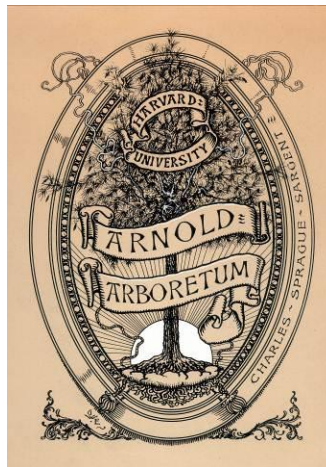


Archives I A-6 BPC

**Arnold Arboretum and Boston Parks Commission partnership records, 1882 - :
Guide.**



The Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University

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I A-6 BPC

Arnold Arboretum and Boston Parks Commission partnership records, 1882 - : Guide

**Archives of the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University
125 Arborway, Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts**

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Descriptive Summary

Repository: Arnold Arboretum, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

Call No.: I A-6 BPC

Location: Archives

Title: Arnold Arboretum and Boston Parks Commission partnership records, 1882-

Dates: 1882-

Creator(s): Arnold Arboretum; Boston Parks Commission

Quantity: 4 linear inches

Language of material: English

Abstract: The Arnold Arboretum and Boston Parks Commission partnership records focus on the relations between the Arboretum and the city of Boston in administering their shared responsibilities in the care and maintenance of the Arboretum. The bulk of the materials consist of correspondence from the office of the Director of the Arboretum to the Chairman of the Parks Commission.

Note: Access to Finding Aid record in [HOLLIS](#).

Preferred Citation: Arnold Arboretum and Boston Parks Commission partnership records, 1882- . Archives of the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University.

Additional material: Sargent correspondence with the Boston Parks Department or the Chair's designees may be found by searching the [Arnold Arboretum Correspondence Database](#) and the papers of the Arboretum's subsequent directors: Oakes Ames (Supervisor) 1927-1935, [Elmer Drew Merrill 1935-1946](#), Karl Sax 1946-1954, Richard A. Howard, 1954-1978, Peter S. Ashton 1978-1987, Robert E. Cook 1989-2009, and in [Science in the Pleasure Ground: A History of the Arnold Arboretum \(Ida Hay papers\), 1981-1996](#).

Processing Information

Lisa Pearson 2006. Revised 2011, Kayleigh Hinckley, 2012 Sheila Connor, 2023, 2024 Larissa Glasser.

Acquisition Information

Provenance: This collection was transferred from the Arnold Arboretum's departmental holdings to the Arboretum's Archives in 1984 when the Archive was established.

Terms of Access

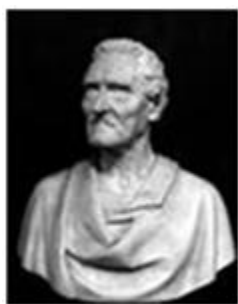
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Historical Note



Benjamin Bussey

In 1842, Benjamin Bussey (1757-1842), a prosperous Boston merchant and scientific farmer donated his country estate, "Woodland Hill," and a part of his fortune to Harvard University "for instruction in agriculture, horticulture, and related subjects." Harvard used this land for the creation in 1869 of the Bussey Institution, which was dedicated to agricultural experimentation. The Bussey Institution building was completed in 1871 and served as headquarters for Harvard's undergraduate school of agriculture.



James Arnold

Sixteen years after Bussey's death, James Arnold (1781-1868), a New Bedford, Massachusetts whaling merchant, specified that a portion of his estate was to be used for "...the promotion of Agricultural, or Horticultural improvements." In 1872, when the trustees of the will of James Arnold transferred that fraction of his estate to Harvard College, Arnold's gift was combined with approximately 137 acres of the former Bussey estate to create the Arnold Arboretum. In the deed of trust between the Arnold trustees and the College, income from Arnold's legacy was to be used for establishing, developing, and maintaining an arboretum to be known as the Arnold Arboretum which "shall contain, as far as practicable, all the trees [and] shrubs . . . either indigenous or exotic, which can be raised in the open air of West Roxbury." The Arboretum would occupy a portion of Bussey's "Woodland Hill" and the Arboretum's director would carry the title of Arnold Professor of Dendrology at Harvard, teach "the knowledge of trees" and "give such other instruction therein as may be naturally, directly and usefully connected therewith."



Charles Sprague Sargent

The Arboretum had the former Bussey land and some funds, -- the signatories to the 1872 indenture described the funds available from Mr. Arnold's estate as "barely sufficient to accomplish the proposed project" -- but lacked adequate financial resources to match the ambitions of Charles Sprague Sargent (1841-1927), the Arboretum's first director, who, throughout his 54 year tenure defined the mission of the Arboretum: to increase and disseminate the knowledge of woody

plants through research and education." In 1874 Sargent corresponded with Frederick Law Olmsted, suggesting that *"the ground (130 acres) could be handed over to the City of Boston on the condition that the City should spend a certain sum of money laying out the grounds and should agree to leave the planting in my hands. . ."*



Frederick Law Olmsted

According to Ida Hay in her history of the Arboretum, [*Science in the Pleasure Ground*](#), Sargent's "earliest political maneuver to credit Olmsted with the notion of joining the Arboretum to the city," began in 1877. Negotiations between the College and the City took several years to complete with initial resistance from both the City Council and Harvard's President Charles Eliot. The terms were finally agreed to, the lease was signed in 1882, and the Arboretum became part of the "Emerald Necklace" Olmsted's linear parkland for Boston. See ["The Arnold Arboretum: an Historic Park Partnership."](#)

In 1882, the Trustees and Fellows of Harvard College provided approximately 120 acres to the City for the project, and the City acquired and provided approximately 48 additional acres. In exchange for the land provided by Harvard, the College received consideration in the form of Olmsted's remaining design services; the construction and maintenance of walk and roadways, walls and gates; policing; and an uninterrupted supply of water, at the expense of the Boston taxpayers. And in addition, a lease of the total acreage (both the land provided by Harvard and that provided by the City) for 1,000 years with the right to renew for another 1,000 at the rate of one dollar per year. Under the conditions of the lease the Arboretum's responsibility was to manage the landscape and to acquire, grow, and curate a comprehensive collection of hardy woody plants for research and education while the City was to maintain the hardscape, the roads, sidewalks, boundary fences and gates, and provide security.



This plan shows the relationship between the original 140 acres of the Bussey Institution Property that was transferred to the AA and the land indicated by a red line that falls between the boundaries of the Adams Institution parcel and the Bussey property that the City took by eminent domain and added to the lease arrangement.

Through mutual agreement between the Arnold Arboretum and the City of Boston Parks Department these responsibilities are sometimes shared or exchanged.

LIVING COLLECTIONS	LANDSCAPE	ARBORETUM
ROADWAYS	HARDSCAPE	CITY
PATHWAYS	LANDSCAPE	ARBORETUM
CULVERTS /CROSSINGS	HARDSCAPE	CITY
OTHER STONE FEATURES	LANDSCAPE	ARBORETUM
BOUNDARY WALLS	HARDSCAPE	CITY
GATES	HARDSCAPE	CITY
FURNISHINGS	HARDSCAPE	CITY
VIEWS	LANDSCAPE	ARBORETUM
NATURAL WOODS	LANDSCAPE	ARBORETUM
WATER FEATURES	LANDSCAPE	CITY/ARBORETUM
STRUCTURES	(BUILDINGS)	ARBORETUM
BURIAL GROUNDS	LANDSCAPE/	ARBORETUM/
	HARDSCAPE	CITY

Scope and Content

The bulk of the materials consist of correspondence about official responsibilities between the Director of the Arboretum and the Chairman of the Parks Commission or their assigns. In addition there are copies of historical papers, including a copy of the indenture of 1882 between the City of Boston and Harvard College. Correspondence between the Arboretum's first Director, Charles Sprague Sargent and the Park Commission is contained in the Charles Sprague Sargent Archives and consists of carbon copies of Sargent's letters that are bound in letterbooks.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged in 4 series:

- Series I:** Correspondence
- Series II:** Annual Reports
- Series III:** Administrative Papers
- Series IV:** Planning Documents

Container List

Box 1

Series I: Correspondence

Correspondence mainly between directors of the Arnold Arboretum: Charles S. Sargent, Oakes Ames (Supervisor), Elmer Drew Merrill, Karl Sax, Richard A. Howard, Peter S. Ashton, his assistant, Wendy Marks and Lydia Kowalski (Executive Director 1985-1988), and Robert E. Cook and the Chairmen of the Boston Park Commission, including: William P. Long 1932-1946, John J. Murphy until 1949, Frank R. Kelley 1949-1957, Martin F. Walsh 1957-1963, William J. Devine 1963-1967, John J. Tierney 1967- 1970, Joseph E. Curtis 1970-1974, Anthony Forgione 1974-1975, Peter Meade 1976-1983?, Lawrence A. Dwyer (1984?-199?) Patrick S. Harrington (199?-1995) and Justine Liff 1996-2002.

Folder

1. List of Park Department rules specific to the Arnold Arboretum undated but submitted by C. S. Sargent and approved by James B. Shea, Chairman, Board of Park Commissioners. Typed transcript of letter from Sargent to the Board of Park Commissioners published in the *Fifth Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners of the Department of Parks for the City of Boston for the Year 1879*. [From S.B. Sutton's notes]

2. 1932-1946, 59 letters:

Correspondence between Ames and Long concerning the sale of the Kingsley estate on Centre Street, visit from Genetics Congress, driving permits (100 unlimited and 250 limited), letter of appreciation, skiing in the Arboretum and posting of regulations, dumping close to the Arboretum and a home for a Honduranian macaw at the Franklin Park Zoo. Merrill and Long regarding land transfers, signage, restricting "winter sports," bicycle riding, "irresponsible visitors" and timeliness of gate closings, control over and amount of annual driving permits issued, creation and location of a plaque honoring Sargent created by the Arboretum's Visiting Committee, road and bench repair, memorial fund for "Bill" Judd [William Henry Judd \(1888-1946\)](#), Arboretum plant propagator. Also included are letters from Captain Killen, Division 13, Boston Police Department, regarding prosecution of firms renting bicycles on Sundays and his request to ban bicycle riding in the Arboretum.



Plaque designed by Coolidge, Shepley, Bulfinch installed April 29, 1946

3. 1948-1950, 32 letters: Correspondence between Sax and Murphy, then Sax and Kelley, regarding land transfers, building roads, specifically to the top of Peter's Hill, flooding, snow removal at the Arnold Arboretum, driving permits and unauthorized driving, repairing macadam paths at the Arnold Arboretum (including a map), spraying plants, new signage, dealing with Japanese beetles, dealing with drought, and the repairing of walls, specifically (letter of April 26, 1950) "the stone wall along the Arborway on the inner side of the wall."



View from Peters Hill towards Boston 1948

4. 1951-1955, 56 letters: Correspondence between Sax and Kelley, and Howard and Kelley regarding numerous fences in and around the Arnold Arboretum, signage, a road to the top of Peters Hill, parking permits, the removal of some Dutch Elm Disease infected Elms, the building of a garage on Walter St., keeping arboretum gates locked and in good condition, and other general maintenance needs. 1 letter from Thomas F. Casey of the Boston Police Department to Sax concerning the policing of the Arnold Arboretum after dark, 1 letter from Kelley to Rose Dopoyan of Milton High School and 1 letter from Kelley to E. F. Pigeon of



Roadway, with turnaround, to top of Peters Hill

Medford High School, both granting permission to park a bus in the arboretum parking lot, and 1 letter from Arthur J. O'Keefe to Lazella Schwarten of the Herbarium and Library in Cambridge concerning the naming of Peters Hill. Of note are the March 31 and April 2, 1952 letters address the removal of the "tool house" in the beech collection.

5. 1956-1962, 66 letters: Correspondence between Howard and Kelley, then Howard and Walsh, regarding repairing benches, fixing flooding, police protection, persecuting plant thieves, times that the gates are locked, driving permits, illegal dumping in the Arnold Arboretum, vandalism, fire hydrants. 1 letter from Thomas P. Dooley of the Boston Public Schools to Kelley, concerning upkeep of the Arboretum, 1 letter from Kelley to Captain John F. McElhinney of the Boston Police Department concerning police protection of the Arnold Arboretum, Several letters concerning the exchange of plants with the city of Kyoto, Japan. Letter to Walsh about the completion of the Dana Greenhouses.



Flooding, Dawson Pond, 1958

6. 1963-1965, 27 letters : Correspondence between Howard and Walsh, O'Keefe, then Devine, regarding dumping behind the Public Works shack, a memorial to Grace S. Batchelder, the Arnold Arboretum becoming a National Historic Site, and vandalism within the grounds. Correspondence between Arthur O'Keefe and Lieutenant Edward Conley of the Boston Police, regarding police arrangements at the Arboretum. 1 letter to Howard from Joseph F. McLaughlin, Editor of "Tell it to Joe" concerning a complaint about cars in the Arnold Arboretum and 1 response to him from Howard, 2 letters from Devine to Truman W. Eustis III regarding money left for the Arnold Arboretum in the will of Grace S. Batchelder, 1 letter from Howard to Edwin W. Small concerning the Arnold Arboretum becoming a National Historic Site.



1965 Arboretum designated
National Historic Landscape

7. 1966-1970, 30 letters: Correspondence between Howard and Devine, then Howard and Tierney in 1967, then Curtis in 1970, regarding vandalism by the "Shot Brothers", putting in a fence to keep out trash, lewd conduct of drivers within the Arnold Arboretum, a gift of spruce trees given by Peter L. Hornbeck, repairing or replacing the Arborway entrance, Arboretum Visiting Committee meeting, disposing of debris, parking permits,



Examples of destruction caused by the
"shot brothers" winter of 1965/1966

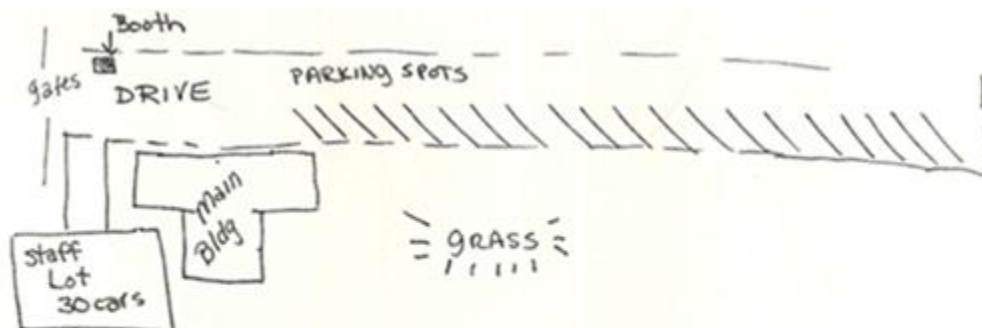
general maintenance of paths, roads, fences, gates, signs and water sources, protection of visitors and their property, 1 letter from Devine to Captain Cornelius F. O'Brien concerning vandalism at the Arnold Arboretum, 1 letter from Mayor of Boston John F. Collins to Howard and 1 response letter from Howard regarding the development of an Anti-Poverty Program, 1 letter from Peter L. Hornbeck, Assistant Professor of Landscape Architecture to Tierney, 1 letter from John J. Tierney to F. B. Jackson concerning a new service building, 1 letter to Mayor Kevin White of Boston, requesting more police presence in the Arboretum and upcoming centennial.

8. 1971-1977, 20 letters: Correspondence between Howard and Curtis until 1974, then Howard and Forgione until 1975, then Howard and Meade regarding a bicycle path, general maintenance as well as repairs of damages as a result of heavy snow, and a plan to repair the driveways and paths of the Arnold Arboretum. March 13, 1974 letter from Howard to Forgione lists 5 areas where repairs are needed including: Benches, Catch Basin Covers, Pavements and Paths, Drain, and Walls. 1 letter to John Sears, from horticulturist Gordon DeWolf, regarding an application for a permit to put up signs, another letter from DeWolf regarding the signage. 1 letter from Martin F. Cosgrove, chief engineer, to Howard concerning a guard rail along the street, 1 letter from Howard to Mr. Donald C. Moulton concerning building a pedestrian walkway, 1 letter from Howard to Dean Richard Leahy concerning repairs to driveways, paths, fences, and gates.



Arborway wall 1975

9. 1978-1983, 46 letters: Correspondence between Howard and Robert G. Stone regarding the repair of grounds artifacts, Letters between Ashton and Paul Perkins, Ropes & Gray about the license hearing for the application of Angelo J. Malvone Jr. to operate a motor vehicle junkyard near the Arnold Arboretum." Letter from Gary Koller to Alan Austin, Commissioner regarding permission to hold event [Children's Marathon, sponsored by the *Real Paper*] at the Arboretum, reply from John F. Rusk, Executive Secretary, Parks and Recreation Dept. affirming use per lease agreement, Handwritten memo from Sheila Connor Geary to Peter Ashton reporting on the



Plan for parking lot submitted to the Parks Department. Sidewalk and grass strip was removed and paved along Meadow Road and an independent contractor was hired to collect fees. The parking lot functioned as such for one spring season.

Malvone Hearing. Ashton and McCoy correspondence, later Marks and McCoy, Ropes & Gray, O. M. Shaw, Paul F. Perkins, Wendy Marks, Paul S. Berenson, and Carol Trager regarding the collection of voluntary contributions or fees from visitor's to be kept separately to fund the Urban Park Rangers Program, 93 space parking lot proposal income to be used for Park Rangers, Directional signs requested from the City of Boston, Traffic and Parking Department. James Sharaf, Harvard University, General Counsel seeking clarification as to the City's responsibilities regarding the gates. Flyer describing establishment of an Arboretum Committee to work on issues of security. Press release to Members of Arboretum Community and Mass Media entitles "Taking back the Arboretum." Plans for marketing and advertising with Berenson & Isham, Inc. General correspondence regarding repairs (including missing sewer covers), signage, and police presence. See also Series III, folders 2 and 3 for 1984-1986 correspondence.

10. 1987-1993, 26 letters: Correspondence between Lydia Kowalski and Marianna Pierce concerning signage, the Public function of the Arboretum, and improvement



Park Rangers in the Arnold Arboretum, May 1983

plans. Letters from Kowalski to Richard Heath and Lisa Wilson regarding lack of funding. Correspondence with Paul McCaffrey and Justine Liff regarding improvements. Correspondence between Robert Cook and Larry Dwyer regarding renovation, letter to Cook from Gary Koller regarding asphalt repairs, letters between Cook, Liff and Dwyer is regarding a vehicular accident, 1 letter from Cook to the Review Panel for Heritage

Conservation Grants (NEA) supporting a brochure proposal.

11. Boston Police Department Mounted Police:

assigned to patrol the Arboretum, 1958, Officers: Ciriello, Donahue, Gordon, McNeil. Names obtained from verso of photographs three of which also contain note, "There are several others that take turns out here also." Seven, 5"x7" b&w prints, 1 duplicated, in color. Also 1 slide of unidentified officers time stamped June 1970.



Boston Mounted Officers Donahue (left) and McNeil, one of several pairs assigned to patrol the Arboretum

Series II: Annual Reports

Copies of sections from Boston Parks Department Annual Reports relating to the Arnold Arboretum held at the [State Library of Massachusetts](#) or by the Arboretum. When not held by the Arboretum, and binding at the State Library precludes copying, there are only summary notes. Annotation by Ida Hay, Sheila Connor.

Folder

1. Boston Parks Department Annual Reports, 1880-1889. Photocopies of the sections relating to the Arboretum. Includes a copy of the pages relating to Arboretum entries from the "Index to Boston Park Reports, 1875-1900 and handwritten summary of Arboretum references Park Department reports [S. Connor 1980s]



Boston Parks Commission. Road construction, Hemlock Hill Road, 1889



Boston Parks Commission. Road construction, Valley Road at South Street, 1891

2. Boston Parks Department Annual Reports, 1890-1900. Photocopies of the sections relating to the Arboretum. Also includes copy of the "Special Committee of the Board of Aldermen on Investigation of the Park Department. Document 115-1900 which contains a transcript of Charles Sprague Sargent's testimony about his relationship and association with both Frederick Law Olmsted and the Boston Park Department. These hearings were held in response to concerns about how the parklands were being managed in relation to the removal of trees. Although his testimony is about the condition and management of the parks in Olmsted's "Emerald Necklace" of special note are his remarks on "boundary walls," shrub plantings, exotic and introduced species and other insights to his opinions on landscape management.



Boston Parks Commission. Road construction, Valley Road at Bussey Brook, 1892



Boston Parks Commission. Road and culvert construction Arborway Gate, 1892

3. Boston Parks Department Annual Reports, 1901-1910. Photocopies of these sections relating to the Arboretum.

4. Expenditures by the Park Department for maintenance of the Arnold Arboretum from 1943-1975, summary list and photocopies of Boston Park Department documents.

Annual Reports Boston (Mass.) Park Department. Annual report of the Board of Commissioners

Arnold Arboretum Library holds:

- v. 6-7 (1880-1881); v.12-17 (1886-1892); v. 19-29 (1894-1904); v. 31-41 (1906-1916) 1943-1953 incomplete. In addition: Arnold Arboretum References in Boston Parks Department Annual Reports contained within Boston City Documents at the State Library.
- 8th Annual – 1882 pp. 15-27
[Contained in Boston City Documents 1883, Vol. 1: 1 to 53, document 20]
 - acquiring more land
 - text of "An Act to Authorize the Connection of the Arnold Arboretum with the System of Parks of the City of Boston"
 - rules for park operation
 - information on the lease
 - description of the park, and map
 - boundaries
- 9th Annual – 1883 pp. 15, 23.
[Contained in Boston City Documents 1884, Vol. 1: 1 to 69, document 9]
 - repairs to cottage on South St, turned into an office
 - final location of driveway, grading
 - contract between Harvard College and the city
 - building costs for driveways
- 10th Annual – 1884 pp. 16-17. 29-30
[Contained in Boston City Documents 1885, Vol. 1: 1 to 59, document 7]
 - driveway work
 - plantation areas prepared
 - trees and shrubs to be set out in the spring
 - suggestion for additional land to be purchased
 - plans for more roads
 - information on construction, grading, and drainage
- 11th Annual – 1885 pp. 15, 28-32
[Contained in Boston City Documents 1886, Vol. 1: 1 to 55, document 26]
 - road construction
 - not enough money for work needed
 - recommendation for more funding
 - description by Prof. Sargent of Arboretum's intent, plans for planting, seeds, nurseries
- 18th Annual – 1983 pp. 28, 54.
[Contained in Boston City Documents, Vol. 2: 15-39, document 25]
 - finishing work: excavation, grading, paths
 - building of walls and gateways at Forest Hills and Walter St. entrances
 - photograph of South St. entrance
 - construction work

- excavation for channels
- grading of slopes
- photograph

Series III - Administrative Records Folder

1. Indenture between the City of Boston and Harvard College, 1882 [copy]



Donation canister with Arnold Arboretum logo c2003

2. Voluntary admissions canisters, correspondence, design specifications.
Includes 12 page Opinion by Ropes & Gray on "the proposal to charge an admission fee at the Arboretum." 1979-1983.
3. Correspondence, articles, newspaper clippings, memoranda, construction estimates, and documents regarding the Arboretum's attempts to obtain funding from the Olmsted Parks Recovery Act and the Olmsted Heritage Landscape Act, 1983-1987. Includes copies of letters from Peter Ashton to various Massachusetts government officials and a copy of "The Arnold Arboretum Restoration and Repair Projects, April 1987. Reference House Bill 5876. Contact: Lydia Kowalski, Executive Director, Arnold Arboretum. Also copy of letter from Governor Michael Dukakis to Peter S. Ashton explaining why the Arnold Arboretum is excluded from funding.
4. Request for Qualifications for Design Services Relating to Landscape Restoration in the Riverway and Olmsted Park Emerald Necklace, Boston and Brookline, October, 1995. The Boston Parks and Recreation Department, Thomas M. Menino, Mayor, Patrick S. Harrington, Commissioner and the Brookline Public Works Department, Donna R. Kalikow, Chair, Board of Selectmen, A. Thomas DeMaio, Commissioner. Section of Massachusetts House Bill No. 5206. 1995. Section 21. Amendmen

changes pertaining to funding for Olmstead (sic) parks. Copy

5. General notes 1892-1990, List of Boston Park Department Commissioners by year 1953/54 – 1980 (incomplete).
6. E-Mail Memorandum with attachment from David Mittelstadt, Sasaki Associates, Arnold Arboretum Master Plan/SA #2850.01 Project to D. Olsen, J. Hibbard, M. Lampkin, S. Stainback; cc.C Zaitzevski, J. Olmsted. April 7, 1992. "List of Drawings [pertaining to the Arnold Arboretum] to be Found in Boston Parks & Recreation Files." 7 pages.[Additional copy filed with Arnold Arboretum Map Inventory]

Series IV – Planning Documents

Folder

1. Part 4 - Open Space Management Mission. Boston Parks and Recreation Department [Includes] The Emerald Necklace. 2002.
2. Arborway Master Plan 2002-2003. Public Meeting # 3, January 16, 2003. Boston Parks and Recreation Department with the cooperation of the Metropolitan District Commission funded in part by a grant from Department of Environmental management. Slide printouts, January 16, 2003.
3. Arborway Master Plan. Boston Parks and Recreation Department Murray Circle to Kelly Circle. Shrub Removals. Slide printouts, January 16, 2003.
4. "Boulder at Kelley Circle Reveals History" by Walter H. Marx. Printout web page of Jamaica Plain Historical Society [The image of sign designating the Circle in this article reads Kelley Circle, designated as Kelly in other documents]. 3 page printout January 11, 2005.
5. Heart of the City: Arborway (as a whole) *and* Park maintenance /funding of parks and open spaces. 2 printouts of web pages from "Database of Greenspaces and Neighborhoods in the Heart of Boston." 8 page printout January 11, 2005.
6. Draft Response to MDC Traffic Study for comments and revisions by the community. To: Ms. O'Brien, Metropolitan District Commission From: The Arborway Coalition. 3 page printout January 11, 2005.