

Appendix B Case Studies

Halifax Commons

History

In 1760, 240 acres of land were granted as common for the benefit and use of the town's inhabitants, and the area was first depicted on city plans three years later (Markham, 1980; Halifax, 1992). Under the original terms of the Common Grant the lands were to be administered by a Board of Trustees "for the use of the inhabitants of the town of Halifax as Common forever" (Markham 1980: 16) Although some disputes occurred over the boundaries of the Common, the edges have always been defined through road layout and adjacent lot development.

Defence, livestock pasturing and firewood gathering were the initial intended uses of the Halifax Common; however, the soil, was rocky, thin, wet and deemed unsuitable for cultivation and the trees were small and scrubby. Clearance of the common land was desired in order to provide unobstructed views from the fortress atop the citadel (Markham, 1980).

19th century

The Commons were largely underused during the early 19th century, regarded as barren and dreary lands. In the public interest of improving the Commons, leases were issued to private citizens to keep horses and cattle and be responsible for improving their farm lots on the common land through the cultivation of land, building of houses and farm buildings, and planting trees. The leases were initially for 999 years; later the leases were reduced to 33 then 15 years. Regulations were put in place limiting the appropriate use of the common to pasturing and land improvements (ie. developments) in order to curtail dumping and removal of scarce soil from the common. Three commissioners were given responsibility over the common land instead of the six trustees.

Since the early 1800s the military had legal rights to *all* common land north of Spring Garden Road, although the North Common was most commonly used for military purposes. In order to protect the clear and unobstructed views from the citadel and to confirm defence and military action as a primary use of the common land, an 1831 Act granted 12 acres west of Citadel Hill to the Military; this land was referred to as the Garrison Grounds. Non-military development, other than cemeteries, gardens and orchards, was prevented within 600 yards west of citadel hill. (Halifax, 1992; Markham, 1980).

1852 – City borrowed 500 pounds to clean, drain, fill, plant trees and construct roads around the commons.

In 1871 – City Council gained authorization to sell these lots so that improvements could be continued at private rather than public expense. (Halifax 1992; Markham 1980 says this was in 1876)

1875 – Management and control to 10 commissioners of the Halifax Common (six aldermen and four citizens).

1875 – City purchased the Horticultural Gardens from the Horticultural Society. Increasing community pressure to improve the commons for recreation (Markham 1980).

From 1859 onward public institutions were constructed on the South Common to prevent interference with firing site lines from the citadel. The North Common was used for recreation and open space and the South Common was considered institutional.

The general hospital was the first institution built on the South Common in 1859, followed by the Poor Asylum in 1866. The following decades brought the development of the School for the Blind (1870), Exhibition Building (1879), and Dalhousie College (1886). (Halifax, 1992).

Early 20th Century

Construction of public institutions on the South Common continued into the early 1900's. The All Saints Cathedral (1907), Children's Hospital (1907), and fire station were built in the southern common (1908).

1931 – Committee on Works (of City Council) given authority for management

1942 – The restrictive lines were lifted, which allowed the construction of Queen Elizabeth High School (1942), the Vocational School (1949), and the CBC Studios (1952).

Current Halifax Commons

In 1994 the City of Halifax Council approved the Halifax Common Master Plan in order to set objectives and corresponding restrictions to uses of the Halifax Commons. Much debate has arisen regarding the transfer of ownership from public to private.

Today the Commons is still approximately 240 acres with 200 acres still publicly owned (Halifax, 2009). Over half of the Commons remains as public open space including the North and Central Common, Wanderers Grounds, Public Gardens, Victoria Park, Camp Hill Cemetery and public streets (Halifax, 2009). In addition to the public institutions that were built in the 1800s and early 1900s, Commons now houses: 2 fountains, softball diamonds, tennis courts, a soccer field, an outdoor public swimming pool, a skateboard park, and the Halifax Pavilion.

Boston Common

History

Throughout the history of the Boston Common it has been used for many different purposes, including military camps, cattle grazing, public hangings, public speakers and civil activism. The Boston Common is closely associated with some major events in the history of the United States and symbolizes national identity and patriotism for many Americans.

The Boston Common was established in 1634 when 45 acres of land was purchased by the town from Rev. William Blaxton. (Markham, 1980). The track of land was initially a large livestock enclosure used for pasturing cattle. Footpaths followed irregular and informal patterns through the sparse woodland, ponds and small hills, and much of the surrounding lands resembled the Common. (Zaitzevsky, 1982)

By the 18th century the Common had taken on new purposes, as the site of hangings and other executions, and as a large military training ground. During the American Revolution in the late 18th century, the land was used by the British as a military camp. Trees and fences were ripped up for fires, and trenches and fortifications were dug. (Stigloe, 1982)

During the late 18th and early 19th centuries the Boston Common underwent a transition from farmland to pleasure ground. Cows were banned from the common in 1830 and landscaping was

carried out to level the terrain, add trees, fountains and statues. The Frog Pond, the “Malls”, and linear interior pathways are all important features of the Common which were introduced during the period of leisure and relative wealth following the American Revolution.

Legal protection of the Common for public leisure became increasingly important during this period. In 1824 the Mayor proposed to keep the area open and without buildings, and ten years later a horticulturalist society was formed and established a large conservatory. In 1822 the City Charter secured the commitment to protect the Common from sale or encroachment.

Current Uses

The Boston Common is the oldest park in the United States and is currently approximately 50 acres in size. Although use and form have changed significantly over the past 350 years, the size and configuration of the park area have remained almost unaltered. It is the central park in a system of connected parks throughout Boston's neighbourhoods and is the starting point of an historic walking trail of sites throughout the city. It hosts several festivals and performances each year.

Throughout the 20th century recreational facilities were introduced in the Common. Today these facilities include ballfields, a playground, spray pool/ skating pond and tennis courts. One area of the Common is developed and was included in the Common during the 20th century. Comprised of the Old Burial Ground and both historic and modern buildings, restaurants, churches, a theatre, and historic sites characterize the Beacon and Tremont Street corner of the Common. The Boston Common is protected through a number of policies to prevent encroachment of development and protect the character of the park, including limits on the amount of shadow which may be allowed.

Pike Place Market

History

In the 1900s, more than 3000 farmers supplied the city of Seattle with fresh fruits and vegetables. Unable to tend to their land and sell their produce farmers turned to wholesalers. Farmers would sell their produce to wholesalers on consignment, receiving money only after their produce was sold. The farmers in many instances were being bilked out of money by the wholesalers, claiming that they were unable to sell the produce or were not able to get a high enough price. Frustrated with the process farmers made their disdain be known. Newly elected City Councilor, Thomas P. Revelle became aware of the issue and sought ways to remedy it. Revelle discovered that in 1896 the City Council had authorized but never followed through a public farmers' market. Revelle was able to persuade his fellow councilors to approve a farmer's market (Crowley, 1999).

On August, 17th, 1907 the Pike Place Market opened. The market was constantly busy and many saw opportunity for growth. The market quickly expanded.

November 1907 – A permanent Arcade is built.

1910 – The sanitary Public Market opened across the Main Building.

1911 – The Outlook Hotel and the Triangle Market were built.

1912 – The Corner Market Building opened.

1914 – A vertical addition to the Main Market was built.

1917 – The Market's ensemble of core buildings is complete

The market faced many challenges throughout the following years. Many proposals came forward that sought to change the look, placement, and land use of the Market. Many of the proposals suggested that change was good for the Market. In 1924 Mayor Edwin J. Brown proposed that the market be moved due to vehicular traffic congestion. The Mayor proposed a giant new public market structure, complete with civic auditorium and radio station (Crowley, 199). The public was against this plan and the mayor lost the following election. In 1950 a plan came forward to have the Market replaced by a giant parking garage, but nothing came of it. In 1963 a revitalization plan that proposed the Market be demolished and replaced with terraced garages and high-rise office buildings (Crowley, 1999). This plan was thwarted by resident groups.

Current Pike Place Market

The Main Market, with street-level stalls and a subterranean warren of shops, stretches in an L-shape from 1st Avenue and Pike Street (named for pioneer builder John Pike) to Pike Place and then along Pike Place to Virginia Street. Across Pike Place, the Sanitary Market and related buildings rise toward 1st Avenue. Through constant vigilance the Pike Place Market has evolved in a manner that is true to the original intent. In addition to the farmers, butchers, fish mongers, and craftspeople the Market now houses a clinic, a seniors centre, a food bank and is home to 500 low income residents.

Sherer Park

Current Sherer Park

Sherer Park is located in Long Beach, a city of approximately 500,000 people in southern California, about 30 km from Los Angeles. For many years the city has lacked sufficient open space for parks, recreation and institutional uses and Sherer Park is an important neighbourhood facility. At 27.5 acres it is one of the larger park areas in the city, and includes tennis courts, basketball courts, a community centre, open green spaces and recreation programming. Temporary buildings for the police force were located in the park during the 1990's, before the police proposed to construct permanent structures on the site. A lengthy debate regarding the proposal followed, and the police force proposal eventually went ahead in 2000. The dispute revealed deficiencies in park protection legislation, but also resulted in cooperative solutions.

The public controversy initiated important changes to park management procedures throughout the city. The City of Long Beach possessed no authority to formally dedicate land as a park, and there was no legal mechanism to prevent the construction of non-park structures in a park area. All park areas were formally dedicated as such and future areas for parks were also designated, and the City implemented a parks master plan which allowed them to strategically acquire new park land. The City council also passed a law that requires any lost parkland to be replaced with twice the acreage. Half the replacement parkland must be provided near the lost area and the other half in a neighborhood with a deficiency of park space. No parkland has been lost since 2000, primarily due to these policy changes initiated by the encroaching development in Sherer Park.