and likely reflected concepts assimilated from a variety of additional sources.

Based on Washington’s library inventory, there were no landscape design books in his collection published between Langley’s 1728 volume and Marshall’s 1796 volume—a period of considerable landscape evolution and advancement in Britain. However, his use of the ha-ha to enhance vistas and the calculated simplicity of the river view, complete with an open lawn rolling up to the edge of the mansion’s piazza, suggested a familiarity with evolving trends, in particular with the work of Capability Brown. Washington may have learned of evolving landscape trends through magazines, letters and anecdotal descriptions. Additionally, he had a copy of Thomas Mawe’s The

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Universal Gardener, published in 1787, which reflected current styles in landscape gardening and pleasure roads within its definitions (Figure 4.2). For example, the definition for “avenue” noted, “nothing having the appearance of art or regularity can be admitted,” and the lengthy definition for “pleasure-grounds” stated a preference for, “winding walks, all bounded with plantations of trees, shrubs and flowers [...] in imitation of a natural assemblage.”

In addition to information gathered on modern landscape design, Washington’s experience as a surveyor provided him with a keen sense of scale and proportion that ensured an adept application of new ideas to the topographic and spatial realities of his property. In a 1792 letter to his farm manager, Anthony Whiting, he wrote, “I would have you open the second Visto 20 feet wide, as far as Muddy hole branch, and let me know whether the hill on the other side of it is high or low.” In a 1793 letter to Whiting, Washington wrote:

My object in clearing the grounds out side of the pasture, along the Road from Gum Spring, was that you might see the Mansion house as soon as you should enter the little field beyond it.

Through his books, acquaintances and innate landscape skills, Washington created at Mount Vernon, over a thirty-year period, a picturesque landscape showcasing the natural beauties of his property and the bounty of his farm. His executed landscape showed a remarkable embrace of the modern style

8 Garrett, George Washington’s Mount Vernon, p. 111.
11 Washington owned a succession of fashionable carriages and also maintained a lighter chaise for touring. Whether or not his travels among his different farms constituted pleasure travel requires further investigation. Other than the approach road at Mount Vernon, no evidence supporting a network of pleasure roads was found during the research for this thesis. Further, as comfortable modern carriages were just becoming available late in his lifetime, he had limited opportunity to embrace the new luxury of pleasure driving.
and a timely application of the most current trends in British theory well in advance of many of his American contemporaries.

Such avant-garde views were not confined to Washington's landscape; he was an early collector of American landscape paintings. In 1793, while serving as the first President of the United States, he purchased two paintings of the Hudson River by the English-born artist, William Winstanley (1775-1806), to hang in the presidential mansion when the capital of the new republic was located at Philadelphia (1790-1800). In his ballroom at Mount Vernon he hung two landscape paintings, one depicting the turgid waters of the Great Falls of the Potomac, just above the new capital being constructed upriver from his estate, and the other, the picturesque confluence of the Shenandoah and Potomac Rivers, approximately fifty miles (eighty kilometers) to the west. The paintings, by George Beck (1749-1812) an English-born artist, were devoid of human forms and figures and expressed the beauty and sublimity of wild nature. Washington's unorthodox appreciation for the natural state of the Potomac River would augur the beginnings of the American Picturesque (Figure 4.3).

**THE AMERICAN PICTURESQUE**

The American artist Thomas Cole (1801-1848) is widely credited with establishing the Hudson River School of painting. Considered the first distinctly American movement in painting, the Hudson River School, with its focus on the picturesqueness and sublimity of the American wilderness, was as much a metaphor for the democratic principles of the new nation as a caution against the wanton destruction of landscapes of immense beauty—a growing concern with westward expansion. Cole was born in Lancashire; in

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12 Thomas Jefferson, in his *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1785), in “Query IV” described the confluence as “one of the most stupendous scenes in nature.” (unpaged.)
1818, the year of Repton's death, his family emigrated from England to the United States, settling in Steubenville, Ohio. He moved east and, after 1827, established a studio on a farm in Catskill, New York—an area of the Hudson Valley renowned for its scenery. Cole painted views of the nearby Catskill Mountain House and Kaaterskill Falls. He wrote of the picturesque falls in his “Essay on American Scenery:"

In the Kaaterskill we have a stream, diminutive indeed, but throwing itself headlong over a fearful precipice into a deep gorge of the densely wooded mountains--and possessing a singular feature in the vast arched cave that extends beneath and behind the cataract.13

Cole authored his “Essay on American Scenery” for the American Monthly Magazine in 1836. It was an important contribution to the understanding of the American landscape as an essential component of American identity. The essay was written during a period in which American taste, art, literature and landscapes were slavishly evaluated against European exemplars. Cole's essay elevated the American landscape to a position of dignity by consciously and articulately freeing its beauty, picturesqueness and sublimity from the European zeitgeist. He wrote, “I would have it remembered that nature has shed over this land beauty and magnificence, and although the character of its scenery may differ from the old world's, yet inferiority must not therefore be inferred [...]”14

Much as the Monroe Doctrine15 of the previous decade had established a stand on the autonomy of the Americas from European interference, Cole's essay defined the American landscape with an equally fierce rejection of European

14 Ibid. (Italics original.)
15 The Monroe Doctrine of 1823 was established in response to the Napoleonic Wars. It stated that the United States would view as an act of aggression any further efforts by European nations to colonize land in the Americas or interfere with its states. The doctrine was largely symbolic as the U.S. lacked the naval power to enforce its provisions; however the United Kingdom shared many of the objectives of the doctrine (due to commercial interests in the Americas) and the Royal Navy tacitly enforced it as part of a larger objective to maintain the neutrality of the seas.
values. He was clear to note, “I am by no means desirous of lessening in your estimation the glorious scenes of the old world,” but believed that the personalities and events that gave meaning and tradition to European landscapes were not applicable to North America. Cole cited individuals such as Milton and Petrarch, and referenced the ruins of war and the ostentations of prosperity, as examples that defined the European landscape and gave it meaning. A new nation in the new world, he asserted, required a different assessment of landscape and meaning.

[...] American associations are not so much of the past as of the present and the future. Seated on a pleasant knoll, look down into the bosom of that secluded valley, begin with wooded hills—through those enameled meadows and wide waving fields of grain, a silver stream winds lingeringly along—here, seeking the green shade of trees—there, glancing in the sunshine: on its banks are rural dwellings shaded by elms and garlanded by flowers—from yonder dark mass of foliage the village spire beams like a star. You see no ruined tower to tell of outrage—no gorgeous temple to speak of ostentation; but freedom's offspring—peace, security, and happiness, dwell there, the spirits of the scene.16

Cole's language resonated with rising nationalism, confidence in the federal government, pride in new American institutions, and Manifest Destiny17. His examples were drawn heavily from the Northeast, a center of power and wealth, and home to many of the artists, writers and landscape designers who would define the American landscape. It was here that Transcendentalist writers such as Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) and Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862), in what is considered the first notable American intellectual movement, associated nature with the sacred and spiritual, and George Perkins Marsh (1801-1882) in Man and Nature made the first argument for the conservation of America's landscapes. It was also home to novelists Washington Irving (1783-1859) and James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851),

17 Manifest Destiny was a widely held nineteenth-century belief that the American nation was destined to expand across the continent. It was viewed as a spiritual quest, ordained by God, to establish an agricultural Eden from Atlantic to Pacific.
among the first American writers to achieve critical acclaim in Britain, who romanticized the American landscape and immortalized many places, such as the Kaaterskill Falls.

The Hudson River Valley was one of the first destinations for the Picturesque traveler in the United States; the Catskill Mountain House, constructed in 1823, was one of the first developed visitor destinations (Figure 4.4). Author James Fenimore Cooper is reputed to have stated while in Europe: "If you want to see the sights of America, go to see Niagara Falls, Lake George and the Catskill Mountain House." By the late 1820s the American Grand Tour comprised a steamboat ride up the Hudson River to Catskill Mountain House, on to Lake George, then a barge trip across the Erie Canal to Niagara Falls.18 Much as early picturesque touring in Britain had utilized the Wye River to access scenic destinations, America’s waterways provided a similarly comfortable route freed from the dismal conditions of the nation’s public roads.

**THE RURAL CEMETERY**

Some of the earliest examples of roads designed for pleasure in the United States were developed in the early nineteenth century for the new rural cemeteries. These cemeteries, a shift from the austere and utilitarian graveyards of the colonial era, created bucolic retreats outside crowded city centers. The first of this new style, Père Lachaise Cemetery, located outside of Paris, opened in 1804. Modeled after the fashion of the Greeks and Romans, who buried their dead outside the city walls, the rural cemetery was a response to growing sanitary concerns over “rotting corpses” in the overcrowded burial grounds of Paris. At the same time, as Blanche Linden

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notes in Silent City on a Hill, new philosophies surrounding death and the afterlife reconsidered the aesthetics of interment spaces and the memorialization of the departed. The new term “cemetery,” from the Greek koimeterion, meaning “to sleep” or a “sleeping place,” reflected this changing attitude. The bucolic plantings, dignified architecture and orderly avenues at Père Lachaise influenced the design of new rural cemeteries in Europe, such as the Glasgow Necropolis (1832), and, in the United States, Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, Massachusetts—the first rural cemetery in America.

In the United States, similar concerns for unsanitary and overcrowded graveyard conditions led Jacob Bigelow (1787-1879), a Boston physician and botanist, to convene a meeting in 1825 to consider planning for a rural cemetery. The “suburban” cemetery he envisioned would relieve Boston’s “tenements of the deceased” by creating a country location where “the beauties of nature” would provide dignity to the dead and consolation to the mourner by uniting the “social and kindred instincts of our nature.” To bolster his efforts, Bigelow enlisted the participation of the newly formed Massachusetts Horticultural Society, modeled on the Horticultural Society of London, in his endeavor. With the Society’s endorsement, a seventy-two acre (twenty-nine hectare) tract of land situated in Cambridge and Watertown near the Charles River, known as “Stone’s Woods” or “Sweet Auburn,” was acquired in 1830 for the purpose of a cemetery and experimental garden.

19 Blanche Linden, Silent City on a Hill, Picturesque Landscapes of Memory and Boston’s Mount Auburn Cemetery (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), p. 117.
20 “Such a place of deposit is Pere [sic] la Chaise, near Paris, which has already become a spot of the greatest interest and attraction, furnishing the model to similar establishments in various parts of Europe, and well deserving to be had in view, in that which is considered here.” From an address by Edward Everett, (no date), as quoted in, Bigelow, A History of Mt. Auburn Cemetery, p. 141.
22 Cynthia Zaitzevsky, Olmsted and the Boston Park System (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1982), p. 15. The Horticultural Society of London was founded in 1804, it was granted a Royal Charter in 1861 and became the Royal Horticultural Society.
23 The experimental garden plan was abandoned in 1833. Nevertheless, Mount Auburn became the first large public ground in the United States to be planted with a wide variety of specimen trees (Zaitzevsky, Olmsted and the Boston Park System, p. 142).
This tract is beautifully undulating in its surface, containing a number of bold eminences, steep acclivities, and deep shadowy valleys. [...] The principal eminence, called Mount Auburn in the plan, is one hundred and twenty-five feet above the level of the Charles River, and commands from its summit one of the finest prospects which can be obtained in the environs of Boston.

Mount Auburn Cemetery was designed by Massachusetts Horticultural Society President Henry Dearborn, a self-taught landscape designer, who envisioned a landscape of sepulture derived from the style of the English park. He sent to London and Paris for maps of cemeteries, publications and illustrations on funerary design—including over two hundred engravings depicting Père Lachaise. Most importantly, he ordered Repton’s three instructive volumes, *Sketches and Hints, Observations* and *Fragments*, to inform his design. From these volumes Repton’s definitions for approach roads and carriage drives, and the detailed descriptions of his designs for the pleasure drives at Bulstrode, Blaise Castle and Sheringham, among many others, provided Dearborn with the theory and practice for the layout of roads designed for pleasure at Mount Auburn. Clearly influenced by Repton’s principles, he organized a carriage drive system he described as, “winding gradually and gracefully through the valleys and obliquely over hills, without any unnecessary or unavoidable bend.”

For Mount Auburn, Dearborn planned a network of carriage drives following the example of Père Lachaise with two notable departures: a more serpentine alignment and the addition of a six-foot (two meter) landscape margin, between the road and the burial plots, to eliminate the architectural congestion already encroaching on the avenues at the French exemplar. The
task of laying out a circulation system of drives and paths was arguably the most important aspect of the planning process. Unlike the compact burial grounds of the past, the vast acres of the new rural cemeteries necessitated networks of drives to access tens of thousands of burial plots over multiple generations. As a result, the rural cemetery created the first large scale and publicly accessible pleasure road systems in the United States (Figure 4.5). For Mount Auburn, the Massachusetts Horticultural Society not only charged Dearborn with designing a system of drives that efficiently organized the property, but also protected noteworthy specimen trees and scenic features, and contributed to the picturesque qualities of the landscape. He laid out twenty-two individual drives, called avenues, totaling approximately ten miles (sixteen kilometers). The avenues were named after trees. A secondary system comprised fifty-three separate footpaths named for shrubs and flowers.30 The avenues were planned at twenty feet wide and the paths at five feet wide. The gently winding drives provided ever-changing views of lush plantings, ponds and ornamental trees; the well-groomed surface of the roads offered a pleasant ride. To ensure the solemnity of the place, no vehicle was to be driven along Mount Auburn’s avenues at a rate faster than a walk.31 Carriages required a ticket of entry and driving was restricted to the hours between sunrise and sunset. In addition to its picturesque qualities, the design of the avenues and paths was commended for facilitating an “easy approach to the various lots.”32 Dearborn’s design reflected an adept implementation of both Repton’s admonition for utility and directness, and his advice on designs to showcase the beauties of a place from a well-designed carriage drive.

30 Picturesque Pocket Companion and Visitor’s Guide through Mount Auburn (Boston: Otis, Broaders and Co., 1839), pp. 55-57. Two avenues were not named for trees, “Garden” and “Mountain;” a few paths were named for trees. This summary reflects the plan as detailed in the Picturesque Pocket Companion of 1839; additional avenues and paths were added as the cemetery acquired additional land. The first, in 1833, expanded the total area to 110 acres (44.5 hectares).
The grounds of the Cemetery have been laid out with intersecting avenues, so as to render every part of the woods accessible. These avenues are curved and variously winding in their course, so as to be adapted to the natural inequalities of the surface. By this arrangement, the greatest economy of the land is produced, combining at the same time the picturesque effect of landscape gardening.33

Mount Auburn Cemetery was consecrated on September 24, 1831. The new cemetery represented, for the first time in America, the tangible intersection of the Picturesque with new attitudes toward death and burial (Figure 4.6 and 4.6x). James Story, in his dedication remarks noted, “A rural Cemetery seems to combine in itself all the advantages, which can be proposed to gratify human feelings [...] and what spot can be more appropriate than this, for such a purpose.” He was speaking before an audience of 2,000 seated in a temporary amphitheater constructed in a forest glade within Mount Auburn. Story continued his address by noting:

Nature seems to point it out with significant energy, as the favorite retirement for the dead. There are around us all the varied features of her beauty and grandeur—the forest-crowned height; the abrupt acclivity; the sheltered valley; the deep glen; the grassy glade; and the silent grove. Here are the lofty oak, the beech, [...] the rustling pine, and the drooping willow;—the tree, that sheds its pale leaves with every autumn, a fit emblem of our own transitory bloom; and the evergreen, with its perennial shoots, instructing us, that "the wintry blast of death kills not the buds of virtue."34

Reporting on the dedication, the Boston Courier proclaimed Mount Auburn a "garden of graves" and prophesied, "In the course of a few years, when the hand of Taste shall have passed over the luxuriance of Nature, we may

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33 Ibid., p. 17. This excerpt describing the cemetery is from an appendix ordered by the Committee (of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society) and attached to the address delivered by Joseph Story (an Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court) at the dedication of Mount Auburn Cemetery, September 24th, 1831. Story’s address presented a poetic view of death and spoke of the new cemetery in romantic landscape terms—but with few details regarding its design or structure. It may be surmised that the Committee wished a record of the design attributes of the landscape preserved for posterity by ordering the appendix to his address.

34 From “An Address Delivered on the Dedication of the Cemetery at Mount Auburn, September 24, 1831,” by Joseph Story, as quoted in, Bigelow, History of Mt. Auburn Cemetery, pp. 160-161.
challenge the rivalry of the world to produce another such abiding place for the spirit of beauty.”

Mount Auburn Cemetery became the model for the rural cemetery in America and many cities soon copied its philosophy, form and serpentine pleasure drives. Laurel Hill Cemetery in Philadelphia (1836), Green Mount Cemetery in Baltimore (1837), Greenwood Cemetery in Brooklyn (1838) and Mount Hope Cemetery in Rochester, New York (1838) followed closely after Mount Auburn. It was, perhaps, the first landscape genre in which Americans considered their design skills and executed works to be complementary to European practice. In an 1846 review of a new book about Greenwood Cemetery, entitled *Green-Wood Illustrated* (Figure 4.7) the American journal *The Horticulturist* noted, “It is not a little remarkable that the Landscape Gardening taste of the country should, at the present moment, appear most fully developed in our rural cemeteries.” In fact, in a noteworthy shift from its general deference to the refinement of landscape gardening in Europe, *The Horticulturist* asserted the superiority of American rural cemeteries.

In the mean time, it is not a little remarkable that the United States possess, at this moment, three rural cemeteries far superior to any in the world. We do not say this in any vain spirit of boasting, or on our own information merely. A friend [...] visited Europe almost expressly for the purpose of comparison, assures us that neither *Père le [sic] Chaise*, nor any other rural cemetery on the continent, or in England, will, for one moment compare, in all that constitutes the highest elements of beauty in such a spot, with *Mount Auburn, Greenwood, or Laurel Hill*—the three great rural burial places of Boston, New-York and Philadelphia.

In the review by *The Horticulturist*, the hegemony of rural cemetery design was placed firmly within the context of the United States. However, the

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review’s assurance of a diligent European investigation, to blunt criticism of “any vain spirit of boasting,” attested to America’s cautious break from European precedent as a benchmark to measure success in landscape gardening. Conversely, the bravado of the assertion reflected a post-colonial faith in the competence of the young nation’s domestic designers. The rural cemetery movement established the authority of American designers in a wholly new landscape type organized by pleasure drives.

The truth is, people were glad to get fresh air, and a sight of grass, and trees, and flowers, with, now and then, a pretty piece of sculpture, to say nothing of the drive to all this beauty, and back again, without considering too deeply whether it might not be better to have it all without the graves, and the funeral processions.38

The truth is that the graves and the funeral processions multiplied and soon the bucolic landscapes and expansive views along the carriage drives, in what had become the first de facto public parks in the United States, were overshadowed by the cemeteries’ solemn and dedicated purpose. “For a while they were the people’s parks. Before long white tombstones and dark herses [sic] and carriages took the cheer out of the landscape.”39 As Elizabeth Barlow Rogers notes in Landscape Design, A Cultural and Architectural History, people eventually began asking, “why not a people’s park devoid of reminders of mortality?”40

ENGINEERING THE PLEASURE ROAD

The construction of the pleasure drives at Mount Auburn Cemetery represented a sophisticated adaptation of civil engineering to the Picturesque.

Civil engineer Alexander Wadsworth (1805-1898) is known to have worked at
Mount Auburn, although his role in the design of the carriage drives is unclear.
How much his skills were used for core engineering competencies such as
mapping, grading and drainage and how much he contributed to the
picturesque alignment of the drives is described in contradictory accounts of
his involvement in the historic record. 41 Regardless of the roles of Dearborn
and Wadsworth in the design and layout of the carriage drives, the executed
work demonstrated both scientific competency and aesthetic sensibilities.

A review of the 1850 A Manual of the Principles and Practice of Road-Making,
reveals not only the familiarity American engineers had with modern road-
making theory from Britain, but also their familiarity with British landscape
theory. Authored by William M. Gillespie (1816-1868), a civil engineer and
professor at Union College in Schenectady, New York, the volume is an
important insight into the relationship between landscape gardening and civil
engineering during this period and a reminder of the reach of the transatlantic
conversation. Published at the start of a half-century of exemplary
engineering achievements in the development of roads designed for pleasure,
Gillespie’s book established the legitimacy of aesthetic considerations as a
part of the American engineer’s professional duties.

The Manual is predominately an engineering guide to practical modern road-
making with advice such as: “Every road, other things being equal, should be
perfectly straight, so that its length, and, therefore, the time and labor
expended in travelling upon it, should be the least possible [...].” 42 Under a list
of “Authorities Referred to” in the introduction were McAdam’s “System of
Road-Making, London, 1825” and Telford’s “Reports on Holyhead roads.”
McAdam and Telford were the sole focus of a chapter entitled, “Broken-Stone
Roads.” Other practical chapters addressed the cross-section of the road,

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41 Linden, Silent City on a Hill, p. 174.
surveying, balancing cut and fill, grading and cost estimating. However, the book demonstrated an unexpected sensitivity (to the modern reader) to roads designed for pleasure and reinforces the examples in this chapter demonstrating a striking familiarity with British theory and precedent in the American public during this period.

In the Introduction Gillespie made a casual reference to Dr. Johnson (see Chapter 3) to reinforce his argument on the broader value of modern roads: “But the increase of personal comfort is only a petty item in estimating the importance of roads, even in despite [sic] of Dr. Johnson’s exclamation, that life has no greater pleasure than being whirled over a good road in a postchaise.”43 The introduction continued with a reference to the military roads constructed by General Wade in the Scottish Highlands.

His military road is said to have done more for the civilization of the Highlands than the preceding efforts of all the British monarchs. But the later roads under the more scientific direction of Telford, produced a change in the state of the people which is probably unparalleled in the history of any country for the same space of time.44

Familiar British references continued in the first chapter, entitled, “What Roads Ought To Be, As To Their Direction,” with a reference to Hogarth in a subsection entitled, “Pleasure Drives.” In what may be the first reference to the design of pleasure drives in an American engineering manual, Gillespie distinguished the road type from others and presented both design theory and practical engineering advice. He particularly noted its applicability for rural cemeteries and parks. His advice to avoid curves “for the mere sake of curving” was a direct reference to Repton’s eighth principle for Tatton Park and was likely gleaned from existing publications widely available in America.45 For pleasure drives, Gillespie advised:

44 Ibid., p. 21.
45 Gillespie may have taken this advice from Loudon’s, The Landscape Gardening and Landscape Architecture of the Late Humphry Repton (1840), or Downing’s A Treatise on the Theory and
In roads designed solely for pleasure drives, such as those laid out by landscape gardeners in parks, cemeteries, &c., curvature is the rule, and straightness only the exception. In them the object is to wind as much as possible, in Hogarth’s “line of grace,” so as to obtain the greatest development of length which the area of the ground will permit, but at the same time never to appear to turn for the mere sake of curving. Some reason for the windings must always be suggested, such as a clump of trees, a rise of ground, a good point of view, or any object which may conceal the artifice employed. The visitor must be deceived into the belief that he is travelling over a large area, while he is truly only retracing his steps and constantly doubling upon his track; but he must do it unconsciously, or at least without knowing the precise manner in which the pleasant deception is effected. *Ars est celare artem* [it is art to conceal art].

As an example for his readers, Gillespie included a map of the carriage drives at Greenwood Cemetery (Figures 4.8 and 4.9). For pleasure roads, the *Manual* also included notes on the visitor’s experience and the design characteristics of a road engaged with the landscape. "The gently curving road, besides its substantial advantages, is also much more pleasant to the traveller upon it; for he is not fatigued by the tedious prospect of a long straight stretch of road to be traversed, and is met at each curve by a constantly varied view.”

As Gillespie’s book demonstrates, a dialogue between American civil engineers and their British counterparts regarding pleasure roads was occurring outside the realm of landscape gardening. While *A Manual of the Principles and Practices of Road-Making* proved invaluable in the development of roads designed for pleasure, the most vocal advocates for pleasure roads, as this thesis demonstrates, were the landscape gardeners (and soon landscape architects) in Britain and America who saw the application of the road typology to the technological advances and recreational needs of the nineteenth century. It is within this context that the transatlantic

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*Practice of Landscape Gardening* (1841), both of which made reference to Repton’s approach to roads.


47 Ibid., p. 28.
conversation on roads designed for pleasure by John Claudius Loudon, Andrew Jackson Downing, Calvert Vaux and Frederick Law Olmsted must be understood.

JOHN CLAUDIUS LOUDON

John Claudius Loudon (1783-1843) was born in Scotland and studied biology, botany and agriculture at the University of Edinburgh. His *Gardener’s Magazine* (published 1826-1844) became an international forum for information on rural and domestic improvements, including architectural design and town planning. He had a number of correspondents in America, most notably Andrew Jackson Downing—America’s first and one of its most influential landscape designers.

Loudon never traveled to America, but his influence on the American landscape was noteworthy. Loudon’s professional acumen issued from his horticultural knowledge; he contributed little to the evolution of roads designed for pleasure. However, by publishing *The Landscape Gardening and Landscape Architecture of the Late Humphry Repton, Esq., Being His Entire Works on These Subjects* in 1840, Loudon ensured that the concepts established by the great landscape gardener for roads designed for pleasure would be available to a new generation of landscape designers. His publication of Repton’s works belies the animosity he had for Repton early in his career. Loudon sided with Knight and Price regarding the Picturesque

49 John Claudius Loudon, *The Landscape Gardening and Landscape Architecture of the Late Humphry Repton, Esq., Being His Entire Works on These Subjects* (London: 1840). The volume included Repton’s: *Sketches and Hints on Landscape Gardening; Observations on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening; An Enquiry Into the Changes of Taste in Landscape Gardening; Designs for the Pavillon at Brighton, and Fragments on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening.*
Controversy and said of Repton, he “shrinks, however, from the full extent of the controversy, apparently sensible that he could not lay down any fixed principles for this part of his practice.”

In the introduction to the book, John Claudius Loudon, In Search of English Gardens: The Travels of John Claudius Loudon and His Wife Jane, Priscilla Boniface notes that Loudon “seems to have had a love/hate relationship with Repton.” Long before republishing Repton’s works in 1840, Loudon had been an outspoken critic of Repton. In his book, A Treatise on Forming, Improving, and Managing Country Residences, published in 1806, Loudon continued the attacks begun by Knight and Price—including a two-part appendix devoted to point-by-point criticism of Repton’s publications and theories. As Boniface notes, in Loudon’s later years there was “some sort of rapprochement,” for reasons not entirely clear, where Loudon spoke more favorably of Repton, ultimately recognizing what he termed “Repton’s School,” which he described as “consisting of the union of an artistical knowledge of the subject with good taste and good sense.” In Loudon and the Landscape, Melanie Simo notes it was Repton’s attention to the practical comforts and conveniences of the garden where Loudon saw congruity with his gardenesque style and the great landscape gardener’s principles. It is also possible Loudon was reacting to the 1832 volume by William Sawrey Gilpin (1762-1843), Practical Hints upon Landscape Gardening, that read mostly as an homage to Price and his followers, and continued their vociferous attacks on Repton’s writings—eighteen years after the great landscape gardener’s

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51 Loudon, Treatise on Country Residences, p. 711.
53 Boniface, In Search of English Gardens, p. 15.
54 Loudon, “Introduction,” The Landscape Gardening and Landscape Architecture of the Late Humphry Repton, pp. vii-viii.
55 Simo, Loudon and the Landscape, p. 87.
death. The volume’s trenchant tone and anachronistic arguments may have shown Loudon a more ludicrous side to the argument that had occupied so much of his earlier career and, considering his legacy late in life, resulted in a literary reconciliation.

As the focus of this thesis is roads designed for pleasure, an analysis of Loudon’s extensive criticisms of Repton’s body of work in his *Treatise on Country Residences* is not warranted. Therefore this inquiry into Loudon’s comments focuses on those he made in regard to Repton’s recommendations related to the design and alignment of roads designed for pleasure in his *Observations on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening* published the year before. For example, Loudon referred to Repton’s description of the forty-four stations at Bulstrode (see Chapter 2) as “a tedious description of a drive”—his tone suggesting an unnecessary attention to details of little interest to the reader, and by extension those making a “tedious” circuit of the drive. He was particularly disdainful of Repton’s “manner of using slides” a technique he described in the Preface to Appendix No. 1, as “a trick unworthy of science,” and in his Appendix No. 2, he attacked Repton’s detailed analysis and critique of Brown’s “open drive” in *Observations* with a harangue belittling Repton’s knowledge of horticulture—entirely missing the design intent of Repton’s commentary. Loudon presented no alternatives after upbraiding Repton’s treatment of the pleasure drives. His *Treatise on Country Residences* demonstrated a very limited understanding of roads in comparison with other books of the time dedicated to improving country residences—both as design features and as constructed elements (he made no reference to modern methods of road-making).

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56 William Sawrey Gilpin was nephew to William Gilpin.
58 Ibid., p. 705.
59 Ibid., p. xi. Appendix no. II contained a criticism “chiefly on his mode of operating with water and wood, the two principal materials of landscape.” (p. 709.)
60 Ibid., p. 717.
What became clear during an analysis of Loudon’s comments for this thesis was a fundamental difference between the two men in their attitudes toward and their assessments of landscapes. Repton was a designer and his recommendations were directed toward the organization of the landscape; references to plant material were largely based on goals for defining and organizing the landscape by color, texture, form and scale. Loudon, by contrast, had an abiding interest in horticulture, floriculture and botany. He evaluated landscapes from a horticultural perspective. For example, when later describing the ancient avenue at Newark Castle at Port Glasgow, Scotland, for the readers of his Gardener’s Magazine he relied on plant taxonomy, not design precedent, to date the avenue to the second half of the seventeenth century. He observed, “it is approached through an avenue of silver firs, a tree that was only introduced into England in 1603, and is not likely to have been so abundant in Scotland as to admit of its being planted in avenues for at least a half century afterwards.”\(^{61}\) Repton, by contrast, would have detailed the design origins of the avenue and the Quincunx (see Chapter 2).

Between 1825 and 1842 Loudon took a number of tours throughout England and Scotland to observe and comment on the landscape and gardening. Notes from the tours (later conducted with his wife Jane) were published in The Gardener’s Magazine.\(^{62}\) The tours provided important insights into the state of gardening during a period in which an agricultural depression and rural migration to the new industrial cities dramatically changed the wealth and society of the countryside in which Repton had worked a generation earlier. Loudon’s observations were often pithy and interspersed with comments

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\(^{62}\) Please note: In Search of English Gardens was edited by Priscilla Boniface. She states in her introduction that she has reduced the approximately 400,000 words describing the original tours to approximately 50,000 words. She also notes minor changes to punctuation for clarity, the running together of separated passages without indicating the breaks, and the addition of text of later dates to fit within the chronology of the structure.
unrelated to the topic at hand. For example, at Stroud House near Haslemere he discussed, at length, the “bell-pulls in every room” which are connected to the gardener's cottage “through a leaden pipe, sunk some feet under ground, and protected by brick-work, so that no intended housebreaker could easily dig down to it and cut it off.”63 While many of his descriptions of gardens or horticultural varieties were accorded equal levels of description, the quotation is included here as evidence of his skills at the detailed recordation of construction and mechanical systems, and to contrast with his scant details in references to roads, approaches or drives— which garner little attention or commentary from Loudon’s tours. Roads and drives were frequently referenced across their travels and across the years, but seldom with the same level of description as accorded the trees, shrubberies or ornaments of the visited properties. The following, description of the roads near Oxford, is typical of his commentary:

The roads have been everywhere more or less improved, but they still fall short of what they ought to be.64

Loudon assigned no method of construction to the disappointing roads or insightful comments on surface condition or drainage, nor did he offer any advice on how they should be improved. His comments were equally sparse when addressing broader landscape issues related to roads. The relationship of the road to the landscape typically read as incidental; when he did note fine views or prospects, the role of the road in framing or unveiling the view by its alignment was not noted.

The road from Godalming to Haslemere, a distance of eight miles, is one of the most grand and romantic in Surrey or Sussex. It is chiefly through natural woods and open woody commons, and it passes over two or three hills, from the highest of which, between Stroud and Haslemere, a very extensive prospect is obtained.65

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63 John Claudius Loudon, as quoted in Boniface, In Search of English Gardens, p. 34.
64 Ibid., p. 90.
65 Ibid., pp. 33-34.
The tour of Stourhead (1833), which Loudon characterized as “a fine specimen of country residences of the old school of modern gardening,” provided one of his few descriptions suggesting the application of landscape theory in the design and alignment of a road.

The drive at Stourhead, which is said to be six miles in extent, displays some fine woods and extensive prospects; but the ascents are too steep to be enjoyed by those who, like us, travel with only one horse. The table-land on which the tower stands having been gained, nearly level, and covered with soft turf, is one of the finest things of the kind in the kingdom. The view extends over many miles, and into several counties. One of the finest features about any extensive place which is hilly, or contains a high hill, such as Stourhead or High Clere, is a smooth road which shall ascend almost insensibly, and by a beautiful route to the top of the hill, and descend again equally agreeably by a different road. There is no hill that exists in which this effect may not be accomplished; and of this ascent and descent of the Simplon[67] is a standing proof.

During a tour of Devonshire, Loudon specifically noted the absence of views when describing the public roads, yet in his recommendations to improve the network he described as “very badly arranged” his advice was practical and utilitarian. While he acknowledged the contribution of views to his experience at Stourhead, he seemed unwilling or unable to articulate a similar accommodation in Devonshire. An absence of such vision is particularly important in the following text where he proposed a radical transformation of the roads in the Devonshire district as a philosophical enquiry—an abstract exercise in which his criticism of the district’s high banks preventing views from the road may have been easily rectified within his theoretical survey.

The greater part of Devonshire, more particularly of the south part, seemed very badly arranged in respect to parish roads. Owing to the

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66 Ibid., p. 142.
67 Likely reference to the Simplon Pass in Switzerland (6,578ft./2,005m.); in 1819 Loudon visited Switzerland.
small size of the fields the roads are far too numerous, and it is to the same cause that we must attribute their circuitous direction and their narrowness. We have already noticed the high hedge banks which accompany these roads, and prevent the traveller from seeing into the fields except when he comes to a gateway. We feel confident that we do not exaggerate when we say that in many cases the ground lost to the proprietors by the lanes and fences, which would be superfluous if the ground were properly laid out, amounts to from 10 to 20 per cent. Proprietors of lands of great extent may remedy this evil themselves, but in general it would require the cooperation of the district. In either case a survey should first be made, and not only the roads and fences, but the inclination of the surface, natural drainage, and course of water ditches and brooks pointed out; and from this plan, jointly with the careful examination of the ground, a rearrangement of the surface into shorter lines of road, straighter hedges, ditches, and brooks, and larger fields, might be determined on. Even if the direction of the roads, and the general drainage, were rectified on sound principles, much public good would result, and the arrangement of the fields and farms might be left to the proprietors.69

While it may be unfair to compare the public roads of Devonshire to the garden at Stourhead, such a compartmentalization of aesthetic considerations was not atypical for Loudon. His proposal to remedy poor function and organization excluded any recommendation to correct the scenic deficiencies he had commented on within the road network. By contrast, as noted in Chapter 2, Repton presented passionate arguments against the loss of scenery from the public highways of England, and Telford adeptly employed his engineering discretion to enhance the scenery of the Scottish Highlands despite the pecuniary constraints imposed by Parliament. It may be suggested that Loudon’s focus on suburban villas, and the smaller acreages not requiring pleasure drives, prevented him from considering the application of landscape gardening to the larger public highway. However, even within the designed landscape of a rural cemetery, Loudon was distracted by his focus on the economy of the road network and seemingly unable to consider

aesthetic alternatives. In an article in *Gardener’s Magazine* on the laying out of public cemeteries, he advised:

> The direction of the *roads, walks, and green paths*, is partly a matter of necessity and partly a matter of design and taste. Where the surface of the ground is hilly, undulating, or otherwise irregular, winding roads become necessary; but where the surface is tolerably even, whether a uniform slope or a flat approaching to a level, the choice lies between straight lines and curvilinear ones. The direction of the roads and walks, and consequently the whole of the interior arrangement of the cemetery, are thus in a great measure controlled by the character of its surface. In general, straight roads and walks are greatly to be preferred in a cemetery to winding ones, not only as admitting of a more economical occupation of the ground, every grave being a rectangle […] but as contributing far more than curved lines to grandeur and solemnity of effect. If all the roads cannot be made straight, there ought, if possible, to be one broad and straight road from the main entrance to the chapel. A winding road from the main entrance, with the chapel concealed by trees, has too much the character of an approach-road through a park to a country residence.\(^7^0\)

Loudon was constrained by the geometry of gravesites and appeared unable to envision a larger design not dictated by the arrangement of burial plots. His advice that straight lines contributed to “grandeur” of the place was antithetical to the guiding principles of the rural cemetery movements in Europe and North America that valued naturalistic landscapes and vehemently eschewed straight lines.\(^7^1\) Such advice is particularly noteworthy given his selection of a quote from Washington Irving to enlighten his readers on the new philosophy toward cemeteries:

> “Why,” says Washington Irving, “should we thus seek to clothe death with unnecessary terrors, and to spread horrors around the tomb of those we love? The grave should be surrounded by every thing that

\(^7^0\) John Claudius Loudon, “The Principles of Landscape-Gardening and of Landscape-Architecture applied to the Laying out of Public Cemeteries […],” *Gardener’s Magazine*, vol. XIX, April 1843, pp. 146-147. (italics original)

\(^7^1\) It should be noted that Bigelow (1860), under a section titled “Cautionary Suggestions,” reported that Mount Auburn’s Trustees adopted a plan to “make both the paths and lots more parallel to each other.” The original plan, based solely on topography, had resulted in “intermediate spaces” of limited value and utility. See Bigelow, *A History of Mt. Auburn Cemetery*, pp. 117-118.
might inspire tenderness and veneration for the dead, or that might win the living to virtue. It is the place, not of disgust and dismay, but of sorrow and meditation.”

Loudon’s guidance for cemetery roads and his proposal for Devonshire, suggest a man with a limited view for the possibilities of roads as attractive features complementing the larger public landscape. Unlike Repton and Telford, he considered the road primarily as a utilitarian device. Nevertheless, that he felt compelled to weigh in on the issue of roads in his *Gardener’s Magazine* demonstrated that he viewed the design of pleasure roads legitimately within the purview of landscape gardening.

Loudon’s impassive views regarding roads designed for pleasure is important to understand as an aspect of the transatlantic conversation. His books and *Gardener’s Magazine* were written for the emerging middle classes and largely addressed the landscape requirements of suburban villas—residential lots typically too small to consider pleasure drives. In America, his writings presented a popular vision of British landscape gardening that the designs of Repton’s great estates could not convey to the average reader. Further, by offering no alternatives to Repton’s pleasure drives, Loudon, by default, maintained the supremacy of Repton’s concepts for approach roads and carriage drives in their purist form.

Most importantly, his rapprochement with Repton resulting in the publication of *The Landscape Gardening and Landscape Architecture of the Late Humphry Repton*, ensured that Repton’s theories for approach roads and carriage drives were introduced to the American audience with the imprimatur of arguably the most highly regarded landscape designer in the English-speaking world.

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ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

Andrew Jackson Downing (1815-1852) maintained a close personal correspondence with John Claudius Loudon and was a regular contributor to his Gardener’s Magazine; he would become the editor of its American counterpart, The Horticulturist.73 Downing did much to establish an appreciation for the American landscape and to distinguish its landforms, features and particularly scale, as different from Europe. He relied heavily on the principles of the Picturesque to explain his landscape ideas and looked to Repton and Loudon as models.74 His office, residence and many of his projects were in the Hudson River valley of New York State—a center of the American Picturesque. He was, according to George Tatum in Prophet with Honor, “the first American-born gardener to achieve an international reputation.”75

Downing was born in Newburgh, New York. He was the youngest son of a wheelwright and nurseryman. He was influenced by Alexis de Tocqueville's Democracy in America (published 1835) and saw himself as a champion of the middle classes whom he implored to pay the same “prideful attention” to their homes and gardens as the wealthy.76 He was an advocate of democratic participation in the establishment of public institutions such as libraries, lyceums, horticultural societies, public parks and rural cemeteries. Downing was a frequent visitor to Mount Auburn Cemetery.77 He viewed the application of the Picturesque to the landscape as a mitigating response to

73 Contributions by Downing to Gardener’s Magazine begin in the final years of its publication. Contributions from Downing may be found in 1839 and 1840 where he commented on the state of gardening in the United States. Excerpts of Downing’s A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening Adapted to North America appeared in August and September 1841.
75 Tatum, Prophet With Honor, p. 43.
76 Rogers, Landscape Design, p. 326.
77 Linden, Silent City on a Hill, p. 249.
growing industrialization and suburbanization—and an effort to maintain his dream of an American Arcadia.\textsuperscript{78}

Downing’s lofty aspirations for the young republic outpaced its ability to produce the theorists and writers needed to transform the landscape. In a section in Loudon’s \textit{Gardener’s Magazine} entitled “Notes on the Progress of Gardening in the United States during the Year 1840,” Downing commented on the dearth of books and journals addressing landscape gardening in America and the reliance of the United States on British publications.

\textit{In the Literature of Gardening}, but little has been produced here, as the current works of the English press, of higher character, find their way across the Atlantic almost as soon as published.\textsuperscript{79}

To redress the inequality, in 1841 Downing published his widely read and influential book, \textit{A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening Adapted to North America With a View to the Improvement of Country Residences}. Downing’s title reflected the titles of two of Repton’s books, \textit{Observations on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening} (1803) and \textit{Fragments on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening} (1816).\textsuperscript{80} As Tatum notes this “borrowing was doubtless deliberate” and just as Repton considered himself the heir to Brown, Downing styled himself as the American heir to Repton.\textsuperscript{81} For American readers desirous of expert landscape advice and guidance, “It did not matter,” as Therese O’Malley states in her 1991 introduction to Loudon’s volume, “that the large majority of the theory and practice contained in the \textit{Treatise} came directly from English writers and

\textsuperscript{78} Rogers, \textit{Landscape Design}, p. 327.

\textsuperscript{79} “Notes on the Progress of Gardening in the United States during the Year 1840,” \textit{Gardener’s Magazine}, vol. VI, new series, December 1840. (Italics original)

\textsuperscript{80} It should be noted that within Downing’s \textit{Theory and Practice} he only cited Repton’s \textit{Enquiry into the Changes in Taste in Landscape Gardening} (page 340) and \textit{Observations on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening} (page 17) in the “Historical Notices” section of the 1841 edition. However \textit{Observations} is not listed in the “Historical Notices” section of the 1850 edition used for this thesis; the 1850 edition does include a testimonial to Repton in the “Historical Notices” section on pages 36 and 37 not found in the 1841 edition).

\textsuperscript{81} Tatum, \textit{Prophet With Honor}, p. 64.
designers such as Humphry Repton and John Claudius Loudon.”\textsuperscript{82} Indeed, Downing’s inclusion of “Adapted to North America” in his title suggested no less a truth.

Downing quoted in full the eight principal requisites for roads in the “modern style” as developed by Humphry Repton, a man he called “one of the most celebrated English practical landscape gardeners.”\textsuperscript{83} While these eight principles focused on the approach road Repton described in his Red Book for Tatton Park, they introduced to the American audience the theory behind the development of a circulation system designed for pleasure and its artful placement within the larger landscape. Repton’s eighth principle was broadly applicable to roads designed for pleasure due to its advice for routes that were logical in their course and based on physical landscape forms—natural or artificial: “As soon as the house is visible from the approach, there should be no temptation to quit it (which will ever be the case if the road be at all circuitous), unless sufficient obstacles, such as water or inaccessible ground, appear to justify its course.”\textsuperscript{84} In addition to presenting the theories of Repton and Loudon, Downing was particularly adept at engaging his readers in a conversational style and skillfully introducing new concepts into the American mind and the American landscape.

The Drive is a variety of road rarely seen among us, yet which may be made a very agreeable feature in some of our country residences, at a small expense. It is intended for exercise more secluded than that upon the public road, and to show the interesting portions of the place from the carriage, or on horseback. Of course it can only be formed upon places of considerable extent; but it enhances the enjoyment of such places very highly, in the estimation of those who are fond of equestrian exercises. It generally commences where the approach terminates, viz. near the house: and from thence, proceeds in the same

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\textsuperscript{84} Downing, \textit{A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening}, p. 339.
easy curvilinear manner through various parts of the grounds, farm or estate. Sometimes it sweeps through the pleasure grounds, and returns along the very beach of the river, beneath the fine overhanging foliage of its projecting bank; sometimes it proceeds towards some favorite point of view, or interesting spot on the landscape; or at others it leaves the lawn and traverses the farm, giving the proprietor an opportunity to examine his crops, or exhibit his agricultural resources to his friends.\textsuperscript{85}

Downing’s book met with the approbation of his friend Loudon who presented a two-part summary of the volume in his \textit{Gardener’s Magazine}. He concluded the book’s extensive excerpts noting:

\begin{quote}
We have quoted largely from this work, because, in so doing, we think we should give a just idea of the great merit of the author, instruct our readers without doing him any injury, and give a very favourable idea of the progress of taste among our Transatlantic brethren.\textsuperscript{86}
\end{quote}

In 1846 Downing edited the first American edition of Jane Loudon’s \textit{Gardening for Ladies}. Also in 1846 he accepted an invitation to become the editor of a new monthly magazine called \textit{The Horticulturist}. The invitation from Luther Tucker of Albany was likely due to Downing’s widespread popularity after the publication of his \textit{A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening}.\textsuperscript{87} In 1847, another popular book, \textit{Hints to Persons about Building in the Country}, was published. Downing’s national reputation created a groundswell of individuals and organizations seeking his counsel and he found himself in need of a business partner to assist with his growing practice. In 1850 he traveled to London in search of a competent architect to help establish his new office in Newburgh. Through the recently formed Architectural Association, Downing was introduced to English architect Calvert Vaux, whom he met at a London art exhibit that included Vaux’s

\textsuperscript{85} Ibid., pp. 341-342. (italics original)
\textsuperscript{87} Tatum, \textit{Prophet With Honor}, p. 29.
work.\textsuperscript{88} Vaux later recalled of their meeting, “I liked him so much, his thoughts and observations [...] that without a fear I relinquished all and accompanied him” to North America.\textsuperscript{89} Vaux became a partner at Downing’s office, soon known as “Downing and Vaux.” Among their many commissions were landscape designs for the White House and the grounds of the new Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.\textsuperscript{90}

While in England, Downing made a tour of gardens and parks that was relayed to the readers of The Horticulturist in a series titled, “Mr. Downing’s Letter from England,” printed in the journal throughout 1851. In his January letter, the first, he noted that his party traveled in “one of the light, open carriages, with which the Island abounds,” as he commenced his travels and began his commentary on England.\textsuperscript{91} In an observation of the dense hedges blocking the views from the public roads, he wrote:

All over the Island, the roads, sometimes broad—but often mere narrow lanes—are bordered by high hawthorn hedges—so that frequently you drive for a mile or more, without getting a peep beyond these leafy walls of verdure. I could imagine that in May, when these hedges are all white with blossoms, the whole Island must be a very gay landscape—but just now, they only served to confirm me in my opinion of the Englishman’s fondness for seclusion and privacy, in his own demesne.\textsuperscript{92}

His criticism reflected Repton’s fierce objection to the loss of scenery from public roads (see Chapter 2) and echoed Loudon’s similar commentary. As a

\textsuperscript{89} Letter from Calvert Vaux to Wilder, as quoted in Prophet With Honor, p. 37.
\textsuperscript{90} The Smithsonian Institution was established in 1846 with a bequest from Englishman James Smithson (c1765-1829). Smithson, the illegitimate son of the 1st Duke of Northumberland, was a chemist and mineralogist; he never visited the United States. It remains unclear why he left his fortune to a nation he never visited to establish an institution “for the increase and diffusion of knowledge;” it is generally believed his gift was due to his admiration for the young democracy and its classless society.
\textsuperscript{91} Andrew Jackson Downing, “Mr. Downing’s Letter from England,” The Horticulturist, vol. VI, no. 1, January 1851, p. 36.
\textsuperscript{92} Ibid., p. 38.
part of his tour, Downing visited Woburn Abbey and penned this observation of Repton’s approach drive:

The Woburn estate consists of about thirty thousand acres of land. [...] You enter the approach through a singularly rich avenue of evergreens, composed of a belt perhaps one hundred feet broad, sloping down like an amphitheatre of foliage, from tall Norway spruces and pines in the back ground [sic], to rich hollies and Portugal laures in front. This continues, perhaps half a mile, and then you leave it and wind through an open park, spacious and grand—for a couple of miles—till you reach the Abbey.93

His description of the approach road at Woburn, much like Loudon’s description of the avenue at Newark Castle in Scotland, was more an exposition of plant material than an instructive discourse on the importance of Repton’s alignment, views and choreography in the design of the approach road.

Both Repton’s comments on public scenery and his design for Woburn Abbey were included in *Fragments*. It seems unusual that no reference to Repton or his work at Woburn was included in Downing’s letters.94 Downing’s omission of any reference to Repton represented either an editorial decision or an ignorance of Repton’s writings. While ignorance of Repton’s contributions was unlikely, many of Downing’s contemporaries were not fully convinced of his technical skills.95 Even Vaux noted, “The value of Downing’s books here has been great not because of their technical excellence, for they are very poor in that quality, but because they are full of life and interest.”96 In general, as with Loudon, Downing appeared more comfortable and conversant when writing about issues of horticulture and architectural taste than design theory.

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93 Downing, “Mr. Downing’s Letters from England,” *The Horticulturist*, vol. VI, no. 2, February 1851, p. 84.
94 Woburn Abbey is referenced briefly in Downing’s “Historical Notes” in *Theory and Practice* (see page 38) as an example of the “modern style,” but without reference to Repton.
95 Tatum, *Prophet With Honor,* p. 31.
96 Letter from Calvert Vaux to Richard Grant White, 1860, from *Prophet With Honor*, p. 31.
If Downing lacked the technical skills to extrapolate the design principles from the Woburn approach road, it did not lessen his ability to recognize the importance of pleasure roads within the landscape. Unlike Loudon, he possessed an obvious fascination with modern roads and luxury vehicles. In "Mr. Downing's Letter from England" describing the London parks, he introduced his American audience to a cavalcade of pleasure vehicles in Hyde Park (Figure 4.10). Downing's exuberant description and jocular commentary were penned from a seat under the shadow of a large elm at “half-past four in the afternoon, and the fashionable world (who dine at seven all over England) is now taking its morning airing.”

This broad well-macadamized carriage-drive, which makes a circuit of some 4 or 5 miles in Hyde Park, is, at this moment, fairly filled with private carriages of all degrees. Here are heavy coaches and four, with postillons [the driver of a horse-drawn coach or post chaise] and footman, and massive carriages emblazoned with family crests and gay with all the brilliancy of gold and crimson liveries; yonder superb barouche with eight spirited horses and numerous outriders, is the royal equipage, and as you lean forward to catch a glimpse of the sovereign, the close coach of the hero of Waterloo, the servants with cockades in their hats, dashes past you the other way at a rate so rapid that you doubt if he who rides within, is out merely for an airing. [...] Unceasingly the carriages roll by, and you are less astonished at the numberless superb equipages or the beauty of the horses, than at the old-world air of the footmen in gold and silver lace, gaudy liveries, spotless linen and snowy silk stockings. Some of the grand old coachmen in full powdered wigs, decked in all the glory of laced coats and silken calves, held the ribbons with such a conscious air of imposing grandeur that I willingly accepted them as the tree-poenoias [sic], the most blooming blossoms of this parterre of equipage.97

Downing was outspoken in his admiration of the London parks and commented in great detail on their maintenance, design, use and close proximity to one another. As before, he was adept at taking a foreign concept and introducing it with alacrity to his American audience. “You look out upon the forest verdure in Green Park [...] which seems to you more like a glimpse

into one of the loveliest pleasure grounds on the Hudson [...].” 98 He then invited his readers to enter Hyde Park in the early morning hours where “you will fancy [...] that you have made a mistake and strolled out into the country unawares” and delight in the “broad grass meadows with scattered groups of trees, not at all unlike what you remember on the smooth banks of the Connecticut [...].” 99 The association of the public parks of London with the scenery of the Hudson River Valley and the Connecticut River was a shrewd and surreptitious argument—Downing was among a group of vocal advocates calling for the creation of a large public park for New York City. The London Parks inspired him and, as the following excerpt from his “Letter” shows, he pandered to his readers with sentimental imagery from America and gentle admonition for his countrymen’s parochial worldview.

In the midst of London lie, in an almost connected series, the great parks. Hyde Park, Regent’s Park, St. James’ and Green Parks. These names are almost as familiar to you as the Battery and Washington Square, and I fear you labor under the delusion that the former are only an enlarged edition of the latter. Believe me, you have fallen into as great an error as if you took the “Brick meeting-house” for a suggestion of St. Peters. The London parks are actually like districts of open country—meadows and fields, country estates, lakes and streams, gardens and shrubberies, with as much variety as if you were in the heart of Cambridgeshire, and as much seclusion in some parts, at certain hours, as if you were on a farm in the interior of Pennsylvania. And the whole is laid out and treated, in the main, with a broad and noble feeling of natural beauty [...] Unaccustomed to this breadth of imitation of nature—this creating a piece of wide-spread country large enough to shut out for the time all trace of the houses, though actually in the midst of a city, an American is always half inclined to believe, (notwithstanding the abundance of evidence to the contrary,) that the London Parks are a bit of the native country, surprised and fairly taken prisoner by the outstretched arms of this giant of modern cities.100

Downing’s observation on the proximity of the London Parks to one another and their near connectivity established an important concept for American

98 Ibid., p. 282.
99 Ibid.
100 Ibid., p. 281
parks that would ultimately lead to the creation of the “parkway.” On his return from England, Downing used his position as editor of *The Horticulturist* to publish an appeal for a public park in New York. In an August 1851 article entitled “The New-York Park,” he made his argument to the citizens of New York:

> The fourth city in the world, (with a growth that will soon make it the second,) the commercial metropolis of a continent spacious enough to border both oceans, has not hitherto been able to afford sufficient land to give its citizens, (the majority of whom live there the whole year round,) any breathing space for pure air, any recreation ground for healthful exercise, any pleasant roads for riding or driving, or any enjoyment of that lovely and refreshing natural beauty from which they have, in leaving the country, reluctantly expatriated themselves for so many years—perhaps for ever.\(^{101}\)

His visionary appeal urged the creation of a park of no less than 500 acres (200 hectares) and included many prominent references to pleasure drives where New Yorkers could enjoy the “substantial delights of country roads.”

> In that area there would be space enough to have broad reaches of park and pleasure-grounds, with a real feeling of the breadth and beauty of green fields, the perfume and freshness of nature. In its midst would be located the great distributing reservoirs of the Croton aqueduct, formed into lovely lakes of limpid water, covering many acres, and heightening the charm of the sylvan accessories by the finest natural contrast. In such a park, the citizens who would take excursions in carriages, or on horseback, could have the substantial delights of country roads and country scenery, and forget for a time the rattle of the pavements and the glare of brick walls.\(^{102}\)

His detailed park vision also included sleighing on winter avenues. Of additional note in the following quote is the familiarity by which he referenced Paxton’s Crystal Palace in a description of possible features for a

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\(^{102}\) Ibid., p. 347.
New York park—his casual reference suggesting many Americans were closely following London’s Great Exhibition of 1851.

In the broad area of such a verdant zone would gradually grow up, as the wealth of the city increases, winter gardens of glass, like the great Crystal Palace, where the whole people could luxuriate in groves of the palms and spice trees of the tropics, at the same moment that sleighing parties glided swiftly and noiselessly over the snow covered surface of the country-like avenues of the wintry park without.\(^\text{103}\)

It is generally believed that Downing would have been tasked with the design of the great park he envisioned. Unfortunately, he died tragically on July 28, 1852 while aboard the Hudson River steamer *Henry Clay*. The steamboat, with 500 passengers, caught fire en route to New York City from Albany in one of the worst boating disasters on the Hudson River.\(^\text{104}\) Downing was at the peak of his career and influence. Five months earlier he had hired a second English architect, Frederick Clarke Withers, to help with his growing practice. Vaux eulogized his close colleague and dear friend:

[...] the tidings of his sudden and shocking death were mournfully received by his family and friends, and almost as mournfully by thousands, who, knowing him only through his books, still felt that he was to them a dear and intimate companion. Mr. Downing was on his way to Newport, to superintend the execution of Mr. Parish’s villa, on the day when the loss of the *Henry Clay* in an instant struck out his name from the roll of living men, and thereby inflicted an irreparable injury on his country; for Andrew Jackson Downing was not only one of the most energetic and unprejudiced artists that have yet appeared in America, but his views and aspirations were so liberal and pure that his artistic perceptions were chiefly valued by him as handmaids to his higher and diviner views of life and beauty. It is for this reason that his loss is so severely felt [...].\(^\text{105}\)

\(^{103}\) Ibid.
\(^{104}\) The Henry Clay disaster resulted in the passage of the Steamboat Act of 1852 by the U.S. Congress which mandated new rules for life boats and inspections.
\(^{105}\) Vaux, *Villas and Cottages*, p. x.
With Downing’s death, his protégé, Calvert Vaux was one of the few Americans who could claim any training in landscape design.106

CALVERT VAUX

Calvert Vaux (1824-1895) was born in London and trained as an architect under Lewis Nockalls Cottingham, a leader in the Gothic Revival Movement. He was an accomplished artist with an appreciation for the subtleties of nature. When he first arrived in America with Downing, he immersed himself in the landscape, exploring the Hudson Valley and wandering through the Adirondack Mountains to sketch and paint the scenery.107 After Downing’s death, Vaux ran their partnership in Newburgh. In 1854 he married the sister of landscape painter Jervis McEntee and in 1856 became an American citizen and moved his office to New York City. He purchased a house on the New Jersey Palisades overlooking the Hudson River just north of New York (and maintained a pied-à-terre in the city). He named his son, born in 1856, Downing Vaux in memory of his mentor and friend. Possessing the soul of Lord Byron, as a former student recalled, Vaux associated easily with many well-known New York artists, poets, writers and journalists, including the painter Frederic Edwin Church (1826-1900), a central figure in the Hudson River School, and George William Curtis, influential editor of Harper’s New Monthly Magazine.108

In 1857 he published his first book, Villas and Cottages, A Series of Designs Prepared for Execution in the United States. His contribution to the

107 Colley, Prospect Park, p. 49.
transatlantic conversation is important. Of the four figures presented here, he is the only one to be professionally trained in England and later practice in the United States. It is fair to say he was able to speak with authority regarding the landscape of his adopted country and the transference of English landscape theory and the Picturesque Movement to North America. In _Villas and Cottages_, Vaux noted that “The study of what has been done by other nations, though useful as a help, will never, by itself, lead to much result in America, where the institutions, the needs of the climate, and the habits of the people, have a distinctive character that requires special consideration [...]”

Vaux embraced his new home and the frenetic energy of a young nation focused on westward expansion—and increasingly divided over slavery. He arrived in the United States the year California was admitted into the Union—becoming the first state on the Pacific coast and spurring a new wave of migration to the West. Demonstrating an astute awareness of the population of his new home, he opened his book by stating, “Every American who is in the habit of traveling, which is almost equivalent to saying every American [...]”

In this young and peripatetic nation Vaux possessed an innate ability to speak to the people and sensibilities of a young nation experiencing its first flush of prosperity and, in the years immediately preceding the Civil War, articulate the universality of the agrarian landscape and rural village as cultural touchstones in an increasingly fractious, and soon to be divided, nation.

In _Villas and Cottages_ he introduced the idea of the Picturesque within a distinctly American context and with references to democratic ideals (“human nature, when allowed a free, healthy scope”) and individuality (“the stirring, unconventional, free-spirited man”), terms well suited to the sensibilities of an American audience.

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109 Vaux, _Villas and Cottages_, p. 45.
110 Ibid., p. ix.
The great charm in the forms of natural landscape lies in its well-balanced irregularity. This is also the secret of success in every picturesque village, and in every picturesque garden, country-house, or cottage. Human nature, when allowed a free, healthy scope, loves heartily this well-balanced irregularity, and longs for it in life, in character, and in almost every thing. It is the possession of this same quality, even when the balance is incompletely kept, that makes the stirring, unconventional, free-spirited man so much more interesting and agreeable than the cold, correct, and somewhat unsympathetic gentleman who never does any harm to any one, and whose equanimity is never disturbed. We want far less formality and restraint in the plans of our new villages.111

Demonstrating the diversity of professional practice of the period and the value he placed upon roads, Vaux transitioned into detailed commentary on the design of roads and their proper relationship to the landscape. He provided a cautionary lesson when describing a poorly executed road project in New York State. His example was an admonishment of the long-term ramifications of poor planning and his preferred treatment for such public investments—evocative of Repton’s eight requisites for the approach road at Tatton Park. “A winding road so laid out as to skirt the pond,” reflected the eighth requisite for Tatton where Repton noted that natural features, such as water, will “justify” the course of a road.

The roads should wind in graceful, easy curves, and be laid out in accordance with the formation of the ground and the natural features of interest. A single existing tree ought often to be the all-sufficient reason for slightly diverting the line of a road, so as to take advantage of its shade, instead of cutting it down and grubbing up its roots. In a case that recently occurred near a country town at some distance from New York, a road was run through a very beautiful estate, one agreeable feature of which was a pretty though small pond that, even in the driest seasons, was always full of water, and would have formed an agreeable adjunct to a country-seat. A single straight pencil-line on the plan doubtless marked out the direction of the road; and as this line happened to go straight through the pond, straight through the pond was the road accordingly carried, the owner of the estate personally superintending the operation, and thus spoiling his sheet of water,

111 Ibid., p. 51.
diminishing the value of his lands, and increasing expense by the cost of filling in, without any advantage whatever: for a winding road so laid out as to skirt the pond, would have been far more attractive and agreeable than the harsh, straight line that is now scored like a railway track clear through the undulating surface of the property; and such barbarisms are of constant occurrence. Points of this nature deserve the utmost attention, instead of the reckless disregard they generally meet with. When once a road is laid out, its fate is settled, and no alteration is likely to be made: it is, therefore, the more desirable that its direction should be well studied in the first instance.  

Just as Southey had argued for a greater investment in the roads and bridges Telford constructed in the Highlands, Vaux too recognized the permanence and long term consequences resulting from poor decisions on the location of public infrastructure. Vaux’s comments also echoed Repton’s advice about the approach road at Cobham Hall in Sketches and Hints where he noted, “There seems to be as much absurdity in carrying an approach round, to include those objects which do not naturally fall within its reach, as there was formerly in cutting through an hill, to obtain a straight line [...]”.  

Vaux, like many designers of his time, had an aptitude and appreciation for aspects of design that, today, would be considered separately as architecture, landscape architecture and planning (at a minimum). The following critique by Vaux demonstrated his skill at assessing scenery and, importantly, his understanding of the design sensitivity required to make popular picturesque attractions accessible to the public with a visitor infrastructure respectful of the natural setting. He described the setting of the Catskill Mountain House (Figure 4.11) and Kaaterskill Falls, the location of one of the first roads in the United States constructed to provide access to a scenic view (and the subject of several paintings by Thomas Cole).  

A white, isolated speck, visible in the gray distance, marks the situation of the Kaatskill Mountain House, and calls to mind the many beautiful
spots in its vicinity, one of which, “The Falls,” I have thought it worth while to speak of more particularly here, because its pictorial effect is much injured by the unarchitectural [sic] treatment it has received at the hands of those who have attempted to make the access to it more satisfactory to tourists. This beautiful fall of water is so picturesquely grouped in connection with the trees and the rocky precipitous sides of the mountain, that its upper edge, or lip, seen through the spray from below, would appear to be at a great height from the eye, if it were not for a clumsy boarded structure that has been erected just on the brink of the descent to afford visitors a view clear down into the valley. This square mass in a great measure destroys the effect that Nature has attempted so successfully to produce, and is one among very many unfortunate instances of harm done to picturesque scenery through a lack of a little architectural knowledge in a rural way.\textsuperscript{114}

This quote established Vaux’s sensitivity to picturesque landscape features, but more importantly, his understanding of the interaction of the tourist with exceptional scenery. He made no disparaging remarks about the visitors to the falls—only the “clumsy” structure erected by those profiting from the spectacular cataract. Indeed, his words had an implicit underlying sympathy for the tourists. He continued by suggesting a better alternative to access the falls.

The practical advantage gained is at once allowed; but the important point is, that an equally satisfactory and convenient result might have been attained, not only without any sacrifice of picturesque effect, but with even some advantage in this respect. For example, the boarded structure might have been omitted altogether, and a rough stone wall built up in great blocks, and without mortar, to the requisite height in a bold, irregular manner, could have received a platform at the required level, and a small, picturesque building might have been placed on this platform, if needed. In a year or so, by this arrangement, the rude new wall would have been covered up with vines and creepers, so that it would have added an actual twenty feet to the real height at this point, and an apparent height, when seen from below, of thirty or forty feet. As the building stands at present it dwarfs the appearance of the fall, and can hardly fail to strike the eye as a decided blemish, obtruded on the attention at the most interesting point of view in the whole landscape in which it occurs.\textsuperscript{115}

\textsuperscript{114} Vaux, Villas and Cottages, p. 167.
\textsuperscript{115} Ibid., pp. 167-168.
Vaux’s response was noteworthy and an indication of his thoughtful approach toward sites of scenic interest. He presented his reader not with an abstract call for a more appropriate structure, but with an exquisite description of a stone structure made of “great blocks”—so richly narrated and eloquently detailed that the reader could visualize the “vines and creepers” overtaking the massive stone structure in a picturesque flourish of tendrils and new green leaves. His skill at visualizing an improved solution was so tantalizing, so seductive and so convincing that the practicalities of cost and engineering were accorded little opportunity to distract the reader from his vision. It is very likely that the descriptive skills he presented in Villas and Cottages were used to advance many of the goals he and Olmsted shared for the design of Central Park. Importantly, the description of the Katterskill Falls was an insightful preview of Vaux’s personal philosophy toward the accommodation of visitors in park structures finely crafted, sensitively located and subordinate to the larger landscape.

Villas and Cottages was published shortly before his partnership with Olmsted and Central Park. While often presented as the “architect” who assisted Olmsted in the design of Central Park, his writings from Villas and Cottages and his work in Andrew Jackson Downing’s office—the premier landscape design office in the United States at the time—suggest that the sophisticated introduction of the Picturesque into Central Park was not from Olmsted. Vaux, it may be argued, established the American preference for the picturesque style in the design of its park structures.

Contrary to popular belief, it was Vaux who invited Frederick Law Olmsted, then superintendent of Central Park, to join him in developing a plan for the park competition and it was Vaux who characterized their work as “landscape architecture”116—defining for the first time the modern profession.117

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116 Alex and Tatum, Calvert Vaux, p. 10.
FREDERICK LAW OLMSTED

Frederick Law Olmsted (1822-1903) was the founder of the modern profession of landscape architecture. He consciously redirected landscape gardening, as practiced by Repton, from a largely private and affluent clientele, to a profession focused on a public client and social responsibility. With Calvert Vaux he designed America's two greatest country parks, Central Park in New York City and Prospect Park in Brooklyn, and defined a new park type, the "park-way." These two parks and his subsequent projects and reports defined the urban country park and parkway and laid the philosophical and aesthetic foundation for America's National Parks. The landscape designer who most influenced Olmsted was Repton.118 No doubt, Repton's pragmatic approach to landscape, planning and design appealed to Olmsted's equally pragmatic views for organizing space and understanding the needs of the user within the social context.

Olmsted was born in Connecticut, the son of a prosperous middle class merchant who appreciated education and valued the natural landscape. Growing up, Olmsted had opportunities to travel and experience a breadth of landscapes. His father took him on tours throughout New England, and he visited one of North America's most sublime attractions, Niagara Falls. His natural inclination to observe and appreciate the landscape was supplemented by reading landscape theory. As a youth he read An Essay on the Picturesque by Uvedale Price and Gilpin's Remarks on Forest Scenery at the

117 Many popular histories suggest it was Frederick Law Olmsted who first used the term “landscape architecture” to define the profession. It should be noted that J.C. Loudon used the term “landscape architecture” in the title of his collection of Repton’s works published in 1840: The Landscape Gardening and Landscape Architecture of the Late Humphry Repton. It is likely more accurate to say that Vaux was the first to use the term to define a new profession and reject the title “landscape gardener”—suggesting that planning and design were to take a priority over horticulture and gardening.

Hartford, Connecticut, Public Library.119 At fifteen he became an apprentice surveyor, learning how to read topographical maps, calculate earth works and lay out roads.120 In 1843, he signed up for a merchant vessel and had the opportunity to visit China and other distant and exotic destinations. Returning after a year at sea he decided on a career in farming; first in Connecticut and then on a 123 acre (fifty hectare) farm on Staten Island. Olmsted embraced agriculture and modern scientific farming with enthusiasm. He learned about soils and drainage and developed a small commercial nursery. Despite his energy, his farm was not profitable, so with characteristic aplomb, he convinced his father to send him to England to study modern agriculture techniques. The trip had little measurable benefit on his Staten Island farm, but the successful book chronicling his journey launched a professional writing career that would establish him as a pragmatic thinker, social reformer and observer of nature both in America and in Britain.

Olmsted’s first book, Walks and Talks of An American Farmer in England, published in 1852, reinforced the general interest in and affection for England that Americans, particularly during this period, had for the traditions and culture of the mother country. In his Preface he acknowledged the familiarity that many Americans had with England through books and journals noting, “I have spent, previous to my own journey, a great many long winter evenings in reading the books, so frequently written by our literary tourists, upon England.”121

While written as a travelogue and intended for “farmers and farmers’ families” whom he expected to “come into a warm, good-natured, broad country kitchen fireside relationship with me,”122 the observations and descriptions in the book serve as prescient insights into the social and design theories that

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119 Zaitzevsky, Olmsted and the Boston Park System, p. 74.
120 Colley, Prospect Park, p. 55.
122 Olmsted, Walks and Talks, p. vi.
would occupy the second half of his life. The book included several references to roads and road-making, and Olmsted appeared to be both a keen observer and well informed of modern road construction techniques. Regarding the public streets of Liverpool, he wrote:

The best streets are paved only one-quarter the distance across them, the intermediate spaces being macadamized. This makes a very pleasant road. There is generally a wide side-walk, which is flagged as in our cities; but in the commercial streets is oftener paved like the carriage way, and in the narrowest, there is none at all. The streets are very clean, and all the sidewalks, gutters, and untraveled spaces, appear to be swept every day.¹²³

Comparing the Picturesque in America to England, Olmsted noted, “The scenery [in England] is beautiful without intention or artifice for the purpose of man, and yet is full of the convenience of man’s occupation; and it is picturesque without being ungentle or shabby.”¹²⁴

When visiting Birkenhead, near Liverpool, Olmsted noted a baker had “begged us not to leave Birkenhead without seeing their New Park, and at his suggestion we left our knapsacks with him, and proceeded to it.”¹²⁵ The exhortation, from an ordinary citizen, impressed upon him the value of public parks. Articulating what would become a point of personal pride with his work at Central Park, Olmsted noted, “I was glad to observe that the privileges of the garden were enjoyed about equally by all classes.”¹²⁶

Olmsted was favorably impressed by the design of the “New Park” and his often quoted account of his first moments in Birkenhead Park has been associated with his advocacy and inspiration for Central Park.

¹²³ Ibid., p. 42.
¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 264.
¹²⁵ Ibid., p. 61.
¹²⁶ Ibid., p. 62.
Walking a short distance up an avenue, we passed through another light iron gate into a thick, luxuriant, and diversified garden. Five minutes of admiration, and a few more spent in studying the manner in which art had been employed to obtain from nature so much beauty, and I was ready to admit that in democratic America there was nothing to be thought of as comparable with this People’s Garden.127

His narrative suggests he spent several hours touring the park and taking in the sights. While watching a cricket match, a sudden shower caused him to take shelter in a pagoda—where he recorded the diversity of the crowd, noting some of the park visitors “were attended by servants, and sent at once for their carriages, but a large portion were of the common ranks, and a few women with children, or suffering from ill health, were evidently the wives of very humble laborers.”128 At some point during his visit, he obtained information from the “head working-gardener” on the design and construction of the park. He reported that the carriage drives at Birkenhead Park were “thirty-four feet wide, with borders of ten feet,”129 and, likely reflecting his own interest in drainage, inquired of the construction method employed for the drives and walks. He reported:

The roads are macadamized. On each side of the carriage way, and of all the walks, pipes for drainage are laid, which communicate with deep main drains that run under the edge of all the mounds or flower beds. The walks are laid first with six inches of fine broken stone, then three inches of cinders, and the surface with six inches of fine rolled gravel.130

His account of Birkenhead Park was published by Andrew Jackson Downing in the Horticulturist in May 1851. Olmsted met Downing a few years earlier, and the encouragement by Downing not only gave promise to his career as a

127 Ibid.
128 Ibid.
129 Ibid., p. 63.
130 Ibid.
writer\textsuperscript{131}, but also supported Downing's own advocacy for a public park in New York.

Regarding the design of modern parks, Olmsted stated "the formation of entirely artificial complete landscapes, or the improvement of broad scenes throughout their whole scope and to remote distances, all in imitation of nature, is to this day the peculiar art of England."\textsuperscript{132} Olmsted cited writers and theorists influential in defining this style:

In the various “Picturesque Tours” of Gilpin, and the voluminous “Essays on the Picturesque” by Sir Uvedale Price, the true principles of art applicable to the creation of scenery were laboriously studied and carefully defined. Shenstone, Mason, and Knight, by their poems, materially aide the revivification of the art. In more recent times the good service of Repton, Loudon, Paxton, Kemp, and our own Downing, and other artists and writers on the subject during the present century, merits warm acknowledgment. Downing's works especially should be in every village school library.\textsuperscript{133}

As a practitioner he recommended reading Repton and other British landscape gardeners, theorists and aesthetes.\textsuperscript{134} Describing the influences he derived from these British publications, Olmsted, late in his career described these as "Books of the last century, but which I esteem so much more than any published since, as stimulating the exercise of judgment in matters of my art, that I put them into the hands of my pupils as soon as they come into our office, saying, 'You are to read these seriously, as a student of Law would read Blackstone.'"\textsuperscript{135} Olmsted's personal library included the work of Gilpin (including Observations on the Highlands of Scotland, third edition, 1808), Knight (including The Landscape, A Didactic Poem, 1794) and Loudon

\textsuperscript{131} Laura Wood Roper, FLO: A Biography of Frederick Law Olmsted (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), p. 78.
\textsuperscript{132} Frederick Law Olmsted, from his definition for “Park” written for the New American Cyclopaedia, 1861. See Beveridge, ed., The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted, vol. III, p. 360.
\textsuperscript{133} Ibid., vol. III, p. 359.
\textsuperscript{134} Roper, FLO: A Biography, p. 408.
The inventory included no original works of Repton; it is possible he purchased one or more of Repton’s volumes while in London, but a fire at his Staten Island farm destroyed part of his reference collection (see Appendix 1).137

THE CENTRAL PARK

The Central Park, as the park was originally called, was authorized by the New York State Legislature on July 21, 1853 with the passage of the Second Park Act.138 The act authorized the purchase of land “hereby declared to be a public place” bounded by Fifth Avenue to the east and Eighth Avenue to the west (now Central Park West) and 59th Street to the south, north to 106th Street. The park was extended to 110th Street in 1859, making a total area of 843 acres (341 hectares). In 1857 Frederick Law Olmsted was appointed Superintendent of the park. Despite the absence of a plan for the park grounds, work on clearing the land and filling swampy areas had commenced in 1856.139

In 1858 a competition was announced to prepare a design for the Central Park. Calvert Vaux, well aware of the public advocacy for the park through his

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138 The First Park Act of 1851 authorized the City to purchase a smaller parcel of land along the East River, known as “Jones Woods”—the authorization was blocked in court.
139 Egbert L. Viele, a civil engineer, had undertaken a survey and plan for the park in 1853 (in hopes he would be compensated). He was appointed engineer-in-chief of Central Park in 1856. See, Roper, FLO: A Biography (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), p. 127.
former employer Andrew Jackson Downing, was not only one of the best-trained landscape designers in America, but also one of the most knowledgeable men regarding the high expectations placed on the park’s design and development. Indeed, it was due to Vaux’s concern for the absence of a quality plan for the park that he advised the commissioners, at the same meeting where Olmsted was recommended as Superintendent, to hold a public competition for the design of the Central Park. A competition was subsequently announced and Vaux, who had met Olmsted in Newburgh before Downing’s death, invited Olmsted to partner with him on the competition.\footnote{140} Their entry, number 33, “Greensward Plan,” won the competition. It is generally believed Vaux’s renderings of the proposed park helped sway the New York Park Commission in favor of his and Olmsted’s submission.\footnote{141} The Greensward Plan included eleven studies, ten of which comprised before and after views in the manner of Repton.\footnote{142}

Carriage roads were a significant feature of the design for the Central Park in New York City (Figure 4.12). Here Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux continued the tradition of curvilinear alignments and picturesque views, but also introduced sophisticated engineering principles in vertical alignment that allowed the carriage roads to pass over and under the park’s pedestrian paths and bridle trails to minimize intersections of conflicting interests and activities—allowing the maximum enjoyment of the park landscape by each user group. For the carriage drives, they proposed principal driveways to be sixty feet (eighteen meters) wide. Such a width, they noted, “admits six lines of carriages being driven at moderate speed, side by side. Much wider roads, however fine in themselves, are incompatible with a rural character of landscape.”\footnote{143} To facilitate pleasure driving, the designers first needed to

\footnote{140}{A man of great integrity, Olmsted approached Viele, his superior, regarding the appropriateness of his entering the competition. Viele’s unfriendly response relieved Olmsted of any further hesitation. See Roper, \textit{FLO: A Biography}, p. 136.}
\footnote{141}{Colley, \textit{Prospect Park}, p. 49.}
\footnote{142}{Alex and Tatum, \textit{Calvert Vaux}, p. 108.}
\footnote{143}{Beveridge, ed., \textit{The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted}, vol. III, p. 155.}
address the competition’s requirement of four transverse roads to carry city traffic across the island, through the park.

In the introduction to their submission, Olmsted and Vaux noted the application of the “long and narrow Boulevards” of Europe for the transverse roads would divide the park and prevent “all landscape gardening, since it puts an abrupt limit to the view.” Then, the designers cleverly introduced the additional complications for the containment of nighttime “marauders” who they noted could escape a police chase along the transverse roads “into the obscurity of the park.” The plan cited reference examples from Regent’s Park in London and the Tuileries in Paris in a discussion of safety and night access—noting in particular the necessity of a “disagreeable” fence required along the public street crossing Regent’s Park to keep the street open at night, compared to the Parisian solution of completely closing the park at night and “forcing all who would otherwise use it, to go a long distance to the right or left.” The designers found neither solution satisfactory. It is from this logic that Olmsted and Vaux advanced the concept for the sunken transverse roads.

From the “Description of a Plan for the Improvement of the Central Park Greensward” on the transverse roads:

Inevitably they will be crowded thoroughfares, having nothing in common with the park proper, but every thing at variance with those agreeable sentiments which we should wish the park to inspire. It will not be possible to enforce the ordinary police regulations of public parks upon them. They must be constantly open to all legitimate traffic of the city, to coal carts, and butcher’s carts, dust carts and dung carts; engine companies will use them, those on one side [of] the park rushing their machines across it, with frantic zeal a every alarm from the other [...].

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144 Ibid., p. 122.
145 Ibid., pp. 121-122.
147 Ibid., p. 121.
Their ingenious use of excavated corridors and land-bridges to carry the park over the transverse roads, minimized what would have been a major intrusion on the park experience. Using advanced engineering techniques for vertical alignment, Central Park exhibited one of the most complex and sophisticated engineered road systems in the world. The extraordinary challenges required to fit the four-tier circulation system into the compact landscape of the park introduced highly engineered roads designed for pleasure into the American context (Figures 4.13 and 4.14).

Pleasure drives and avenues provided a variety of picturesque tours through the new park, and an ingenious system of tunnels and bridges separated pedestrian, horseback and cross-town traffic from the pleasure roads. The highly engineered roads of the park were a striking contrast to the city streets and met Downing’s original objective to free the citizenry from the “rattle of pavements” by providing the “substantial delights” of country roads. The *New York Times* was less sanguine in its assessment of the deplorable condition of the city’s public streets:

> The Commissioners of the Central Park announced that four miles of drive in the Park will be open to carriages and equestrians on Saturday next, —an invaluable boon to thousands who would both ride and drive if New-York had any place in which either could be done.¹⁴⁹

The following quote, appearing in the *New York Times* shortly after the Central Park carriage drives first opened to the public, demonstrates how quickly pleasure driving was embraced in America once roads of sufficient quality were available. Its style and enthusiasm are evocative of Downing’s 1851 “Letter from England,” which further demonstrates the widespread novelty and popularity of pleasure driving on both sides of the Atlantic (Figures 4.15 and 4.16).

On the broad carriage-road, whose surface was like polished steel, was a long line of carriages filled with gay, laughing people. Fast young men in sulkies [a light two-wheeled, one horse carriage for one] whose huge wheels almost topped the head of the driver, with clean-cut, well-shaped, bob-tailed nags scud along the road as if the old Harry was after them: huge, heavy, substantially-built family carriages with gilded lamps, gilded hubbed-wheels, and high, well covered seats, drawn slowly, sedately and dignifiedly by heavy, long-bodied, long-tailed, thick maned horses, contained elderly ladies dressed in black silk, lace caps and false curls, accompanied by one or two younger ladies, who sat generally on the front seat, wearing English baréges [sic], coal-scuttle bonnets, or cloudy Nubias, and who looked after the aforementioned fast young men as if they would like to change places for just a little while, it would be “so nice” and such fun; then would pass a mad-dashy barouche with top thrown back, filled with chattering girls whose mammas had remained at home, and who were bent on having a good time, and who seemed mightily tickled whenever they met one of those comet-like sulkies or when, as was frequently the case, they were joined by some young blood on horseback, who exhilarated by riding, could bend gracefully and whisper gallantly, or by his lively conversation keep the ball of fun rolling with increased velocity [...]. In fact, there is no place in the country, or as far as we have seen in any other, where driving can be so perfectly enjoyed as on the avenues and broad roads of the Central Park [...].

In addition to the sophisticated and elegant alignment of the carriage drives, Olmsted and Vaux imported the latest technology in road building—constructing the roads in the Telford method from Britain (Figures 4.17 and 4.18). Work on paving the roads commenced in 1869. Paying particular attention to the construction of the park drives, Olmsted noted in a section of the Greensward Plan titled, “Particulars of Construction and Estimate for a Plan of the Central Park,” the following:

Roads of binding gravel are always excellent—better for pleasure-driving than any other—so long as their foundation is firm and unyielding. Ordinarily, however, the earth below works up every Spring, and the whole road becomes soft and rutty. It is very commonly attempted on private grounds to provide against this by

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laying a stratum of stone under the gravel, which, if the road is much used, serves only to increase the evil, for the gravel stone sinking through the clay more readily than the larger stone, the latter, in obedience to a well-known law, work to the surface. There is one method of using large stones, however, which was first practised by Telford on the Holyhead road, and which supplies a perfectly unyielding road foundation.151

Olmsted and Vaux’s attention to the construction technology was important to their desired success of the carriage roads in the park. Most roads in the United States during this period were in poor condition. The few paved roads were generally in urban settings and in varying degrees of repair—most, including the cobbled streets of many cities, were wholly inappropriate for a relaxing or pleasurable drive due to their rough surfaces. The concept of pleasure driving—its success and expansion for other applications—was wholly dependent on the provision of a smooth surface over which to travel. Pleasure drives represent some of America’s earliest efforts at sophisticated engineering design and materials technology through advancements in surface treatments.

To construct the park’s roads in the Telford method, the first steam-powered roller in the United States was imported from Kent, England in 1869.

A party of engineers assembled at the Central Park yesterday morning to witness the operation of a steam road and park roller, imported from England, and manufactured by Aveling & Porter, of Rochester, Kent. The machine comprehended an ordinary steam engine of ninety-horse power, with a wide roller in front, divided in two parts and two rollers behind, widely divided by the engine. The whole weighed fifteen tons, and performed the service required effectually and economically. [...] Neither the engine nor the rollers were in themselves novelties. The peculiarity of the machine lay in the perfect ease with which it was turned around in a space less than its own length. Mr. Green, Superintendent of the Central Park, was present,

together with Mr. Stranahan, of Prospect Park, Brooklyn, and several gentlemen interested in laying out the parks of other cities.\textsuperscript{152}

The expense of importing machinery to compact the carriage drives of Central Park using the most advanced technology, demonstrated the importance of the pleasure roads to the function of the park and the serious manner in which their engineering and construction was administered. No other public road in the United States came close to the technical superiority of Central Park’s drives. Pleasure driving and roads designed for pleasure would be synonymous with America’s country parks throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century, and would be so ingrained in the American park experience that a new park form, the “park-way,” would be created to accommodate the growing demands for pleasure driving.

\textbf{CHAPTER SUMMARY}

The transatlantic conversations in this chapter reflect a robust exchange of ideas on roads designed for pleasure between Britain and America in the first half of the nineteenth century. It represents the first era in history, due to the convergence that occurred around 1800, in which pleasure roads became feasible and valued elements of the designed landscape.

During this period the United States transitioned from an imitative reliance on British landscape theory and engineering advice to a consultative relationship. Downing, as an American, took cautious steps to articulate the distinct identity and needs of the American landscape, while Cole and Vaux, as naturalized citizens of the United States, were more enthusiastic in their bold declarations on American scenery and landscape architecture as wholly independent from European exemplars. It is within this context that the rural

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{152}“A Steam Road Roller,” \textit{New York Times}, June 5, 1869.}
cemetery demonstrated the competence of American designers in a landscape typology organized by pleasure drives and from this context that American landscape architects, after the Civil War, would develop the parkway.

The arrival of the steam road and park roller from Aveling & Porter in England may be viewed as the final word of the transatlantic conversation on pleasure roads. With Olmsted and Vaux, the design of Central Park represented the culmination of an exchange of ideas informing landscape architecture in the United States. The serpentine drives and avenues of Central Park exemplified Repton’s advice for alignment, views and stations. The park’s landscape, created from a wasteland and constrained by the rigid street grid of New York, presented picturesque scenes unfolding around each bend in the carriage drives—artful sequences that Gilpin would have admired. The pleasure carriages that thronged the park traveled effortlessly over roads constructed in the Telford method, enabling the visitors to enjoy the rural scenery without any concern for damage to their fine vehicles. The Central Park was a uniquely American creation in which “The beauties of an English landscape as described by [Washington] Irving are all but reproduced.”

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Figure 4.1. “The National Road,” as depicted by U.S. Bureau of Public Roads artist, Carl Rakeman (1878-1965). The first federally funded public highway in the United States was authorized by the U.S. Congress in 1806. The National Road began in Cumberland, Maryland (the western extent of public highways from the port of Baltimore) and extended 130 miles (209 kilometers) west to Wheeling, Virginia (now West Virginia) on the commercially vibrant Ohio River. Shown is the National Road crossing Wills Creek, just west of Cumberland. The road was paved in the French Trésaguet method.

Credit: U.S. Federal Highway Administration.
Figure 4.2. George Washington’s copy of *The Universal Gardener and Botanist* by Thomas Mawe. Credit: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Rare Book Collection, Washington, DC.

Figure 4.3. The Potomac River, above Georgetown (a colonial port city on the Maryland side of the river), overlooking the site of the new federal city, Washington, DC, 1795. Credit: U.S. Library of Congress.
Figure 4.4. “Catskill Mountain House,” etching by John Rubens Smith, 1830. A precipitous drive 3,000 feet above the Hudson River to Catskill Mountain House, one of the first destinations for the serious picturesque traveler in nineteenth-century America. Credit: New York Public Library.
Figure 4.5. Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
Credit: U.S. Library of Congress.

Figure 4.6. “Lowell’s Monument, Willow Avenue,” etching by James Smillie, from Mount Auburn Illustrated by Cornelia W. Walter, 1851. Note the generous setback from the carriage drive.
Credit: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Rare Book Collection, Washington, DC.
Figure 4.6x. Père Lachaise Cemetery, Paris. The crowding of monuments along the drives at the first rural cemetery may have influenced Mount Auburn’s required landscape margin. Credit: Paul Daniel Marriott and Charles K. Zavalianos, 2015.

Figure 4.7. “Lawn-Girt Hill,” etching by James Smillie, from Green-Wood Illustrated by Nehemiah Cleveland, 1847. Note the carriages in the middle-ground and background. Credit: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Rare Book Collection, Washington, DC.
Figure 4.8. Frontispiece, etching by James Smillie, from *Green-Wood Illustrated* by Nehemiah Cleveland, 1847.
Credit: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Rare Book Collection, Washington, DC.
**Figure 4.10.** “Hyde Park Corner,” by James Pollard, etching by J. Harris (London: Ackermann, 1838).

**Figure 4.11.** “Catskill Mountain House,” by Thomas Cole.
Credit: Private Collection.
Figure 4.12. The carriage drives as originally laid out. Outlined in red on Hinrich’s Guide Map of Central Park, 1875.
Credit: Central Park Conservancy.
Figure 4.13. Transverse road below Central Park. *Third Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners*, 1859.
Credit: Central Park Conservancy.

Figure 4.14. View of 79th Street transverse road from Vista Rock (location of the Belvedere Castle).
Credit: Lane Addonizio.
Figure 4.15. “The Drive,” by Thomas Hogan, 1869. Credit: New York Public Library.

Figure 4.15a. Detail showing touring carriage.

Figure 4.16a. Detail showing carriage driving.
Figure 4.17. Telford paving cross section for Central Park. From Report of the Board of Commissioners for Central Park.
Credit: Central Park Conservancy.

Figure 4.18. Photo of Telford paving at Grand Army Plaza, at Fifth Avenue, between 59th and 60th Streets, c. 2014.
Credit: Central Park Conservancy.
CHAPTER 5
THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PARK-WAY

INTRODUCTION

After the Civil War, America’s urban centers saw rapid population increases. During the period from 1850 to 1870, the cities this chapter most closely follows, New York City, Brooklyn, Buffalo and Boston, experienced dramatic population increases—New York and Boston nearly doubled, Buffalo nearly tripled and Brooklyn quadrupled.\(^1\) With the success of Central Park, and soon after Prospect Park in Brooklyn, Olmsted and Vaux began to envision a larger system of connected parks—a deliberate improvement on the near-connections of the London Parks described by Andrew Jackson Downing. Driving this desire was the rapid growth of metropolitan New York and the enormous popularity of pleasure driving. To improve park connections and respond to the infrastructure needs of what was being viewed as a new mode of transportation, Olmsted and Vaux created the “park-way.”

\(^1\) Source: U.S. Census. 1850 population statistics: New York City, 515,547 (Rank: 1); Boston, 131,181 (Rank: 3); Brooklyn, 96,838 (Rank: 7); Buffalo, 42,261 (Rank: 16). 1870 population statistics: New York City, 942,292 (Rank: 1); Brooklyn, 396,099 (Rank: 3); Boston, 250,526 (Rank: 7); and Buffalo, 117,714 (Rank: 11). Boston’s lower rank in 1870 was largely due to the exponential growth of western cities during this period, such as Chicago and San Francisco, and should not be viewed as a result of diminished stature or economic vitality (Chicago was ranked 24\(^{th}\) in 1850 and 5\(^{th}\) in 1870, and San Francisco, not ranked in the top 100 in 1850 was ranked 10\(^{th}\) in 1870).
In order to understand how Repton’s road designed for pleasure evolved in the United States, and how it influenced the form of the automobile parkway, it is essential to understand the evolution of the term across the second half of the nineteenth century. The term “park-way” emerged in 1866 with the Olmsted and Vaux proposal for Jamaica Parkway in Brooklyn. It is generally cited as the first parkway and the progenitor of the American motor parkway. The great innovation of Olmsted and Vaux’s “park-way” was not, however, as a new type of road, but as a new type of park—a narrow strip of land dedicated to park access. Therefore, to appreciate fully the development of the parkway, the “road” must be separated from the analysis of the parkway. Only by studying the evolution of the parkway as a distinctly American landscape form, before it was considered a road type, can its eventual expression as a twentieth-century road typology be fully understood. The clarification of such terms is essential since their inconsistent use, and evolving meaning within the nineteenth century, must be reconciled to produce an accurate history of the period.

During this period, “avenue” and “boulevard” were established terms that denoted a roadway of significance or importance, and typically a roadway of some preconceived aesthetic distinction. Additional terms such as “drive” or “driveway,” both newer, were used to define roads designed for pleasure that were typically narrower, more serpentine in alignment, and often of a rural character. While the defining features of each were subject to debate, misrepresentation and even misappropriation within the historical period covered in this chapter, each of these terms was fully understood as a type of roadway during the second half of the nineteenth century. It was with the term “park-way,” where the confusion began. As most parkways included a road, many came to view the term “parkway” as synonymous with a road.
This chapter will demonstrate that the parkway emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century as a park corridor designed to connect public pleasure grounds and sites of recreation; that the popularity of pleasure driving, and the specialty roads required for the new light pleasure carriage, introduced a new transportation infrastructure into America’s cities. While the parkway represented a desirable, and logical, intersection between parks and pleasure driving, a strong distinction between the parkway, and the road within its limits, was maintained during this period. The parkway evolved from a relatively narrow axial construct in Brooklyn with tightly programmed corridors designed for movement to a more park-like, albeit still axial corridor, in Buffalo. It was in Boston, where the goals of the emerging public health movement intersected with the established goals for park connections and pleasure driving, that the physical form and aesthetic characteristics of the parkway were fundamentally altered—resulting in the serpentine alignments and sylvan settings ascribed by Newton as defining features of the parkway. The creation of the first regional park authority, the Metropolitan Park Commission in Massachusetts, expanded the scale of the parkway to the regional level; the system developed for pleasure carriages was of sufficient scale to accommodate the longer distances easily traveled by the automobile.

While a number of American cities developed or considered parkways, this chapter will focus on the three cities where the greatest theoretical advances influencing the Bronx River Parkway occurred, and the construction of parkways was undertaken as a result of enlightened planning and an expression of civic pride: Brooklyn, Buffalo and Boston.²

² Other cities developed parkways during this period, notably Chicago and Minneapolis under the guidance of H. W. S. Cleveland; Olmsted and the Olmsted firm developed parkways for Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Rochester, New York and Louisville, Kentucky.
PROSPECT PARK

Any study of parkways must begin with Prospect Park in Brooklyn. The park, its exceptional plan and visionary leadership, located at the center of what was becoming the nation’s first metropolis, represents a glimpse into the planning, recreation and transportation needs, and aspirations, of the post-Civil War industrial city in America. It was the first large-scale civic building project after the Civil War; as Justin Martin notes in *Genius of Place: the Life of Frederick Law Olmsted*, Prospect Park was a metaphor for a reunited America.  

With the success of Central Park in New York, Brooklyn desired a great country park for its citizens. Brooklyn’s park commissioners, tasked to establish public recreation and pleasure grounds in a city growing at twice the rate of New York City, were committed to setting aside sufficient lands while it was still possible to acquire large tracts at a reasonable cost. Of the different park sites they considered, the first acquired was Mount Prospect. Here, the commissioners envisioned a country park modeled on the same picturesque features and with many of the amenities of the Central Park. The land that became Prospect Park was favorably situated with gently rolling hills and attractive natural features and, unlike Central Park, possessed fine views extending for many miles. It was an exceptional site. Indeed, the *New York Times* boldly asserted:

“While the Central Park of New-York will perhaps in all time hold the superiority over any other which may be conceived or executed as a mere work of art, and while other cities may exhibit parks ample in their extent and creditable for the good taste of their plans, the Prospect Park of the City of Brooklyn must always be conceded as the great natural park of the country; presenting the most majestic views

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of land and ocean, with panoramic changes more varied and beautiful than can be found within the boundaries of any city on this continent.”

The proclamation of Prospect Park as “the great natural park” was a not-too-subtle reference to the extensive manipulation of the Central Park site required by Olmsted and Vaux to turn the pigsties, bone-boiling works and other industrial detritus, scattered across a park site that included pockets of what Olmsted characterized as the “vile sloughs in the black unctuous slime,” into a suitable pleasure ground. The Brooklyn property was not simply a better site; it was strikingly picturesque. To make this important point, the *New York Times* used European exemplars as benchmarks to measure the exceptional scenic views afforded from Prospect Park. The tactic was effective. Brooklyn’s park, according to the newspaper, would offer scenic views and vistas from an urban setting no less, indeed finer, than Milan, Edinburgh and other notable European cities. The article continued confidently:

> [...] Such will be no less the verdict of an unbiased observer contemplating these grounds even now [...]. He may have looked on the marvelous beauty of the Bay of Naples, or stood spell-bound amid the clustering turrets of the Cathedral tower of Milan, and seen on one side the snow-clad Alps, and on the other the fertile plains of Lombardy; from the highest pinnacle of Antwerp he may have gazed upon the city-studded garden-like expanse of the Low Countries; or he may still recall memories of the picturesque richness of the Carse of Stirling, or of that other view of Edinburgh and the distant Forth which so entranced Lord [ ]; but we venture to say that for its unique combination of the triumphs of man, with the lavish magnificence of nature he must yield the palm to the splendid panorama which stretches before him [...]. On one side, where the sky rests upon the bosom of the broad Atlantic, the eye takes in the first stage of the great ocean highway between the New World and the Old, and can discern the varied and ceaseless concourse of vessels grow from dim specks on the distant horizon to the larger outlines under which they are seen to

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4 “Prospect Park, Description of the Great Pleasure Ground […].” *New York Times*, March 27, 1870. (Quotation marks original.) The article continued, “Such was the deliberate verdict of the [Brooklyn] Park Commissioners, pronounced eight years ago while their great work was yet in its inception […].”

5 Martin, *Genius of Place*, p. 131.
converge in the Lower Bay. Sweeping over the richly-varied panorama which lies between Sandy Hook, the Highlands of Neversink [New Jersey] and the distant Palisades of the Hudson, the observer grows bewildered with the multitude of objects which arrest his attention, and it is only when he keeps his eye fixed upon the splendid expanse of the inner harbor, on the wavy outline of the Jersey shore, or on the picturesque contour of Staten Island, that he can realize the matchless grouping of the natural scenery extended before him.6

While Thomas Cole opposed the slavish comparison of the scenery of the New World to Europe in his “Essay on American Scenery,” this grandiloquent comparison of the view from Prospect Park to a wide range of notable landscapes from Scotland to Italy may have gone beyond the due regard for the American landscape he advocated. What makes this extended narrative instructive for this thesis are the multiple complementary descriptions of equally different picturesque scenes, not from across the vast expanse of Western Europe, but each spied from a single vantage point in Brooklyn. It was an exuberant affirmation of the influence of the Picturesque Movement on the scenic expectations for America’s public parks—and an obvious rejection of the urban forms conspicuously omitted from the description of the Brooklyn panorama.

The New York Times picture of the busy harbor viewed from the park site reads much like Repton’s Red Books for Point Pleasant and Blaise Castle, with their descriptions of fine boats and billowy sails plying the River Thames and Bristol Channel. Within Prospect Park such kinetic activity would be manifest in the light carriages traversing the park’s serpentine pleasure drives. A network of such roads already existed in Greenwood Cemetery, less than half a mile (.6 kilometers) from the park site. One of the first and finest of the American rural cemeteries, Greenwood Cemetery introduced Brooklyn’s residents to the delights of pleasure driving thirty years earlier (Figure 5.1). Nevertheless, the tantalizingly close carriage roads in the Central Park, free

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6 “Prospect Park, Description of the Great Pleasure Ground […],” New York Times, March 27, 1870.
from the veil of sepulture and its implied decorum, undoubtedly made the new roads designed for pleasure a much-anticipated feature of the planned park. Most importantly, the carriage drives at Prospect Park were conceived as a part of a larger park system. As Olmsted and Vaux noted:

 [...] We regard Brooklyn as an integral part of what today is the metropolis of the nation, and in the future will be the centre of exchanges for the world, and the park in Brooklyn, as part of a system of grounds, of which the Central Park is a single feature, designed for the recreation of the whole people of the metropolis and their customers and guests from all parts of the world for centuries to come.7

In 1865, when Olmsted and Vaux were asked to consult on the design for a new country park, Brooklyn was an independent municipality across the East River from New York City.8 Olmsted returned from California where he had taken a position with the Mariposa Company, a mining concern. He had viewed the job as an opportunity to explore California—and as an escape from the poisonous working relationship he often experienced with the New York park commissioners and his exhausting war work for the United States Sanitary Commission.9 Earlier in 1865, while Olmsted was in California, Vaux had laid out the general boundaries and principal features of Prospect Park in a rough sketch for James Stranahan, the president of the Brooklyn Park Commission.10 The Park Commission liked Vaux’s ideas and asked him to develop a new park plan. Despite their strained relationship, Vaux encouraged Olmsted to return from California to consult with him on the

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8 Brooklyn and New York were ranked as separate cities until the 1900 census (the modern city of New York was created in 1898 by consolidating Manhattan with the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens and Staten Island as a single municipality).
9 Olmsted left New York City for California in September 1863. In 1864 he visited the Yosemite Valley. Olmsted became increasingly concerned by the actions of his employer; evidence of corruption surfaced and by 1865 he realized the Mariposa Company was failing. In July of 1865 he was summarily fired. In August he presented his treatise to protect the Yosemite and in November 1865 he returned to New York.
10 Martin, Genius of Place, p. 271.
Brooklyn Park. Olmsted returned in November 1865; Olmsted, Vaux & Company was quickly established and by December 1865 the two were working to complete their proposal.

The landscape architects were given a 526-acre (212 hectare) parcel with a more irregular shape than that of Central Park. The rapport between Olmsted and Vaux and the Brooklyn Park Commissioners was more cordial than they had enjoyed with the park commissioners in New York, and Stranahan’s unwavering integrity imbued the entire process with the verisimilitude required of an important civic undertaking. This freedom to focus on design within an eminently finer parcel of land resulted in what many consider to be the finest country park designed by Olmsted and Vaux. The celebrated nineteenth-century New York diarist George Templeton Strong was forced to admit that Prospect Park was “a most lovely pleasure” and that in trees and views it “beats Central Park ten to one.” Similarly, the noted Boston landscape architect Robert Morris Copeland found the park’s design far superior to Central Park. Regarding the Brooklyn Park, the New York Times stated, “That it will be, or is, superior to Central Park, is the fault of nature and the good sense of a public-spirited and far-seeing Commission.”

Olmsted and Vaux replied modestly, “If, as is now frequently stated in the public prints, the Brooklyn Park is in some respects more attractive than the Central Park in New York, it is because we have, from the outset, been sustained by your

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11 Vaux believed Olmsted took too much credit for the design of Central Park when interviewed by several newspapers before leaving for California. The two effected a rapprochement while Olmsted was in California.
13 Alex and Tatum, Calvert Vaux, p. 20; Jellico, The Landscape of Man, p. 281; Newton, Design on the Land, p. 278.
board in our effort to improve a considerable portion of the ground with special reference to the development of this element of pastoral effect [...]."17

Construction of Prospect Park began on July 1, 1866 and the mostly-completed park officially opened to the public on October 21, 1872 (Figure 5.2). By 1873 the park’s engineering was largely completed, final grading of the landscape provided a discernible and elegant form to the park’s physical structure, and the fifty-five acre lake was finished.18 Olmsted and Vaux made the construction of the park’s carriage drives a first priority and red flags were placed to mark the location of the drives.19 Much anticipation surrounded the opening of the park’s drives, which would relieve the city’s carriage owners of a ferry ride across the East River and the unpleasant task of navigating the rough pavements of New York’s streets required to reach the pleasure drives in Central Park.20

In a few years, however, Broklynites will not be forced to tempt the ruin of their conveyances on the cobbles of lower New-York that they may enjoy the smooth drives and pleasant rambles of a park. Their own will be open to general use, and sufficient progress is already made to indicate the eventual success of the undertaking.21

Indeed, so eager was Brooklyn for comfortable pleasure drives, that the park commissioners opened portions of the East Drive and the East Wood lane (connected via temporary roads to the Plaza and Flatbush Avenue, and Coney Island Road) in October 1867 while the park was still under construction—however, carriage owners were requested to drive “slowly and carefully” and “avoid unnecessary interference with the workmen.”22 In December 1868 the

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20 “The Brooklyn Bridge, the first bridge constructed over the East River, did not open until 1883.
New York Times reported that the park's visitor register had recorded over 42,000 carriages visited the park in a two-month period. The total number of vehicles to enter Prospect Park in 1868 totaled 421,593. Olmsted and Vaux noted the popularity (and social intercourse) of the carriage drives in their report to the Brooklyn Park Commissioners in January 1871—a year before the park officially opened:

As the park has come more and more into use, new habits and customs, and with them new tastes, have been developed. There is already many times as much pleasure-driving as there was five years ago, and not a few persons are attracted to the Park by what is to be seen upon the road than by any conscious enjoyment of the inanimate nature to be seen from it [...].

Prospect Park offered five miles of carriage drives, four miles of bridle paths and twenty miles of walkways. From the oval entry Plaza (Grand Army Plaza) the park's East Drive and West Drive departed along separate alignments following the periphery of the park and providing a roughly three-mile circuit; the two drives rejoining at the southern gateway to the park, Park Circle. These were supplemented by a number of shorter interior drives, such as Center Drive, providing access to picturesque views and destinations. Like Central Park, the different circulation systems (carriage drives, pedestrian promenades and bridle paths) were separated by handsome bridges and tunnels since, as Olmsted and Vaux noted, "The lack of a provision of this kind in most of the popular parks abroad leads to many accidents, and much inconvenience." Unlike Central Park, no transverse roads were required as no city streets bisected the property.

The serpentine drives offered views of The Lake and The Green (Long Meadow); two carriage concourses provided a place for carriage drivers to congregate to enjoy views of The Lake, and a carriage concourse on Lookout Hill offered a capacious turnaround and access to panoramic views of the distant Watchung Hills in New Jersey, the Verrazano Narrows and the Atlantic Ocean (Figure 5.3). From the high Nethermead Arch, the largest of the park’s bridges, such spectacular views of the picturesque Ravine were afforded that Vaux limited the location of the plantations to enable carriage riders the opportunity to view “two distinct districts, seen comprehensively from no other point.”

The carriage drives were paved in the Telford method; heavy stone blocks formed the road foundation, a steam-powered rock crusher produced the required gravel of various sizes for the different layers of the surface and a steamroller compacted the newly formed drives. As with Central Park, the modern steamroller compacted twice the road surface of a traditional eight-horse team for half the cost.\(^\text{27}\) The road surface was crowned, directing rainwater to the brick side gutters and onward to the park’s complex drainage system. Like Central Park, it promised to be an exceptionally well-engineered system, offering greater New York a second pleasure circuit of roads with fine driving surfaces. Unlike Central Park, however, Olmsted and Vaux envisioned the extension of their fine roads well beyond the boundaries of the park. With the success of Central Park’s carriage drives and the anticipation of those planned for Prospect Park, Olmsted and Vaux were already considering the next evolution of roads designed for pleasure—almost a year before the first sections of the Prospect Park drives opened to the public.

It would undoubtedly add much to the value of the [Prospect] Park if it could be reached, by citizens living at a distance, through liberally

\(^{27}\) Colley, *Prospect Park*, p. 90.
conceived approaches which were, in all their extent, convenient and pleasant to walk, ride or drive in.\textsuperscript{28}

That Olmsted and Vaux characterized their concept as “liberally conceived approaches” suggests they were aware of Repton’s distinction between carriage drives and approach roads. For the two landscape architects, Brooklyn’s undeveloped districts to the south and east of Prospect Park were viewed as an exceptional opportunity to make the Brooklyn country park the locus of an integrated parkway network linking new residential, park, recreational and scenic destinations throughout the city. Their ambitious inclusion of a parkway connection to Central Park (the plan necessitated a bridge over the East River) represented, perhaps, the first regional, inter-municipal, park planning proposal in the United States.

With modifications to adapt it to variations of the topography and the connecting street arrangements, the plan should eventually be extended from the [Prospect] Park, in one direction, to Fort Hamilton, where ground for a small Marine Promenade should be secured, overlooking the [Verrazano] Narrows and the Bay; and in the other to Ravenswood, where it should be connected by a bridge with one of the broad streets leading on the New York side to the Central Park. A branch should extend from it to the ocean beach at Coney Island, and other branches might lead out from it to any points at which it should appear that large dwelling quarters were likely to be formed [...].\textsuperscript{29}

With these three parkways, and branches, Olmsted and Vaux envisioned a parkway system extending over five miles (eight kilometers) in circumference from Prospect Park within Brooklyn and nearly ten miles (sixteen kilometers) in circumference with a bridge link to Central Park. These new public “ways,” radiating from the park and linking to other park and desirable destinations, transformed park planning in the United States and, by the close of the nineteenth century, had a significant influence on transportation planning.

\textsuperscript{28} Olmsted, Vaux & Company, “Report of the Landscape Architects and Superintendents,” to the President and Board of Commissioners of Prospect Park, Brooklyn, January 1, 1867, from The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted, vol. VI., p. 157.

DEFINING A “PARK-WAY”

In their 1871 report to the Brooklyn Park Commissioners, Olmsted and Vaux summarized the origins of the nearly completed Prospect Park, noting in particular that when “the formation of the Park was begun, there was little pleasure-driving in Brooklyn.”30 In the narrative that followed, they chronicled the desire of the city’s growing population to seek solace in the countryside and, in so doing, articulated one of the most apt definitions for the parkway as a road designed for pleasure.

In driving for pleasure, —not merely for conveyance from point to point,—it had always been an object to get as soon as possible out into the country, and, if tolerable roads could be found, into the midst of woods and scenes of a secluded and rural character.31

It is within this simple statement that the essential philosophical, structural and aesthetic form of the American parkway may be traced. Olmsted and Vaux capitalized on the traditional travel structure of origin and destination. Rather than leave the journey between the two points to chance, they conceived a new system to manage the journey as a pleasurable prelude to the destination by containing it within a landscape corridor or park “way.” The urgency of travel they acknowledged may be interpreted in two ways: Firstly, as the usual goal to reach a desirable destination “as soon as possible” and secondly, and more germane to the arguments in this thesis, as an opportunity to ameliorate the miseries of the journey by managing the experience between the origin and destination. Thus, the desire to reach the destination “as soon as possible” would be inversely proportional to each improvement to the prescribed route of the journey. Within this context, Olmsted and Vaux viewed Prospect Park, with its “rural character,” as the desired country

31 Ibid.
destination. The parkway corridor would provide a dedicated, efficient, attractive and pleasant approach to the fine carriage drives waiting in the park.

The idea of the parkway structure originating in Brooklyn was not unlikely. In 1859, the New York State Legislature authorized the Brooklyn Park Commission to acquire lands for public park and recreation grounds. In 1860, the farsighted commission proposed eight new parks. Three would be of significant size serving as regional recreation grounds, and five would be designed for local recreation. The visionary plan was quickly modified to a single large park due to cost. Nevertheless, a number of public spaces that had been, or were secured, formed the nucleus of a nascent park system. During their tenure as landscape architects to the Park Commission, Olmsted and Vaux had significant influence on the development of each site within a broader set of goals for Brooklyn's recreation and pleasure grounds. In addition to Prospect Park, Olmsted and Vaux prepared designs for the Parade Ground, Washington (Fort Greene) Park, Carroll Park and Tompkins Square. It is more than likely that their close relationship with the city's parks and their comprehensive views on planning resulted in early concepts to connect the random park units into a more cohesive system.

In 1867, with the construction of Prospect Park underway, Olmsted and Vaux pressed the City of Brooklyn to take advantage of a fleeting opportunity to intervene in the expansion of the city grid. By making minor modifications to the platted streets (surveyed and mapped, but not executed) before the land was subdivided and developed, they argued that a broad tree-lined thoroughfare for pleasure driving could easily be inserted into the grid and a correspondingly dignified extension of the park created. Their argument, as usual, was both inspired and pragmatic. For the approach, they selected a high ridge with views of the Atlantic Ocean for both its picturesque situation and the difficulty of incorporating such topography within a grid arrangement
of streets. The 1867 report to the Brooklyn Park Commissioners was noteworthy in that the “roadway” it recommended provided accommodation for driving, riding and walking—the three circulation systems provided within Prospect Park.

When the streets now planned in this vicinity shall have been once opened, it will be impossible to lay out a spacious and attractive roadway leading in this direction without destroying very valuable property. During the next two or three years, however, it would probably be found practicable to make such local modifications in the general street system as would leave it no less convenient than at present, and yet would allow of the introduction of a broad boulevard, shaded by agreeable plantations and adapted for use as a pleasure drive, ride and walk. The route suggested would make frequent curves and considerable inequalities of surface desirable, and this circumstance would operate to prevent its general use for any other purpose than for pleasure travel and access to the buildings by which it would be lined.32

By recommending an alignment following the most interesting topography, and selecting a route that would naturally discourage commercial traffic, Olmsted and Vaux established a preference for the parkway as a non-axial, curvilinear concept, integrated with the characteristics of the natural landscape and designed primarily for pleasure driving.

To advance this innovative strategy in park planning, in 1868 Olmsted and Vaux published, Observations on the Progress of Improvements in Street Plans, with Special Reference to THE PARK-WAY Proposed to be Laid Out in Brooklyn.33 The document established the historical and philosophical underpinnings for the parkway in America. In a methodical, erudite and at times onerous history of roads and ways, the report summarized the

32 Ibid., p. 157.
33 The publication included much of the “park-way” narrative from Olmsted, Vaux & Company’s 1868 “Report of the Landscape Architects and Superintendents” to the President and Board of Commissioners of Prospect Park, Brooklyn. Olmsted’s ongoing interest in the topic of roads was reinforced by a lengthy talk “History of Streets” he gave to the Brookline (Massachusetts) Club in February 1889. See Charles Beveridge, ed., The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted, vol. VIII, The Early Boston Years, 1882-1890 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), p. 583.
“historical development of existing street arrangements” in the four “stages” upon which they argued modern roads were based. Beginning with ancient footpaths, the report explained the origins of human settlements and the early “ways” connecting communities. The second stage outlined the needed improvements to roads to accommodate the wheeled vehicles of the Medieval Period and included a discourse on Christopher Wren’s plan for London after the Great Fire of 1666. The third stage presented street plans and city planning, referencing St. Petersburg, Russia and Philadelphia as examples of a comprehensive view to road-making. The fourth historical stage of street arrangements reviewed two formal avenues in Europe: the Avenue of the Empress (Avenue de l’Impératrice) in Paris (now Avenue Foch), which opened in 1854 to connect the Place de l’Étoile to the Bois de Boulogne, and Linden Avenue (Unter den Linden) in Berlin, c. 1674 (Figure 5.4). These were presented as prototypes of grand ways connecting ceremonial spaces to parklands across notable distances. Throughout the discourse, Olmsted and Vaux provided a caution against the incremental development of an organic road system and the importance of roads as conduits to recreation and open space as cities inevitably grew. They did not directly criticize the American city grid pattern, however, within the context of their argument, the application of the grid to the landscape without regard for topography or civic art, may be viewed as equally organic, and therefore undesirable.

The proposed “park-ways” radiating from Prospect Park represented their fifth and final stage in the evolution of the road. Parkways, they stated, were “prepared with express reference to pleasure-riding and driving.” Within a subsection entitled, “The Parkway. –A Fifth Stage,” Olmsted and Vaux laid out a complex road comprised of a central pleasure way. Regular city streets were located outside of the central pleasure reservation or median.

The “Parkway” plan which we now propose advances still another step, the [Unter den Linden] mall being again divided into two parts to make room for a central road-way, prepared with express reference to
pleasure-riding and driving, the ordinary paved, traffic road-ways, with their flagged sidewalks remaining still on the outside of the public mall for pedestrians, as in the Berlin example. The plan in this way provides for each of the several requirements which we have thus far examined, giving access for the purposes of ordinary traffic to all the houses that front upon it, offering a special road for driving and riding without turning commercial vehicles from the right of way, and furnishing ample public walks, with room for seats, and with borders of turf in which trees may grow of the most stately character. It would contain six rows of trees, and the space from house to house being two hundred and sixty feet, would constitute a perfect barrier to the progress of fire.34

The linear form of the first parkways, based on the Berlin and Paris avenues they cited, established the American parkway with few physical differences from its European predecessors. However, their recognition of pleasure traffic as an independent form of travel and their proposal to connect park, scenic and recreational destinations defined the parkway as a distinct structure. The publication of the widely read Les Promenades de Paris (published 1867-1873), by Adolphe Alphand, presented a comprehensive summary of the new Parisian boulevards and may have provided Olmsted and Vaux with a useful reference from which to conceptualize and distinguish their “park-way” form from European models.35 That they deliberately selected a new term “park-way,” rather than utilize the accepted and well-regarded terms of “avenue” or “boulevard,” further suggests that they viewed the parkway as more than a new type of roadway—and more than an American interpretation of the European boulevards showcased in Alphand’s book. The limitations of the Brooklyn city grid may have restricted the fullest expression of the first parkways, but it did not limit their aspirations for a concept far beyond the function of an attractive urban thoroughfare.

34 Olmsted, Vaux & Company, Observations on THE PARK-WAY, pp. 25-26. Olmsted was acutely aware of the risk of fire in San Francisco due to seismic conditions. His park and parkway plan for San Francisco was prepared so that parkways would also function as practical firebreaks.
35 Olmsted cited Les Promenades de Paris in his “Park” entry for the American Cyclopedia in 1875. There is no record of the volume in Olmsted’s library, however, as noted earlier, a fire destroyed part of his professional library. Olmsted’s library inventory does include a copy of Alphand’s 1886 L’Art des Jardins, Parcs, Promenades [...], which suggests he may have owned a copy of the earlier volume.
What inspired their recognition of pleasure traffic as a separate use was not simply the justification for a commodious specialty roadway, but a response to the vehicular needs of the new modern pleasure carriage. Olmsted and Vaux interrupted their discussion of “stages” between the third stage (city planning in St. Petersburg and Philadelphia) and the fourth stage (the Paris and Berlin boulevards) and introduced their readers to the modern light carriage and the subsequent rise of pleasure driving. The timing within their historical assessment coincides with the convergence that occurred around 1800 introduced in Chapter 2, and their judgment of such pleasure vehicles as “quite unfit” for the public roads directly supports the importance of modern road construction as a facilitator of pleasure driving outlined in this thesis. From a subsection, “Change in the Character of Vehicles,” Olmsted and Vaux noted the need for specially constructed roads designed for pleasure:

Still another important change or class of changes in the habits of the people of towns may be referred to [...]. A more striking illustration of this will not readily be found than is afforded by the light, elegant, easy carriages which have lately been seen in such numbers in your Park. [...] Now we have multifarious styles of vehicles in each of which a large number of different hands has been ingeniously directed to provide in all their several parts for the comfort, pleasure, and health with which they may be used. For the sake of elegance, as well as comfort and ease of draft, they are made extremely light and are supplied with plaint springs. They are consequently quite unfit to be used in streets adapted to the very heavy wagons employed in commercial traffic, and can only be fully enjoyed in roads expressly prepared for them. In parks such roads are provided in connection with other arrangements for the health of the people.36

Olmsted and Vaux were conscious of their plan’s radical departure from the accepted practice of platting streets, which placed little emphasis on the purposes for which they were used, and made virtually no distinction between the different types of vehicles using the public streets. Anticipating an

increase in specialty vehicles, Olmsted and Vaux argued for long-range planning to accommodate what they saw as an integral aspect of future road networks—pleasure travel.

It will be observed that each of the changes which we have examined points clearly towards the conclusion that the present street arrangement of every large town will at no very distant day require, not to be set aside, but to be supplemented, by a series of ways designed with express reference to the pleasure with which they may be used for walking, riding, and the driving of carriages; for rest, recreation, refreshment, and social intercourse [...]37

It can be argued, therefore, that what drove the impetus to develop parkways was not only the physical connection of larger park sites, but also the provision of a suitable carriage road, designed for high-performance touring vehicles, that would extend pleasure driving across the city, relieve pressure on the internal park pleasure drives and create a larger recreational driving network.

This raises an important question for this thesis. Was the parkway a new type of road designed for the accommodation of pleasure vehicles, or was the parkway a new form of park designed to provide tangible connections between different park, scenic and recreational destinations?

While this thesis argues that the greater application of park corridors across urban districts was Olmsted and Vaux's intended outcome, it also recognizes that the talented and perspicacious designers possessed a great capacity to capitalize on opportunities to advance loftier goals. The rapid increase in carriage ownership and pleasure driving legitimately advanced their goal to connect public parks. If such an accommodation was expedient, it was not thoughtless. Olmsted and Vaux were remarkably consistent in their language, describing the requisite elements of the parkway, including the

37 Ibid., p. 21.
accommodation of the multiple user groups already represented within Prospect Park. While the two men may have reconciled their “park-way” design with the rigidity of the city grid, their preference for a broader corridor, serpentine alignment and kinesthetic engagement with the landscape was amply recorded.

It will thus be seen that the grander and more splendid style of public pleasure grounds, while it is peculiarly adapted to display a great body of well-dressed people and of equipages to advantage [...] is not preferred where there are moderate advantages for the adoption of a natural style, even for the purposes of a promenade. The reason may be that where carriages are used, in the frequent passing over the long spaces of bare surface which they make necessary, formal arrangements and confined scenes become very tiresome. In passing along a curving road, its borders planted irregularly, the play of light and shade, and the succession of objects more or less distant which are disclosed and obscured in succession, is never wholly without interest [...]  

The road Olmsted and Vaux proposed may be best described as an approach road for the exclusive use of pleasure vehicles. As such, the roadways within the first parkways would not be considered roads designed for pleasure—they represented attractive roads designed to accommodate pleasurable driving.

Olmsted and Vaux’s concept for an approach was evocative of Repton’s definition for an approach—an attractive road that was “convenient, interesting, and in strict harmony with the character and situation.” In the instance of the Brooklyn parkways, the “situation” was urban and the “character” was accordingly, dignified. As with Repton’s approach road, the parkway corridor (and avenue for pleasure driving) would be more utilitarian

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39 Repton, Sketches and Hints, pp. 48-49.
and more direct than the leisurely carriage drives in the park.\footnote{Olmsted used the term “The Approach” to describe the entry drive to the Biltmore Estate in Ashville, North Carolina in 1889. His use of the term “approach” within an estate context such as Repton typically worked, further demonstrated his comprehension for the term as defined by Repton. See Beveridge, ed., \textit{The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted}, vol. VIII, pp. 680-696.} It anticipated the scenery of the park’s carriage drives by the dense planting of trees—creating a green refuge within (and interrupting) the city’s street grid. The parkway did not, however, define a new type of road. The parkway defined a \textit{land corridor} or strip of land extending the reach of the country park into the city and suggesting the verdant landscape of the park well beyond its boundaries. Within the parkway was a roadway dedicated to pleasure driving. \textit{The pleasure road was not a parkway, but a pleasure road within a parkway}. Therefore, during this period the term “parkway” referred exclusively to a strip of parkland. The term “land parkway,” a term developed by Olmsted for his later Boston work, is probably best used to characterize the “park-way” of this period.\footnote{Land Parkway was a term used by Olmsted, Olmsted & Eliot in their Charles River report for Boston. See: \textit{Report of the Joint Board Upon the Improvement of Charles River}, p. 17.}

In February 1870, Olmsted enthusiastically summarized the development of pleasure driving and parkways in greater Brooklyn and New York:

\begin{quote}
Twelve years ago there was almost no pleasure-driving in New York. There are now, at least, ten thousand horses kept for pleasure-driving. Twelve years ago there were no roadways adapted to light carriages. There are now fourteen miles of rural drive within the parks complete and in use, and often crowded, and ground has been reserved in the two cities and their suburbs for fifty miles of park-ways, averaging, with their planted borders and inter-spaces, at least one hundred and fifty feet wide.\footnote{Frederick Law Olmsted, \textit{Public Parks and the Enlargement of Towns} (Cambridge: American Social Science Association, 1870), p. 35.}
\end{quote}

Olmsted’s close association of the parkway with pleasure driving and his particular reference to the requirements of pleasure vehicles, placed the first
parkways, at least conceptually, within the realm of the road designed for pleasure.⁴³

**Jamaica (Eastern) Parkway and Ocean Parkway**

Constructed between 1870 and 1874, Jamaica Parkway in Brooklyn is considered the world’s first parkway. The parkway, according to the *New York Times*, embodied “an enterprise as important (if not more so) in many respects as the [Prospect] Park itself.” Further noting, “When complete it will be beyond all question the finest and most imposing boulevard in the world.”⁴⁴ Yet, the first parkway’s location and alignment already represented a compromise from the preferred curvilinear route Olmsted and Vaux proposed in their 1867 report to the Brooklyn Park Commissioners. The needed land to realize their first plan and its inherent conflict with the platted grid forced a simpler solution.

Jamaica Parkway followed the alignment of the existing platted Sackett Street and extended approximately two miles (three kilometers) from the Prospect Park Plaza east to Hunterfly Road at the city line.⁴⁵ To create the parkway within the geometry of Brooklyn, Olmsted and Vaux reconfigured the existing street grid, removing two of the platted streets to gain the land needed for the parkway. Sackett Street, platted at seventy feet (twenty-one meters) wide, would be widened to 230 feet (seventy meters) to be laid out as a “park-way” (Figure 5.5).

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⁴³ This thesis suggests that the first parkway roads were “approach roads” designed for “pleasurable driving” and therefore not roads designed for pleasure, as defined in Chapter 1. As will be shown, beginning with the Buffalo park and parkway system, the parkway’s interior road gradually shifted toward the structure of roads designed for pleasure.


⁴⁵ Hunterfly Road no longer exists; today Ralph Avenue is the terminus of the original parkway. A shift in the alignment and a narrowing of the width of the parkway extending beyond Ralph Avenue further demarcates the end of the first parkway.
The 230-foot right-of-way included (from right-of-way edge to right-of-way edge) a twelve foot-six inch wide residential sidewalk with trees along the side. Next a twenty-five foot wide “side road for the approach of vehicles to the adjoining lots.” After the side road were a seven foot-six inch wide tree lawn, a twenty-foot wide “walk” or promenade, and a second tree lawn of the same width. In the center was the “park-way” road at fifty-five feet wide. An identical combination of walks, approach road, side road and trees completed the plan on the opposite side of the central axis. In addition, the parkway scheme mandated a thirty-foot setback for the “line of houses” on each side for an effective width of 290 feet (eighty-eight meters) between the facades (Figure 5.6).

To ensure that the parkway maintained property values as part of a larger residential district, rather than a solitary boulevard, Olmsted and Vaux planned two narrower “park-ways” of 100 feet in width (thirty meters) paralleling the main parkway. The addition of two parallel parkways, also with building setbacks and allées of trees, would define an affluent district of a significant size to attract well-to-do residents. In an era before zoning, the tactic promoted amenities as an incentive to construct stylish homes in the new district. The secondary parkways were planned with a central roadway of forty feet with two thirty-foot corridors containing a double row of trees (no details are provided, but it may be assumed these corridors included a sidewalk at the minimum and possibly a service road). In addition, the secondary parkways had a setback for the “line of houses” of twenty feet, for an effective width of 140 feet (forty-three meters)—twice the width of the standard platted street. Between the primary and secondary parkways would be a “lane” or alley—Brooklyn, like New York, did not plan for service alleys to access the rear of its properties; Olmsted and Vaux’s lane would have been a desirable and useful addition for the wealthier classes they were hoping to attract.
Three rows of American elms (*Ulmus americana*) lined each side of the main “park-way” providing shade for the pleasure road, secondary roads and pedestrian walks. The American elm was an ideal urban street tree and its selection by Olmsted and Vaux accomplished a number of desirable goals. Not only was it a fast growing native tree that tolerated drought and a variety of soil conditions, but it also possessed an architectural distinction that complimented the streetscape—its erect trunk and high crown allowed light and air to circulate freely at the street level.\(^\text{46}\) Regarding the American elm, Charles Sprague Sargent (1841-1927), director of the Arnold Arboretum in Boston noted, “Nothing can be more pleasing and playful than the way Nature fantastically weaves about the rugged and shaggy stems this graceful garniture of fluttering leaves and clustering twigs, which give the last touch of perfection to the beautiful picture.”\(^\text{47}\) The selection of the American elm is also noteworthy as it indicated Olmsted and Vaux were reconciled to a monumental urban effect for their “park-way”—not a picturesque vignette.

Jamaica Parkway was, after all, a formal urban structure possessing a dignity, stature and scale that aggrandized Prospect Park and extended its reach into the city. While the bucolic scenery of the park could not be replicated in the narrow linear strip accorded the parkway, the park’s pleasure drive, or more correctly the surface of the pleasure drive, could be replicated. The well-graded and smooth surface of the drives so highly praised in Prospect and Central Parks would be extended within the specialty avenue constructed in the parkway. In addition, the urban form of the parkway, and its intimate relationship to the city, provided opportunities for forms of recreation not suited to the country park. Regarding the desirability of promenading on hot summer nights, Olmsted and Vaux noted that Prospect Park was not designed for night use; advising formal, well-lit promenades were safer for night.


\(^{47}\) “An Avenue of Elms,” *Garden and Forest Magazine*, vol. VI., No. 269, April 19, 1893.
strolling. “The parkways now under construction,” they noted, “are of this character.”

Jamaica Parkway, or Eastern Parkway as it was increasingly called, was a success. The New York Times reported, near the completion of the first boulevard section to be graded and paved, that the Park Commissioners expected to realize $3,000,000 (approximately $59,000,000 in 2014 dollars) from the sale of the improved lands along the parkway. The “court yards” as the front yards were termed, were restricted “to statuary and ornamental shrubberies” to ensure the dignity of the boulevard. This restriction, placed upon private property to protect the character of the parkway corridor, established the importance of the larger landscape as a contributing feature of the parkway (Figures 5.7 and 5.8). The plan for the two secondary parkways and the rear lanes was not implemented.

Land for the second “park-way,” Ocean Parkway, was acquired by the City of Brooklyn in 1868. Work on Ocean Parkway, south of Prospect Park to Coney Island commenced in 1874 and was completed in 1876. The parkway began at Park Circle, the southern entrance to the park and followed the line of the old Coney Island Plank Road; extending approximately five-and-a-half miles (nine kilometers) from Prospect Park to the bathing beaches at Coney Island (Figures 5.9 and 5.10).

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49 The reason for shift in name from Jamaica Parkway to Eastern Parkway is unclear. An 1868 Olmsted and Vaux plan for the parkway assigned no name to the corridor. Olmsted and Vaux used the name “Jamaica Parkway” in their 1871 report to the Brooklyn Park Commissioners (after construction of the parkway commenced); an 1875 article in the New York Times (February 6) noted “the Sackett Street Boulevard, known as the Eastern Parkway District” adds to the confusion. It is possible the shifting name reflected the newness of the parkway as an urban form.
Only three miles remain to be finished of Ocean Parkway, which, when completed, will run nearly east from Prospect Park to Coney Island, and will be one of the grandest drives in the United States.\textsuperscript{52}

With the completion of Ocean Parkway, Brooklyn possessed the first, albeit limited, parkway system in the world. Additional parkways were proposed for Manhattan and the Bronx, and segments of land parkways were established and roads constructed within these corridors. The most elegant examples, by Frederick Law Olmsted, were Riverside Drive along the Hudson River (with Vaux) and Morningside Drive along the top of the escarpment at Morningside Park—both in Manhattan. These later drives were established within wide parkway corridors and each, defined by a natural feature, was freed from the geometric constraints of the New York street grid he and Vaux both sought to avoid with their initial plans for a Brooklyn Parkway. Both Riverside Drive and Morningside Drive offered pleasing serpentine alignments that no doubt resulted in their being termed “drives.”

Escalating land values, development pressures and the intrinsic conflicts that existed among the regional municipalities before the consolidation of New York City in 1898, proved too complicated to fully execute the metropolitan parkway vision held by Olmsted and Vaux. While many miles of parkways were created, inviolable gaps existed within the system. To realize their ideal parkway plan, Olmsted and Vaux required a city better suited to the long-range comprehensive planning they advocated.

\textbf{BUFFALO PARK AND PARKWAY SYSTEM}

In 1868 Frederick Law Olmsted traveled to Buffalo, New York to consult on a park plan for the rapidly growing city. The city’s leadership was committed to the development of civic structures and public recreation grounds befitting its

aspirations as the great western metropolis of the state. Located nearly 400 miles (650 kilometers) from New York City, and with a population less than one-tenth of New York and Brooklyn combined, Buffalo with its open lands, and promise of becoming a great metropolitan center, presented Olmsted and Vaux with an opportunity to engage in the meaningful long range park and parkway planning that had eluded them in New York and Brooklyn.

Situated on Lake Erie, Buffalo was the terminus of the Erie Canal, one of the first major internal transportation improvements completed in the United States. With the opening of the 363-mile (584-kilometer) canal in 1825, a water route from the Atlantic Ocean at New York City to the Great Lakes, via the state capital at Albany, was completed. Located at this important nexus, Buffalo became the eastern shipping terminus for the growing Great Lakes cities of Cleveland, Detroit and Chicago, and quickly developed into a thriving port city, grain milling, manufacturing and transportation center. In 1830, shortly after the canal was completed, Buffalo had a population of 8,668; by 1870 it was the eleventh largest city in the United States with a population of 117,714.53

Buffalo was established with high expectations for growth and civic form. The Holland Land Company (a Dutch investment company) hired Joseph Ellicott in 1804 to plan and survey the new city on Lake Erie. Ellicott, with his brother Andrew and Benjamin Banneker, the noted African-American surveyor and scientist, surveyed the new capital at Washington in 1791.54 Influenced by the Baroque-style plan for the national capital created by French-born architect and engineer Pierre Charles L’Enfant, Ellicott designed Buffalo around a commodious central square (Niagara Square) from which four diagonal avenues overlaid a typical American gridiron arrangement of streets. The

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53 Source: U.S. Census: 1870 population statistics.
54 The Ellicotts were neighbors of Banneker in Baltimore County, Maryland and, as Quakers, encouraged Banneker’s education during a period in which African Americans had few opportunities for specialized training and professional apprenticeship.
diagonal avenues converging on the square defined a system of primary avenues associated with a central public space—not entirely unlike Olmsted and Vaux’s later “park-way” concept for thoroughfares radiating from Prospect Park.55

Olmsted was invited to Buffalo by William Dorsheimer (1832-1888) a rising political figure and advocate for public parks.56 He believed that Buffalo, like its more established and cosmopolitan sisters in the eastern part of the state, required a great country park. Dorsheimer convened a meeting, presided over by former U. S. President Millard Fillmore, to hear Olmsted describe the country park he envisioned for the city.57 Fillmore, returned home to Buffalo after his presidency, was not simply a resident figurehead lending stature to the gathering. As a strong park advocate, he had hired Andrew Jackson Downing and his new associate Calvert Vaux, to redesign the Mall in Washington, D.C. during his presidency.

With the endorsement of its civic leaders, Buffalo acquired 350 acres (142 hectares) for “The Park”—a country park so ideally situated that during his initial survey of potential sites with Dorsheimer, Olmsted announced, “Here is your park, almost ready made.”58

The land that became The Park (Delaware Park) was located on a rise of land north of the city. It offered the additional benefit of being sited between the State Insane Asylum and Forest Lawn Cemetery, and adjacent to Parkside, a suburb of “sylvan character”—an assemblage of public and private landscapes

55 This thesis makes no assertion that Olmsted and Vaux appropriated the Buffalo plan, but rather that Buffalo, unlike most American cities, presented Olmsted and Vaux with a more favorable street system upon which to implement their parkway concept.
56 Dorsheimer’s home in Buffalo was designed in 1886 by noted architect H.H. Richardson, a close collaborator and friend of Olmsted. He was Lieutenant Governor of New York (1875-1879) and a member of the U.S. House of Representatives (1883-1885).
58 Buffalo Courier, November 26, 1869, as quoted in Roper, FLO: A Biography, p. 322.
intended to provide, in perpetuity, a significant rural district for Buffalo.\textsuperscript{59} The park’s design included a forty-two acre lake, large meadow, woodlands and carriage drives.

In addition to Delaware Park, Olmsted and Vaux’s original plan included “The Parade,” a fifty-six acre (twenty-three hectare) park with a large lawn for military drills, outdoor sports and civic gatherings, and “The Front,” a fifty acre (twenty hectare) park adjacent to the Erie Canal and with a commanding view of the Niagara River, the Canadian Frontier and Lake Erie. The Front was described in the park reports by Olmsted and Vaux as being, “fanned by a cool westerly breeze, almost constantly blowing from the lake, which, in warm days is grateful and refreshing to visitors and healthful to invalids.”\textsuperscript{60} With the planned parks, Olmsted and Vaux accommodated the recreation, restorative and civic needs they anticipated for the city within three discreet units (Figure 5.11). The Parade, in particular, ensured that the rural character of Delaware Park would not be compromised by urban gatherings or the organized sports they viewed as incompatible with its restful scenery—Olmsted, in particular, viewed the country park as an antidote to urban life; for all of his country parks, he vehemently opposed organized sporting activities.

Connecting these three parks, Olmsted and Vaux projected a parkway system extending the reach of the main country park by uniting the secondary parks, and many residential districts with Niagara Square—a system extending roughly four miles (six kilometers) from the historic center of the city.\textsuperscript{61}

\textsuperscript{59} The State Insane Asylum occupied 203 acres, of which 100 acres were used for a farm. Olmsted and Vaux designed the grounds for the State Insane Asylum c. 1871; H. H. Richardson designed the building. Forest Lawn Cemetery was a rural cemetery established in 1849.

\textsuperscript{60} Buffalo Park Commission report as quoted in Alex, Calvert Vaux, p. 153.

\textsuperscript{61} Olmsted’s understanding of traffic circulation and the principal function of roads was demonstrated in a letter about a proposed war memorial for Niagara Square that he wrote to the Buffalo Park Commission on December 15, 1874: “[…] I have had in view the fact, that Niagara Square is the central feature of the plan of your city, and that broad streets approach and cross it from eight directions. It is first of all a place of thoroughfare, and, in my judgment, nothing should be done which will seriously injure its character in this respect.” See Charles Beveridge, ed., The
parkways reflected the geometry of the city, but were nonetheless handsome—owing partly to the city’s distinctive street plan.\(^6^2\) The parkways were up to 200 feet (sixty meters) wide and were lined with trees. The geometry of the parkways, their relationship to the park units and the city center, and the long distances they traversed was clearly derived from their “park-way” concept for Brooklyn (Figures 5.12 and 5.13). However, in Buffalo, Olmsted and Vaux presented a more complex and nuanced parkway corridor. Within the land parkways they envisioned playgrounds, diverse plantings and passive activities—the parkways were to be “more park-like than town-like.” Olmsted and Vaux presented their parkway concept to Dorsheimer in an 1868 letter:

Through these [parkway] strips a series of roads and walks adapted exclusively for pleasure travel should eventually be formed and outside of them roadways to answer the purpose of streets, for ordinary traffic, which could thus be disassociated from the movement to and from the park. So much of these strips as would not be wanted for passage-ways should be occupied by turf, trees, shrubs and flowers; they should follow existing lines of streets as far as practicable, so as not to interfere unnecessarily with the present divisions of property, and they should be so laid out as to connect the two subordinate grounds [The Parade and The Front], which have been indicated with the main park.

Thus, at no great distance from any point of the town, a pleasure ground will have been provided for, suitable for a short stroll, for a playground for children, and an airing ground for invalids, and a route of access to the large common park of the whole city of such a character that most of the steps on the way to it would be taken in the midst of a scene of sylvan beauty and with the sounds and sites of the ordinary town business, if not wholly shut out, removed to some distance and placed in obscurity. The way itself would thus be more park-like than town-like.\(^6^3\)

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\(^6^2\) Olmsted and Vaux added a few circles and squares, and two short diagonal avenues, to modify the existing street plan in the vicinity of Delaware Park.

In Buffalo, Olmsted and Vaux achieved the first integrated municipal park and parkway system in the United States. The parkways they planned advanced the concept from its Brooklyn origins as an urban corridor to one more sylvan in character. Their innovative design for the Buffalo parks and connecting parkways was one of their last collaborations. The two men formally dissolved their partnership in 1872.64

The Buffalo South Park

By 1888, with a population approaching 255,000, the population of Buffalo had more than doubled since Olmsted and Vaux were first asked to advise on its park system.65 Olmsted, now in partnership with his nephew and stepson John Charles Olmsted (1852-1920), was asked to consider the development of parks and parkways in the rapidly growing areas to the south of the city center. In typical Olmstedian fashion the plan was based on a strong philosophical and moral imperative for their work.

Twenty years hence Buffalo will be not only a city of much larger trade, much larger wealth and much larger population, but it will be a city of much more metropolitan character, than, not withstanding its recent rapid advance in this respect, it has yet come to be.66

With their plans for South Park in Buffalo, Olmsted and John Charles Olmsted proposed a second country park of 240 acres (ninety-seven hectares)—which would make Buffalo the first city in the nation to have two country parks. Olmsted believed strongly that the city’s location on Lake Erie should be highlighted, and he proposed a park with not only the passive picturesque features of his country parks, but also a bathing beach on the shore of Lake

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64 Olmsted and Vaux would continue to work together on a number of projects, most particularly Riverside Drive in New York.
Erie. As with all his country parks, carriage drives were an important aspect of the design, and the plan’s description for the “pleasure roads” maintained his strong distinction between a park carriage drive and a parkway. The park’s pleasure roads were intended as leisurely drives for which the kinesthetic experience with the scenery was the intended destination. Echoing Repton’s “stations,” the Olmsted and Olmsted plan designed spaces to accommodate the enjoyment of particular scenic views and prospects (Figures 5.14 and 5.15).

A proper pleasure road, with broad bordering walks mainly in the shade of trees, will be seen making a circuit of the Green, with liberal curves and liberal turning places. On one side of the circuit this road will command a broad view up Lake Erie, on the other a broad view over the park water. Where these views will be seen to the best advantage, there are expansions of the drives, and places arranged for people both in carriages and on foot to congregate. On the west side of the Green a minor circuit road is introduced, and the junctions are made so large that there can be a circulation of carriages about the point where the lake and the breeze from over the lake can be best enjoyed. On the east side, where the best lines of view over the park water are to be had, there is a standing place for carriages, and near it a large aquatic garden, for growing choice water-plants.67

For the parkways in the southern district, Olmsted and John Charles advised improved access for the city’s residents unable to afford a private carriage and reliant on public transport to access parks and other recreation destinations. Delaware Park, still some distance from the populated center, was not easily accessible by horse-cars and other modes of public transport.68 For South Park, the designers wanted to ensure that access was part of the park planning process.

68 The Buffalo Street Railway Company, established in 1860 maintained a system of public horse-cars. In 1888, the first electric streetcar began operation in Buffalo. The horse-cars were discontinued in 1894.
The situation of the first park [Delaware] having secured much greater advantages of access and use to those who would visit it in carriages upon common roads, than those who could come to it only by other means of transit, it will be better, in fixing the place and determining the plan of the second park, that special regard should be given to the point of providing inexpensive, convenient and agreeable means of access to it and conveyance within it, independently of ordinary road vehicles.\(^\text{69}\)

Olmsted must have been aware of the philosophical discrepancy between his views on country parks as a retreat for the working classes and the provision of carriage drives which were, by default, the domain of the wealthy classes. Olmsted could do little to change the affordability of the carriage, but he could ensure the democratization of scenery by improving access. While the Delaware Park site was beyond the public transport system of the day, he likely anticipated sufficient connections as the park developed and the city grew (horse car service was extended to the park in 1879\(^\text{70}\)). His very particular focus on public transport for South Park suggests a determination to ensure that Buffalo’s second country park was more accessible from the start.

The issue of public accessibility was further complicated by the topographic form and industrial development south of the city center. While the location of the South Park was widely endorsed as an ideal bluff from which to enjoy the scenic expanse of Lake Erie, access to the proposed park was inhibited by the railroads, swamps and creeks that made the development of a land parkway an expensive undertaking. So significant was the public debate as to how to connect the proposed park to the rest of the city and who should pay for its construction, the report included a separate section entitled, “Report on the South Parkway Question.” The report noted that public parks, as city institutions, were supported by taxes, but that the construction of roads,

\(^{69}\) Olmsted and Olmsted, The Projected Park and Parkways of the South Site of Buffalo, p. 8.

viewed historically as benefitting the local resident or business population, were paid through a local assessment. Then the report noted, “If, however, a road of precisely the same character were to be made with a purpose more especially of giving general access to a park, and which was, therefore, to be classed as a parkway [...] one-half of its cost would be defrayed by general taxation.”71

Having made a legal and revenue argument as to the cost of the parkway, Olmsted and John Charles Olmsted next appealed to the park commissioners as to their duty to provide convenient access to sites of recreation and retreat that did not fatigue park visitors through less expensive, but more circuitous, routes to the parks.

Why, then, should it be expected in Buffalo that the Park Commissioners will take the duty of laying out this particular class of streets [parkways]? The answer to the question is that the Park Commissioners have the duty of providing for the wants of the people in respect to open air refreshment. With this duty they have to choose ground for a park which because of natural circumstance is adapted to the purpose. But suppose such ground to be so situated that access to it for the greater part of the people of a city by existing streets would be inconvenient, fatiguing and unpleasant to that degree that it would hardly be compensated by the refreshment that they would obtain while in the park. In that case it becomes the duty of a Park Commission to consider and advise the city what improvement of its street system may desirably be undertaken in order to make the proposed park more valuable to its entire people. Out of this duty grows that class of public streets properly called parkways.72

This reference, while subject to interpretation within its context, may be the first time the term “parkway” was referenced as a road type.73

71 Olmsted and Olmsted, The Projected Park and Parkways of the South Site of Buffalo, p. 28.
72 Ibid., p. 30.
73 The report’s reference to a “road of precisely the same character” suggested Olmsted and Olmsted viewed the “parkway” as a public road. It is also possible that Olmsted and Olmsted were modifying their definition to secure the tax revenue needed to develop a land parkway.
In the end, South Park was not constructed due to concerns about the cost of filling the low-lying lands and the long-term risk to the park from winter storms blowing off Lake Erie. The Buffalo Park Commissioners had Olmsted and John Charles Olmsted develop plans for two smaller parks, and in 1892 they submitted designs for a new South Park and Cazenovia Park—neither park was sufficient in size to be considered a country park by Olmsted, but they were linked to each other and the larger Buffalo park system by new parkways.

**BOSTON: DEBATING, DEFINING AND REFINING THE PARKWAY**

In 1869, as part of a growing public debate over the provision of public parks in the City of Boston, the *Boston Daily Advertiser* published a controversial excerpt from a new book on public parks: “What do you Bostonians want of a park, with such wealth of natural beauty all around you, and almost every foot of it so tastefully improved by private hands?” Its publication by the *Boston Daily Advertiser* was intended to challenge those advocating for the expenditure of public funds for the acquisition of new parks. The excerpt, misrepresented in the paper, was a rhetorical query, after a paean to the picturesque scenery surrounding Boston, from the recently published *The Public Grounds of Chicago, How to Give them Character and Expression*, by landscape architect H. W. S. Cleveland (1814-1900).

The book, published in 1869, was Cleveland’s opportunity to advise not only Chicago, but also other cities considering the development of country parks through a series of park assessments and guidance on park development. The slim volume opened with a summary of the three completed great country parks of the time, Central Park, Prospect Park and Druid Hill Park in Baltimore. Cleveland’s explanation of each park was as much a summation of

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74 Zaitzevsky, *Olmsted and the Boston Park System*, p. 35
their design and character as a lesson of how each city developed a successful park landscape based on unique local conditions and history. In cautioning the dozens of American cities considering the development of country parks, and establishing an argument for his park vision for Chicago, he exhorted them to avoid the “sheep-like propensity to follow a leader”75 in an imitation, particularly, of Central Park. Cleveland urged his readers to recognize that:

[…] every city has a character of its own, resulting from the nature of its situation, and the topography of its surroundings, as well as from its history and growth—and in the creation of its parks, or whatever other description of public grounds may be desirable for its adornment, and the health and recreation of its inhabitants—the aim should always be, if possible, to give them a character of individuality which shall harmonize with that of the city itself, and render them attractive and interesting because it is unique, rather than because its features are more or less magnificent than those which may be found elsewhere.76

Cleveland’s argument was directed partly to the park advocates of Boston, where he had been in practice with Robert Morris Copeland before moving to Chicago. To make his argument for respecting local conditions, Cleveland presented two essays, “What Boston May Do” and “What Chicago May Do,” showcasing vastly different park solutions for “two cities, which are perhaps, as widely different from each other in all their characteristics, as any two in the United States.”77

Cleveland’s argument for Boston was radical. He stated that no country park, such as Central Park, was needed. He cited the compact size of the city, the existing open space found in the Boston Common and the Public Garden, and the cleansing breezes from the ocean and river that naturally ventilated the city. In his essay, which has been considered the genesis of what would become the Metropolitan Park Commission, he advocated Boston go “beyond

76 Cleveland, The Public Grounds of Chicago, p. 7.
77 Ibid., p. 7.
her own limits”\(^{78}\) and seek scenery and recreation in the surrounding countryside. While the wealthy classes regularly recreated in the picturesque destinations far from the smoke and noise of America’s growing cities, the idea of public parks beyond the municipal boundaries, and available to the urban masses, was highly unconventional. For Boston, Cleveland argued that the picturesque countryside, benefitting from the good taste among the suburban classes and the responsible husbandry of the agrarian classes, was, in reality, a *de facto* country park. Any visitor to Boston, he stated, “would not ride a mile out of the city on any road, without expressions of admiration of the beauty of the natural features […].”\(^{79}\) Cleveland’s plan, however, did not advocate the acquisition of the sites and scenes he admired; it relied on an Arcadian vision that the “park” be maintained through the munificence of private landowners (with a few limited land acquisitions). Despite the plan’s quixotic bent, it is valuable for the importance Cleveland placed on the development of park roads. His entire concept for metropolitan Boston was based on the identification and improvement of existing public roads to provide a structure for his country “park.” To be fair, his argument acknowledged that many of the bucolic scenes were privately owned and could only be enjoyed from a carriage on a public road, but he reasoned that that experience was little different from Central Park, which offered its own limitations on access. Regarding his proposed park road network in comparison to Central Park, he stated:

> […] the scenes of beauty and attractive interest which meet the eye are quite as much the property of any one who can enjoy them, as are those of the Central Park, where his steps are as strictly confined to the roads and paths as if the adjoining fields were private grounds. Here, then, we have an area, compared to which the Central Park is of trifling extent, the natural beauty of which has been so far improved by private hands, that one may ride for days and days in succession through continually varying scenes […]. It remains only for Boston to avail herself of the opportunity thus offered by finishing and adorning the

\(^{78}\) Ibid., p. 8.  
\(^{79}\) Ibid., p. 9.
roads which wind among these charming scenes in a corresponding style, and she may thus appropriate their beauty [...].

According to Cleveland, his proposal for pleasure roads “would make a park of the whole surrounding country.” He advanced specific recommendations for improvements to existing country roads to ensure that the aesthetic effect would be appropriate to the setting and advised, again anticipating the Metropolitan Park Commission, that the cost of the improvements be shared by the towns receiving improved roads, but that “to ensure unity of design their general direction should be governed by one head.” He noted that specific roads to be improved as park roads be selected based on their relationship to picturesque scenery and their suitability for improvement.

The drainage and road-making would, of course, be entrusted to a competent engineer; but the adornment of the roadsides should be designed and directed by an artist of the best attainable class. The danger to be apprehended […] will be that of too elaborate a display of decorative art, which in many places would be glaringly offensive from its incongruity with the prevailing character of the adjoining grounds. The general tone should be that of simplicity, and the effort should be only to develop natural beauty by the use of natural means. […] The highways should simply be rendered attractive by the tasteful introduction of objects of natural beauty and interest, and no artificial structures should be admitted for merely ornamental purposes, but only for those of obvious utility. These would consist of bridges, for crossing streams, railroads or ravines, fountains or watering places for the refreshment of man or beast, and seats or resting places for pedestrians.

The importance Cleveland accorded pleasure roads was significant, and whether for the Boston “country” park or the boulevard plan he advocated for Chicago, *The Public Grounds of Chicago* was heavily weighted by his observations and recommendations for roads as a principal organizing structure for public parks. Further, his assessment of picturesque scenery

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80 Ibid., p. 10.
81 Ibid.
82 Ibid.
83 Ibid., pp. 10-11.
beyond the municipal boundary of Boston, and independent from the jurisdictional divisions of the surrounding towns, established an early conceptual framework for regional park planning.

**The Most Beautiful City in America**

In 1872 Robert Morris Copeland published *The Most Beautiful City in America, Essay and Plan for The Improvement of the City of Boston*—a practical and philosophical dissertation on public parks and, though not termed as such, parkways. Copeland (1830-1874) was a noted landscape gardener and the author of *Country Life: A Handbook of Agriculture, Horticulture and Landscape Gardening* published in 1859. His work included the design and laying out of grounds for country places for the wealthy, public parks and cemeteries, as well as town planning throughout New England. He is credited with assisting the architect Arthur Gilman in the layout of Boston’s Back Bay in 1856 and with developing the boulevard concept for Commonwealth Avenue in the new district (Figure 5.16). Copeland, with H.W.S. Cleveland, designed Sleepy Hollow Cemetery (1855), a rural cemetery in Concord, Massachusetts, and in 1858 Copeland and Cleveland submitted an entry for the Central Park design competition in New York; he also consulted on Fairmount Park in Philadelphia.

Copeland, perhaps more than any other landscape architect of the period, viewed roads as an exceptional design resource and as an under-recognized tool to organize the landscape. While Loudon and Downing made references to Repton’s road concepts and Olmsted and Vaux used the road skillfully, Copeland wrote extensively and, in a manner after Repton, contributed to the theoretical development of roads designed for pleasure in the United States through complex assessments and engineering advice.
In *Country Life*, a book devoted primarily to landscape design and horticultural practices for country estates, Copeland wrote about the design of roads, their construction and maintenance. His detailed notes and views of roads suggest the importance he placed on them as landscape elements and echo similar views held by Repton, Olmsted and Vaux. However, with the possible exception of Repton, Copeland placed greater emphasis on the different types, purposes and construction of roads for country estates (see Appendix 2).

In *The Most Beautiful City in America*, Copeland expanded upon his residential “drive” discussion in *Country Life* and articulated what may be considered the first metropolitan park and parkway concept in the world. What distinguished his plan from Olmsted and Vaux’s work in Brooklyn and Buffalo was its more ambitious scope, and its integration into modern city planning—addressing Boston’s larger transportation, communication and commercial needs. While the conceptual nature of his plan allowed Copeland to project a grand vision, unencumbered by the realities of politics, land ownership or budget, it was not impractical; nor did it rely on the naïve and romantic dependence of Cleveland’s proposal on public-spirited landowners to maintain “public” scenery in perpetuity.

The first half of the pamphlet made a practical and economic call for progressive city planning; in the second half he spoke in the voice of a landscape architect advocating beauty and nature. Copeland used economic, social and quality-of-life arguments to advance his justification for better planning, and much of his writing was devoted to the development of a comprehensive circulation plan.

The city whose area is carefully studied, which shows by plan where wharves may be built, where new avenues are to be laid out, and where new factories may congregate; where parks, gardens, and palaces, if desired, may be made, will grow in a sure, orderly, and progressive
way, and as it grows have all the central vigor of the great railroad or
manufactory; merchandise can be easily transported, business done,
water and gas supplied, amusements furnished, fires limited, and
sewage provided for.\textsuperscript{84}

In outlining the features that distinguished Boston from other growing
American cities, Copeland adeptly mixed commercial prospects with the city’s
picturesque setting.

Whether we care for it or not, admit it or not, Boston cannot be
surpassed in picturesqueness. Its irregularity of surface, its hills and
valleys, rocky ledges, wide meadows, fine trees, winding streams,
broad harbor, inland bays, make variety and beauty in every direction,
and a beauty which still continues to be manifest, in spite of the efforts
which have been made to destroy it.\textsuperscript{85}

Like Repton, Copeland understood and defined the kinesthetic qualities of the
existing road network of the region.

It is well known that all travelers, native or foreign, are pleased with
our city and its environs, and always call them beautiful. A stranger
drives from the city through our suburban towns, winding through
lanes, whose ferny and rocky sides are full of shrubs, equally beautiful
with their blossoms or berries: or ascends hills that give the most
varied and extended views over the bay, or far inland to the mountains;
or he follows the winding course of a river, or the margin of a lake,
whose clear waters give the most beautiful reflections of tree-clad
banks and the changing color of the sky.\textsuperscript{86}

And also like Repton he delighted in the animation of the landscape.

Before these hills is spread a landscape that one can never tire of
looking at, whether he studies the busy shifting of scenes in the harbor
always lively with sail and steamer, or watches the breaking line of
foam as wave after wave rolls up on Chelsea beach, or gazes inland
over the level but ever beautiful marshes of Malden and Medford, with

\textsuperscript{84} Robert Morris Copeland, \textit{The Most Beautiful City in America, Essay and Plan for The
Improvement of the City of Boston} (Boston: Lee & Shepard, 1872), p. 11.
\textsuperscript{86} Ibid., p. 28.
their picturesque outlines and background of hill and forest-clad ledges.\textsuperscript{87}

The second half of \textit{The Most Beautiful City in America} offered a blueprint for a metropolitan park system connected by parkways (Figures 5.17). Copeland may have opened with a good economic argument but he closed with an emotional plea. Well-written and convincing, Copeland presented a philosophical foundation for the park system Boston (and the metropolitan region) would ultimately adopt and develop. Copeland drew careful comparisons to Central Park, but more often to Fairmount Park in Philadelphia, to show why Boston was different and, by extension, the unique needs and opportunities for a park and parkway system. While not using the term “parkway,” Copeland captured the idea of a parkway when he discussed preserving the hilltops of East Boston as “public grounds” and connecting them via a “broad boulevard” to Chelsea Beach.\textsuperscript{88}

His 1872 publication was written while Jamaica Parkway was under construction in Brooklyn (1870-1874). While it is likely he was familiar with the new term “park-way” through his knowledge of Olmsted and Vaux’s work, it is possible he resisted its use for several reasons. Firstly, as he advocated a regional system with a hierarchy of road types including “wide avenues,” “broad boulevards,” “park drives” and “winding lanes,” rather than a single road type, he may have wanted to avoid the suggestion of the singular cross-section of the Olmsted and Vaux Brooklyn parkway with its central avenue, local approach roads and pedestrian promenades. While well suited to some of his boulevard and avenue concepts, it would have been too formal for his scenic park and suburban drives. Secondly, as a public plea for a better Boston, he may have wanted to avoid introducing a term that would have been unfamiliar to the majority of his readers. By referencing boulevards,

\textsuperscript{87} Ibid., p. 24.
\textsuperscript{88} Ibid.
avenues and drives he was using familiar terminology that would ensure the fullest comprehension of his vision for Boston.

 [...] Boston, as a city, will be made more beautiful as a whole, if we can crown every hill-top with groves of trees and gardens which will have vistas opened to the landscape in addition to parks of moderate size, skirting and enclosing some of the hills and valleys which can be connected by fine avenues. These places would offer local beauty and pleasure to many neighborhoods, and to those who ride or drive, a long line of changing and beautiful scenery, each new park or common having something to admire unlike the one passed through.\footnote{Ibid., p. 36.}

Copeland’s description of a “long line of changing and beautiful scenery,” suggested he too was familiar with Repton’s theory of “stations” to provide interest and diversity to the route. Here, as with his observations on animation in the landscape, he demonstrated a Reptonian comprehension of the complexities that made for an interesting experience.

Making a clear distinction between roads designed for pleasure and roads adapted for pleasure, Copeland noted that the existing drive from the hilltops of East Boston to Chelsea Beach was recognized as a pleasure drive (a road adapted for pleasure) and that it should be secured as a permanent corridor—suggesting, perhaps, future improvements associated with roads designed for pleasure.

This drive is familiar to most of us; the heights of East Boston and Winthrop, the shore of Point Shirley, Breed’s Island, and the long line of Chelsea beach [sic], have given many a day’s pleasure to old and young amongst us, and a large part of this region ought to be secured by the city for a great sea-side park for our maritime population.\footnote{Ibid., p. 41.}

Copeland’s detailed description of a regional park system introduced a hierarchy of pleasure road types, from broad boulevards to winding lanes,
each designed to respond to the particular needs of capacity, environment and experience found in the different districts he evaluated. Many of his concepts would be realized through Olmsted’s Boston park work, known collectively as the “Emerald Necklace,” and ultimately through the Metropolitan Park Commission.

Olmsted and the Muddy River Improvement

With the writings of Cleveland and Copeland, Boston became the center of the park and parkway debate; Olmsted too, was engaged in the conversation. As the originator, with Vaux, of the “park-way” concept, his assessment of Boston’s parkway development potential, when compared to other U.S. cities, marked an important evolution from the earlier Brooklyn and Buffalo parkways. His views were presented in a paper entitled, “Public Parks and the Enlargement of Towns,” read before the American Social Science Association at the Lowell Institute in Boston on February 25, 1870. The treatise collected Olmsted’s views on social reform, parks, transportation, sanitation and public health in a comprehensively written text that elevated the conversation on the future of the city in post-Civil War America. Not surprisingly, he viewed attractive roads as the best structure by which to rationalize urban life, provide better access to areas of recreation and repose, responsibly structure new areas for development and ensure lines of beauty spreading out and across the landscape—parkways.

Olmsted’s Boston remarks, outlining a preference for an “irregular form” for parkways, were made six months before construction began in Brooklyn on the Jamaica Parkway—establishing a compelling argument that he always viewed the parkway as a serpentine form associated with pleasure driving. Such an argument is further supported by Olmsted’s description of the parkway as an elongated park and his consideration for a parkway width up to 500 feet (152 meters)—more than twice the width of the Jamaica Parkway.
right-of-way. Within the more organic street pattern of Boston he saw an ideal geometry for the “park-way” concept. In “Public Parks and the Enlargement of Towns,” Olmsted stated:

A park fairly well managed near a large town, will surely become a new centre of that town. With the determination of location, size, and boundaries should therefore be associated the duty of arranging new trunk routes of communication between it and the distant parts of the town existing and forecasted.

These may be either narrow informal elongations of the park, varying say from two to five hundred feet in width, and radiating irregularly from it, or if, unfortunately, the town is already laid out in the unhappy way that New York and Brooklyn, San Francisco and Chicago, are, and, I am glad to say, Boston is not, on a plan made long years ago by a man who never saw a spring-carriage, and who had a conscientious dread of the Graces, then we must probably adopt formal Park-ways. They should be so planned and constructed as never to be noisy [sic] and seldom crowded, and so also that the straightforward movement of pleasure-carriages need never be obstructed, unless at absolutely necessary crossings, by slow-going heavy vehicles used for commercial purposes. If possible, also, they should be branched or reticulated with other ways of a similar class, so that no part of the town should finally be many minutes’ walk from some one of them; and they should be made interesting by a process of planting and decoration, so that in necessarily passing through them, whether in going to or from the park, or to and from business, some substantial recreative advantage may be incidentally gained. It is a common error to regard a park as something to be produced complete in itself, as a picture to be painted on canvas. It should rather be planned as one to be done in fresco, with constant consideration of exterior objects, some of them quite at a distance and even existing as yet only in the imagination of the painter.\(^91\)

For his Boston audience Olmsted was decisive; a park was “not complete in itself,” but rather a part of a larger system of pleasure grounds, recreation sites and parkways. Olmsted’s comparison of a park to a fresco, rather than a painting on canvas, was evocative of the Picturesque Controversy; his use of fresco as a metaphor for a park and parkway system may be interpreted as a

\(^{91}\) Olmsted, *Public Parks and the Enlargement of Towns*, pp. 24-25.
kinesthetic reference and an acknowledgement of the uncertainties of long range planning. In toto, his paper was a comprehensive assessment of America’s growing cities and a rational and compelling call for pleasure roads to connect and provide access to public parks and recreation areas. In Boston, Olmsted found a receptive intellectual environment for his views on park planning.

In 1875 the General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (the Massachusetts State Legislature) passed the Park Commission Act. As one of their first projects, the newly appointed Boston Park Commissioners approved the development of Back Bay Park in 1877. The commissioners secured 106 acres (forty-three hectares) where Stony Brook and Muddy River entered the Charles River estuary—the majority of land they intended for a reservoir lined with granite blocks to serve as a storage basin for storm overflows from the two water courses. The impetus for the park was driven by the noxious situation created when the Muddy River and Stony Brook, both functioning as open sewers, emptied into the Back Bay estuary of the Charles River.

The Back Bay formed the “back” shore of the Shawmut Peninsula, where the City of Boston had been established in 1630. The west side of the Boston Common was originally on the shore of Back Bay. Between 1818 and 1821 a dam was constructed to manipulate the waters of the bay in an effort to create tidal waterpower for a speculative milling and manufacturing center. With the completion of the dam (the location of Beacon Street today) 735 acres (297 hectares) of the Back Bay were impounded; its waters no longer naturally refreshed by the Charles River tides. The waterpower scheme proved insufficient to support modern industrial needs and, by the 1840s, all serious manufacturing was located inland along the powerful Merrimack River—creating the Industrial Revolution behemoths of Lawrence, Haverhill and Lowell, Massachusetts. What remained in Boston was a stagnant bay of
no industrial value into which much of the city’s sewage flowed. One engineer described the Back Bay as, “the filthiest marsh and mud flats to be found anywhere in Massachusetts [...] a body of water so foul that even clams and eels cannot live in it, and that no one will go within half a mile of in summer unless from necessity, so great is the stench arising therefrom.”\(^{92}\)

It was decided to fill the fetid Back Bay for residential development. In 1854 a plan for streets was established and in 1855 the filling of the site began—proceeding, block-by-block, gradually west into the 1860s.\(^{93}\) Unfortunately, the plan robbed the compromised body of one of its last useful functions, impounding storm water. The situation was particularly acute during storm events when the high tides of the Charles River pushed the filthy water back up the Muddy River and Stony Brook—causing extensive flooding. Thus, the determination was made by the Boston Park Commissioners for a granite block reservoir to hold the floodwaters until they could be safely released at low tide.

In 1878 the city began filling the park site and announced a competition for a plan for the “Back Bay Park.” The competition was a failure. The winning design by Hermann Grundel, a local florist, was an awkward assemblage of picturesque features that largely ignored the stormwater requirements; \textit{American Architect and Building News} described the plan as “childish.”\(^{94}\) In the absence of a viable solution, Frederick Law Olmsted was asked to prepare a park plan for the site. Olmsted argued that the site was a sanitary project, more than a park, and that its name be changed from Back Bay Park to “Back Bay Fens”—the “fens” defining a low-lying area wholly or partially covered with water. As Olmsted wrote:

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\(^{94}\) Zaitzevsky, \textit{Olmsted and the Boston Park System}, p. 47.
With a view to a public opinion sustaining true economy and suitable design in park work proper, nothing could be more unfortunate than that the work in Back Bay should be regarded as park work, and, as such, should be found acceptable. 95

Olmsted proposed the elimination of the engineered reservoir and the creation of a salt marsh. A new dam would be built at the Charles River, which was still a tidal estuary, to maintain the level of salt water in the park eight feet above mean low water; thereby keeping the fetid mud banks from being exposed at low tide. Muddy River and Stony Brook, the two sources of fresh water, and of sewage, would be diverted to the Charles. Stony Brook would be entirely replaced by a conduit; Muddy River would be restored from Jamaica Pond to the Back Bay Fens. While the Muddy River would appear to empty into the salt marsh, it too would be diverted, via conduit, for the final distance to the Charles River. During flood events, the Back Bay Fens would capture overflow water from the two watercourses, flooding the salt marsh basin and then releasing the captured water during low tide (Figure 5.18).

The artificial salt marsh constructed at the Back Bay Fens was a success. In 1880 Olmsted prepared “Suggestions for the Improvement of Muddy River and for completion of a Continuous Promenade from the Common to Jamaica Pond.” The park system Olmsted envisioned began with the Boston Common (1634) and Public Garden (1837) and extended along the Commonwealth Avenue boulevard to its intersection with the Back Bay Fens, then continued upstream along the Muddy River to Jamaica Pond—a source of the river and a destination historically valued for boating and ice skating. The connected system of parks, both existing and proposed, was ultimately extended beyond Jamaica Pond to include the Arnold Arboretum (1872) and Franklin Park (1884), connected by a final parkway, “The Arbor-Way.” The interconnected series of parks and parkways created the “Emerald Necklace” of Boston (Figure 5.19).

The first parkway project of the Emerald Necklace, after the Back Bay Fens sanitary improvement, was the “Muddy River Improvement.” Like the Fens, the Muddy River was largely a recreated natural feature. In December of 1881 the Park Commissioners began purchasing lands along the Muddy River. In 1890 work began on restoring the despoiled river environment; work was substantially complete in 1895 and the new parkway labeled, “The River-way.”

The early plans for the Back Bay Fens called for placing the entire length of the Muddy River in conduit, but Olmsted saw an opportunity to restore the river as a parkway corridor. What began as a sanitary improvement defined a new form for the “park-way”—dictated by hydrology, not platted streets. In a subsection “Nomenclature of the Parkway System” of the Appendix of the 1887 report to the Boston Park Commissioners, Olmsted defined the term within the new Boston context:

> The term Parkway, hitherto used to designate the continuous and connecting thread of the system, is probably as expressive of this idea as any that can be devised, and is as likely as any to come easily into familiar use with those having no special interest in the subject.

The restoration, or more correctly the reconstruction, of the Muddy River as a parkway supports the assertion that a roadway was not essential to the early concepts for a parkway; the narrow corridor allowed no room for a pleasure drive. Thus, the Riverway established the primacy of park connections, or land parkways, over transportation considerations.

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96 Olmsted was not the first to view the river as part of a metropolitan park plan. The Bowditch Park Plan of 1875 recommended the upper portion of the Muddy River be preserved as a park. See Zaitzevsky, *Olmsted and the Boston Park System*, p. 81.


98 Letter from Frederick Law Olmsted to Charles F. Sprague, Chairman, Board of Park Commissioners, August 20, 1894. See Beveridge, ed., *The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted*, vol. IX, p. 820.
The Muddy River demonstrated that a sanitary project could be conceived and executed as a public amenity (Figure 5.20). Olmsted was confident of the long-term significance of the Muddy River Improvement. In a letter to John Charles Olmsted and Charles Eliot he equated the significance of the project to Central Park:

In your probable life-time, Muddy River, Blue Hills, the Fells, Waverly Oaks, Charles River, the Beaches, will be points to date from in the history of American Landscape Architecture, as much as Central Park. They will be the opening of New Chapters of the Art. And there will be fashions starting from them, which will run across the Continent. And our first stroke of importance in this sort of work is that now being made on Muddy River. Twenty years hence you will be looking back to Muddy River, as I do to Central Park. That is what I mean when I say that it is a critical work.99

Olmsted’s reference to the Blue Hills, the Middlesex Fells, Waverly Oaks, Charles River and the beaches, as a part of his assessment of the Muddy River Improvement, was an acknowledgment of the Metropolitan Park Commission, established in 1893. Under the direction of the new state agency, public health and the parkway would reshape the landscape of metropolitan Boston and, as Olmsted prophesied, the profession of landscape architecture in America.

PUBLIC HEALTH AND THE PARKWAY

The development of watershed parkways in Boston, beginning with the Muddy River Improvement, was influenced by a new public health movement in the United States dedicated to eradicating the chronic outbreaks of cholera, typhoid and malaria common in many American cities. The first public health

department in the United States was established in New York City in 1866. In 1869, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts established the State Board of Health. In 1886, recognizing the important link between public health and water quality, Massachusetts established the Department of Water Supply and Sewerage.

Landscape architects in the second half of the nineteenth century were often involved in the sanitary and public health movements. Given the grim realities of rapidly expanding urban centers and increasing population densities, they identified critically needed places for recreation and leisure—despite their often-filthy conditions. Importantly, they looked beyond execrable, but ultimately solvable problems, to evaluate landscapes objectively. Describing the “beautiful close to an afternoon's drive” around Boston and its environs, Copeland described the advantages of the “sewerage-fed” harbor in The Most Beautiful City in America:

Here, for the first time, the tourist would touch the shore of the bay, and in spite of mud and slime deposited by our sewerage-fed harbor, the shore is beautiful, and opens out in a most attractive way.100

Well before his Boston work, Frederick Law Olmsted was actively engaged in the sanitary movement and, like Copeland, saw the interface between public health and public parks. In 1861, Olmsted resigned his position with Central Park and moved to Washington, D.C. to serve as Executive Secretary of the United States Sanitary Commission, established at the start of the Civil War.101 In the capital he was horrified by the conditions he found in the military encampments. Dysentery, typhoid fever and malaria were taking more lives than combat wounds; drainage and sanitation were near nonexistent. Using his new authority, he implemented scientific reporting on camp and battlefield conditions and published bulletins on disease, sanitation and other

100 Copeland, The Most Beautiful City in America, pp. 40-41.
101 The U.S. Sanitary Commission is considered the direct forerunner of the American Red Cross.
health and environment subjects. While the Civil War exacerbated and concentrated such problems, disease and sanitation problems were endemic in America’s growing industrial cities.

In 1864, *Man and Nature* by George Perkins Marsh was published. Considered the fountainhead of the conservation movement in the United States, the book’s argument for responsible land management and conservation was made during the final year of the Civil War. Written on the brink of the mass consumption of raw materials that would fuel post-war growth and draw new attention to the condition of the nation’s ecosystems, Marsh’s book captured the ethos of the early conservation movement in the United States. His writing on restoring landscapes, the effects of erosion, the creation of new reservoirs and the importance of clean water defined the argument for the reclamation of the nation’s despoiled waterways.

In reclaiming and reoccupying lands laid waste by human improvidence or malice, and abandoned by man, or occupied only by a nomade [sic] or thinly scattered population, the task of the pioneer settler is of a very different character. He is to become a co-worker with nature in the reconstruction of the damaged fabric which the negligence or the wantonness of former lodgers has rendered untenable. He must aid her in reclothing the mountain slopes with forests and vegetable mould, thereby restoring the fountains which she provided to water them; in checking the devastating fury of torrents, and bringing back the surface drainage to its primitive narrow channels; and in drying deadly morasses by opening the natural sluices which have been choked up, and cutting new canals for drawing off their stagnant waters. He must thus, on the one hand, create new reservoirs, and, on the other, remove mischievous accumulations of moisture, thereby equalizing and regulating the sources of atmospheric humidity and of flowing water, both which are so essential to all vegetable growth, and, of course, to human and lower animal life.

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The Wissahickon Creek in Philadelphia may be the first river reclamation project in the United States. As Laura Wood Roper notes in *FLO: A Biography of Frederick Law Olmsted*, the expansions of Fairmount Park in Philadelphia along the Schuylkill River and Wissahickon Creek had more to do with protecting the city’s water supply than a response to the growing popularity of the parks movement.\(^\text{104}\) Indeed, the park, which dates to 1812 when the city purchased five acres (two hectares) to ensure a supply of pure water, preceded Central Park by nearly fifty years. Subsequent land additions were made primarily to protect the water supply; Fairmount Park was not officially established until 1855.\(^\text{105}\)

Philadelphia’s commitment to protecting its water supply through the acquisition of watershed lands was noteworthy during an era in which many believed bad vapors, or miasmas, to be the source of disease. It was not until 1854, when the English physician John Snow (1813-1858) traced an outbreak of cholera in London to a polluted well, that science challenged the miasma theories that had guided public health since Medieval times. His findings advanced the recognition of viral or bacterial microorganisms as a source of disease—establishing modern germ theory.

Fouled waterways and their reclamation, such as Wissahickon Creek in Philadelphia, were among the earliest efforts at associating environmental reclamation with larger public health goals. In Boston, the Charles River was fouled by industrial waste and raw sewage emptied into the river upstream from the city. Demonstrating the intersection between public health and public parks a comprehensive report on the Charles River, *Report of the Joint Board [...] Upon the Improvement of Charles River*, was jointly prepared by the Metropolitan Park Commission and the Massachusetts State Board of Health in 1896. The report presented a critical analysis of pollution and incumbent

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health issues, while also assessing the recreational and scenic asset the river provided to Metropolitan Boston. The river, popular for boating and bathing, was a critical health problem.

As the stream for a large part of its course is still the public sewer of the district, much putrescible animal and vegetable matter is deposited upon these exposed banks and soon enters into decomposition, becoming a source of discomfort and positive injury even to the health of those who visit the stream for purposes of recreation or who live upon its banks.106

The intersection of river reclamation with public health occurred during the peak of the park and parkway movement. It is not surprising that landscape architects, who also saw their work as benefiting public health, identified opportunities for scenic and recreational goals within projects to clean the fouled waterways of the nation’s industrial centers.

Aside from the aesthetic and recreative interest which the beautiful shores of this river possess, and paramount to it, is the question of their healthfulness; and in this relation no disease has in recent years attracted more attention, or deserved more, than intermittent fever, or the disease due to the so-called malarial influences. The real importance of this disease cannot be measured by the deaths which are recorded as due to it. The disabling effects of it cling to the unfortunate for years [...].107

Such concerns were justified. In 1890 there were 442 cases of “intermittent fever” reported along the Charles River; by 1892 the number of reported cases spiked to 1,355—remaining elevated for the years leading up to the preparation of the report.108

108 Ibid., p. 38.
The document’s “Report of the Landscape Architects,” prepared by Olmsted, Olmsted & Eliot, echoed the critical findings in the introduction, noting particularly, recreational boating: “If the river is to be preserved as a pleasure highway or parkway, the mills and factories must, in the first place, be induced or compelled to cease pouring their objectionable wastes into the current.”

Their references to the river as a “pleasure highway” or a “parkway” (or what later in the report they referred to as a “water parkway”) were not intended as desirable synonymic terms, but rather reflected two distinctly different outcomes for the river based on established park and parkway theory. Olmsted, Olmsted & Eliot offered two alternative models for the river. The first, a “parkway” or “water parkway,” would protect the river’s edge with building setbacks designed to limit development along the Charles and an ordinance to prohibit the cutting of trees within a defined protected area. Regarding the setback, the report noted, “The restricted strip would, of course, need to be wider than is usual on land parkways.”

Under this scenario, the river frontage (except for a few existing public sites) remained in private hands. The second alternative proposed the acquisition, by purchase or condemnation, of lands along the river to create a publicly accessible park. The summary of the two alternatives is an important insight into the differences between a parkway and park during this period.

This proposal [acquiring the land] is put forward last, because it plainly calls for several times the expenditure, both at first and annually, that all the preceding suggestions put together would require. The carrying out of the preceding suggestions would make Charles River simply a parkway, bordered by partially “restricted” private lands. This last suggestion would make the river and its scenery the central feature of a park, the banks and the waters alike usable by the public.

While Olmsted, Olmsted & Eliot never called for the creation of a pleasure drive within their Charles River recommendations, their differentiation

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109 Ibid., p. 13.
110 Ibid., p. 17.
111 Ibid., p. 18. (Italics original.)
between a “park” and “parkway” within their two alternatives reinforced the contemporary understanding of a parkway. The river, without accessible edges (but nonetheless attractive under their proposal), was much like the approach road (boulevard or avenue) within a parkway, pleasantly situated, but limited in public use due to a narrow corridor (consider, for example, the elegant residences with courtyard setbacks and restrictions on plantings along Eastern Parkway in Brooklyn). The creation of public lands along the river would make the district a “park” and, by extension, the river a “pleasure highway” within a larger park landscape.

The year before the Charles River report, in an 1895 article for *Engineering Magazine*, Olmsted began to lay the foundation for the modern definition of the parkway. It is likely that these ideas were developed during his work with the Muddy River and Back Bay Fens. Not surprisingly, he began his “parkway” definition by reinforcing the public health argument that natural surface-drainage channels should “be retained under public control where they belong.” He then determined a public reservation to be a “park” or a “parkway” based on the road structure. If border roads paralleled the reservation, he determined the linear reservation to be a “parkway”—a corridor dedicated to connecting larger park destinations, such as the Muddy River Improvement (The River-way). However, if the reservation contained a pleasure drive, a road designed for pleasure, he considered the reservation to be a park. Border roads were deemed important for all public reservations as a means to control the edge of the public space by a clear demarcation line. Border roads would, in theory, prevent both physical and visual encroachments into the reservation lands.

The natural surface-drainage channels will be retained under public control where they belong; they will be surely defended from pollution; their banks will offer agreeable public promenades; while the adjacent boundary roads, one on either hand, will furnish the contiguous building land with an attractive frontage. Where such stream-including strips are broad enough to permit the opening of a
distinctively pleasure drive entirely separate from the boundary roads, the ground should be classified as a park. Where the boundary roads are the only roads, the whole strip is properly called a parkway; and this name is retained even when the space between the boundary roads is reduced to lowest terms and becomes nothing more than a shaded green ribbon [...].

Olmsted’s careful distinction between a boundary road and a pleasure drive reflected the long-held distinctions he made between a road designed for pleasure as a destination drive and a pleasurable road providing an attractive link to a park destination. While Olmsted did not specifically identify his parkway as a connection to a larger park reservation, it may be assumed, within the larger municipal and metropolitan debates regarding public parks for greater Boston, that such connections were implied. Further, the essential connection of a parkway to a park was established in his (and Vaux’s) parkway plans for Brooklyn and Buffalo. It was the physical link, even when “reduced to lowest terms” that Olmsted associated to the parkway. Olmsted continued by noting the different aesthetic forms a parkway could take:

In other words, parkways, like parks, may be absolutely formal or strikingly picturesque, according to circumstances. Both will generally be formal when they occupy confined urban spaces bounded by dominating buildings. Both will generally become picturesque as soon as, or wherever, opportunity offers.

Olmsted’s assertion that parkways may be “absolutely formal or strikingly picturesque,” depending on location and circumstance, made clear his intention that the parkway was a linear corridor connecting larger parks and, during this moment in history, devoid of any particular landscape or design vocabulary. What makes the Boston discussion of importance to this thesis, and ultimately the American motor parkway, is the application of the parkway

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113 Ibid.
concept to river corridors. Olmsted’s prior parkways responded to the urban grid pattern and were necessarily “absolutely formal.” Boston introduced an alternative dominant organizing form, the river, which by alignment and natural structure allowed Olmsted, for the first time, to consider a parkway as “strikingly picturesque.” A serpentine road (a boundary road), engaged with a natural feature, the river, resulted in an easy alignment dictated by nature rather than the city grid. It was a dramatic shift from the linear avenues that defined the first parkways in Brooklyn and Buffalo. With the completion of the Muddy River Improvement, a new and pleasing aesthetic for the parkway emerged. Olmsted continued to maintain a strong distinction between a park and parkway, but the shifting geometry of the parkway from the street grid to the watershed, changed the public perception of a parkway to one more sylvan in character.

Despite Olmsted’s best efforts to distinguish between a park and parkway, the term “parkway,” was increasingly associated with a road type. A year after Olmsted’s definitions were excerpted in Garden and Forest Magazine, an editorial by Charles Sprague Sargent confused the terms in its endorsement of a parkway within a park.

[...] the [Charles] river has once more come to be used as a highway, but a highway of pleasure instead of traffic. Now the inhabitants of this region stand more and more in need of means of recreation. Boating is one of the most agreeable pastimes, and this river furnishes the most pleasant boating course near Boston, and, therefore, the landscape-architects recommend that it shall be preserved as a parkway—that is, that the river and its scenery for these sixteen miles be made the central feature of a park, with its banks and waters available for public recreation.

If any such plan is adopted the first duty of its administration would be to keep the current clean from sewage and objectionable waste from factories which offends the eye and exhales noisome odors.114

For Olmsted, the Charles River could be a park or parkway depending on the acquisition of public lands along the shore or the imposition of protective easements along the shore—it could not be both as suggested by Sargent.\textsuperscript{115} Nevertheless, it is easy to understand, within the new parkway context of Boston, how both terms could be misdirected in their usage.

**CHARLES ELIOT AND THE METROPOLITAN PARK COMMISSION**

In August 1893, the General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts established the Metropolitan Park Commission. It was the first regional park and planning commission in the United States. Within eighteen months, the newly organized commission acquired and protected over 7,000 acres (2,800 hectares) in a western arc approximately ten miles (sixteen kilometers) from the City of Boston. Much of the credit for this landmark achievement belongs to the vision and leadership of Charles Eliot.

Charles Eliot (1859-1897) was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts. In 1869 his father, Charles W. Eliot, became president of Harvard University. Eliot apprenticed at the Olmsted firm in Brookline and became a protégé of Frederick Law Olmsted. Under Olmsted’s tutelage, he took a European tour and studied Repton, and read Horace Walpole’s “Essay on Gardening” and Thomas Whately’s *Observations on Modern Gardening* at the British Museum.\textsuperscript{116} He returned home in 1886 and established his own office in Boston. Eliot began advocating for the preservation of open lands surrounding Boston.

\textsuperscript{115} Olmsted had differences of opinion with Sargent and the editorial content of *Garden and Forest* on a number of occasions. A particularly contentious disagreement over commentary on the Back Bay Fens in *Garden and Forest* resulted in an acerbic letter from Olmsted to Sargent in August 1891; in 1894 Olmsted noted his reluctance to engage in a “public struggle” with Sargent. See Beveridge, ed., *The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted*, vol. IX, pp. 382 and 850.

To build public support for a regional park strategy, Eliot argued for the preservation of Waverly Oaks, a popular grove of ancient white oaks in the towns of Belmont and Waltham, just outside Boston. Long used as a public gathering and pleasure ground, the property was privately owned. Now, with the metropolitan expansion of Boston, the future of the property was in jeopardy. To secure these lands without waiting for government intervention, Eliot proposed the formation of the Trustees of Public Reservations in an 1890 article in *Garden and Forest Magazine*. On May 21, 1891, the Governor of Massachusetts signed into law the act creating the Trustees of Public Reservations—the first land trust in the world and the inspiration for the British National Trust a few years later. This was followed, in 1892, by a bill to establish a temporary Metropolitan Park Commission—enabling the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to investigate a more active role in park acquisition.

Charles Eliot was appointed as one of the commissioners, and as landscape architect, to the temporary park commission. Sylvester Baxter (1850-1927), another outspoken advocate for a metropolitan park system, was appointed secretary of the temporary commission. The two were charged with preparing a comprehensive study and recommendations for park acquisition. During the autumn of 1892, the Commissioners, guided by Eliot, visited potential sites for public reservations within a ten-mile (sixteen kilometer) radius of Boston. Among their recommendations was the acquisition of land on both sides of Boston’s three largest tidal rivers, the Mystic, the Charles and the Neponset, forest reservations (Middlesex Fells, Stony Brook and Blue Hills) and an ocean reservation at Revere Beach.

In August 1893 the regional park system that many, such as Copeland, had envisioned, became a reality when the General Court established the permanent Metropolitan Park Commission. In the autumn of 1893 Olmsted,

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117 Zaitzevsky, *Olmsted and the Boston Park System*, p. 121.
Olmsted & Eliot were appointed landscape architects to the new park commission (Eliot joined the Olmsted firm in March 1893). Funds were appropriated to acquire lands in the scenic hills surrounding the metropolitan area and along the region's beaches. By the end of 1894 lands had been acquired for the Middlesex Fells, Blue Hills, Stony Brook and Beaver Brook (which included the Waverley Oaks site) Reservations. In 1895 Revere Beach, the Hemlock Gorge on the Charles River, and additional areas along the Charles and Mystic Rivers were secured. In 1894 Baxter wrote *The Metropolitan Park System*, prepared under the auspices of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, to explain the ambitious mission of the new commission:

> The scope of the Commission, therefore, comprises not only the establishment of great public reservations and the preservation of natural features of exceptional beauty, but the restoration, so far as possible, of the seashore [...] of improving the natural watercourses of the district [...] of preserving the charms of the various beautiful ponds [...] and of establishing convenient and agreeable means of communication, in the shape of boulevards or parkways, between the dense populations of the metropolitan area and the various reservations established for their benefit.\(^{118}\)

His inclusion of both boulevards and parkways, maintained Olmsted’s distinction between a physical park connection (land parkway) and the pleasure roads connecting parks. Weighing in on the objectives of the Metropolitan Park Commission, Olmsted, in an 1894 letter to Charles Sprague Sargent, expressed his desires for the newly proposed Stony Brook Parkway:

> Beyond Jamaica Park, again, in the Arborway, in the Arboretum, in Franklin Park and in, we hope, the new parkway leading to Stony Brook Reservation, the pleasure drives have been secluded or separated from the boundary roads. Wherever space permits such ought to be the arrangement. Those who drive cannot gain the full advantage to be derived from parks unless this can be the

arrangement. To drive for miles with houses on the one hand and a park on the other, and to mix in all these miles with vehicles which must use the one road to carry freight to the adjoining houses is to eat only the half loaf which is better than no bread. To drive past Jamaica Pond in the shade of woods and out of sight of houses is to eat of a whole loaf if a small one.\textsuperscript{119}

Sargent, endorsing the new park commission, implored “every large city” to follow the Massachusetts model in an editorial in \textit{Garden and Forest Magazine}.

In our large cities it requires much time to get into the country, and entrance to the fields is forbidden when it is reached, and, therefore, it becomes necessary for every large city to secure for its use and enjoyment of its people such neighboring fields and woods, pond-sides and river-banks, valleys and hills as may be made to present fine scenery of one kind or another.\textsuperscript{120}

The regional initiative was imperative if the Commonwealth was going to protect lands at risk from metropolitan growth and suburbanization. With thirty-seven municipalities making up greater Boston, only a regional authority could undertake the actions required in a thoughtful and comprehensive manner. Eliot had recognized this need early on. At a meeting of the Trustees of Public Reservations in December 1891, he noted a fundamental flaw with the most recent park legislation enabling towns to acquire public lands for recreation and scenic beauty. In a brief Eliot wrote on December 15, 1891 for a meeting of the different park commissions and committees of Boston and surrounding towns called by the Trustees of Public Reservations, he called attention to the fact that scenic sites did not follow municipal boundaries.

It has been pointed out that the location of large public reserves should be determined chiefly with reference to the inclusion therein of the finest scenery of each region or district. Now, the park act limits the

\textsuperscript{119} Letter from Frederick Law Olmsted to Charles F. Sprague, August 20, 1894. See Beveridge, ed., \textit{The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted}, vol. IX, pp. 819-820.

field of action of our park commissioners to the bounds of their respective towns and cities, while it is self-evident that these boundaries bear no relation to the scenery of the district they divide. Instead, the boundaries of our towns are very apt to bisect the prettiest passages of scenery, as where the line follows the channel of a river or brook the banks of which are beautiful.\textsuperscript{121}

The Muddy River Improvement was an early example, with the City of Boston and the Town of Brookline jointly cooperating on a restoration project for the river that formed their municipal boundary, of how to accomplish larger regional goals through cooperation.\textsuperscript{122} Rivers and waterways, particularly in the eastern United States, were often used as political boundaries. As a result, metropolitan planning, particularly with reference to the sanitary improvement of rivers and streams, necessitated inter-municipal or inter-state cooperation.

The Metropolitan Park Commission was designed to address this problem. It was administered by a permanent commission of five members empowered to “create a system of public reservations” in twelve cities and twenty-five towns.\textsuperscript{123} These communities had a combined population of 888,000 and represented forty percent of the Commonwealth’s population.\textsuperscript{124} Public parks and parkways would be created within the thirty-seven municipalities that constituted Metropolitan Boston. The lands would be called “reservations.” It was a new term developed to recognize land that was held in reserve for future park development.

The name Reservation has been applied to these public holdings rather than that of Park for good reasons. It will be years before any

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\item \textsuperscript{122} Zaitzevsky, \textit{Olmsted and the Boston Park System}, p. 110.
\item \textsuperscript{124} Baxter, \textit{The Metropolitan Park System}, p. 10.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
elaborate form of improvement will be in order for these places, either as justifiable by the resources at command or as demanded for the uses of the public. These uses, while they will naturally be considerable in the very near future, will for a long time to come be perfectly consonant with their maintenance in their present condition, as for the most part a wilderness. [...] Therefore it is better that they should be regarded merely as public reservations, held for improvement as future occasion may demand.125

Connecting 7,000 acres (2,800 hectares) of new public lands would be over forty miles (sixty-four kilometers) of land parkways (Figures 5.21 and 5.22). Roads within the parkways, when deemed necessary, would be designed to reflect the local setting—more formal avenues in densely settled areas and serpentine carriage drives in more rural settings. In addition, existing roads, such as Blue Hill Avenue, would be improved as “parkway” connections. For a system designed for the horse and carriage, the scale of the system was remarkable.

The continuing influence of Humphry Repton on the design and development of roads designed for pleasure may be seen implicitly and explicitly in a slim report presented to the Metropolitan Park Commission, Vegetation and Scenery in the Metropolitan Reservations of Boston, written by Charles Eliot in 1897 (published 1898). The report was prepared under the auspices of the landscape architecture firm Olmsted, Olmsted & Eliot. The introductory Letter of “Transmissal” [sic], reads much like the preface to a Red Book:

A summary report of the principal ascertained facts, with photographic illustrations is also submitted herewith, including some account of the origin of the commoner types of woodland scenery, and some suggestions as to that control of the vegetation of the reservations which will be necessary for the preservation and enhancement of the beauty and interest of the landscape.126

125 Ibid., pp. 13-14.
126 Olmsted, Olmsted & Eliot, Landscape Architects, Vegetation and Scenery in the Metropolitan Reservations of Boston (Boston: Lamson, Wolffe and Company, 1898), [p. 5].
The report made a singular mention of pleasure drives on its first page, noting “Such paths or roads as will be needed to make the scenery accessible will be mere slender threads of graded surface winding over and among the huge natural forms of the ground.”\(^{127}\) The sixteen pages that followed codified six different types of vegetation and the resulting scenic effect. The observations were perfunctory, but effective. These were followed by a conclusion that is Reptonian in its structure, advocacy and consideration. Its direct appeal to action was evocative of Repton’s writing style.

Simply to preserve the beauty of so much of this vegetation as is now beautiful, or the suitability of so much as is now suitable, --for example, the tree-fringed vales of grass, the open groves of great trees, the intricate shrubberies of old pastures, and the dwarf ground-cover of the hill-tops, --will necessarily require continual painstaking care. To restore variety and beauty in the now more or less degenerate or ruined woods will similarly demand intelligent attention. So to control, guide and modify the vegetation generally that the reservations may be slowly but surely induced to present the greatest possible variety, interest, and beauty of landscape will particularly require skilled direction.\(^{128}\)

The narrative ended by noting that, “The sooner all these kinds of work are entered upon systematically, the finer will be the scenery of twenty and fifty years hence [...].”\(^{129}\) It was followed by fifty-one black and white photographs depicting examples of the six types of vegetation outlined in the report.\(^{130}\)

The introductory note of “some suggestions” for improving the scenery referred to a series of monochromatic (sepia) watercolor sketches showing before and after scenes of views in different units of the new metropolitan park system. As with Repton’s Red Books, two methods were used. One set showed full page before and after illustrations of recommended vegetation clearing in the southeastern Middlesex Fells, and four illustrations included

\(^{127}\) Olmsted, Olmsted & Eliot, *Vegetation and Scenery*, p. 7.
\(^{128}\) Ibid., p. 22.
\(^{129}\) Ibid., p. 23.
\(^{130}\) The Letter of Transmissal [*sic*] notes 154 photographs were taken.
hinged flaps that revealed before and after scenes of proposed scenic improvements in the Middlesex Fells and the Blue Hills reservations. The flaps, exactly as in Repton’s Red Books, were precisely cut and covered approximately twenty-five to fifty percent of the full image (Figures 5.23 and 5.24). While no reference to Repton or his work was made in the report, it is known that Frederick Law Olmsted had encouraged Eliot to read Repton. Therefore, Eliot would have been familiar with Repton’s technique of illustrative flaps to depict landscape improvements.

The similarities of Eliot’s Vegetation and Scenery to Repton’s Red Books may extend beyond the imitation of an effective tool to envision change in the landscape. It may have been an homage to both his mentor Olmsted and the work of Humphry Repton. Olmsted’s deep admiration for Repton was recorded in a letter he sent to Eliot on February 25, 1886 asking the young landscape architect to seek out Repton’s cottage at Harestreet while on tour in England. Olmsted wrote:

> When you are in England again, if you can find the village of Harestreet, and it is not too much out of the way, you might like to see the present condition of the cottage and its garden that Repton says, at the close of his book [Fragments], has been the most interesting place in the world to him—the house in which he died a few weeks later. If there happens to be a local photographer there I shall be glad if you can order a picture of it taken for me.\(^\text{131}\)

In a letter to his father, dated October 14, 1886, Eliot reported on his progress:

> I have been out to the village in Essex where Repton, a great landscaper of the last century, lived, this excursion being at Mr. Olmsted’s request, who wrote me he would like a photograph of the house if it could be found. In the British Museum I learned from a this-century edition of Repton that the house existed fifty years ago, so I set out, and find it I did.\(^\text{132}\) The village has not a new building anywhere in it, and


\(^{132}\) Eliot may have been referring to Repton’s Fragments on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening, published in 1816.
Repton’s cottage, as the people still call it, stands between two big lindens at one end of the street. But nobody seemed to know who Repton might have been, not even the family living in the said cottage.\textsuperscript{133}

Eliot’s father published the letters in 1903 in a book entitled \textit{Charles Eliot, Landscape Architect}.\textsuperscript{134} In a footnote he recorded the influence of Repton on American landscape architecture when he observed, “Repton published his excellent treatises from 1794 to 1803. Mr. Olmsted was not born till [sic] 1822; so that two far-away Americans of the second and third generation after Repton were interesting themselves in his local surroundings.”\textsuperscript{135} Four years later, the newly established American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) printed color reproductions of Repton’s cottage at Harestreet taken from \textit{Fragments on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening}.

Eliot was not the only individual considering Repton’s influence on America at the dawn of the twentieth century. Seeking a touchstone for the profession and the new century, in 1907 the ASLA published \textit{The Art of Landscape Gardening}, “the first volume of a series of classics in Landscape Architecture which has been undertaken at the suggestion and with the cooperation of the American Society of Landscape Architects.”\textsuperscript{136} The man whose writings the society honored with its first volume was Humphry Repton. The ASLA volume comprised what the society considered Repton’s “two best works”\textsuperscript{137} on landscape architecture: \textit{Sketches and Hints on Landscape Gardening} and \textit{Observations on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening}. The selection

\textsuperscript{134} Eliot died of meningitis in 1897 shortly after completing \textit{Vegetation and Scenery}, the book was written by his father as a memorial. In July 1918 the letters and photographs of Repton’s cottage were published in \textit{Landscape Architecture} magazine, in an article entitled “Repton’s Cottage” by Percival Gallagher.
\textsuperscript{137} Nolen, ed., \textit{The Art of Landscape Gardening}, p. xxi.
of the noted English landscape gardener by the American organization was, as
the introduction stated, “to supply the demand for Repton’s counsel.”138

What demand, it may be asked, did twentieth-century American landscape
architects have for the counsel of an eighteenth-century English landscape
gardener? More specifically, what influence did Repton’s republished works
have on the theoretical origin of the American motor parkway?

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The evolution of the parkway during the second half of the nineteenth
century, from an axial and urban structure to a picturesque and serpentine
form, reflected not so much a natural progression of the “park-way” concept,
but rather the attainment of the form as first envisioned by Olmsted and Vaux.

As this chapter shows, the parkway first emerged as a corridor to expand the
reach of the country park and provide a pleasurable approach. The difficulties
of acquiring land for such a novel undertaking restricted the early parkway
corridor to narrow strips of land dictated by existing street patterns.
Nevertheless, the concept of connecting parks or providing approaches to
parks resonated with many civic leaders, and resulted in the first integrated
parkway system in Buffalo. At the same time, the sanitary and public health
movements began influencing civic action and developed as a parallel, but
highly influential, urban undertaking that directly facilitated many of the
objectives for the earliest parkways. In Boston such sanitary improvements
provided new opportunities for park connections, fundamentally altering the
form of the parkway to a serpentine course of sylvan character as it shifted
from the grid to river. By the end of the nineteenth century that parkway was
recognized as an important park corridor to facilitate pleasurable transitions

138 Ibid.
across metropolitan areas—often, though not always, via an attractively designed roadway.

The Metropolitan Boston Parkway System established a new precedent in access to public parks and reservations, and significantly expanded the scale of such systems. It was the last major parkway system designed for the horse and carriage. Within two decades, landscape architects would use the Boston model as the exemplar for a new class of pleasure roads designed for the automobile—the American motor parkway.
**Figure 5.1.** Greenwood Cemetery in Brooklyn. Credit: Paul Daniel Marriott, 2015.
Figure 5.2. Map of Prospect Park, Olmsted, Vaux & Co, 1871.  
Credit: Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation.

Figure 5.3. Vaux designed a shelter for the Carriage Concourse near the lake, 1869 (never constructed).  
Credit: Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation.
Figure 5.4. Stereograph view: “Avenue de l’Imperatrice, le jour des promenades à Longchamps.” H. Jouvin, c. 1865. Note the separation of pedestrian and carriage traffic, and the wide lawn areas with newly planted trees. Credit: George Eastman House, Still Photo Archive.

Figure 5.5. Detail of the 1871 Olmsted, Vaux & Co. map of Prospect Park (lower right section). Note the central “Park Way” extending from “The Plaza” and the two narrow secondary parkways that parallel the main parkway. Credit: Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation.
Figure 5.6. Proposed plan of the “Park Way” for Brooklyn. Note the accommodation of the original street grid at the bottom of the plan with the new central “Park Way,” parallel parkways and service lanes.
Credit: Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation.

Figure 5.6a. Detail noting sidewalk, side road, walk and park way.
Figure 5.7. Jamaica (Eastern) Parkway, 1900. From lower right corner (to left): central “park way,” tree lawn, pedestrian promenade, tree lawn, access road, tree lawn and pedestrian sidewalk. Credit: Museum of the City of New York.

Figure 5.8. Jamaica (Eastern) Parkway viewed from pedestrian promenade. Credit: Paul Daniel Marriott, 2015.
Figure 5.9. Ocean Parkway, Brooklyn, 1894. Credit: Museum of the City of New York.

Figure 5.10. Ocean Parkway, Brooklyn, 1890s. Credit: Museum of the City of New York.
Figure 5.11. Plan of Buffalo Park and “Park-Way” system. Olmsted, Vaux & Co., 1876. Niagara Square, lower left, Delaware Park (letters C. and G.) upper center, and State Hospital (H.). Credit: From Alex, Calvert Vaux.

Figure 5.13. Gates Circle, Buffalo Parkway System, between 1910 and 1920. Credit: U.S. Library of Congress.
Figure 5.14. Map of South Park (detail) from, Frederick Law Olmsted and John Charles Olmsted, *The Projected Park and Parkways of the South Site of Buffalo*, Buffalo: Buffalo Park Commission, 1888. Note the broad carriage concourse loop (left) overlooking Lake Erie. Credit: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Rare Book Collection, Washington, DC.
Figure 5.15. Map of South Park (detail) from, Frederick Law Olmsted and John Charles Olmsted, *The Projected Park and Parkways of the South Site of Buffalo*, Buffalo: Buffalo Park Commission, 1888. Note the carriage concourse (right) overlooking the Park Water.
Credit: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Rare Book Collection, Washington, DC.

Figure 5.15a. Detail showing carriage concourse.
Figure 5.16. Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, ca. 1903. 
Credit: U.S. Library of Congress.

Figure 5.17. Detail of plan from *The Most Beautiful City in America*, by Robert Morris Copeland. The Boston Common and Public Garden are located in the center right. The large green area to the upper left indicates Copeland’s desire to protect the Muddy River and the remaining Charles River wetlands (the Fens) as park land. 
Credit: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Rare Book Collection, Washington, DC.
Figure 5.18. Plan for the Back Bay Fens, Frederick Law Olmsted. Commonwealth Avenue is indicated by the boulevard of trees (image edge, center right).
Credit: Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation.

Figure 5.19. The “Emerald Necklace” park system of Boston.
Credit: Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation.
Figure 5.20. Muddy River Improvement, 1920.
Credit: Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation.
Figure 5.21. Parkway, Middlesex Fells Reservation, Metropolitan Park Commission. Credit: Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation.

Figure 5.22. Parkway, Middlesex Fells Reservation, Metropolitan Park Commission. Note the sign on the left, “Pleasure Vehicles Only.” Credit: Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation.
Figure 5.23. Illustration with flap (before) from, *Vegetation and Scenery in the Metropolitan Reservations of Boston*, Olmsted, Olmsted & Eliot, Landscape Architects, 1898. Credit: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Washington, DC.

Figure 5.24. Illustration with flap (after) from, *Vegetation and Scenery in the Metropolitan Reservations of Boston*, Olmsted, Olmsted & Eliot, Landscape Architects, 1898. Credit: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Washington, DC.
CHAPTER 6
THE BRONX RIVER PARKWAY

INTRODUCTION

In 1922, Charles W. Eliot, the President of Harvard University, wrote an article, “The Influence of the Automobile on the Design of Park Roads,” for Landscape Architecture, the quarterly magazine of the American Society of Landscape Architects. The article reads as much as a personal lament for a bygone era of carriages and country parks as it does a pragmatic response to the new motorcar. Despite his aversion to the horn and claxon, Eliot managed to transcend his misgivings and pen an exceptionally instructive and surprisingly prescient article on accommodating the speed and scale of the automobile within the design of park roads. He needed only to look at a handful of new pleasure roads designed for the automobile, including the Bronx River Parkway, the first automobile parkway in the world, nearing completion in Westchester County, New York, to understand the dramatic change the motorcar had brought to the American landscape in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Still, at eighty-eight years of age, having witnessed the birth of the profession of landscape architecture in the United States and establishing its first professional curriculum at Harvard University,
he concluded his article by opining, “Are automobiles and the other concomitants of the rush of life to govern and control our art?”

Eliot was not alone in his query. “The automobile,” observed the New York Times, “has revolutionized our ideas of parks and city or regional planning.” In an extraordinarily rapid transformation, across the first two decades of the twentieth century, the parkway evolved from a land corridor connecting parks, and often including a pleasure drive for carriages, to a new form of road designed for pleasure dedicated to the automobile. Nowhere can this transformation be more clearly expressed than in the evolution of the Bronx River Parkway.

The legacy of the Bronx River Parkway is the transformation of the term “parkway” from a land corridor to a vehicular corridor. With the completion of the Bronx River Parkway, a “parkway” would come to define an attractive road of serpentine alignment, beautifully situated within the local topography, restricted to passenger automobiles, of limited access, and located within a park-like setting. Yet, for a roadway type so familiar within the lexicon of transportation, at least within the American context, the origins and evolution of the modern term “parkway” have not been fully considered by scholars and landscape historians. To consider its importance as a legacy of the pleasure road, as first envisioned by Gilpin and first realized by Repton, the influences and movements that guided its development must be established.

The purpose of this chapter is to clarify the origins of the American motor parkway and establish the radix of its definition as a road type. It will demonstrate that the core features of roads designed for pleasure, established by Repton, evolved over the nineteenth century and codified by a Harvard University text, prove that the automobile parkway is not a uniquely American

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construct as many have said, but rather a uniquely American adaptation of the road designed for pleasure to the particular needs of transportation and planning at the start of the twentieth century. It will show that the first purpose-built automobile roads were roads designed for pleasure, and that the pleasure road systems developed for America’s country parks and first parkways in the nineteenth century established landscape architects as among the most experienced highway designers at the start of the twentieth century. It will posit that the advocacy of the Good Roads Movement in the United States, the influence of the American Conservation Movement and the rapid rise in automobile ownership was as an apposite convergence, not unlike the convergence that occurred around 1800, which influenced the Bronx Parkway Commission charged with the parkway project. Lastly, it will chronicle the emergence of the American motor parkway as a new type of road through an analysis of the decisions made by the Commission leading to the dedication of the Bronx River Parkway.

Bronx Parkway Commission

The Bronx Parkway Commission was established in 1906 to reclaim, restore and protect the Bronx River and Bronx River Valley in Westchester County, New York and within the Bronx Borough in the City of New York. The once picturesque river had become an open sewer. It posed a significant health risk to the City of New York, particularly during spring flooding when water-borne diseases such as cholera and typhoid contaminated the district and, after the flooding, when receding waters left fetid pools ideal for mosquitoes—a critical problem for a city still plagued by chronic outbreaks of malaria.³ To combat this health nuisance, the Commission was charged with creating a “parkway”

along the Bronx River between Bronx Park and the Kensico Dam in Westchester County—a distance of approximately sixteen miles (twenty-six kilometers). The Commission was tasked with cleaning up the unregulated districts in the flood plain between the park and the dam, where industrial developments, garbage dumps and tenement housing were contributing to the filthy and unsanitary condition of the river.

Bronx Park was established in 1889 when the City of New York purchased 640 acres (260 hectares) under the authority of the New Parks Act of 1884 that funded the acquisition of undeveloped lands for parks, and parkways to connect the parks. In 1891, 250 acres of Bronx Park were allotted to the New York Botanical Society for the development of the New York Botanical Garden and in 1898 another 250 acres were allotted to the New York Zoological Society for a Wildlife Conservation Park, now known as the Bronx Zoo. The relatively undeveloped lands, picturesque river and lower population density of the Bronx Borough provided an idyllic setting for both land-dependent scientific institutions. Unfortunately, the polluted condition of the Bronx River proved noisome to both undertakings. At the northern end of the Commission's jurisdiction, in Westchester County, was the Kensico Dam. It was established in 1885 to impound the waters of the Bronx and Byram Rivers to meet the rising water needs for the City of New York. The dam was reconstructed in 1913 to increase capacity and serve as the southernmost collection point for New York City's immense reservoir system in the Catskill Mountains in Upstate New York, and the Croton Reservoir in northern Westchester County.

The nineteen-year period during which the Bronx Parkway Commission was active (1906 to 1925) was one of the most transformative in the history of the automobile and the public highways in the United States. In 1908 the Ford Motor Company introduced the Model T to the American public. The immensely affordable motorcar made automobile ownership, and by
extension pleasure driving, available to the middle classes—democratizing pleasure driving. Manufactured for nineteen years between 1908 and 1927, the Model T closely paralleled the reclamation of the Bronx River and the subsequent development of a pleasure drive within the Bronx Parkway.

In 1913, the same year the Bronx Parkway Commission began acquiring land for the parkway, auto-enthusiast, industrialist and visionary, Carl G. Fisher (1874-1939), established the Lincoln Highway, the nation’s first transcontinental automobile highway. The planned all-weather, paved road from New York City to San Francisco captured the public’s imagination. Regarding Fisher’s highway, the New York Times proclaimed, “This is the biggest project ever undertaken in the automobile world.”4 Also in 1913, the Woolworth Building, the tallest building in the world, was completed—the neo-Gothic style tower, illuminated with 80,000 incandescent lights the night it opened, redefined the Manhattan skyline for the twentieth century.5 Both endeavors represented the optimism and confidence of what would come to be termed “The American Century.”6 The events may have been encouraging for the Bronx Parkway Commission which, after seven years of crippling delays in funding, legal challenges to its authority and the vituperative attacks of politicians and resident naysayers, still had little to show for its efforts. Nevertheless, 1913 marked an important turning point for the Commission and, despite the delays, restoration of the Bronx River was finally underway. The Commission’s work was, as emphatically stated by landscape architect Charles Downing Lay, “a patriotic and sentimental duty.”7 Lay, was the first to articulate the development of an automobile road designed for pleasure within the restored Bronx River valley. He viewed the parkway not only as

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5 Designed by architect Cass Gilbert, the Woolworth Tower is 762 feet (241 meters) tall. It was the tallest building in the world from 1913 to 1930 and was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1966.
part of the metropolitan park system, but also as a part of the regional transportation system.

The Bronx River Parkway was dedicated in 1925. It established roads designed for pleasure as the preferred model for new automobile roads and its innovations shaped the modern highway system in the United States and globally. Yet for such an influential road, the Bronx River Parkway’s origins as a motor road were more accidental than historians suggest. Much like Repton, a little over a century earlier, the Bronx River Parkway represents a logical (and imaginative) response to larger technological and cultural influences that were converging at the start of the new century. As the official reports of the Bronx Parkway Commission show, a pleasure road was not considered as a part of the original plan for the river reclamation. Rather, the Bronx River Parkway, as an automobile parkway, was a result of the Commission’s enlightened recognition, embrace and accommodation of the motorcar within its work, and a reflection of the rapid changes in mobility in the United States. Nevertheless, its stature as the first automobile parkway and response to the issues of scale, speed and regional growth brought by the automobile, have rightly earned it a place within the pantheon of twentieth-century landscape architecture.

THE BRONX CONVERGENCE

The parallels between the convergence that occurred around 1800 (see Chapter 2), and the convergence of Good Roads and the American Conservation Movement with the automobile at the start of the twentieth century are noteworthy. The Good Roads Movement, like the advances of Telford and McAdam in the eighteenth century, initiated a period of sustained highway construction and revolutionized mobility. The American Conservation Movement, like the Picturesque Movement, focused national
attention on areas of scenic interest. However, unlike the British movement, the American movement was more heavily predicated on the protection, rather than admiration, of such places. The automobile, like the modern light touring carriage a century earlier, was a technological response placed in, rather than applied to, the landscape. While the scientific advances in road-making and vehicle design at the end of the eighteenth century were fully independent from the Picturesque Movement, the same parallel cannot be made between Good Roads and the American Conservation Movement. As noted in the last chapter, the rise of the railroads limited most investment in public highways in the United States. As a result, the technological and engineering innovations in road construction in the second half of the nineteenth century were developed for the roads in parks and parkways—and designed to meet the needs of the finely engineered, high-speed pleasure carriage. Therefore, with the arrival of the automobile, it was to the park roads and parkways that the Good Roads Movement looked for inspiration in the design of new roads for the high-speed motorcar.

Of all the highways constructed during the Good Roads era, few compared to the Columbia River Highway in Oregon. Modeled on the Axenstrasse scenic road overlooking Lake Lucerne in Switzerland, the seventy-four mile (119 kilometer) Columbia River Highway was promoted by Good Roads advocate and entrepreneur Samuel Hill. Constructed between 1913 and 1922, it earned the nickname “King of Roads,” and was widely studied by highway engineers and landscape architects (including those of the newly established National Park Service) for its exceptional aesthetic and safety features. The design of the two-lane road through the Columbia River Gorge was guided by landscape architect Samuel Lancaster who used elegant concrete bridges, stone parapet walls, and rustic tunnels to negotiate the towering basalt cliffs, ravines and spectacular waterfalls of the area, while maintaining a maximum grade of five percent (Figures 6.1 and 6.2).
The Good Roads Movement

The park roads, parkways and speedways designed for pleasure driving in the second half of the nineteenth century represented an unusual investment in roadway infrastructure, engineering and creativity during a period in which the nation’s transportation focus shifted to the railroads. The particular needs for roads designed for pleasure contributed to impressive advances in design, experimentation of materials and engineering practices that would prove invaluable for the automobile and establish landscape architects, and the engineers with whom they collaborated, as the most experienced highway designers at the start of the twentieth century. As a result, the first purpose-built roads for the automobile were park roads and parkways.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, the dominance of an efficient and reliable rail network (total track mileage in the United States grew from 30,000 miles in 1860 to its peak of 254,00 miles in 1916)\(^8\) and a large canal network in the East reduced public roads to little more than a local network of urban and farm-to-market roads. The invention of the pneumatic tire in 1885, and the advocacy of America’s bicycle riders, laid the groundwork for today’s modern automobile network through the Good Roads Movement. The bicycle, unlike the experimental motorcars that were considered a curiosity by many, was hailed as the great advance in modern auto-transportation. It was viewed as affordable \textit{primary} transportation and \textit{recreation} for the working classes for whom a horse, let alone stable space and a carriage, was beyond their means. The only drawback to the affordable machine was the need for smooth surfaces over which to travel. At the turn of the twentieth century, outside of a few urban networks and a handful of private estates, the nation’s road network was deplorable (Figure 6.3). In 1904 the United States had 2,151,570 miles (3,462,617 kilometers) of rural roads; only 153,664 miles

were “improved” with shells, sand-clay, oil, gravel or brick—7.14% of the total mileage.  

In the 1890s, The League of American Wheelmen, a bicycle organization, began advocating for a national network of hard-surfed, all-weather roads suitable for the bicycle. In 1892 the League, under the leadership of New York City civil engineer I. B. Potter, launched a magazine entitled Good Roads to influence favorable public opinion regarding the benefits of such a system and to promote techniques for scientific road-making in the United States (Figure 6.4). Soon the “autoists,” who represented the growing numbers of nature-lovers, conservationists and tourists traveling by motorcar, joined the Good Roads Movement. In fact, recreation and leisure users were quickly becoming one of the most active voices demanding improved highways. The introduction of the bicycle, and later the automobile, which occurred almost simultaneously with a new awareness for conservation and the first State and National Parks, spurred Americans to take to the road and explore the countryside and wilderness (Figure 6.5).

In 1893, responding to the growing national movement for Good Roads the U.S. Congress passed an appropriation of $10,000 ($263,158 in 2014 dollars) for the U.S. Department of Agriculture to conduct a “road inquiry.” In response, the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture established the Office of Road Inquiry (ORI) “to make inquiries in regard to the system of road management throughout the United States.” The office responded to its charge by publishing technology bulletins on road-making and preparing state and national maps of good roads. In 1897 the ORI began constructing “object lesson roads”—short improved macadamized roads to demonstrate the value of good roads to the public. The first “object lesson road” was a 660-foot (200

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meter) section near New Brunswick, New Jersey. Within a few years the ORI was constructing eight or nine roads a year. As many as 500 people would turn out to listen to lectures on modern paving and good drainage, and sample a smooth ride, during “Good Roads Day” festivities at the completion of each project. In 1905 the ORI became a permanent agency and was renamed the Office of Public Roads; in 1915 it was renamed the Office of Public Roads and Rural Engineering. In 1916 U.S. President Woodrow Wilson signed the first bill to establish a federally-aided highway program (Figure 6.6). In order to receive the new federal funding, each state was required to establish a highway department. In 1918 the Office of Public Roads and Rural Engineering became the Bureau of Public Roads (BPR).

In 1891, under the auspices of the State Board of Agriculture, the New Jersey legislature passed the State Aid Highway Act, the nation’s first act authorizing the expenditure of state funds for general road building—in 1894 the responsibility of the act was placed under the newly created Commissioner of Public Roads. Massachusetts created the first highway department, the State Highway Commission, a year earlier in 1893.

New York established the New York State Highway Commission in 1898. The same year the New York State General Assembly passed the Higbie-Armstrong Act for the construction of state highways. Under the Act, county supervisors were required to petition the state for road construction projects; costs were divided 50-35-15 among the state, county and town, respectively. To further bolster the nascent state highway program, the New York General

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11 America’s Highways, 1776-1976, p. 44.
12 The new title’s inclusion of “rural engineering” was a reference to additional farm-related duties unrelated to roads.
13 The BPR would remain within the Department of Agriculture until 1939 when it was shifted to the New Deal Federal Works Agency and renamed the Public Roads Administration (PRA). The PRA was re-named the BPR in 1949. BPR became FHWA (Federal Highway Administration) in 1969.
14 The Northeast led the United States in establishing state highway departments. New York’s neighboring states established state highway departments in: Vermont, 1898; Massachusetts, 1893; Connecticut, 1895; New Jersey, 1894; and Pennsylvania, 1903.
Assembly, also in 1898, passed the Fuller-Plank Act to provide state funds to any town that adopted the “money system”—replacing the colonial-era system of mandatory labor requirements to maintain public roads, inherited from British colonial law and still in use, with paid professionals. These acts proved so popular that the appropriated funds quickly fell short of requested projects. As a result, in 1905, New York State voters overwhelmingly ratified a constitutional amendment for a $50 million bond (over one billion dollars in 2014) for the construction of state highways. The legislature issued a second $50 million bond in 1912. The funding established New York State as an unquestioned leader in road building in a nation that was increasingly focused on Good Roads.

Reflecting the broad social benefits from the state’s investment in public roads, the New York Secretary of State, speaking at the American Road Congress in 1911, stated, “The automobile gives opportunities of seeing the country which the people have never had to such an extent before. It leads to many small interesting places which even the railroad with its great facilities had not been able to make sufficiently accessible. It enables the people to know their country better.”

The American Conservation Movement

The early twentieth century was a period of enhanced environmental awareness in the United States. National and state parks were being designated, and in many urban areas reclamation projects were under way. In 1906, the same year the Bronx Parkway Commission was established, U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt signed into law the Antiquities Act, and Upton Sinclair’s muckraking novel, The Jungle, was published. These two events may be viewed as metaphors for the Bronx Valley; Sinclair’s novel representing the

The Antiquities Act of 1906 gave the U.S. President the authority to restrict activity on public lands owned by the federal government by declaring such lands to be “National Monuments” without authorization by the United States Congress. The establishment of the Act represented a high point for the American conservation movement that had been steadily growing across the second half of the nineteenth century.

In 1872 Yellowstone was designated as the first National Park. While earlier efforts to protect places of scenic beauty and scientific interest had been undertaken (notably Hot Springs Reservation in Arkansas in 1832, and the Yosemite Valley and Mariposa Grove in California in 1864 as a state park), setting aside potentially productive or valuable land for permanent protection by the federal government at Yellowstone, solely for scenic value, was a radical and controversial concept (Figure 6.7).

Yellowstone's designation empowered the conservation movement and emboldened the states to take action. In rapid-fire landmark achievements New York, in 1885, established the Niagara Falls Reservation and the Adirondack Forest Preserve. In 1887, the first efforts calling for the protection of the Hudson River Palisades in New Jersey from devastating quarrying operations began. In 1891 the State of Minnesota protected the headwaters of the Mississippi River at Lake Itasca—establishing the second state park in the United States (after Niagara Falls). In 1892, as noted in the previous chapter, Massachusetts established the Metropolitan Park Commission to conserve natural and scenic locations surrounding Boston. Also in 1892, the State of New York elevated the Adirondack Forest Preserve

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16 Yosemite was ceded to the State of California by the U.S. Government in 1864; it was ceded back in 1890 and was designated as the second National Park.
by designating it as the Adirondack Park to protect permanently 2,800,000 acres (1,100,000 hectares) of woodlands. The Adirondack Park was, and remains, the largest public park in the continental United States. In 1900 the Palisades Interstate Park Commission of New Jersey and New York, the first bi-state park agency, was established to preserve the Hudson River Palisades.\textsuperscript{17}

As these actions demonstrate, the Bronx River Valley was located in a state and region that was leading the nation in highway construction and conservation. The influence of New York State policies was noted in the 1912 report of the Bronx Parkway Commission:

> A connection can thus be made with the network of macadamized county roads now being built; this in turn joined to the whole system of more than 40 lakes and many miles of rivers, with bridges and permanent engineering works which the City has extended throughout the 360 square miles of the Croton and Byram watersheds.\textsuperscript{18}

The reference to “macadamized county roads now being built” demonstrated the gargantuan undertaking in public roads construction, the application of scientific road construction processes and the influence of the Good Roads Movement since the Commission was established. The automobile was rapidly influencing public policy.

**The Automobile**

In 1907, the *New York Times* published an illustrated feature article, “Interesting Sunday Tours for a Motor Car”—Westchester County was one of the destinations highlighted:

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\textsuperscript{17} Other noteworthy accomplishments include: the Forest Reserve Act was established in 1891—allowing the U.S. President to designate protected public reservations on federal lands; the Sierra Club was founded in 1892; and the National Park Service was established in 1916.

With the advent of the automobile the word touring has acquired a peculiar significance never attached to it before. [...] At this modern day, however, touring as popularly used, means a run of from fifty to several hundred miles by automobile. [...] Any one who has been abroad on the few pleasant Sundays of the past month in the parks or on the boulevards that lead from the built-up habitations of the city to the cooling and picturesque resorts of the country has been impressed with the large number of motor cars speeding, presumably within legal limits, for the suburbs of Long Island, New Jersey, and Westchester County [...] Good roads, good inns, and good meals—these are the three necessities for a perfect day’s enjoyment.19

In the United States the number of passenger automobiles increased 495% from 77,000 in 1905, the year before the Bronx River Parkway Commission was established, to 458,000 in 1910. Between 1910 and 1915, the number of passenger automobiles increased another 409% to 2,332,000. The two five-year reporting periods, between 1905 and 1915, represent the second and third highest percent increases in passenger automobiles in the twentieth century (after the 1900 to 1905 reporting period) and represent an extraordinary decade of sustained automobile expansion (Figure 6.8). Overall, between 1905 and 1925, when the Bronx River Parkway was dedicated, the number of passenger automobiles in the United States increased 22,600%.

In 1922, reflecting on the impact of rising automobile ownership on pleasure driving and parks, Henry Vincent Hubbard, the editor of Landscape Architecture, wrote:

In the relation of pleasure traffic to parks the modern development of the automobile has made a notable difference since Central and Prospect and Franklin Parks were designed. Formerly when the old family horse and the carryall, or the livery stable horse and the rig with a seat for two, were taken out on Sunday afternoon, the out-of-town park was about the limit of the journey, and after a circuit of the park it was time to return. The parks were designed with this use in mind [...].

The automobile changed all this. The [urban country] park is now seldom the goal of an automobile journey. You are at the park almost as soon as you have started from home, and, were you to drive through it, the circuit of the park would require only a few minutes. But the whole open countryside is now within your reach.20

To understand the impact the radical increase in motorcars must have had on the Bronx Parkway Commission during such a formative period in the parkway’s development, consider that the post-World War II boom in automobile sales in the United States (1945 to 1950) resulted in a 56% increase in passenger automobiles.21 In the five years since the first Bronx Parkway Commission report was submitted in 1907, the automobile had begun to transform the landscape. Doubtless, by 1912, the Commission was cognizant of the changes in mobility brought by the motorcar and the opportunities and expectations it placed on their parkway project. Supporting this view, in 1912, the Commissioners advanced their first consideration for a pleasure road within the Bronx River Parkway.

Despite its recognition as the first automobile parkway in the world, the modern term “parkway,” as defined by Newton (see Chapter 1), was never used by the Bronx Parkway Commission to describe the pleasure road it ultimately constructed.

PARKWAY?

In Modern Civic Art, published in 1903, Charles Robinson identified the confusion by which many historians still attempt to define the parkway when he wrote, “A street precisely similar will be called in one city an avenue, in

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another a boulevard, and in a third a parkway.”

In The Planning of the Modern City, published in 1916, Nelson P. Lewis echoed Robinson when he noted, “The designation ‘parkway’ is often misleading.” Lewis’ book, published the year the Bronx Parkway Commission first introduced the concept of a “parked drive,” affirmed the confusion of the term “parkway” which, in the estimable judgment of the Commission did not imply a roadway—or a parked drive—but a park corridor. For Robinson and Lewis, their parkway was defined primarily as a road type. Their books represent an important shift in the term from the nineteenth-century origin of the parkway as a land corridor to the twentieth-century idea of the parkway as a vehicular corridor.

The designation “parkway” is often misleading. It might naturally be assumed that a street so named would have some of the characteristics of a park, that it would at least be well planted with trees and have a roadway devoted to restricted traffic, but this is not always the case. Because a street or avenue leads from one park to another, or because jurisdiction over it is vested in a park department or commission, it is not necessarily a parkway in the proper sense of the term. Parks should be connected by parkways; they need not be of extreme width, but they should have some distinguishing park features, so that one leaving a park by them would know that he is on the right road to another park. In planning a system of parks, therefore, provision should be made for properly connecting them.

Robinson’s observation that avenue, boulevard and parkway were being used interchangeably was an important one. Only after the completion of the Bronx River Parkway in 1925 would the term be associated with a particular type of road designed for pleasure. In 1900, with the exception of the term parkway, the terms avenue, boulevard, drive and driveway each represented an aesthetic-type road, i.e., a road conceived first for appearance and second for utility. If they were conceived primarily for leisure travel and designed to

22 Charles Mulford Robinson, Modern Civic Art or the City Made Beautiful (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1903), p. 307.
24 Lewis, The Planning of the Modern City, p. 140.
engage with the landscape they also represented a road designed for pleasure. For many, the parkway, as first introduced by Olmsted and Vaux, continued to be viewed as a concept for park planning, and not a road typology.

In his earlier book, *The Improvement of Towns and Cities*, first published in 1901, Charles Robinson stated that, “parks and park systems are the most important artistic work which has been done in the United States.”25 An important aspect of the park systems, to which he devoted a chapter titled “Parks and Drives,” were the boulevards, drives and parkways. He referenced the Chicago parks and metropolitan Boston parks as “striking exemplars” of what he called a “chain” system, in which he noted, “large reservations are made at various points of the circumference equi-distant from the centre, and designed to be connected with it and with one another by park roads and boulevards.”26 Regarding the system for Boston, he noted that its parkways were established with a threefold purpose to provide access to the different park reservations, to unite the reservations and many local parks into a single system, and to provide “pleasant driving communication” between the park units and various communities within the district.27

In speaking of the chain system of parks, it has been impossible to avoid some reference to the handsome drives and parkways28 that are its connecting links. The practical dreamers of city beauty, however, have imagined a far more glorious development than a mere means to an end. They have dreamed of park roads that should be an end in themselves and so a striking feature in the structural skeleton of the city beautiful. It is noteworthy that some of these dreams have come to realization. They point the way with encouraging confidence.29

26 Robinson, *The Improvement of Towns and Cities*, p. 156.
27 Ibid., p. 158.
28 Robinson makes no reference to specific drives or parkways.
29 Robinson, *The Improvement of Towns and Cities*, pp. 165-166.
Here, Robinson presaged what would come to typify the American motor parkway—a road that was not a “mere means to an end” but a road that became a destination unto itself.

As Robinson contemplated the different types of park roads, he noted a difference between “ease of communication” and “pleasantness in the way of going” as he assessed the purpose of different types of roads. His evolving views were reflected in *Modern Civic Art* where he distinguished the parkway as a type of road and differentiated it from the boulevard and avenue. His parkway may be equated to Repton’s carriage drive and the boulevard and avenue to Repton’s approach road. From his chapter titled “Parkways,” he wrote:

Considered closely, however, the parkway may have a development that belongs to neither boulevard nor avenue and that justifies its separate discussion. In speaking of the former thoroughfares, it was noted that the first requirement was that they should afford ease of communication and that the second was that they should have a certain “dignified and stately” beauty. When we come to the parkways, there is no restriction as to the kind of beauty that may be given. It may be as picturesque, gentle, and softly winning as we please. And while it is necessary that a parkway should have connection with a park,—either leading to it from the city or joining park to park, if it be not acting in itself as a park,—yet there may fairly be reversal of the old order of requirements. Now the beauty of the way is the first essential. There may be a hundred means of approach to a given park, and from necessity the parkway cannot be the shortest from all portions of the town. There may even be electric cars [streetcars] on other routes, so that it may not be possible to say that the bulk of the travel is by this thoroughfare. But it can be said, if the parkways fill their mission, that no other approach will be as pleasant as by them. Entirely accurate, therefore, is the suggestion in their name: they are related more closely to the parks of the town than to its street system; and ever in the parks sheer directness—mere facility of communication between distant points—is of less account than is pleasantness in the way of going.30

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It is within this context of park links and pleasure drives that the term “parkway” evolved and shifted across the nineteenth century. Indeed, the connection to parks noted by Robinson was an early justification for the Bronx River Parkway. Even then, the impetus for the creation of the parkway emerged from the more pressing need to find a solution to the unsanitary conditions in the Bronx River Valley. In 1914, the Bronx Parkway Commission reported:

More than twenty years ago officials and citizens of New York City and lower Westchester County began to search for a solution of the problems presented by the Bronx River. Being the longest river within the City limits and the most picturesque, it was recognized in the early nineties that the purity of the stream and the beauty of its surroundings could not be preserved without comprehensive measures of protection and preservation. At the time, however, the present nationwide appreciation of the value of parkways as adjuncts to a city’s park system was not felt and the problem was viewed almost exclusively from a sanitary standpoint: a remedy was therefore sought which would relieve the City and County of the menace of an open sewer and protect the region from the flood waters which periodically inundated and swept the valley.

It was due to this lack of appreciation of the value of parkways during the earlier years that the matter was considered almost entirely a sewerage problem.31

As this thesis demonstrates, the parkway concept was well established by the 1890s, despite the Bronx Parkway Commission’s assertion to the contrary. Nevertheless, their acknowledgement of the ambiguity of the term at the start of the twentieth century demonstrates why an assessment of the term’s evolution is needed to clarify the origins of the American motor parkway. Such an assessment is also required to determine the influence of Humphry Repton on the American motor parkway.

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REPTON AND LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY AMERICA

In 1910 Henry Vincent Hubbard founded, with Charles Downing Lay and Robert Wheelwright, *Landscape Architecture*, the professional journal of the American Society of Landscape Architects. The first editorial in the new *Landscape Architecture* quarterly articulated the shift of focus for the profession in the twentieth century:

Landscape architecture is no new thing in America. Ever since we have had men of taste and leisure, we have had some examples of man’s use of landscape with a consideration of its appearance.

But only within the last two decades has there been any widespread general realization of our need for beauty in land adapted to our use—beauty, not merely as a luxury, but as a practical necessity and as a matter of course.⁵²

The American Society of Landscape Architects, founded in 1899, was the first professional organization of landscape architects. Its eleven founding members included Frederick Law Olmsted’s son Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. and his stepson and nephew John Charles Olmsted, and Downing Vaux, the son of Calvert Vaux (named after Andrew Jackson Downing).⁵³ Of the other eight prominent landscape architects who founded the Society, Warren H. Manning (1860-1938) worked for Frederick Law Olmsted and Samuel Parsons, Jr. (1844-1923) worked for Calvert Vaux.

Establishing the ASLA was not an easy task. There was no systematic method for training landscape architects and the number of practitioners in the United States was small. Warren Manning first sought to build interest for a professional society in the winter of 1896-97, but met with little enthusiasm.

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⁵³ Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., was unable to participate in the founding of the ASLA due to his failing mental health. He retired from practice in 1895 due to increasing memory loss; he experienced increasing anxiety and depression, and entered a state of dementia. In 1898 he was committed to the McLean Hospital in Waverley, Massachusetts where he died in 1903.
In 1898 Samuel Parsons, Jr., sent out a letter to solicit interest in a professional organization and met with a similar lackluster response. John Charles Olmsted replied, that it was "entirely unlikely that any such comprehensive and elaborately organized professional association as you seem to have in mind will be successful until there are more experienced and well recognized practitioners willing to join it," and noted, as an alternative, that an informal Boston group, called the "Repton Club," which met for casual dinners and discussions, might serve as a model for "similar societies" until there was sufficient interest in a national organization. Humphry Repton it appeared, at least among landscape architects in Boston, continued to represent an authoritative figure to be studied and emulated.

As noted in the previous chapter, the ASLA selected Repton as the landscape architect to honor with the Society’s first publication. John Nolen, the editor of The Art of Landscape Gardening, stated in his introduction, “He [Repton] appreciated the principle of utility. He, like his American successor, Olmsted, had no sympathy with a design that did not provide adequately and frankly for the plain necessities of human living.” Regarding the success of Central Park and America’s country parks which followed its precedent, Nolen attributed their form to Repton and England:

*Without doubt the most suggestive ideals for the public parks of our own great cities, ideals that have impressed themselves upon the most distinguished landscape architects since Repton’s day, are to be found in the “park” or informal pleasure-grounds of a well-to-do Englishman’s estate.*

Nolen’s introduction, and by extension the imprimatur of the American Society of Landscape Architects, established Repton as the authoritative

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34 Newton, *Design on the Land*, p. 386. Manning, however, enthusiastically embraced Parsons’ outreach and on January 4, 1899, the two persuaded the founding members to meet in the office of Parsons & Pentecost in New York to formally establish the American Society of Landscape Architects.


36 Ibid., p. xvi.
source on the style of landscape architecture that had come to define
America’s public parks. In tracing the history of the style, he noted the literary
influence of Addison and Pope and the projects of Kent and Brown in bringing
about the new English landscape style that would be adopted in America, then
he stated unequivocally:

But it is to the period of Repton and the work of Repton himself that we
must look for the sound and rational development of the so-called
landscape school of England, a school whose influence spread rapidly
to the Continent of Europe and whose principles still control the
treatment of large areas in the informal or naturalistic style.37

Nolen, an accomplished writer, described the quintessentially British
romantic era in terms that appealed to American individualism (“dignity and
worth of manhood”) and, by association, conjured romantic images of
America’s iconic landscapes. He captured the great contradiction facing the
young profession of landscape architecture in America—the abiding
mythology of nature as “an inexhaustible resource” after a half-century during
which a Civil War, industrial development and demand for raw materials had
laid bare the vulnerabilities of nature and the nation’s feeble ability to
respond.

It was due to the movement called “romanticism,” the renaissance of
wonder. In almost innumerable ways the world acquired a new power
of appeal and response to man. The glory of lake and mountain and
meadow, the exquisite grace of childhood, the dignity and worth of
manhood, the intrinsic interest of the commonplace, —to these and to
other influences of a similar character mankind became sensitive.
Romanticism was in truth an extraordinary development of
imaginative sensibility, and the centre of the movement in England lay
in its various, intimate, and subtle interpretations of the world of
nature. Through it nature became to man an inexhaustible resource.38

37 Ibid., p. xv.
38 Ibid., p. xvi.
Then, continuing as if he were using Repton’s career as a call to action for American landscape architects at the dawn of the twentieth century, Nolen stated:

Therefore the conditions were ready and the time was ripe for such ideals of landscape gardening as those held and advocated by Repton.\(^{39}\)

Education of the American Landscape Architect

In 1900, the year after the American Society of Landscape Architects was established, the first professional degree program in landscape architecture was established at Harvard University. The curriculum was initiated as a memorial to Charles Eliot who had died a few years earlier while directing the work of Olmsted, Olmsted & Eliot for the Metropolitan Park Commission in Massachusetts.\(^{40}\)

In 1901, Henry Vincent Hubbard (1875-1947) was awarded the first degree in landscape architecture. As he stated: “the first degree conferred in this course, and, as far as I know, the first degree granted in this country in landscape architecture as an independent professional study.”\(^{41}\) Hubbard had been educated at Harvard, earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1897, undertook studies in landscape architecture with Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., served a five-year apprenticeship with the Olmsted Brothers firm, and later joined the Olmsted Brothers firm as a partner. In 1906 he began teaching landscape architecture at Harvard. In 1924 Hubbard married Theodora Kimball (1887-1935). Kimball, a graduate of Simmons College and a formidable advocate for the new profession, was the first landscape

\(^{39}\) Ibid., p. xvi.
\(^{40}\) The program arose from a gift from Nelson Robinson who wished to endow the recently inaugurated courses in architecture in memory of his son who died while studying at Harvard. When Robinson learned of President Eliot’s own loss he asked that his gift also be used to establish a curriculum in landscape architecture as a memorial to Charles Eliot.
Hubbard and Kimball wrote the first textbook for landscape architecture while working together at Harvard. *An Introduction to the Study of Landscape Design*, published in 1917, provided a wide-ranging introduction to the profession that included chapters and sections devoted to theory, historic styles, landscape characteristics, composition, natural features, planting design and professional practice. Their book, reprinted and revised numerous times, established the pedagogical parameters for landscape architecture and was widely used by American landscape architecture programs until the 1960s.

*An Introduction to the Study of Landscape Design* is an important link between British landscape gardening and theory from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and the American practice of landscape architecture as it emerged in the nineteenth century. The book strongly associated American design with British precedents: “In its treatment of parks and large private estates, this American style of landscape design traces its origin directly to the English landscape school [...]” and made references to sites and practitioners throughout the United Kingdom, including Kent, Price, Loudon and Repton. Humphry Repton is prominently cited throughout the book and his views on mobility and the Picturesque are included in several sections. Overall, the

42 Simmons College was founded in 1899 to provide a progressive liberal arts education for women.
43 Kimball served as expert on President Herbert Hoover’s advisory committee on zoning for Washington, DC and was the first woman accepted as a member of the American City Planning Institute.
45 Darwina Neal, landscape architect for the U.S. National Park Service (retired), conversation with author, January 29, 2015. Ms. Neal noted the textbook was in use at the Pennsylvania State University, where she studied, in the early 1960s.
book references approximately 120 practitioners, theorists and artists, both contemporary and historic, and primarily from Europe and North America, in its explanations of landscape design. Repton is the most frequently referenced individual in the volume. In fact, Repton is referenced in five of the book’s eleven chapters (Frederick Law Olmsted and Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. are each referenced in four of the book’s chapters) suggesting he was valued more as a landscape theoretician to be emulated than a historical figure to be studied.47

Repton is introduced in Chapter II, “Theory of Landscape Design.” What makes his introduction of significance to this thesis is the familiar manner in which he was first presented to the reader—simply, “Repton said.” Such a casual introduction, well before the chapter on history, demonstrated that Repton was not only a recognized figure, but also that he was so familiar to the American audience that no association such as “the well-known English landscape gardener” or “practitioner of the English Landscape School” was considered necessary. Further, he was introduced within the context of kinesthetic theory and engagement with the landscape; theories, which this thesis has shown, Repton applied to landscape design. From Chapter II of An Introduction to the Study of Landscape Design:

Sensory, perceptive, and intellective pleasure are, then, all to be obtained as the results of the designer’s skill. He should recognize each for what it is, however; he should strive for the greatest total result, and he should be sure that in attaining one kind of pleasure he has not sacrificed a greater amount of another.

47 References to individuals were determined after a review of the Index for An Introduction to Landscape Design (1917 edition) and included all citation types for each individual (textual, note, quoted and reference distinctions). Humphry Repton is listed in the index as follows: “quoted, 11; note, 45; style of, 47, 49, 52; note, 58; quoted, 93; quoted, note, 143; note, 267; refs., 364, 367, 368” and appears in Chapters II, IV, VII, VIII and XI. Frederick Law Olmsted is listed in the index as follows: “29, 57, 58; quoted, notes, 18, 299; refs., 378” and appears in Chapters II, III, IV and XI. Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. is listed in the index as follows: “quoted, note 82-83; notes, 18, 201, 287, 307, 322, 333; refs., 376, 379, 380, 381” and appears in Chapters II, VI, X and XI. For reference, both Andrew Jackson Downing and John Claudius Loudon are listed in the index with three citations each, Uvedale Price with six and Calvert Vaux with two.
That these mental effects are the real values to be produced by the designer is by no means a new conception in the literature of landscape architecture. Repton said,

"I confess that the great object of my ambition is, not merely to produce a book of pictures, but to furnish some hints for establishing the fact, that true taste in Landscape Gardening, as well in all the other Polite Arts, is not an accidental effect, operating on the outward senses, but an appeal to the understanding, which is able to compare, to separate, and to combine, the various sources of pleasure derived from external objects, and to trace them to some pre-existing causes in the structure of the human mind." [A footnote at the end of the quote: "End of the introduction to Sketches and Hints on Landscape Gardening, 1794"]48

Much of the theory presented in the textbook is directly derived or evocative of Repton's writings. Terms Repton utilized for roads, such as “approach road” and “station” (also used by Gilpin) were included within the book’s discourse. For example, regarding the approach road, Hubbard and Kimball stated:

In a large estate the approach road should seem to lead with reasonable directness from the public street to the house, or if it be indirect, there should seem to be a sufficient reason for this. It is seldom desirable to make a road very circuitous for the sake of making the estate seem larger, and although at times it may be well to divert a road considerably from its more direct course in order to afford to any one passing over it a particularly good view, still this may be easily overdone, because on a private estate the view is better enjoyed by people afoot who have more leisure to contemplate it. In short, the approach road should afford as many pleasing outlooks as possible and should be pleasantly and completely fitted to the topography, and should give a flattering impression of the estate and of the house at first glance; but usually for none of these considerations should a very much greater length of road be built, because the road is not itself a desirable object in the landscape, and adding to its length may well spoil more beauty than it creates.49

Within Hubbard and Kimball's description may be found most of the eight “requisites” for an approach road that Repton enumerated in the Red Book for

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48 Hubbard and Kimball, An Introduction to the Study of Landscape Design, p. 11.
49 Ibid., pp. 269-270.
Tatton Park (see Chapter 2). Regarding views and stations, Hubbard and Kimball cited Repton’s design for Bulstrode:

A landscape composition, however, may give pleasure even though it covers a wider angle of view than can be included in a pictorial unity. It may have a three-dimensional unity, an organization in plan and elevation, which can be reconstructed in the mind from the memories of a number of different views, which views indeed may not be all taken from the same station point. It is quite possible that an observer might remember a garden as well composed and beautiful even although it were impossible to take, in that garden, a single photograph that would be pictorially well composed. Repton said of Shardeloes [Bulstrode]:

This park must be acknowledged one of the most beautiful in England, yet I doubt whether Claude himself could find, in its whole extent, a single station from whence a picture could be formed. I mention this as a proof of the little affinity between pictures and scenes in nature.” [A footnote at the end of the quote notes: Repton, Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening, chapter 5, p.65]

Their assessment of views from multiple points in the landscape was reminiscent of Repton’s explanation in Sketches and Hints: “The spot from whence the view is taken is in a fixed state to the painter; but the gardener surveys his scenery while in motion; and from different windows in the same front, he sees objects in different situations; therefore, to give an accurate portrait of the gardener’s improvement.” In the following quote the apparent vindication of Repton’s views during the Picturesque Controversy may be intuited from Hubbard and Kimball’s stolid conclusion that the “outdoor world” for the landscape architect is the “more important consideration.”

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50 The above quotation from Repton in Observations is about Bulstrode and is incorrectly attributed to “Shardeloes” in the 1917 first edition; the error remains in the 1929, revised edition. In Observations, Shardeloes is referenced immediately before Bulstrode; the most likely explanation for the error.
52 Repton, Sketches and Hints, p. 55.
Landscape composition is to the landscape architect, as it is to the landscape painter, the arrangement of the elements of his design into an ordered whole. The painter, however, is making a composition in pigments on a flat canvas which represents his subject as seen from one point of view only [...]. The three-dimensional relations of things which he represents he can only suggest by the way he handles the color, the drawing in perspective, the atmosphere, in his picture. The landscape architect is making a composition in solid objects in the outdoor world which will be seen from many points of view, and so the three-dimensional relations of his elements will be to him the more important consideration.53

In one example, furthering what may be considered their approbation of Repton’s views of the Picturesque, they cited Denman Waldo Ross (1853-1953), an American painter, collector and professor of art history and theory at Harvard University who associated movement as a key indicator in defining the pleasure road. Their use of a road to explain the landscape concept of “sequence” suggested an understanding of the kinesthetic and the importance of alignment in the design of roads. In a subsection in Chapter VII, “Landscape Composition,” Hubbard and Kimball stated:

The simplest form of sequence is that of continuation or repetition. Such sequences, essentially linear, have the very greatest value in connecting various parts of a design. (See the roads in Plates 15 and 31.[54])

The idea of Sequence is of movement and the satisfaction and pleasure we get from any Sequence lies in its movement, not in divergences and other obstacles to progress. Other things being equal, the movements which are most agreeable are those which are consistent in character and easy to follow. It must not be argued that the sequences in which we move quickly and easily are for that reason the most interesting. There is many a road which is perfectly straight which has no divergences and is without obstacles or difficulties which is, nevertheless, a very stupid road to travel on. It may offer us the possibilities of easy and rapid motion and be a perfect speedway and have no other interest.55 Unless we are in for the pleasure of easy and rapid movement the road I have described has no attraction for us. We prefer

54 Plate 15 is titled, “The Meadow Road, Arnold Arboretum” and Plate 31 is titled, “The Circuit Drive, Franklin Park, Boston.”
55 The reference to a “perfect speedway” acknowledges the design of the high-speed pleasure drives constructed in a number of U.S. cities in the late nineteenth century.
a road on which we are entertained as we go along. We have a perfect
illustration of sequence in a straight line, but we get through it quickly and
are not at all interested. We prefer, perhaps, to move slowly, even very
slowly, if there is something to interest us, to make it worth while.... [A
footnote at the end of the quote notes: “Ross, On Drawing and Painting, p. 68-
69.”]56

For Hubbard and Kimball, the outdoor world of twentieth-century America
included pleasure roads and parkways for both private and public landscapes.
They tackled the topic in a number of specialized sections addressing roads
from the practicalities of Telford, macadam and concrete pavement, to the
aesthetic considerations of aligning a road and the kinesthetic experience of
traveling along a road. Their text institutionalized the primary role of the
landscape architect in the design of pleasure roads.

A road serves other purposes in landscape design than mere provision
for ease of traffic. It is taken by the traveler as a guide: he assumes
that a road will lead him to the places to which he is supposed to go.
Roads can thus be used to display to those using them certain beauties
of a park or of a private estate. If this enjoyment of views from the
road is a matter of considerable importance in the whole design, pains
should be taken that the spectators come to the various outlooks and
objects of interest without retracing their course, in pleasant sequence,
and prepared by each one for the next to come, as were, after passing
through a shady wood, a road comes to an outlook over a sunny
landscape.57

For the automobile park roads and parkways Hubbard and Kimball
envisioned, they provided detailed explanations and directions for the
location and presentation of views. When compared to Repton, their overall
explanation of views—what Repton termed “stations”—was presented as a
similar construction with an integral relationship to the alignment of the road
and movement of the traveler. What was significant, and representative of the
new awareness for what would become the American motor parkway, were
their recommendations for “roads designed for fast pleasure traffic.” Hubbard

56 Hubbard and Kimball, An Introduction to the Study of Landscape Design, pp. 94-95.
57 Ibid., p. 222.
and Kimball anticipated the impact higher speeds would have on the ability to identify, engage and appreciate a view from the road—what they termed “time to enjoy the view” from a passing automobile. Like Repton, they applied kinesthetic theory as a critical component of roads designed for pleasure. Hubbard and Kimball continued:

Views taken up and down the road must be considered: they are inevitably seen by every one who travels upon it. Where a road changes direction, a view out at the point of change, continuing the line of the road which approaches it and centering on an interesting distant object suitably enframed by the planting about the road itself, is a desirable possibility which the designer should have in mind. Views to be enjoyed from a road, where the spectator looks sharply to the right or left, should of course be enframed by the planting along the road itself, but they should not be enframed with so small an opening that the traveler has been carried by before he has had time to enjoy the view. It is usually desirable also that interesting views should not be seen to right and left of the road at the same time, if it can be arranged that they be seen alternately. These last two considerations apply especially to roads designed for fast pleasure traffic.58

Several subsections, including, “Views from Roads,” “Planting and Roads,” “Materials of Roads and Walks,” and “Approach Roads” are devoted specifically to the design and construction of roads. Under a section titled “Landscape Parks and Reservations,” Hubbard and Kimball articulated the parkway as primarily a transportation facility noting: “Our ‘parkways,’ which serve as pleasure traffic connections for our large parks.”59

The large out-of-town parks and reservations should be selected for their landscape beauty, present or possible, with due consideration of the probable growth of the community and of other legitimate uses to which the land can be put, so that the chosen park areas may meet recreational needs and not block the future normal growth of the community. Both connecting these larger recreation areas circumferentially, and particularly running radially from the center of the town outwards, should be designed some system of parkways, that

58 Ibid., pp. 222-223.
59 Ibid., p. 297.
is, some provision whereby those who dwell in the heart of the city may get out to the parks and back again to their homes without having the recreation which they obtain from the open places counteracted by a long journey through the very conditions from which they are seeking relief.60

Hubbard and Kimball’s argument for pleasurable connections to public parks was not unlike that made by Frederick Law Olmsted when advocating the need for parkways in Buffalo (see Chapter 5).

It is not surprising, given Hubbard’s advocacy for national parks and his and Kimball’s interest in city planning that the textbook envisioned the expansion of parkways from regional and metropolitan systems to a nationwide system. The book’s publication, the year after the Organic Act of 1916 established the National Park Service, occurred during a period of optimism regarding America’s iconic landscapes and it is reasonable to assume that the textbook’s advocacy for automobile parkways would have been familiar to the landscape architects charged with designing the new system of national parks.61 The successful example of the metropolitan parkway system connecting the large park reservations surrounding Boston served as an exemplary prototype for Hubbard and Kimball’s larger national vision. They may also have been inspired by the formation of the National Park-to-Park Highway Association in 1916 (Figure 6.9), which promoted a 5,600 mile (9,000 kilometer) circuit route connecting twelve Western National Parks.62 While never envisioned as a land or automobile parkway, the notion of a modern road network organized by the sublime scenery of some of the nation’s most famous national parks surely inspired Hubbard.63

60 Ibid., p. 298.
61 While Yellowstone was established in 1872 as the first national park, there was no park agency until the Organic Act of 1916; the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers administered the national parks.
62 The twelve National Parks were: Rocky Mountain, Yellowstone, Glacier, Mount Rainier, Crater Lake, Lassen Volcanic, Yosemite, General Grant, Sequoia, Zion, Grand Canyon and Mesa Verde.
63 The Blue Ridge Parkway in Virginia and North Carolina and the Natchez Trace Parkway in Tennessee, Alabama and Mississippi, both over 400 miles (640 kilometers) long and begun during the Great Depression, realized the vision for long distance automobile parkways connecting national park units.
Automobile ownership when Hubbard and Kimball’s textbook was printed in 1917 represented the culmination of a decade that experienced the most sustained increase in automobiles in the twentieth century. Hubbard and Kimball were prophetic in their assessment of the motorcar’s potential and their call for its harmonious accommodation within the landscape. In an era without modern road infrastructure, absent or inconsistent standards for highway safety across the different states, debilitating traffic congestion and horrific automobile accidents (Figure 6.10), their clarion call for a great system of parkways represented a confidence in the profession to take a leadership role in the design of modern roads in the United States.

As to their accessibility [public parks and reservations] from without, it is evident that they will be sought to a greater and greater degree not only by rail but especially by automobile, and that therefore the relation of state parks to state highways and state parkways, and the relation of these with the national parks into one great system providing for outdoor recreation and recreational travel, is obviously a desirable thing, and one which we may hope to attain through consistent and intelligent effort in the not very distant future.

In Hubbard and Kimball’s *An Introduction to the Study of Landscape Design*, the influence of Humphry Repton on twentieth-century American landscape architecture was firmly established. What makes the volume so remarkable is its admiration for Repton within a volume that advocated automobile parkways. While Repton’s specific comments on pleasure roads were not reproduced, the expression of his theories as underlying and universal tenets of the profession (as with approach roads) imbues the book’s impassioned calls for automobile parkways with the mantle of Repton’s pleasure drives. Hubbard and Kimball’s book reads, in some sections, as much an appeal for parkway development and park planning as a textbook. In a few places, the book skirts its intellectual neutrality as the authors adopt a reformist’s zeal,

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proselytizing access to recreation, for example, as “a very desirable thing.” Their enthusiasm for roads, however, never breached the objectivity of a good text—the book’s multiple reprints and decades of use attest to this fact. Rather, it may be viewed as a deeply felt cognizance of the possibilities presented by the automobile age to transform society and the landscape, and their well-informed assessment that the field of landscape architecture was best suited to perform this twentieth-century task.

The prominence of roads in *An Introduction to the Study of Landscape Design* suggests that roads designed for pleasure, and roads in general, were viewed within the oeuvre of the profession and as a particularly important skill to be instilled in students of landscape architecture in the new automobile era. Its publication at a critical point in the development of the Bronx River Parkway may be viewed as representative of the current thinking of landscape architects and park planners; its guidance on parkways and regional transportation planning may be seen in both the form and function of the constructed parkway drive that was dedicated in 1925.

**THE BRONX RIVER PARKWAY—“A MAGICAL PARKWAY”**

On August 16, 1925, the full length of the Bronx River Parkway was open to traffic for the first time. The serpentine automobile parkway was an exemplary model for accommodating the motorcar within the landscape. Importantly, the parkway represented the genius by which landscape architects could coordinate land reclamation, park planning, water quality and highway construction within a complex site. In a lengthy illustrated article celebrating the opening, “A Magical Parkway Leads Out of City,” Diana Rice of the *New York Times* described the shift of the parkway from a boulevard structure to a serpentine structure responding to hydrology—and sanitation (Figure 6.11). It was, as the first *Landscape Architecture* editorial had
envisioned fifteen years earlier, “beauty, not merely as a luxury, but as a practical necessity and as a matter of course.”66 Echoing Frederick Law Olmsted and the Metropolitan Park Commission, she observed:

The utilization of stream valleys as part of a country’s highway development is more and more attracting the attention of those whose job it is to beautify and at the same time keep practical an artery of travel.67

In sections, as if she were referencing the eighteenth-century Picturesque Movement, her article made painterly references to the newly restored landscape of the Bronx River Valley. Her references to Corot and Millet, and by extension the Barbizon School, reflected a genre of painting far different from the works of Lorrain and Poussin that had occupied the conversations of Repton, Knight and Price just over a century earlier. Nevertheless, her article reflected the tradition of using art to interpret landscapes of great size and complexity. With the negative associations that her readers had with the river, what she described as the “valley of dump-heaps which for decades contaminated the waters of the historic Bronx River,” her poetic descriptions represented a striking contrast to the recent past and sought to restore the lore of another age.

As the panorama unfolds there is a suggestion of Corot in a misty vista of meadowlands with two groups of trees on either side, in a stretch of clearing flanking the stream. And the canvas of nature’s planning is undisturbed on either side as mundane signs, pointing the way to Mount Vernon and Yonkers, flash past.68

And, regarding the design of the parkway landscape, she wrote:

Open spaces must be cleared to preserve the symmetry of the roadside canvas along Bronx River. There was, the other day, a Milletesque group—after the modern fashion—in one of these meadows.

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68 Ibid.
Haymakers in blue shirts and wide straw hats were leaning on their pitchforks talking [...] These and many other things are to be seen along the new roadway over which 20,000 automobiles pass each Sunday. Occupants of these cars are afforded glimpses of hardwood forest—spruce, maple and oak—of considerable size, within eighteen miles of the Grand Central Terminal [in New York City].

Despite Rice's picturesque imagery, her article recognized the kinesthetic relationship of the driver to the landscape with her references to panoramas unfolding, signs flashing past and the momentary glimpses of scenery spied from the motorcar. The Bronx River Parkway was, according to Rice, first and foremost, a road designed for pleasure. It was a conclusion reached by many after experiencing a ride along the serpentine driveway. Indeed, the novelty of the park "driveway" overshadowed the successful river reclamation—a project that had captured the public imagination only a few years earlier. As recently as 1912, the New York Times had urged its readers to consider the possibilities of a restored river environment:

Imagine, for one moment, how the Bronx might look if it could be taken in hand by landscape architects and beautified for a few hundred feet on each side all the way to its source—that is, to the Kensico Reservoir, fifteen miles north of the Bronx Park system. Better than imagination, this is to be a reality.

Rice's feature article on the opening of the Bronx River Parkway was the culmination of two decades of reporting by the New York Times on the progress of the reclamation, park and pleasure road project. A staunch advocate for the parkway project from its inception, the New York Times provided an important public forum during the project's evolution, an independent record of the activities of the Bronx Parkway Commission and a summary of its annual reports. For example, in 1920, the New York Times noted: "The commission has recently issued an attractive report for the year 1918, which contains complete landscape development plans for the entire

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69 Ibid.
reservation.”\(^{71}\) (See Figures 6.19 -6.25.) It is within the Bronx Parkway Commission reports that the genesis of the American motor parkway may be found.

THE BRONX PARKWAY COMMISSION REPORTS

Between 1906 and 1925, the Bronx Parkway Commission prepared ten “annual” reports.\(^{72}\) The Bronx Commission reports, a detailed written, financial, administrative and photographic record of work from 1906 to 1925, are an important record of the first automobile parkway. The reports chronicle the evolution of the term “parkway” from its nineteenth century antecedents to the threshold of its adaptation as a particular type of automobile road designed for pleasure (Figure 6.12).

References and definitions of the pleasure drive ultimately constructed in the Bronx Parkway evolved over the years in the ten Commission reports. However, throughout all the reports, the term “parkway” referred exclusively to the park corridor created to protect the Bronx River, with the notable exception of a letter from Charles Lay, attached to the 1912 report and discussed below. The 1907 report makes no reference to a pleasure drive as a part of the Commission’s work, but does note an ongoing plan for “Bronx Boulevard” in the vicinity of the southern part of the parkway; similarly, the 1909 report makes no reference to a pleasure drive within the parkway. The

\(^{71}\) “New Parkway Nearly Done,” \textit{New York Times}, March 7, 1920. The year-long delay of the report, dated December 31, 1918, may have been due to administrative reviews before a public release.

\(^{72}\) The ten reports are as follows: 1907 (dated: December 21, 1906), 1909 (dated: January 15, 1909), 1912 (dated: April 15, 1912), 1914 (dated: June 30, 1914), 1915 (dated: June 30, 1915), 1916 (dated: June 30, 1916), 1917 (dated: December 31, 1917), 1918 (dated: December 31, 1918), 1922 (dated: December 31, 1922), and 1925 (dated: December 31, 1925). The total number of reports and their dates were verified by the Westchester County (New York) Archives by email between Jackie Graziano, Assistant Archivist, Westchester County Archives, 2199 Saw Mill River Road, Elmsford, NY 10523 and the author, on February 6, 2015; the 1915, 1917 and 1918 reports were viewed by the author on March 24 and 25, 2015 at the archives. The request was made due to inconsistencies in the total number of reports listed by a number of libraries and online sources during the research for this thesis.
1912 report references both a “boulevard” and an “attractive boulevard” as a possible feature of the parkway. The 1914 report refers to a pleasure drive as a “parked driveway,” and the 1915 report notes that the parked driveway “is now being laid out.”73 The 1916 report notes both a “parked drive” and a “driveway” when referencing a pleasure road. The 1917 report continues referencing a “parked drive” and makes the first reference to a “parkway drive,” and the 1918 report refers extensively to a “parkway drive.” The 1922 report makes no reference to the “parkway drive” but uses the terminology of a “parked drive” and “parked driveway” from earlier reports. The final report, in 1925, references a “driveway” and a “Parkway Drive.” The evolution of roadway terms, and the absence of a singular term within each report, demonstrates the confusion associated with the newness of the road type.

While the Commission’s reports may suggest an inconsistent and uncertain movement toward the parkway ultimately constructed, it never wavered in its commitment to an aesthetic road. In hindsight, the Commission’s evolution from parkway reservation to automobile parkway was remarkably swift and represented a deft response to the rapidly changing demographics and transportation requirements of the twentieth century.

The following summaries of the ten Bronx Parkway Commission reports chronicle the eventual inclusion of a road designed for pleasure within the Bronx River Parkway and document the evolution of the terminology used by the Commission to define the pleasure drive. They are an extraordinarily important series of documents that establish the provenance of the American motor parkway as a new type of road and are essential to determine the radix of its definition.

73 The 1915 report was never published due to a budgetary decision. Based on Commission precedent, it is likely a copy of the 1915 report was sent to the Governor of New York State in Albany.
1907 Report of the Bronx Parkway Commission

The 1907 Commission report is the first of the ten reports. The report focused primarily on the restoration of the Bronx River and the Bronx River Valley and water quality. The report opens with a summary of the Act establishing the Commission in 1906 to “inquire into the advisability of preserving the waters of the Bronx River from pollution, and creating a reservation of the lands on either side of the river [...].” It declares that the valley’s “picturesque features” may be found within Westchester County and as far south as Bronx Park. This picturesque reference is interesting given the report’s summation of the Bronx River as “rapidly becoming an open sewer” and surrounded by a “low class of development and increasingly unsanitary conditions.” However, as the report notes, the Commission saw an opportunity for a reversal, reporting after an inspection trip, that “they were generally impressed with the natural beauty of the stream and its immediate surroundings where the march of alleged improvement had not impaired that beauty.” The Commissioners, despite the severe environmental problems of the valley, were likely encouraged and emboldened by previous successful waterway reclamation efforts elsewhere in the Northeast. The report cites similar efforts to reclaim the once picturesque and pristine waterways for the Wissahickon Creek in Fairmount Park in Philadelphia, begun in 1869 and the Charles River in Boston. The Commission made a general reference to

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74 This dissertation uses the prevalent (Westchester County Archives) date of 1907 for the first Report of the Bronx Parkway Commission. The 1907 date is listed on the title page of the copy printed in Albany, New York by J. B. Lyon Company, State Printers. The copy reviewed for this dissertation was printed by The Trow Press in New York City and has no publication date. Both reports (page 15 for Trow Press, page 21 for J.B. Lyon Company), list a submission date of December 21, 1906. Pagination between the two reports is not consistent, due to font and format; text and ordering, however, are identical. Page numbers cited in this dissertation for the 1907 report are from the Trow Press of New York edition viewed at Avery Library at Columbia University.
75 Report of the Bronx Parkway Commission, 1907, p. 3.
76 Ibid., p. 5.
77 Ibid., pp. 6-7.
78 Ibid., p. 3.
reclamation efforts underway “throughout the Union,” in their first official report. It states:

In looking for a precedent for action to save the river, the Board found that it was not necessary to go abroad where such action is quite usual, but that here at home enlightened communities had already commenced to take such steps, as for instance in the case of Wissahickon, in Philadelphia, and of the Charles River, in Boston, and it also found on investigation that throughout the Union municipalities were awakening to the necessity of taking concerted action in order to preserve tracts of unusual natural beauty from destruction and to maintain them for public use.79

While the Bronx Parkway Commission’s reference to the Wissahickon Creek project appeared focused primarily on the successful efforts of the Philadelphia river reclamation, its inclusion in the report suggests the possibility that the Commission was also familiar with Olmsted’s recommendation to restore the corridor as an attractive route for pleasure driving (Figure 6.13). Frederick Law Olmsted wrote:

The extension of drives beyond the limits of the [Fairmount] Park proper may next be considered. The general question of roads from the City, adapted to other purposes than those simply of ordinary business transportation, is now under consideration and presents many difficulties in New York and Brooklyn, but so far as Philadelphia is concerned it is yet possible to meet this requirement in the most fortunate manner, for the present Wissahickon Creek road offers such unparalleled attractions for pleasure driving, it [is] so accessible and convenient of approach, and can be secured at this time at a cost so moderate, that no other route is at all to be compared with it. As moreover, a necessity exists for taking the river banks below the Creek for City purposes,[80] it is evident that the East shore furnishes an opportunity for connecting the Creek road naturally and agreeably with the shore drive now laid out as a part of Fairmount Park.81

79 Ibid.
80 A footnote states: “[t]he park was intended to protect the purity of the water supply.” See Beveridge, ed., The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted, vol. VI, p. 244.
Throughout the 1907 report, references to the term “parkway” are used to denote the acquisition of park lands and the resultant linear corridor along the Bronx River proposed as a park. At one point, the report refers to a “superb River Parkway,” noting the immense possibilities afforded by the “reclaimed river and reservation.”\textsuperscript{82} It is likely from the context that the Commissioners were referring to a vision for a new linear park—with verdant meadows and forest areas surrounding the clear waters of the Bronx River. At no point in the report is the term “parkway” associated with a road or drive, and vehicles, whether carriages, or automobiles, are not mentioned. References to roads are limited and, based on the report’s recommendations and summation of legislative authority, were considered beyond the core responsibilities and goals of the Commission.

As to the streets and highways included, it is not desired to close or interfere with any of these which are in regular and legitimate use, or which may be necessary for future traffic, but it is proposed to acquire and extinguish, wherever expedient, all semi-established and privately opened streets, which will have no utility after the reservation has been created.\textsuperscript{83}

The 1907 report makes limited mention of any specially constructed road within the parkway lands between Bronx Park and the Kensico Dam. The report obliquely references the benefit of boulevards under a section titled “Park Development” which introduced the section by noting, rather authoritatively, that “Professor Zueblin states that ‘no phase of city making speaks more eloquently of the change in American ideals than the growth of parks, playgrounds, and boulevards,’ and ‘that not acreage, nor mileage, but distribution is the standard to guide park commissioners.’”\textsuperscript{84} The report also notes plans prepared by the office of the President of the Bronx Borough for

\textsuperscript{82} Report of the Bronx Parkway Commission, 1907, p. 9.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid., p. 9.
\textsuperscript{84} Ibid., p. 10. “Professor Zueblin” is likely a reference to Charles Zueblin (1866-1924), a sociologist and president of the American League for Civic Improvement (after 1904, the American Civic Association). Stephen Mather, the first director of the U.S. National Park Service was a member of the American Civic Association.
the development of a “Bronx Boulevard” running parallel to the river between Bronx Park and Woodlawn, for a distance of approximately two miles (three kilometers). It later notes that the “sanitary reservation,” likely a reference to a parallel program for a trunk sewer line between White Plains and Woodlawn underway by the Bronx Valley Sewer Commission (established in 1895), is “peculiarly adapted” to development, noting “an attractive boulevard to the city from the open countryside” as a possible development. This section continues by suggesting that with the “Kensico Lake reservation as an objective point, we have only to picture the completion and extension of the Riverside Drive improvement along the Hudson River, and the similar development of a line along the [Long Island] Sound, to complete a very comprehensive outer park system for the city, with the proposed Bronx Parkway as a central feature.” Such references are certainly directed toward the development of a regional park system, already visualized and articulated by park planners and advocates in the region. Roads, transportation and circulation within the envisaged system, however, were conceptual and vague—the reference to the “Riverside Drive improvement” suggests it is more of a park improvement along the Hudson River than a pleasure road project, reaffirming the concept of a parkway during this period as a land unit.

Despite vague and independent efforts for the development of some type of boulevard, the report does address metropolitan transportation issues and suburbanization relevant to the parkway corridor:

Statistics show that the population of all our large cities is increasing with the greatest speed in the outer zones. In New York City, perhaps the most congested in the world, because of its close water surroundings, we are also witnessing a new and marked trend of city overflow to the suburbs; and with the completion of new transportation facilities, as against the former ferry-boat and bridge, a

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85 The neighborhood surrounding Woodlawn Cemetery, a noteworthy example of the romantic cemetery movement, established in 1863.
87 Ibid., p. 11.
large portion of this will naturally be diverted to the immediately adjacent Westchester section.\textsuperscript{88}

In the 1907 report, it is clear that the Commission viewed the improvements and additions to the rail network as sufficient to meet the challenges of population growth and suburbanization. The report also anticipates the changing geography and demography of the region. As rail became cheaper and faster, the proximity of Brooklyn and the Hudson River towns of New Jersey to New York City, via a bridge or ferry ride, could now be exchanged for the more distant and pastoral setting of Westchester County, and reliable rail service. Indeed, it is the improvements to rail service that the report advances as the engine of growth for the Bronx River Valley region. Interestingly, highways are detached from the discourse on essential transportation and utility services, and are included in a broad category of miscellaneous municipal and community projects. The absence of the “highway” from state interest or responsibility is an important aspect of this report and likely reflects the nascent involvement of state governments in road building, which had been, historically, a local issue. Roads were secondary and tertiary concerns for the Commission, which made its most specific statements about roads regarding the elimination of “semi-established and privately opened” roads within the envisioned parkway lands. It is evident, from the following excerpt from the report, that the Bronx Parkway Commission envisioned their work to result in a significant addition to the New York City park system and that primary transportation needs along the parkway corridor would be met by the proposed electric rail lines.

In addition to the increase of the Park System of New York, the advantage to local communities is doubly accentuated in the fact that it will not be merely a community adjunct; but following along the railroad through the entire electric zone, immediately at hand from every station, it may be pictured as a transformed life artery, extending

\textsuperscript{88} Ibid., p. 6.
through the heart of these communities, and a factor making for progress the value of which is difficult to estimate.\textsuperscript{89}

The 1907 report envisions a network of green parkway corridors connecting significant park, recreational and natural areas to one another, and that the communities along these corridors will be transformed by their proximity to the park system. A road designed for pleasure, much less an automobile parkway, was not yet envisioned as a primary feature of the Bronx Parkway.

1909 Report of the Bronx Parkway Commission

The 1909 \textit{Report of the Bronx Parkway Commission}, unlike the visionary document that preceded it in 1907, is a perfunctory update of the Commission’s activities and a series of schedules outlining issues of law, finance and real estate. The subheadings that characterized the vision the Commission was hoping to establish in the 1907 report, such as “Betterment Area, Widening City Growth, Pollution and River Conditions and Park Development” are not included, nor are there any of the photographic images of the Bronx Valley used in the previous report to add gravitas to their undertaking. Given the paucity of funding for the Commission’s work in the intervening years, there was little to report. Indeed the future of the Bronx Parkway was uncertain. The State of New York had yet to authorize funds for the acquisition of parkway lands. The upbraiding by the Commission’s President, Madison Grant, at the close of the report sent an urgent message: “Your Commission has proceeded as far as it can upon its own resources, and is obliged to regretfully report that unless funds are forthcoming the project must fail.”\textsuperscript{90}

The only reference to roads in the 1909 report is a summary note that Commissioners consulted with “the board of water supply as to improvements

\textsuperscript{89} Ibid., p. 11.
to road connections at Kensico Dam.”91 The report does summarize the update to the Bronx Parkway Law (Chapter 594 of the Laws of 1907, New York State) that characterized the intended goal as “a public parkway for public use.”92

1912 Report of the Bronx Parkway Commission

The 1912 report begins by reinforcing the river restoration as the Commission’s primary administrative goal and legal obligation of “preserving the waters of the Bronx River from pollution and creating a Reservation of lands along the river.”93 While still defining a strong focus on the river and urging the acquisition of necessary lands to protect the river as a “parkway,” the 1912 report introduces a road designed for pleasure as a feature within the parkway noting “the future for the development of a splendid River Parkway and Boulevard northerly from the City into the superb Westchester Reservoir section.”94 This is the first time that a road within the parkway reservation—clearly intended as an attractive road with the appellation “boulevard”—is referenced as an outcome of the Commission’s planning process. Its representation as a desirable addition to a “splendid” parkway is noteworthy in establishing its intention for an aesthetic road. The report states that the Commission’s engineer was instructed to consider the lands necessary to “preserve enough of the natural beauties of Bronx Valley” for both the river reclamation and a boulevard.95 The inclusion of “natural beauty” as a component of the boulevard design is the first indication that the Commissioners, despite their use of the more formal term boulevard, were envisioning a road designed for pleasure. The identification of sufficient lands within the Bronx Parkway to ensure the pleasure drive was developed as an

91 Ibid., p. 6.
92 Ibid., p. 16.
94 Ibid., p. 6.
95 Ibid.
attractive addition, necessitated sufficient width and buffer areas to maintain the roadway as a feature subordinate to the larger, and primary, park setting. This would become a defining feature of the American motor parkway. Further associating the parkway corridor with transportation concepts, the 1912 report utilized the term “link” when referencing the regional benefits of the proposed plan. The Commissioners, by including a boulevard and discussing linkages, began to suggest the road as integral to the regional park concept.

Such a Parkway will have its greatest significance, in the fact that it will provide a final link to connect the Parks owned by the City in the Borough of the Bronx, with the new reservation for the Kensico Reservoir and its other properties in Westchester County.96

Suggesting a change in the parkway’s development, the Commission stated “It will be possible to augment the scope of the Reservation by including in its development the new Bronx Boulevard and the so-called Kensico Aqueduct right-of-way acquired by the City 30 years ago, both of which are now partially improved as highways, and will make material additions to the total area.”97 The proposed sanitary reservation along the Bronx River was described in the 1907 report, as being “peculiarly adapted” to the development of an “attractive boulevard.”98 As the report noted in its Conclusion, “An additional advantage of this parkway scheme is that it will provide a beautiful drive through a really beautiful section of the country, thus connecting the system of State roads with the splendid parks of The Bronx Borough.”99 Analysis of the 1912 report text suggests that the concept of the automobile parkway connecting larger parklands via a beautiful road was emerging. Still, within the Commission’s discourse, the term “parkway” continued to represent park land and not a park road. Such an interpretation

96 Ibid., pp. 11-12.
97 Ibid., p. 13.
98 Ibid.
99 Ibid., p. 28.
may be seen in the following reference noting the relationship of roads to the parkway:

The proposed Bronx Boulevard [...] and existing highways will afford convenient access to all parts of the Parkway, thus making the lands immediately available for desirable park use in their restored natural state."\textsuperscript{100}

What the Commissioners intimated as the form of an automobile parkway in the 1912 report, garners clarity and structure from Charles Downing Lay, a landscape architect for the City of New York Parks Department. Certainly within the context of the Bronx River Parkway, and likely within the context of twentieth century pleasure roads, Lay articulated the first association of the term “parkway” to the construction of a road designed for pleasure integrated within a specific park corridor. In a prescient letter from Lay, attached to the 1912 report as Appendix G, he stated:

I think it is safe to say that when this parkway is completed it will be the main line of travel to all points more than twenty miles from New York. What can be more important in the development of the city than to have the approaches to it direct and at the same time dignified and beautiful?\textsuperscript{101}

With Lay, the idea of a “dignified and beautiful” approach to the city from the country united the road and parkway as a single entity and began to establish the parkway structure as a new type of road designed for pleasure. Roads, especially boulevards, were increasingly referenced as important components, but treated as additive elements, integral, but not essential, to the parkway concept. Lay began to change the relationship from the rather fluid definitions in which roads inhabited space within a legitimate parkway corridor, such as the “Riverside Drive improvement,” to one in which the road and parkway were viewed as a singular and harmonious structure—what

\textsuperscript{100} Ibid., p. 25.
\textsuperscript{101} Ibid., p. 38.
would eventually become the automobile parkway. His letter demonstrated that he viewed the development of a road in the Bronx Parkway as an essential transportation component of a regional system designed to access recreational areas and sites of natural beauty well beyond Manhattan.

His letter to Madison Grant began with an expression of his “hearty approval of the proposed Bronx River Parkway, because it seems to me one of the most important works of conservation and beautification now under consideration in New York.” 102 Lay then briefly expressed his admiration for the parkway’s favorable influence on property values (Lay and Hubbard would write *Parkways and Land Values*, in 1937), the improvement in storm water management in “time of freshet” and “from the aesthetic point of view, the need for the improvement is so pressing that one wonders that it was not done twenty-five years ago.” 103 At this point, and for the remainder (and bulk) of his letter, he addressed the parkway as a primary transportation facility designed to take city dwellers to the countryside. His transition from the reclamation purpose of the parkway outlined by the Commissioners in 1907 to his transportation vision was presented forthrightly and with a sense of profound urgency.

But it is the practical advantages of the scheme as they appeal to the Manhattanite rather than to the dwellers near by that I wish to urge upon your attention. The shape of New York—which is given apologetically as a reason for many shortcomings and is always lamented—has tended to direct the highway traffic to and from the city into two main lines, one from the east and the district along the Sound, the other from the Hudson Valley. The large triangle in between [the Bronx River Valley], in spite of two railroads and a few highways, has always been backward in development, and for that very reason is now the most unspoiled and the most lovely country near New York.

In this region are the many beautiful lakes of the New York water system, and other and larger lakes are now being built. The City owns

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102 Ibid., pp. 36-37.
103 Ibid., p. 37.
40,000 acres, which is in effect, if not in fact, park land, with tremendous resources of delight. All this territory will be opened by the proposed parkway, for the enjoyment of the people.104

His letter continued:

The Bronx Parkway will provide an excellent way to Mount Vernon and White Plains, from which places one may branch off to the Connecticut towns on the edge of the State, or even to the shore towns. It will, if constructed, be the Berkshire Hills route, and an alternate, avoiding the large towns, to the Hudson Valley and the [Long Island] Sound.105

By highlighting the access to scenic and recreational destinations such as the Berkshire Mountains, Hudson Valley and Long Island, Lay fundamentally shifted the term “parkway” from a park corridor in which the road was incidental, to a park corridor in which the road was essential. His description of the Bronx Parkway, “if constructed,” was a direct reference to building a road. The creation of the “parkway” envisioned by the 1907 report did not involve construction, but land acquisition and restoration. Further demonstrating his belief of the Bronx Parkway as a road, he stated, “An additional advantage is that the parkway will be practically without hills, following as it does, a water route.”106 An absence of hills, viewed as an advantage, is important for the design and construction of an automobile parkway—it is not important as a parkway land corridor connecting park units or destinations. In 1912 the modern definition of a parkway as an automobile route, as first articulated by Robinson and Lewis, was applied by Lay to describe his vision of a beautifully built and sensitively located pleasure road within the Bronx Parkway corridor.

104 Ibid.
105 Ibid.
106 Ibid., p. 38.
The Bronx Parkway Commission, while authorized and formed in 1906, received little funding, other than for studies and reports, to implement any of its goals until 1913. In 1913, after an amendment to the law "to authorize the acquisition of lands described in the Act" work was finally able to proceed.\textsuperscript{107} The 1914 report, when compared to the 1907, 1909 and 1912 Commission reports is an enthusiastic and accomplished report. It swells in size from the approximate thirty-eight pages of the 1912 report to approximately 119 pages and includes the first detailed financial statements and an impressive photo collection chronicling, through before and after images, the first efforts to reclaim and restore the Bronx River (Figures 6.14 and 6.15). Whereas Repton used before and after illustrations to suggest the advantages of his proposed improvements, the Commissioners used before and after photographs to showcase the magnitude of their accomplishments—politically important after so many years of delay since the Commission was established. The initiation of State funding allowed the beginning of land acquisition, through gift, purchase and condemnation, to begin, and the removal of industrial waste and blighted structures.

In addition, the Commissioners were operating under an amended Bronx River Parkway Law, which explicitly expanded their powers to include the development of roads. Chapter 594, Laws of 1907, as amended by Chapter 757, Laws of 1913, Section 14 (Bronx River Law, State of New York) states:

\begin{quote}
Said commissioners appointed under this act shall have power to lay out, construct and maintain roads and pathways, and boulevards across and over said parkway, and to lay out, construct and maintain roads and ways connecting the roads and ways within said park with other public roads and ways outside of said park; [...].\textsuperscript{108}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{107} Report of the Bronx Parkway Commission, 1914, p. 35.
\textsuperscript{108} Ibid., p. 111.
The Commission responded to its new authority by redefining the vaguely defined “attractive boulevard” from the 1912 report as a “Parked Driveway.” The term “driveway” was used by Olmsted to describe Riverside Drive in New York and was used to define the new Henry Hudson Drive (begun 1901) constructed between the New Jersey Palisades and the Hudson River. A “driveway,” unlike a boulevard, suggested a more leisurely route, engagement with interesting natural scenery or features, and a more serpentine alignment. By describing the planned route as a “Parked Driveway” the Commissioners sought to ensure that there be no confusion with an urban thoroughfare, such as a boulevard, and that the integrity and beauty of the newly restored Bronx River Valley would be a dominant feature for a new type of driver called an “automobilist.” The term “Parked Driveway” is the first indication of an aesthetic and experiential goal for the traveler, and suggested the harmonious relationship the road would have with the landscape.

As the Commission began to articulate a vision for transportation within the parkway, it began to take an active role in non-parkway projects that would cross the Reservation. Regarding plans for new bridges crossing the Reservation, the report noted “suggestions were made for such modifications as to provide structures in harmony with park development” and “structures which would enhance rather than detract from the beauty of the Reservation, and of such character and design as would not interfere with a rational Parkway development.”¹⁰⁹ The language of the report, suggesting topography as an important consideration, further reinforces the conclusion that the Commissioners desired a route thoughtfully placed within the landscape they had worked so diligently to restore and create.

Upon complete topographical maps, to be prepared from surveys now in progress, the Commission will lay down the location of a Parked Driveway extending from the northerly limits of Bronx Park to lands of the Board of Water Supply at Kensico Reservoir, where connections

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¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 55.
will be made with the magnificent highways converging at that point.\textsuperscript{110}

The “Parked Driveway” appellation is a significant advancement in articulating a vision for a road within the Bronx Parkway. Nevertheless, Lay’s early use of the term “parkway” to reference a road had yet to be adopted by the Commission. The report’s section on “Billboards” still strongly suggested the parkway as a place, not as a road:

The various outdoor advertising companies have also been notified that, in the event of any of these signs being removed to other locations outside of the Commission’s jurisdiction, tall trees and shrubbery will immediately be planted to screen them from the view of persons in the Parkway or passing trains.\textsuperscript{111}

Despite not labeling the road as the parkway Lay defined in the 1912 report, the Commission began to incorporate the larger regional and transportation goals that Lay articulated into their planning. The Foreword to the 1914 report presented the shift from a river reclamation project to a regional park system, well beyond the jurisdictional authority of the Commission, connecting “picturesque lands” in the Croton watershed north of the Kensico reservoir and the Catskill watershed, within the Catskill Park, 100 miles (160 kilometers) north of New York City.

Those who interested themselves in the project at this time, appreciating the great need of sanitary protection for the River and its surroundings, and realizing the opportunity afforded for a park connection between the City’s parks and the enormous areas of picturesque lands acquired by the City in the Croton and Catskill watersheds [...].\textsuperscript{112}

Not yet specifically defining a pleasure road system, the Commission established the enormous scale and scope that would define the American

\textsuperscript{110} Ibid., p. 70.  
\textsuperscript{111} Ibid., p. 64.  
\textsuperscript{112} Ibid., p. 12.
motor parkway. The Taconic State Parkway, begun 1923, would extend north from the Bronx River Parkway, skirting the western edge of the Croton watershed and passing roughly eighteen miles east of the Catskill Park. While not directly connecting the Bronx Parkway to the Catskill Park, the 104 mile (167 kilometer) automobile parkway designed by landscape architect Gilmore Clarke, provided a scenic route through the Hudson Valley along a line proximate to the Commission’s vision and expressive of Hubbard and Kimball’s advocacy for long distance parkways.

**1915 Report of the Bronx Parkway Commission**

The 1915 report was not published due to budgetary considerations and is considerably reduced in size from the 1914 report.

The 1915 report represents an important transition in the development of the automobile parkway and its omission from the general historical record must be acknowledged to reflect accurately the chronology of activities undertaken by the Bronx Parkway Commission. The report begins with a major historical revision by suggesting that the idea of a “parked drive” had been a part of the parkway concept since the Commission was established in 1906.

The Parkway project was initiated by the City primarily to preserve the Bronx River from pollution and to secure at the same time a Parkway of great natural beauty, improved with pathways and a parked drive connecting the City’s park and boulevard system with the State roads and watershed lands at Kensico Reservoir.

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113 The Taconic State Parkway evolved from the “Bronx River Parkway Extension” envisioned by the State Park Plan for New York in 1922, with construction beginning in 1923 of a thirty-mile extension to access recreational areas. In 1924 the Taconic State Park Commission was established; Franklin D. Roosevelt was the first chairman of the Commission. Construction of what was called the “Eastern State Parkway” began in 1933. By the 1940s the parkway was renamed the “Taconic State Parkway.” The parkway was completed in 1962.

114 Report of the Bronx Parkway Commission, 1915, p. 30. There are only two known copies of the 1915 report, a typed copy and a carbon copy, both at the Westchester County Archives.

115 Ibid., p. 3.
The report notes the “parked driveway is now being laid out” and that “substantial improvement work early in 1916” is planned.\textsuperscript{116} The report notes that a study on road surfacing was begun to consider paving methods and materials for the parked drive.\textsuperscript{117} In addition, the 1915 report demonstrates the ongoing application of the Picturesque Movement to the aesthetic development of American roads designed for pleasure.

Several sections of the Bronx River were diverted due to the close proximity of the Harlem Division of the New York Central and Hudson River Railroad. In these areas, steep railroad embankments had destroyed the edge of the river; no viable landscape strategies to reconcile the steep engineered slope with the naturalistic goals of the Commission were possible. Therefore, approximately five miles (eight kilometers) of the Bronx River were diverted away from negative conditions or situations viewed as insurmountable. In one location the river was rerouted through an old quarry pit and a new channel was blasted through the rock. This new and uncharacteristic edge of the riverbank was justified when the Commission noted, “By diverting the River through the old quarry pit, a picturesque feature could be developed.”\textsuperscript{118} The report accompanied its claim with three photographs showing the existing relationship of the river to the railroad, the construction of the diversion, and the completed project showing the languid waters of the Bronx passing through a newly created picturesque channel. The image is evocative of the British Picturesque with the rough rock contrasting sharply with the still water and the narrow fissure adding mystery to what may lie beyond the violent cleft in the earth (Figures 6.16, 6.17 and 6.18).

As noted in Chapter 3, the Picturesque Movement had a significant influence on the design of American pleasure drives in the nineteenth century and, as this thesis shows, the design of the American motor parkway. While the

\textsuperscript{116} Ibid., p. 29.
\textsuperscript{117} Ibid., p. 63.
\textsuperscript{118} Ibid., p. 21.
parkway reclamation was picturesque in its structure, details and relationship to the landscape, the Commission report make few specific references as to their inspiration or models. However, the Minutes of the Bronx Parkway Commission for 1915 record that the carriage drives of Central Park were considered in the design of the Bronx River Parkway.

The Commission gave further consideration to the matter of width of proposed Parkway drive which had previously been discussed informally on many occasions. Mr. Grant stated that he had with the Engineer [likely Jay Downer] gone over the park drives in Central Park, measuring same, and had found that the main west drive for a considerable distance above 80th Street was thirty feet in width and that it appeared that this would be ample for the Bronx River Parkway for some time as the drive in Central Park was, of course, subject to very heavy traffic.\(^{119}\)

1916 Report of the Bronx Parkway Commission

The 1916 report is the first published report to suggest that the idea of a “parked drive” was a part of the parkway concept since the Commission was established in 1906. The language, nearly identical to that of the unpublished 1915 report, not only suggests the importance in which the pleasure road was held, but also a sophisticated view of a regional network of roads providing access to parks and recreation sites well beyond the Bronx Parkway.

The Parkway project was initiated primarily to preserve the Bronx River from pollution and to secure at the same time a Parkway of great natural beauty, improved with pathways and a parked drive connecting the City’s park and boulevard systems with the State roads and watershed lands at Kensico Reservoir.\(^{120}\)

Whereas the 1914 report noted aesthetic “modifications” to enhance structures proposed to cross the reservation, the 1916 report reflects a Commission engaged in the function of transportation facilities and making


recommendations based not only on engineering practice but also designed to ensure the enjoyment of the traveler on the Parked Driveway. Their recommendation of separated grades to isolate city traffic from parkway traffic is reminiscent of the transverse roads Olmsted and Vaux designed for Central Park approximately fifty years earlier. While no specific reference to Central Park’s drives and avenues is made in the reports, the Commission members, as noted, visited Central Park in 1915. Additionally, the Commission maintained a New York City office, first at 11 Wall Street in Lower Manhattan and later at 280 Madison Avenue and 40th Street in Midtown—one mile (1.6 kilometers) south of Central Park. The success of the transverse roads, their inclusion within the New York City park system and their proximity to the Bronx River project (and the Commission offices) suggests the exemplary example of separating traffic would have been familiar to the Commission.

In the following description it appears the reference to “Bronx Boulevard” reflects the older references to the Bronx Boulevard (as ultimately constructed) as a monumental thoroughfare running parallel to the parkway reservation and a separate parked drive in the vicinity of Bronx Park and Woodlawn Cemetery. While not directly related to the parked driveway, the Commission’s assessment of traffic within the parkway district reflects a level of detail not seen in previous reports. It is also the first reference to “automobile traffic” made in the reports.121

At Gun Hill Road the Commission advocated and strongly urged a modification of established profiles to provide for separation of grades at the intersection of Bronx Boulevard and Gun Hill Road, by raising the latter and lowering Bronx Boulevard to pass under Gun Hill Road. The amount of heavy traffic now passing Gun Hill Road is considerable and will steadily increase in volume. [...] On the other hand Bronx Boulevard, when the Parkway drive system is completed, will carry a

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121 The first use of the term “automobile” in the Commission reports refers to “automobile bodies” in a description of debris found during the Bronx River clean-up. See Report of the Bronx Parkway Commission (1916), p. 34.
very heavy volume of automobile traffic which, if required to cross Gun Hill Road at grade, would undoubtedly create serious congestion and interference with both lines of traffic. The separation of grades has been approved by the Board of Estimate and Apportionment of the City of New York, and plans for the improvement drawn accordingly.\textsuperscript{122}

The report also makes one of the first references to what will become the “limited access” of the Parked Drive to enhance the parkway experience by controlling traffic from abutting properties. The concept of limited access was established by the Bronx River Parkway and would become a hallmark of the American motor parkway and be adopted by the nation’s freeway system and later Interstate system as an essential safety feature. Today, it is a global standard for motorways.

Negotiations looking toward the development of Bronx Boulevard, adjoining the Parkway Reservation, between Bronx Park and East 23\textsuperscript{rd} Street, or Woodlawn Road, have been pending for some time with Bronx Borough and New York City authorities. The plan most favorably considered provides for the City developing a street along the easterly line of the Boulevard, north of Gun Hill Road, to serve abutting lands of private owners, and turning over to the Commission for development the remaining width of 60 feet, which will be merged with the Parkway Reservation, providing location for the parked drive.\textsuperscript{123}

In addition to engineering issues such as vertical alignment and limited access, the report also notes that studies “to determine the best method of paving and surfacing the parked drive have been made by the Engineering Department” and “Particular attention has been given to the layout of the proposed parked drive which will be made of ample width to accommodate the heavy traffic which is sure to be imposed upon it.”\textsuperscript{124}

\textsuperscript{123} Ibid., p. 51.
\textsuperscript{124} Ibid., p. 65. No mention as to specific paving methods (Telford or McAdam, for example) is made.
Studies to determine the best method of paving and surfacing the parked drive have been made by the Engineering Department. Much data has been obtained and the behavior, under traffic, of those pavements in most general use, has been carefully observed and data obtained.125

Landscape improvements were also detailed in the report:

The parked driveway is laid out and several sections will soon be under construction. Between Scarsdale and White Plains, Bronx Park and Gun Hill Road, and in the vicinity of White Plains, the Commission will make substantial progress this year, which will include grading for the Parkway drive and final grading of the park lands, followed by extensive planting of many areas which have been almost entirely stripped of trees and other plant growth.126

In addition, the 1916 report was the first to articulate alignment issues based on the aesthetics of the road and its visual impact on the parkway traveler.

In the narrower sections of the Parkway, particularly in the vicinity of the Mount Vernon Station, the width is barely sufficient to provide space for the river channel, Parkway drive and a narrow screen planting along the railroad embankment and Bronx River Road. In this section the Parkway drive will be carried through at a level somewhat below the adjacent street, so that the planting strips provided, though narrow, will be effective in preserving the appearance of a Parkway.127

In a letter attached to the report, Hermann W. Merkel, the consulting landscape architect and forester, summarized the Parked Drive as the “main” improvement to the parkway. Of importance to the concept of the automobile parkway evolving within the Bronx Parkway was the sensitivity to the topography and vegetation of the Bronx Valley when determining the alignment of the Parked Drive. Of additional note was the weight of consideration given to safety. Since Repton, landscape architects carefully considered the safety aspects of roads designed for pleasure.

125 Ibid., pp. 65-66.
126 Ibid., p. 66.
127 Ibid.
The main feature of these improvements is, of course, the driveway, which will run for the entire length of the Reservation, connecting with adjacent streets wherever an outlet has been considered necessary. For the width of the drive, forty feet has been tentatively settled upon, although this width may not be graded and paved at the outset, thirty-two feet being considered sufficient in certain sections. In sections where the full width required for a single driveway would mean an extensive amount of grading, the destruction of trees or other desirable features, the road has been divided into two one-way drives, which sometimes run at decidedly different levels, reuniting as soon as possible. Excessive grades and dangerous curves have been avoided.\footnote{Ibid., p. 81.}

After several years of evolution, the road designed for pleasure, between Bronx Park and Kensico Dam had begun.

The adoption of this plan by the several boards and officials of the City having jurisdiction is being urged and every effort will be made to remove the legal obstacles so that the general improvement of the Boulevard and adjacent Parkway lands, including the grading of this section of the Parkway drive, can be finished as early in 1917 as weather conditions will permit.\footnote{Ibid., p. 51.}

In addition, in a letter attached to the report by Jay Downer, the hiring of Gilmore D. Clarke was reported: “Mr. Gilmore D. Clarke, a graduate landscape architect in charge of work for the Hudson County (New Jersey) Park Department, but residing in the Bronx, was temporarily appointed as Superintendent of Landscape Construction” and noted “Mr. Clarke entered upon his duties a few days prior to the date of this report.”\footnote{Ibid., pp. 73-74.}

\textit{1917 Report of the Bronx Parkway Commission}

The 1917 report continues with the assertion that the “parked driveway” had been a primary component of the Commission’s plans since 1906, but unlike the bold assertions of the 1915 and 1916 reports, notes it as a “secondary
purpose.” Nevertheless, the introduction reinforces and expands the role of the parked driveway as an integral component of a regional park system accessed by pleasure cars.

A secondary purpose is to provide a parked driveway outlet for New York City’s tens of thousands of pleasure cars. The Bronx River Parkway drive provides such an outlet, directly connecting the City’s park system with the magnificent State highways diverging from the great Kensico Dam and reservoir, and extending throughout Westchester and Putnam Counties where New York City owns over 30,000 acres of beautiful watershed lands and lakes [...].

The 1917 report is important in that it marks a shift from the parked drive as an abstract primary transportation element facilitating access to different park units within the region to an experiential element facilitating pleasure as an integral aspect of the parkway experience.

But it must be recognized that not until the driveway is completed from Bronx Park to Kensico Dam, and additional sections of the river channel excavated for river regulation and drainage, with lakes and pools provided for recreational purposes, will the Parkway Reservation be available for the fullest enjoyment of the people.

The report of the consulting landscape architect, Hermann Merkel, articulated the shift from the formal boulevards or avenues located within the nineteenth century parkways to naturalistic road designs.

It has become a recognized factor in city planning, that park needs of large cities are not served in full by areas of park lands within city limits only, but that large areas, natural or created, are needed within reasonable distances, and that comfortable and safe approaches must lead to them to make them available. The formal parkway [A possible reference to Eastern and Ocean Parkways], with separate drives for freight and passenger service, and the tree-planted boulevard serves this purpose to a certain extent and is often the only one that can be built without excessive costs; but much to be preferred is an approach

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132 Ibid., p. 17.
in a natural setting, with its diversified beauty of contours and woods.\textsuperscript{133}

Merkel’s comments run counter to the prevailing aesthetic of the City Beautiful Movement which embraced axial formalism within the American city. Merkel’s comments cannot be interpreted as a rebuff of the City Beautiful, but rather a continuation of the argument that parklands and places of recreation should be as naturalistic as possible. Therefore, by extension, parkway drives, which, in a Reptonian reference he terms approaches, should be naturalistic in their design.

\textit{1918 Report of the Bronx Parkway Commission}

The 1918 report made the strongest statements to date regarding the primacy of the parked driveway. Reflecting the evolving views of parkways and the tangible results of the New York State highway bonds in the construction of modern highways, the report stated:

\begin{quote}
The great Kensico dam, some twelve miles north of the city limits, marks the southern boundary of this public domain, but there was no direct avenue for traffic between the city and this magnificent property, lying midway between the Hudson River and the Sound. It was apparent that an unobstructed avenue for motor traffic from the parks established in The Bronx, through to the open country to the north, would be of incalculable value to the metropolis.\textsuperscript{134}
\end{quote}

The identification of an “unobstructed avenue” is likely a reference to the limited-access concept developed for the parkway drive, and further suggests the Commission’s intentions for a road designed for pleasure—freed from the intrusions of non-park traffic. Indeed, the 1918 report closely associated the success of the Commission’s work with the ability of the motoring public to access the parkway. Reflecting the shift from river reclamation to pleasure

\begin{flushright}
\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{133} Ibid., p. 61.
\end{flushright}
drive, the report takes a moderately defensive tone—reminding the public of the successful river reclamation.

The total cost of the project to date has been $5,917,248.13 [...] And what benefit, it may be asked, is the public at present deriving from this expenditure in view of the fact that the Parkway drive, which will be a vital asset, has not yet been built, except for a short stretch above Bronx Park. The answer is this: The menace of the polluted river has gone for all time [...] 135

Nevertheless, the report continues with a focus on motor traffic:

The natural charm of the finished Parkway will, of course, always be its chief asset from an aesthetic point of view, but this very asset can only be put to its full benefit and purpose with the completion of the Parkway Drive, which will not only make all the Parkway accessible, but also perform its intended function of furnishing the needed outlet for motor traffic from the crowded city into the open country to the north.136

In an ironic shift, the automobile reversed Olmsted’s ideas of bringing nature into the city to one of removing the city dweller to the countryside. A carriage ride to enjoy the artificial scenery created for the nineteenth-century country park was supplanted by a motor drive to the genuine scenery of the countryside. The 1918 report includes detailed drawings of the parkway landscape and the alignment of the park driveway (Figures 6.19, 6.20, 6.21, 6.22, 6.23, 6.24 and 6.25)

1922 Report of the Bronx Parkway Commission

The 1922 report opens by building on the comments, beginning in 1915 and first published in the 1916 report, that the Parkway Act had always intended a “parked drive,” with an even stronger statement regarding the inclusion of a

135 Ibid., p. 13.
136 Ibid., p. 17.
drive as part of the original concept when the river reclamation was first considered. While the Parkway Act, as amended by Chapter 757 of the Laws of 1913, explicitly enabled the Commission to “lay out, construct and maintain roads,” the gradual elevation of the “parked drive” from the vague mention of an “attractive boulevard” in the early reports to a strongly defined pleasure road in 1922, demonstrates a remarkably rapid shift in priorities, the powerful influence of the automobile and a new vision of the Bronx Parkway as an integral component of a complex and extensive regional transportation network. The 1922 report states unequivocally, “The Parkway Act had a dual purpose,” thus fully equating the pleasure drive with the river reclamation.

The Parkway Act had a dual purpose:

First: -to reclaim the Bronx River from its intolerable condition as an open sewer and protect the city’s park lands through which the river flows. To do this two things were necessary:
(a) to build a trunk sewer paralleling the river [...].
(b) to preserve the river and adjoining low lands from pollution [...].

Second: -to provide a parked driveway outlet for New York City's hundreds of thousands of pleasure cars. The Bronx River Parkway connects the city's park and boulevard system with the state highways diverging from the great Kensico Dam and Reservoir and extending through Westchester and Putnam Counties, in which area the city owns nearly 30,000 acres of watershed lands and lakes, which with improvements represent a city expenditure of more than $133,000,000.137

The description of the automobiles using the “parked driveway” as “pleasure cars” set an expectation for the type of recreational driver the pleasure road within the Bronx Parkway intended to serve. The report makes no mention of commercial vehicles or suburban commuters. Further, the assessment of the city's “hundreds of thousands of pleasure cars” suggests a growing demand

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and interest in accessing the “30,000 acres of watershed lands and lakes” now within an easy day’s journey.

The obvious elevation of the parked drive as a primary feature contradicts the Act establishing the Commission in 1906 with the singular charge of “preserving the waters of the Bronx River from pollution, and of creating a reservation of the lands on either side of the river”\textsuperscript{138} is open to several interpretations. Firstly, the importance of accommodating the automobile, hardly a consideration in 1906, demanded attention as the automobile evolved from a curiosity of the wealthy when the Commission began, to a powerful force as automobile ownership swelled during the first decade of the Commission’s work. Secondly, the importance of the automobile, especially after the early successes at acquiring lands and restoring the river, may have naturally shifted the Commission’s focus to a point where the automobile pleasure road seemed to have always been a goal of the project. It is also possible, as the project was nearing completion, that a sense of profound accomplishment was compelling the Commission toward a slight revision of history to ensure that the pleasure drive, the most noteworthy accomplishment during their tenure was not, as Gilmore Clarke would later remember a “purely incidental feature in the early consideration of the project.”\textsuperscript{139} Indeed, in the 1925 report, the last report of the Bronx Parkway Commission, Jay Downer proclaimed “the completed parkway a world model.”\textsuperscript{140}

\textbf{1925 Report of the Bronx Parkway Commission}

The 1925 report is both a summary of work of the Bronx Parkway Commission since the 1922 report, and a reflection on its accomplishments since the first report in 1907. The “Parkway Drive” is the most prominent

\textsuperscript{138} Report of the Bronx Parkway Commission, 1907, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{139} Clarke, “The Parkway Idea,” p. 33.
\textsuperscript{140} Report of the Bronx Parkway Commission, 1925, p. 56.
term used to describe the road designed for pleasure within the parkway reservation, and considerable explanation as to its location, function, design and construction is provided (Figures 6.26 and 6.27). Its accommodation of the automobile is a consistent theme within the report.

One of the most important features of the Commission’s work were the negotiations had with the municipal authorities concerned for the traffic crossing the parkway at various points. From the outset it was recognized that to be of maximum service, the Parkway Drive should be built to accommodate four lanes of fast-moving pleasure vehicles and that grade crossings between the Parkway Drive and the streets carrying commercial traffic east and west should be eliminated as far as practicable by viaducts, built upon designs which would be in harmony with the natural beauty of the restored valley.\(^\text{141}\)

The report’s accommodation of “fast-moving pleasure vehicles” is similar to Hubbard and Kimball’s recognition of “fast pleasure traffic” in An Introduction to the Study of Landscape Design. The concept of limited access suggested by the “unobstructed avenue” in the 1918 report was clearly articulated by the construction of viaducts to remove commercial traffic from the parkway—further enhancing the free and easy flow of traffic. Such accommodations for the pleasure driver should be understood within the context of the period; they do not reflect the creation of a motorway. The parkway was planned for a speed of twenty-five miles per hour.\(^\text{142}\) In an era with few modern roads, the rapid increase in automobiles created chronic congestion problems on city streets and the narrow country lanes serving as primary arterials in the new suburban enclaves. A pleasure drive along the Bronx River Parkway was incumbent on the creation of a highway environment free from the vexations of daily travel and dedicated to the enjoyment of scenery.

Continuing, the report described the “Parkway Drive” as a “boulevard,” a careful appellation to ensure that the aesthetic characteristics of the

\(^{141}\) Ibid., p. 38.
completed road were easily recognized. As noted, the Bronx Parkway Commission never described the completed road as a “parkway.” However, within the Commission’s careful description of the road’s alignment and response to natural features may be found the hallmarks of the American motor parkway as both a road and landscape typology:

The Parkway Drive is a boulevard, fifteen and one-half miles long, of the uniform width of forty feet, extending from the drive at the Botanical Gardens at Bronx Park to the plaza south of Kensico Dam. Its location, section by section, was determined upon only after topographical maps, complete and accurate in detail, had been made. As each section was completed, it was thrown open to the public. Care was exercised that the drive should follow natural contours, so that its construction would interfere as little as possible with natural features, at the same time avoiding sharp or dangerous curves. To accomplish this and to interject variety, the drive was separated at certain places into two one-way drives, each twenty feet in width. This was done at Wakefield, Tuckahoe, Scarsdale and North White Plains. 143

The report clarifies the history of the project, which as noted above, increasingly suggested the automobile drive as one of the principal goals of the undertaking, and reaffirmed the project’s origins as a river reclamation.

Future generations will doubtless assume that the restored valley never needed restoration and that the Bronx Parkway Drive, to provide for restricted traffic, was the sole object for the creation of the parkway. Such, however, was not the case. The inception of the idea for the establishment of the parkway was founded more upon a need for the cure of unsanitary conditions that provide facilities for pleasure traffic. 144

Nevertheless, the success of the parkway was amplified by legislation authorizing a northern parkway extension from the Kensico Dam to Bear Mountain State Park. The new parkway would be known as the Taconic State Parkway.

144 Ibid., p. 14.
It is indeed a gratifying fact that the value and attractiveness of the parkway, as well as the beneficent effect it has had upon adjacent territory, is directly responsible for the passage of Legislation, by which an extension of it from the Kensico Dam to the Bear Mountain Bridge approach above Peekskill has been authorized and commenced at State expense with the Westchester County Park Commission acting as the agent of the State for this piece of work.\textsuperscript{145}

The 1925 report’s summary of details shows a Commission dedicated to both safety and function, and the beauty and artistry of the completed facility. Descriptions of paving and lighting reflect their careful assessment of construction, safety and utility with a thoughtful regard for the visual effect each element would have on the overall enjoyment of the ride.

After studying the question of paving, it was decided that the best type for the purpose would be a heavy concrete base with bituminous wearing surface. Concrete was not used for surfacing, because the bituminous wearing surface provides more resiliency and the absence of joints makes for smoother riding conditions with less cost of maintenance. The bituminous surface, being darker, also harmonizes better with the surroundings than concrete.

The Parkway Drive lighting was one of the most difficult technical questions to be solved in connection with the entire project. Roadway lighting is still far from being developed to a point of high efficiency. […]

The Commission’s engineers examined the best type of highway and park lighting systems in many cities. […] After the Commission had selected the most efficient type of light, it was confronted by the fact that none of the usual types of lighting standards harmonized with the natural treatment adopted in the development of the parkway. Samples of lighting standards erected and placed in temporary use were designed of concrete, cast iron and other types of posts, all of which were artificial looking.

Finally the Commission’s engineers designed a type of rustic lighting post of cedar with the natural bark, which combines a pleasing, natural effect with the most efficient lighting obtainable for the conditions. There could, of course, be no overhead wires and the underground system installed with individual transformers for each light represents

\textsuperscript{145} Ibid., p. 51.
the best type of construction for park lighting. The posts are spaced 200 feet apart on one side of the driveway, which lessens the confusion of night driving. Each post is equipped with a 400 candle power lamp and Holophane refractor, which distributes the light and eliminates annoying and dangerous glare.\textsuperscript{146}

Hermann W. Merkel, the landscape architect and forester, attached a letter to the report expressing his observations on the project’s progress and the resultant work. Merkel’s summary of the design principles utilized to guide the work reflect the thoughtful approach to design that would come to define the American motor parkway. In particular, he noted the primacy of the natural feature or landscape associated with the parkway, the necessity of naturalistic design and plantings, screening to maintain the parkway experience and the alignment of the road to both respond to the topography and present views of the district. As with the report, Merkel was conscious of the influence the parkway would have on future projects and presented his summary comments as much to memorialize the project as to ensure proper direction for future projects.

In the design the principles first proposed to and accepted by your Commission have been adhered to from first to last and in this final report it may be well to recall them for the benefit of others having similar projects to develop:

1. To make the Bronx River the leading motive.
2. That any but naturalistic design would be undesirable.
3. That all objects foreign to or distracting from this naturalness must be hidden by natural objects where possible.
4. That the roadway should follow easy natural curves and grades, be so located conveniently to carry the large amount of traffic expected and to display to the traveller as much of its attractiveness as possible without despoiling it.
5. To make the plantings restorative in design and execution with indigenous material naturally placed as to location, soil and plant associates.\textsuperscript{147}

\textsuperscript{146} Ibid., pp. 43-44.
\textsuperscript{147} Ibid., p. 69.
He concluded his letter confident of his role in the process and cognizant of the legacy of the parkway.

Already the work of your Commission has become the inspiration for the most progressive movement for municipal and suburban parks and parkways of the present time—that which is now under way in Westchester County—and its beneficial influence in future years cannot be over-estimated.\textsuperscript{148}

Merkel’s assessment of the significance of the Bronx River Parkway was immediately evident in the design and construction of a comprehensive network of automobile parkways underway, connecting new public parks throughout suburban Westchester County. While the Bronx Parkway Commission never declared their pleasure road a “parkway,” the term was now fully associated with an automobile pleasure drive. Indeed, two years before the parkway was dedicated, the \textit{New York Times} advocated a “Greater Bronx Parkway” as an automobile pleasure road:

All seem to be agreed that the Parkway should be continued from Kensico to Pines Bridge, at Croton Lake, there crossing the lake and proceeding to Mohansic Park [...]. From Mohansic the parkway extension would be built to the new Harriman Bridge, which will span the Hudson from a point near Peekskill across to Bear Mountain. When completed the parkway would be a boulevard over which motorists could drive from New York to the Catskills, the Adirondacks, or wherever fancy directed.\textsuperscript{149}

That the Bronx River Parkway, as a motor road, was not first considered when the Commission was established in 1906 is of less importance than the fact that the Commission was able to respond to a fundamental change in American transportation and metropolitan structure with such an elegant automobile parkway. The pleasure drive was not new, but the Bronx River Parkway was a wholly new type of road designed for pleasure. Accommodating a road design based on the speed and alignment required of...

\textsuperscript{148} Ibid.
the motorcar within the aesthetic sensibilities of a newly reclaimed scenic landscape, established the American motor parkway as the most rational response to the automobile.

**CHAPTER SUMMARY**

It is within the Bronx River Parkway that the genius of Repton's carriage drive and the logic of Olmsted and Vaux's parkway, intersected with the motorcar and the sanitary movement, to create a wholly new type of road designed for pleasure—the American motor parkway.

This chapter presents evidence to support the declaration of the Bronx River Parkway as the first automobile parkway in the world. The success of the road's construction with its innovative limited access corridor, separated-grade intersections and nighttime illumination established a noteworthy and enviable facility that was a model for safety at the dawn of the automobile age. The safety and efficiency of the road, clothed in its scenic alignment, picturesque details and traversing a reclaimed river valley made it not only modern and intelligent, but attractive and desirable. The “parkway model” would be employed, first as a comprehensive system of automobile parkways in Westchester County, and then as an ideal structure for accommodating the automobile and growth within and around America's burgeoning cities.

The development of the automobile parkway in Westchester County was as much a result of the convergence of the Good Roads Movement, the American conservation movement and the automobile, as it was geography. Olmsted and Vaux created the parkway concept for metropolitan New York sixty years earlier, and New York State led the nation in both modern highway investments and conservation in the first years of the twentieth century. It is within this environment that the Bronx River Parkway evolved from a land
parkway to connect Bronx Park with the Kensico Dam, to an automobile parkway designed for pleasure driving in a park-like corridor. The success of the endeavor was largely due to the extraordinary leadership of the Bronx Parkway Commission. Indeed, the automobile was inserted, uninvited, into the planning process of the Commission midway into their river reclamation project. Rather than ignore the noisy machine, they responded by constructing a pleasure drive of great beauty and inspired foresight. Rather than retreat within their legislative boundaries, the Commission viewed the public highways constructed by the State of New York around the Kensico Reservoir as additive, not extraneous to their task. The Commission developed an automobile parkway that showcased the best of environmental reclamation and transportation for the twentieth century.
CHAPTER 6 ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 6.1. Vista House overlook on the Columbia River Highway, Oregon. Constructed between 1913 and 1922, Samuel Lancaster, landscape architect.
Credit: Oregon Department of Transportation

Figure 6.2. Vista House overlooking the Columbia River. The Columbia River Highway represents the quintessential form of the road designed for pleasure as first developed by Repton; Vista House the quintessential station.
Credit: Oregon Department of Transportation.
Figure 6.3. Lincoln Highway, Nebraska, c. 1915. Road conditions on America’s first transcontinental highway were poor. Credit: Nebraska Department of Roads.

Figure 6.4. *The Law Bulletin and Good Roads*. Credit: U.S. Library of Congress.
Figure 6.5. The City of Denver constructed Lookout Mountain Drive, as part of its plan to develop a metropolitan park and parkway system beyond the city limits. The plan was developed by Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. and implemented between 1913 and 1941. Credit: Lariat Loop Scenic and Historic Byway.
Figure 6.6. “Rural Concrete Roads – 1909,” as depicted by U.S. Bureau of Public Roads artist, Carl Rakeman (1878-1965). Woodward Avenue, near Detroit, is widely considered to be the first rural public highway in the U.S. to be paved in Portland cement concrete. The road opened to the public on July 4, 1909, Independence Day. Credit: U.S. Federal Highway Administration.
Figure 6.7. The automobile afforded unprecedented access to the new U.S. National Parks. The Mariposa Grove of redwoods at Yosemite National Park, 1918.
Credit: U.S. Library of Congress

Figure 6.8. Early automobiles designed for pleasure driving, such as the 1912 Packard Phaeton, adopted the names of well known touring carriages.
Credit: U.S. Library of Congress.
Figure 6.9. The National Park-To-Park Highway.
Figure 6.10. Automobile wreck, Washington, DC, between 1918 and 1920. The rapid increase in automobile ownership, in an era of poor roads and inconsistent safety standards, resulted in a nationwide increase in highway fatalities. The safety features developed for the automobile parkway were responding to this critical situation.
Credit: U.S. Library of Congress.
A MAGICAL PARKWAY LEADS OUT OF CITY
Bronx River, Once a Dumping Ground, Has Become a Long Vista of Sylvan Charm, With New Pictures at Every Turn—Ambitious Landscape Development Is Nearly Completed

By DIANA RICE

The Bronx River Parkway, at the southern end of the city, was designed to relieve the congestion of the southern belt of the metropolis, and to provide for the amusement of the people. It is a 24-mile-long boulevard, built in the early 1920s, and now known as the Bronx River Parkway. The river runs along the eastern side of the city, and the parkway follows its course, providing a beautiful and scenic route for motorists.

The parkway was opened to the public in 1924, and has since become a popular destination for visitors and residents alike. It is a beautiful example of landscape architecture, with its many trees, gardens, and scenic views.

The Bronx River Parkway was designed by the noted landscape architect, Gilmore Clarke. He was influenced by the English parkland movement, and sought to create a parkway that would provide a variety of vistas and views, as well as a place for recreation and relaxation. The parkway is lined with beautiful trees, and features many scenic overlooks and viewpoints.

The Bronx River Parkway is a beautiful example of how landscape architecture can be used to create a sense of place, and to provide a place for leisure and recreation. It is a wonderful example of how the beauty of nature can be enhanced and preserved.

The Bronx River Parkway is a wonderful example of how landscape architecture can be used to create a sense of place, and to provide a place for leisure and recreation. It is a wonderful example of how the beauty of nature can be enhanced and preserved.

Figure 6.11. “A Magical Parkway,” the New York Times. August 16, 1925.
Figure 6.12. Map of the Bronx River Parkway showing the parkway in relationship to New York City, the Hudson River, Palisades Interstate Park, New York City reservoirs and Long Island Sound. 1922 Report of the Bronx Parkway Commission.  
Credit: Avery Fine Arts Library, Columbia University.
Drive along the Wissahickon.

Figure 6.13. “Drive along the Wissahickon,” from *Picturesque America*, edited by William Cullen Bryant, 1872-1874. Credit: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Rare Book Collection, Washington, DC.
Figure 6.14. Tenement housing along the Bronx River, Westchester County, before the Bronx Parkway Commission. 1914 Report of the Bronx Parkway Commission. Credit: Courtesy of the Westchester County Archives.

Figure 6.15. The same location along the Bronx River, after acquisition and condemnation of land began in 1913, showing the restored river. 1914 Report of the Bronx Parkway Commission. Credit: Courtesy of the Westchester County Archives.
Credit: Courtesy of the Westchester County Archives.
Credit: Courtesy of the Westchester County Archives.
Figure 6.24. Detail, map 2 of 5, Mount Vernon to Tuckahoe showing recreational paths along lake. Credit: Courtesy of the Westchester County Archives.

Figure 6.25. Detail, map 3 of 5, Tuckahoe to Scarsdale showing the separated East Parkway Drive and West Parkway Drive. This is the first use of separate alignments for opposite directions of traffic. Credit: Courtesy of the Westchester County Archives.
Figure 6.26. Bronx River Parkway, Westchester County. 1926. Credit: Courtesy of the Westchester County Archives.

Figure 6.27. Bronx River Parkway, Westchester County. Example of separated grade intersection. No date. Credit: Courtesy of the Westchester County Archives.
Roads Designed for Pleasure; British Influences on the American Motor Parkway
CHAPTER 7
CONCLUSION

“Some few men of taste, or inquisitive travelers, hunt for beauties in every direction, but the many are heedless observers, and to such everything is lost that is not too obviously presented to be overlooked; it is for this reason that peculiar care is requisite in giving the direction of every road or walk, that we may compel the most careless to observe those parts of a design, which have a claim upon their admiration.”¹

—Humphry Repton.

New modes of transportation arise from practical needs for mobility and are shaped by advances in technology. Achieving the first functional form of a new vehicle type is an exercise in engineering, not art. However, once the essential function of mobility has been tested, determined reliable and proved efficient, these new forms become the source of discourse for enlightened designers who see the infrastructure required for the vehicle as a new opportunity for art and architecture. In transportation, this process of aesthetic enhancements may be traced to the rapid developments in mobility and locomotion, beginning with the first modern roads at the end of the eighteenth century. Since that time, the infrastructure required for each new mode, whether a road, station or terminal structure, has sparked creative

¹ Humphry Repton, Red Book for Stoke (Edith) Park, as quoted in Daniels, Humphry Repton, p. 48.
responses from architects, landscape architects and artists who sought new opportunities for beauty within the requirements of function and the structure of technology. Tilmann Buddensieg captured this phenomenon when writing:

> With all this, it cannot be emphasized enough that our visual perception is undergoing a change as a result of the progress of technology. [...] Other factors that have brought about changes in our consciousness are the speed of locomotion (and our perception of it) and the great distances that tend to traverse our thoughts. These factors will help fashion the style of the future and have already influenced the style of the present.²

With the rapid technological advances of the Industrial Revolution, a new age of transportation aesthetics was born. As noted in Chapter 2, it was the convergence of vehicle design, road-making and the Picturesque that inspired Repton to articulate the first concepts to apply aesthetic sensibilities to the utilitarian road. By defining the carriage drive, by elevating the road from a perfunctory conduit between A and B to a road designed for pleasure, he initiated a conversation on transportation aesthetics. In many ways, Repton was surprisingly modern in his understanding of environmental setting, kinesthetic design and the psychological responses to mobility. His original ideas on mobility and landscape, formed for the speed and range of the carriage, were established during the Picturesque Controversy and may be found at the core of the aesthetic arguments for each subsequent advance in road design across the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century.

*The View from the Road,* by Donald Appleyard, Kevin Lynch and John R. Myer was published in 1964. Appleyard et al directly reference Repton’s age in the opening by stating, “There is a tradition of the scenic road in this country, and a few have been built. The original parkways [...] were primarily intended for

pleasure-driving like the old pedestrian or carriage promenade."³ The authors then defined the highway as “a work of art,” calling to mind Repton’s Red Book for Sheringham where he wrote, “a road is a work of art.” Appleyard et al note that the driving experience is a sequence “made up of many elements; it is convenient to group them according to a presumed progression in the process of visual perception.”⁴ The legacy of Repton (and Burke and Gilpin) is reflected in the discussion of animation in *The View From the Road* under the subtitle, “The Sense of Motion.”

Beyond the concentration on near detail, the fundamental sensation of the road, continuously referred to, is the visual sense of motion and space. This includes the sense of motion of self, the apparent motion of surrounding objects, and the shape of the space being moved through. These factors are all intertwined, since the visual judgment of motion is based on the apparent motion of exterior objects and is interpreted as being motion in relation to the enclosing spatial form.⁵

Unlike Repton’s knowledge of the movement of a carriage through the landscape, Appleyard et al note, “True kinesthetic sensations are slight in a steadily moving car on a modern highway.” Nevertheless, in their discussion on alignment may be found similarities to Repton’s theories when they state, “if it is skillfully carried out and well matched to the landscape, the highway is both easy to drive and has a harmonious appearance in perspective” and, as if referencing the Picturesque, note that such harmonious alignments demonstrate a “rather well-developed artistic style.”⁶ Such statements call to mind Burke’s traveler “being swiftly drawn in an easy coach on a smooth turf” in Chapter 3, as well as his corollary admonition that a rough road diminishes the experience of the landscape. The American parkways of the first half of the twentieth century reflected this dual approach to highway design and landscape. Gilmore Clarke wrote:

⁴ Ibid., p. 5.  
⁵ Ibid., p. 8.  
⁶ Ibid., p. 10.
We found that the engineering part of the work that we undertake is so closely interwoven with landscape and planning (including city planning) design that the two must be developed together. For example, we have been engaged in the design of parkways and expressways for many years and we find that the aesthetic requirements of these large projects are so closely related to the engineering requirements that, to gain successful results, both phases of these projects are best undertaken in a single office.\footnote{Letter from Gilmore Clarke to Philip N. Youtz, Dean, College of Architecture and Design, University of Michigan, November 25, 1957. [David Gilmore Clarke, papers (Box 1), Butler Library, Columbia University Call MS#0233]}

Landscape architects, such as Clarke, were leaders in design innovations and scientific research for highways, and the automobile in the first half of the twentieth century. An article in *Landscape Architecture* entitled, “Texas Landscapes for Safety: The Psychologic \[sic\] Approach to Highway Planting” by Jac L. Gubbels, was one of the first articles in the quarterly journal to address, albeit not by name, kinesthetic design. The article outlined principles for “road focus” and described how plantings and grading helped to provide visual cues to modify driver behavior for safety. In a commentary immediately following the article, Thomas H. MacDonald, the Commissioner of Public Roads for the U.S. Public Roads Administration, noted:

> We know that the highway safety problem is made up of several factors, and unquestionably ‘what the driver sees’ along the road has an influence on the safe use of the highway facility. Highway thinking in the United States as well as in foreign countries is giving increasing attention to these less tangible factors in the complicated safety problems of today. As more careful research is developed […] there undoubtedly will be wider recognition of the economic necessity of correlating landscape-design principles with highway engineering […].\footnote{Jac L. Gubbels, *Landscape Architecture*, vol. XXX, No. 2 (January 1940), pp. 59-65.}

MacDonald, continuing in the tradition of Repton, Vaux, Olmsted, Copeland and Eliot, directly associated landscape design with highway engineering. It is not an exaggeration to state that landscape architecture in America embraced the automobile and established the profession as a leader in transportation
design and planning. When remarking on the automobile parkway, Sylvia Crowe (1901-1997), the well-regarded English landscape architect, noted “it is inevitable that we should draw many of our examples of road landscape from the U.S.A. and Germany, the two pioneer countries in this field [...]”

The role of landscape architecture and public highways shifted in 1956 when U.S. President Eisenhower signed into law the Federal Aid Highway Act establishing a National System of Interstate and Defense Highways. The “Interstate” plan called for over 40,000 miles (64,000 kilometers) of high-speed, limited access highways crossing the United States on a roughly north-south, east-west grid and linking over ninety percent of all cities with a population of 50,000 or greater. Until this time, the Bronx River Parkway, now thirty-one-years-old, served as the inspiration and model for most modern highways in the United States. Despite the fact that the “parkway” was increasingly constructed to connect non-park destinations, the legacy of its park origins continued to be expressed in a high level of aesthetic sensitivity toward the design of structures and the alignment of the road within the landscape. Modern, limited access roads in the United States were, by design and tradition, parkways. Now, a new road type designed to connect cities, not parks, fundamentally changed the relationship of the road to the landscape.

A 1957 article by J. B. Jackson, “The Abstract World of the Hot Rodder,” captured the shift in the relationship of society and recreation to the highway as the twentieth century progressed. Of the Sunday Drive, Jackson wrote, “Knowingly they plunge into the heavy stream of cars, struggle with it hour after hour, dodge from highway to country road and back again, sometimes going fast, sometimes slow, but rarely stopping, and glancing only briefly at

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9 Sylvia Crowe, *The Landscape of Roads* (London: Architectural Press, 1960) p. 54. It should be noted that German engineers studied the Westchester County Parkway System as a prototype for the Autobahn. It is further noted that Crowe attributed no credit to the pioneering role of Britain for the earliest development of these concepts.
the scenery.” The article notes a detachment from the landscape brought about by the auto age and a new-found quest to engage with “Mother Nature” via hot rodding and motorcycling, among other recreational activities. Interestingly, his article made no mention of the automobile parkways, or the role of landscape architects in fostering access to scenic destinations via routes designed to engage the traveler with the landscape. In the few decades since the dedication of the Bronx River Parkway, the absence of any parkway reference in an article that begins by romanticizing the excursions of the middle classes into the countryside in the early twentieth century suggests how quickly the parkway, as a road designed for pleasure, disappeared from the popular (and professional) consciousness.

Beginning in the 1960s the profession of landscape architecture shifted away from highway design and relinquished its authority to the engineers. The profession moved from a position of influence, to a subservient role as decorators of the public highways. Landscape architecture programs at universities in the United States and the United Kingdom gradually eliminated highway design as a part of the core curriculum. What was lost, was not the art of landscape architecture, but the collaborative relationships that accommodated speed, efficiency, safety and environment within corridors that were pleasurable to drive. Commenting on this shift, Robert Kopetsky, a landscape architect for the North Carolina Department of Transportation, recalled a conversation with a civil engineering student at the Pennsylvania State University where he was studying landscape architecture in the 1980s. The engineering student noted that the landscape architecture curriculum devoted more time to horizontal and vertical alignment than the civil engineering program. As a practicing professional, Kopetsky stated landscape architecture provided “an emphasis of study understanding highway design.

11 Catharine Ward Thompson, Professor of Landscape Architecture, University of Edinburgh, telephone conversation with author, September 4, 2015; Timothy Baird, Professor of Landscape Architecture, Pennsylvania State University, conversation with author, July 28, 2015.
It offered us insight and a bridge between the natural, aesthetic, and the empirical world of engineering. To this day, it gives me a broader perspective of how all elements integrate together. At the time (and I believe true to this day), engineers did not have a good perspective of the natural world, but only ways to ‘engineer’ impacts to it. The profession of landscape architecture will lose a vital role and perspective if schools no longer teach engineering elements (such as road alignment) within their curriculum.”

Whether the profession consciously relinquished its authority or naturally redirected its attention, warrants additional study. Zeller, for example, suggests that civil engineers in post World War II Germany changed the narrative of road construction history to elevate the importance of technology and thereby “severely curtailed” the historical influence of landscape architects in highway design during the first half of the twentieth century.

Regardless of what caused the shift, a review of Landscape Architecture Quarterly and its successor Landscape Architecture Magazine shows a steep decline in articles and editorials on highway design and engineering technology beginning in the 1960s.

Crowe noted the shift when citing the “Public dissatisfaction with the ugliness of roads” and further noted that efforts at highway improvement “tended to be cosmetic rather than organic.” As with others before, seeing aesthetic advantages within new transportation forms, she saw the introduction of the motorway as an opportunity to reconsider the relationship of the automobile to the landscape—and the past. For Crowe, the Roads Act of 1949, authorizing the construction of motorways in Britain, represented a “fairly recent development on modern roads, although the care with which the eighteenth-

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13 Zeller, Driving Germany, p. 5.
14 Crowe, The Landscape of Roads, p. 20.
century landowners gave to this problem can still be an inspiration for our new and different problems.”

The road designed for pleasure, as an eighteenth-century development, represents the first road designed in harmony with the landscape. As such, a careful study of its design relationship to the natural environment may be extrapolated to multiple road typologies as a starting point for continuing research on how to assess the innate relationship all roads have with the landscape. In addition to its application to twenty-first-century highway design, such knowledge is required to better protect and preserve historic roads of significance.

One of the goals for this thesis is to raise awareness for the significant history of roads designed for pleasure. One of the findings of this thesis is that roads designed for pleasure made significant contributions to the broader history of highway design, culture and engineering. For historic roads in general, the parkway—with its clear boundaries and well-defined design principles—represents an ideal microcosm from which to study the issues of safety, viewshed and policy. The growing awareness for historic roads globally has challenged traditional methods for the preservation of monuments and sites. The vast stretches of the Silk Road in Asia, the Lincoln Highway in the United States and El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro in Mexico, do not fit neatly into the compact sites from which many of the protocols for modern heritage conservation were derived. As a result, conservation efforts for historic roads tend to focus on the material conservation of structures such as bridges and paving materials. For example, the initial buffer areas proposed by the Mexican State of Zacatecas for El Camino Real, for World Heritage consideration, were ten meters on each side of the sixteenth-century stone paving (ten meters wide)—in effect,  

15 Ibid., p. 19.
eliminating the contextual continental landscape from further heritage considerations.\textsuperscript{16} How to address unwieldy and vast linear transcontinental landscapes has been largely overlooked due to the absence of relevant landscape theories for historic preservation. The road designed for pleasure, with its defined landscape component, may offer a practical entrée and pragmatic insights into broader preservation questions for historic roads.

The very purpose of every road is to facilitate \textit{transition} within the landscape. It is not static, as Repton observed more than two hundred years ago. The road is seldom the destination (with the notable exception of roads designed for pleasure and roads adapted for pleasure). It is the \textit{landscape} that defines the form of the road. This innate relationship that the road has to the landscape as a kinesthetic engagement, whether designed or incidental, places the landscape as a contributing factor to \textit{all} road typologies. Zeller recognized this universality when stating, “transportation and landscape shape each other.”\textsuperscript{17} The landscape is more than the background, it is the facilitator of engagement and a measure of movement.

When tracing the development of heritage and conservation movements since the end of the nineteenth century, most initial efforts were directed toward the most notable and most self-consciously designed structures and places—the Alhambra, Versailles and, more recently Central Park, for example. Pride of human skills, art and creativity lent such places an authority, and not surprisingly such places were among the earliest to be considered, recognized and protected. Advancing this argument, the fountainhead of preservation for historic roads in the United States has centered on early park roads and parkways. The first roads considered at risk and elevated to concern and scholarly inquiry were the Columbia River Highway and the Bronx River


\textsuperscript{17} Zeller, \textit{Driving Germany}, p. 5.
Roads Designed for Pleasure; British Influences on the American Motor Parkway

The genius of their design commanded attention as their beauty was compromised or ignored. It is from such points of cause and effect, conservation versus destruction, that the preservation movement has advanced new typologies for consideration, study and recognition.

Accommodating the automobile in the landscape required great forethought, but it was not undertaken in a vacuum. Indeed, the writings of Gilpin, Repton, Vaux, Olmsted, Copeland and Eliot each contributed toward an environmental ethic of accommodating people and travel in a landscape that was attractive and ecologically secure. Whether the view from the road, or the alignment of the road in a restored river valley, public access, safety and enjoyment have been constants for pleasure driving for over two hundred years.

The American motor parkway was conceived at an ideal moment when the newness of the automobile allowed, and demanded, creative solutions. The broad goals of the public health movement, in hindsight, were not dissimilar from the broad public goals to accommodate the automobile. The intersection of reclaimed lands inspired collaboration among engineers, public health departments and landscape architecture, and resulted in projects that would be termed “sustainable” today. Landscape architecture needs to reclaim its role, and authority, in designing our modern highway networks and contributing toward evolving views on environment, mobility and heritage. 

The Bronx River Parkway was directly influence by the design skills of Humphry Repton, both through the adaptation of his ideas to the rural cemeteries, parks and early parkways by American landscape architects, but also through the direct guidance from his principal volumes and, at the beginning of the twentieth century, the republication of his works by the ASLA and the incorporation of his design theories as a core aspect of the first textbook for landscape architecture. As Hyams noted, “Repton’s theory
extended, however, well beyond such generalities. There was, so to speak, pure theory, and then a practical theory, or rules for obtaining the required results in practice. In that light, his books became textbooks, didactic works.”

It is from these sources that the design and theory behind the American motor parkway can be traced, and the first application of kinesthesthetic design to the alignment of the road may be studied.

As Repton stated, when looking out on the public road from his garden at Harestreet, “Others prefer still life, I delight in movement [...].”

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18 Hyams, Capability Brown and Humphry Repton, p. 194.
19 Repton, Fragments, p. 235.
APPENDIX 1

Survey--Inventory of the
Frederick Law Olmsted Office--Estate and Contents
Brookline, Massachusetts

William Alex

This project is supported by a grant from
the National Endowment for the Arts,
a Federal agency

1973-1974
10. Other Materials, Remaining and Dispersed

About five years after Olmsted Junior gave Senior's papers to the Library of Congress, he requested the return of a number of books and related items of his father's personal library that he had loaned to the Lowthorp School of Landscape Architecture at Groton, Mass. (which subsequently merged with the Rhode Island School of Design). In January 1953, during correspondence on Olmsted Senior's San Francisco Plan of 1866 with Dr. Wellier Scott of the Department of City and Regional Planning of the University of California at Berkeley, Junior offered this collection to the University—possibly excpeting some of the volumes that were heavily annotated by Senior which he felt ought to join the Library of Congress materials. "The items are very miscellaneous," he wrote, "ranging from books of the 18th and early 19th centuries concerned with theory about landscape and the art of landscape manipulation—Repton, Gilpin, Price, Loudon, etc. to narrowly technical fragments on botanical and engineering matters, and essays such as F.G. Hamerton's, and some fiction that interested him for its bearing on landscape problems." Dr. Scott, who was kind enough to provide the listing which follows below, secured their acceptance in the name of the University and indicated the intention that they would be kept together as a special collection, "interesting as a group for the light they throw on sources of information and inspiration available to your father." The range of materials speaks for itself; from Elementary Meteorology, by W. Davis (Boston, 1894) to Window Gardens for the People, and Clean and Tidy Rooms Being an Experiment to Improve the Homes of the London Poor, Parkes, Rev. S.W. (London, 1863). Although this material is not extant at Brookline, it is felt that it is well worth the space it takes to include it here for its significance in helping establish Olmsted's cultural background. The symbols preceding each entry are explained on the last page.


B x American country houses of today. With a preface by Frank Miles Day. N.Y., Architectural book pub. co. 1913.


x André, Édouard. Un mois en Russie... Paris, Victor Masson. 1879.

x Tal Antiquités romaines. 1907.

x Arts and crafts exhibition society. Art and life, and the building and decoration of cities... London, Burlington, Percival. 1897.


C x Aubry, L. É. Traité de la composition et de l'ornement des jardins... Paris, Aubry, 1859.

x Austin, Alfred. The garden that I love. London and N.Y., Macmillan. 1895.

x Balsley, L. H. Annals of horticulture in North America for the year 1893... comprising an account of the horticulture of the Columbia expedition. N.Y., Orange Judd. 1894.


x Beavere, James. Les dalles du grand Bretagne & de l'Irlande... v. 5. 2 pts.


x Bigelow, Jacob. Florula botanicae; a collection of plants of Boston and its environs. Boston, Cummings and Hilliard. 1831.

x Black, Adam & Chas. Black's guide to England and Wales. Edinburgh. 1791.

x Blanchfield, E.H. Mural painting in America. N.Y., Bowdoin. 1893. (The second lectures)


x Bolles, Frank. At the north of Bearcamp water. Boston & N.Y., Houghton. 1893.


x Braun & Cie. Catalogue général des reproductions inséparables au Chant du départ les œuvres d'art et de la peinture dans les musées d'Europe... Paris, Braun & Cie., 1830.


* Note: "B" indicates books added by Frederick Law Olmsted Junior.
Roads Designed for Pleasure; British Influences on the American Motor Parkway
APPENDIX

1

Library of Frederick Law Olmsted

D 451
Roads Designed for Pleasure; British Influences on the American Motor Parkway
APPENDIX 1 | Library of Frederick Law Olmsted 453
Roads Designed for Pleasure; British Influences on the American Motor Parkway

  o Johnson, J.B. The theory and practice of surveying... 10th ed. enlarged. N.Y., Wiley. 1833.
  o Johnson, J.F. The natural principles of landscape gardening; or, The adornment of land for perpetual beauty. Belfast, Archer & Sons. 1817.
  x L'Enfant, Alphonse. Voyage autour de mon jardin... nouvelle éd. Paris, Calmann Lévy. 1891.
  x Callaway, N.Y. How to lay out suburban home grounds. N.Y., Wiley. 1897.
  x Kerr, O.H. Practical landscape gardening... Cincinnati, Moore, Williams, Kerr. 1855.
  o Berry, Robert. A small country house... 2d ed. London, John Murray. 1831.
  x Kitts, J.A. ...Das Vaterland und Washington, 1774-1792... Baltimore, Johns Hopkins. 1929.
  (Historical documents, Institut Francais de Washington, cabinet 131).
  x Knight, R.F. An analytical inquiry into the principles of taste. London, T. Payne. 1805.
  x Knight, R.F. The landscape, a didactic poem, in three books... London, W. Bulmer. 1794.
  x La Fage, Jean. Considerations on painting... N.Y., Macmillan. 1896.
  x Laloux, V. L'architecture grecque. Paris, Malon Quantin. 1888.
  x Lemain, Rodolph. The ruins and excavations of ancient Rome. Boston and N.Y., Boushington. 1897.
  o We Larwood, Jacob. The story of the London parks. London, Chatto and Windus. n.d.
  x Lander, Thomas Dick. Sir Peckle Fridge on the Picturesque, with an essay on the origin of taste and much original matter, by Sir Thomas Dick Land... Edinburgh, Caldbell, Lloyd, etc., etc., 1862.
  x Lobjindo, M.H. Lectures on ventilation, being a course delivered in the Franklin institute, of Philadelphia, during the winter of 1866-67. N.Y., Wiley. 1868.
  x Lobjindo, John, and Moore, Thomas, ed. The treasury of botany a popular dictionary of horticulture... 2v. London, Longman, Brown, 1866.
  x Long, E.A. Ornamental gardening for Americans... N.Y., George Judd. 1855.
  x Lobjindo, George and Anne, Henry. The vivant gardener... being a translation of Le jardinier solitaire, or, Dialogues between a gentleman and a gardener... N.Y. London, Jacob Toncio. 1795.
  x Lobjindo, John. The beauteous of nature and the wonders of the world we live in. N.Y., Macmillan. 1893.
  x Robin, H.W. Under the trees and elsewhere. N.Y., Dodd, Mead. 1891.
APPENDIX 1 | Library of Frederick Law Olmsted 455
Roads Designed for Pleasure; British Influences on the American Motor Parkway
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Roads Designed for Pleasure; British Influences on the American Motor Parkway

458 Roads Designed for Pleasure; British Influences on the American Motor Parkway
APPENDIX 1 | Library of Frederick Law Olmsted 459
The above books were undoubtedly kept in Senior's North Parlor headquarters. A small professional library together with extensive reference materials and publications is located in the first floor drafting room area of the rear office wing. (Figure 20) Between 400 to 500 books are kept in a small alcove here. (Figure 31) Most are reference books on housing, zoning laws, playground facilities, sports and recreational areas, street and highway planning, Zoological parks and the like. Other books are on typically related subjects like horticulture, gardening, architecture, sculpture and garden ornamentation, expositions, etc. In addition a lower shelf carries about 25 folio and larger volumes on gardens and estates in England, Scotland, France, Italy and other European countries. These are primarily picture books published in the early 20th century. Some of these large books are also located on the shelves of the second floor photo storage closet, as has been mentioned. The second floor area between the photo closet and the photo archive has wall shelves on its north side which contain assorted books and bound magazines, the major item here being a bound set of "Gardens Old and New, Country Life," vols 1-40 (1900-1940).

Returning to the first floor drafting area, the professional publications shelves, near the library alcove, carry large numbers of bound and unbound professional publications; mostly magazines on horticulture, architecture, engineering, planning and other environmental arts. Typical here is a set of bound volumes, 1945-1969, of "Plants and Gardens," the publication of the Brooklyn Botanic Garden. Cabinets below the shelves hold an interesting assortment of "older" professional samples of paving and building materials and so forth. The firm currently receives about a dozen professional publications.

An unusual and possibly unique professional file is just adjacent to the professional publications shelf and is termed the "NAB" file. This was originally a Library of Congress
APPENDIX 2


ROBERT MORRIS COPELAND: COUNTRY LIFE

Robert Morris Copeland (1830-1874) was a noted landscape gardener and author of Country Life: A Handbook of Agriculture, Horticulture and Landscape Gardening published in 1859. In Country Life, Copeland wrote about both the design of roads and their construction in a book devoted primarily to landscape design and horticultural practices for country estates. His detailed notes and views of roads suggested the importance he placed on them as landscape elements and echo similar views held by Repton, Olmsted and Vaux. However, with the possible exception of Repton, Copeland placed greater emphasis on the types, purposes and construction of roads for country estates. Further, Copeland’s views are evidenced by what we may still discern from much of the horizontal and vertical alignment of the carriage road system constructed for the Frederick Billings estate in Woodstock, Vermont (now Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park), where he is known to have worked and where a copy of Country Life was included in the Billing’s library.1 In Country Life he spoke strongly about the value and design of carriage roads for pleasure driving.

By this name (the drive or walk) I designate a road or path which may carry one naturally and easily about the whole place in such a way as to

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1 There is no record of Copeland having designed the carriage drive system for the Billings estate. He did visit the property and was commissioned to design the mansion gardens. It is likely his advice was sought, as well as followed from the volume of Country Life in the family library. Additionally, Billings’ farm manager, George Aitken, had a demonstrated interest in road design and construction.
display its beauty and open that of the surrounding country. If the place is large enough I should always make this path at least 12 feet wide, and 15 is better, to allow the passage of a large carriage. [...] taking care not to cut up the surface more than is necessary, but to leave the land in as large masses as possible. *Never curve or distort it merely to gain length, never curve it where it would be better straight, and never make it straight where a curve would have more beauty, or would display the surface to better advantage.* But I have already said enough about paths and avenues.²

Copeland's note that he has “already said enough about paths and avenues” comes near the end of his book and after much detailed explanation about the values of curvilinear lines that are logical and appropriate to the landscape. His view of curves, good and bad, is clearly stated in a discussion of paths and he made reference to Hogarth’s Line of Beauty.

Avoid sharp turns and corners, and it will seem to lead on without reference to the boundaries, whether near or distant, crooked or straight. Curve it to avoid inequalities in the surface, and for the sake of grace and beauty, but make all its curves as long and easy, and gently-changing as possible. A comparison between a straight and a *crooked* line, is almost always in favor of the straight; its simplicity and directness fills us with disgust for crooks, and sharp, unnecessary turns. The same principle will guide our choice between well and ill-curved lines; the best curve, like the line of beauty, possesses the good qualities of the straight line, and seems appropriate; the bad curve, like the wriggle of a wounded snake, is like the crooked line, meaningless. Do not think that because a line is not straight it is beautiful.³

Copeland also gave detailed advice as to the aesthetic and practical benefits of curvilinear roads.

Starting with the fact that the road or path is to be a means of going from one point to another, most men will say that it must plainly be as straight as possible, must be the shortest distance between two points, if such a line of travel is practicable. But I cannot think this reasoning correct. I am sure much evil has grown out of it. Of course the purpose


³ Copeland, *Country Life*, pp. 324-325. (Italics original.)
of a road is to connect two places for travel, and of course it does not answer its purpose if it is not pretty direct; but it is possible to sacrifice too much to this directness, and the sacrifice is so often made that I consider it important to inquire into the matter at some length.

Though the inquiry is made particularly to determine what rules should guide us in laying down roads and paths on private estates, I shall first speak of public roads, believing that we may thus arrive at conclusions which will apply to private roads with even greater force than to highways.\(^4\)

Copeland’s reference to public roads as a useful learning device echoed Repton’s frequent references to public roads. Copeland continued his inquiry, in great detail, laying out an argument suggesting the efficiency of directness is lost to boredom or anxiety.

Suppose yourself traveling a road carried as straight as a railroad, but not traveling by steam power; you are walking or driving in no more than ordinary haste. For miles ahead you see your road; if your journey is not to be long the end is in sight from the beginning, and you measure off the distance, step by step, thinking in spite of yourself how slowly you get on, till you grow impatient, hurried, fretful. Get what glimpses you may on either hand, that provoking vista robs them of genuine variety, and with its stupidly familiar face takes away all chance of a pleasant surprise. It will not let you tarry to enjoy a pleasant side view in peace, but is always reminding you of your purpose, and upbraiding you with neglecting it. If good fortune has put a hill in the way too thick or hard to cut through, you are relieved for a moment only to see with more annoying distinctness from its top your whole road marked out.\(^5\)

While kinesthetic concepts were generally used by landscape architects to define favorable interactions with the landscape, Copeland used a negative example to demonstrate the relative ease by which an improvement could be made with a more thoughtful approach. He continued by contrasting the values of a curvilinear road that interacted with the features of the natural landscape through a more favorable interchange:


With what relief we turn from them to a road which winds to avoid water, or to cross mountains by an easier ascent! how [sic] we enjoy the unexpected views which burst upon us at the sharp turns, the alternation between the woods or glens that shut in about us, and the valleys that open before us, or the heights that give us a glimpse of our destination, without revealing all the road by which we are to reach it! We can linger when we like without a guilty feeling that we are wasting time, and at last are surprised at some curve to find that it is the last, and has brought us unawares to our journey’s end. Variety is a great delight and a great aid to the traveler; it refreshes not only his mind, but his body; for variety of surface calls into play a different set of muscles.6

In Chapter X of *Country Life*, Copeland provided detailed information on road construction. His construction recommendation appeared as more of a composite of the work of Telford and McAdam than a particular endorsement of either method; it is not clear if he was advised on this technique by J.H. Shedd, a Boston Civil Engineer cited in the preface. Like the Telford process, Copeland recommended a level base from which to begin construction, and larger stones for the base (“about the size of a double fist”). Unlike Telford’s cambered stone base, Copeland recommended forming the crown by building up the middle layer of gravel by three inches—an approach closer to McAdam’s model. Like both Telford and McAdam he noted the importance of the compaction of the stones to form a good surface. Copeland made no particular note of the shape of the gravel, and the prototypical example he cited in *Country Life* took gravel from the road excavation process for the road surface (Telford and McAdam both advocated angular gravel and McAdam had very specific specifications for gravel size). The construction specification recommended was for a road fifteen feet wide, the width Copeland noted as ideal for allowing comfortable carriage travel.7

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7 Copeland, *Country Life*, p. 647.
[T]he road was excavated 2 feet deep and 15 feet wide [...]. When the men who were digging had advanced some few rods, another set began to make the avenue. The first laid in by hand stones about the size of a double fist to the depth of 6 inches. In the middle, a V drain, as to be described, was made as the stones were laid. On top of these stones and thoroughly covering the drain was laid 15 inches of smaller stones, as shown in the cut, always keeping the stones at least 3 inches higher in the crown or middle of the road than at the sides; over these stones enough of the gravel already piled beside the road was laid to make a covering to the road-bed 24 inches deep, and this should bring the centre of the road on a level with the surface of the surrounding soil. This gravel was thrown upon the road by the shovel [...] and leaving the surface of the road covered with fine gravel clear of stones.

If this work is carefully done, travel and the action of wheels passing over it will force the fine gravel down among the stones beneath, pressing the small stones of the upper layer in their turn more compactly into those below them, and so on to the bottom. A few months’ wear will suffice to make this avenue firm and compact, and will insure dry, good driving at all seasons of the year.  

He concluded his road building chapter by noting that roads “made in this manner consume considerable time and money, but are, nevertheless, the cheapest roads in the end.”

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8 Copeland, Country Life, pp. 81-82.
9 Copeland, Country Life, p. 83.
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