United States Department of the Interior Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only received AUG | 2 1983 date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*Type all entries—complete applicable sections

| Type an entries | —complete appl | icable sections | | | |
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| historic Ocean | n Parkway | | 9.00 | | |
| and/or common | | | | | |
| 2. Loca | ation | 9 | 8 | | |
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| city, town Bro | ooklyn | ·-,,,, | vicinity of | congressional district | |
| state Nev | w York | code 036 | county | Kings | code 047 |
| 3. Clas | sificatio | n | | | |
| Category district building(s) structure site object X Parkway | Ownership X public private both Public Acquisit in process being considered | v tion Acce | occupied inoccupied vork in progress ssible es: restricted es: unrestricted | Present Use agriculture commercial educational entertainment government industrial military | museum X park private residence religious scientific transportation other:Thorough-fa |
| 4. Own | er of Pro | perty | | | |
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| 5. Loca | ation of | Legal D | escripti | on | |
| courthouse, regis | stry of deeds, etc. | Kings Count | y Register's | Office | |
| street & number | Municipal H | Building - 21 | .0 Joralemon | Street | |
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| depository for su | irvey records | Landmarks Pr | reservation C | ommission, 20 Vesey | |
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| 7. | Des | Crip | tion |
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| Condition excellent good _X fair | deteriorated ruins unexposed | Check one unaltered X altered | Check one X original site moved date | NA | |
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Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Designed in 1866 by Frederick Law Olmsted, Ocean Parkway was planned to extend from the southern entrance of Prospect Park in Brooklyn to Coney Island. As actually built in 1874-76, this six-mile thoroughfare stretches from the Atlantic Ocean to just a few blocks south of Prospect Park.

Like Eastern Parkway, Ocean Parkway is 210 feet wide, featuring two tree-lined malls each 20 feet wide, flanking a 70-foot-wide central drive. The western mall, composed of a concrete promenade, provides park benches, playing tables and a bicycle path. The eastern mall originally contained a bridle path. The parkway's malls and adjacent properties are shaded by a canopy of deciduous trees, as suggested by Olmsted: maple, elm, sycamore, ginko and oak. Separated from the drive by the two malls are the flanking 25-foot-wide service roads and two 15-foot-wide sidewalks.

Although the roadways and sidewalks are now paved in concrete, the original character of the Olmsted parkway remains. The thoroughfare still separately accommodates commercial and pleasure traffic by its divided plan which in length and dimensions has remained unchanged.

Today, the housing which lines Ocean Parkway is predominantly early twentieth century and adheres to the original 30-foot zoning restriction. Near Coney Island, tall post-World War II apartments and hotels break the rhythm created by these smaller homes, but they further develop the ocean resort flavor of the parkway.

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Continuation sheet

Kings County New York Ocean Parkway

Item number

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Page 1

Mr. Henry R. Fulton, Deputy Commissioner, Bureau of Highway Operations 40 Worth Street
New York, New York 10013

Henry Stern
Department of Parks & Recreation
The Arsenal
New York, New York

8. Significance

| 1400-1499 1500-1599 1600-1699 1700-1799 X 1800-1899 | Areas of Significance—Carcheology-prehistoricagriculturearchitectureartcommercecommunications | X community planning X — conservation — I — economics — I — education — I — engineering — I — exploration/settlement — I | literature military music philosophy politics/government | religion science sculpture social/ humanitarian theater transportation other (specify) |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| Specific dates | 1866-76 | Builder/Architect Frederick | Law Olmsted & C | Calvert Vaux |

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Designed by Frederick Law Olmsted in 1866, Ocean Parkway is architecturally and historically significant as the first parkway planned in the United States. As such it established a new concept in road construction. Built in 1874-76 it was conceived as part of a network of parkways that incorporated tree-lined malls, walkways, pleasure drives, and service roads. Ocean Parkway was planned to link Prospect Park with Coney Island, bringing greenery to the people of Brooklyn.

From his established vantage point as one of the country's most prominent social critics and landscape architects. Frederick Law Olmsted (1822-1903) was especially sensitive to the needs of the fast-growing cities. His travels through the South during the 1850s made clear to him the cultural and social shortcomings of a purely rural existence, and yet the relentless commercially oriented grid of the northern city plan proved to be incompatible with residential needs. Picturesquely planned and systematically placed parks were proposed by Olmsted as the cure for both the individual and cumulative health problems of city residents. Parks as a solution to help eliminate the overcrowding in the 19th-century city were not a new idea. In 1848 A.J. Downing, America's most popular architectural writer, publicized the extraordinary public parks of France and Germany where "all classes assemble under the shade of the same trees..." In the 1850s Napolean III, with the assistance of his great minister Baron Haussmann, sought to improve the failing physical and moral health of the citizens of Paris by opening up broad avenues and laying out romantically inspired public parks. Frederick Law Olmsted followed this line of thinking, and throughout his career as landscape architect he planned open space in various physical forms to meet the individual requirements of each locality.

Although Olmsted and his partner, Calvert Vaux, intended that their first open space, Central Park, should be a self-contained rural haven set apart from the surrounding architecture, they did address themselves to the problem of joining the park with the surrounding streets. Rather than ignoring the street, they proposed a mall of trees to be planted between the adjacent sidewalk and roadway. This natural border served the dual purpose of blocking off the cityscape from the park views and serving as "a handsome effect" leading to the Fifth and Eighth Avenue entrances.² This initial effort foreshadowed the direction which their later work was to take.

The approaches which were planned for Brooklyn's Prospect Park reflect European park and roadway developments which Olmsted had observed during his journey abroad in 1859. Boulevards designed exclusively for pedestrians date back to the 17th century in France. However, it was not until the 19th century that it became popular to join these recreational roadways to public parks. Olmsted spent two weeks in Paris and made eight trips to the newly developed Bois de Boulogne. In 1853 Napolean III and his minister Haussmann began the transformation of this state forest into a romantically conceived public park along the lines of London's Hyde Park. Access to the park from the city was provided by a great boulevard of unprecedented width which was planned as an extension of the park and featured a central pleasure-drive flanked by picturesquely landscaped lawns bordered by residential streets. In order to insure the maximum width of park along the Avenue de 1'Imperatrice, as the boulevard was named, an imperial decree forbade the construction of residences within 33 feet of the bordering roadways. Olmsted stated that he was also

9. Major Bibliographical References

(See Continuation Sheet)

| Acreage of nominated property | approximately | 123 acres | |
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| Quadrangle name | | | Quadrangle scale |
| UMT References (See Contin | nuation Sheet) | | |
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| ad of Ocean Parkway List all states and counties for | | | |
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Ocean Parkway

Continuation sheet Kings County, NY

Item number 8

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influenced by the layout of Berlin's famed <u>Unter der Linden</u>, where a system of separate road ways through a broad tree-lined mall accommodated both commercial and pleasure traffic. 4 Olmsted's advance upon the French and German prototypes was also intended as an extension of the park itself and to convey this primary role, he termed it "parkway."

There can be little doubt that Olmsted invented the term "parkway." The designer's painstaking history of street types which appears in the 1868 Annual Report of the Commissioners of Prospect Park shows that he had thought through the subject most thoroughly and had done so to add a new category. Olmsted's very wording suggests the act of invention. "The 'Parkway' plan which we now propose advances still another step,..." This step featured tree-lined malls with a central carriage drive and flanking walks set apart from residential service roads and sidewalks. Six rows of trees on grassy strips divided the routes and created an endless allée of refreshment. Perhaps influenced by the French example, Olmsted reserved a 30-foot area from the sidewalk to each building front where only porches, fences, fountains and statuary could intrude on the lawn.

Ocean Parkway was the first of these parkways and evolved from an idea expressed by Olmsted and Calvert Vaux in their 1866 preliminary report to the Park Commissioners of Brooklyn on their plans for Prospect Park. Under the section entitled "Suburban Connections," they suggested that the shaded "pleasure" drive on the western side of Prospect Park be extended from the park to the ocean. The road should be "of a picturesque character... neither very straight nor very level, and should be bordered by a small belt of trees and shrubbery." Due to funding problems, construction of Ocean Parkway was delayed and Eastern Parkway was actually completed first in 1874. However, it was during the planning of Ocean Parkway that Olmsted first worked out his ideas for the parkway system.

On May 11, 1869, an act was passed in the New York State Legislature (ammended in 1872) giving authority to Brooklyn Park Commissioners to "lay out, open, and improve a public highway or avenue from Prospect Park, in the City of Brooklyn, towards Coney Island."

Construction of the parkway began in 1874 and was completed to Kings Highway in 1875. The extension from Kings Highway to Coney Island began in 1876 and was opened on November 11, 1876. The cost of construction was borne entirely by the owners whose property lay within 1,050 feet on either side of the parkway. It was not until 1882, when legislation was passed, that these property owners received compensation for their loss. Under the terms of this law, Kings County paid two thirds of the cost while the property owners paid the remaining third.

Originally, the Brooklyn Parks Commission had control over an extra 30 feet on either side of the 210-foot-wide parkway. Within this extra area "no buildings or other erections, except porches, piazzas, fences, fountains and statuary shall remain or be at any time placed; which space on each side of the avenue, and in addition thereto, shall be used for courtyards only, and may be planted with trees, shrubbery, and otherwise ornamented, at the discretion of the respective owners or occupants thereof; but such an ornamentation shall be under the direction of the said Park Commissioners..."

For many people in Brooklyn, Ocean Parkway is the only large, open space with trees and grass that is readily accessible. Because the Prospect Expressway merges with Ocean Parkway at Church Avenue, the central roadway can no longer be considered a "pleasure drive." But the original intention that the parkway should also serve as a promenade and greenbelt for the residents of the neighboring communities has, to a great degree, been realized.

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¹Andrew Jackson Downing, <u>Rural Essays</u> (New York: Leavitt & Allen, 1854), p. 141.

Albert Fein, ed., Landscape into Cityscape: Frederick Law Olmsted's Plans for a Greater New York City (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1967), p. 71.

³J.M. and Brian Chapman, <u>The Life and Times of Baron Haussman</u> (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1957), pp. 191-192.

⁴Fein, p. 158.

⁵ Ibid.

The East Parkway and Boulevards, in the City of Brooklyn (New York: Baker & Gödwin, 1873), pp. 24-28.

⁷Fein, p. 158.

⁸Henry R. Stiles, <u>The History of Kings County: 1683-1884</u> (New York: W.W. Munsell & Co., 1884), vol. I., p. 172.

^{9&}lt;sub>Ibid</sub>.

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NPS Form 10-900-a

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Coney Island, N.Y. and Brooklyn, N.Y. Quads

Scale:

1:24000

UTM References:

- A) 18/ 586660/ 4499580
- 18/ 586720/ 4499610 B)
- 18/ 587000/ 4497420 C)
- 18/ 587070/ 4497420 18/ 587550/44493940 D)
- E)
- F)
- G)
- 18/ 587620/ 4493920 18/ 587260/ 4492050 18/ 587320/ 4492030 H)

UTM References A and B are located only on the Brooklyn, N.Y. Quad Map, while D, E, F, G, and H are located only on the Coney Island, N.Y. Quad Map. UTM References C and D are located on the boundary line between Coney Island and Brooklyn Quads, and are notated on both maps.

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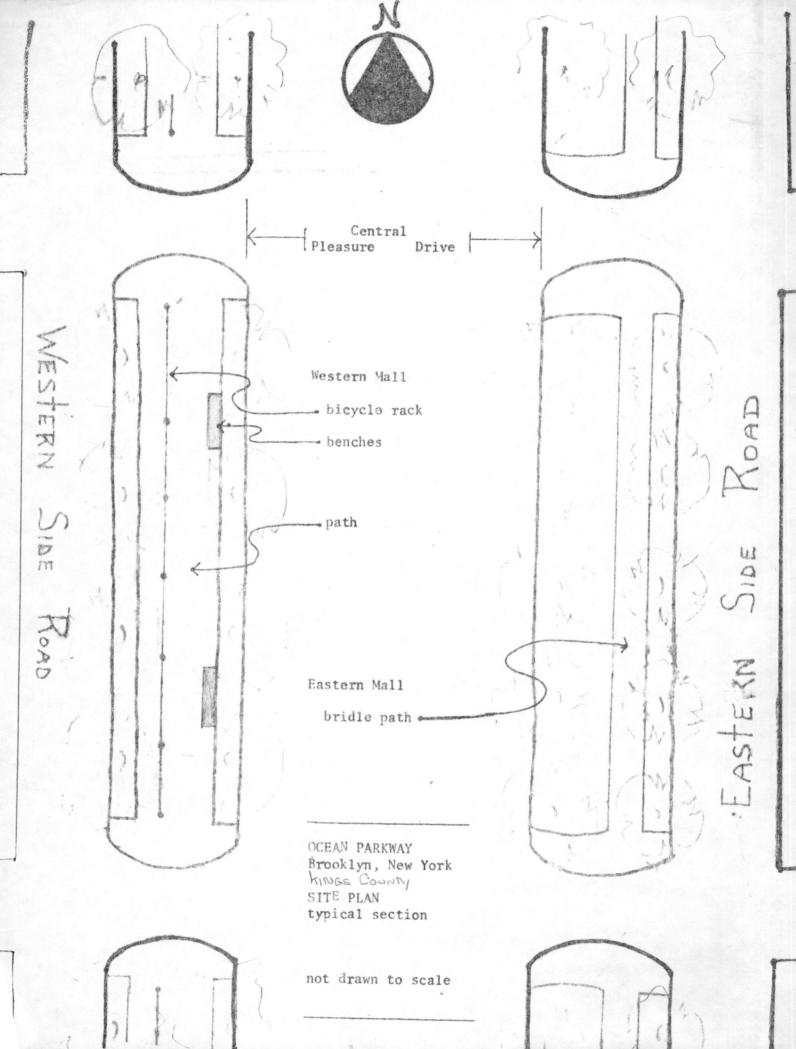
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Form prepared by:

Holly Huckins Landmarks Preservation Commission 20 Vesey Street New York, N.Y. 10007

(212) 566-7577



WASO Form - 177 ("R" June 1984)

boundary selection

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Ocean Parkway Kings County NEW YORK Working No. ____AUG | 2 | 1983 Fed. Reg. Date: ___ Date Due: ___ 9 Action: ___ACCEPT_ Entered in the ____RETURN resubmission National Register REJECT. nomination by person or local government Federal Agency: _ owner objection appeal request appeal NR decision ☐ sample Substantive Review: Reviewer's comments: Recom./Criteria_ Reviewer __ Discipline__ Date___ see continuation sheet _technical corrections cited below Nomination returned for: _ substantive reasons discussed below 1. Name 2. Location 3. Classification Ownership Status Present Use Category **Public Acquisition** Accessible 4. Owner of Property 5. Location of Legal Description 6. Representation in Existing Surveys ☐ yes no Has this property been determined eligible? 7. Description Condition Check one Check one unaltered original site excellent deteriorated altered good ruins moved fair unexposed Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance summary paragraph completeness clarity alterations/integrity dates

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| 11. Form Prepared By | | | |
| 12. State Historic Preservation | on Officer Certification | N. Barrier | |
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| 13. Other | | | |
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1. Ocean Parkway
Kings County, New York
Photo by: Carl Forster, 1982
Neg. at: New York Landmarks
Preservation Commission

Avenue S, looking north.



2. Ocean Parkway
Kings County, New York
Photo by: Carl Forster, 1982
Neg. at: New York Landmarks
Preservation Commission

Avenue I, looking north



3. Ocean Parkway
Kings County, New York
Photo by: Carl Forster, 1982
Neg. at: New York Landmarks
Preservation Commission

Cortelyou Road, looking north

