Chapter Five
SITE

Scholars who have written about the selection of Madison as Wisconsin's capital generally agree that three factors led to the territorial legislature's approval of the site on 3 December 1836 during its initial session in Belmont. The first was Madison's central location between the settled areas of the territory—the lead mining district in the southwest and the older communities in the Green Bay area in the northeast together with the new, quickly developing communities along the shore of Lake Michigan in the southeast. The second was its naturally beautiful site on an isthmus between two large lakes. And the third was a lobbying campaign, often described as bribery, by the site's promoter, James Duane Doty, who originated the radial plat for which the city has become known.¹

Platting of Madison

Even though the 1836 plat has been widely discussed, relatively few physical descriptions exist of the site as it appeared at that time. The most informative was written two years before the legislature selected Madison and it appears in the field notes kept by the surveyors for the U.S. Commissioner of Public Lands. At the time, a systematic survey of the entire territory, beginning at the Illinois border, was underway, using the township and range system that Congress had selected for surveying all the states of the Old Northwest Territory of which Wisconsin was a part. A principal surveyor with a crew of three reached Town 7 North, Range 9 East—what became known later as the Town of Madison—in December 1834. The notes kept by Orson Lyon, who headed the crew, and John Mullet, a crew member, described the general character and soil of the township where Madison lies as “Land rolling & 2nd rate.” The trees were “Burr – Black & White Oak” with an undergrowth of “Oak & Grass,” meaning that most of the township was covered with oak openings and prairie. Lyon and Mullet gave a more specific description of the character of the lakes on either side of the isthmus. “The bank of the third Lake [Monona] is high, dry and rich land except a part of the Southwest side of the Lake . . . which is low and marshy . . . The bank of the 4th Lake [Mendota] is with few exceptions high dry ground.” The isthmus had no inhabitants in 1834-36, either Native American or European American. Native Americans and some fur traders lived seasonally on the north shore of Lake Mendota and the south shore of Lake Monona at the time of the survey, and Native Americans had occupied the townsite from time to time over the millennia. But on the isthmus itself, wilderness conditions prevailed when the legislature chose it for the capital. In the nineteenth century, numerous Indian mounds were found on the isthmus generally, though none in what is now the Capitol Park. The nearest mounds to the park, including conical mounds and a turtle effigy, were at the foot of modern Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard and at about 105 West Main Street.²

The genesis of the Madison plat began in April 1836 when Doty, together with a business partner from Detroit, Stevens T. Mason, entered a claim to about 1,360 acres of the isthmus at the federal land office in Green Bay. Then on 1 July 1836, Doty “drew up a plat of the ‘Town of Madison’ to be built around a square, centering at a meeting of fractional
sections 13, 14, 23, and 24, Township 7 North, Range 9 East, the precise spot on which the Wisconsin capitol now stands.” In late October, he and John V. Suydam, an editor, teacher and sometime surveyor from Green Bay, visited the site and staked it out following the plan that Doty had drawn, with the central square incorporating about 13.5 acres. Doty and Suydam then went on to Belmont, the first territorial capital, arriving on or about 2 November 1836. Doty was there as a citizen who had at least one item of personal business in mind—to convince the legislature to select Madison as the seat of government for the territory.¹

The plan submitted by Doty was radial, doubtless drawn from his familiarity with the plans for Washington, D.C., Detroit (then the capital of Michigan) and Indianapolis, the latter two having direct connections to the Washington plan. In general, radial plans drew on precedents that date back to the late 1300s and early 1400s in Europe and to the late 1600s in America. They flourished particularly in the Baroque era, roughly from the early 1600s to the 1750s. Plans from the Baroque era emphasized networks of streets, avenues and boulevards that create vistas and focal points, often with an implied hierarchy determined by the width of the thoroughfares and the character of the focal points. In the United States, a radial plan was used in Annapolis, Maryland, in the late 1600s, but that plan appears to have had little immediate influence on further planning in the colonies. The plan for Washington, D.C., by Pierre Charles L’Enfant, a French-born architect who served as a captain in the Revolutionary War, was far more influential and is the progenitor of the plan for Madison. President George Washington commissioned L’Enfant’s plan, which was submitted in 1791. Both Washington and Thomas Jefferson participated as clients in establishing the plan, which was more elaborate than Doty’s plan for Madison. Madison’s relatively simple plan echoes rather directly the 1821-22 so-called “Mile Square” plan for Indianapolis. The Mile Square had fewer circles and squares and vistas than L’Enfant’s plan for Washington, and it had a direct connection to L’Enfant’s plan through its designer, Alexander Ralston, who had worked for L’Enfant on the Washington plan. Ralston also was familiar with the L’Enfant-inspired plan for Detroit, which was conceived in 1807 by Augustus B. Woodward, an associate of Thomas Jefferson. In 1807, Woodward was the federal justice in Detroit, which served as Michigan’s capital until 1847, and in 1819-20 Doty was the clerk of Woodward’s court. At the time Indianapolis was being designed, also as a wilderness site, Doty served as a judge himself in the Wisconsin district of Michigan, maintaining a connection to Woodward. Thus Doty was personally familiar with all three of these radial plans—Washington, Detroit and Indianapolis. The fact that the isthmus offered a relatively small site with significant hills may have influenced Doty’s decision to choose the least elaborate of the preexisting radial plans for capitals in the United States.⁴

The Madison plat placed what became the Capitol Square on the hill at the juncture of the four sections near the middle of the isthmus, closer to Lake Monona than to Lake Mendota. The plat indicated that the square was a “Donation for Public Buildings” (similar to various “donations” in the Indianapolis plat), but, having no contour lines, it did not indicate the pronounced slope on the west side of the hill. The plat’s grid of blocks followed the natural conformation of the isthmus, running northeast to southwest, and not in the usual north-to-south, east-to-west pattern of most Midwest cities. (Glaciers came from the northeast, and many Wisconsin land features accordingly run northeast to southwest.) From the centers of the sides of the central square, broad avenues with ceremonial-scale, 132-foot widths extended to the extremities of the plat: Lakes Mendota and Monona to the northwest and southeast, the Yahara River to the northeast, and the plat’s southwest extremity. Streets 66 feet wide radiated from the corners of the square, suggesting an intention of small-town residential and commercial uses. The city was small, about 230 blocks in all, having an average of about twelve lots per block, each measuring 66 by 132 feet—standard for the day. At a small-town density of four persons per lot, and accounting for businesses, government buildings, stores and factories, the platted area could be estimated to accommodate eight to ten-thousand residents in single-family dwellings. Besides the radial plan for the square area, two other diagonal streets were planned on the east side. One ran north to south from Lake
Platted Portion of Judge Woodward's Plan for Greater Detroit, Based Upon the Governor and Judges Plan of 1807

(Courtesy Michigan Historical Commission)

5.4. Augustus B. Woodward, plan of Detroit, 1807
L'Enfant's Washington plan influenced Judge Augustus B. Woodward in his 1807 plan for Detroit, which was then Michigan's capital. Dutty had been associated with Woodward in Detroit, where he worked as a clerk in Woodward's federal court from 1819 to 1820.

5.5. Alexander Ralston, plat of Indianapolis, 1821
Like Madison, Indianapolis was selected as a capital city while the area was still a wilderness. Alexander Ralston, who once had been employed by L'Enfant, created a plan for Indianapolis based on the plan for Washington, D.C., although it was much simpler.
Monona to East Washington Avenue, a block or so from the Yahara; the other ran east to west, from Lake Mendota to East Washington. They would have created another set of focal points but were never executed. The plat indicates a small mill district and a canal between Hancock and Franklin Streets, but no parkland or public access to the lakes and river, nor a site for a university. Doty’s plat served as a suitable footprint for both the early town that developed on the isthmus and for the city that grew later.  

On 8 November 1836, John Suycam drew the plat that was submitted to the territorial legislature. He made the drawing in Belmont where he also acted briefly as a draftsman for the legislature. Seventeen communities, some of them established and some of them paper towns like Madison, were put forward as capital sites in the territorial council (the equivalent of the senate), which rejected them all but Madison on a vote of seven nays to six ayes. On 23 November, Doty was victorious and Madison was selected with seven ayes. The vote in the house of representatives (the equivalent of the assembly) followed suit on 28 November after three additional potential sites were thrown into the mix. Just how Doty brought off the triumph for his town site is not known. He likely trafficked in Madison lots—some free, some for money—and he made warm buffalo robes available to the legislators, who were suffering through an unusually cold November in badly heated, newly constructed buildings at Belmont. He also employed his “unusual charm” and verbal skills. Doty’s biographer, Alice E. Smith, sums up the story thus:

In the end it was probably the combination of Doty’s warm buffalo robes, the promise of corner lots, the genial persuasiveness of the judge (Doty himself), the section deadlocks [among other competitors], and the personal antagonisms, as well as the real merits of the proposition, that settled the matter and resulted in the choice of an unoccupied and unimproved tract displayed on a scroll labeled “Madison City” as the capital of Wisconsin.  

Early Development of the Capitol Park, 1837-57

Construction of the “public buildings at the seat of government,” as the legislation described them, began in June 1837 and was overseen by a three-man commission appointed by the legislature: James Duane Doty, John Falls Neill and Augustus A. Bird. Doty was treasurer; Bird served initially as builder, then James Morrison assumed that role in 1838. The legislation left it to the commission to determine what buildings besides a capitol might be required, and it decided that the commission should report neither to territorial officials nor to officials in Washington, although the federal government appropriated $40,000 to construct buildings. Doty alone kept the records, a circumstance that soon led to lawsuits and political controversy. The commission did indeed spend some funds on other “public buildings” besides the capitol, since the builders required housing, work sheds, a sawmill and other structures. The territorial capitol was barely habitable by late 1838 when the legislature attempted to meet in it and was not completed satisfactorily until the winter of 1845-46. The basement was not finished into what were by then badly needed offices until after statehood was attained in 1848.

Territorial Capitol

No evidence has been located to identify the architect of the territorial capitol in Madison, which is generally attributed to the commission. Although both James Duane Doty and Augustus Bird have been suggested as the designers, their biographers do not award the building to either of them, and it may be that an architect employed by Morgan Martin of Green Bay drew the plans. The capitol in Madison was the third of Wisconsin’s territorial capitols, the first two having been in Belmont and Burlington. The Madison building was constructed of cut stone quarried at Maple Bluff on the northeast shore of Lake Mendota, and it had some Greek Revival traits, notably two wooden porticoes with four Doric

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5.6 James Duane Doty, plat of Madison (detail), 1836

Doty’s 1836 plat for Madison created what would become the Capitol Park. He had persuaded the territorial legislature to choose his “paper” town as Wisconsin’s capital city largely because of the beauty of its isthmus. The relatively confined site limited the number of axial streets Doty could employ; the fundamental idea for the design likely was inspired by Ralston’s work in Indianapolis.

5.7 Statement of payments for the territorial capitol (detail), 1841

Doty acted as treasurer for the commission that oversaw erection of “public buildings” in Madison, including the territorial capitol. He first reported related expenditures to the U.S. Senate in 1844 when he sought confirmation as territorial governor. This is the only surviving record of payments.
columns each, a wooden cornice that the commissioners wished to be in "the Grecian Doric order," and a metallic dome. Neither of the central entrances had a pediment, a typical element of Greek Revival design, and the central doorways on the east and west sides of the building had Romanesque arches. The building was symmetrical in concept, with nine bays on the principal east and west facades, three on the north and south facades. There were forty-six double-hung windows, each with twenty lights that measured 11 by 16 inches each. The tin dome resembled an inverted bowl and measured 26 feet in diameter with a skylight in the center; a wooden octagonal drum supported it. A wooden balustrade surrounded the walls and porticoes and partially masked a low, hipped roof. The capitol measured 104 feet by 54 feet and rose 30 feet above the water table. Instructions to masons and carpenters suggest that the first story had 12-foot ceilings; the second, 15-foot ceilings. The porticoes were about 30 feet long and 12 feet deep.

5.8 Territorial capitol from the west, circa 1861
John S. Fuller of Madison photographed the soon-to-be-replaced territorial capitol just after the new east wing of the second capitol was erected behind it. The masonry structure on the left is probably the capitol's outhouse. Posts and chains lined a boardwalk as the principal approach to the building.

5.9 Johann B. Wengler, territorial capitol from the east, 1851
Johann Wengler, an Austrian artist, drew King Street and the capitol when he traveled in America in 1850-51. The Capitol Park "grove" and board fence appear to the left of the building.
During the early days of settlement in Madison, improvements of the Capitol Park coincided with growth of the community, which was slow. The community had 142 residents in 1840, 172 in 1842, just fewer than 300 residents in 1845 on the eve of its incorporation as a village, and 633 in 1846. Nevertheless, by 1839, the clearing of underbrush helped give the grounds “the look of a well kept lawn, shaded by fine white oak and bur oak trees.” In the early 1840s, Madison’s principal street of the period, King Street, still had a sod surface and was interspersed with the stumps of trees. By 1846, the community’s principal intersection of King, Main and Pinckney streets was somewhat improved and served as the approach to the capitol building. The east entrance of the capitol served as its ceremonial entrance, and most public activities associated with the capitol took place on the east and southeast lawns along Main Street. Mixed forest and prairie still covered the land west and northeast of the Capitol Park. The park had a steep slope to the west. Between the center of the square and the State Street corner, the land fell at least 25 feet, judging from a survey made in 1906 before construction began on the present capitol. The slope may account for the placement of the territorial capitol 26 feet east of the established center of the square, making it closer to King Street than to State Street. Such placement would have eliminated the need for fill and extensive steps leading to the west façade, and eased the difficulties inherent to construction in a wilderness area. The off-center placement was corrected when the present capitol was erected.

The first efforts to delineate the Capitol Park appear to have occurred in 1842 when the legislature provided funds to erect a whitewashed wooden fence around the grounds, as much to prevent incursion by horses and roaming livestock as to beautify the area. Outside the fence, workmen built a wooden sidewalk and a hitching rail. Then in 1843 the legislature established the position of superintendent of public property whose duties included overseeing work on the capitol and tending its grounds. In 1844, a large brick outhouse designed in Gothic style was erected near the northwest corner of the capitol. In 1846 the superintendent arranged for removal of the remaining hazel bushes and oak grubs and for sowing grass seed. He also had the lower branches removed from existing trees, most of which were only about 12 feet in height, and he had new trees planted, including a row of maples and elms next to the fence. These efforts created a park-like atmosphere that reduced the somewhat wild appearance of the grounds and visually separated them from the businesses and residences that had begun to ring the Square. Despite these improvements, the legislature in 1848 considered a resolution to address the problem of livestock wandering into the park, and Madisonians still hunted game birds in the park until at least 1852.

As the community grew (1,670 residents in 1850; 8,664 in 1855), the park became increasingly refined. The walks leading from the outer fence to the capitol were set off by ditches and post-and-chain fences; benches were placed along the walks seasonally. When native oak trees died, they were removed and replaced, primarily by elm trees but also by maple, linden and hackberry—common species in southern Wisconsin. In late March of 1857 when a new capitol was in the offing, the Wisconsin State Journal recommended enhancing the park with more walks, paving them all with gravel, installing “a wide promenade . . . inside the enclosure,” and adding “flowers, ornamental shrubs, &c.,” saying that they “wouldn’t injure the looks of the place.” The newspaper suggested that Madison’s municipal government pay for these improvements, underlining the park’s dual function as an official State of Wisconsin property and an unofficial Madison municipal park.

Uses of the Park

Governmental, political and local events assuredly occurred in the Capitol Park from 1837 to 1857, but because of the legislature’s calendar the majority of the events were local, not governmental or ceremonial. Until well into the twentieth century, the legislature met in the winter months, and most of the significant ceremonial events took place during these sessions when cold weather prevented outdoor ceremonies. Instead, government ceremonies were held inside
the capitol, particularly in the hall of the house or assembly, which was the largest room in the building and probably the largest meeting place in the community until the late 1850s. Madisonians liberally used the capitol's rooms for gatherings of all kinds, and they unofficially appropriated the Capitol Park for recreational and organizational purposes. In the winter months, thawing and refreezing of snow in the relatively flat area of the park along Main Street created sufficient ice for skating, and in the spring boys played marbles in the same area.  

Wisconsin-wide ceremonial events and gatherings in the park were few in number until after 23 May 1854, the day the first train reached Madison. Before then, the difficulties in traveling to the capital by stage, wagon or horseback mitigated against ceremonies of statewide significance in the park. Not even the achievement of statehood on 29 May 1848 occasioned a significant ceremony, neither on that day nor later on the Fourth of July, always a day of public celebration. Instead the legislature, which had convened in early June 1848, adjourned on 29 June and returned on 10 July, giving legislators a chance to celebrate at home. At least one important statewide event occurred in the park during the early days of statehood—the formation of the state's Republican Party on 13 July 1854. The convention attracted hundreds of persons from all parts of the state. Most delegates traveled by rail, making the event an excursion on the new rail line as well as a political undertaking. The meeting resulted in the second Republican Party organization under that name in the United States, a few days after Michigan's party formed. The fall election that year put Republicans in charge in Wisconsin—the first such outcome for any state.  

Fourth of July celebrations were probably the most important public events around the United States in the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century before Decoration Day (now Memorial Day) superseded the prominence of these events after the Civil War. Madison citizens routinely used the park for celebrations, which were organized annually by ad hoc committees with food furnished by local hotels and restaurants. Madison's very first public celebration was likely the laying of the capitol cornerstone on 4 July 1837. Although reports of Independence Day celebrations have not been found for the years 1838 to 1846, an 1847 report suggests that a tradition had been established and all elements of the exercises had become somewhat routine. Cannon were fired early in the morning; participants gathered first at a hotel and then marched a block or two to "the Park." There the Declaration of Independence was read and an oration was delivered. Then toasts were made formally by the members of the committee and informally by Madison residents and visitors from the countryside. One or more local hoteliers or restaurateurs provided a meal. The newspapers referred to a section within the park as "the grove" and there much of the activity took place. ("The grove" was probably the most level part of the park and would have had no underbrush.) Dances occurred in the evening, and by the 1850s there were fireworks after dark. In 1857, a year of depression, the ad hoc committee did not form, and the Argus and Democrat called the oversight "remissness." Yet too impromptu celebrations occurred anyway. The first was in the morning and was organized by Madison's German community, following the usual American pattern of recitations, an oration and toasts, with delivery in German. The second was in the afternoon, called by the mayor who had handbills distributed announcing the event. Toasting was not mentioned in 1857 accounts, perhaps because it had gone out of fashion by the late 1850s. Other events also took place in the park in the 1850s, including concerts twice a week in the summer months. The park was, in short, the place where Madisonians gathered from the 1830s until the 1850s for much of their outdoor entertainment and recreation.  

Capitol Park, 1857-1906  

The period between 1857 and 1917 encompassed the erection of Wisconsin's second and third statehouses in the Capitol Park, with accompanying changes in landscaping, fencing, other built elements and usage. The park was transformed from a natural landscape that served as a municipal recreational space, to a city center devoted to more formal leisure,
and finally to a Beaux-Arts setting appropriate for a large and important Capitol that was far more imposing than either of its predecessors.

The Second Capitol

A new and considerably grander capitol building erected between 1857 and 1869 transformed the appearance of the park. From territorial days until the eve of the Civil War in 1861, many mature trees surrounded and shaded a relatively small building at its center. In contrast, the new capitol was at least eight times as large and dominated the park visually, towering over both mature trees and new plantings. Until 1857, the capitol appeared to be almost secondary to the park; the size of the second capitol reversed this impression and the park became a setting for a building. The new capitol had indoor plumbing, and the outhouse on the west lawn was removed in May 1866. Construction also prompted the removal of many mature trees and the planting of new ones. Over time other elements were placed in the park, such as benches, a fountain and cannon.

The new capitol was designed by August Kutzbock and Samuel Hunter Donnel of Madison in a German Romanesque (Rundbogenstil) style; the roof was to have had a modest lantern topped by a small dome. The exterior was clad with cut Prairie du Chien stone and had octagonal turrets and elaborate chimneys. It was erected in stages, beginning in 1857 with the east wing, which was attached to the existing building. In 1861, construction of the west wing commenced, and the rest of the building, except for the central portion and dome, was finished about 1865. Portions of the first capitol's walls were incorporated into the structure of the central portion and the basement. The east and west wings had semicircular porticos, each with ten Ionic, cast iron columns. The ground story lintels were flat; two-story tall windows served the second and third floors and had arched lintels. The capitol had central heating and included
an attached subterranean boiler house on the southwest side of the building with smoke routed through a chimney in a turret. Donnel died on 18 December 1860 after the first wing was completed, and Kutzbock supervised the rest of construction, leaving Madison for San Francisco in 1865.16

Photographs from the early 1860s just after the east wing was constructed suggest that some new trees were planted at the time, and they were planted rather closely together. New trees probably were called for because construction had forced cutting the existing trees. Kutzbock was also a landscape designer, and it is possible that he created a new landscape plan for the park as part of his work. A surviving account book indicates that he was also trained as a craftsman, since entries appear in it for carving and finish carpentry, architectural and landscaping designs, and for actual execution of garden plans.

The second capitol finally received a dome in 1869. The state rejected Kutzbock’s original design and instead sought a cast iron dome modeled on the newly installed dome of the National Capitol in Washington. Designed by Stephen Vaughn Shipman of Madison, the cast iron dome imitated that of the United States Capitol in both form and materials. After the Wisconsin dome was completed, the height of the capitol to the top of the flagstaff, including a cast iron eagle, was 225 feet, 6 inches. According to Capitol lore, Kutzbock was despondent over the rejection of his design and the accepted design of the ill-fitting Shipman dome. He committed suicide by walking into Lake Mendota in 1868. In 1873, the underground boiler house was expanded and an adjoining coal vault was constructed to eliminate the heaps of coal that were piled on the grounds in fall, winter and early spring. In 1882-83 the second capitol was expanded with additions to the north and south wings. The extensions resulted in a building extending 396 feet north to south, making the second capitol ten or eleven times larger than the first and contributing further to the impression of the building’s

5.14 Newly constructed dome from the north, July 1870
Stephen Vaughn Shipman of Madison designed the dome for the second capitol after Kutzbock’s design was set aside in favor of a cast iron dome evocative of the recently completed dome on the National Capitol in Washington, D.C.

5.15 Second capitol with 1883 extensions, South Carroll Street, circa 1885
The extensions to the north and south wings were constructed in 1883, and the capitol and the Capitol Park remained in this basic configuration until 1899. The iron fence was in place from 1872 to 1899.
dominance in the park. The architect for the extensions was David R. Jones, whose initial plans imitated the Kutzbock and Donnel design. Economic considerations led to elimination of some decorative elements, although the wings were constructed of the same Prairie du Chien stone as the original portion of the capitol. The carved stone doorways of the north and south wings of the Kutzbock and Donnel building were moved to the ends of the new wings.17

The Civil War era saw heavy use of the Capitol Park for local political activities. When Abraham Lincoln was nominated for president in May 1860, Republicans fired a hundred-gun salute in the park, and when he was elected in November they fired cannon in the park every minute for three hours. The campaign that year occasioned many rallies in the park for both major parties and included famous speakers. Political rallies at night were illuminated by kerosene-soaked cattail torches. After the war erupted in April 1861, patriotic parades would begin at the park and march to the railroad station accompanied by bands. As the war progressed, the park became the scene of protests, and in April 1862 anti-draft advocates demonstrated in the park. On 3 October 1864, pro-war forces knocked several torch-carrying antiwar protesters unconscious with well-aimed stones, and at a subsequent pro-war rally, the speaker’s stand in the park was the target of eggs and stones. On 9 April 1865, Governor James T. Lewis ordered a cannon fired in the park to celebrate the Union’s victory over the Confederates. By July, the park was the scene of marches to welcome returning soldiers, usually accompanied by cannon fire, speeches and rallies.18

During the Civil War, a “Secesh” (Secessionist or Confederate) cannon captured by the Fourteenth Wisconsin Regiment at the Battle of Shiloh on 7 April 1862 found a home in the Capitol Park, the first of at least five cannon that eventually were displayed. It was described as:

a brass 12-pounder, of rather a rough finish. The carriage bears many bullet marks, showing conclusively that it has been where it hailed bullets in great profusion. It was manufactured by Messrs. Leeds & Co., of New Orleans, in 1861, and is a trophy of deep interest to our people. Crowds are constantly huddling around it. It is thoroughly spiked [by Lieutenant George Staley of Company D] with a rat-tail file, and we understand that is contains a full secession charge of powder and ball.

The charge was later removed. A dispute arose in 1896 when a retired general from Ohio claimed that an Ohio regiment had actually captured the cannon, prompting Wisconsin figures to produce historic documents proving Wisconsin’s claim.19

1872 Landscape Plan
The incongruity of a new, elegant building surrounded by a relatively rustic park, a white board fence and a hitching rail was not lost on either the public or state officials. In his January 1872 annual message, the new Republican governor, Cadwallader C. Washburn (who served from 1872 to 1874), suggested that the legislature provide for both an ornamental fence and for general improvement of the grounds. (The need for a solid board fence had dwindled because by then fewer animals were apt to escape confinement from downtown stables and barns.) The legislature accommodated his suggestions by appropriating $40,000 for a fence on 5 March, then followed with a law creating a Board of Park Commissioners to see that the Capitol Park was “surveyed, aesthetically designed, laid out and platted, and hereafter . . . improved and beautified in accordance with some fixed plan.” It appropriated $500 for the board’s expenses and another $1,000 for a plan and a survey. Governor Washburn signed the park board legislation on 23 March and subsequently appointed three commissioners, all from Madison, to six-year terms. In that same session, the legislature also adopted a law calling for removal of the old fence and hitching posts around the Square and providing a fine of five dollars for hitching horses to the new fence.
5.18 Horace William Shaler Cleveland (attributed), plan of the Capitol Park, 1872
Cleveland's plan for the park included numerous serpentine walks, fountains at the four junctures of the capitol's wings, a bandstand and other destinations for visitors. Cleveland endorsed the perimeter fence as conceived by Shipman and Governor Washburn.

5.17 Pedestrian entrance to the Park, Main, King and Pinckney Streets, circa 1875
The enclosed park with a partially realized landscape plan by Horace William Shaler Cleveland had a more formal appearance than the earlier park. A double row of trees, or allees, provided a shaded walk around the park inside the fence.
On 11 March, even before passage of the commission act, Washburn had advertised for architects to submit designs for a fence, specifying iron as the material with a stone coping to match the capitol and four carriage and twelve pedestrian gates, each of which would require a pair of stone posts. The fence was to be 760 feet square, a dimension that put it at the location of the existing hitching rail, with walks both inside and outside, thus eliminating the stableyard conditions around the periphery of the Square. Architects had until 10 April to submit plans, and the winner would receive $200. Some time between 26 and 30 April, Washburn chose Stephen Vaughan Shipman, the architect of the dome, to design the fence. Other of Shipman’s buildings existed around the Capitol Square, and his fence design thus was expected to harmonize with the capitol and neighboring buildings. Estimates of the cost of a stone coping proved too high, and instead the fence was constructed at ground level with iron posts every 30 feet. Granite foundation blocks were buried every 6 feet and pickets were inserted in them and secured with poured lead, thus strengthening the stretches of pickets between the posts. Spear-shaped finials topped each picket. The eight large stone gateposts at East and West Washington Avenues, Wisconsin Avenue, and what was then Monona Avenue received cast zinc statues of female figures in classical garb, purchased from Gould Brothers and Dibblee of Chicago. Only four figures were selected, and each was used twice. Gaslights on iron standards were placed on the sixteen pedestrian gateposts. An eight-foot-wide, yellow-brick walk with a stone curb was constructed outside the new fence. Another yellow brick walk circled the park inside the fence. The decisions about the walks aroused controversy locally because of the loss of hitching space. Flagstones were used as pavements at the entrances to the park, and both the flags and the brick harmonized with the buff-colored Prairie du Chien stone of the capitol and gateposts. The fence project was completed in June 1873, and the walks were completed a year later.10

On 30 April 1872, the commission secured the services of one of the most famed landscape architects of the day, Horace William Shaler Cleveland of Chicago, to design the park. Cleveland’s credentials were impeccable and included, or came to include, the Minneapolis park system, the Omaha park system, Washington Park in Chicago, Como Park in St. Paul, and the Brookside suburb in Indianapolis. Even though Cleveland had no part in the design of the fence and sidewalks, he endorsed them. In an exchange of letters between Governor Washburn and Cleveland that was published in both the Madison Democrat and the Wisconsin State Journal on 11 July, Cleveland quieted local opposition, saying the fence and sidewalks would eliminate “the incongruity of an ornamental park, surrounded by a stable yard occupying a third of the width of the roadway.” And he declared that the lawns, plantings and embellishments of the park that he intended to design would be seen best from such walk.

Cleveland apparently submitted his plan between 30 April and 11 July. Besides incorporating the perimeter walks, it called for serpentine walks within the park itself which were to lead to destinations such as a music stand (bandstand), a summer house, fountains, statuary and urns. (No cannon appears as a destination on Cleveland’s plan, although at least one was likely to have been in the park in 1872.) Small fountains were to be tucked into the corners of the capitol at the junctions of the wings. Each of the quadrants received two features, with the bandstand to have been erected on the southeast lawn. To prevent destructive behavior against these features, Cleveland’s plan provided for impediments like trees and earth berms. Cleveland also recommended concrete and asphalt drives and walkways leading to the capitol and around it. Only one drive or approach, that at Monona Avenue, was to have had a carriage turn. The walks and drives vary from quadrant to quadrant on the plan, but the idea for each appears rather similar. The walks for the west quadrant may have accommodated the slope, but no contour lines or topographical measurements overlay the plan, so it is impossible to determine the extent to which Cleveland designed the park with the slope in mind. The design seems to have been imposed on a rather flat plane, not one with a 25-foot drop.

As for trees and plantings, Cleveland recommended removal of the “gaunt, unsightly specimens” of trees that detracted
from the “great many fine specimens” of oaks, hickory, hard maples and basswoods. He also suggested transplanting some of the overcrowded trees, especially maples, elms and box elders, to other locations where they could develop fully. He believed this would provide “contrast of light and shade, and . . . occasional concealment or closing of views, by groups of trees left together in a mass.” The rest of the park was to be given over to green lawn except for the foundation areas around the capitol. There he wanted “thick growing flowering shrubs of four to six feet high, such as Weigelia Rosea, Syringa, Tartarian Honeysuckle, Persian Lilac, etc.”

Cleveland’s ambitious vision for serpentine walks and attractive destinations was not realized for the most part, and some of his ideas were modified. By autumn of 1872, an asphalt walk around the capitol was completed, as were radial walks and drives from the perimeter of the Square to the capitol. Judging from plans of the park drawn on an insurance map of 1898, each of the four broad avenue entrances at the centers of the sides of the park (not just one at Monona Avenue) received a carriage turn that surrounded a serpentine-shaped grassy plot, and each of these plots was shaped somewhat differently. But no serpentine walks traversed the lawns in the four quadrants of the Square. In 1873, many trees were cut and sod was laid where they had stood. Other trees were trimmed and thinned. Despite local fears that the work might have gone too far, the park remained nicely shaded and the Wisconsin State Journal reported that, unlike the past, “one [now] can see the Capitol and look across the Park under the trees.” A few flowerbeds were planted, but foundation plantings were not. (Indeed, a fairly substantial embankment seems to have been created around the foundation, as appears on the 1906 survey, although the date of its creation cannot be determined.) The superintendent of public property initiated regular cutting of the grass and protected it from trampling by placing stones on the edges of the driveways and installing posts and chains along the walks. Cleveland’s ideal of a park with many walks was not met, and signs eventually discouraged walking on the lawns.

As for the proposed destinations, only a bandstand and one fountain were installed. The bandstand was erected near the Monona Avenue entrance on the West Main Street lawn in 1877, about where Cleveland recommended, and it seems to have accommodated regular concerts in the summer months. It was followed in 1878 by a large fountain on the same lawn, but nearer the capitol. The fountain was a duplicate of a fountain exhibited by the manufacturer at the U.S. Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia in 1876, was made of cast iron, had four tiers, and weighed about ten tons. A stone basin circled it. Making room for the fountain required grading and removal of a cesspool and some trees. Water spouted from an ornament at the top and cascaded from tier to tier to a basin below. In the summer, speckled trout and other fish swam in the basin and tempted Madison children to mischief. In the winter, a cover was placed over the basin. Just in front of the fountain, a Civil War cannon was affixed to a post, and several iron benches were placed nearby. In 1873, the Norwegian immigrant community proposed another feature for the park, but it did not come to fruition. That year, a group from Madison launched a campaign to raise $10,000 for a statue of Leif Eriksson, one of the early European explorers of the North American continent. Violinist Ole Bull from Norway, who was then a Madison resident, gave benefit concerts to raise the funds, but ultimately the efforts failed.

The Shipman-designed fence and the partial realization of Cleveland’s landscape plan effectively finished the gradual transformation of the Capitol Park from the rustic, wooded site it had been since the 1830s into a “romantic landscape park, planned in accordance with the fashion of the time to be aesthetic and healthful.” It was a suitable setting for the capitol and at the same time retained some of its old characteristics as a spot for Madisonians, who by the 1870s numbered more than 10,000, to engage in the types of activities for which they had always used the park—recreation, community events and civic gatherings. But the transformation had added a trait not previously obvious: the park had become a beauty spot. It was no longer a grove to which Fourth of July celebrants would retreat for oratory and a picnic.
Late 19th Century Development of the Park

The park’s role as the principal government-owned recreational space in Madison changed considerably in the years before the present Capitol was erected. Various public and private parks and spaces were developed before 1900, and from 1900 to 1910, the city acquired a remarkable park system that became known throughout the United States. By then, the Capitol Park had lost its status for casual recreation in the center of the city. Various public and private entities had both deliberately and inadvertently provided other options for recreational areas beginning in the 1870s. During that decade, the city created a park on the east side, Orton Park, which had been the community’s cemetery until Forest Hill was platted in 1856, and it designated two other public parks as well—the block between Hancock and Franklin Streets on Lake Mendota and the street end of Monona Avenue. Residents also turned to other publicly owned locations that were not formal parklands such as the University of Wisconsin campus, and they patronized private parks, particularly on the shores of Lake Monona. The private parks became popular after the Civil War and persisted well into the twentieth century. After 1892, electric streetcars made some of these public and private spots even more accessible. By 1895, Madison had attained a population of nearly 16,000, and the need for more municipal parks had become acute. It fell to a private organization, the Madison Park and Pleasure Drive Association, to mount a campaign to create several parks that eventually would be overseen by the municipality. Tenney, Vilas and Brittingham Parks were created as part of this effort between 1900 and 1910; by then Madison had grown to 25,000 residents. Use of the Capitol Park lawn for strolling and more active recreation was discouraged by signage and local convention. However, the walks and steps were used for public events such as in July 1902 when Carrie Nation, the famed temperance advocate, mounted the steps of the east wing and delivered an address. Civil War veterans, however, had a special status when it came to use of the lawn. The 1905 encampment of the Wisconsin branch of the Grand Army of the Republic took place in the park, and the veterans received carte blanche to use the grounds.25

Several changes occurred in the park’s appearance between 1872, when the H. W. S. Cleveland plan was partially put into effect and Shipman’s fence was erected, and 1906, when construction began on the current Capitol. The extension of the capitol’s north and south wings in 1883 occasioned relocation of walks around the building, although the carriage drives appear to have been unaffected. In 1895, a statue, Forward, by Jean Pond Miner Coburn was placed on the East Main Street lawn opposite the fountain and between the King Street and Monona Avenue approaches. Its position did not correspond to Cleveland’s recommendations for placing fountains and statuary. Forward, named for the state’s motto, was the first significant work of outdoor sculpture located in the Capitol Park. A clay version had been exhibited at the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893, and the women of Wisconsin raised the funds necessary to have the work reproduced in copper repoussé for the Capitol Park and placed on a pedestal of rusticated granite.26

Advances in transportation technology and increases in Madison’s growth resulted in electric streetcars traversing the center of the right-of-way on three sides of the Square; and an escalating numbers of stores, service businesses and offices put pressure on state government to relinquish its double walkway and fence. In May 1899, the fence and outer wall were removed and stone curbing was laid, narrowing the park by eight feet on all sides and restoring it to its pre-1872 dimensions. The twenty-four stone gateposts were retained. (Sections of the iron fence were sent to the School for the Deaf at Delavan and the Wisconsin Public School at Sparta. The Sparta fence was removed, rehabilitated and installed around the Executive Residence in Madison in 1970.) Special lighting on the capitol dome also drew people to the park and to downtown Madison. In 1900, a thousand bulbs lit the dome during a four-day street fair from 15 to 19 October, and an estimated 75,000 visitors came downtown for the sight. The grounds retained gaslights until 1905 when they were replaced with electric arc lamps at the order of the city council that acted on a report that stated that gaslights “gave the city too much of an appearance of a country village.” At the same time, the council prohibited erection of poles on the streets surrounding the park.
By the late 1800s four cannon, each supposedly a captured Confederate weapon, were positioned in the park, one near each of the carriage approaches. In 1907, their undercarriages and wheels were repaired by the Wisconsin Wagon Company, and they drew attention when they were returned to the park in a caravan on Main Street. In 1900, the U.S. War Department "allotted" a Spanish-American War cannon to the city of Madison, and by 1907 it, too, was placed in the park adjacent to the fountain, creating what local commentator Jud Stone facetiously called "a nice little village around the fountain."

Only small-scale changes occurred in plantings and trees in the park during this period. In the late nineteenth century, the capitol's gardeners created flowerbeds around the edges of the park in patterns referred to by landscape historians as "gardenesque" beds. These were ornate, complexly shaped beds, sometimes overlaid with symbolism. In 1899, for example, the Wisconsin State Journal suggested a seven-pointed star as a flowerbed to honor the Seventh Army Corps—a suggestion that may not have been heeded. By July 1901, there were fourteen geometric beds in the park, some in the shape of stars, crosses and at least one planted to resemble a U.S. flag. The gardeners used mostly geraniums and foliage plants, not flowering plants, but they also used tulips seasonally. Tree maintenance continued in ways that prevented a return to the early rustic appearance of the park. Groundkeepers pruned trees and planted new ones when required. They also kept the lawn mowed, installed several more iron benches, and created an atmosphere for strolling in dappled shade—but only on the walks. The park was also home to gray and fox squirrels, some of them descendants of eight that were introduced in 1872. They attracted occasional newspaper attention, and groundskeepers erected special houses for them in trees around the park.28

Capitol Park Extension Proposals, 1905-07

By 1903, state government had outgrown the capitol, and the 1904 fire made the need for a new building even more immediate. The debate over what kind of capitol to place in the Square centered particularly around the issue of the relatively small, 13-acre park versus the size of the building that it could accommodate with satisfactory aesthetic effect while still meeting the practical requirements of the government. The first capitol competition in 1904 (conceived before the fire destroyed substantial portions of the building) drew attention to the dilemma. The program for the competition did not require a site plan, a circumstance lamented by of the American Institute of Architects president, William S. Eames of St. Louis, who judged the competition. He drew attention to the off-center siting of the capitol:

"[T]he present building is askew with the entire city, a most confusing and unfortunate condition, inasmuch it destroys the dignity of the building and distorts the important surroundings in such a manner as to present a most painful effect. All ... the competitors have realized this fact, and point out the importance of having the dome coincident with the center of the square and on the axis of the intersecting streets. Your Commission must not fail to insist that the proper axis for the new building be adopted."

Eames also cautioned that "the execution of any of the designs submitted in competition will necessarily involve a complete change in the character of the block [Square] on account of the removal of the trees and the substitution of an entirely different treatment of the landscape."

Between the first competition in 1904 and the second in 1906, consideration arose to extend the park southeast to Lake Monona. Making more of the Monona Avenue approach to the lake had been under consideration since 1893, when the Madison Improvement Association hired Olaf Bensen, a Chicago landscape architect who had designed Lincoln Park, to prepare a design for the avenue that went unimplemented. Then in 1904-05, the winning design by Cass Gilbert...
in the first competition drew attention to the small size of the park for a building that would meet the government's programmatic needs. At that time, Dr. Clarke Gagen, a Madison physician and lawyer, proposed extending the park along the avenue, keeping the size of the capitol in suitable proportion to the size of the original park, and erecting supplemental government buildings on both sides of the blocks leading to the lake. James Huff Stout, an influential state senator and lumber baron from Menominee, advocated a similar plan in 1905. Stout headed the senate's committee on the capitol and its grounds, and he quietly formed a group of allies to pursue the idea. On their behalf, Grant Thomas, a local real estate figure who was associated with the Madison Park and Pleasure Drive Association, began securing options on properties in the six blocks involved. While this work proceeded covertly between 1905 and 1907, other activities affecting the capitol and the park were more overt. Many citizens and visitors had gone for some time pointed to squalid conditions in the streets around the capitol because they were largely dirt or gravel and were routinely fouled by waste from horses. The legislature agreed, and in 1905 forced the City of Madison to pave the streets before it would release the 1905 appropriation for the new building. The city complied and began laying asphalt pavement late that autumn. Then in February 1907 the story broke about the Stout and Thomas activities. It was reported that they had acquired $1.6 million in options, and Stout and nine other wealthy men from around Wisconsin were said to have already pledged $100,000 each to carry out the scheme.  

Newspapers, politicians and business interests promptly took sides about extending the park. The Milwaukee Journal advocated an extension not only to Lake Monoma, but down Wisconsin Avenue to Lake Mendota and down State Street to the university campus. If such plans were carried out, the Journal wrote, "future generations would bless the memory of the men whose wisdom, liberal mindedness and far-sightedness had changed a beautiful dream into a proud reality." Madison attorney C. E. Buell said the plan "would give Madison the finest capitol site in the United States." An anonymous Madisonian said he bet a friend "a new suit of clothes that Senator Stout's gigantic plan will meet with popular favor." Others said the expanded park would keep the capitol from being overwhelmed by "sky-scrapers" around the Square. But Daniel Kent Tenney, a real estate entrepreneur with $50,000 worth of property in the district, opposed the scheme because it would close streets and "cut the city of Madison in two." Tenney thought the Capitol Park was the largest state capitol site in the country. "The New York state capitol at Albany has no park setting at all," he said. "I believe our park . . . is abundant for the purpose." By May, a bill a had been introduced in the senate for the Capitol Park extension, but it failed, and for a short while the issue disappeared from the press while the legislature debated the capitol itself.  

Unlike the 1904 program for the first capitol competition, the second program issued in 1906 tackled some site issues but did not mention expansion, despite the fact that at least some of the commission members must have been aware of the activities taking place behind the scenes. In its program, the commission specified that the Capitol was to be designed for the existing scale of the park and called for a cruciform plan that would fit into a 420-foot-diameter circle. The commission also asked competitors to offer "possibilities of landscaping the park" and required that the plan of the principal story also show the park with "approaches, terraces and other suggested accessories."  

Landscaping George B. Post & Sons' Capitol  

According to Daniel H. Burnham, the famed Chicago architect who judged the competition drawings in late June 1906, George B. Post & Sons of New York best fulfilled the elements of the program related to site. Post & Sons' plan of the park included a "broad platform" or terrace for the Capitols, which drew Burnham's admiration. He noted that the other competitors had designed terraces that simply followed the outline of the cruciform Capitol and did not create a broader platform like Post's. Burnham said "the building will [sit] . . . with much dignity" on it. "It is handled with a sense of grace and is practically direct and fitting for its purpose and superior to any of the others." Burnham believed the scale of Post & Sons' scheme fit the relatively small site appropriately and did not crowd the building as the "gran-
Post & Sons' 1906 proposal for landscaping was less formal in concept than its plan for approaches and walks. The winding paths were reminiscent of H. W. S. Cleveland's unexecuted plans for serpentine walks and demonstrate the likelihood that Post and his staff may have been familiar with Cleveland's earlier work for the park. For other park features, both the ground floor block plan and the perspective drawing prepared for the competition show the entire park surrounded by a stone coping, outside of which was a perimeter walk. The coping was broken symmetrically in each of the eight blocks of the Square for two sets of flower urns and benches. At the corners were circular flowerbeds. The walks from the corners to the wing ends were divided by a grass median. Shrubs, trees, and other plantings were sketched minimally in both the perspective drawing and the landscape plan.64 Once the commission chose Post & Sons, the firm quickly began work. One of its first steps was to acquire a fresh and detailed topographical survey of the grounds to which it assigned the project drawing number of 518-0—the first drawing in a series of hundreds of drawings for the Capitol. After the survey, Post & Sons adapted the competition plans in general. The architects lengthened the wings, and this step affected plans for both the terrace and the topography. The topographical reconfiguration called for an approach with a grade of no more than 10 percent, meaning that considerable fill would be required for the west slope of the park and the terrace for the West Wing. In August 1910, Post & Sons prepared a "General Plan of Grounds." It went through six revisions that concluded on 27 September 1915, which is the only version that survives.65

Excavation and cutting of trees began in October 1906 to prepare for construction of the West Wing. Thereafter, until completion of the Capitol, changes to the park involved making way for the new building and planning for eventual landscaping. While the Capitol was being built, the parts of the park adjacent to construction were effectively closed to the public, although barricades do not seem to have been erected. Scores of trees were cut to make room for each of the wings as well as for considerable fill and changes in topography for the west, south, and north quadrants. But parts of the park adjacent to the wings of the old capitol that were not immediately affected continued to be used as before, apparently receiving only routine maintenance until their turn came for construction. The usable sections of the park continued to attract the public, so much so that the legislature adopted a regulatory statute in 1907. The law specified a $25 fine or ten days in jail for park vandalism, "reckless making of pathways hither and yon across the grass," shooting of firearms and explosives, and general trespassing. The issue of the public's cutting across the lawn had been raised the previous autumn by Jud Stone, in the Wisconsin State Journal, who wrote: "There is some excuse for people cutting across the west portion of the capitol park to get to the post office and the city hall, now that the regular walks are cut off by the excavation for the new west wing . . . but it is an utter shame that so many other paths are made."66

Newspapers continued to cover developments in the park. For example, the park's squirrel population received press coverage, and throughout construction the state subsidized feeding them at a cost of $10 to $15 annually. Groundskeepers placed the food into feeders around the grounds, and squirrel houses still nestled in trees.67 Additionally, entertainment continued to be a feature on the grounds, as when circus performers fascinated the public with a wire-sliding act outside the old north wing while the new building was under construction behind it. Crowds continued to view parades around the Square during the entire period of construction, and in some ways the Capitol Park retained its status as a
5.28 Post Drawing 518-4, Survey (detail), 1906
The first drawing in Post & Sons’ numbered series for the Capitol was a survey map of the grounds that indicates a fall of 25 feet or so from the west wing of the old capital to State Street. It also suggests the off-center placement of the previous capital.

5.29 Post Drawing 518-5000a, Capitol Park: General Plan of Grounds, 1906
In Post & Sons’ earliest site plan, contour lines again reveal the very steep slope to the west towards State Street in addition to the firm’s general intent for placing the approaches and steps.
place for leisure and entertainment, despite the constant changes in its appearance. The public seems to have been expected to avoid the hazards of the construction areas without the aid of barriers, since a 1908 photograph of East Wing construction gives no evidence of a fence, merely of a temporary walk. State laws governed the safety of workers, but no laws existed to guarantee the safety of curious members of the public. Even the planting of new trees beginning in 1911 and 1912 did not discourage public use. Perhaps the most extensive use of the park during construction occurred in June 1914 when the state’s Grand Army of the Republic encampment took place on the grounds. The Capitol was outlined in electric lights, and the flowerbeds were given patriotic designs. Outdoor concerts were scheduled on the lawn as part of the encampment. 13

The John Nolen Plan and Park Extension Proposals, 1907-13

What to do about the Capitol Park remained unresolved until 1910 when the Capitol Commission engaged John Nolen, a famed landscape architect then living in Cambridge, Massachusetts. By then Nolen was already a familiar figure in Madison. In 1908, he had accepted an offer from the Madison Park and Pleasure Drive Association and the City of Madison to “study park system issues.” Nolen articulated his conclusions before hundreds of citizens in April 1909, and resurrected the recommendation to extend the Capitol Park to Lake Monona, where it would connect with an esplanade along the lakeshore. He said: “The Lake Monona approach to the capitol is certainly unequalled and probably unequalled in any American commonwealth, and is as good in its relation to a state’s needs as the capitol at Washington is to that of the nation.” A Lake Monona esplanade, he said, “might equal the best that has been done in Europe.” A year later, in June 1910, the capitol commission’s executive committee approached Nolen about planning the Capitol Park, and on 20 June both Nolen and George Post attended the full commission meeting. It was agreed that Nolen should prepare a preliminary park plan for $250 and expenses. A week later, George Post refuted his firm’s initial, “picturesque” concept, writing to Nolen, “We are not in favor of any picturesque treatment of any irregular winding paths which were shown on our competition drawings and criticized adversely by Mr. Burnham when rendering his expert opinion on the merits of the plan.” 14

Nolen worked quickly. On 15 July he sent his schematic plan to Lew Porter. He noted that the principal distinction from Post & Sons’ competition landscape plan thus:

[There is a] division of the Terraces and [a] . . . reduction in this way of the elevation at the front of the Terrace, where such reduction is necessary, as along Carroll and Mifflin Streets, of from five to ten feet. In other words, this plan is an attempt to differentiate the treatment of the Terrace levels so as to conform with the natural levels of the ground and thus moderate the serious problem of steps, especially at the State Street approach.

His plan also altered the topography by reducing the grades for the approaches from West Washington Avenue to about 5 percent and from Wisconsin Avenue to about 8 percent, which meant more pedestrian steps at those approaches. At the request of Porter and the commission, Nolen did not design sites for statuary “except at the four corners, where I recommend . . . fountains or . . . statues. In my judgment, these are logical places for such treatment and would be well justified.” He proposed a grassy divider in the walks leading to the ends of the wings (as had Post & Sons), but he designed a larger, formal approach to the Southeast Pavilion than to the others, making it the principal entrance to the Capitol from Monona Avenue, where it would have linked to an expanded park, should such a scheme have been realized. 15

Nolen thought simple trees and shrubs would be best: “rows of well spaced elms at the eight approaches and along the streets, some selected hardy shrubs or hedge plant . . . for the bounding of sidewalks; perhaps Bay trees in tubs

5.30 Aerial kite photograph of central Madison (detail), 1908
During construction, the public continued to use the park much as before. A temporary pedestrian walk built to skirt the East Wing construction area appears in this May 1908 view.

5.31 Circus act, north wing, circa 1910
A circus performer slides down a wire suspended from the roof of the previous capitol while the new building rises in the background. Crowds continued to gather at the park during construction, using areas not affected by building.
along the four approaches at the corners and on the Terraces, and some mixed planting of hardy shrubs around the base of the Terraces, thus connecting them naturally with the ground.” However, Nolen also prepared a preliminary plant list that included both native trees (hackberry, pin oak, red oak, American linden and American elm) and nonnative “exotic” trees (Tartarian maple, Norway maple, red horse chestnut, Bechtle’s crab, flowering crab, mountain ash, and tree lilacs). His list of shrubs also included both native and nonnative species; one of the latter, buckhorn, has in more recent years has become difficult to control a pest in the state.46

On 26 July 1910 George Post’s son and partner, James Otis Post, and Nolen appeared before the commission to present their initial proposals for the architectural design of the terraces, approaches and a coping along with the landscape plan. The commission accepted the architectural design except for the sections of coping that would have ringed the park, but did not adopt a landscape plan. Between then and August 1911, Nolen outspokenly advocated a wholesale plan for transforming Madison into a “model city” with the capitol building and its park as a centerpiece. In a widely quoted and reprinted article, he wrote in February 1911:

Madison, Wisconsin, is an illustration of a city that might easily become a worthy expression of the pride and glory of a great state. Its main function is to serve as a state capital. For that purpose it was selected, for that first settled, for that it should be planned and replanned as new needs and changing conditions and rising standards require. This applies first of all to the state house itself, but it applies with equal force to those other features of the city that can only be appropriately developed through the power and cooperation of the state.

That August, the commission again took up the question of landscaping the Capitol Park and instructed the executive committee “to secure the services of a professional landscape architect in assisting the Architects . . . in preparing a landscape plan of the Park and a planting diagram.” Nolen was tendered the offer and he accepted it, including the provision that he would work under the direction of Post & Sons. Between the acceptance of the plan for terraces and approaches and Nolen’s selection as landscape architect, crews working for James S. Grady of Madison, the contractor for grading the park and the site of the power plant, began filling the void between the West Wing and the concrete wall of the west terrace that had been erected in 1908. So much fill was needed that Lew Porter sought dirt from the excavations for new basements in Madison as well as from the excavations elsewhere on the grounds. Porter hoped the grading and filling would be finished by the autumn of 1911, but the work did not conclude until the fall of 1912.47

Collaboration between Nolen and Post & Sons began immediately. Post & Sons told Nolen that it envisioned a park “fringed with trees” and that “there should be trees in the eight spaces formed by the intersection of the approaches,” planted to create vistas on all eight approaches. The firm noted that few existing trees were “specimen trees worthy of preservation, but we realize that the sentiment in Madison is strong to preserve as many of the trees as possible.” Porter, too, made some suggestions, mostly about walkways. He thought the outer perimeter walk could be built at the curbline, with no intermediate grassy terrace or trees, or that it could be eliminated altogether in favor of a walk around the base of the building’s terrace. Nolen’s plan, however, did not employ Porter’s ideas. It had a terrace and trees at the curbline and no walk at the base of the terrace. Nolen’s plan did, however, propose shortcut walks diagonally across each quadrant of the park connecting the broad avenues in the centers of each side of the Square. The broad, formal approach at Monona Avenue did not appear in this proposal. Post & Sons reacted negatively to the shortcut walks, saying “they would save little or nothing in distance and certainly would mar seriously the effect of the lawn,” but the firm seems to have approved of the terrace and trees at the curbline—a feature ratified by the executive committee on 25 September 1911.48
Trees and Shrubs in the Nolen Plan

With Post & Sons’ approval of the plan in general, Nolen began to establish specifics for trees and plants for the park. Nolen had two surveys of trees to consult, one made in 1910 and the other in August 1911. The latter survey identified “all decayed, misshaped, and undesirable trees” and was conducted by Porter with a member of the executive committee and a representative of the governor’s office. Nolen’s plan (submitted in late summer or early autumn) identified a total of 414 trees, a figure that included those to be retained, those to be removed, and those to be planted. All of the proposed new trees were to be planted along the approaches or between the curb and the perimeter walkway. Nolen wanted red oaks on the outside of the park, planted in a rhythm that matched the coping, which was still under consideration although never built. He also desired a single tree species along each of the eight approaches to the building and the suggested sugar maple, red horsechestnut, pin oak, American elm or American linden. The plan also preserved suitable existing trees, even along the perimeter of the park, despite their obvious contrast with the recommended red oak border trees. He made this recommendation with public opinion in mind. Nolen suggested moving one large, existing elm at Monona Avenue, and Porter arranged this effort, although the ball of earth required was 20’ in diameter and the hole needed was 6’ deep. In October, Nolen revised his suggestions about the perimeter trees and suggested a symmetrically planted row of red oaks inside the coping around the entire Square with the surviving trees remaining between the sidewalk and the curblin. For plantings, he suggested lining the outer edge of the terrace with flowering shrubs and perennials arranged in beds. He recommended evergreen shrubs at the corners of the building and in back of the granite seats along the approaches. Plants like bay trees and hydrangeas were to be placed in tubs along the balustrade of the terrace and the pedestrian walks. In all, the design fulfilled Nolen’s initial goal of simplicity in arrangement and in choices of species.44

Most of the plan met with the commission’s approval in November, although hesitancy occurred about the border of red oaks around the perimeter. Nolen eventually persuaded the commission to plant red oaks, setting in motion an unsuccessful five-year attempt to transplant suitable trees. For both shrubs and trees, the commission contracted in late 1911 with Elwanger & Barry of Rochester, New York, who had been highly recommended. In late fall and early winter, the commission had the existing perimeter trees cut, making way for oaks to be planted in the spring. Tree cutting led to “considerable criticism and a lot of explaining,” Porter told Nolen. The commission also decided to eliminate the granite coping around the perimeter of the park, occasioning a repositioning of the trees. Nolen’s subsequent revision called for a double row of trees with a walkway between them, the outer row being 6 feet inside the curb, and the inner row 12 feet from the outer edge of the walk. The trees were to be spaced 19 feet apart at first; then, after they had grown for about ten years, every other tree was to be removed, resulting eventually in a double row of seven trees per block, spaced 30 feet on center.

Post & Sons was displeased by the decision to eliminate the coping—“a decided blunder”—and by the double row of trees—“a mistake”—because the trees eventually “would shut out all possible view of the Capitol except its base and possibly the top of the Dome from all points not almost exactly in line with the approaches.” But Post & Sons reluctantly concluded that Nolen’s plan was adequate given the commission’s decision about the coping, which saved about $400,000. The Wisconsin State Horticultural Society also expressed skepticism about removal of trees and at first about the red oaks, but eventually supported Nolen’s choice of trees, as did Ransom Asa Moore, head of the University of Wisconsin’s horticulture department.45
Implementation of the Nolen Plan

Planting was delayed slightly in the spring because of cold weather, a delay that enabled James Grady, the contractor, to finish grading the park, work that had begun in late 1911 but was curtailed during the winter months. The job entailed cutting many trees from the park in October 1911 and February and March 1912 and removing the squirrel houses, which were not replaced. Many Madisonians protested the tree removal and wrote directly to the governor and the commission. Shipment of the stock from Rochester to Madison took eleven days by rail, and the plants looked distressed upon arrival on 5 May 1912. Many roots had dried. Further, Ellwanger & Barry had erred in filling the order. Shrubs did not meet requirements, the chestnuts and pin oaks were not the specified size and many perennials “were nearly all ruined.” Nevertheless, crews planted the stock by 8 May. They also seeded the lawns in the two southern quadrants, leaving the northern quadrants until completion of the west terrace, the North Wing and related pavilions. No tubs for annual plantings were acquired, and that part of Nolen’s plan never was implemented.64

In connection with the work on the south lawn, the cast iron fountain was removed in March 1912 and reinstalled on the lawn of the governor’s mansion at 130 East Gilman Street. It was sold for scrap in 1943 as part of the salvage effort during World War II. It is likely that at least two of the five cannon in the park also were removed in 1912, taken to Camp Randall and installed behind the new Civil War memorial arch that was dedicated in June 1912. A letter reporting on the dedication stated that the cannon—“as harmless dogs of war as if they were muzzled” stood west of encampment tents erected for the occasion. And finally the stone gateposts that stood at the entrances to the park were removed in December 1912; they were given to the Board of Control for installation at state institutions like Mendota State Hospital, although some eventually found their way into private hands.65

The newly planted trees did poorly. Many red oaks died after they put forth some leaves; most of the pin oaks and chestnuts never leafed at all. By autumn, two horticulturists from the university examined the 216 red oaks and declared that a hundred were dead or “worthless.” Fifteen of the sixteen pin oaks were dead; nine of sixteen chestnuts had died as had eight of sixteen sugar maples. The eight American lindens survived. After considerable correspondence and pressure exerted by Porter and the commission, Ellwanger & Barry agreed to replace the dead trees at half price. The replacements were delayed and arrived in bad condition on 7 May 1913. That same month, an inspection revealed that only about 30 of the original 216 trees showed any signs of life. Porter wrote to Ellwanger & Barry: “I fear that we made a serious mistake in undertaking to have nursery stock sent from so great a distance.”66 In conjunction with the major landscaping effort, the commission contracted with George Nelson of Madison for new concrete drives and walks. Nelson had installed the concrete of the West Wing terrace, beginning his work on the Capitol in 1908, and he had kept a small shed on the grounds near the North Wing that he used as an office and for tool storage. In May 1912, Lew Porter asked him to move it to the East Washington Avenue approach directly in front of the old gateposts to make way for shrubbery. In August that year, Nelson was awarded the contract for the new walks and drives, and was instructed to inconvenience the Capitol’s occupants and the public “as little as possible.” The east quadrant terrace and the approach walks were still being poured in October.67

Throughout the design process and early stages of plantings, John Nolen’s plans for the Capitol Park retained indications that a possible extension of this area along Monona Avenue to Lake Monona was still under consideration. His plans called for parklike plantings on the Main Street edge of the drawings, not trees. Early in 1913, an assembly bill reached the legislature that would have issued bonds to acquire the six blocks between the Capitol and Lake Monona. The proposal would have facilitated the implementation of Nolen’s 1908 plan, which incorporated ideas presented in the slightly earlier scheme advanced by James Huff Stout and Clarke Gapsen. The Capitol Commission strongly promoted passage of the 1913 assembly bill. In a letter to legislators, the commission acknowledged that the land might
not be used immediately as a park, but "when used it will furnish the necessary setting for the new Capitol to make it the finest in this country if not the world." 

While efforts remained in place to extend the park, the unsatisfactory experiences with a distant nursery led Porter and the commission to seek trees and shrubs from a Chicago supplier, Swain Nelson & Sons Co., which had nurseries in northern Illinois not far from the state border. In April 1913, Porter ordered eight elm trees from the company, replacing trees that had died during having been moved to the State Street approach. More of Ellwanger & Barry's red oaks also died; by the spring of 1914, only 84 of the 216 oaks and none of the 25 Ellwanger & Barry chestnuts survived. The results "sincerely disappointed" John Nolen, who expressed a willingness to give up on the red oaks and substitute either American elms or lindens. Porter, however, persisted and ordered some small red oaks from Swain Nelson for elsewhere on the grounds. In April 1914, Porter turned to Orrin H. Ingram, an Aner Claire lumberman and member of the commission, for help with replacement of the perimeter red oaks. Ingram let Porter take trees from his cottage property on Long Lake in Washburn County. Porter had them transported to Madison by train and planted in the park. Additionally, he had some extra trees planted on University of Wisconsin property in case they were needed in the future. Unfortunately a drought imperiled all these trees as well. 

In 1915, Porter continued his quest for oaks and asked Nolen about substituting black or scarlet oaks. Nolen's office favored scarlet, but warned against mixing red and scarlet "indiscriminately," suggesting that the varieties should be alternated or that one type should be used at corners and the other in between corners. Porter thereupon arranged a contract with A. L. Corner of Madison for 56 red or scarlet oak trees at $50 each. They were to measure 6 inches in diameter and 25 feet tall, "symmetrical, well formed, and uniform in size and shape." In the early spring, Corner removed trees from woods belonging to nearby landowners, but did not fill holes or repair fence as he had promised, arousing the landowners' ire. Porter told Corner, "I do not regard the way you are using these people as right," and threatened to turn over the problem to the attorney general "unless you take immediate steps to keep your promises." Unfortunately, about two-thirds of these trees had died by October. Porter then advertised in The National Nurseryman for red oaks. 

The red oak saga concluded in 1916 with a decision to replace the oaks with Norway maples. Alfred C. Clas, who was appointed to the commission in 1914, wrote to Porter in March that "the planting of oak trees around the Capitol Square, as a side walk tree...[is] an absolute failure, especially so if they are not nursery grown...I would highly recommend the Norway maple. While it is a slow growing tree, it is hearty and formal in aspect." Responsibility for a decision then rested with the Executive Committee, and by April, Porter had received authority to order Norway maples, as well as the other shrubs and plants to finish the grounds, from Swain Nelson. The stock arrived on 8 May and was planted by 12 May, including a row of Norway maples between the sidewalk and the street around the perimeter of the Square. Nearly all the trees survived the winter of 1916-17 and many have survived to the present. As for the red oaks, some appear to have survived, and one large specimen along West Mifflin Street near State Street was removed on 11 June 2003. 

The placement and arrangement of the trees, shrubs and perennials complemented the American Beaux-Arts design of the Capitol. Despite disagreement between Post & Sons and John Nolen about aspects of the design, the resulting landscaping became part of an integrated composition that included the Capitol, its exterior sculpture and the axial relationships of the whole to the city. No single element detracted from the composition, and the classical proportions of Post & Sons were, in the end, brought into harmony with the naturalistic tendencies of John Nolen. Three distinct zones resulted: the open terrace around the Capitol, the expansive shaded lawns and a tree-lined promenade around
The reconfiguration of topography on the west, south and north sides of the Capitol provided for relatively gently sloped lawns, dotted with mostly young trees. The lawn served as a stage for the terrace and the Capitol. At the base of the terrace, below the balustrade, Nolen arranged for a mixture of shrubs and plants, most of them low-growing and not in symmetrical beds but in arrangements that complemented the overall concept of the site. Nolen’s choices were familiar in Wisconsin: deutzias, lilacs, privet and barberry. He eschewed banks of colorful annuals and used them only at the corners of the park, allowing the landscaping to assume its assigned role in the overall composition.18

The extent of the transformation of the park between 1912 and 1917 is made clear in photographs taken in the years immediately following completion of the Capitol and the landscaping of its park. The west quadrant, bounded by North Carroll and West Mifflin Streets, had noticeably smaller and younger trees, an indication of the number of mature trees removed for the terrace and the reconfigured slopes. The small, sapling-sized Norway maples along the perimeter gave visual evidence of the effort to achieve an appropriate planting to separate the park from the Square. Those parts of the south and north quadrants close to the west quadrant also lost some trees in the regrading of the park, but mature trees dominated the remaining areas of the south and north quadrants as well as the east quadrant. The formality of the setting, together with “keep off the grass” signs, reinforced the tradition that the lawns were off-limits in the Nolen park, although the perimeter walks, approaches and terraces around the building encouraged pedestrian activity. The lawns of the new Capitol became truly public only on occasions such as conventions and ceremonies when the rules were relaxed. On an everyday basis, the public was taught to accept that the lawns and foundation plantings were for looking but not touching. But the terrace, approaches, walks, copings and benches on the approaches and the perimeter existed for everyone to enjoy freely, and they were heavily used.19

Other Elements

Post & Sons designed granite copings, flat benches, semicircular benches (exedrae) and pedestals for bronze urns along each of the eight approaches. In May 1913, Porter instructed the granite contractor, the Woodbury Granite Co. of Hardwick, Vermont, to begin constructing the facing of the terrace walls, the terrace balustrades, the copings and steps along the approaches, straight and circular seats and granite bases for proposed statuary, streetlamps and eight drinking fountains that flanked the ends of the four wings. The work began in the summer of 1913 and reached completion around July of 1916. Similarly, concrete walks in the approaches were installed beginning in 1910 and concluding in 1916. Throughout this process, state employees besieged Porter with suggestions about the walks, causing Porter to complain that “the employees of the State purpose to dictate to the Capitol Commission.” In 1913, for example, John S. Donald, the secretary of state, “requested that the walks about the Capitol be painted green.”20 In addition to copings that begin at the terrace and terminate at the perimeter walk, each approach has two semi-circular exedrae with

5.39 Post Drawing 518-3012, Terrace Balustrade Plans and Elevations, 1910
The terrace and its balustrade provided a pedestal-like platform for the Capitol. Post & Sons made detail drawings for the terrace and balustrades at the time the East and West Wings were being completed.

5.40 Post Drawing 518-3011, Coping and Approaches Plans and Elevations, 1910
Post and Sons specified that the walks and drives approaching the Capitol be lined by copings, exedrae and benches. The drawings indicated both structural and design features.
backs, scrolled arms and bracketed bases. They are positioned midway between the perimeter walk and the terrace. In front of each of the sixteen exedrae is a bronze flower urn on a granite pedestal. The urns were designed by Post & Sons, cast in bronze by Hecla Iron Works of Brooklyn, New York, in the spring of 1916 for the sum of $4,332, and put into use in 1917. Besides the exedra benches and urns, the pedestrian approaches each have four recessed flat granite benches on bracketed bases, two on either side of the approach. At the time the Capitol Park was nearly completed in 1916, iron benches appeared prominently on the inside of the sidewalk around the perimeter. They were removed in the winter months and put into place every spring in late April or early May.73

In 1913, Post & Sons designed a scheme for a perimeter lighting plan that conformed to the placement of trees on Nolen’s plan. The architect also called for lighting on all approaches, an idea the commission rejected, opting instead to install lights only along the four pedestrian walks. The commission desired light poles for the approaches similar in design to those placed along the perimeter walk with the lights placed behind the seats of the exedrae, not in front of them. The lights, which were manufactured by Hecla Iron, had single globes and stood atop tall standards that were placed on granite bases; the bases of the lamps had small doors for maintenance purposes. Eight lights were installed along each length of the perimeter walk for a total of thirty-two; each curved bench or exedra on the pedestrian approaches to the wing ends received one light, for a total of eight; no lights, however, were placed behind the exedreae on the approaches to the pavilions. Additionally, sixteen large seven-globe bronze standards with lion-paw feet were placed on the balustrade of the terrace, two each at the four wing ends and pavilions. The lights were controlled by a panel in the utility tunnel and power reached them through buried conduits, not overhead wires. Installation of wiring occurred in late 1914 and the lights were installed in the spring of 1915. They were turned on for the first time on 19 June. (Lighting of the exterior of the dome was accomplished with floodlights mounted behind the pediments of each wing.)74

Post & Sons submitted preliminary drawings for the eight bronze drinking fountains located at the ends of the wings in November 1912 but final full-sized drawings were not completed until May 1914. The fountains were fabricated in New York City by Jno. Williams, Inc. Williams shipped them to Wisconsin in February 1915 with installation that year or later as construction permitted. The fountains were placed between the terrace walks and the building, requiring a concrete pad that extended from the sidewalk into the lawn. The fountains are triangular and sit on granite bases, with an overall height of 31 inches. Three panels form the sides and have figures in “very flat relief,” as described on the architect’s drawing. They appear to represent a satyr, a nymph and a woman signifying grace, all of them associated with activities conducted in parks. At the top of each side is the head of a fish with an open mouth. A bronze bowl for the bubbling mechanism (later replaced by a modern apparatus) caps the fountain. During winter months, each was outfitted with a protective cone over the bowl.75

As construction progressed, Forward had to be moved from its position on the south lawn to a number of temporary locations. By 1912, it was on the east lawn adjacent to the old north wing. When construction began on the North Wing in 1914, the statue was moved again. On 12 May 1916, the Executive Committee of the Capitol Commission decided to place Forward in the center of the north approach at the first flight of steps from Hamilton Street and to supply it with a new pedestal of white granite of approximately the same size as the old pedestal that had been made of gray granite. In 1917, Forward was affixed to the new pedestal as the only freestanding piece of sculpture then in the park. While considering the question of Forward, the commission also dealt with a proposal to purchase a fountain by Wisconsin sculptor Helen Farnsworth Mears, who had died in 1916. The commission rejected the idea, explaining that John Nolen’s design did not include such features and that appropriations were not sufficient for such a project.76
From 1912 until the early 1920s, the State Street corner of the park was home to a 4-foot-square, 8- to 10-foot-tall wooden U.S. Weather Bureau kiosk of a standardized design that was used in cities around the country. The kiosks were intended to inform the public about daily weather conditions, educate them about weather generally and promote the Weather Bureau. The Commercial Club of Madison was behind the acquisition of the kiosk and in 1911 appealed to U.S. Senator Robert M. La Follette, Sr. for support. That May, the Weather Bureau complied and instructed Eric R. Miller, the bureau’s local forecaster with offices in North Hall on the university campus, to handle arrangements. Miller approached the Capitol Commission to place it in the park, the commission approved the idea conditionally and sought the approval of the architect, who disliked the design. Instead, Post & Sons suggested a stone kiosk “in accord with the rest of the work” and provided a drawing that shows the kiosk on the King Street corner where John Nolen had specified a circular flowerbed. The Weather Bureau declined to redesign the kiosk and build it in stone, and suggested painting a standard wooden kiosk to harmonize with the Capitol and erecting it on a granite base, for which it agreed to pay. The commission approved this proposal on 23 August 1911 and decided the kiosk should be placed at the State Street corner; further it authorized that electrical conduit be installed for night lighting. It was in place by June 1912 and featured a recording thermometer, a barometer, a rain gauge and a hygrometer. Labels explained the instruments and readings.40

In 1913, concern with protecting the view of the Capitol and its visual dominance within the city came to the fore. It was proposed that the heights of buildings around the Square be limited to not obstruct the Capitol. The question was prompted by Leonard Gay’s 1911 proposal for Madison’s first “skyscraper” at 16 North Carroll Street on the Capitol Square. In reaction to the nine-story building, a height-limitation bill was introduced in the assembly in 1913. The Capitol Commission supported such a measure but urged substituting a bill that would have limited “all the buildings in the city of Madison” to 90 feet. Neither bill succeeded, and the attorney general ruled adversely on the question, stating that the state could not regulate the aesthetics of construction, only related matters of health and safety. The Gay Building was completed in 1915 before the issue was resolved. As had been recommended by the Capitol Commission, in 1921 the legislature passed a law limiting buildings around the Square to 90 feet in height. The Piper family was contemplating construction of the Belmont Hotel (now the YWCA) at 101 East Mifflin Street, and took the law to court. In 1923, the Wisconsin Supreme Court upheld the statute and grandfathered in both the Piper hotel project and the Lorraine Hotel at 123 West Washington Avenue, which was then under development.40

Capitol Park, 1917-88 Modifications, 1917-59

A prominent addition to the park occurred in 1926 with the unveiling on 17 October of an eight-foot tall bronze figurine statue of Hans Christian Heg (1829-63) at the King Street approach. Heg was a hero among both Norwegians and Norwegian-Americans for his gallantry during the Civil War as a colonel with the Fifteenth Wisconsin Regiment, a solidly Scandinavian unit. Heg lost his life in the Battle of Chickamauga in September 1863, and the statue honors him as an individual and as an embodiment of Norwegian-Americans’ general contributions to the development of the United States. The Norwegian Society of America began the movement for the statue in 1920 and hoped to have it erected in 1925, the centennial marking the onset of significant emigration from Norway to the United States. Raising the necessary $25,000 took longer than expected, and the work was not completed until 1926. Funds were contributed around the country, especially in the Midwest states with large numbers of Norwegian immigrants, such as Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, North and South Dakota and Nebraska. In Madison, the local committee raised $5,000. The sculptor, Paul Fjelde (1892-1987) of New York, was of Norwegian descent and had been born in Minneapolis. Fjelde trained in New York and Paris and studied with Lorado Taft in Chicago. Other of his works appear in the Indiana State Capitol and in Bryant Park in New York City.43
As the result of a request by the Madison Commercial Club in 1911, the park received a prefabricated U.S. Weather Bureau kiosk in June 1912. It informed the public about temperature, barometric pressure, and precipitation; it was removed in the early 1920s.

The Gay Building (now the Churchill Building) on North Carroll Street at the lower left was completed in 1915 and prompted a state law adopted in 1921 that limits the height of buildings around the Square to 90 feet, thus protecting views of the Capitol from a distance. At this time, the esduras of the west approach were under construction, and blocks of granite for the coping were laid in the West Mifflin Street median.
In 1939, the legislature approved a private organization’s effort to erect a statue of Jean Nicolet, the first recorded European to visit Wisconsin; he traveled to the Green Bay area in 1634 in the company of Huron Indians. The Jean Nicolet Memorial Commission tried to raise $10,000 for the statue, a portion of which was collected in pennies from Wisconsin schoolchildren. Sidney Bedore (1883-1955), a Wisconsin-born sculptor with a studio in Lake Geneva, had completed a clay model by August 1941, but the commission lacked the funds to move forward. The entry of the U.S. into World War II in December 1941 curtailed many such projects, and the statue was not completed despite support from the governor, the Catholic archbishop of Milwaukee and the president of the University of Wisconsin.44

Until 1917, Lew Porter had seen to it that the Capitol’s groundskeepers continued to implement and maintain Nolen’s design recommendations and extend respect to the terrace and the granite elements of the park. He was concerned about proper treatment of plantings and made certain waste was not burned near new evergreens; he also supervised snow removal so that metal shovels would not damage the copings and balustrades. With Porter’s death in 1918, adherence to the plantings recommended in Nolen’s plan began to wane. In 1921, at the instigation of the Gold Star Mothers organization, a star-shaped flowerbed planted with gold-colored annuals was created on the sloping lawn adjacent to the Wisconsin Avenue approach. The bed was dedicated in 1922 as a memorial to mothers’ sons who had died in World War I. On Armistice Day in 1921, the Dane County Star Service Legion added a spruce tree near the gold star. The tree was transplanted from the grounds of General Pershing’s headquarters in France. In 1931, a hickory tree was planted in memory of Senator Robert M. La Follette, Sr., who had died in 1925, and that same year several of the park’s existing buckeye trees were dedicated to the honor of “national leaders not native to Wisconsin.”65

By 1920, the increasing use of automobiles prompted Moritz F. Blumenfeld, the superintendent of public property and the person in charge of the Capitol and its park, to establish new parking regulations for the perimeter and approaches. “Autoists” were informed that “no vehicles of any kind will be permitted to be parked within any of the circles leading to porticos, nor will any machine or vehicle of any kind be permitted to park within a limit of 15 feet of any crossing of the Capitol Park or any hydrant or water plug.” Pedestrian use of the sidewalks, approaches and terraces continued to be heavy. Crowds stood or sat on them to watch the annual array of parades—circus parades, Memorial Day parades and the like. In 1920, a state senator used the West Wing steps to address an audience of 1,300. That same year, Frederick J. Kehl, operator of a well-known dance studio, received permission to hold a “dance carnival” on the lawn on the Fourth of July, and in the 1920s university students staged tableaux and performances on the terrace. Such events varied from the earlier, more spontaneous uses of the park, but still kept the paved surfaces routinely available to the public. Events typically were planned to minimize damage to the grounds and plantings. Blumenfeld rejected a series of ten free band concerts in 1920 because they “would destroy all the care that has been put into [the park] . . . and for which the money of the state is expended. Occasional use of the lawn is all right, but we can’t let it be overdone.”66

This mixed use of the park prevailed until the post-World War II era. Following the war, the State Street corner was used for annual holiday displays and trees, and on 29 May 1948 crowds swarmed the Capitol Square for a huge Wisconsin centennial parade. But in general, people did stay off the grass despite ever-growing numbers of shoppers downtown. By the 1950s, the trees in the park had matured so much so they began to form a dense canopy that discouraged the growth of grass, shrubs and perennials, and also masked the view of the Capitol from the streets. Gardners planted annual beds of tulips and cabbas at the corners of the Square and trimmed the hedges behind the benches, but the foundation and balustrade plantings became overgrown, even drooping over the pavilions’ grand stairs. In 1959, a front-page Wisconsin State Journal story commented negatively on the park’s appearance. It blamed the weather for poor spring flowers, explaining that early cold in November had “wrought havoc” with the roses that had previously flourished along the Monona Avenue approach. The article cited other problems, including the illigas
5.48 Gold Star Mothers flowerbed, circa 1950
The Gold Star Mothers of Wisconsin had a star-shaped flowerbed placed on the East Mifflin Street lawn in 1921. Composed of gold-colored annuals, it honored the memory of Wisconsin soldiers who had perished in World War I.

5.49 Wisconsin centennial parade, 1948
Wisconsin’s centennial parade on 29 May 1948 drew thousands to the Square. The throng confined itself mostly to paved areas, honoring what had become a tradition of not walking on the Capitol lawns.
next to the building, that it said, were “old and scrappy.” As for the lawn, “it is virtually impossible to grow grass on some sections of the Capitol park because heavily-leaved trees prevent the sun from shining on the lawn.” That same year, the legislature instituted parallel parking, eliminating angle parking on the Capitol side of the of the Square’s perimeter, thus bringing the state’s parking stalls into compliance with the parking regulations of the City of Madison—a point of contention since 1955. Sidewalks, too, received attention in the 1950s. Six thousand dollars were appropriated in the executive budget of 1957-59 to cover the cost of sidewalk replacement during that biennium; the work was evidently carried out.63

An Era of Change, 1960-88

National and local movements led to significant changes in the appearance and use of the Capitol Park between 1960 and 1988, the year that restoration of the Capitol began. Nationally, by the late 1950s an era of social revolution was underway that affected civil rights, attitudes toward social mores and the right to use public space. The presence of a major university in Madison contributed to the accelerated change in attitude in the city compared to other metropolitan areas of similar size around the country. Social change, the growth of the city to well over 100,000 residents, increasing traffic and the development of the surrounding countryside led to a transformation of downtown Madison that was reflected inevitably in the park. Along with the social and population changes, professional specialization arose that dealt with urban planning, traffic engineering, landscape architecture, urban forestry and historic preservation. In turn, these professions altered their standards or developed new ones to accommodate the new social sensibility. By the early 1960s, Capitol officials eased regulations surrounding the use of the park and began to permit local celebrations such as Dairy Day, where cows and tents were permitted on the grass, and the Art Fair on the Square, an event at which exhibitors set up tables and tents on the lawn, walks and approaches. Madison civic and commercial organizations promoted such events, which brought visitors and shoppers downtown, provided income for arts and promotional organizations, and improved cooperation between the city, its business community and Capitol officials.

More intensive use naturally escalated pressures on the park. Simultaneously, budgets for the park remained at deferred-maintenance levels, as they did for the Capitol itself, a situation the Wisconsin Legislative Council began to address after its creation in 1957. The council’s Building Maintenance Committee promoted the pointing of the exterior stonework, including terraces and approaches, work that was accomplished between 1957 and 1964. In 1962 the committee sought lighting for the park, its perimeter and balustrades, plus “accent lighting on the dome and colonnades.” These plans were realized in 1964 and resulted in replacement of the original iron light poles with modern fixtures. Replacements for the ornamental balustrade fixtures were tried, but were deemed unacceptable. The replacements prompted a critical letter to the editor (“Save Those Beautiful State Capitol Lights”) in the Wisconsin State Journal. Also in 1962, the committee endorsed recommendations by the State Building Commission for the 1963-65 biennium to spend $12,000 for bronze handrails at the State Street approach, $10,000 for replacing 10,000 square feet of sidewalk, and $7,000 for shrubbery, planting and new sod. Accordingly, handrails were installed on stairs of the State Street approach in 1967, and likely on the North Hamilton Street approach at the same time. In 1965, the granite in the terraces and approaches was cleaned with a hydrofluoric acid solution (4 percent acid, 14 percent detergent and 82 percent water) under 1,200 pounds of nozzle pressure, after which the stone was flushed with water. This process damaged some stones, mortar and surrounding grass and shrubs. The damage was repaired in late 1965 and early 1966 and the plantings were replaced. In 1966, an underground lawn sprinkler system was installed, and it was replaced in 1985 at a cost of $70,350. These projects reflected the ongoing concerns and fiduciary responsibilities of the executive and legislative branches of government relative to care of the Capitol and the Executive Residence. In 1967, these concerns manifested themselves in the creation of the State Capitol and Executive Residence Board (SCERB), whose responsibilities included oversight of modifications proposed for the Capitol Park.64
Effects of Protests, Dutch Elm Disease and Policy Change

SCERB was created at a time when pressures on the park were growing in several ways. Challenges included the social and political protests of the late 1960s and the early 1970s, especially the anti-Vietnam War protests; the onset of Dutch elm disease in 1971, and a deliberate internal action in 1979 on the part of SCERB and the Department of Administration (DOA) to open the park to broader public use. The large social protests that took place between 1969 and 1974 frequently damaged the lawns, trees and plantings. Participants took a toll on grass that was already struggling because of shade, and they both intentionally and unintentionally destroyed concrete and granite elements in the park. Notable marches and protests included one in May 1969 over welfare cutbacks, which involved a sit-in on the lawn; a week of protest concerning welfare in late September and early October 1969; a 15,000-person antiwar march on the Capitol on 16 October 1969; a five-day antiwar protest in April 1970, which involved 6,000 demonstrators and the use of tear gas; the events that followed the Kent State University deaths in May 1970; more antiwar events in February 1971 and May 1972, the latter involving 7,000 persons; and protests against President Richard Nixon’s administration’s energy policies in 1973 and 1974. At the same time, scheduled and well-controlled events took place that also put pressures on the park. These included the annual summer art fairs beginning in the early 1960s (40,000 patrons by 1974), an upbeat “Up with People” concert in August 1969, regular drum and bugle corps parades and Memorial Day parades throughout the period, a YWCA “Blossom Day” plant sale in May 1971, the Dane County Farmers’ Market every Saturday from June through October beginning in 1972 (attracting a total of 100,000 shoppers for the season by 1973) and lunchtime concerts by the Madison Symphony Orchestra in the summer of 1974. Vendors at the Farmers’ Market set up their booths in the sparse grass in the medians between the walk and the curb.

By the middle 1970s, vendor and buyer activity had nearly destroyed the grass and compacted the soil around the Norway maples, which threatened the trees’ health. When it rained, the medians turned muddy. Reseeding grass and installing sod both failed to solve the problem, and the City of Madison’s planning process for a pedestrian mall and concourse delayed a decision until 1979.46 Additionally, elms constituted approximately 60 percent of the mature shade trees in the park, and Dutch elm disease destroyed nearly all of them between 1971 and the early 1980s. The 1979 policy change made by SCERB and DOA not to maintain the “originally designed format” for the perimeter led DOA to accommodate and even anticipate public demands to use the park. DOA met the challenge with redesigns and new management techniques, finding ways to create attractive lawns and plantings while still permitting broad public use.49 DOA further expanded public use of the park by authorizing Concerts on the Square beginning in 1983. In connection with the concerts and other events, DOA sought to protect the lawns by prohibiting plastic groundcovers and coordinating cleanup with municipal agencies. State and municipal cooperation in park maintenance constituted another contrast to the immediate past. The new uses reflected a return to the park’s earliest history as a municipal gathering ground.51

Capitol Concourse and Park Development, 1970s and 1980s

In 1973 the City of Madison unveiled plans for a “Capitol Concourse” around the Square and a mall the length of State Street to improve downtown shopping and traffic. The concept was inspired by Nicollet Mall recently completed in central Minneapolis. In 1974, the city commissioned a design from M. Paul Friedberg and Associates of New York City, whose recommendations included revising the perimeter of the park in the area between the sidewalk and the curb. Without consulting SCERB or DOA, the city proposed a change in street levels around the Square, affecting the park. SCERB responded by requesting a more fully developed proposal created “in cooperation with” DOA; SCERB also established a Capitol Park subcommittee. The redesign, released later in 1974, called for paving the park’s perimeter and installing historical exhibits and markers, building seating “at regular intervals” and installing new cast iron lamp posts. The consultants said the promenade and lamp posts would harken back to the designs of Post &

5.51 Lamp replacement, West Main Street, 2003
In 1964, the lamps that were part of the exterior lighting scheme designed by Post & Sons were replaced with modern aluminum fixtures. The posts were painted black in the late 1970s.

5.52 Handrails on the State Street approach, 1986
The placement of new bronze handrails at the State Street approach was approved for the 1965-67 biennium; they were installed in 1967. Similar rails were placed on the North Hamilton Street approach, probably at the same time.

5.53 Welfare demonstration, Wisconsin Avenue, 1969
A period of protest in the late 1960s and early 1970s put unprecedented pressures on the park’s lawns and plantings as demonstrators used the Capitol Park to advocate a variety of causes. In 1969, protesters assembled on behalf of welfare rights.
Sons. In response, SCERB noted that “we have had virtually no input into the design and cost estimating process,” and they did not endorse the revision. State officials thereupon formally sought participation in the design process, but the request came too late, since the city had approved the concourse plan on 24 June 1974 and planned construction for the period 1974-77. The city then asked the state for 4.5 feet of the park’s perimeter. SCERB did not accept the proposal based in part on a study by UW-Madison horticulture professor Edward R. Hasselkus, who demonstrated the city’s plan would destroy the root systems of the Norway maples that lined the park. The speaker of the assembly conveyed SCERB’s decision to the City of Madison, and the city responded that it hoped the state would cooperate by instituting a Capitol Park landscape plan that would harmonize with the concourse.72

In 1978, SCERB hired the Madison firm of Edwin A. Sanborn and Associates, Inc., to devise a plan for improvements of the perimeter walk. The resulting document noted that the Norway maples had suffered from soil compaction, poor nutrition and girdling roots and drew attention to unsystematic placement of signs, lights and trash barrels. The consultant recommended three options, all of which would have raised the area between the sidewalk and curb 6 inches above the existing grade. SCERB adopted none of the proposed options and decided on a simpler solution, which was approved on 13 March 1979. The plan retained the 4-foot walk at the curb and the 9-foot walk on the inner side of the median, which was to be surfaced with Florock, an “epoxy bonded rock on a crushed gravel base,” which was promoted as “puddle-free, non-skid [and] mildew-resistant” but yet was pervious to water for the benefit of the Norway maples. Benches were to be mounted on the epoxy surface, and trash containers and drinking fountains would be installed at the corners, designed to blend with those being installed as part of the new Capitol Concours. The project was completed in the summer of 1980 at a cost of $550,000. In addition to the epoxy and gravel surface, modern benches and trash containers were installed, as were wheelchair-accessible drinking fountains at three of the park’s four corners. Each

5.54 Dane County Farmers’ Market, 1973
Heavily attended public events including the Farmers’ Market damaged the shaded and sparse turf in the median between the curb and the perimeter walk. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s the use of the Square for such regularly scheduled events increased markedly.

5.55 Bare and compacted soil in the median, circa 1975
Pedestrian traffic and special events at the perimeter of the park threatened the health of the Norway maples that had been planted in 1916. A permeable epoxy and gravel cover was installed in the summer of 1989 to remedy the problem.

5.56 Concerts on the Square, North Hamilton Street, 1986
A change of policy in 1979-80 led to broader use of the Capitol Park for events like Concerts on the Square, which began in 1983. The public was encouraged to use the lawn appropriately, and plantings were placed to prevent the development of paths and bare patches in the grass.
length of the perimeter received four benches with backs, four flat benches and two trash containers. The benches were made of slats affixed to steel frames with two steel supports set into the ground. They were designed to harmonize with the Capitol Concourse elements across each of the four streets that define the Square.13

During this period, Dutch elm disease had taken its toll and the lawn and approaches suffered the effects of large assemblies. A 1975 study of the park’s trees indicated that five types dominated: elm, maple, basswood, oak and ash. There were also small numbers of Ohio buckeyes and horsechestnuts. Types represented by only one specimen included quaking aspen, shagbark hickory and beech. The study pointed out that overplanting of trees had obscured the view of the Capitol from all vantage points on the Square, and in that respect the loss of the elm trees had had a positive effect, since views were improved and the lawn was improving gradually. In 1977, a follow-up inventory located 177 trees in the lawn and 45 on the perimeter. The study, conducted by a University of Wisconsin graduate student in forestry, provided planting recommendations that included “forest giants” for the lawn, planted randomly, but in close proximity to the approaches and the perimeter walks. The recommendations suggested trees native to Wisconsin as replacements and proposed large shrubs or small trees immediately adjacent to the approaches, with a parallel row of intermediate-sized trees to form a gradual transition to the large trees in the lawn. For the perimeter Norway maples, he suggested replacing them when they died with different species that would be resistant to exhaust furnes, soil compaction and salt. SCERB adopted these recommendations, but funds for implementation were in short supply. That same year, budget cutbacks led to simpler plantings at the corners of the Square. Where canna traditionally had been put into the circular flowerbeds, petunias took their place.74

In 1980 DOA hired a full-time, professional landscape architect to oversee the maintenance and development of the park. Shortly thereafter, the Division of Buildings and Grounds studied its options for planting hedges to “discourage pedestrian paths,” caulking walks and curbs to prevent displacement from frost, creating new flowerbeds and reinstituting tulip beds at the four corners where tulips historically had bloomed in the spring and canna during the summer and fall. In 1981, DOA through the Division of Buildings and Grounds proposed a modified plan for tree planting and maintenance to SCERB that included suggestions for removing several diseased, damaged or misshapen trees and replacing them with new specimens positioned not to interfere with views. The plan also suggested gradually adding twenty-one new trees in the lawn, placed to allow healthy turf to develop, and proposed a greater variety, recommending thirteen new species, including exotics like the ginkgo, cucumber tree magnolia and Amur corktree, plus some Wisconsin species not previously in the park, such as American hopbush, common hackberry and swamp white oak. SCERB rejected a recommendation for replacing the perimeter Norway maples as they died, with one species for each quadrant, and decided to retain the Norway maples, replacing dead trees as necessary.13

The Division of Buildings and Grounds also created a plan for shrubs and perennials with evergreens located near the building and below the balustrade and formal beds of flowers at the terrace. These beds would have included flowering shrubs, small evergreens, annual and perennial flowers and roses. These formal gardens were to have names associated with the functions of the wings—such as the Assembly Garden for the West Wing. At the pavilions, small evergreens and flowering shrubs were recommended and flowering trees and shrubs for the approaches. An increase in the number of annuals for existing flowerbeds was also planned. The plan for the terrace gardens was not implemented, but in 1982, the park’s floral displays doubled in size, with “more than 13,000 annual plants of 59 varieties.” The Division of Buildings and Grounds reinstated the types of figural beds that were planted in the late nineteenth century, a compass on the southwest quadrant, for example, and planted beds where people had created paths across the grass. In 1983, the park received a National Award of Excellence from the Professional Grounds

5.37 Renovation plans for median areas, 1979
Between 1974 and 1977, the City of Madison implemented its Capitol Concourse project. In conjunction with this effort, which affected the blocks around the Square and State Street, the State of Wisconsin re-designed the park’s perimeter to harmonize. These bench designs and their placement were proposed in 1979.
Maintenance Society of America and a citation of excellence from the legislature. In 1985, SCERB approved the general concept developed by the Division of Buildings and Grounds and adopted it as a master plan for shrubs and plants; it authorized testing the scheme along the King Street approach and the east lawn. The project was awarded to Tillmann Landscape-Nursery of Green Bay for $24,560. SCERB considered the outcome successful and authorized full-scale implementation in 1987, phased over a four-year period. Public reaction was mixed, and one letter writer complained that the effect verged on "too much busyness." By 1988, implementation of the plan for flowers and shrubs had resulted in 50,000 annuals in the park.\textsuperscript{76}

In addition to trees and plantings in the park, the granite steps of the pedestrian approaches received new foundations and the displaced granite copings were repaired in the summer of 1986. Bachmann Construction Co., Inc. of Madison received the $64,160 contract. The original foundations, constructed of brick, had deteriorated because of moisture and the steps, particularly at the State Street approach, had displaced. Each tread had to be removed, a concrete foundation laid and the tread replaced. Sealant was installed at the joints to prevent further deterioration. When the treads and deteriorated brick were removed, workmen uncovered rubble fill along the State Street approach, consistent with the regrading associated with construction of the park in the 1910s.\textsuperscript{77}

The deteriorating condition of artwork and bronze elements in the park also was of concern during the 1980s. In 1986, DOA engaged the Conservation Group of Washington University Technology Associates in St. Louis to undertake a conservation survey of the metal statues, urns, light stands and fountains in the park, on the terrace balustrade and on the Dome (Wisconsin by Daniel Chester French). It was reported that the Hans Christian Heg bronze had lost "all original patina and coatings" because of weathering and corrosion, and that its original brown coloration had turned green from corrosion. The survey proposed cleaning the statue, restoring its patina and applying a protective coating. The statue Forward also had lost its original patina, was covered with "green sulfate corrosion crust with black speckles," and cracks and splits in the copper cladding had been repaired "in a hard, gray plastic putty" similar to the body putty used to repair automobiles. The report recommended inspection of the statue interior, removal of corrosion, resoldering where necessary, repatination and a new protective coating. The sixteen bronze urns at the exedrae and the sixteen bronze light standards on the balustrade were covered with green and black corrosion, and iron elements had rusted. The report recommended removing corrosion using "glass microspheres" at low pressure, rebrazing welds as needed, repatination and a protective coating. The eight triangular water fountains had the same kinds of corrosion, and the treatment proposed was similar to the treatment proposed for the Heg statue. The report also addressed the bronze handrails. Despite the fact that they were only twenty years old, the railings were corroded, and similar treatments were proposed.\textsuperscript{78}

Capitol Park, 1988-2003

As the interior of the Capitol began undergoing restoration in 1988, the Department of Administration continued developing the Capitol Park landscape according to the 1981 guidelines for the removal and planting of trees and those adopted in 1985 for shrubs and flowering plants. The west lawn was landscaped in 1990 and 1991, the north lawn in 1991, both along the lines of the east lawn project that SCERB had approved. Work on each quadrant cost approximately $25,000. In 1996 a research project was launched to collect archival material about the park and its history, and in 1998 DOA began a joint project with the University of Wisconsin-Madison Department of Landscape Architecture to prepare a full-scale landscape history of the park, along with a master plan for rehabilitating it. Funds for the landscape history and the master plan were included in the East Wing Restoration and Rehabilitation project budget. The master plan appeared in 2000; the historical report in 2002.\textsuperscript{79} SCERB accepted the master
plan’s general goals with the provision that DOA would involve SCERB in approving the specific plans for each phase. The study made seven principal recommendations, many of which contribute to the larger objective of imparting historic integrity to the park by working toward reintroducing the spirit of the Nolen plan. First, the study recommended replacing epoxy-gravel pavement around the perimeter of the park more in keeping with the historic plan, “while accommodating current social use and functional requirements.” Second, it suggested a return to a planting plan for shrubs and perennials “that restores the sense of harmony and order reflected in John Nolen’s planting design of 1912.” Third, the report advocated a planting and management plan that would maintain “the health of the tree canopy and turf” and emphasize species native to Wisconsin. Fourth, it recommended adding new safety and security elements to the park. Fifth, it sought replications of the light posts designed by Post and Sons, supplemented by “unobtrusive, contemporary light fixtures where necessary.” Sixth, it advocated “restoration of ornamental flower beds” adjacent to the wing ends on the terraces (eight in total); and, finally, that the bronze fixtures and statuary in the park be conserved.

Concerns remained about the freestanding bronze statuary in the park and other bronze elements addressed in the 1986 survey and in August 1989 an internal DOA survey of the statuary preceded approval for a $46,000 project to repair and conserve the Heg and Forward statues. The contract was awarded to Venus Bronze Works, Inc. of Detroit and the work was accomplished in the spring and summer of 1990. The statues were washed with solvents, cleaned with ground walnut shells, repaired as necessary, and repatinated and waxed as deemed suitable for each. Forward, being in worse condition, was removed to an off-site facility for treatment and then returned to its position at North Hamilton Street, where it remained until 1995 when, because of the fragility of its copper cladding, it was conserved again and removed to the Wisconsin Historical Society headquarters on the university campus. A $60,000 bronze duplicate was cast and installed at the foot of the west approach to the Capitol at State Street. Sue Ann Thompson, the wife of Governor Tommy G. Thompson, led a fund-raising effort in the private sector, and those contributions paid expenses. The North Hamilton Street approach then became the site of the Wisconsin Law Enforcement Memorial, which SCERB approved on 15 May 1995. Designed by KEE Architecture of Madison and built at a construction cost of $390,000, the project began in the fall of 1997. The memorial consists of a raised flowerbed surrounded by a circular granite memorial on which the names of 195 fallen officers were engraved, with more names added annually as appropriate. The memorial has a complex lighting system and an extensive watering and drainage system, which accounted for much of the cost. It was dedicated on 30 June 1998; recommendations occur each May. While the freestanding statuary was conserved or replicated, the other bronze elements in the...
park were not. As funds become available, light fixtures and urns will be restored and missing elements will be replicated. Unlike the statuary, they will retain a patina of age, with further corrosion prevented by routine cleaning and maintenance.19

The masonry of the approaches and walks was rehabilitated during the larger restoration project. In 1993, the north terrace and portions of the walks and drives around the entire park were resurfaced as part of a road and sidewalk maintenance project. The work was completed by Parisi Construction Co. Inc., of Verona for $130,423. Parisi had some difficulty matching the brown color and pebbly appearance of the "poultry grit" sidewalk surface that had been installed in the Capitol Concourse and other parts of the terrace. Additional work on walks and drives occurred in 2000 and 2001, when the general restoration contractor, J. P. Cullen & Sons, Inc. of Janesville was awarded a contract to replace pavement and walks for the west, northwest, north and northeast approaches; to install new foundations for the granite steps, coping, exedrae and benches; and to repair and reinstall these granite elements. Similar projects for the remaining approaches were deferred for fiscal reasons.20 Approximately fifteen different surface treatments have been installed in the median along East Main Street as potential replacements for the epoxy-gravel surface that exists in that area. Three types of reproduction or replacement lampposts have been tried in the park, each having been subjected to extensive photometric testing to ensure adequate security lighting.

SCERB has not yet approved any of the surface treatments or lights. In the fall of 2002, Cullen & Sons received the contract to install a $650,000 security camera system throughout the park. A subterranean construction project at the Southeast Pavilion known as the Southeast Stair project, completed in 2002, added other elements to the Capitol Park. A skylight now abuts the balustrade to the south of the pavilion, and ventilation shafts were constructed in the lawn to the east.

Although the recreation of John Nolen's plans for trees, shrubs and flowers awaits implementation, in 2002 the eight circular flower beds at the wing ends were reinstated. As they had been for many years, tulips were planted for seasonal display and were replaced with annuals following the late spring bloom of the tulips. In 2003 new evergreen shrubs were planted behind the exedrae and flat benches. Tulips, and then annuals, were placed in beds along the four diagonal approaches, and modest flowering shrubs were planted at the terrace at the ends of the approaches. In connection with the completion of the Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center (based on a design by Frank Lloyd Wright) in 1997, the City of Madison redesigned and reconstructed the southeast approach (the name Monona Avenue was changed to Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard in 1987) to the Capitol, bringing to partial fruition Nolen's vision that the stretch of land extending to the lake be integrated visually with the park. Some of the decorative elements, such as the light standards at the entrance to the boulevard opposite the

5.64 Conservation enclosure for the Heg statue, 1990
In 1990, Venus Bronze Works, Inc. of Detroit conserved both Forward and the Heg statue. The Heg figure was enclosed and work conducted on-site.

5.65 Cleaning the Heg statue, 1990
Crushed walnut shells applied under pressure were used to remove corrosion; this procedure was followed by various hand-cleaning methods. Scaffolds were erected inside the plastic enclosure.

5.66 (above) X-raying Forward in advance of restoration, 1990
The fragility of Forward required more extensive restorative treatment than the Heg statue received. Before cleaning Forward, conservators x-rayed the statue to learn more about its construction and condition. Restoration and conservation took place off-site.

5.67 (right) Forward being returned to the park after cleaning, 1990
Conservators successfully restored the patina on Forward and repaired the breaks in the copper repoussé shell. They recommended eventual indoor display, but in 1990 the statue was returned to its outdoor pedestal.
Capitol, were designed to harmonize with details of the Monona Terrace's ornamentation; others, such as grates around the bases of trees and fixtures and globes atop light poles, echo Wright's design vocabulary generally. The redesign eliminated parking down the center of the boulevard (though it retained parking at the curbs), widened the sidewalks, and instituted a true alley (double row) of trees along the two blocks to Monona Terrace, a feature that Nolen had sought for the Capitol's perimeter walk. Most importantly, the designers, including Madison landscape architect Ken Saiki, made a conscious effort to connect the Capitol, the Capitol Park, and the Lake Monona shore into a unified composition, an objective both Nolen and Frank Lloyd Wright had promoted decades earlier for the Capitol Park.\textsuperscript{13}

5.70 Wisconsin Law Enforcement Memorial, North Hamilton Street approach, 2003
In 1995, SCERB approved a memorial in the park to honor Wisconsin's fallen law enforcement officers. Donations paid for the design and construction of the circular, granite monument, which was dedicated in 1998.

5.71 Southeast Stair addition skylight, 2003
A skylight next to the balustrade between the South Wing and the Southeast Pavilion provides natural light to new offices constructed within an underground addition beneath the terrace and lawn. Completed in 2001, the Southeast Stair addition also required new ventilation structures in Capitol Park.
5.72 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard redesign, 2003
The City of Madison undertook extensive redesign of the boulevard connecting the Southeast Pavilion with the Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center at Lake Monona. Monona Terrace, dedicated in 1997, was based on earlier designs by Frank Lloyd Wright, who had intended the building to be in full axial relationship with the Capitol.

5.73 View from the Southeast Pavilion to Lake Monona, 2003
The redesign of the boulevard and construction of Monona Terrace created a deliberate visual connection between the Capitol and the lakefront. John Nolen, Frank Lloyd Wright and others had advocated this relationship be established beginning nearly a century earlier.
Endnotes


3 Smith, *The History of Wisconsin, Volume I*, 254-56; Smith, *James Duane Doty*, 192-96. According to Smith, the sequence of events is best spelled out in a pamphlet, *In Chancery, James D. Doty vs. Stevens T. Mason, and Others* . . . (Madison, 1840). Suydam played a small role, if any, in planning the plat, but was the surveyor who could attest to the plat’s accuracy and drew the official copies of the plat. Doty’s annotated copy is in the archives of the Wisconsin Historical Society.


5 MacDonald, Alalen, and Smith, *Wisconsin’s Capitol Park, 2* ; Mollenhoff, 20-21.

6 Smith, *James Duane Doty*, 199-203; Wisconsin Territory, *Council Journal*, 1836, pp. 45-48, and *House of Representatives Journal*, 1836, pp. 47, 80, 84-87. Besides Madison, the communities put forward, including several in Iowa, which was then part of Wisconsin Territory, were Fond du Lac, Dubuque, Portage, Helena (the site of Towner Hill State Park), Milwaukee, Racine, Belmont, Mineral Point, Platteville, Astor (now a Green Bay neighborhood), Cassville, Bellevue (Iowa), Koshkonong “on the west side of the outlet at the foot of Koshkonong Lake,” Wisconsin Rapids near Port Winnebago at Portage, Peru near Dubuque, Wisconsin City on the Wisconsin River in Iowa County, the City of the Four Lakes on the north shore of Lake Mendota, Prairie du Chien, and Osoha, that was likely in Crawford County.


8 David Atwood, “Building of State’s First Capitol Was Tediious, Costly, Joh,” *Wisconsin State Journal*, 9 November 1919, no page number; John Smith, “History of Madison,” 18-21; and three images in the archives division of the Wisconsin Historical Society, two photographs by John S. Fuller that show the capitol, WHI(X)50746 and WHI(X)50748, and an 1851 drawing by John B. Wing of King Street and the capitol. For Augustus Bird, see Elyavinr Attoe Blumer and Jerry W. Carlson, *To the Last Bird: The Story of a Wisconsin Pioneer Family* (Amherst, Wisconsin: Palmer Publications, 1985); the book was written by Bird family descendants who credit the commission for the design. Bird is mentioned as “Construction Supervisor and probable Designer” in Department of Administration, *Historic Structure Report, Book V*, 3-22. Alice Smith, Doty’s biographer, suggested in conversation in the 1970s that Doty was the designer, but does not credit him with the design in her biography. No architectural fee is included in a list of capitol-related payments that Doty submitted to the U.S. Senate in 1841 in order to secure the territorial governorship; none of the disbursements mentioned describes services rendered. However, the first payment on the list is for $1,000 to Morgan L. Martin, suggesting that Martin may have arranged for plans, which various documents of the period mention as being in existence. At the time the capitol was being built in 1837 and 1838, Martin was also building his Green Bay home, Hazelwood, a drawing for which exists signed by Joseph Jackson, a builder and architect with roots in Ireland and western New York where Doty and Martin, who were cousins, had been born and raised. See Bill Meindl, “Establishing Hazelwood,” *Broganer* 6 (winter/spring 1990), 8-9; James Duane Doty, “The Territory of Wisconsin, in account with James D. Doty . . . .” James Doty folder, Papers re Nominations, SEN27B-A5, Records of the U. S. Senate, National Archives and Records Service, Washington, D. C.

9 Mollenhoff, Madison, 37; MacDonald, Alalen, and Smith, *Wisconsin’s Capitol Park, 3*.

10 Post & Sons drawing 518-0, Survey [1906], Capitol Archives; George B. Post to Lew Porter, 28 September 1906, folder 16, box 20, Capitol Commission records, ser. 833, Archives Division, Wisconsin Historical Society, hereinafter cited only as Capitol Commission records, ser. 833.


12 MacDonald, Alalen, and Smith, *Wisconsin’s Capitol Park, 4-5*.

13 “Defacing the Park,” (Madison) *Daily Argus and Democrat*, 3 July 1857, p. 3; Mollenhoff, Madison, 49-51; “Madison Millionaire Skates in the Capitol Park,” 5 February 1906, p. 8; and “Jud Stone’s Gleanings,” 7 February 1906, p. 8, both in Wisconsin’s *State Journal*.

14 Mollenhoff, Madison, 40-42, 50-51; Richard N. Current, *The History of Wisconsin, Volume II: The Civil War Era, 1848-1873* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1976), 220-22; Diane S. Butler, “The Public Life and Private Affairs of Sherman M. Booth,” *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 82 (spring, 1999), 167-83 (founding of the Republican party); Wisconsin, *Senate Journal*, 1848, p. 156. A personal and professional relationship between the Wisconsin Historical Society Historical in 1998 of Milwaukee and Madison newspapers for May and June of 1848 resulted in no findings about celebrations of statehood. The legislature met for the first time in June 1848, shortly after statehood; beginning in 1849, the legislature convened in January. Although Ripon claims to be the birthplace of the Republican Party, the meeting that occurred there in February 1845 only proposed a new party but did not undertake formal organization.


16 Samuel Hunter Donnel probe file, box 6, Dane County Court probate case files, Dane Series 97, and August Kutzbock record book, 1855-68, August Kutzbock papers, both Archives Division, Wisconsin Historical Society.

“Capitol Park Chronology,” Capitol Park Info binder, box 3, Capitol Park Information, Capitol Archives; Mollenhoff, Madison, 455, note 92; John O. Holzhueter, ed., Madison During the Civil War Era: A Portfolio of Rare Photographs by John S. Fuller, 1860-1863 (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1997), photographs WHI(X3)50746, 50747 and 30748; 1871-72 Madison City Directory, 6-7.

18 “Capitol Park Chronology,” Capitol Park Info binder, box 3, Capitol Park Information, Capitol Archives.


22 MacDonald, Alanen and Smith, Wisconsin’s Capitol Park, 8-9.


24 MacDonald, Alanen and Smith, Wisconsin’s Capitol Park, 9.


26 “Capitol Park Chronology,” Capitol Park Info binder, box 3, Capitol Park Information, Capitol Archives.


29 MacDonald, Alanen and Smith, Wisconsin’s Capitol Park, 16-17.


32 MacDonald, Alanen and Smith, Wisconsin’s Capitol Park, 17-18; Capitol Commission minutes for 10 February 1906, Capitol Commission records, ser. 833; Wisconsin, State Capitol Commission, Program Containing Instructions to and Information for Architects Submitting Competitive Plans Preliminary to the Election of an Architect for the State Capitol Building (1906), 31.


34 MacDonald, Alanen and Smith, Wisconsin’s Capitol Park, 18-19; “Accepted Designs, Wisconsin State Capitol,” Architecture XIV (September 15, 1906), block plan on p. 156 and perspective on plate LXIV.


39 MacDonald, Alanen and Smith, Wisconsin’s Capitol Park, 20; Mollenhoff and Hamilton, Frank Lloyd Wright’s Monona Terrace, 13-20.

40 MacDonald, Alanen and Smith, Wisconsin’s Capitol Park, 22.

41 Ibid.

42 Ibid. George Nelson contract and bond, 15 April 1908, folder 4, box 43; James S. Grady contract, 22 May 1911, folder 6, box 42; and correspondence with Grady in folders 7, 8 and 9, box 10, all in Capitol Commission records, ser. 833; “State Capitals and State Pride: John Nolen Declares Common Wealth Should Step In and Put Through Certain Desirable Local Improvements,” Wisconsin State Journal, 17 February 1911, p. 6. Grady’s contract specified a fee of $5 a day for Grady himself, plus time of his employees.

43 MacDonald, Alanen and Smith, Wisconsin’s Capitol Park, 23.

44 Ibid. 1-3.


46 MacDonald, Alanen and Smith, Wisconsin’s Capitol Park, 25-26; correspondence with James S. Grady in folders 7, 8 and 9, box 7, and with Ellwanger & Barry in folders 13, 14, 15, 24 and 25, box 8, all in Capitol Commission records,
ser. 833; “Plant Capitol Park,” 7 May 1912, Wisconsin State Journal, p. 2. The removal of the squirrel houses is mentioned in the Wisconsin State Journal, 3 April 1912, as reported on the “Capitol—1912” card, Frank Cluster Papers, Archives Division, Wisconsin Historical Society.


48 Capitol Commission to “Members of the Legislature,” 23 May 1913, no folder or box number, Capitol Commission records, ser. 833; MacDonald, Alanen, and Smith, Wisconsin’s Capitol Park, 25-26; correspondence with James S. Grady in folders 7, 8 and 9, box 7, and with Ellwanger & Barry in folders 13, 14, 15, 24 and 25, box 8, all in Capitol Commission records, ser. 833.


50 MacDonald, Alanen and Smith, Wisconsin’s Capitol Park, 26.

51 Ibid. Ingram to Porter, 27 April and 4 May 1914, folder 19, box 10, and Porter to Ingram, 26 August 1914, folder 17, box 11, Capitol Commission records, ser. 833.


53 Clas to Porter, 10 March 1916, folder 10 or 11, box 6, Capitol Commission records, ser. 833; MacDonald, Alanen and Smith, Wisconsin’s Capitol Park, 27-28; the oak was removed during preparation of this volume.

54 MacDonald, Alanen and Smith, Wisconsin’s Capitol Park, 28-35.

55 Real photo postcard of the Capitol’s south approach dated 23 February 1917, Lot 642, WHI(X3)50312; aerial view, 1922, Melvin E. Diemer, place file, WHI(X3)7236, both in Archives Division, Wisconsin Historical Society.


58 Post & Sons drawing 518-1654, Schedule & Electric Fixtures, 29 March 1914; Capitol Park Info 1996-97 binder, box 3, Capitol Park Information, both in Capitol Archives; “Spend $25,000 on New Lights Around Park,” 11 October 1913 (p. 1) and “Capitol Lighting System Officially Baptized,” 20 June 1915 (no page number), both Wisconsin State Journal. Eight additional streetlight posts were ordered because they were made from “a special model.” Post & Sons to Porter, 22 December 1914, folder 5, box 22, Capitol Commission records, ser. 833.

59 MacDonald, Alanen, and Smith, Wisconsin’s Capitol Park, 27; Post & Sons to Porter, 27 November 1912, folder 3, box 22, and Jno. Williams, Inc., to Porter, 11 February 1915, folder 6, box 28, both Capitol Commission records, ser. 833; Post & Sons drawing 518-3018, F.S.D. of Bronze Bubble Fountain, 3 October 1913, revised 12 May 1914, Capitol Archives.

60 Chronology of Statue Forward, Forward Statue Summer 1995 binder, box 1, Capitol Park Information, Capitol Archives; MacDonald, Alanen and Smith, Wisconsin’s Capitol Park, 40; Wisconsin, Department of Administration, Wisconsin State Capitol Guide and History (Madison, 34th edition, 2000), 18-19, 51-52; Wisconsin, Department of Administration, Historic Structure Report, Book II, Wisconsin State Capitol, North Wing (Madison, 2003), 5-4 to 5, 5-13 to 14.

61 Correspondence related to the kiosk appears in folders 1 and 2, box 16, Capitol Commission records, ser. 833; “Kiosk Being Erected on Capitol Park,” 10 June 1912 (p. 1) and “Kiosk Shows Correct Date of Weather,” 15 June 1912 (p. 1), both Wisconsin State Journal; Wisconsin, Department of Administration, Historic Structure Report, Book III, Wisconsin State Capitol, West Wing and Northwest Pavilion (Madison, 2003), 5-6 to 8.

62 Mollenhoff, Madison, 351.


64 On the Nicolet statue, see “Model for Jean Nicolet Statue for Capitol Park Is Nearing Completion,” Capitol Times, 31 August 1941, p. 12.

65 Porter to M. F. Blumenfeld, 18 May 1916, folder 20, box 5, and 28 November 1917, folder 21, box 5, both in Capitol Commission records, ser. 833; MacDonald, Alanen and Smith, Wisconsin’s Capitol Park, 40.

66 MacDonald, Alanen and Smith, Wisconsin’s Capitol Park, 41.


70 MacDonald, Alanen and Smith, Wisconsin’s Capitol Park, 54-58.

MacDonald, Alanen and Smith, *Wisconsin's Capital Park*, 53-54.


Conversation between East Wing Architects, LLC staff and Daniel Stephans, 12 June 12, 2003; DOA and Department of Landscape Architecture, *Wisconsin's Capital Park*, 8.

See “9810-62 Bronze Conservation Capitol Park” folder, box 2, Capitol Park Information, Capitol Archives.


East Wing Architects, LLC conversation with Stephans, 12 June 2003.
