

# Charles River Esplanade

## Study Report

As amended June 23, 2009

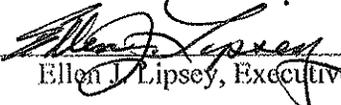


Boston Landmarks Commission  
Environment Department  
City of Boston

Report on the Potential Designation of

**Charles River Esplanade**

as a Landmark under Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended

Approved by:  5/4/2009  
Ellen J. Lipsey, Executive Director Date

Approved by:  5/4/2009  
Susan D. Pranger, Chairman Date

As amended June 23, 2009

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## **1.0 LOCATION OF PROPERTY**

### **1.1 Address**

The Esplanade is a linear park extending along the Charles River. It does not have a specific address.

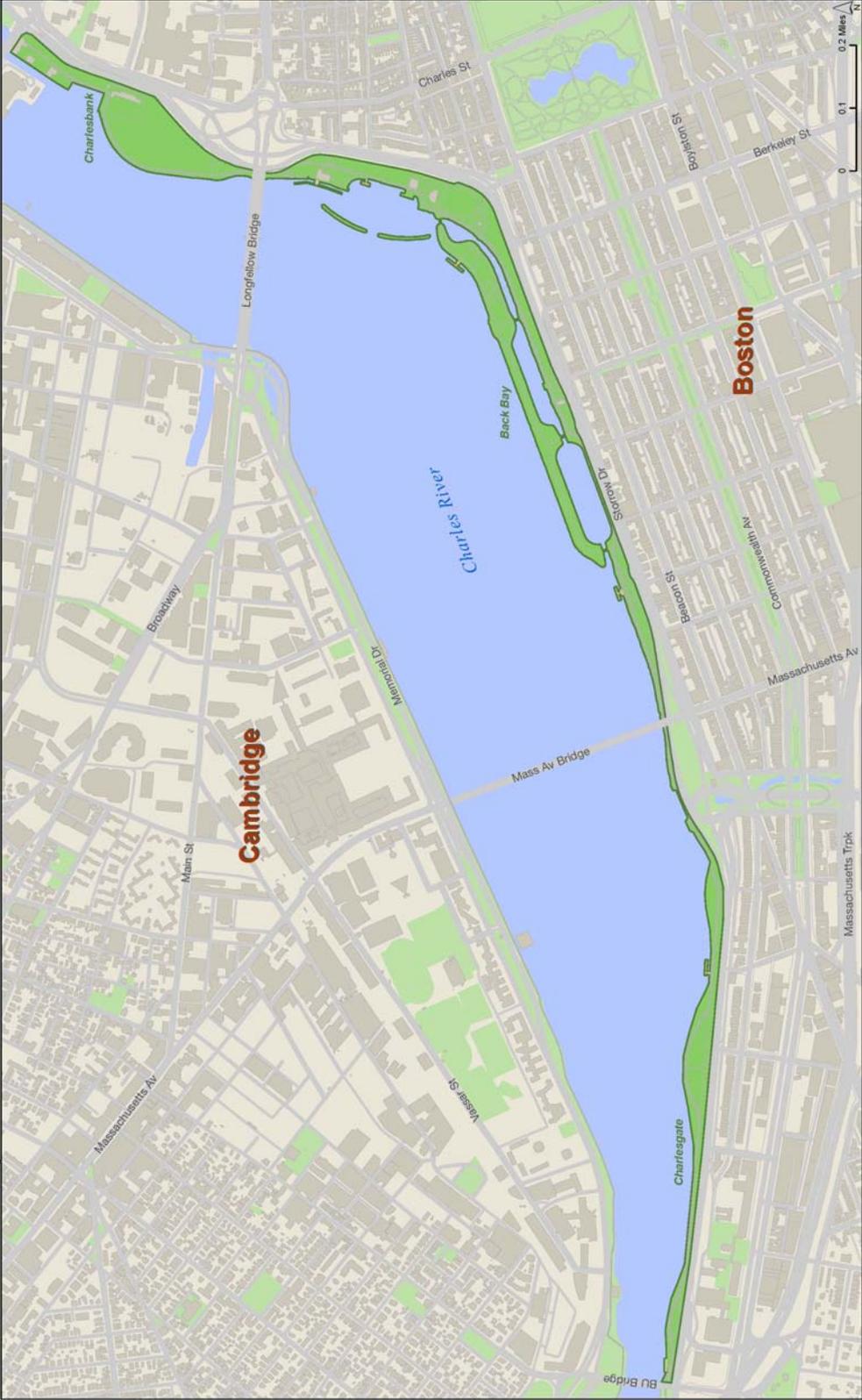
Boston assessors' parcel numbers are typically used to describe Landmark study area boundaries. However, the Esplanade parkland is state-owned property that was acquired in small parcels over many years. City parcel numbers do not clearly describe the current boundaries of the Esplanade. Therefore, a verbal description is used here to delineate the study area boundary. (See map, 1.3.)

The study area includes the parkland that extends west from the upstream edge of the Craigie Drawbridge to the downstream edge of the Boston University Bridge. (Neither bridge is included in the study area.) On the north, the study area is bounded by the Charles River and on the south by the DCR parkways (Charles Street, Storrow Drive and associated ramps as they exist in December 2008), with the actual southern boundary being the front of the existing curb. The study area includes the breakwaters, islands and lagoons of the Esplanade, as well as existing docks and landings. Only the south side of the old Charles River lock is included because the area to the north (where the Science Museum is located) is not considered part of the Esplanade. Land under the Longfellow and Harvard Bridges is included within the study area boundary but the bridges themselves and the structures associated with them (such as stairs and ramps) are not included. Land between the eastbound and westbound lanes of Charles Street and Storrow Drive (parking lots and parkland) are not included in the study area. The parkways that lie to the south of the Esplanade parkland are also part of the Charles River Reservation, but are not included in this Study Area. They are Charles Street from Leverett Circle to Charles Circle, as well as Storrow Drive and David Mugar Way.

### **1.2 Area in Which Property is Located**

The Esplanade parkland runs north of several Boston neighborhoods. South of Charlesbank, the eastern end of the study area, is the West End. South of the Back Bay section are the Beacon Hill and Back Bay neighborhoods. South of the Charlesgate/Upper Park section is the Kenmore Square neighborhood.

1.3 Map Showing Location



## **2.0 DESCRIPTION**

### **2.1 Type and Use**

The term “Esplanade” is an informal name for the state-owned parkland also known as Charlesbank and Storrow Memorial Embankment. The Esplanade is part of the Charles River Reservation, a linear park system that stretches along the Charles River for 17 miles, but also has a distinct identity of its own.

The Esplanade as we know it today is a relatively recent creation. Filling of Boston’s Back Bay occurred in the second half of the nineteenth century when the Charles River was still tidal. Charlesbank, the easternmost section of the Esplanade, was built in the 1880s and 1890s on filled land north of Charles Street. Damming of the river in 1908 created a broad river basin with a constant water level. At that time the park at Charlesbank was widened and a new 100’ wide strip of parkland was created along the southern edge of the Charles River from the Longfellow Bridge west to Charlesgate, where the Muddy River flows into the Charles. The area was transformed again in the 1930s by landscape architect Arthur Shurcliff, with the parkland nearly doubled in width. This was the foundation of the Esplanade as we know it today. Construction of Storrow Drive in the early 1950s brought additional filling to create new parkland to compensate for that taken by the roadway.

The three distinct segments that form the Esplanade parkland are separated by the vehicular bridges that cross the Charles River. The easternmost segment, Charlesbank, extends from the Craigie Drawbridge west to the Longfellow Bridge. The middle segment, referred to here as the Back Bay section, is the area most commonly known as the Esplanade. It extends from the Longfellow Bridge on the east to the Harvard (Massachusetts Avenue) Bridge on the west. It contains many of the best-loved features of the Esplanade, including the Hatch Shell, Community Boating, Union Boat Club and the Lagoon. The westernmost segment, referred to as Charlesgate/Upper Park, extends from the Harvard Bridge west to the Boston University Bridge. The three segments are described individually from east to west. In each case the description begins with a brief history of the segment, followed by a description of sub-areas within the segment, then a description of general landscape character and built features for each segment.

### **2.2 Physical Description**

*Note: A Cultural Landscape Report that documents the historical development and existing features of the Esplanade parkland was prepared in 2007 for The Esplanade Association. Much of the information that follows is drawn from that report. The full report should be consulted for additional detail about the history and current features of the Esplanade. See also Chapter 4 of this report, which addresses character-defining features that exist throughout the Esplanade while this chapter addresses individual segments of the park.*

## 2.2.1 CHARLESBANK

Charlesbank is the smallest segment of the Boston Esplanade and also the easternmost. It extends from the upstream edge of the Craigie Drawbridge on the east to the Longfellow Bridge on the west. It is bordered on the north by the Charles River and on the south by Charles Street and the ramps associated with Leverett and Charles Circles. Charlesbank is roughly 2,000' long and is wider at the western end than the eastern end.

### Charlesbank: History

Charlesbank, the first section of the Boston Esplanade to become parkland, was a tidal area that was gradually filled during the late nineteenth century. A seawall was built in the 1880s and landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted Sr. designed a pioneering park here in the 1880s and 90s that included a promenade along the river as well as landscaped grounds for active and passive recreation. The area was expanded and modified in 1908 by landscape architect Guy Lowell, but remained a linear park.

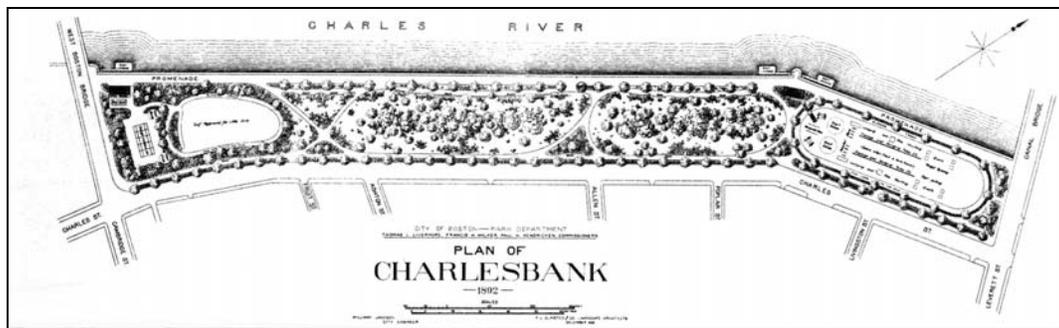


Figure 2.1 – 1892 Olmsted plan for Charlesbank. Longfellow Bridge is at the far left, Craigie Drawbridge is at the far right. Note the active recreation facilities at either end, which were removed in the early 1900s. (Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site).



Figure 2.2 – Early view of Olmsted's design for Charlesbank looking east with the river to the left. Key features were a wide promenade along the river and recreational facilities for both men and women. (Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site).



## Charlesbank: Landscape Areas

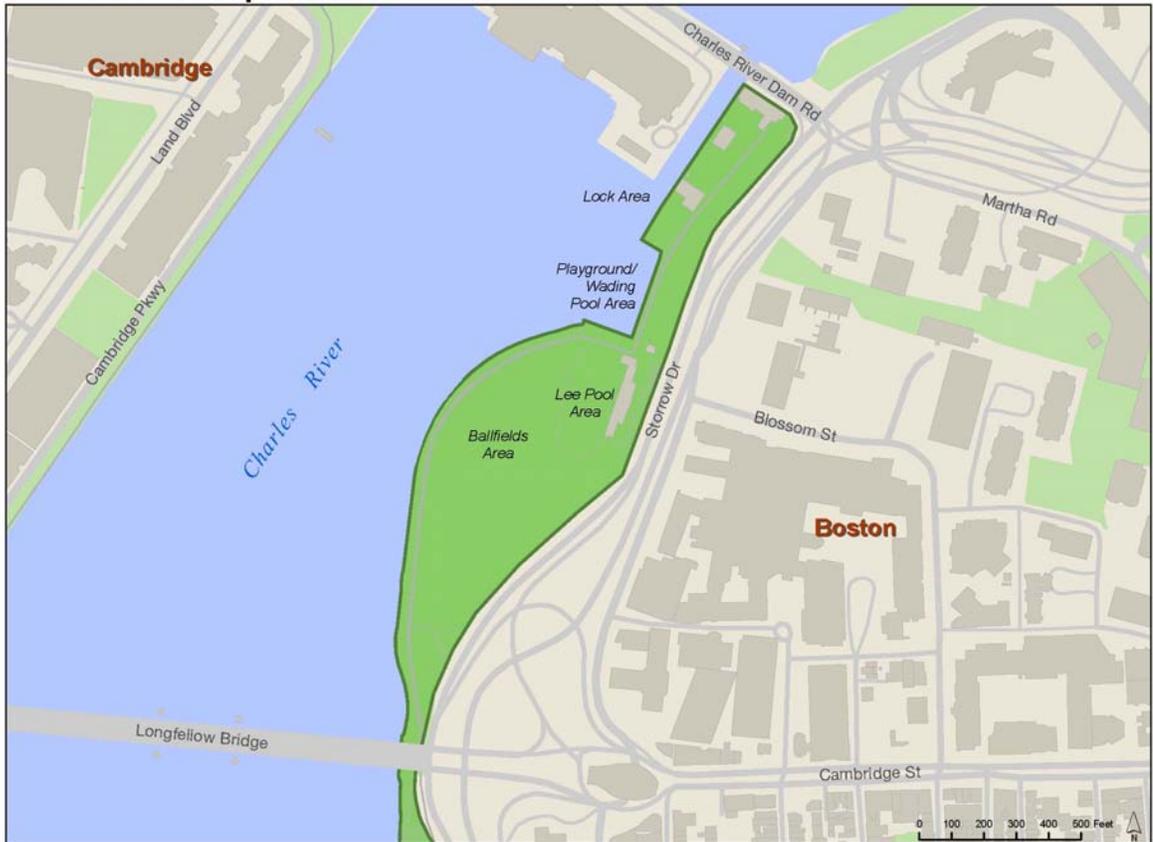


Figure 2.5 – Detail map of the Charlesbank section of the Charles River Esplanade

Charlesbank has four distinct sub-areas, which are illustrated in the map above and described below from east to west. The eastern end is generally narrow and hard surfaced, with seawall at the river's edge. The western end is wider and more park-like with large areas of grass and trees.

**Lock Area** - When the Charles River dam was completed around 1908, the eastern end of Charlesbank was redesigned by architect Guy Lowell as a landscaped part of the park. However, over time much of this parkland has been replaced by parking lots (which are used by the state police) and is enclosed by tall chain link fencing. The lock, seawall, the two gatehouses and remnants of early fencing are important features of the Lock Area, primarily associated with the work of the Charles River Basin Commission between 1903 and 1910. The tennis courts are a late twentieth century addition that reflects the history of recreational use of the area. There are also recent streetscape improvements (lights, paving and street trees) along the southern edge of this area that help to re-establish a more parkway-like edge. Other features such as parking lots and chain link fencing detract from the intended character of the parkland.



*Figure 2.6 – Lock area in the early twentieth century, with gatehouses at left. Parkland at the far left is now parking lots. (DCR archives).*



*Figure 2.7 – Similar view looking west along lock. Garage at far left was built in 1937, upper gatehouse is beyond. (2007 photo).*

***Playground/Wading Pool Area*** - This segment of Charlesbank is more park-like than the Lock Area and continues the tradition of active recreation established by the early Olmsted design for Charlesbank. It also has direct public access to the water's edge, which the Lock Area lacks. There are fairly small areas of grass and trees, including sycamore trees along Charles Street and mature deciduous trees along the river's edge. The major recreational features include an oval wading pool that dates to the 1950s, as well as the newly renovated Charlesbank Playground, an area of roughly 10,000 square feet surrounded by chain link fencing. This area also has a rare surviving remnant of the 1880s seawall, built of massive granite blocks and surmounted by a low iron fence that may be original to the circa 1908 era. This area connects with the riverfront path north of the Lee Pool.



*Figure 2.8 – Wading pool, 1972. (DCR archives).*



*Figure 2.9 – Wading pool with Shurcliff benches. Museum of Science is in the background. (2007 photo).*

**Lee Pool Area** - This area, located to the west of the wading pool, is considerably wider than the eastern part of Charlesbank. It is dominated by the Lee Pool complex, which has been closed for many years. There is also a small concession stand that dates to the 1960s. The parkland widens north of the pool where fill was added in the 1930s and 1950s. The water's edge is riprap with low vegetation and an adjacent bituminous paved path, with benches and an informal row of deciduous trees. In front of the Lee Pool there is now a heavy tree cover that contributes to the park-like character of the area.



*Figure 2.10 – Lee Pool in 1952 with wading pool in the foreground and ballfields beyond. Note that Charles Street had been widened to six lanes. (DCR archives).*

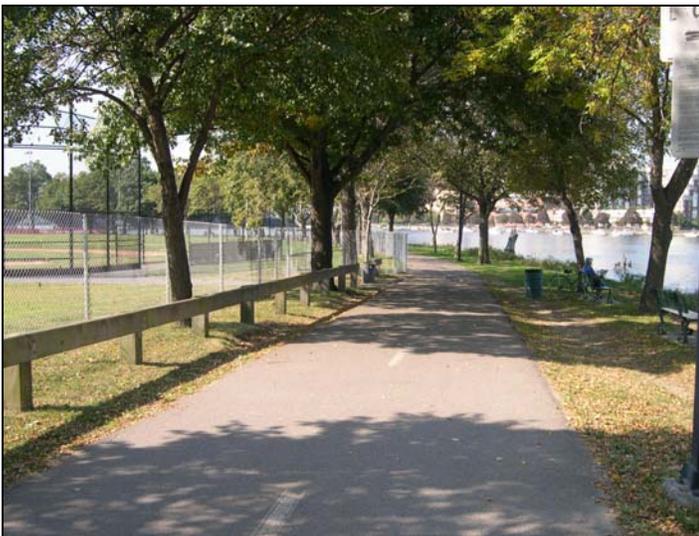


*Figure 2.11 – Front of Lee Pool, which has been closed for some time. (2007 photo).*

**Ballfields Area** – The Ballfields Area is filled land created in the 1930s and 1950s, when it reached its present size. Arthur Shurcliff’s intent was that it be an area for active recreation. In 1972 the entire Ballfields Area was named Lederman Athletic Field in honor of Dr. Melvin Lederman, an Army surgeon who was killed in action in 1969. The fields are now known as Teddy Ebersol Red Sox Fields, in honor of a young Red Sox fan who was killed in a plane crash. They were renovated and expanded in 2006, with added lighting and more formalized surfaces. As part of the renovation, a temporary 6’ chain link construction fence was installed around the ballfields. At the time of this study report, the replacement of this fence with a permanent, ornamental 6’ fence had been proposed by DCR as part of a larger project for safety and maintenance improvements (see 6.3, Current Planning Issues). In 2006 a bench was installed with a bronze glove at the backstop as the memorial to Teddy Ebersol. Another key element of the Ballfields Area is the paved path along the river, which is heavily used. Mature deciduous trees are located on both sides of the riverfront path and also along the street edge. The edge of the river is stone riprap with low vegetation growing along it.



*Figure 2.12 – Newly constructed baseball field, looking west towards Hancock tower and Prudential building. (2007 photo).*



*Figure 2.13 – Perimeter path with guardrail, benches and trash receptacles. (2007 photo).*

## Charlesbank: General Landscape Character

Charlesbank has an evolved landscape character that integrates aspects from all phases of its diverse history. In the 1880s Frederick Law Olmsted, the first designer of the newly filled parkland north of Charles Street, focused on two major goals: providing access to the waterfront in the form of a broad promenade with numerous benches along the waterfront and also providing a wide range of structured recreational activities for men, women and children (figures 2.1 and 2.2). The topography of the park was fairly flat and the planting scheme emphasized trees that could provide shade for urban residents during summer months. Olmsted's design also included clusters of shrub plantings at focal points such as park entrances.<sup>1</sup>

In the early 1900s construction of the lock and Marginal Conduit, a massive sewer line that runs under the park, resulted in the destruction of much of Olmsted's design. Architect Guy Lowell was responsible for the much simpler design associated with the work of the Charles River Basin Commission.

Arthur Shurcliff developed schematic plans for Charlesbank in 1929 and 1949 (figures 2.3 and 2.4) that continued the tradition of waterfront access and active recreation, but by that time the western part of Charlesbank had shifted to the north to accommodate roadway ramps. Shurcliff retained the seawall edge at the eastern part of Charlesbank but for the first time incorporated a sloping rip-rapped edge in the western part that provided more natural and direct access to the water. Otherwise the topography remained generally level.

From the time of Olmsted's original design, Charlesbank has been used for active recreation. Unlike the rest of the Esplanade, which was conceived and operated as part of the state-owned Charles River Reservation, Charlesbank also remained under the jurisdiction of the Boston Parks Department until 1949. By that time there was a much greater difference between the narrow eastern part of Charlesbank, which was more urban and geometric, and the wider western section, which was more naturalistic with trees along the river's edge and the Charles Street edge of the park. The large areas of open turf and the Lee Pool provided new recreational opportunities. Shurcliff also set the tone for park furnishings, especially the distinctive bench that continues to be used as a park standard all along the Esplanade.

Today the spatial organization of Charlesbank is more fragmented than it used to be, with each smaller area being treated somewhat separately, rather than as a continuous park. One significant loss has been the lack of public access to the river in the lock area, eliminating the continuous promenade that was a hallmark of the park from the earliest design. Plantings also lack cohesiveness, as those that exist are largely remnants of earlier plantings. Important planting concepts are providing shade as well as trees along the street edge (generally sycamores, which are intermittent now) and plantings along the rivers edge. There are few remaining shrubs. There are also many functional additions such as lighting, parking lots, security fencing etc., which are remnants from different eras and further fragment the appearance of the park.

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<sup>1</sup> For additional information on Olmsted's design for Charlesbank, see Cynthia Zaitzevsky, *Frederick Law Olmsted and the Boston Park System* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 95-99. The Olmsted National Historic Site has 178 plans and drawings for Job #907, Charlesbank Gymnasium, dating from 1851 to 1907. None of the plans are listed as planting plans and there are no plant lists. There are also 59 photographs from 1897 to 1907.

## Charlesbank: Buildings and Structures

The buildings and structures described below are all specific to Charlesbank and are listed by date of construction. Generic features, such as fencing, benches, lights etc., that occur throughout the Esplanade are discussed in Chapter 4 of this study report.

**Granite Seawall** - 1880s, and ca. 1908. The section of granite block seawall behind the wading pool is one of the oldest extant features in the entire Esplanade. It predates construction of Charlesbank Park and is noteworthy for its age and as evidence of early park history. The seawall behind Charlesbank Playground dates to the early 1900s construction of the dam and lock.



Figure 2.14 – This section of granite block wall behind the wading pool dates to the 1880s. (2007 photo).

**Lower Lock Gatehouse** - 1908, Guy Lowell, architect, with modifications in 1914 and later additions at rear of building. Lowell also designed the original landscape of this area, which has largely been replaced by pavement. The gatehouse is a two-story brown brick building with tower, located at the downstream end of the lock. Its intended use was for the lock superintendent and drawbridge tender. However, the state police have used the building since soon after its construction. Roof and gutter work have recently been completed, but the building appears to be in poor condition. There is a bronze plaque on the north side of the building.



Figure 2.15 – Lower lock gatehouse in 1942, seen from Leverett Circle. (DCR photo).

**Upper Lock Gatehouse** - 1908, Guy Lowell, architect. Also known as the pumphouse. Hipped-roof one-story brown brick building located at upstream end of lock to protect sliding lock mechanism. It contains pumping equipment for drawing down the river in case of flooding, although this is no longer needed since construction of the new dam downstream. The building appears to be in poor condition and is surrounded by chain link fencing.

**Charles River Lock** - 1908, built by the Charles River Basin Commission as part of damming of the river (figures 2.6 and 2.7). The lock consists of granite block walls with concrete and bituminous surfacing. The lock mechanism is in place but is no longer used. The lock area is inaccessible to the public although it is visible from the adjacent bridge. Only the southern edge of the lock is included in this study area.

**Garage** - 1937, architect unknown. Four-car two-story hipped-roof yellow brick garage between the two gatehouses that is used for storage (visible in figure 2.7). It appears to be in poor condition and is surrounded by a parking lot.

**Lee Pool** - Completed 1951. The Lee Pool (figures 2.10 and 2.11) is a single story modern brick building with horizontal bands of high windows. It is set back from the sidewalk, with a lawn area in front and scattered mature deciduous trees. The pool complex also includes an outdoor pool, diving pool and bleachers and is surrounded by chain link fence. The pool has been closed for a number of years and is now used for maintenance and storage.

**Wading Pool and Fencing** - 1951, with later equipment building (ca. 1960s). The oval wading pool (figures 2.8 and 2.9) adjacent to the playground is enclosed by a roughly 5'6" metal picket fence similar to that along part of the seawall. The area surrounding the pool includes paving and grass, as well as some trees and benches. Located within the pool enclosure is a one-story brick building containing mechanical equipment for the pool. The wading pool is open during the summer months and is used primarily by young children.

**Concession Building** - Ca. 1960s. Small one-story modern building with sloping roof and brick base. It appears to be in good condition but has not been used in recent years.

**Lederman Memorial** - Ca. 1974. A simple granite boulder with incised lettering saying "Lederman Field" located at the western end of Lederman Park near the Longfellow Bridge. The plaque was donated by the Lederman family.

**Tennis/Basketball Courts** - 21<sup>st</sup> century rehabilitation of earlier courts. This area, located west of the Upper Lock Gatehouse, includes two hard surfaced tennis courts, one with basketball hoops. Courts are enclosed by high chain link fencing and are used by the general public, as well as by the Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital.

**Charlesbank Playground** - 21<sup>st</sup> century rehabilitation of earlier playground. This rectangular area located adjacent to the tennis courts consists of approximately 10,000 square feet and is designed for use by young children. There are benches and some mature trees in the playground area, which is surrounded by a tall chain link fence.

## 2.2.2 BACK BAY

### Back Bay: History

The Back Bay is the middle segment of the Esplanade. It is also the longest and the most heavily used. It extends from the Longfellow Bridge on the east to the Harvard Bridge on the west and is bordered on the north by the Charles River and on the south by Storrow Drive. The Back Bay section is roughly 1¼ mile long and varies in width.



Figure 2.16 – Pre-park 1890s view along Back Street with the tidal Charles River at the left and rear of Beacon Street houses at the right. (DCR archives).

Boston's Back Bay was gradually filled during the nineteenth century when the Charles River was still tidal. The seawall along the northern edge of Back Street formed the northern edge of the Back Bay neighborhood until the early 1900s when the first parkland along the Back Bay was created by the Charles River Basin Commission around 1910 (figure 2.16).<sup>2</sup> The park was more than doubled in size in the 1930s with the land sloping down to a turfed edge (figure 2.17). Arthur Shurcliff's 1930s design included more formal elements such as the Boat Haven and Music Oval at the eastern end and the Island and Lagoon at the western end.

In the early 1950s Storrow Drive was constructed to the north of Back Street, resulting in the taking of additional parkland (figure 2.18). More filled land was created to compensate for the taking, primarily in the form of a longer island connected to the rest of the park by a series of bridges. There have been few major physical changes to the Back Bay segment of the park since the 1950s but use levels have increased dramatically as cycling and running have become more popular and as programmed events, particularly at the Hatch Shell, have grown in size and number.

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<sup>2</sup> While not part of the Esplanade (and not included in this study report), the seawall along the northern edge of Back Street is an important place maker, as it marks the location of the water's edge from the 1870s until the early twentieth century.

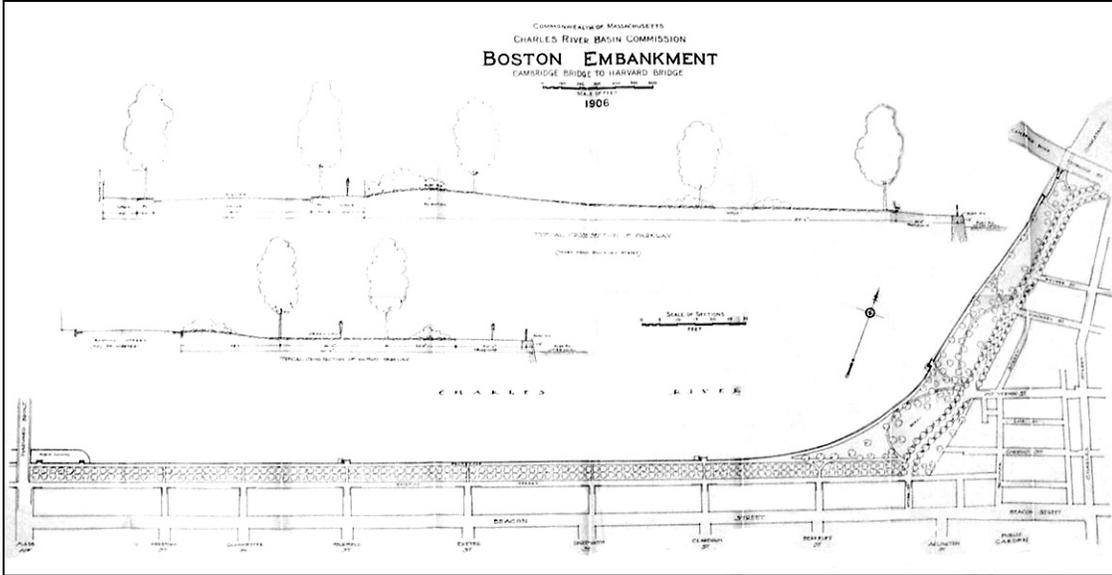


Figure 2.17 – Schematic 1906 plan of Back Bay section of the Esplanade. (DCR archives).

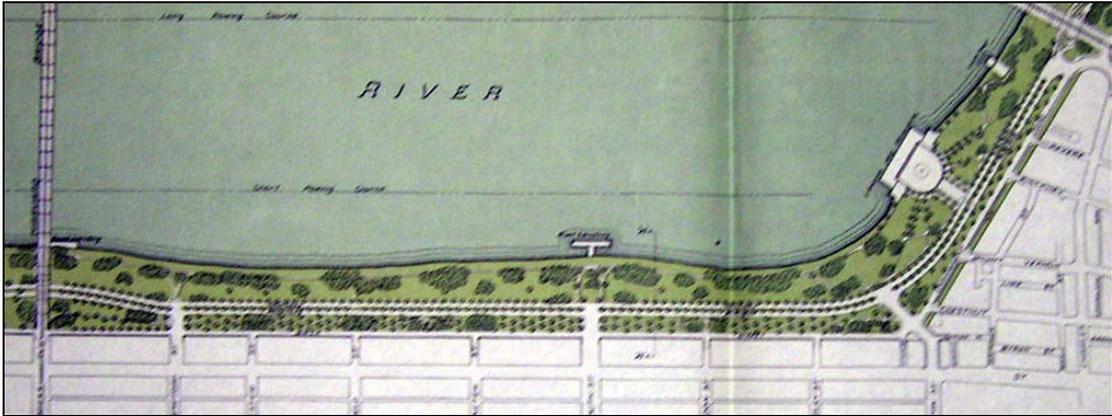


Figure 2.18 – Shurcliff's 1929 schematic plan for the Back Bay area, which was later modified. Only the eastern part of the parkway shown here (Embankment Road) was built at this time. (DCR archives).

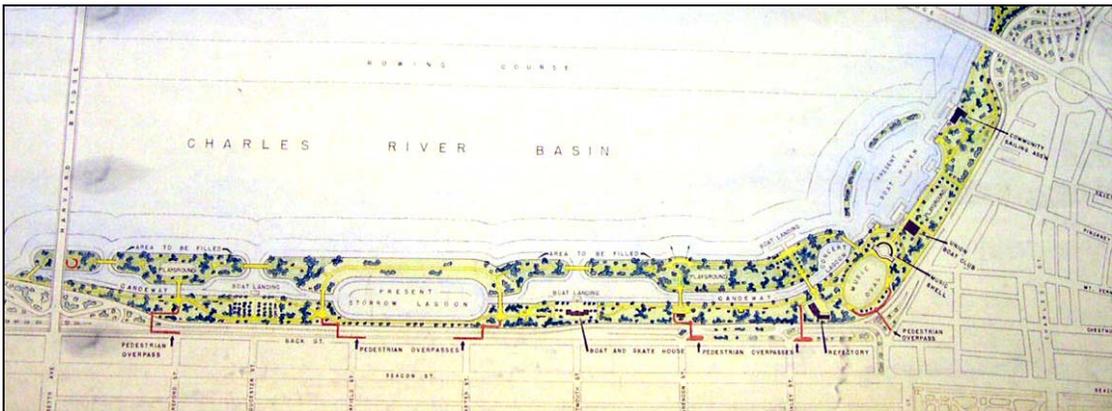


Figure 2.19– Shurcliff's 1949 plan shows Storrow Drive and the islands that were created in the early 1950s. (DCR archives).

## Back Bay Section: Landscape Areas



Figure 2.20 – Back Bay Section of the Charles River Esplanade.

For the purpose of this analysis, the Back Bay section of the Esplanade has been divided into four sub-areas, which are labeled in the map above and described in detail below.

**Boat Haven** - The Boat Haven at the eastern edge of the Back Bay section was created by Arthur Shurcliff in the 1930s and later expanded in the 1950s, bringing a more formal character to the Esplanade. The focus of this area was on providing water access. Original features included the landings, Union Boat Club, and the two earthen breakwaters. The area retains much of its 1930s character although additional facilities have been added, including Community Boating in the 1940s. The trees have also grown up, giving this part of the park a more wooded and less formal appearance.



*Figure 2.21 – Aerial view of Boat Haven and Music Oval in the 1930s showing the formality of Shurcliff's design. (DCR archives).*



*Figure 2.22 – Commissioners Landing looking west from dock. (2007 photo).*

**Music Oval** - Small informal concerts were held on the Esplanade as early as 1910. The Music Oval was established in the early 1930s to provide a designated space for concerts, a tradition that has become increasingly popular in the intervening years. The focal point of this area is the Hatch Shell and adjacent lawn, which is surrounded by monuments commemorating people important to the history of Massachusetts. Nearby there is a concession stand and the gondola kiosk.



Figure 2.23 – Aerial view of Hatch Shell with Boat Haven beyond and Embankment Road at right. Circa 1940s. (DCR archives).

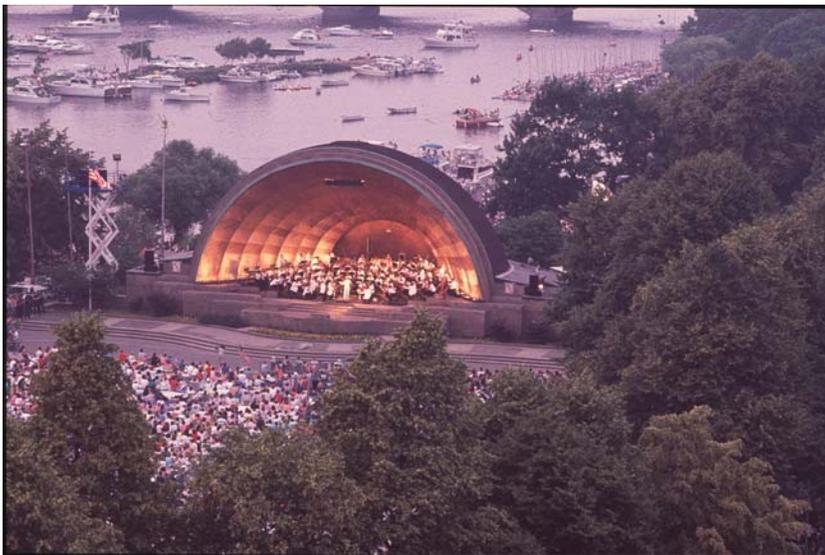


Figure 2.24 – Recent event at the Hatch Shell (DCR archives).

**Linear Park** - This section is the narrow piece of parkland that extends west from the Music Oval to the Harvard Bridge just north of Storrow Drive. The island runs north of this section with the lagoon in between. From roughly Berkeley Street to nearly Exeter Street, the path follows the alignment of the 1930s path. The landscape character is generally one of grass and mature deciduous trees, with a few shrubs. There are benches, a few shade shelters and several monuments and sculptures along the way. From just before Exeter Street to just beyond Fairfield Street the adjacent Storrow Lagoon is wider and the strip of parkland along Storrow Drive narrows to approximately 20' wide, barely enough for the path and a narrow strip of grass with struggling honey locust trees. The presence of Storrow Drive is particularly noticeable in this section, and because of the proximity there is a low metal fence between the road and the path. Focal features in this area are the Dartmouth Street Landing and the Fairfield Street Landing, both designed by Shurcliff in the 1930s.



Figure 2.25 – View of Gloucester Street Landing looking west. (2007 photo).



Figure 2.26 – Some of the original 1950s fencing along Storrow Drive remains near the lagoon. (2007 photo).

***Island and Lagoon*** - The island and the lagoon, which were initially established in the 1930s and expanded in the 1950s, run parallel to the Linear Park. The island is connected to the rest of the park by five bridges. The western-most segment of the lagoon, known as the Storrow Lagoon, was built in the 1930s to provide a sheltered area for canoes and model boats. The northern edge was created by an island that was accessible at either end by a granite arched bridge that canoes and small boats could pass under. When Storrow Drive was constructed in the early 1950s the island was extended eastward all the way to the Music Oval, creating a long narrow island of varying width. The eastern part of the island, which extends roughly from the Music Oval to Clarendon Street, is fairly wide, has a dual path system and a dock on the river side.



*Figure 2.27 – View of island from eastern end looking west with river at right. Dock was a later addition. (2007 photo).*



*Figure 2.28 – Western part of lagoon with centennial fountain. (2007 photo).*

## Back Bay: General Landscape Character

The Back Bay section of the Esplanade is the area that has changed the most since the first section of parkland was established here in the early twentieth century by the Charles River Basin Commission. Initially this part of the park (figure 2.17) was 100' wide for much of its length and had a seawall at the river's edge with an adjacent promenade, much like what Olmsted had designed for the original Charlesbank. The elevation sloped gradually from Back Street down to the water's edge. Plantings consisted primarily of massed shrubs along the Back Street edge of the park, as the Beacon Hill residents did not want their view blocked by trees. Other features of the early park included shade shelters with canvas roofs, light fixtures and benches. There were several landings adjacent to the river to provide boat access to the park.

The Esplanade was redesigned by Arthur Shurcliff in the 1930s when it was widened and focal areas, such as the Boat Basin, Music Oval, Island and Lagoon were added to bring new activities into the area. Other major changes included eliminating the hard-edged seawall and using a natural slope to bring the park down to the water's edge. The park was originally hot and shadeless, so trees were added throughout the park. In formal areas such as the plazas, single species were used in a grid-like pattern, while in other areas trees were massed more informally with small areas of shrubs at focal points. The earlier canvas-topped shade shelters were replaced by more permanent wooden ones and a new type of bench known as the Shurcliff bench was introduced.



*Figure 2.29 – Photograph taken in 1935 shows the 1910 section of park at the left and 1930s section to the right. Lagoon and island are in the background. (DCR archives).*

When Storrow Drive was added north of the seawall in the 1950s, additional changes were made to the Back Bay section of the Esplanade. Most significant was the fill added at the northern edge of the park to compensate for taking of parkland to create the roadway. Much of this added land was an extension eastward of the island creating a longer lagoon. By this time the landscape had finally achieved many of the objectives laid out more than a century ago. The water was now accessible, with boating available to a wide range of users. The plantings of the park had matured, with a heavy tree canopy and extensive shade.

## Back Bay: Buildings and Structures

The buildings and structures described below are all specific to the Back Bay section of the Esplanade and are generally listed by date of construction, except for monuments and memorials, which are grouped together at the end. Generic features such as fencing, benches and lights that occur throughout the Esplanade are discussed in Chapter 4 of this study report.

**Union Boat Club** - 1909. The two-story hipped-roof wooden Union Boat Club is located at the western end of the Boat Haven. The building is actively used and has changed relatively little since it was constructed. DCR owns the land under the boathouse; Union Boat Club owns the boathouse and associated docks. The building was moved to its present location in the early 1930s.



Figure 2.30 – Union Boat Club building looking northeast. (2007).

**Commissioners Landing** - 1930s, design by Arthur Shurcliff. Intended as a focal point at the eastern end of the Esplanade, Commissioners Landing consists of a classically detailed granite wall with balustrade approximately 3' tall (see figure 2.22). There are curved ends and central granite steps leading down to the water. Inscriptions at either end of the steps commemorate the commissioners of the Metropolitan Park Commission and its successor agency the Metropolitan District Commission.

**Dartmouth Street Landing** - 1930s, design by Arthur Shurcliff. The Dartmouth Street Landing is a formal plaza at the end of a major street leading to the park. Initially there was a strong relationship between the park and the neighborhood, which has been severed by Storrow Drive. The granite balustrade at the water's edge remains. Granite stairs lead down to the water but the dock no longer exists. In the center of the plaza is the MDC Centennial Memorial. A distinctive feature of the Dartmouth Street Landing is the presence of a regularly spaced grove of trees. The original Norway maples have been replaced with honey locusts.

**Gloucester Street Landing** - 1930s, design by Arthur Shurcliff. The Gloucester Street Landing (figure 2.25) is similar to the Dartmouth Street landing. It is on axis with Gloucester Street and has a classical granite balustrade and dock at the water's edge and a paved path running through it. The Norway maples that Shurcliff intended still remain and there are benches in the plaza area. The focal point is the Storrow Memorial (see page 25).

**Bridges to Island** - There are five pedestrian bridges that connect the island with the rest of the park. The two westernmost bridges are granite arched with replacement metal railings, while the three easternmost bridges date to the 1950s and are concrete arched with metal railings.



Figure 2.31 – 1930s granite bridge with new railing. (2007).

**Hatch Shell** - 1940, Richard Shaw architect, restored in 1990-91. The Hatch Shell (see figure 2.23 and 2.24) is a wooden music shell that is heavily used for a wide range of events, including the annual Fourth of July celebration. It was funded through a trust from Maria Hatch in memory of her late brother, Edward, and replaced a temporary band shell built prior to the Great Depression. The seating area for the Hatch Shell is the lawn, which is impacted by the heavy use that the area receives. The adjacent restrooms were built in the 1960s. The Hatch Shell is owned by DCR and according to the terms of the gift, it must be used for programs that provide a public benefit, and cannot be used for religious or political activities.

**Community Boating** - 1941, designed by Kilham, Hopkins and Greeley. The grey brick Community Boating building was constructed to provide a facility for public boating and was expanded in 1987 when the second story was added. The building retains much of its original character but the operation has grown substantially in the intervening years with expanded docks and fenced storage of a large number of boats. DCR owns the land and the building, which Community Boating operates under a permit.



Figure 2.32 – Community boating building. (2007).

**Storrow Drive Fence** - 1950s. DCR parkways form the southern edge of the Esplanade for its entire length (see figure 2.26). When Storrow Drive was built in the 1950s, there was metal

picket fencing along most of the boundary between the parkway and the park. Only parts of the fence remain; in some places fencing has been replaced by more utilitarian guardrails. At the time of this Study Report, there are plans to replace the entire fence along Storow Drive with a new steel picket fence.

**Dartmouth Street Sanitary** - 1952-53, designed by Holmes and Edwards Architects. Adjacent to the Dartmouth Street Landing is a one-story brick restroom building. The restrooms are no longer functioning and the building is now used as storage space by DCR and community groups.



Figure 2.33 – Dartmouth Street sanitary.

**Esplanade Café** - 1980s. The present refreshment building west of the Hatch Shell was built on the site of the earlier concession stand. It is a single story shed roof building with appendages at the rear and outdoor seating in front. The building is owned by the operator under a permit.

**Stoneman Playground** - Rebuilt in 2001 on site of earlier playground. The playground is located at the far western end of the Back Bay section of the Esplanade. It includes an area for very young children and another for slightly older children and is enclosed by low chain link fence.

**Gondola Kiosk** - Early 21<sup>st</sup> century. A relatively recent addition to the Esplanade is an Italian gondola service that operates on the lagoon during the summer months. It includes a kiosk and several gondolas. The building is owned by the gondola operator under a permit.

**Monuments and Memorials near Music Oval** - Various dates, see below. The Music Oval is surrounded by monuments, most of which commemorate prominent Massachusetts residents. They include:

- **Edwin U. Curtis** - Circa 1924. Two large urns and plaque at bridge to island.
- **Charles Devens** - Sculpted 1893-96, by Olin Levi Warner, moved here from State House grounds in 1950.. Bronze figure on gray granite base and pedestal.
- **David Ignatius Walsh** - 1954, by Joseph Coletti. Bronze figure with brown granite base and plinth.
- **General George Patton** - 1955, by James Earle Fraser. Bronze figure on pink granite base and pedestal.
- **Maurice J. Tobin** - 1958, by Emilius R. Ciampa. Bronze figure on grey granite base.

- **Cherry Tree Plaque** - 1985. Inscribed pink granite boulder marking the gift of cherry trees from the government of Japan.
- **Metropolitan Police Memorial** - Bronze plaque on pier adjacent to bridge commemorating the centennial of the metropolitan police force, 1893-1992.
- **David Mugar** - Late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Cannon, in commemoration of his role in establishing the fireworks at the Hatch Shell. The inscription on the monument reads: “*You bring the music and I’ll bring the cannon.*”

**Miscellaneous Monuments and Memorials in Back Bay Section** - They are listed from east to west.

- **Charles Eliot Memorial** - Landscape architect Charles Eliot (1859-1897) was largely responsible for the establishment of the metropolitan park system. The Charles Eliot Memorial, located near Community Boating, consists of a square monument and base that also serves as a bench, was designed by Arthur Shurcliff. It includes an inscription to Eliot and lists the metropolitan parks in each direction.
- **Oliver Wendell Holmes Memorial** - 1914, by architects Parker, Thomas and Rice. Semicircular granite bench with central short round pillar (which originally held a sundial) in small plaza. Between Dartmouth and Exeter streets. Moved to its present location circa 1950 to make room for Storrow Drive.
- **Storrow Memorial** - 1936. Large circular gray granite base with bronze plaque honoring James and Helen Storrow. At Gloucester Street landing.
- **Lotta Fountain** - 1939, sculpted by Katherine Lane Weems. Located between Berkeley and Clarendon streets. Fountain sculpture of dog and small plaza near Storrow Drive named for its benefactor Lotta Crabtree.
- **Trimloid X Sculpture** - 1970, metal sculpture by David Kibbey. Located between Clarendon and Dartmouth Streets.
- **MDC Centennial Memorial** - Created in 1993 to honor the centennial of the metropolitan park system. Located at Dartmouth Street landing. Monument is a circular bronze plaque set in granite paving.
- **Arthur Fielder Memorial** - The Arthur Fiedler memorial, which commemorates the famous Boston Pops conductor, is located at the eastern end of the Island. It was sculpted by Ralph Helmick in 1984.
- **Otis Grove** - There is a small, inscribed boulder identifying a grove of birch trees on the island near Exeter Street as the Otis Grove, in memory of State Representative William F. Otis and his wife who were murdered in their Back Bay apartment in 1968.

### 2.2.3 CHARLESGATE/UPPER PARK

#### Charlesgate/Upper Park: History

Charlesgate/Upper Park is the westernmost segment of the Boston Esplanade. It extends from the Harvard Bridge on the east to the Boston University Bridge on the west. It is bordered on the north by the Charles River and on the south by Storrow Drive. It is roughly 4,000' long and ranges between 30' and 230' wide.

Charlesgate and the Bay State Road area were the last section of the Esplanade to be filled. West of Charlesgate (where the Muddy River enters the Charles) the seawall turns slightly north and follows the alignment of Bay State Road. Some filling was done between the Harvard Bridge and the Muddy River at Charlesgate in the early 1900s as part of the creation of the Charles River Basin, but at that time the narrow strip of parkland extended only as far west as Charlesgate.

Additional filling was done in the 1930s as part of the creation of the Storrow Memorial Embankment when parkland was extended west from Charlesgate to the Boston University Bridge. When Storrow Drive was built along the south side of the Charles River in the 1950s, the parkland was widened again to compensate for the taking of land. This time the shoreline was undulating rather than straight. Construction of the Bowker Overpass in the 1960s resulted in further filling at Charlesgate, with much of the new land area dominated by overhead highway ramps.

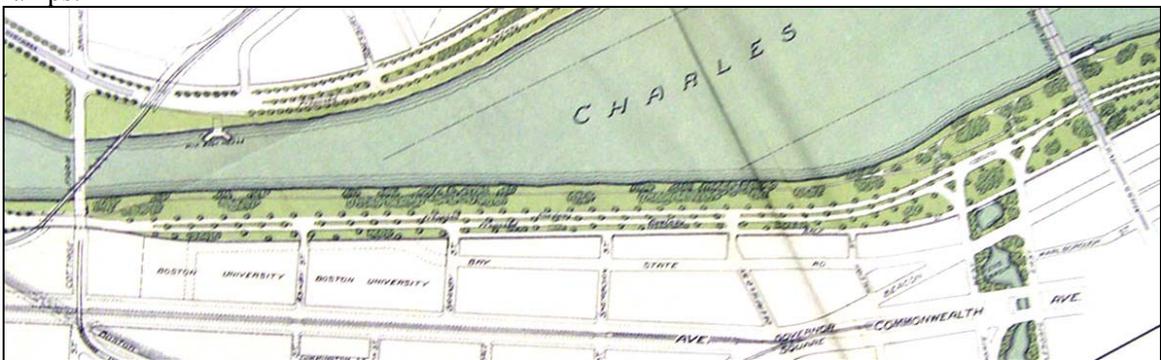


Figure 2.34 – Arthur Shurcliff's 1929 schematic plan for Charlesgate. The road shown in this early proposal was not built at that time. (DCR archives).

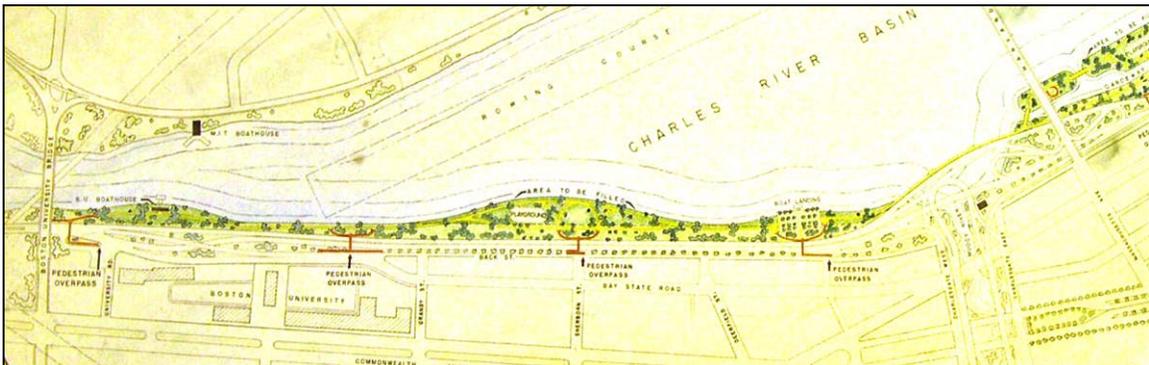


Figure 2.35 – This conceptual 1949 plan by Arthur Shurcliff shows the large amount of land that was taken for construction of Storrow Drive and the additional parkland created in the early 1950s to compensate. The undulations were created to make the shoreline more interesting. (DCR archives).

## Charlesgate/Upper Park: Landscape Areas



Figure 2.36 – Charlesgate/Upper Park Section of the Charles River Esplanade.

The Charlesgate/Upper Park segment of the Esplanade is divided into two distinct sections. The eastern part is a narrow strip dominated by the Bowker Overpass, which occupies much of the former parkland, forcing the pedestrian path into a narrow strip of land between the road and the river. West of the overpass is a long section of linear park that is characterized by grass, trees, path and water's edge. As this entire section of parkland is narrow, Storow Drive is a dominant presence immediately adjacent to the park. There are relatively few structures and recreational features in this segment.

**Charlesgate/Bowker Overpass Area** - The Charlesgate/Bowker Overpass area is one of the most dramatically changed sections of the Esplanade. Olmsted and Shurcliff's designs for the area have been almost completely obscured by construction of additional land and roadways. The strip of parkland that runs adjacent to the overpass is extremely narrow and runs under the overpass in some places.



*Figure 2.37 – In the parkland west of the Harvard Bridge, Storrow Drive crowds the path and parkland into a narrow strip of land. (2007 photo).*



*Figure 2.38 – Railing, path and willow trees with Harvard Bridge in the background. (2007 photo).*

**Upper Park Area** - This section of the park is entirely filled land that was created in several stages. The most recent filling occurred in the early 1950s when additional parkland was created to compensate for land taking associated with construction of Storrow Drive. The river edge is undulating with riprap and low vegetation along the water's edge, creating a naturalistic appearance that is an important characteristic of this part of the park. Vegetation consists of mature trees, primarily deciduous, but also some evergreens between the path and Storrow Drive.



*Figure 2.39 – West of the Bowker Overpass the parkland widens and the shoreline is undulating with mature trees. (2007 photo).*



*Figure 2.40 – Typical view along linear park area. Note worn path at left. (2007 photo).*

## **Charlesgate/Upper Park: Buildings and Structures**

***Boston University Sailing Pavilion*** - ca. 1940 with an addition in 1946. One-story hipped-roof building with shed roof and various types of wooden siding located immediately east of the Boston University Bridge. Associated with the pavilion is a boat dock. This facility is used primarily for sailing and kayaking.



*Figure 2.41 – View of Boston University Sailing Pavilion and dock looking west with Boston University Bridge and railroad bridge in the background. (2007 photo).*

***Storrow Drive Fence*** - 1950s. When the current parkways were built in the 1950s, there was metal picket fencing along the entire boundary with the park, but today only parts of the fence remain. At the time of this Study Report, there are plans to replace the entire fence along Storrow Drive with a new steel picket fence.

***Railing at Water's Edge*** - early 1950s. The railing at the edge of the Charles River adjacent to the Bowker Overpass was erected when Storrow Drive was constructed. The substructure is concrete and the upper part is granite. It was intended as a formal element in the park to mark the Beacon Entrance but with construction of the Bowker Overpass, it has been crowded by the westbound lane of Storrow Drive.

***Deerfield Street Dock*** - 21<sup>st</sup> century, recent replacement for an earlier wooden dock. Rectangular platform roughly 135' feet long by 18' wide with three indentation on the water side. Although the idea of landings to provide access to the water dates back to the early years of the Esplanade, the current dock is relatively recent and is made of synthetic materials. The dock is open to the public and is also used by the Northeastern sailing team.

***Furnishings*** – See note above. Site furnishings include shade shelters, Shurcliff benches, several picnic tables, trash receptacles and shoebox lights. There is also a late twentieth century exercise station near Sherborn Street in the widest section of parkland and several concrete electrical transformer boxes that provide power to the park lighting.

### 3.0 SIGNIFICANCE

#### 3.1 Historic Significance

The Esplanade is entirely man-made, built on filled land that was once mudflats and tidal wetlands. It is part of the state-owned Charles River Reservation created in the 1890s, and more specifically part of the Lower Basin that encompasses the Boston and Cambridge shoreline from the Craigie Drawbridge on the east to the Boston University Bridge on the west, a distance of about 2½ miles. The entire Lower Basin, including all the area discussed in this study report, as well as the area on both sides of the river upstream to the Eliot Bridge, is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The nomination cites the basin as “the most important element of Boston’s metropolitan park system, the first such system realized in the United States. The embankment and park land adjoining the water provides Boston and Cambridge with an amenity that makes them two of the country’s most attractive cities.”<sup>3</sup> Thus the Esplanade is a significant part of a larger National Register district that recognizes the visionary planning, engineering and landscape architecture of the Lower Charles River Basin. The Esplanade also has significance in its own right.

The first section of the Esplanade to be built along the lower Charles on the Boston side was at Charlesbank in the early 1890s. A primary purpose was to provide recreation for urban residents who had little access to fresh air and open space. Frederick Law Olmsted Sr.’s pioneering plan for Charlesbank included a promenade along the river as well as paths, benches, boat landings and lawn areas with trees and shrubs. The most innovative aspect of the park was providing facilities for active recreation. Olmsted historian Cynthia Zaitzevsky describes Charlesbank as having “the first scientifically designed and administered open-air gymnasiums to be operated free of charge in a public park,” thereby setting a national precedent for active recreation.<sup>4</sup> When Charlesbank was completed, the residential neighborhoods to the west still turned their backs on the polluted river.

In 1893 the Metropolitan Park Commission was established to create a regional park system to preserve the rapidly disappearing scenic and natural resources of the greater Boston area. Once landscape architect Charles Eliot had completed the overall plan for the Commission, he turned his attention to the lower Charles River basin. On the Boston side he envisioned a continuous seawall with “promenades and plazas - broad gravel-ways well shaded by trees afford[ing] pleasant out-of-door halls where crowds may mingle in an easy social life . . .” He also proposed “. . . concert grounds, outdoor halls, nurseries, playgrounds, gymnasia, and gardens” which could be combined so that no individual feature would take more than a small space and also “a roadway which will serve as a pleasure drive and also as an approach to the buildings on the abutting estates.”<sup>5</sup>

However, the polluted river remained a problem and a dam was proposed to improve water quality and establish a basin with a permanent water level. James Jackson Storrow led a successful campaign and the Charles River Basin Commission was established in 1903 to oversee construction of the Charles River dam and to extend the parkland on the Boston side west from the Longfellow Bridge to Charlesgate, just west of the Harvard Bridge where the Muddy River flows into the Charles.

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<sup>3</sup> National Register Nomination for Charles River Basin Historic District, 1978.

<sup>4</sup> Cynthia Zaitzevsky, *Frederick Law Olmsted and the Boston Park System* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), page 98.

<sup>5</sup> Charles William Eliot, *Charles Eliot, Landscape Architect* (Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries, 1971, first published in 1902).

In the Back Bay section from Berkeley Street west to Charlesgate, the Back Street seawall formed the southern edge of the park. A new seawall 100' north of the original wall formed the northern edge, with several landings to provide access to the water. The parkland sloped down slightly from the elevation of Back Street with a broad expanse of turf and a wide walkway along the river with a metal rail fence and decorative light fixtures. Crosswalks connected the promenade with the ends of the Boston streets.

On July 1, 1910, the Charles River Basin Commission turned the Boston parkland over to the Metropolitan Park Commission, which was to operate the dam and riverfront park. The Cambridge riverfront remained under the jurisdiction of the Cambridge Park Commission and Charlesbank remained under the jurisdiction of the Boston Park Commission. By 1912 the area was more pleasant than it had been, but far from the lively promenade that Eliot had envisioned. The water was choppy and the wide basin was perceived as a vast uninteresting expanse. Dissatisfaction with the Esplanade continued through the 1920s.

In 1928 the State Legislature authorized a special commission to investigate potential changes to the basin. The commission's report identified three key issues: improvements to the riverbanks; completion of the Charles River parkway system; and making the river safer and more attractive for boating and water sports. A major boost to the proposed work came in 1928 in the form of a generous bequest from Helen Osborne Storrow, widow of James Storrow, who had been instrumental in getting the dam built. Mrs. Storrow offered \$1,000,000 towards the beautification and improvement of the Esplanade. The only stipulation was that the money be used with legislative appropriations to carry out a comprehensive plan for the beautification and improvement of the basin. The total cost of the work was estimated at \$4,250,000.

The second major expansion of Esplanade parkland was undertaken in the 1930s. The commission strongly supported the proposed parkway but there were many opponents, including Helen Storrow, so the parkway was dropped but the legislature authorized the remainder of the project. A major focus of these improvements was in the Back Bay section of the Esplanade where new features included the Boat Haven, Concert Oval and Storrow Lagoon, as well as overlooks at Dartmouth and Gloucester Streets.

At Charlesbank, which was still a city park, additional filled land was created to compensate for parkland taken for road construction. The landscape remained simple with a large open lawn in the wide western part of the park surrounded by tree-lined walks. The eastern part of Charlesbank was largely unchanged with lock operations and recreational facilities for the West End neighborhood.

Treatment was also simple along the far western end of the Esplanade known as the Upper Park. The newly formed parkland west of Charlesgate was a straight strip of land roughly 100' wide that extended from Back Street down to the stone edging at the water's edge. The Storrow Memorial Embankment was dedicated in 1936.

The demand for a parkway along the Esplanade, proposed in the 1929 plan, increased after World War II. Construction of Storrow Drive began in 1950 and was completed a few years later. The intent was that most of the road was to be below the grade of the Esplanade and that new parkland was to be created using the fill from the road. The new road was located immediately north of Back Street on the 100' strip of filled land created between 1907 and 1909. Near Berkeley Street a tunnel was constructed so that land did not have to be taken from the Music Oval. The road construction project was massive in scale and disrupted the entire Esplanade for several years.

Landscape architect Arthur Shurcliff and his son Sidney were responsible for the 1949 redesign of the Esplanade. At Charlesbank land was taken from the park to accommodate ramps associated with the construction of Storrow Drive and to expand Charles Circle at the Longfellow Bridge, so five acres of fill were added at the western end of the park where new paths, trees and baseball fields were added, as well as a fieldhouse, swimming pool and bathhouse. The eastern end of Charlesbank, with gatehouses and playground, remained largely unchanged.

In the Back Bay section, the biggest changes were in the central part of the Esplanade where a long narrow island was built, extending the lagoon eastward. The island created a new water channel that was appropriate for canoes and small boats. The 1930s plantings were maturing by this time but supplemental plantings were added in older sections of the park and extensive planting was done on the expanded island.

The parkways and parkland created along the southern edge of the Charles River in the 1950s are still largely what exists today. The most significant change to area over the past 50 years was construction of the Bowker Overpass, which links Boston's Emerald Necklace parkways with Storrow Drive, in the 1960s. While the overpass is not considered part of the Esplanade (which is defined as the land between Storrow Drive and the river), it necessitated taking of additional parkland to accommodate all the ramps.

Construction of the overpass largely obliterated the Olmsted-designed landscape known as the Beacon Entrance (part of the Emerald Necklace park system), which connected the Back Bay Fens and the Charles River at Charlesgate. A new edge was created further out into the river where a granite balustrade similar to those at the other landings was built.

### **3.2 Landscape Architectural Significance**

The Esplanade is a renowned work of landscape architecture and park planning that reflects the work of three prominent American landscape architects: Frederick Law Olmsted Sr., Charles Eliot and Arthur Shurcliff, who collectively shaped the area from initial planning through multiple iterations of design in response to evolving community needs. It is a work of aesthetic, social and technical genius, important in the nineteenth and twentieth century development of the city and also universally recognized for its innovations in park planning, design and engineering. Although significant changes have been made and details have disappeared over time, much of the design of the Esplanade is intact.

Frederick Law Olmsted Sr. (1822-1903), considered the founder of landscape architecture in America, designed Central Park in New York City (a National Historic Landmark) as well Boston's Emerald Necklace park system (which is listed in the National Register and is also a designated Boston Landmark) and nearly 500 other public and private projects around the country. He was also responsible for the initial design of Charlesbank in the 1890s, which was significant as an early example of a park designed specifically for active recreation.

Charles Eliot (1859-1897) apprenticed as a landscape architect at the Olmsted office and then traveled abroad before establishing his own firm. Eliot's ideas on the preservation of natural, scenic and historic landscapes led to the creation of the Boston Metropolitan Park Commission in 1893. His report on the metropolitan parks has been widely praised as a visionary work of landscape planning that resulted in the creation of the first regional park system in the United States. The Charles River Basin was central to his vision for the metropolitan parks, and the early Esplanade was based largely on his ideas. Eliot was just beginning to turn his attention to designs for specific parks of the system, when he died at age 37. His work on Boston's metropolitan parks, including the Charles River Basin, is one of Eliot's most important accomplishments.

Arthur A. Shurcliff (1870-1957) was the third landscape architect to play a significant role in shaping the Esplanade, with responsibility for major changes that occurred in the 1930s and 1950s. It is his work that is most visible today. Shurcliff began his career in the Olmsted office before establishing his own practice in 1904. He is best known for his park work, including many Boston park projects, and for work on historic properties including Colonial Williamsburg.

### **3.3 Architectural Significance**

The Esplanade also includes buildings and structures that contribute significantly to the function and character of the parkland. These fall into several categories.

The oldest extant buildings are the Lower and Upper Lock Gatehouses at Charlesbank, both designed in 1908 by architect Guy Lowell as part of the initial work for the Charles River Basin. These were functionally important when the lock was active and remain visually significant architectural features. There is a 1937 garage between the two gatehouses (architect unknown).

Other buildings located on the Esplanade include the Union Boat Club (1909, moved to present location in 1930s); the Hatch Shell (1940, designed by Richard Shaw); Boston University Sailing Pavilion (1940, addition in 1946, architect unknown); Community Boating (1941, by Kilham, Hopkins & Greeley, with later addition); Lee Pool Complex (1951), and the Dartmouth Street Sanitary 1952-53, by Holmes and Edwards. Recent buildings include the Equipment Building at Wading Pool (ca. 1960s); Concession Stand near Lee Pool (ca. 1960s); Concession Stand near Hatch Shell (ca. 1980s) and Gondola Kiosk (early 2000s).

Buildings that previously existed but have been demolished reflect past trends and priorities for the Esplanade. The very earliest buildings on the Esplanade were the Men's and Women's Gymnasias at Charlesbank (built 1890s, demolished early 1900s during construction of the Marginal Conduit and Charles River Dam). There were also several buildings that were demolished around 1950 to make room for Storrow Drive. They were: Tea House near Berkeley Street (built 1913, demolished ca. 1950); Recreation Building near Fairfield Street (built 1939, demolished ca. 1950); Underground Sanitary near Embankment Road (early 1900s, demolished ca. 1950).

Structures also play an important role in the function and character of the Esplanade and many of them pre-date 1960. The oldest is the section of granite seawall at Charlesgate behind the wading pool, which was built in the 1880s as part of the original design for Charlesgate. Slightly to the east of this are the Charles River Lock, built in 1908 as part of Charles River Dam project, and a section of 1908 seawall. Many of the structures that are familiar today as part of the Esplanade were designed by Arthur Shurcliff in the 1930s and 50s. These include:

Commissioners Landing, Breakwater, Dartmouth Street Landing, Gloucester Street Landing, Island Bridges and Charlesgate Landing.

There are also numerous monuments and memorials, which have artistic significance and contribute to the overall character of the Esplanade (see descriptions of each sub-area for more detail, section 2).

### 3.4 Relationship to Criteria for Landmark Designation

The Esplanade meets the criteria for landmark designation found in Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975 as amended. It consists of improvements that have historical, social, cultural, architectural and aesthetic significance to the City, the Commonwealth, the New England region and the nation. Specifically, it meets the following criteria:

- A. ***Inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places as provided in the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.*** The Esplanade was listed in the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Charles River Basin Historic District in 1978. The district includes the entire lower Basin in Boston and Cambridge from the Charles Drawbridge to the Weeks Bridge. While the nomination does not specify a level of significance, it does identify the Charles River Basin as the most important element in the nation's first metropolitan park system. The Charles River Basin (including the Esplanade) was designated a National Civil Engineering Landmark in 1981.
- B. ***Structures, sites, objects, man-made or natural, at which events have occurred that have made an outstanding contribution to, and are identified prominently with or which best represent some important aspect of the cultural, political, economic, military, or social history of the city, the commonwealth, the New England region, or the nation.*** The site, structures and objects that comprise the Esplanade exemplify an important aspect of the development of Boston and the region, notably the creation of the Metropolitan Park System, in the 1890s. The Charlesbank portion of the Esplanade parkland was a pioneering urban park designed specifically to provide active recreation for urban residents. The Esplanade was also a focal point of the work of the Charles River Basin Commission, which transformed the tidal Charles River into a wide swath of water lined with sophisticated urban parks that have been heavily used for over a century and remain some of the best-loved parkland in Massachusetts.
- C. ***Structures, sites, objects man-made or natural, associated significantly with the lives of outstanding historic personages.*** The Esplanade is strongly associated with investment banker and philanthropist James Jackson Storrow (1864-1926) and his wife Helen Osborne Storrow (1864-1944), for whom the Storrow Memorial Embankment is named. James Storrow was instrumental in getting the Charles River dam built and the early Esplanade created. In 1928 Helen Storrow donated one million dollars towards the expansion of the Esplanade parkland but strongly opposed the creation of a parkway through the Esplanade. It is ironic that when the parkway was built in the 1950s it was named Storrow Drive.
- D. ***Structures, sites, objects, man-made or natural, representative of elements of architectural or landscape design or craftsmanship which embody distinctive characteristics of a type inherently valuable for study or a period style, or method of construction.*** The Esplanade is a significant work of landscape architecture and park planning that includes an ensemble of park buildings and structures, which also

contribute to design significance. It is also a significant composite of the work of three prominent American landscape architects: Frederick Law Olmsted Sr., Charles Eliot and Arthur Shurcliff.

## 4.0 CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES

### 4.1 Introduction

The historic, landscape and architectural significance of the Esplanade as discussed in Section 3 are conveyed by the design intent and physical attributes of the Esplanade. Together these features define the character of the Esplanade and should be carefully considered when alternations to the Esplanade are proposed.

The character of the Esplanade has evolved over time, with distinct features associated with each of the three major periods:

- **1890s** – Key features of Charlesbank as designed by the Olmsted firm were: a vertical edge to the river created by a granite seawall with metal railing; a wide promenade with benches; open turf areas with scattered trees; men’s and women’s gymnasias at either end.
- **1910s** – The Charles River Basin Commission created a linear park 100’ wide with seawall; promenade; lights and turfed area. The Back Street wall formed the southern edge of the park. Plantings, consisting of shrubs along the Back Street wall and trees in rows along the path, were added a few years later, as were benches and shade shelters.
- **1930s** – The Esplanade took on a very different character in the 1930s when the edge was softened and focal elements in a Neo-Classical style were added, giving a new formality to the park. By this time the original plantings had grown and the park had a more established appearance.

Taking these eras into account, the 2002 *Charles River Basin Master Plan* developed principles to guide future planning for the Charles River Basin. In its observations about historic patterns and design principles throughout the Basin and particularly in the Charles River Esplanade, the Master Plan provides key insight to understanding the Esplanade’s historic character, as well as modern-day changes and challenges to this character. While the entire document should be used a tool for understanding and evaluating the Esplanade, several key points have been summarized here.

**Interconnectivity** – According to the Master Plan, the developers of the Esplanade saw it as a link, connecting open spaces in Boston to each other, and to the Charles River Basin. It was also seen as a connection for urban dwellers to a natural environment growing increasingly difficult to access on a daily basis. This connective quality, linking the river to the city, the city to the surrounding region, and the city’s residents to the environment, is a valuable part of the Esplanade’s historic character and purpose.

**Integration of Structures within the Landscape** – The various contributors to the design of the Esplanade emphasized the importance of the landscape’s scenic qualities, and the subsidiary nature intended for structures, pathways, and other elements within the landscape. They also held, however, that those subsidiary structures should be of the highest design quality. Landscape architect Charles Eliot commented that “the [Charles] River runs through the very center of the metropolis...and upon its shores should naturally be placed its most attractive structures...” The historic balance between the Esplanade landscape and the man-made elements that allow visitors to enjoy it is an important element of the Esplanade’s character.

**Recognition of Diversity within the Esplanade** – The Esplanade was intended as a place for many different uses and activities, and this has been reflected historically in its design; different degrees of formality suggest different types of activities appropriate within the landscape, and different types and patterns of plantings acknowledge transitional or significant spaces. Just as necessary paths and structures have historically played a complimentary but subsidiary role in the landscape, though, Eliot advised that provisions for diverse uses be designed so as not to “conflict with or detract from the breadth and quietness of the general landscape.” Active uses and their associated spaces that animate the landscape without overwhelming it are an essential feature of the character of the Esplanade.

## 4.2 Spatial Organization

Spatial organization is the arrangement of features in a landscape. The Esplanade is a linear park that is two and a half miles long and rarely more than a few hundred feet wide. It was created in several stages over more than 100 years and reflects the evolved character of a layered landscape. The earliest spatial organization was that established by Olmsted's plan for Charlesbank (figure 2.1), soon followed by the Charles River Basin Commission's plan for the Back Bay section of the Esplanade (figure 2.16). Both featured a wide promenade along the river with benches and later shade shelters. Lawn areas and plantings provided a buffer from the city. Shurcliff's 1929 and 1949 plans had a wider piece of land to work with and by this time the water's edge was largely soft so park users could have more direct access to the water. The water's edge became undulating and more complex in places rather than straight, with the island and lagoon creating a wider range of landscape experiences. Shurcliff also added more formal spaces than had previously existed in the Esplanade, such as the Boat Basin, Music Oval, Lagoon, Island, Dartmouth Street Landing and Fairfield Street Landing.

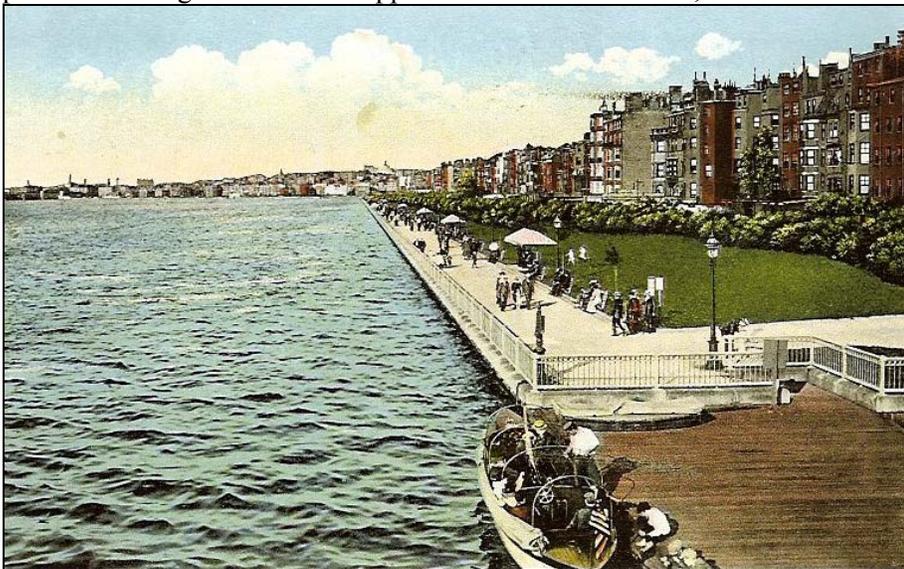
Particular care should be taken in review of proposals that would remove existing elements or features from the Esplanade; that would add new features, particularly buildings and structures, and that might compromise the historic character.



Figure 4.1 – Aerial view of Boat Haven in the 1930s showing the formality of the design. (DCR archives).

### 4.3 Vegetation

Plantings from the early years of the Esplanade were more elaborate than what presently exists and depended on more grounds maintenance than is realistic today. Olmsted and Shurcliff both used primarily a limited palette of large deciduous trees that would do well in urban conditions, although Shurcliff also used hawthorns (which are smaller ornamental trees) in his 1952 planting and there are a few evergreens. Some of the earlier trees were planted in straight rows along the edge of the promenade or the adjacent roadway, while trees internal to the park were placed more informally, often in same species groupings. Groupings of shrubs were used by Olmsted at Charlesbank in the 1890s; by Guy Lowell along the Back Street wall in 1911; and by Shurcliff in the 1930s and 1950s. Concern from the 1910s was that the park was totally lacking in shade, making the park hot and uncomfortable in summer months. Today this is no longer the case, the current palette of vegetation is mature although greatly simplified, with few shrubs. Small ornamental trees were generally not used except in conjunction with shrub plantings along the Back Street wall. While plans and plant lists have not been found for all periods, several key lists provide useful guidance. See Appendix A for detailed lists, as taken from the DCR archives.



*Figure 4.2 – Postcard view from Harvard Bridge (after 1912) shows shrub plantings adjacent to Back Street wall (private collection).*



*Figure 4.3 – 1935 view of linear plantings along the lagoon and Gloucester Street landing (DCR archive).*



*Figure 4.4 – The predominant vegetative character today is derived from mature, primarily deciduous, trees of varied species in a more informal (non-linear) arrangement (2007 photo).*

#### 4.4 Topography

The topography of the Esplanade has little variation in elevation. It generally slopes from a high point at its southern (city) edge to a low at the river's edge but the change in elevation is only a few feet. One characteristic of topography that is particularly important is the relationship of the park to the water's edge. In some places there is a vertical seawall that forms the edge, while in others there is a gentle slope, often with riprap to prevent erosion at the water's edge. In several places there are landings to provide more direct water access for boating and fishing.



Figure 4.5 – Lifesaving apparatus along the Charles, 1916. Until the 1930s the river was not easily accessible from the park (DCR archives).

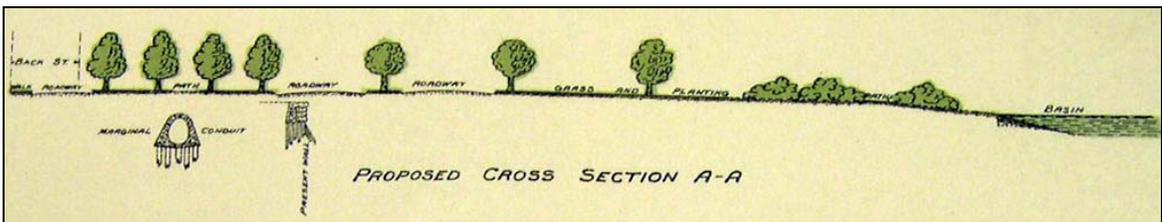


Figure 4.6 – Cross section from Shurcliff's 1929 plan showing location of Back Street, Marginal Conduit and 1910 seawall in relation to the proposed parkland, as well as proposed plantings and the new water's edge (DCR archives).

## 4.5 Circulation

The path system is an integral feature of the park. The Esplanade paths are part of the interconnected Charles River Basin system and also link with the Emerald Necklace park system and with the city. In some cases the connections are tenuous and difficult to use, particularly where outdated overpasses are the primary means of access.

In most places the path system is no longer the formal promenade along the seawall that characterized the park in its early years, but rather runs further away from the water's edge in a more informal alignment that responds to the changing character of the shoreline. All paths within the Esplanade are bituminous, and they are of various widths, depending on the amount of traffic and the size of the space through which the path travels. Some are straight, while others are curved. In some places there is a dual path system. Walkers, runners, roller bladers and cyclists all use the same path. In some places where there is heavy traffic there is a center stripe to keep riders to the right. In addition to paths, there are an increasing number of areas used for service access including parking.

The Esplanade, as well as the larger Charles River Basin, was designed to create interconnectedness and to serve multiple types of activities. However, like all built features the path system should be subordinate to the landscape.



Figure 4.7 – In some places there is a dual path system. (2007 photo).

## 4.6 Water's Edge

From the 1870s to the early 1930s, the water's edge was entirely seawall, separating park users from the river and limiting access to the water. Now almost all of the water's edge is a softer landscape, with the parkland extending to the water. In most cases there is riprap to stabilize the edge and low plantings have grown up. Other than the Back Street wall (which is no longer at the water's edge), only a small area of the early seawall remains, notably the section of 1880s wall at Charlesbank behind the wading pool and the circa 1908 wall in the area of the lock. The landings, created in the 1930s, represent another edge condition, as do the docks, which were designed to facilitate access to the water. The granite coping of the Storrow Lagoon is another edge condition.

## 4.7 City Edge

Although no longer an integral element of the park, the Back Street wall, which lies on the south side of Storrow Drive for much of the Back Bay and Upper Park sections of the Esplanade, is an important feature that initially formed the southern edge of the Esplanade and now forms the southern edge of Storrow Drive, which runs along the southern edge of the Esplanade for its entire length. In the 1950s there was a low metal picket fence separating the road and the park. Some sections of this fence remain; in other cases there is no longer a barrier, while in still other places a standard metal guardrail separates the park and the road. At the time of this Study Report, there are plans to replace the entire fence along Storrow Drive with a new steel picket fence.

## 4.8 Buildings, Structures, Furnishings, and Monuments

### *Buildings*

Buildings serve as focal features in the landscape. Most of the extant buildings date to pre-1950. Below are key buildings significant to the history of the Esplanade; see Section 2 of this study report for full lists and descriptions of buildings by sub-areas of the Esplanade.

Buildings that are particularly important to the history of the Esplanade:

- Upper and Lower Lock Gatehouses
- Community Boating Building
- Union Boat Club
- Hatch Shell
- Fens Gatehouse (in parkway area)

### *Structures*

Below are key structures significant to the history of the Esplanade; see Section 2 of this Study Report for full lists and descriptions of structures by sub-areas of the Esplanade. With the exception of the Back Street wall, which is of paramount importance to the history of the Esplanade and the Back Bay, only features that are internal to the Esplanade are included here.

Structures that are particularly important to the history of the Esplanade:

- Charles River Lock
- Remnant sections of granite seawall at Charlesbank
- Fiedler Footbridge

- Commissioners Landing
- Breakwater at Boat Haven
- Dartmouth Street Landing
- Gloucester Street Landing
- Island Bridges (over Lagoon)
- Granite curbing at Storrow Lagoon
- Charlesgate Landing
- Longfellow Bridge
- Harvard Bridge
- Boston University Bridge

### *Furnishings*

The Esplanade has an eclectic collection of furnishings dating to several different park eras. The most distinctive feature is the Shurcliff bench, adapted from a design by Arthur Shurcliff. This has been adopted in the 2002 *Charles River Basin Master Plan* as a standard for the entire basin, including the Esplanade.

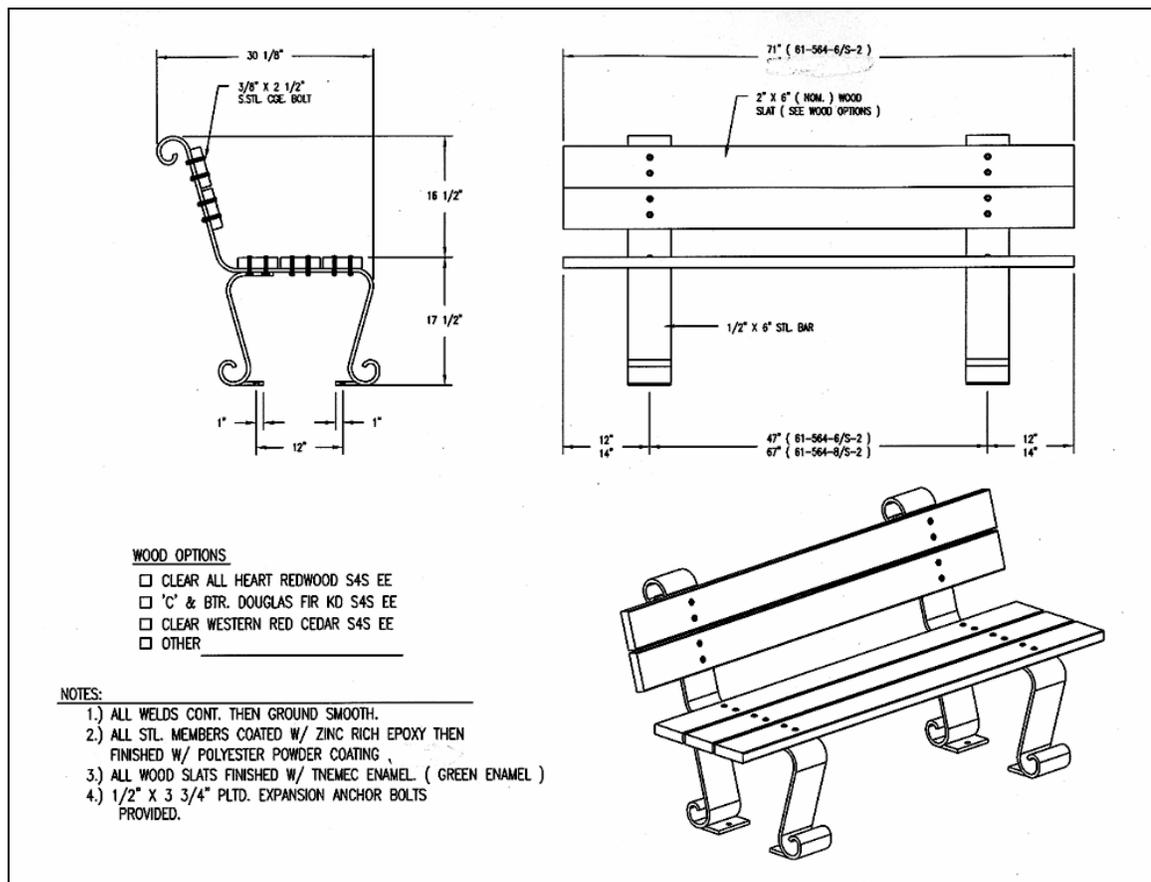


Figure 4.8 – Detail of Shurcliff bench currently used throughout the Charles River Basin. (DCR).

Another characteristic furnishing type found in the Back Bay section of the Esplanade are the wooden shade shelters developed by Shurcliff in the 1930s to replace the earlier canvas shade shelters, which were less durable (figure 4.9).



*Figure 4.9 – Newly constructed shade shelter based on 1930s style. The benches shown here differ from the standard Shurcliff bench (2007 photo).*

Park furnishings rarely have a long life. In most cases extant furnishings are reproductions, such as the Shurcliff bench, or are modern fixtures designed to meet contemporary standards and needs, such as the shoebox lights, utilitarian trash containers and the concrete drinking fountains. However, there are a few remnants of early furnishings. They include:

- Remnant early fencing on top of seawall behind Wading Pool
- Remnants of 1950s fencing along Storrow Drive and at Charlesbank
- Remnant historic sign south of Fiedler Overpass

### ***Monuments***

Landscape architect Charles Eliot argued that monuments were “obtrusive structures” detracting from the quality of the landscape, and should instead be subsidiary to the landscape itself.<sup>6</sup> Existing historic monuments, however, should be preserved; see Section 2 of this Study Report for full lists and descriptions of structures by sub-areas of the Esplanade.

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<sup>6</sup> *Charles River Basin Master Plan*, page 60.

## **5.0 ECONOMIC STATUS**

### **5.1 Current Assessed Value**

Since the property the addressed in this study report is publicly owned, it is tax exempt. City of Boston Assessor's parcel numbers do not align with the boundaries of the study area, but by combining the assessed values of the parcels that most closely follow the boundaries of the Esplanade, an estimation of an assessed value can be set at approximately \$264,557,000.

### **5.2 Current Ownership**

The entire land area discussed in this study report is owned by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Department of Conservation and Recreation and is administered as part of the Charles River Reservation.

## **6.0 PLANNING CONTEXT**

### **6.1 Background**

The Esplanade is entirely man-made land that has undergone many changes in the past 150 years. In the late nineteenth century, sanitation was the most pressing issue, as the city lacked an adequate sewer system and the polluted mudflats of the Charles River were a public menace. In the first half of the twentieth century, recreation was a priority, with the first narrow strip of parkland created by 1910 and widened in the 1930s. By the 1950s, transportation was the most pressing need, with parkland relocated to accommodate Storrow Drive and the widening of Charles Street. Construction of the Bowker Overpass in the 1960s further impacted the Charlesgate section of the Esplanade, but did not have the same mandate to replace the parkland that it took away.

By the 1960s health and fitness were important themes, including linear activities such as biking, running and walking. Bicycles were allowed on the Esplanade for the first time in 1960 and the Dr. Paul Dudley White Bicycle Path was constructed between 1971 and 1978, ultimately creating a continuous loop extending along both sides of the Charles River from the dam to Watertown Square.

Other activities have also increased in popularity. Union Boat Club, the oldest continuously operating rowing club in Boston, remains active with use limited to members. Community Boating, which was established in 1939 and has operated in its present location on the Esplanade since 1941, runs a public program of sailing, windsurfing and kayaking. There is also increased use of the Esplanade's recreational facilities by organized groups such as the Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital and sports leagues requesting baseball and soccer fields. The Teddy Ebersol Red Sox Fields were established in part to respond to this demand.

Another trend has been the use of the Esplanade for organized events such as races, fundraising walks and concerts. Over time these have become larger and have more heavily impacted the park. The Fourth of July concerts at the Hatch Shell are the largest event, requiring months of preparation and drawing hundreds of thousands of visitors.

### **6.2 Recent Planning Documents and Organizations**

The Esplanade is perceived as an entity in itself but it is also part of the larger Charles River Reservation owned by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and administered by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). *Master Plan for the Charles River Basin: The Second Century* prepared by Goody Clancy Associates for the Metropolitan District Commission (predecessor agency to the DCR) was completed in 2002. It addresses the entire eight and one-half mile long Charles River Basin including the Esplanade. The *Master Plan*, which addresses management, planning and design, is the first major planning document to address the Charles River Basin in more than 60 years. It places the Esplanade within a larger park planning context, addressing history, use, existing conditions and current issues. Recommendations focus on thirty project areas within the Charles River Basin, including the Esplanade. However, these are necessarily fairly general. The *Master Plan* also addresses issues that occur throughout the Basin, and offers general policy guidance for issues such as landscape character, circulation, furnishings and use of the parklands. This substantial planning document

should be consulted as part of any review of proposed work to the Charles River Esplanade.

Other neighborhood and civic groups have also been involved in various issues related to the Esplanade. The Charles River Conservancy is a non-profit advocacy organization founded in 2000 to advocate for renewal and good stewardship of the Charles River Parklands, including the Esplanade. In addition to the preservation of Parklands, the Conservancy's concerns include management, accessibility, and ecological issues.

The Esplanade Association is a non-profit advocacy organization established in 2001 that is devoted entirely to issues related to the Esplanade, and specifically to the preservation and restoration of the Esplanade's beauty, vitality, and liveability. In 2007, *Cultural Landscape Report: The Esplanade, Boston, Massachusetts* was prepared by Shary Page Berg for the Esplanade Association, providing detailed information on the history and existing conditions of the Esplanade, as well as a summary of findings.

Another valuable planning tool is the *Tree Inventory and Management Plan* prepared in 2004 by Karen D. Doherty and Melissa LeVangle of Trees New England for the Esplanade Association. This report documents existing trees and offers specific vegetation management objectives, some of which have already been implemented.

### 6.3 Current Planning Issues

At the time of this study report, a large project by DCR to address safety and maintenance issues in several areas of the Esplanade and adjacent roadways was underway, with some portions of the work proposed, some ongoing, and some completed. According to presentation materials available on DCR's website, the project goals include enhancing Storrow Drive and Soldiers Field Road, improving public safety, promoting aesthetics and visual continuity for fencing and guardrails on the Charles River Reservation, and upgrading visitor experience and recreational opportunities. Specific elements of the project include improving drainage and catch basin surfaces, replacing steel picket fencing, refinishing Boston Pattern fencing, improving guardrails, installing new curbing, improving bike/walking paths, upgrading an existing fitness area, enhancing landscaping, introducing energy-saving lighting, and completing work to Teddy Ebersol's Red Sox Fields. Work to the fields includes removal of a temporary chain-link fence and replacement with a permanent fence in keeping with other fencing throughout the Esplanade.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. "Storrow Drive and Soldiers Field Road Safety Improvements and Maintenance Project." (*Department of Conservation and Recreation*. Powerpoint. 2009), 5 June 2009. <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/projects/soldierfieldroad.htm>.

For over a century Charlesbank was the eastern terminus of the reservation, but when a new dam was built downstream in 1978, the last half-mile of parkland was created along the southern edge of the Charles between the old dam and Boston Harbor. That parkland now functions as an extension of the Esplanade parkland east towards Boston Harbor.<sup>8</sup> Extensive parks, bike paths, pedestrian walkways, and footbridges were proposed for the “last half-mile” as part of the Central Artery/Tunnel Project (commonly known as the Big Dig). However, due to budget constraints, only a few of these proposed projects have been completed at the time of this study report.<sup>9</sup>

Transportation infrastructure, while technically outside of the study area, has the potential to significantly impact the Esplanade. Plans to repair and eventually rebuild the Storrow Drive Tunnel have repeatedly suggested routing a temporary road through the Esplanade, sparking concern and protest among the public and preservationists.<sup>10</sup> In part due to public outcry against impact to the Esplanade, plans to begin reconstruction of Storrow Drive Tunnel were put on hold, and interim repairs began in 2008. However, due to the deteriorated condition of the Tunnel, more drastic repairs or reconstruction are anticipated to be necessary in the near future.<sup>11</sup>

Other work to transportation infrastructure that could potentially impact the Esplanade has been put into motion by the recently-created Accelerated Bridge Program, which will provide \$3 billion to repair bridges and other infrastructure across Massachusetts. In the program’s initial three-year project list, over \$360 million are budgeted for repairs to bridges and structures bordering or crossing over the Esplanade.<sup>12</sup> While these structures are not included in the Esplanade Study Area, it is likely that this work could impact use, access, and the physical condition of the Esplanade.

#### **6.4 Current Zoning**

Between the Craigie Drawbridge and the Longfellow Bridge, the Esplanade is zoned Open Space; however, from the Longfellow Bridge to the Boston University Bridge the Esplanade is zoned “H-1,” which is a housing zoning. According to the Boston Redevelopment Authority, this anomaly is the remnant of an era in which Open Space zoning was not used and the Esplanade was instead zoned collectively with adjacent properties. As the zoning adjacent properties is adjusted, the remainder of the Esplanade will be converted to Open Space zoning, as has already happened throughout much of the Study Area.

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<sup>8</sup> For more information about the new dam and the last half mile see Karl Haglund, *Inventing the Charles River* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003), Chapter 8, 280-307.

<sup>9</sup> DeMarco, Peter. “Missing Links: Born of the Big Dig, three study parks along the Charles have a big flaw: they’re not tied together. Where’d the \$80 million go?” *The Boston Globe*. 25 November 2007 (accessed online).

<sup>10</sup> Abel, David. “Revised plan for detour on Esplanade stirs outrage-State touts savings during tunnel project.” *Boston Globe*. 16 August 2007 (accessed online).

<sup>11</sup> Abel, David. “Storrow Tunnel to undergo repairs.” *The Boston Globe*. 9 November 2007 (accessed online).

<sup>12</sup> Massachusetts Highway Department. “Governor Patrick Signs \$3 Billion Accelerated Bridge Bond Bill.” Press release, 4 August 2008 (accessed online).

## **7.0 ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES**

### **7.1 Alternatives Available to the Boston Landmarks Commission**

#### **A. Individual Landmark Designation (Parkland only)**

The Charles River Esplanade has been proposed for Boston Landmarks Commission designation as a Landmark (see Section 3.4 Relationship to Criteria for Landmark Designation). This designation would provide for the review of most proposed exterior alterations or changes including those to vegetation and landscape elements, landforms and topography, the addition of virtually any new elements or features as well as new construction, repairs to existing elements or features, and demolition and removal of existing elements or features.

#### **B. Individual Landmark Designation (Parkland and Parkways)**

The state-owned parkways adjacent to the Esplanade (Storrow Drive, Embankment Road, Mugar Way, part of Charles Street, part of Bowker Overpass) could also be included in the designation. The enabling legislation for the Boston Landmarks Commission does not allow the designation of Protection Areas in the central area of Boston east of Massachusetts Avenue and north of the Turnpike. Therefore, designating the parkland as a Landmark and the parkways as a Protection Area is not an option.

#### **C. Denial of Individual Landmark Designation**

The Commission retains the option of not designating any or all of the Esplanade as a Landmark.

#### **D. Preservation Plan**

The Commission could recommend development and implementation of a preservation plan for the property.

#### **E. National Register of Historic Places**

The Esplanade and adjacent parkways are already listed in the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Charles River Basin National Register District. Some portions are also included within the Back Bay National Register District.

### **7.2 Impact of Alternatives**

#### **A. Individual Landmark Designation (Parkland Only)**

Landmark designation represents the city's highest honor and is therefore restricted to cultural resources of outstanding design and/or historical significance at both the local level and above the local level, at the state, regional, or national level. Landmark designation under Chapter 772 would require review of physical changes to the specified features of the property, in accordance with the standards and criteria adopted as part of the designation.

#### **B. Individual Landmark Designation (Parkland and Parkways)**

The state-owned parkways adjacent to the Esplanade (Storrow Drive, Embankment Road, Mugar Way, part of Charles Street, part of Bowker Overpass) have a different history and level of

significance than the Esplanade parkland. They also represent very different kinds of operational considerations. Therefore, including the parkways in the designation is not recommended.

**C. Denial of Individual Landmark Designation**

Without landmark designation, the city would be unable to offer protection to the Esplanade or extend guidance to the owner under chapter 772.

**D. Preservation Plan**

A preservation plan allows an owner to work with interested parties to investigate various adaptive use scenarios, analyze investment costs and rates of return, and provide recommendations for subsequent development. It does not carry regulatory oversight. Note: The Charles River Basin Master Plan and the Esplanade Cultural Landscape Report provide documentation of significant resources. Financial issues associated with private development are not applicable in this situation.

**E. National Register of Historic Places**

National Register listing provides an honorary designation and limited protection from federal, federally-licenses or federally assisted activities. It creates incentives for preservation, notably the federal investment tax credits and grants through the Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund from the Massachusetts Historical Commission. National Register listing provides listing on the State Register affording parallel protection for projects with state involvement and also the availability of state tax credits. Tax credits are not available to public agencies.

## **8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

For its associations with, and identity as a focal point of, the nationally significant Charles River Basin, which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, for its status as the first U.S. public park to provide free, open air athletic facilities in the 1892 Charlesbank section, and as an example of innovative and outstanding park planning and design by three significant landscape architects, Frederick Law Olmsted Sr., Charles Eliot and Arthur Shurcliff, the Esplanade achieves significance beyond the local level. Therefore, the staff of the Boston Landmarks Commission recommends that the Charles River Esplanade be designated a Landmark under Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended. The boundaries shall correspond to the water's edge to the north and the DCR parkways (Charles Street, Storrow Drive, and associated ramps) to the south, and to the upstream edge of the Craigie Drawbridge to the downstream edge of the Boston University Bridge, including land under bridges within this area but not the bridges themselves. These boundaries are illustrated in greater detail in the maps on pages 2, 6, 16, and 27.

## 9.0 GENERAL STANDARDS AND CRITERIA

### 9.1 Introduction

Per sections, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 of the enabling statute (Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975 of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, as amended) Standards and Criteria must be adopted for each Landmark Designation which shall be applied by the Commission in evaluating proposed changes to the property. The Standards and Criteria established thus note those features which must be conserved and/or enhanced to maintain the viability of the Landmark Designation. Before a Certificate of Design Approval or Certificate of Exemption can be issued for such changes, the changes must be reviewed by the Commission with regard to their conformance to the purpose of the statute.

The intent of these guidelines is to help local officials, designers and individual property owners to identify the characteristics that have led to designation, and thus to identify the limitation to the changes that can be made to them. It should be emphasized that conformance to the Standards and Criteria alone does not necessarily insure approval, nor are they absolute, but any request for variance from them must demonstrate the reason for, and advantages gained by, such variance. The Commission's Certificate of Design Approval is only granted after careful review of each application and public hearing, in accordance with the statute.

As intended by the statute a wide variety of buildings and features are included within the area open to Landmark Designation, and an equally wide range exists in the latitude allowed for change. Some properties of truly exceptional architectural and/or historical value will permit only the most minor modifications, while for some others the Commission encourages changes and additions with a contemporary approach, consistent with the properties' existing features and changed uses.

In general, the intent of the Standards and Criteria is to preserve existing qualities that cause designation of a property; however, in some cases they have been structured as to encourage the removal of additions that have lessened the integrity of the property.

It is recognized that changes will be required in designated properties for a wide variety of reasons, not all of which are under the complete control of the Commission or the owners. Primary examples are: Building code conformance and safety requirements; Changes necessitated by the introduction of modern mechanical and electrical systems; Changes due to proposed new uses of a property.

The response to these requirements may, in some cases, present conflicts with the Standards and Criteria for a particular property. The Commission's evaluation of an application will be based upon the degree to which such changes are in harmony with the character of the property.

In some cases, priorities have been assigned within the Standards and Criteria as an aid to property owners in identifying the most critical design features. The treatments outlined below are listed in hierarchical order from least amount of intervention to the greatest amount of intervention. The owner, manager or developer should follow them in order to ensure a successful project that is sensitive to the historic landmark.

- **Identify, Retain, and Preserve** the form and detailing of the materials and features that define the historic character of the structure or site. These are basic treatments that should prevent actions that may cause the diminution or loss of the structure's or site's historic

character. It is important to remember that loss of character can be caused by the cumulative effect of insensitive actions whether large or small.

- **Protect and Maintain** the materials and features that have been identified as important and must be retained during the rehabilitation work. Protection usually involves the least amount of intervention and is done before other work.
- **Repair** the character defining features and materials when it is necessary. Repairing begins with the least amount of intervention as possible. Patching, piecing-in, splicing, consolidating or otherwise reinforcing according to recognized preservation methods are the techniques that should be followed. Repairing may also include limited replacement in kind of extremely deteriorated or missing parts of features. Replacements should be based on surviving prototypes.
- **Replacement** of entire character defining features or materials follows repair when the deterioration prevents repair. The essential form and detailing should still be evident so that the physical evidence can be used to re-establish the feature. The preferred option is replacement of the entire feature in kind using the same material. Because this approach may not always be technically or economically feasible the Commission will consider the use of compatible substitute material. The Commission does not recommend removal and replacement with new material a feature that could be repaired.
- **Missing Historic Features** should be replaced with new features that are based on adequate historical, pictorial and physical documentation. The Commission may consider a replacement feature that is compatible with the remaining character defining features. The new design should match the scale, size, and material of the historic feature.
- **Alterations or Additions** that may be needed to assure the continued use of the historic structure or site should not radically change, obscure or destroy character defining spaces, materials, features or finishes. The Commission encourages new uses that are compatible with the historic structure or site and that do not require major alterations or additions.

In these guidelines the verb **Should** indicates a recommended course of action; the verb **Shall** indicates those actions which are specifically required to preserve and protect significant architectural elements. Finally, the Standards and Criteria have been divided into two levels:

- **Section 9.0** - Those general ones that are common to all landmark designations (building exteriors, building interiors, landscape features and archeological sites).
- **Section 10.0** - Those specific ones that apply to each particular property that is designated. In every case the Specific Standards and Criteria for a particular property shall take precedence over the General ones if there is a conflict.

## 9.2 Levels of Review

The Charles River Esplanade is a large, complex property, involving ongoing maintenance activities, public events, as well as scheduled capital expenditures. The Commission has no desire to interfere with the normal maintenance procedures of the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. In order to provide some guidance for the agencies and organizations involved as well as the Commission, the activities which might be expected to take place on the Esplanade, and which might be construed as causing an alteration to the physical character of the park have been categorized into:

### 1. Routine activities, including maintenance, which are not subject to review by the Commission and do not require an application:

#### Vegetation

Routine pruning and fertilizing of trees and shrubs

Removal of dead or diseased trees or shrubs

Routine mowing and turf management

Manual removal of invasive species

Replacement in kind of vegetative material which has been removed due to disease, injury, or poor health

#### Park Furnishings

Routine repair of existing park furnishings, including benches, fountains, lighting, signage, etc., in the same location and of identical design to those which now exist in the park

#### Architectural, Sculptural, and Engineering Features

Routine care and cleaning including painting or staining which does not involve a change in color.

#### Circulation

Routine road and path maintenance including plowing, striping, cleaning of catch basins, etc.

Minor repairs to road and path surfaces involving no changes in material or design

#### Special Uses

Events and recreational activities where there are routine activities unlikely to have significant impacts on the park or parkway system, for example: maintenance contracts and park partners agreements; issuing of sports permits for existing facilities, issuing of permits for special events and activities which will not result in permanent or long term installation of features and facilities. Please see 9.3, *General Standards and Criteria*, for Standards and Criteria related to impacts of special events and activities.

### 2. Activities which may be determined by the staff to be eligible for a Certificate of Exemption or Administrative Review, requiring an application to the Commission:

#### Vegetation

Planting or removal of limited numbers of trees or shrubs

Major vegetation management and clearing projects

Removal of large areas of invasive vegetation by chemical or mechanical means

#### Architectural, Sculptural and Engineering Features

Repairs to existing features such as walls, terraces, bridges, gates and similar structures

Chemical cleaning or graffiti removal

**Circulation**

Reconstruction of roads and paths, involving minimal changes in alignment, materials or design

**3. Activities requiring an application and full Commission review:**

New construction of any type or removal of any existing features or elements shall require review by the Commission. This includes buildings, structures, paths, recreation facilities, major planting or re-grading.

**Vegetation**

Major planting or removal of trees or shrubs  
Addition or removal of major planting areas

**Topography**

Changes in landform

**Park Furnishings**

Installation or removal of additional park furnishings such as benches, lighting, water fountains, signage, etc., or change in their color, appearance, location or design

**Architectural, Sculptural and Engineering Features**

Installation or removal of statues, fountains or structures or alteration of any existing statues, fountains or structures involving change in design, material, color, location or outward appearance  
Addition of visible drainage or engineering features

**Circulation**

Major reconstruction or redesign of roads and paths

**4. Activities not explicitly listed above:**

In the case of an activity not explicitly covered in these Standards and Criteria, the staff shall determine whether an application is required and if so, whether it shall be an application for a Certificate of Design Approval or Certificate of Exemption.

### 9.3 General Standards and Criteria Common to all Landmarks (Landscapes)

1. In these guidelines the verb **Should** indicates a recommended course of action; the verb **Shall** indicates those actions which are specifically required to preserve and protect significant architectural elements.
2. The intent of these standards and criteria is to preserve the overall character and appearance of the Charles River Esplanade (Esplanade) including its spatial organization, topography, vegetation, circulation and features.
3. The Standards and Criteria acknowledge that there will be changes to the landscape and are intended to guide such change in a manner that is sensitive to the historic character of the Esplanade.
4. Particular emphasis should be given to those portions of the Esplanade which retain the greatest historical integrity and are most visible. Stabilization of existing historic elements and features should be given priority over construction of new elements.
5. Each property within the Esplanade will be separately studied to determine if a later addition(s) and/or alteration(s) can, or should, be removed.
6. Since it is not possible to provide one general guideline, the following factors that will be considered in determining whether a later addition(s) and/or alteration(s) can, or should, be removed include:
  - a. Compatibility with the Esplanade's integrity in scale, materials and character.
  - b. Historic association with the Esplanade.
  - c. Quality in the design and execution of the addition/alteration.
  - d. Functional usefulness.
7. Redesign of pre-existing, non-historic recreational facilities to make them more compatible with the overall landscape is encouraged.
8. Additions to existing recreational facilities are discouraged, but may be considered on a case-by-case basis if such additions make the facilities more compatible with the overall design intent.
9. The development of additional facilities for active recreation or single purpose uses is discouraged, but may be considered on a case-by-case basis.
10. Temporary alterations or additions to the Esplanade for special activities and events, or resulting impacts to the landscape, shall be removed or repaired immediately following the activity or event in order to restore the landscape to its previous condition.
11. The Commission recommends that any work proposed to the Esplanade landscape be executed with the guidance of a landscape professional with expertise in historic landscapes.

## **10.0 SPECIFIC STANDARDS AND CRITERIA**

### **10.1 Design Intent**

1. The Charles River Esplanade was created as, and continues to serve as, a refuge from the city and connection to the river, and as an integrated portion of the entire Charles River Basin. Acknowledging that the landscape character, individual design elements, and the degree of formality have evolved over time, the preservation and reinforcement of the Esplanade's overarching identity shall be given high priority. Actions which diminish the character of the park shall not be permitted.
2. Major aspects of the original design and later historic evolutions establish the Esplanade as a wide promenade along the Charles River, buffered from the city by trees and lawns, interacting with water's edge and interspersed with formal elements such as the Music Oval and landings at connections to city streets. Maintaining a connection to the water and surrounding neighborhoods, while sheltering the Esplanade from the urban disruptions from which it is intended to be a respite, shall be encouraged.
3. Changes to the property which have taken place in the course of time for ecological and functional reasons are evidence of the history of the Esplanade. Many of these changes have developed significance in their own right, and this significance should be recognized and respected. "Later contributing features" shall be the term used to convey this concept. Areas which retain the highest degree of historic integrity shall receive the most careful preservation treatment while other areas and features, which have changed more over time, may merit a more adaptive approach.
4. Proposed changes shall respect the original design intent and later historic evolutions of the design, and shall seek to reinforce rather than change them.
5. New materials should, whenever appropriate, match the material being replaced in physical properties, design, color, material and character.
6. New additions or alterations to the landscape should not disrupt the essential form and integrity of the landscape and should be compatible with the size, scale, color, material, spatial organization and character of the property.
7. New additions or alterations should be done in such a way that if they were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the landscape would be unimpaired.

## 10.2 Spatial Organization

1. Views and vistas are among the most important aspects of the Esplanade, therefore, they should be maintained and preserved.
2. Original or later contributing spatial organizational features shall be retained in their existing configuration and shall be maintained through proper drainage, access and erosion control, pruning and removal of invasive vegetation, and use of other recognized horticultural and soil management practices appropriate in an historic landscape.
3. Important visual connections between spaces within the landscape shall be retained by maintaining vegetation, circulation and topography features which contribute to these visual relationships.
4. The historic spatial and functional relationship of circulation systems, water features and structures shall be preserved by maintaining the massing of adjacent vegetation, vistas, or other associated features.
5. Maintenance of, removal of, and/or additions of vegetation materials and features should consider maintaining existing or intended vistas and spaces, screening intrusions, and maintaining defined areas of shade and sun.
6. Alteration of existing or addition of new spatial organizational features will be considered if they do not alter the design intent of the historic landscape.
7. When replacement of features is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
8. Deteriorated or missing spatial organizational features shall be replaced with features that match the original in form, shape, color and texture.
9. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered.
10. The form and shape of individual landscape spaces and their associated vertical elements shall be retained in order to preserve the historic relationships of the landscape. Examples include the relationship between the Hatch Shell and Music Oval or lawns with high tree canopies.
11. Moving or demolishing historic structures that would alter spatial and visual relationships in the landscape shall not be allowed.
12. Construction of new structures that would alter historic spatial and visual relationships in the landscape shall not be allowed.
13. Intrusive views of new construction may be screened with compatible fencing or plant material so long as the screening would not detract from the historic character of the landscape.

### **10.3 Vegetation (includes Trees, Shrubs, Ground Covers, Hedges, Fields, Planting Beds, etc.)**

#### **A. General**

1. Original or later contributing vegetation materials and features shall be retained in their existing configuration and shall be maintained through proper horticultural management practices appropriate in an historic landscape.
2. Alteration of existing or addition of new vegetation materials and features will be considered if they do not alter the design intent of the historic landscape.
3. When replacement of vegetation materials or features is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
4. Deteriorated or missing vegetation materials and features shall be replaced with materials that match the original in size, shape, color, form and texture.
5. If using the same vegetation material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute vegetation materials may be considered if they convey the same growth habit, form, foliage and bloom characteristics as the historic plant.
6. Existing healthy vegetation material shall be retained unless it is part of a later non-compatible design or is volunteer vegetation inconsistent with the original design.
7. Consideration for removal of existing healthy vegetation materials and features will be given when it is in conflict with the historic design intent of the landscape, such as when an important vista has become overgrown or when plants have grown out of scale with their intended purpose.
8. Maintenance of, removal of, and/or additions of vegetation materials and features should consider maintaining existing or intended vistas and spaces, screening intrusions, and maintaining defined areas of shade and sun.

#### **B. Plant Health, Maintenance, and Safety**

1. Invasive vegetation shall be removed whenever technically feasible and shall be replaced, if necessary, with vegetation consistent with the design intent of the historic landscape.
2. Plants or portions of plants that are mutilated, distorted, or that pose a safety hazard, should be removed.
3. Plants with diseases that are difficult or not practical to control or cure should be removed promptly to prevent their infection of other plants.
4. Plant replacements should be added on a schedule that will assure continuity in the landscape design.
5. Existing vegetation shall be protected from any adjacent construction activities by fencing the root system prior to the start of construction.

**10.4 Topography**  
**(includes the Shape, Slope, Elevation, Contour of Landforms and Ground Plane, etc.)**

1. Original or later contributing topographical features shall be retained in their existing configuration and shall be maintained through proper drainage, access and erosion control, and recognized soil management practices appropriate in an historic landscape.
2. Natural features which are integrated into the landscape shall be treated as part of the overall design and shall be retained.
3. Alteration of existing or addition of new topographical features will be considered if they do not alter the design intent of the historic landscape.
4. When replacement of materials or features is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
5. Deteriorated or missing topographical features shall be replaced with materials that match the original in form, shape, design and material.
6. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered.
7. Wherever appropriate, plant materials rather than structural materials should be used to solve erosion problems.

## **10.5 Circulation (includes Paths, Trails, Walks, etc.)**

### **A. Circulation Layout**

1. Original or later contributing layouts of walks and paved areas shall be retained and maintained.
2. When replacement of circulation layouts is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
3. Alteration of existing or addition of new circulation layouts will be considered if it can be shown that better site circulation is necessary and that the alteration does not alter the design intent of the historic landscape.
4. Consideration for removal of existing circulation systems and features will be given when it is in conflict with the original design intent of the landscape.

### **B. Circulation Materials and Features**

1. Original or later contributing circulation materials and features shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching, piecing-in or reinforcing the material or feature using recognized preservation methods.
2. When replacement of circulation materials or features is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
3. Deteriorated or missing circulation materials and features shall be replaced with materials that match the original in size, shape, color, profile, form, texture and detail of installation.
4. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered.
5. Alteration of existing or addition of new circulation materials and features will be considered if they do not alter the design intent of the historic landscape design.
6. Consideration will be given to an alternate paving material if it can be shown that its properties will be compatible with the original or later contributing design concept.

## **10.6 Water Features and Materials (includes fountains, pools, lagoons, shorelines, etc.)**

### **A. Water Features**

1. Original or later contributing water features shall be retained and maintained.
2. Existing water features should not be altered. Consideration will be given to proposals that improve site drainage, improve water quality, enhance the landscape design or improve wildlife habitat, where appropriate.
3. Alteration of existing or addition of new water features will be considered if the alteration does not alter the design intent of the historic landscape.
4. When replacement of water features is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
5. Consideration for removal of existing water features will be given when it is in conflict with the original design intent of the historic landscape.

### **B. Water Feature Materials**

1. Original or later contributing water feature materials shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching, piecing-in, consolidating or reinforcing the material using recognized preservation methods.
2. Deteriorated or missing water feature materials shall be replaced with materials that match the original in size, shape, color, profile, form, texture and detail of installation.
3. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered.
4. Alteration of existing or addition of new water feature materials will be considered if they do not alter the design intent of the historic landscape.

### **C. Waterways and Wetlands**

1. Dredging of waterways may be permitted as a means of retaining historic waterways, when appropriate from an ecological perspective.
2. All wetlands shall be preserved. In addition to review by the Boston Landmarks Commission, review of the Boston Conservation Commission may be required.
3. All shorelines shall be protected from erosion in a manner in keeping with the design intent of the historic landscape.

**10.7 Buildings and Structures (See also 10.8, Architectural Materials)  
(includes the Hatch Shell, Walls, Playground Equipment, Picnic Shelters, Plazas, Steps,  
Bridges, Buildings, etc.)**

1. The general intent is to preserve the original or later contributing structures that enhance the historic landscape.
2. Original or later contributing structures, materials, elements, details and ornamentation shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired using recognized preservation methods.
3. New additions/alterations to the landscape (such as: parking lots, comfort stations, buildings, etc.) may be considered if they do not alter the design intent of the historic landscape. If allowed, they shall be as unobtrusive as possible and preserve any original or later contributing landscape features.
4. When replacement is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
5. Deteriorated or missing structures, materials, elements, details and ornamentation shall be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile and detail of installation.
6. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered.
7. Removal of non-historic structures that are in conflict with the design intent of the historic landscape is encouraged.
8. Structures shall be protected from arson and other acts of vandalism through proper monitoring procedures and methods such as: permanent installation of smoke detectors, alarms, or other security systems, or temporarily boarding up windows and openings. Fencing around structures may be allowed. Barbwire will not be allowed.
9. Necessary precautions to prevent demolition by neglect of maintenance and repairs shall be taken. Demolition of designated buildings, structures, and landscapes in violation of Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended, is subject to penalty as cited in Section 10 of Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended.

## 10.8 Architectural Materials

### A. General

The Commission recommends that work proposed to the materials outlined in sections B, C and D be executed with the guidance of a professional building materials conservator.

### B. Masonry (Brick, Stone, Terra Cotta, Concrete, Stucco and Mortar)

1. Original or later contributing masonry materials, features, details, surfaces and ornamentation shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching, piecing-in, or consolidating the masonry using recognized preservation methods.
2. When replacement of materials or elements is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
3. Deteriorated or missing masonry materials, features, details, surfaces and ornamentation shall be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile and detail of installation.
4. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered.
5. Original mortar should be retained.
6. Deteriorated mortar shall be carefully removed by hand-raking the joints.
7. Use of mechanical saws and hammers may be allowed on a case-by-case basis. Additional review by other City of Boston environmental agencies may be required.
8. Repointing mortar shall duplicate the original mortar in strength, composition, color, texture, joint size, joint profile and method of application.
9. Sample panels of raking the joints and repointing shall be reviewed and approved by Commission staff.
10. Cleaning of masonry is discouraged and should be performed only when necessary to halt deterioration.
11. If the building is to be cleaned, **the mildest method possible** shall be used. Additional review by other City of Boston environmental agencies may be required.
12. A test patch of the cleaning method(s) shall be reviewed and approved on site by Commission staff. Test patches should always be carried out well in advance of cleaning (including exposure to all seasons if possible).
13. **Sandblasting (wet or dry), wire brushing, or other similar abrasive cleaning methods shall not be permitted.** Doing so changes the visual quality of the material and accelerates deterioration.
14. Waterproofing or water repellents are strongly discouraged. These treatments are generally not effective in preserving masonry and can cause permanent damage. The Commission does

recognize that in extraordinary circumstances their use may be required to solve a specific problem. Samples of any proposed treatment shall be reviewed by the Commission before application.

15. In general, painting masonry surfaces shall not be allowed. Painting masonry surfaces will be considered only when there is documentary evidence that this treatment was used at some point in the history of the property.

### **C. Wood**

1. Original or later contributing wood surfaces, features, details and ornamentation shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching, piecing-in, consolidating or reinforcing the wood using recognized preservation methods.
2. When replacement of materials or elements is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
3. Deteriorated or missing wood surfaces, features, details and ornamentation shall be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile and detail of installation.
4. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered.
5. Cleaning of wooden elements shall use **the mildest method possible**. Additional review by other City of Boston environmental agencies may be required.
6. Paint removal should be considered only where there is paint surface deterioration and as part of an overall maintenance program which involves repainting or applying other appropriate protective coatings. Coatings such as paint help protect the wood from moisture and ultraviolet light and stripping the wood bare will expose the surface to the effects of weathering.
7. Damaged or deteriorated paint should be removed to the next sound layer using **the mildest method possible**. Additional review by other City of Boston environmental agencies may be required.
8. **Propane or butane torches, sandblasting, water blasting or other abrasive cleaning and/or paint removal methods shall not be permitted**. Doing so changes the visual quality of the wood and accelerates deterioration.
9. Repainting should be based on paint seriation studies. If an adequate record does not exist repainting shall be done with colors that are appropriate to the style and period of the building.

### **D. Architectural Metals (Cast Iron, Steel, Pressed Tin, Copper, Aluminum and Zinc)**

1. Original or later contributing metal materials, features, details and ornamentation shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching, splicing or reinforcing the metal using recognized preservation methods.

2. When replacement of materials or elements is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
3. Deteriorated or missing metal materials, features, details and ornamentation shall be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile and detail of installation.
4. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered.
5. Cleaning of metal elements either to remove corrosion or deteriorated paint shall use **the mildest method possible**. Additional review by other City of Boston environmental agencies may be required.
6. Abrasive cleaning methods, such as low pressure dry grit blasting, may be allowed as long as it does not abrade or damage the surface.
7. A test patch of the cleaning method(s) shall be reviewed and approved on site by Commission staff. Test patches should always be carried out well in advance of cleaning (including exposure to all seasons if possible).
8. Cleaning to remove corrosion and paint removal should be considered only where there is deterioration and as part of an overall maintenance program which involves repainting or applying other appropriate protective coatings. Paint or other coatings help retard the corrosion rate of the metal. Leaving the metal bare will expose the surface to accelerated corrosion.
9. Repainting should be based on paint seriation studies. If an adequate record does not exist repainting shall be done with colors that are appropriate to the style and period of the building.

**10.9 Furnishings and Objects**  
**(includes Benches, Lights, Signs, Drinking Fountains, Trash Receptacles, Fences, Tree Grates, Flagpoles, Sculptures, Monuments, Memorials, Planters, Urns, Balustrades, etc.)**

**A. General**

1. Original or later contributing furnishings and objects, materials, elements, features and details shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching, splicing, consolidating or otherwise reinforcing using recognized preservation methods.
2. Existing fountains, monuments, statues, and memorials shall be carefully preserved and restored where necessary, maintaining the integrity of the original material and design and with recognized preservation methods. Consulting an art conservationist is strongly recommended.
3. Alteration of existing or addition of new furnishings and objects will be considered if the alteration does not alter the basic concept of the historic landscape design.
4. When replacement of furnishings and objects and their materials are necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
5. Deteriorated or missing furnishings and objects materials, elements, features and details shall be replaced with materials that match the original in material, size, shape, color, profile, form, texture, configuration and detail of installation.
6. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered.
7. New furnishings and objects should be designed and installed using vandal resistant standards.
8. The Boston Landmarks Commission will consider work proposed as part of DCR's Storrow Drive and Soldiers Field Safety and Improvements and Maintenance Projects, including repair/replacement of fencing, guardrails, bike and foot paths, and lighting (see 6.3, Current Planning Issues).

**B. Signage**

1. Location and design of signs shall be reviewed, and should follow a standardized model throughout the Esplanade.
2. Signs shall conform to a simple, comprehensive sign system.
3. Existing non-conforming signs should be removed.

## 10.10 Archaeology

1. The landscape should be surveyed for potential archeological sites prior to the beginning of any construction project.
2. Known Archeological site(s) shall be protected during any construction project.
3. Disturbance of the terrain within the landscape shall be kept to a minimum so as not to disturb any unknown archeological materials
4. All planning, any necessary site investigation, or data recovery shall be conducted by a professional archeologist.

## 10.11 Accessibility

1. A three-step approach to protecting the integrity and historic character of the property is recommended for identification and implementation of accessibility modifications:
  - a. Review the historical significance of the property and identify character-defining features;
  - b. Assess the property's existing and required level of accessibility;
  - c. Evaluate accessibility options within a preservation context.
2. Because of the complex nature of accessibility the Commission will review proposals on a case-by-case basis. The Commission recommends consulting with the following document which is available from the Commission office:

U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Cultural Resources, Preservation Assistance Division; **Preservation Brief 32 "Making Historic Properties Accessible"** by Thomas C. Jester and Sharon C. Park, AIA.

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**12.0 APPENDIX A: VEGETATION LIST**

**1911 Guy Lowell Shrub List**

(These were planted along the Back Street seawall from the Longfellow Bridge to Charlesgate. No large trees were planted at this time. See circa 1911 planting plans by Guy Lowell, which are in DCR Plans Archive.)

<i>Scientific Name</i>	<i>Common Name</i>
Berberis thunbergii	Japanese Barberry
Berberis vulgaris	Common Barberry
Cercis canadensis	Eastern Redbud
Cornus alba	Tatarian Dogwood
Cornus florida	Flowering Dogwood
Cornus rubra	Pink Flowering Dogwood
Cornus stolonifera	Red Osier Dogwood
Cornus stolonifera, var lutea	Yellow Twig Dogwood
Crataegus cordata	Washington Hawthorn
Crataegus coccinea	Scarlet Hawthorn
Crataegus mollis	Downy Hawthorn
Crataegus oxyacantha	English Hawthorn
Forsythia intermedia	Border Forsythia
Forsythia suspensa	Weeping Forsythia
Lonicera morrowii	Morrow's Honeysuckle
Lonicera tartarica alba	Tatarian Honeysuckle
Lonicera tartarica rubra	Red Tartarian Honeysuckle
Philadelphus coronarius	Sweet Mockorange
Philadelphus lemoinei	Lemoine Mockorange
Rhamnus catharticus	Buckthorn
Spiraea vanhouttei	Vanhouette Spirea
Symphoricarpus racemosus	Snow Berry
Viburnum acerifolium	Mapleleaf Viburnum
Viburnum dentatum	Arrowwood
Viburnum lentago	Nannyberry
Viburnum opulus	European Cranberrybush
Viburnum plicatum	Japanese Snowball

**1930s Shurcliff Tree and Shrub List**

(partial list of trees and shrubs used throughout the Esplanade)

For additional information on 1930s plantings on the Esplanade, see the following plans in the DCR Plans Archive: 21007, 21339, 21340, 21341, 21381, 21382, 21383, 21903, 21904, 21905.

Note: this is not a complete list.)

<i>Scientific Name</i>	<i>Common Name</i>
Acer platanoides	Norway Maple
Platanus occidentalis	Buttonwood/Sycamore
Quercus palustris	Pin Oak
Quercus rubra	Red Oak
Salix alba	White Willow
Tilia europaea	European Linden
Acanthopanax pentaphyllum	Fiveleaf Aralia
Aralia spinosa	Devils-Walkingstick

Berberis thunbergii	Japan Barberry
Cornus alba siberica	Tatarian Dogwood
Crataegus crusgalli	Cockspur Thorn
Deutzia, Pride of Rochester	Pride of Rochester
Forsythia fortunei	Fortune Forsythia
Forsythia suspensa	Weeping Forsythia
Ligustrum ibota	Ibota Privet
Ligustrum amurense	Amur Privet
Lonicera morrowi	Morrow Honeysuckle
Lonicera tatarica	Tatarian Honeysuckle
Philadelphus coronarius nana	Dwarf Mockorange
Rhamnus cathartica	Common Buckthorn
Rhus canadensis	Fragrant Sumac
Spiraea thunbergii	Thunberg Spirea
Spiraea vanhouttei	Vanhouette Spirea
Syringa vulgaris	Common Lilac
Viburnum dentatum	Arrowwood
Viburnum lantana	Wayfaring Tree
Viburnum lentago	Nannyberry
Viburnum opulus	European Cranberrybush
Viburnum opulus nanum	Dwarf Cranberrybush
Weigela rosea	Pink Weigela

**1950s Shurcliff Tree and Shrub List**

(They were used mostly on the islands.) For additional information on 1950s plantings on the Esplanade, see the following plans in the DCR Plans Archive: 29776, 30980x, 31280x, 31422x, 31423x, 31424x, 32283x, 34022x, 34929x. Note: this is not a complete list.)

<i>Scientific Name</i>	<i>Common Name</i>
Acer plantanoides	Norway Maple
Cercidiphyllum japonicum	Katsuratree
Crataegus crusgalli	Cockspur Hawthorn
Gleditsia triacanthos	Common Honeylocust
Quercus borealis	Northern Red Oak
Quercus palustris	Pin Oak
Salix babylonica	Babylon Weeping Willow
Tilia cordata	Littleleaf Linden
Acanthopanax sieboldiana	Five Leaf Aralia
Berberis thunbergii	Japanese Barberry
Cornus alba	Tatarian Dogwood
Forsythia intermedia	Border forsythia
Ligustrum amurense	Amur privet
Spiraea Vanhoutii	Vanhoutte spirea