

CRAM, GOODHUE AND FERGUSON

ARCHITECTS.

170 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK.

15 BEACON STREET, BOSTON.

NEW YORK, May 26th, 1911

*D*  
*Rec'd 940 Am 31st*

John C. Olmsted, Esq.

U. S. Grant Hotel,  
San Diego, Cal.

Dear Olmsted:

The blue prints of the two schemes we have been making, and which we have labelled for convenience, E and F, are being sent you this afternoon.

We call them E and F because as you will find by referring to the drawings we have sent out in the past, the first four letters of the alphabet have already been used.

In plan E, by placing the bridge slightly north of Date Street, as indeed, you suggest in your last letter, we have, also, it seems to me, obtained a very much better and more practical arrangement in every way. This plan, though a large portion of it was worked out independently before your last plan reached us, is, after all, little more than a development of your own arrangement.

We have, to be sure, reduced the size of the square containing the band stand; but in defense of this proceeding, it must be remembered that the arcade surrounding this square will provide space for a great many auditors during the Fair, and that when the Fair is over, this arcade should be, if my advice is followed, entirely removed, leaving only a low parapet

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J C O p 2

wall.

In looking at this plan E, you will notice that we have actually gone so far as to suggest the band stand in quite another position, to wit, the natural amphitheatre lying to the west of the more important of the temporary buildings. This is no more than an idea and I am disposed to believe that the original position is the best, for there is quite a strong possibility that the band in the new position would clash with the music they are bound to have in Rodeo.

We have considerably reduced even your last dimensions; but I know you will agree that it is better to do this now, even if it is proved necessary to add area to certain of the buildings later on.

In this plan, there is no doubt of the effectiveness the permanent group will produce when the Fair is done away with, almost as good in fact, so far as the buildings themselves are concerned,-- (and this included the bridge) as in the position as suggested by Allen, still I can't help feeling that if you could bury your prejudices, the other site is better in every way. After all, you are dealing, not with an American town in its essence, but with what is endeavouring to be a Spanish one. Formality is the note of all

NEW YORK, May 26th, 1911

J C O p 3

Spanish garden architecture and I can't conceive, indeed, I may as well quite frankly say, I don't know in any American public park, of any effect that could compete with the bridge, the permanent buildings and the mall terminated by the statue of Balboa.

This is all I ask of you in the way of a concession to my deep rooted and most curiously un-Gothic fondness for formality where gardens are concerned, and before condemning my point of view, please look at the thing from every possible side.

Col. Collier suggested that the buildings on the new site would not be so visible from the harbour as on the old. This may or may not be so; but in twenty-five years from now, they will probably not be visible from any portion of the harbour.

The cost of the bridges shown in each design is practically the same, and I think we can so design them that the construction will work out much more cheaply than Mr. Allen has allowed.

As you will see from the accompanying schedule, in the original scheme, \$140,800 was allowed for the three bridges then proposed. I believe that either of the bridges shown in our design could be built for \$75,000. Furthermore, the reservoir is of infinitely greater value as a scenic property in the new than

NEW YORK, May 26th, 1911

J C O p 4

in the old site, indeed in the old, it would be quite negligible. This, of course, applies only to the Fair and would not be true of the final arrangement of the park.

It is true too, that the new site is somewhat higher than <sup>the</sup> the water level of the reservoir while the old site is lower. This would probably make the hydraulic effects, fountains, etc. easier and cheaper to produce ~~than~~ on the original site, than on the new one, <sup>but</sup> ~~and~~ I have no doubt Mr. Allen will find some way to overcome this difficulty, especially since plan F gives in every way a better opportunity for effects of this kind than plan E.

There are too, a number of possibilities in connection with the lake that it seems to me are too important to be thrown over, until their value has been carefully considered, notably the possibility of boating. We have shown a boat house in close connection with the restaurant on the assumption that the letting of boats would be in the hands of the restaurant concessionaire, and I suggest that if plan F be adopted that both restaurant and boat house be made permanent features of the park.

With regard to grading and filling, the grades on both plans are, of course, subject to elevation and

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J C O p 5

depression as suggested by you.

You speak of the possibility of a bridge in your letter and, of course, if the money for this can be had for one at Date Street, it can equally be had for Laurel Street. Also a bridge at Laurel Street would be of some real value when the Fair is over, while one in the wretched position at Date Street would make the public come in the park at precisely the ugliest and least desirable point. In Scheme E, the main entrance, at the south, is considerably cramped, and though, of course, it deserves and will get a great deal more study, I don't believe it can ever be made very satisfactory, while in Scheme F, without any detriment to the property owners facing the park, or indeed, without touching the first 500 feet of the park, which is now as I remember it, the only place where any money has been spent in the way of planting, we obtain a large plaza adequate for any amount of traffic, carriage stands, etc. The only detriment at this point is that a car line must perforce be swung in around the loop and out, yet we have formed the necessary loop in this case wholly within the park and where it can readily be screened by foliage, even going to the extent of carrying the tracks

NEW YORK. May 26th, 1911

J C O p 6

under the avenue that runs approximately parallel with the edge of the park.

The grade of the Plaza Larga is, you say, in your scheme from 4% to  $4\frac{1}{2}\%$ , <sup>with</sup> to which grade our scheme E will have to <sup>conform</sup> apply, while in scheme F, it is but 1.2%, surely a great advantage in every way.

We have, as you will readily see, taken the law into our own hands with regard to the square area of many of the buildings; the only one whose accuracy I feel at all sure about being the Auditorium. The Plaza de Musica is also distinctly smaller, for the reasons given farther back, than in your last plan, being 230 feet ~~and~~ in scheme E and 210 feet in scheme F.

When Col. Collier was here, he hinted, or at least did not prevent my inferring, that more money was going to be forthcoming from the Government. This possibility, however, had better not be allowed to have any bearing on what we do now. It is, however, pleasant to think that in case Mr. Allen's estimates are proved to be too low, we have something to fall back on.

In the past few days, I have sent a number of letters and telegrams to one or another of you at San Diego, enough, at any rate, for you to realize how difficult it is for me to plan in advance with any great degree of certainty.

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J C O p 7

Since my last telegram, my friend, Gillespie has landed here from Europe and has so strongly urged our going to Santa Barbara for the summer that it is not impossible, or even improbable, at this present writing, that we may come out on or about the first of July, we, in this case, meaning Gillespie, myself and my entire family. If this happens, it will enable me to spend a great deal more time actually on the ground for I purpose to stay perhaps six weeks before coming east again, leaving, of course, my family in Santa Barbara, and returning in the early Autumn to bring them back, when I will again stay for perhaps a month.

Won't you and Allen, therefore, the minute the plans are received, get together, calling a meeting of the Committee if necessary, and let me have your every possible criticism and suggestions so that I can bring a more or less final plan with me.

Very faithfully yours,

