

## Front Park

(See Figures 25-29)

### Defining Attributes

- The location on a bluff overlooking the Niagara River and Lake Erie: “It’s all about the view.”
- Designed as a public ceremonial space.
- Adjacent to site of Fort Porter.

### Key Missing or Lost Elements

- The view is obstructed by highway and bridge infrastructure.
- Sheridan Drive.
- Lakeview House, which offered outstanding views and was the key architectural element in the park design.
- The Bank.
- The formal terrace gardens.
- Separation of people and traffic.
- Perimeter buffer plantings.
- The Peace Bridge Plaza has displaced Fort Porter.
- Original pathways.

### Critical Baseline Assumptions

- Interim improvements to the park planned by the City of Buffalo are completed.
- The Peace Bridge Expansion Project is implemented with Shared Border Management with the plaza as far north as possible.
- Elements of the Fort Porter archaeological site are interpreted.

### Suggested Areas of Focus

The overarching goal for Front Park is to reconnect park with its *raison d’etre*—the water (visually and logistically) and to attract people back to the park, which was, when built, by far the most-visited park in the City of Buffalo.

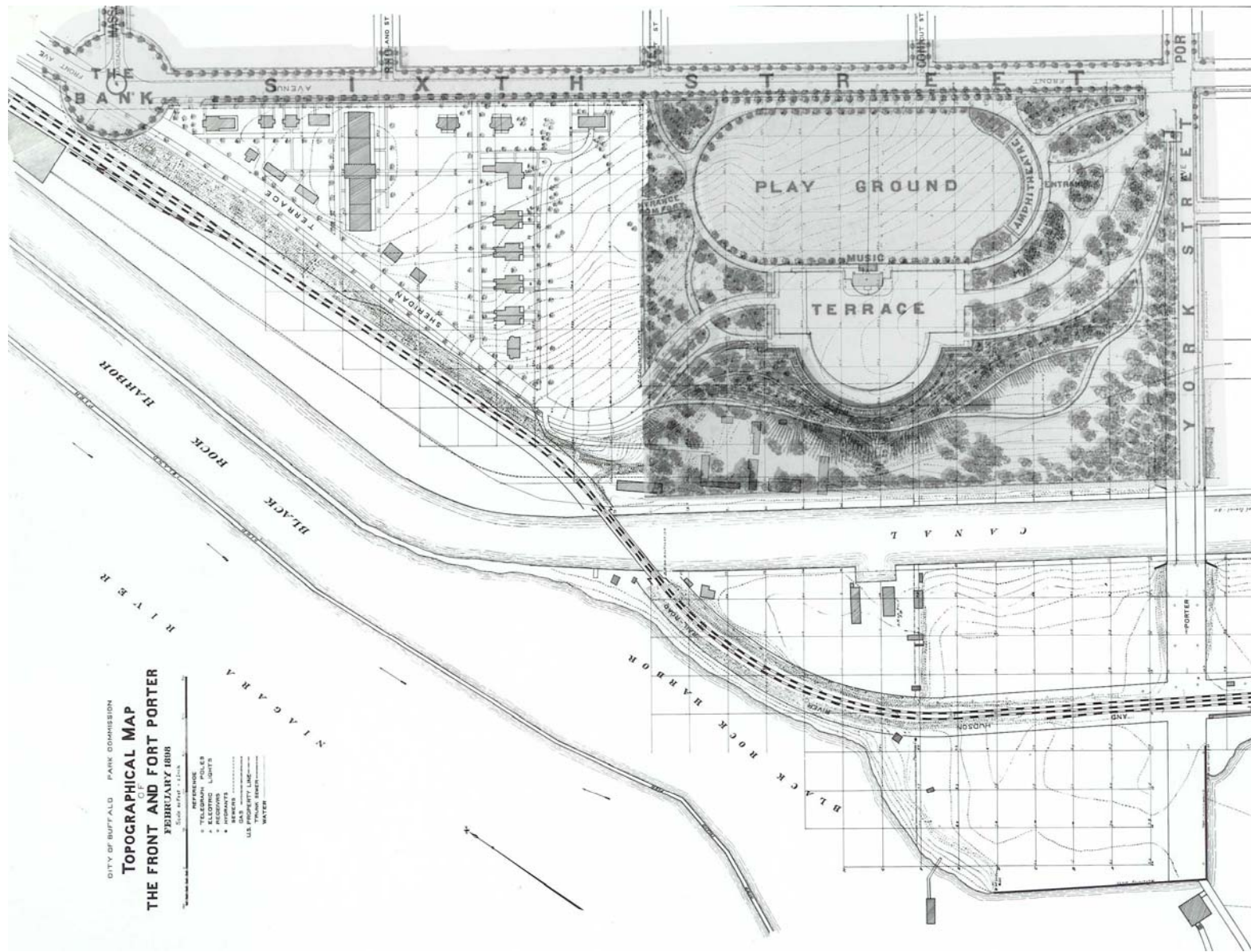
This strategy resulted in the following preliminary list of recommended project groupings, designed together to



Figure 25 - Historic view from Front Park



Figure 26 – Front Park was more peaceful when the Erie Canal was open



14 Figure 27 - 1898 Olmsted design for Front Park

achieve the overall vision for the park:

- Buffer the park and its visitors from the effects of the highway, bridge and thruway edge.
- Restore The Terrace as a focal point and activity center.
- Enhance connections to other waterfront green space and recreate Sheridan Terrace.
- Rationalize park facilities in a way that better serves visitors and ensures compatibility with the historic design intent.

**Preliminary Recommended Project List**

**Buffer the Park**

- Construct earthen berm adjacent to Thruway.
- Restore perimeter wooded buffer and plantings.
- Restore original grading at ice rink area.

**Recreate a Grand Terrace**

- Restore the Terrace (surface treatment and fixtures).
- Rebuild Lakeview House.
- Restore the historic Playground.
- Restore the Formal Gardens.
- Restore trees lining perimeter of historic Playground.

**Enhance Connections**

- Restore historic main park entrance at Porter Avenue and Busti Avenue.
- Establish bike trails connecting with trail systems.
- Enhance connection to LaSalle Park and Cotters Point.
- Enhance connection to Prospect/Columbus Park.
- Recreate Sheridan Drive.

**Rationalize Park Facilities**

- Restore Picnic Shelter.
- Relocate children’s playground.



**Figure 28 – The Lakeview House served as a comfort station to visitors**



**Figure 29 – There are no comfort facilities left in the park today**



16 **Figure 30**

- Provide restrooms at Lakeview House.
- Remove the tennis courts (contingent upon finding a suitable alternate location).
- Remove rink and re-landscape area (contingent upon finding suitable off-site location).

**Interpret Historic Features**

- Interpret Fort Porter archaeological site.
- Interpret the Bank.

(See Figures 30-33)

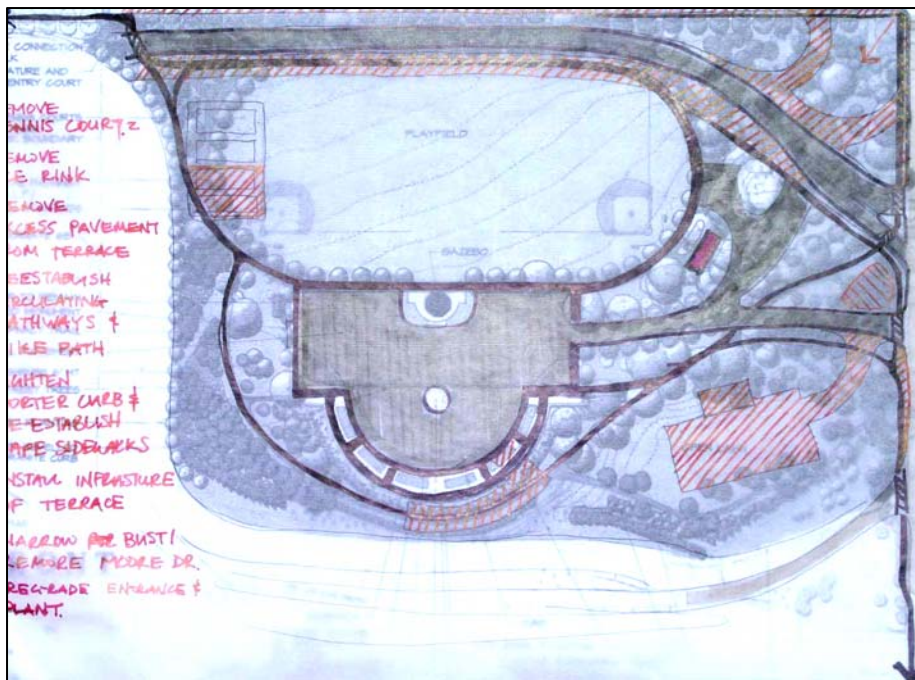


Figure 31 - Recapturing Olmsted’s design for the Front

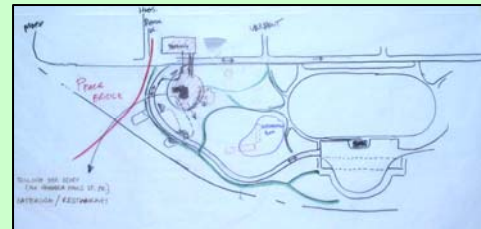


Figure 32 - Concept sketch for a reconfigured pathway system



Figure 33 - Sketch of expanded park land along the I-190