

OLMSTED BROTHERS
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Seattle, June 14, 1911.

Dear Harold:-

I was very glad to get your letter yesterday giving me the news about the exposition work, etc. I gave Mr. Olmsted your message about Gill's address and he telegraphed to Gill last night when he would be at the Auditorium Annex. I also read with interest what you had to say about the political situation in San Diego.

Your idea of having the Exposition in the middle of the Park I think is a wrong one. It sound as if you had accepted all the pleas and arguments of Allen and various other people who have no regard for park design. The matter of cross roads and trolley lines through the park is not nearly as objectionable as the introduction of public buildings. Mr. Olmsted has said very little about the railroad and doesn't care to say anything even now, because if he agrees to a railroad, why, that is a point in favor of the exposition being in the middle of the Park. As long as I can remember and from all that I have read, the Olmsted's have never favored public buildings in a park and have fought vigorously against their introduction whenever it was possible for them to do so. There are, of course, several instances where these public buildings occupy ground in parks, that should be used for park purposes, such as in Central Park, Buffalo Park, and several others. In most instances, when these buildings were put in parks, it was just a grab by the promoters of the buildings, whether it was an Art museum or a Library, to get the land for nothing and to give the buildings a magnificent setting and surrounding of landscape regardless of the butchery that it caused the park. In other words, I felt, and I know that Mr. Olmsted strongly feels, that the introduction of the buildings into the Park would permanently injure the value and beauty of the Park and disturb the principles of the Park.

You must realize, and, of course, Goodhue and Allen do not realize, that a park is not created to be a frame for a lot of public buildings, no matter how beautiful they might be. It is created for the purpose of giving recreation and pleasure and peace to the public who, in order to get their rest and happiness, must find a place which is quiet and peaceful, and as far from the thought of such features of civilization as possible. You know mighty well that when you find yourself in the country or in the fields, or in portions of parks or any such place where you are entirely surrounded by only natural features, such as trees, fields, etc., that you obtain a rest of mind that you can find under no other condition. There are in my mind thousands and thousands of people living about in cities who have never tasted such recreation simply because they have not had the opportunity and have been forced to live in view of all sorts of structures, trolley cars and noisy streets, and the continuous

sight of great masses of people.

It is extremely difficult to offer this to the public even in a public park, simply because it is so hard to entirely shut out from view the structures outside of the park limits and within the park as well, and when they actually introduce these structures within the bounds of the park, it is pretty d--- hopeless. This is the reason why we are so anxious, and Mr. Olmsted has fought so hard to keep this exposition at the south end of the Park, which is next to the populated district and which will permit the buildings that are built for permanency to eventually become a part of the city and not a part of the Park. In other words, my feeling is that the north end of the buildings built on the exposition will and should eventually be the south end of Balboa Park.

I do not feel that the exposition in the vicinity of the High School will cause any great disturbance to the pupils during the construction or the exposition period. During the construction period it would have no more effect on them than any big piece of work about the city; most of the work will be north of them and far enough away not to disturb them after the novelty of the thing has worn off. Then, during the exposition, as soon as they get used to seeing a lot of people in the vicinity, I don't think they will be disturbed any more than they were at the University of Washington at Seattle. Of course you will say that the University at Seattle closed before the exposition opened, but before the exposition opened many of the students actually used buildings within the grounds, such as in the Administration Building; for over a year the Treasurer's office was used for law classes and as soon as the auditorium was built, it was used continuously by the students.

El Rodeo is far enough off not to cause any unusual disturbance other than to have the tendency to attract the students going and coming from school. And beyond that, even if it did disturb them to considerable extent for a whole year, I think it would be much better to break up their studies for one year than it would be to disturb permanently a public recreation park that would be used by many times more people than there are students.

I hope the above expressions of my views will be convincing to you of the one important principle - that public buildings or buildings of any sort other than are necessary for the actual accommodation of people visiting the parks, have no right to be placed within the park boundaries. Such men as Allen and Goodhue who are looking at this matter from their own selfish point of view, will probably never realize this principle because they are entirely ignorant of park design and as to its principles.

Some time it would be interesting to you to read Mr. Olmsted's report on public buildings in parks written to the Board of Park Commissioners at Atlanta, Ga.

Yours truly,

J. H. D.