

## **Forest Hill Park**

**East Cleveland and Cleveland Heights, Cuyahoga County, Ohio**

### **Description**

Located 6 miles east of the Cleveland Public Square and about 3 miles from Lake Erie, Forest Hill Park occupies approximately 235 acres, of which 170 acres, or approximately two-thirds, lie within the limits of the City of East Cleveland and 65 acres, or approximately one-third, lie within the limits of the City of Cleveland Heights. Each municipality is responsible for the administration and maintenance of its own portion of the park.

Forest Hill Park lies on the northwesterly-facing slope and near the base of the Portage Escarpment, which separates the Appalachian Plateaus to the east and south from the Lake Plain to the north and west. The topography is gently rolling. The property is cut by two ravines that start at the southeast edge of the park and drop from 80 to 100 feet northwest toward the lake. The main valley carries Dugway Brook, which is enclosed by a concrete box culvert in the East Cleveland section of the park; the other is occupied by Forest Hill Boulevard, a four-lane vehicular road that divides the park almost exactly in half.

The northwest (Terrace Road) frontage of the park is marked by a series of terraces cut by glacial lake waters during the withdrawal of the Wisconsin ice sheet in Pleistocene times. In the Dugway Brook Valley are good exposures of Cleveland Shale and a sandstone deposit known locally as Euclid Bluestone, a fine-grained, bluish sandstone that once was extensively quarried on the property near the corner of Lee and Monticello Boulevards. Beneath the surface soil (Miami clay loam) is a heavy clay subsoil.

During his occupancy of the property, from 1880 to 1917, John D. Rockefeller developed an extensive network of carriage, foot, and bridle trails, many of which A. D. Taylor incorporated into his plan for the park. Using locally quarried bluestone, Rockefeller also built a number of bridges, culverts, and retaining walls along the course of Dugway Brook, examples of which can still be seen today. Rockefeller erected the family's summer home on the flat-topped ridge lying between the ravine today occupied by Forest Hill Boulevard and the Dugway Brook Valley, and laid out a nine-hole golf course in the area today known as the Great Meadow. He took care to preserve the original forest cover in many parts of the estate, at the same time planting a considerable number of exotic ornamentals, especially in the vicinity of the residence.

A survey of the trees of Forest Hill Park made under the direction of Cleveland naturalist Arthur B. Williams in 1943 revealed the dominant presence of native deciduous trees, especially sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*), red oak (*Quercus borealis*), American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*), wild black cherry (*Prunus serotina*), red maple (*Acer rubrum*), white ash (*Fraxinus americana*), and American elm (*Ulmus americana*). Beech and sugar maple, Williams reported, appeared as closely associated species throughout the Dugway Brook Valley, while on the flat ridge tops and upper edges of the ravines and valley walls was what he described as "a remarkably

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fine assemblage of oaks." Also present, though far less numerous, were non-native deciduous trees, with black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) and horse chestnuts (*Aesculus hippocastanum*) comprising the largest species in numbers; and coniferous evergreens, with Eastern hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*) and Austrian pines (*Pinus austriaca*) comprising the largest species in numbers. Williams concluded that, before the coming of Moses Cleaveland to the Western Reserve in 1796, much of the ravines within Forest Hill Park were covered by a forest in which beech and sugar maple dominated, while the drier ridge tops and upper edges of the ravine and valley walls were occupied by an oak-chestnut association. He noted the presence of 65 sugar maples and 95 beech trees, as well as numerous oaks that, based on size, he estimated to have been part of the original forest. Of the oaks, he wrote: "There are some fine examples of stately old trees among them. If one would study our native oaks in their natural setting, Forest Hill is the place to go."<sup>1</sup>

As part of the survey, Williams mapped and measured the largest specimen trees, most of which were found in the upper reaches of the Dugway Brook Valley. There he reported finding the largest sugar maple, 43 inches in diameter; white ash, 38 inches; American elm, 51 inches; slippery elm (*Ulmus rubra*), 22 inches; basswood (*Tilia americana*), 50 inches; sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*), 43 inches; and yellow birch (*Betula lutea*), 23 inches. The largest beech, 48 inches; red maple, 36 inches; and tulip (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), 48 inches, were found on the south-facing slope of the Dugway Brook Valley, the largest rock chestnut oak (*Quercus prinus*), 42 inches, on the opposite slope. On the flat-topped ridge today known as the Great Meadow, Williams found the largest white oak (*Quercus alba*), 53 inches, and tupelo (*Nyssa sylvatica*), 31 inches. On the south-facing slope near the Superior-Terrace parking lot he found the largest black oak (*Quercus velutina*), 32 inches, and scarlet oak (*Quercus coccinea*), 33 inches. "But these are only a few of the big ones," he wrote. "There are many others."<sup>2</sup>

In addition to old-growth forest, Forest Hill Park contains habitats that support diverse plant life, including several plants that are on the Ohio endangered-species list. Dr. George Wilder, a botanist and professor of biology at Cleveland State University, has identified approximately 450 plants within the park, noting the presence of two especially rich plant habitats. One is the promontory above the confluence of the north and south branches of Dugway Brook. There, white-rod (*Viburnum cassinoides*) and common hairgrass (*Deschampsia flexuosa*) can be found; both plants are rare in Cuyahoga County, and here the latter plant is

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<sup>1</sup>Cleveland Museum of Natural History, "The Trees of Forest Hill Park: Report of Survey Made by the Kirtland Tree Club," prepared by Arthur B. Williams (Typescript, December 31, 1943), pp. 12-28.

<sup>2</sup>"Trees of Forest Hill Park," pp. 29-30.

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believed to be found only in Forest Hill Park. A relatively pristine natural area, the promontory is also home to white goldenrod (*Solidago bicolor*), maple-leaved viburnum (*Viburnum acerifolium*), low-bush blueberry (*Vaccinium vacillans*), and Canada hawkweed (*Hieracium canadense*). (The latter plant is listed as "threatened" by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources.) Notable trees in this location include, among others, shadbush (*Amelanchier arborea*), hemlock, yellow birch, and white oak (*Quercus alba*). Another notable plant habitat is found along the northern edge of an area today known as the Meadow Vista, where withe-rod, Canada hawkweed, zig-zag goldenrod (*Solidago flexicaulis*), large-leaved aster (*Aster macrophyllus*), and diverse other species mingle beneath a thick forest of scarlet, black, and chestnut oaks.<sup>3</sup>

The park features an extensive network of winding paths varying in width. Some of these are former carriage roads built by Rockefeller; some are paved with asphalt, others are unpaved; some (especially those in the wooded portion of the Dugway Brook Valley) are narrow trails through the woods. As prescribed by Taylor, vehicular roads are confined to the short drives leading to several designated parking areas at the perimeter of the park. Much of the park is enclosed by a four-foot-high chain-link fence supported by obelisk-shaped concrete posts. The fence, which can be glimpsed in photographs contained in Taylor's 1938 park plan, probably dates to 1936 when this section of Forest Hill Boulevard was built.

Note: Park features described below are keyed by number to the Development Plan for Forest Hill Park prepared by A. D. Taylor in 1938, included with this nomination.

North Section

Entering the park from Forest Hill Boulevard through a pair of square sandstone pylons that frame the foot trail on both sides of the road, one comes upon a delightful vista: a small artificial lake (1) situated in the same location as the one enjoyed by the Rockefellers and their guests for swimming, boating, and skating. When rebuilt in 1939, the lake was enlarged (to 5.6 acres) and reduced to a depth of about three feet. The broad stretch of shallow water is framed by a small stone-faced footbridge that carries the foot trail over the outlet for the lake; just beyond, at the northerly edge of the water, is a rustic stone boathouse (2). The boathouse, erected in 1940, is 74 by 26 feet in size, with rock-faced random-ashlar walls and a hipped roof with deep, bracketed

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<sup>3</sup>Dr. Wilder hiked through the park with the preparer of this nomination on September 16, 1997.

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eaves. The long facades are articulated by three wide arched openings; inside, the shelter features a handsome open-hearth stone fireplace and tongue-in-groove ceiling. Rest rooms and storage areas are located at each end of the building. Immediately east of the boathouse, a mature European beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) casts its shadow. Elsewhere in the vicinity of the lake are willows (*Salix spp.*), exotic cherries (*Prunus spp.*), and swamp white oaks (*Quercus bicolor*).

The outlet for the lake consists of a fine naturalistic stone spillway, or cascade (3), now heavily overgrown but still visible. The lake's original stone retaining wall has been substantially rebuilt with concrete, and in 1973 a small island planted with flowering trees and evergreens was added to provide a haven for waterfowl. (Taylor's plan showed an island accessible by foot trail, but it was not built as part of the initial development of the park.) The lake is rimmed by curving paths, beyond which a variety of mature trees screen the area from nearby roads. At the south end of the lake is a small concrete casting platform built in 1950 to a plan prepared by A. D. Taylor. Nearby is a small stone water bubbler (now defunct). In the vicinity of the lake and boathouse are a children's playground and remnants of calisthenic exercise stations, both of recent vintage. A series of tall floodlights were also added later.

From the lake, meandering foot trails lead to the recreational facilities at the northwest corner of the park (4), including ball fields, a basketball court, and a group of eight tennis courts. These facilities, together with an adjacent landscaped parking lot, all survive largely as built to Taylor's plan in 1940. Nearby to the west, on the proposed site of a swimming pool and bathhouse (5), are one non-contributing structure and two non-contributing buildings. These are: a police radio antenna, installed in 1948; a small one-story caretaker's house, erected in 1959 on the site of a two-and-one-half-story wood-frame "lodge house" dating to Rockefeller's tenure (the house served as headquarters for the engineers and draftsmen who developed the park, later as a caretaker's house and comfort station); and a 76- by 32-foot concrete-block service building, erected in 1965. A short distance to the west, a winding drive, entered from Terrace Road (6), leads to a landscaped parking area, both built about 1940. The drive is framed by thick stands of black locust trees. The parking area is quintessential Taylor: the automobile rows are divided by planting strips — here consisting of mature pin oaks (*Quercus palustris*) — and the lot is screened from the park by gentle berms planted with both native and exotic trees.

The northerly half of Forest Hill Park features a fine wooded area of oaks and maples underplanted with a scattering of dogwoods (*Cornus florida*), designated by Taylor as the Meadow Vista (7). At the perimeter of this attractive area are numerous small picnic groves, now in poor condition and no longer used. At the eastern edge of the Meadow Vista is a small rustic-style comfort station (8) erected in 1939-40. Vandalized and no longer used, the building features rock-faced random-ashlar walls and a hipped roof. Beyond the Meadow Vista, an unpaved former carriage road (sometimes used by the City of East Cleveland for vehicular access to

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the park) leads down a wooded slope to a lawn-bowling complex (9). Leased by the East Cleveland Bowling Club and surrounded by a chain-link fence topped by barbed wire, it survives in excellent condition and is virtually unaltered. Two bowling greens (only one is still used) flank a 64- by 20-foot rustic stone shelter with hipped roof erected in 1940. Flanking an open central section (protected by tarpaulins when not in use) are locker rooms, rest rooms, and a kitchen. The shelter building, with its rock-faced random-ashlar walls, features a handsome stone fireplace.

### South Section

The two halves of Forest Hill Park are connected by a high-level, reinforced-concrete footbridge veneered with sandstone (10). The flat-arch bridge was among the last works designed by Cleveland civil engineer Wilbur J. Watson (1871-1939), a national authority on bridge history and design. Erected in 1939-40 and having a span of 360 feet, the bridge is a fine example of the mason's craft. Particularly notable are the handsome tooled railings, which are carried well beyond the abutments at both ends of the bridge and flare into circular wing walls, the tops of which feature a hub-and-spoke design. The chain-link screen enclosing the top of the bridge (damaged in 1996 by a storm but since replaced) was added in 1968 after vandals repeatedly threw objects (in one instance a park bench) at cars and pedestrians below.

The southerly portion of the park is dominated by the Great Meadow and the rugged Dugway Brook Valley. Once the site of Rockefeller's nine-hole golf course and half-mile trotting track, the Great Meadow (11), with its beautiful vistas of mature hardwoods and sweep of green lawn, is reminiscent of the great pastoral landscapes of Olmsted and Vaux. The area is dotted with handsome specimen trees (many of which were part of the original forest cover) and rimmed by winding footpaths that follow the edges of the park's wooded slopes. At the western end of the Meadow is the former Rockefeller residence site (12) with its expansive view of downtown Cleveland and Lake Erie. Nearby are large specimens of three exotic ornamentals — copper beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), ginkgo (*Ginkgo biloba*), and golden raintree (*Koelreuteria paniculata*) — almost certainly planted by Rockefeller to enhance the grounds in the immediate vicinity of the residence. Beyond the plateau, a steep slope functions as a popular sledding hill in winter.

At the southern edge of the Great Meadow, occupying the former site of the Rockefeller horse barns, is a large and unsightly dump (13) comprised of tree limbs, used tires, and other debris. The area is included in this nomination as a non-contributing site.

The southern half of the Great Meadow, located wholly within the City of Cleveland Heights, has been despoiled by the construction of a large recreation complex (14) consisting of four ball fields separately

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enclosed by high chain-link fences and arranged, like wedges of pie, to form a circle, at the center of which is a one-story concession building. Tall pole lights illuminate the complex year-round from dusk to dawn, and posted signs facing the intact portion of the Great Meadow to the northwest inform park visitors that they are "Entering Cleveland Heights." The change in use from passive to active recreation, and the stark visual intrusion of this complex, constitute a serious loss of integrity. Thus, this section of the park, together with an adjacent area containing picnic shelters, restrooms, tennis courts, and a parking lot — with one exception, all built in 1989 and wholly incompatible with the Taylor park plan — has been deleted from the nominated historic district.

Along the southern edge of the Great Meadow is a picturesque carriage road that once led from Euclid Avenue to the Rockefeller residence and the estate's horse barns and service buildings. (The barns were destroyed by fire in 1964.) Entered off Forest Hill Boulevard, the road is carried across a small stream on a handsome rubble-stone arch bridge (15) dating to the late nineteenth century. Below the road are a picnic grove and parking area (16). The picnic grove features a large gable-roofed shelter whose posts and brackets recall the joinery of early American barns and a small comfort station with rock-faced random-ashlar walls and hipped roof, both erected in 1939-40. The comfort station has been vandalized and is no longer used.

Dugway Brook in this area of the park is contained in a concrete box culvert built in 1939-40 as part of the original development of the park. East of the picnic grove, extensive illegal dumping has occurred in recent years and the landscape is scarred with thousands of cubic yards of excavated subsoil and construction debris, and, to a lesser extent, yard waste and trees disposed of by the City of East Cleveland. Badly degraded, this area (17) is included in the nomination as a non-contributing site. The dumping abates at the Cleveland Heights municipal line, beyond which lies the unculverted portion of Dugway Brook (18), a wild piece of land where it is possible to hike and feel, as one reporter put it in 1938, "a thousand miles from nowhere" despite its proximity to the city (*Cleveland Press*, June 9, 1938). Here are good exposures of both Cleveland Shale and Euclid Bluestone, unmaintained foot trails, remnants of retaining walls and two small bridges built of local sandstone during Rockefeller's tenure, and a thick beech-maple forest. In this section of the park, Dugway Brook separates into north and south branches. The south branch enters the park through a culvert in the vicinity of Mayfield and Superior Roads, cascading through a series of small waterfalls. The north branch enters the park through a pair of culverts near Monticello and Lee Boulevards. The Rockefeller quarry was formerly located in this vicinity, but extensive backfilling and a thick growth of trees have erased any trace of it.

Along the southwestern rim of the Dugway Brook Valley, sandwiched between Superior Road and the dense woods at the top of the slope, is a narrow strip of parkland known as the Superior Road Recreation Area (19). Developed in 1949-52, it consists of a ball diamond, basketball court, children's playground, and a small parking

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lot. These facilities are badly neglected and largely abandoned, and a comfort station built as part of the project has been demolished. A short distance to the south, set back from the corner of Mayfield and Superior Roads, is a large brick recreation pavilion (20). Erected by the City of Cleveland Heights in 1968 and substantially expanded in 1975, the pavilion, together with a large asphalt parking lot at the rear, are excluded from this nomination. East of the pavilion, three ball fields occupy a site marked "Recreation Field" on the Taylor plan (21). To the north, the ball fields are rimmed by the thick woods that clothe the upper slopes of the Dugway Brook Valley. A parking lot (22), entered off Lee Boulevard and built to Taylor's plan in 1940, completes the historic landscape elements included in the nomination. At the southern edge of the lot, near the top of the slope, is a magnificent cucumber-tree (*Magnolia acuminata*). Immediately north of the parking lot is a small non-contributing picnic shelter of recent construction.

No original site furnishings remain.

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**Statement of Significance**

Designed in 1938 and substantially developed between 1938 and 1941 under the auspices of the Works Progress Administration (WPA), Forest Hill Park is significant under Criterion C for its association with the productive career of Cleveland landscape architect Albert Davis Taylor (1883-1951). A prolific author, three-term (1936-41) president of the American Society of Landscape Architects, and with a diverse office practice ranging from country estates to town planning, Taylor was a national leader in the landscape architecture profession from the early 1920s until his death in 1951. Encompassing the one-time country estate and summer home of industrialist John D. Rockefeller, known as Forest Hill, the site Taylor found featured an extensive network of winding roads and trails, stands of old-growth forest, large specimen trees, an artificial lake, and a rugged, shale-rimmed valley. Taylor's plan for Forest Hill Park combined preservation of the existing character of the property with the provision of active and passive recreational facilities intended to serve a large metropolitan population. In addition to its Great Meadow, wooded rambles, and picturesque lake in the tradition of Olmsted and Vaux, Taylor's design for the 235-acre park included ball fields, tennis courts, bowling greens, and a swimming pool. Taylor's plan was substantially realized during the waning years of the Depression, and much of Forest Hill Park remains unchanged since that time. The park's many WPA-built structures of native stone embody the distinctive characteristics of rustic park architecture of the period and exhibit a high degree of craftsmanship, while the imprint of Rockefeller's occupancy, and Taylor's respect for the natural beauty of the land, are still clearly evident. One landscape historian has recognized Forest Hill Park as Taylor's "most noted park project,"<sup>4</sup> while Jot D. Carpenter, professor of landscape architecture at Ohio State University, has cited it as "one of our state's most important designed public places."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Noël Dorsey Vernon, "Albert Davis Taylor," in William Tishler, ed., *American Landscape Architecture: Designers and Places* (Washington, D.C.: Preservation Press, 1989), p. 105.

<sup>5</sup>Jot D. Carpenter, FASLA, to Mary Hughes, Chair, Forest Hill Park Commission, August 26, 1996. This letter is in the files of the Forest Hill Historic Preservation Society.



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**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

In 1873, John D. Rockefeller (1839-1937) purchased a tract of 109 acres fronting on Euclid Avenue in East Cleveland. The site was four miles east of Rockefeller's Euclid Avenue home and seven miles from the headquarters of the Standard Oil Company (both properties long since demolished). Rockefeller purchased the property as an investment, selling it to the Euclid Avenue Forest Hill Association (in which Rockefeller was himself an investor) in 1875 for the purpose of establishing a "water-cure and place of public resort." When the project failed, Rockefeller bought back the property and remodeled the sanitarium as a private club. About 1880, he adapted the rambling, four-story building as a country home, and for the next thirty-five years the Rockefeller family occupied the property, known as Forest Hill, each summer. "With a zest," writes Ohio historian Grace Goulder, Rockefeller "went about the refinement of the grounds," carefully developing the tract as a country estate. He planted trees and shrubs of great variety and laid out more than six miles of winding gravel roads, bridle trails, and footpaths in the vicinity of the residence and through the deep and attractive ravines on either side of the residence plateau. To carry the roads and paths across Dugway Brook, he built a series of bridges using native stone from a quarry on the property. He built an artificial lake for swimming and boating, and laid out a half-mile track for exercising his fast driving horses. About 1901, Rockefeller added a nine-hole golf course stretching southeast from the residence in the location that would later become the Great Meadow. Forest Hill eventually comprised some seven hundred acres stretching from East Cleveland into Cleveland Heights and included a fully functioning farm, with houses for workers and their families and barns for stock and carriages. Although the Rockefellers made New York their legal residence in 1884, they returned to Forest Hill each summer, normally staying from May through October. Here, under his father's tutelage, John D. Rockefeller, Jr. (1874-1960) was put in charge of various landscape and construction projects and is said to have developed both his love of the outdoors and his lifelong interest in conservation.<sup>6</sup>

Following his wife Laura's death in 1915, Rockefeller returned only for brief and infrequent stays, and, after the four-story house was destroyed by fire in December 1917, he never returned. "In the loss of Forest Hill," John Jr. wrote to his father, "I feel as though we had all lost a very dear and lifelong friend."<sup>7</sup> In 1923, Rockefeller

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<sup>6</sup>Nancy Newhall, *A Contribution to the Heritage of Every American: The Conservation Activities of John D. Rockefeller, Jr.* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1957), pp. 5-7.

<sup>7</sup>John D. Rockefeller, Jr., to John D. Rockefeller, December 18, 1917, in Joseph W. Ernst, ed., *"Dear Father"/"Dear Son": Correspondence of John D. Rockefeller and John D. Rockefeller, Jr.* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1994), p. 79.

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left the disposition of the estate to his son, selling him his entire real estate holdings in Cleveland, East Cleveland, and Cleveland Heights for \$2.8 million. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., gradually gave or sold portions of Forest Hill to provide sites for Huron Road Hospital, Kirk Junior High School, and a Masonic hall, and to provide for the widening of existing streets bordering the estate. In the late 1920s, Rockefeller undertook the development of a model housing project on the portion of the estate east of Lee Boulevard; eighty-one French Norman-style houses and a business block [all National Register] were built before the onset of the Depression and the collapse of the real estate market. In 1936, Terrace Road was extended through a portion of the property abutting Euclid Avenue, and Forest Hill Boulevard (erroneously styled, on street signs and maps, "Forest Hills Boulevard") was developed through a ravine on the property, dividing what had once been the heart of the estate into two parts.

In 1937, representatives of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., including his Cleveland agent, James C. Jones, and Jay Downer, a member of Rockefeller's staff who had previously served as chief engineer of the Westchester County (New York) park system, met with Cleveland Heights Mayor Frank C. Cain and East Cleveland City Manager Charles C. Carran to discuss the possible donation of the Forest Hill property for use as an intercity park. Cain and Carran selected Cleveland landscape architect A. D. Taylor to make a study of the former estate and devise a plan for its development as a public park; Rockefeller would pay for the study, and, if the plan proved satisfactory, he would offer the land, valued at \$1,000,000, at no cost to the two cities. "The plan," noted the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* in an article on the deal, "must provide for development, maintenance and use of the park as a unified whole without regard to the [Cleveland] Heights and East Cleveland boundary lines." In the same article, Cleveland Heights Mayor Frank Cain cited Taylor's long experience as a professor of landscape architecture at Ohio State University, his service on the Cleveland City Plan Commission, and his work as consulting engineer for the National Forest Service, saying, "we chose him as the best man."<sup>8</sup>

A. D. Taylor

Albert Davis Taylor was at the height of his career and serving the second of three terms (1936-41) as president of the American Society of Landscape Architects when he was commissioned to prepare a development plan for Forest Hill Park. Born in Carlisle, Massachusetts, Taylor (1883-1951) was the twin son of Nathaniel A. and

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<sup>8</sup>"Taylor to Make Forest Hill Plan," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, July 29, 1937, p. 12. In the mid-1920s, Taylor had prepared plans for Cumberland Park in Cleveland Heights, a small park that abuts Forest Hill Park on the south side of Mayfield Road and shares the same watershed.

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Ellen F. (Davis) Taylor. He attended Massachusetts State Agricultural College (now the University of Massachusetts), receiving his B.S. degree in 1905. He went on to Cornell University, receiving a master's degree in landscape architecture from the College of Agriculture in 1906. Taylor remained in Ithaca, New York, for two more years as an instructor in landscape architecture, rounding out his education with visits to the important planned landscapes of Europe during the summer of 1907. In 1908, Taylor joined the office of landscape architect Warren H. Manning (1860-1938), a nationally prominent practitioner and protégé of Frederick Law Olmsted. He was promoted from draftsman to associate four years later; in that position he was responsible for supervising the design and execution of field work, sometimes directing the labor of up to twelve hundred men. With Manning, Taylor executed designs for large estates, including those of Frank A. Sieberling (Stan Hywet) in Akron and A. H. Chatfield in Cincinnati. He was also responsible for preparing the topographic survey for the new campus of the Ohio State Normal College (Kent State University).

In 1914, Taylor left the Manning firm to open his own office in Cleveland. While much of his early work was devoted to the planning of private estates, Taylor's office practice grew to become extremely diverse, embracing gardens, suburban places, land subdivisions, parks, expositions, defense-plant housing projects, state highway improvements, and grounds for schools, colleges, hospitals, and other institutions. His knowledge of Olmstedian subdivision design brought him the commission to design the Cincinnati suburb of Rookwood (1922), while his government work ranged from site plans for the U.S. Marine Hospital in Cleveland (1931) to the Pentagon (1942) outside Washington, D.C., to defense-housing projects in Kingsbury, Maryland; Windham, Ohio; and Erie, Pennsylvania. He laid out Father Flanagan's Boys Home in Boys Town, Nebraska (1939) and the Lincoln Park approach to Cincinnati Union Terminal (1931, since altered). In 1936, two years before he was commissioned to design Forest Hill Park, Taylor inspected Regions 1-9 of the United States Forest Service with R. D'Arcy Bonnet. Their report, *Problems of Landscape Architecture in the National Forests* (1936), became the standard authority for the development of recreational facilities in the national forests.

"A. D.," as Taylor was universally known, was one of the first professional landscape architects to practice in Ohio, and his Cleveland office served as a training ground for a generation of noted practitioners, including Gordon D. Cooper and Herbert L. Flint. Through his active association with the American Society of Landscape Architects, and through his teaching, lecturing, and extensive writings, Taylor fostered recognition of the profession and the appreciation of good design. Named a Fellow of the ASLA in 1919, Taylor was instrumental in formulating several documents recognized as milestones in the development of the ASLA, including the Code of Professional Ethics (1927). During the Depression, as chairman of the ASLA Committee on Practice of Landscape Architecture by Government Agencies, he served as a clearinghouse for government jobs in landscape architecture, helping many ASLA members weather hard times by finding opportunities with such agencies as the National Park Service, the Civil Works Administration, and the Civilian Conservation

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Corps.

From 1916 to 1924, Taylor served as non-resident professor of landscape architecture at Ohio State University (a department he helped to establish) and, beginning in 1938, as lecturer on landscape architecture at the University of Michigan. He served as a member of the jury in landscape architecture for the American Academy in Rome and was a longtime member of the Cleveland City Plan Commission. He was noted, too, for his extensive and literate writings in the field. Between 1922 and 1936 his "Landscape Construction Notes" were a regular feature of *Landscape Architecture*, the organ of the profession, providing important information on such subjects as the construction of flagstone walks, roads for private estates, bowling greens, pruning, and the treatment of stream banks at a time when there were no standard references available to the profession. With office associate Gordon D. Cooper, he wrote *The Complete Garden* (1921), a durable reference work. When he died in 1951, an appreciation of his life and work published in *Landscape Architecture* noted that he "was and still is an outstanding influence in the field of landscape architecture."<sup>9</sup>

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Taylor laid out his plan for Forest Hill Park in a handsomely illustrated 104-page report, *Forest Hill Park: A Report on the Proposed Landscape Development*, published in the spring of 1938. In it, he described the property as he found it in the winter of 1937-38: its "gently rolling" topography, most of it on the "heights" 225 to 325 feet above Lake Erie; the rugged Dugway Brook Valley with its "growth of fine trees, mostly beeches and maples, with a few oaks"; its quarry of Euclid Bluestone, "more dense, finer grained, harder and stronger than most sandstones"; the grove of large old specimen trees east of the site of the former Rockefeller residence, "remnants of the original hardwood forest"; some six-and-one-half miles of winding gravel roads; the golf course, "a beautiful expanse of greensward" extending from the former residence site east to Lee Boulevard; and a four-acre artificial lake. Comparatively few buildings remained on the old estate. Among these were the Rockefeller boathouse, and two large frame barns and a number of smaller garage and storage buildings that formed the service area of the former estate.

Taylor noted, around the perimeter of Forest Hill Park, "a limited amount of frontage which is ideal for the development of apartment houses and stores." These parcels — two on the north side of Superior Road, one on

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<sup>9</sup>W. A. Strong, "Albert D. Taylor, July 8, 1883 - January 8, 1951, A Biographical Minute," *Landscape Architecture* 41 (April 1951): 127-129.

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the east side of Terrace Road, and another at the northwest corner of Lee Boulevard and Mayfield Road, slated to be separated from the park by the proposed extension of Monticello Boulevard — he excluded from the park.<sup>10</sup> Next, he considered existing features that could be incorporated into the design of the park. Taylor proposed that the artificial lake, which he called "one of the great assets on this property," remain as part of the permanent park, but that the golf course, which could serve only a limited number of people and which posed a safety risk, become what he called the "Great Meadow." Existing roads winding through the Dugway Brook Valley, Taylor wrote, "can be converted to fine walks," while the straight gravel and hard-surfaced roads that dominated and divided the Great Meadow should be removed. With the exception of those in the proposed Great Meadow and in the vicinity of the barn group, existing walks and trails were incorporated into the plan, though they were to be widened to four or more feet. Existing tennis courts located southwest of Forest Hill and Lee Boulevards, he wrote, "must ultimately be eliminated and replaced by more appropriately located tennis courts which do not interfere with the landscape composition of the Great Meadow." Lastly, Taylor considered the quarry, which, with its handsome stone outcrop preserved and its stone crusher removed, "can become one of the unique features in Forest Hill Park."

According to Taylor, Forest Hill represented an "unusual opportunity in that one seldom finds an area of such size possessing such diversity of topography, abundance and variety of existing vegetation, and many other natural advantages, located within the metropolitan area of a large city. To have had such assets carefully preserved through a period of many years in such [urban] surroundings is most unusual." The problem of planning the park, he wrote, "is that of preserving to the maximum extent the existing character of the property and at the same time providing recreational facilities for considerable numbers of people...." In planning Forest Hill Park, Taylor's task was to determine which forms of recreational activity the park should accommodate and, as he put it, "the extent to which the otherwise rural landscape will be sacrificed to the needs of these recreational activities. The ultimate object of the city park should be that of serving the maximum number of people to the greatest advantage of all concerned, without sacrificing unnecessarily the natural landscape effects."

In what he admitted some might consider a "radical innovation," Taylor called for the elimination of automobile traffic from the park except those roads necessary to provide access to designated parking areas. "Rare indeed," he wrote, "is the urban land area available for park purposes that exists free of this menace to complete

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<sup>10</sup>Under the terms of the Rockefeller gift, the cities of East Cleveland and Cleveland Heights were permitted to sell these choice development sites, but were required to use the proceeds for development and maintenance of the park.

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relaxation and recreational use. The avoidance of such destructive intrusion has been one of the basic principles in the design of Forest Hill Park." A second guiding principle was the preservation and enhancement of the natural features of the property. Opportunities for the study and enjoyment of trees, and bird and animal life, he wrote, "will be an important asset in a park of this size, and in order that it may be developed to its maximum value, adequate protection must be provided to encourage native flora and fauna." No planner who realized the superb natural beauty of the property, Taylor wrote, "could fail to set as his goal the preservation and enhancement of such natural features with their ever-increasing contrast to the built-up areas they serve." To this end, Taylor proposed "only such structures ... as will increase the utility of definite areas without detriment to their natural beauty, only such parking and service areas as are definitely needed to serve the area, and only such changes in the natural vegetation as will increase the beauty and utility of that already existing within the park."

Detailed Design

*Entrance Drives and Parking.* Taylor recommended six automobile and fourteen pedestrian entrances to the park. Proposed parking areas would provide for 775 automobiles. One drive, entering the property from Forest Hill Boulevard east of Terrace Road, was to continue to a proposed central parking lot on the site of the former barn group. Another would enter the property from Terrace Road west of Kirk School; the curving road, leading to a large parking area, would "follow through an interesting swale and small wooded valley making a natural and most attractive approach to this parking area." Taylor recommended bituminous macadam or another hard surface construction for all entrance drives and parking areas.

*Walks and Trails.* Walks and trails would consist of two types: walks connecting two points and scenic trails. "Economy of park design," Taylor wrote, "demands a continual combination of the two ideas. Naturalists tired of city blocks will find in Forest Hill Park's trail system a four-hour walk beside Dugway Brook, under fine old forest trees, over meadows and green lawn with never a retraced step. On the other hand, a person entering at any major entrance will be able to walk to any other entrance with a minimum of effort." In Taylor's opinion, a "considerable portion" of the property's existing gravel drives, originally located to take maximum advantage of interesting landscape compositions on the Rockefeller estate, would ideally meet the requirements for proposed walks and trails, especially through the wooded Dugway Brook Valley.

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*Recreational Activities.* Taylor provided space for baseball, softball, basketball, bowling, football, horseshoes or quoits, ice skating, playgrounds, practice putting greens, soccer, swimming, tennis, track, and winter sports. At the same time, he cautioned that the space allotted for active recreation "should not interfere to an unwarranted extent with the scenic beauty of the open meadows, nor damage unnecessarily the established vegetation on the wooded slopes and in the valley." Facilities proposed near Kirk Junior High School, including a track, football field, swimming pool, and tennis courts, were expected to serve both school and general public recreational needs. Limited picnic facilities, including camp stoves and fireplaces, were proposed for development in the Dugway Brook Valley, in the quarry area, and on the east and west sides of the Meadow Vista.

*Structures.* The location of some park structures was dictated by the topographical features of the property; others, by the use of different parts of the property. Taylor proposed a main pavilion on the former site of the Rockefeller residence, located on a knoll at the west rim of the plateau commanding a wide view of the eastern part of the city and Lake Erie beyond. A steep slope to the west, he noted, already was heavily used for skiing and coasting in winter.

*Lake.* Taylor proposed to enlarge the area of the existing lake by about 20 percent and, for safety, to regrade it to create a maximum depth of three to three-and-one-half feet. He proposed construction of a new boathouse (which could also serve as a skating shelter in winter) on the north side of the lake. Outlets for draining the lake and for overflow would be reconstructed. "The ideal solution," he wrote, "would be the construction of a naturalistic stone masonry spillway which ought to be carefully designed in detail and equally carefully constructed."

*Dugway Brook.* This waterway, one of several streams draining water from Cleveland's eastern "heights" to the lower level of Lake Erie, was problematic. In times of heavy rainfall, the stream cut away its shale bed, resulting in an ever larger and deeper channel. Extensive development of residential areas to the south and east of the park had greatly changed the rate of discharge and the condition of water in the brook; unexpected flooding, together with presence of colon bacteria, meant that the stream bed should be made "rather inaccessible" to children. While Taylor thought that Dugway Brook should remain an open channel between the upper and lower boundaries of the park, he deemed it necessary to confine and culvert a portion of the channel to provide for the "logical development" of those portions of Forest Hill Park near Mayfield Road, Lee Boulevard, and Terrace Road. Taylor recommended the construction of new stone masonry walls and repair of existing stone walls to protect the stream bank from erosion. He also recommended the reconstruction of eight bridges built to carry Rockefeller carriage roads and now proposed to carry foot trails through the valley. (Of the eight bridges Taylor noted, three survive today.)

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*Bridge Over Forest Hill Boulevard.* Forest Hill Boulevard, which bisects the park through a major valley extending east and west across the original estate, required the construction of a footbridge to allow safe and convenient movement between the two sections of the park. The valley's steep walls made it "admirably adapted" to the construction of a high-level bridge. In his report, Taylor illustrated two proposed designs: a reinforced-concrete bridge veneered with stone and a less costly (and less aesthetic) steel arch.

*Quarry.* Stone from the quarry on the Forest Hill property, Taylor wrote, "can be used to excellent advantage in connection with construction work within Forest Hill Park." He advised against extending the borders of the quarry "in view of the specimen trees which are now growing near the top of the bank on the south and west sides of the quarry."

*Utilities.* Taylor's plan for the park discussed requirements for sanitary and storm sewers, water lines, power, and lighting. He recommended the "pendant luminaire with a low mounting" for parking space and lake lighting, and floodlights for softball areas, bowling greens, quoits areas, and the swimming pool.

*Street Frontage of Park.* Taylor recommended a three-foot-high masonry boundary wall to preserve the park as a refuge and to protect plant growth along boundaries of the park.

*Planting.* Taylor called for a mixture of native and exotic plants. Where woodlands in the park were to be retained, he recommended that they be further planted, if necessary, using native trees and shrubs, with emphasis on the introduction of small native flowering trees such as shadblows, dogwoods, and hawthorns, especially along the edges of woodlands and on the ravine slopes. In the open spaces, especially bordering the Great Meadow, he recommended that "specimen trees and clumps of trees . . . be planted in such a way as to provide shade and interest without interfering with the use of the areas or destroying their effectiveness as open spaces." In his discussion of planting, Taylor expressed concern for preservation of the many fine specimen trees in the upland areas and in the Dugway Brook Valley "where intensive use of any area immediately surrounding them will be most injurious to the future growth of these trees unless use of these areas is restricted." Although Taylor believed that every effort should be made to have new plants in the wooded areas of the park appear "indigenous and naturalistic," he believed that buildings and entrance drives required the development of detailed planting studies. "The general effect desired in the planting of the park," he wrote, "should be one of richness, dignity and luxuriance."

Taylor's plan for Forest Hill Park represented a skillful blending of preservation of the stunning scenic qualities



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of the former Rockefeller estate with recreational and service facilities required to accommodate twentieth-century public use. With its Great Meadow, wooded rambles, and picturesque lake, Taylor's design for Forest Hill Park was in the manner of Olmsted and Vaux's Central and Prospect Parks in New York, reflecting Taylor's early apprenticeship with Warren H. Manning, a student of Frederick Law Olmsted. But it differed from those prototypical nineteenth-century pleasure grounds in its provision for both active and passive recreation, and in its recognition that automobiles would need to be accommodated in certain areas of the park. "Its genius," according to a recent article in *Landscape Architecture* magazine, "lies in the artful way in which Taylor incorporated the realities of modern park usage while retaining the most important pastoral qualities of the site."<sup>11</sup>

Besides Forest Hill, Taylor's other park work included designs for Cumberland Park in Cleveland Heights (1926), Ault Park in Cincinnati (1930), Ambler Park in Cleveland (1930), Walnut Beach Park in Ashtabula (1931), a planting plan for the Shaker Lakes in Cleveland (1935), and the Ashtabula Township Parks (1936). Not all of these plans were realized, and none approaches Forest Hill Park in either size or scope. Forest Hill Park stands out, too, in comparison to other large Cleveland-area parks of this period. The reservations of the Cleveland Metropolitan Park District, substantially developed with the assistance of federal work-relief projects during the 1930s, made automobile parkways a central feature and paid little or no attention to the cultural landscapes that may have preceded park development; formerly agricultural lands, for example, were reforested, often with non-native species.<sup>12</sup> A contemporary review of the Forest Hill Park park plan, by Milwaukee landscape architect Phelps Wyman, praised Taylor's creation of "a single unified city park" from land owned by two different municipalities, the placement of active recreation around the borders of the park (leaving the "inspirational" center intact), and the absence of pleasure drives.<sup>13</sup>

Taylor's plan more than satisfied John D. Rockefeller, Jr. In response to a letter from Cleveland Mayor Harold H. Burton expressing appreciation for Rockefeller's "thoughtful, generous and constructive action" in making

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<sup>11</sup>Alicia Rodriguez, "Can This Park Be Saved?" *Landscape Architecture*, September 1997, p. 79.

<sup>12</sup>Carol Poh Miller, *Cleveland Metroparks, Past and Present: Celebrating 75 Years of Conservation, Education, and Recreation* (Cleveland: Cleveland Metroparks, 1992), pp. 9-13.

<sup>13</sup>"Forest Hill Park Review," *Parks & Recreation* 22 (February 1939): 290-291.

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Forest Hill Park available to the public for generations to come, Rockefeller wrote:

Mr. Taylor has done an extraordinary piece of work, which has been successful beyond my fondest hope or expectation. He has prepared his plans from the point of view of one who loves nature and all that it has to offer; from the point of view of one who knows well how to make available without spoiling them, nature's beauty and charm.

In the same letter, Rockefeller credited City Manager Charles Carran and Mayor Frank Cain, who had worked together to realize the park plan, writing: "... it is only because of the vision, the broadmindedness and the willingness to cooperate of the political leaders of East Cleveland and Cleveland Heights that my gift of the Forest Hill area and Mr. Taylor's skillful plans for its development have been brought to fruition."<sup>14</sup>

The agreement between John D. Rockefeller, Jr., and the cities of Cleveland Heights and East Cleveland for the establishment of Forest Hill Park called for the transfer of three parcels totaling 266.3 acres (including those sites earmarked for development): one parcel, 82.6 acres in size, to Cleveland Heights; and two parcels, one 91.3 acres in size and the other 92.4 acres in size, to East Cleveland. Though the land was not deeded over until February 1, 1939, both cities quickly pushed forward with applications for Works Progress Administration funds with which to start developing the park. On May 26, 1938, East Cleveland City Manager Charles Carran announced that WPA authorities had approved grants to the two suburbs totaling \$425,000 to improve the former Rockefeller estate, and that work on the project, which was expected to employ several hundred men, would start about June 1.<sup>15</sup> Construction, which began in the summer of 1938, continued through 1939 and 1940 and into the autumn of 1941. Through his staff expert on park matters, Jay Downer, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., kept close watch on the project as it proceeded, even giving the City of East Cleveland \$27,000 to subsidize the construction of a stone-veneered footbridge rather than a less aesthetic steel arch.<sup>16</sup> Designed by Cleveland civil engineer Wilbur J. Watson (1871-1939), a nationally prominent bridge designer, the bridge with its exquisite tooling is a fine example of the mason's craft.

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<sup>14</sup>John D. Rockefeller, Jr., to the Honorable Harold H. Burton, January 18, 1939, Rockefeller Archive Center, Tarrytown, New York.

<sup>15</sup>On September 11, 1940, the *Cleveland Press* reported that "about \$2,000,000 has been expended by the two suburbs, the Rockefellers and the WPA" in development of the park.

<sup>16</sup>East Cleveland, Ohio, *Annual Report*, 1938.

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In a letter to Jay Downer dated November 22, 1939, A. D. Taylor reported on the progress of the work. The letter illustrates Taylor's close ongoing connection to the project, at the same time documenting the chronology of construction of some of the principal features of the park. Following a discussion of the footbridge over Forest Hill Boulevard, in which he expresses concern about the uniformity of the stone facing on the reinforced-concrete structure, Taylor writes:

The lake is entirely completed (including the spillway), and water is now within about four inches (4") of the top of the spillway. By the time this letter reaches you water will probably be flowing over the spillway. The lake is a great addition to this area and is really a beautiful piece of water.

The culvert is practically completed in the lower Dugway Brook Valley, work is progressing on the walk, and all of the walks and the area near Forest Hill Boulevard in the vicinity of the old original boathouse are now completely graded and finished except seeding. It looks fine.

The grass has made an excellent growth and we have had ideal weather conditions for these turf areas.

The large parking area is now being paved, and the large football area is about one-third graded.

The entrance drive to the parking area from Terrace Road is now completed.

The foundation[s] for the two comfort stations (one in the lower Dugway Brook Valley and one on the north side of the Meadow Vista) are now being completed, and the foundations for the large shelter building in lower Dugway Brook Valley are also completed. They are now starting with the foundation for the shelter building in the area between the two bowling greens, which are about subgraded....

As soon as I can procure some good photographs of the lake I shall send them to you, to be submitted to Mr. Rockefeller. I know that he will be extremely pleased with this lake development.<sup>17</sup>

By the spring of 1941, Forest Hill Park was substantially completed. An article on the project in the *New York Herald Tribune* (April 27, 1941) reported that just over \$2,000,000 had been expended, providing employment

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<sup>17</sup>A. D. Taylor to Jay Downer, November 22, 1939, Rockefeller Archive Center, Tarrytown, New York.

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to a work force that varied in size from 350 in 1938, when the project began, to 750 in 1940 and 1941. The newspaper noted the 360-foot-long footbridge over Forest Hill Boulevard, built at a cost of \$185,000; the artificial lake rimmed by stone walks, featuring a shelter and boathouse costing \$25,000; the bowling green and building ("the first of its kind in Ohio"); and the extensive improvements in the lower Dugway Brook Valley ("one of the largest and costliest sections"), where a 4,300-foot-long concrete box culvert had been built to enclose the brook. At the north end of the park, a football field, eight concrete tennis courts, a baseball field, and a small parking lot had been completed. According to the 1940 annual report of the City of East Cleveland, thirteen thousand shrubs and "approximately" thirteen thousand small trees had been planted.<sup>18</sup> Probably owing to budgetary constraints and the Federal Government's preference for labor-intensive work-relief projects, where the bulk of the money would be used for wages rather than materials or equipment, not every element of Taylor's plan was realized. Features proposed by Taylor but never built include the Main Pavilion with its gate lodge and parking area, the Overlook Shelter, and the swimming pool and bathhouse.

World War II brought further development of Forest Hill Park to an end. The park was opened to the public in the spring of 1942 and quickly became a popular recreation area. In accepting the land, the cities of East Cleveland and Cleveland Heights agreed to "faithfully cooperate in the improvement, development, maintenance, government and management of the park, holding in high trust for the benefit of the public the special blessings and natural or developed advantages thereof." Both cities also approved and adopted the 1938 Taylor plan "as the basic plan for the improvement and development" of the park and pledged "to cooperate with the other municipality so far as possible to insure uniformity of improvement and development" of Forest Hill Park.

In his plan for Forest Hill Park, A. D. Taylor had been explicit in stating that he had designed it "with the intent that this park shall represent a unified recreation area to be developed and maintained, so far as *unity of design* [Taylor's emphasis] is concerned, without specific consideration as to boundary lines between the communities of East Cleveland and Cleveland Heights." In the report, he had even considered the "ultimate location" for the

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<sup>18</sup>In February 1940, Taylor prepared planting plans for certain areas of the park, including the cascade (spillway) and lower pool, the vicinity of the lake and footbridge, and the north end of the park near Kirk Junior High School. These called for a mixture of native and exotic plants. While the landscape has become overgrown in many instances, evidence of Taylor's hand can still be seen, especially in the parking areas and around the perimeter of the lake. Plant lists and blueprints of planting plans are located with the Forest Hill Park plans in the locked vault at East Cleveland City Hall.

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office of the park superintendent. But Taylor never addressed the problem of jointly administering and maintaining a park divided unequally between two cities, and as the years passed the two suburbs increasingly diverged in their approach to the further improvement and maintenance of the park.

In 1948, the City of East Cleveland erected a police radio antenna in the north end of the park. In 1949-52, using proceeds from the sale of an adjacent parcel designated for the construction of apartments, the City of East Cleveland developed the Superior Road Recreation Area with a ball diamond, basketball court, children's playground, comfort station, and a small parking lot to a plan prepared by A. D. Taylor. A 1949 aerial view of the park shows that by this date two softball diamonds had been built along the eastern edge of the Great Meadow, in Cleveland Heights. A 1960 aerial view shows the addition of a third ball field in the meadow; the former Rockefeller quarry — still visible in the 1949 aerial — has been filled in. In 1959, the City of East Cleveland erected a ranch-style caretaker's house near the Terrace Road parking area.

In 1968, the City of Cleveland Heights built a large brick recreation pavilion and parking lot at the corner of Mayfield and Superior Roads. In 1975, the pavilion and parking lot were expanded, and the three softball diamonds occupying the Great Meadow were relocated (elsewhere within the Meadow) and lighted. In 1989, these diamonds were replaced by a complex of four ball fields built to the plans of Blunden-Barclay Architects. Two contemporary-style park shelters, two new tennis courts (four earlier courts pre-dated development of the park), and a parking lot (entered off Forest Hill Boulevard) were also added that year.<sup>19</sup> During 1993 and 1994, extensive illegal dumping occurred in the lower Dugway Brook Valley, scarring the landscape and killing numerous trees and other plants.

Today, the most intact portion of the park lies in East Cleveland, which in the 1960s saw the rapid and large-scale departure of its white, middle-class population and is now one of the poorest communities in Cuyahoga County. East Cleveland has lacked the resources to make any large new capital improvements or even to maintain the park adequately. Ironically, while the East Cleveland portion of Forest Hill Park has suffered from lack of maintenance, comparatively few changes have occurred there and it enjoys a high degree of historic integrity. Cleveland Heights, on the other hand, with its relatively high-income population, has had the resources to develop new recreation and service facilities within the park, most of which do not conform with the 1938 Taylor plan.

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<sup>19</sup>The 1968 and 1975 projects were reviewed by the Forest Hill Park Advisory Commission, as stipulated by the 1938 agreement between John D. Rockefeller, Jr., and the Cities of East Cleveland and Cleveland Heights. The 1989 work was done without the Commission's review.

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The agreement between John D. Rockefeller, Jr., and the two cities that was meant to guard against inappropriate alteration has proved, with time, to be inadequate. In recent years, preservationists have had to fight to hold the line against further incursions. These have ranged from a proposed soccer field (in the Cleveland Heights section of the park) to a wireless telecommunications tower (in the East Cleveland section). Yet despite the changes that have occurred, large portions of Forest Hill Park still preserve to a remarkable degree both the imprint of its famous occupant and the design of one of America's foremost landscape architects.

*The preparer of this nomination wishes to acknowledge Dr. George Wilder, who generously shared the results of the hundreds of hours he has spent studying the plants of Forest Hill Park and reviewed the description of botanical features included with this nomination; and members of the Forest Hill Historic Preservation Society, especially Sharon Gregor, Cathryn Kapp, and Anne Meissner, who shared their own research on the history of the park.*

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### **Geographical Data**

#### Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property consists of Cuyahoga County permanent parcels #672-28-002, 672-28-003, 672-28-004, and 681-39-001, excluding portions of parcel #681-39-001 as indicated on the accompanying base map.

#### Boundary Justification

The nominated property comprises those portions of Forest Hill Park that retain historic integrity. Two areas of the park have been excluded due to incompatible later construction and changes in use.