

PROSPECT PARK



In addition to its pastoral elements, Prospect Park houses multiple spaces that hold the picturesque design style. Natural features were formed into dramatic scenery and take the user on a journey, revealing streams, uneven terrain, waterfalls, and stunning views. The Ravine is populated by the last remnants of indigenous forest in Brooklyn, New York. With dense canopy coverage, The Ravine entices users to its wonder, revealing artfully-made waterfalls and both stone and wooden bridges.

As the park is connected through a cohesive, yet chaotic network of meandering paths, intention flows through its design. The man-made streams and waterfalls of The Ravine lead directly to Prospect Lake. Such a carefully crafted hiking trail, combined with the natural topography of the land, allows for an adventure that the user believes they constructed themselves. However, their experience, whether it be a small trail or a large one, a sun-exposed rest or a shaded one, a stop at Prospect Lake or a picnic at The Long Meadow, was designed for them. The burden of choice is eliminated through pastoral and picturesque elements. Olmsted and Vaux have designed a park that eases the mind, rests the body, and brings humans back to the land.

Prospect Park was designed by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux in 1866 Brooklyn, New York. It holds a design precedent for Golden Gate Park of San Francisco, California- also designed by Olmsted. Prospect Park is a beautiful and well-planned example of the design values of 19th Century America. Olmsted and Vaux sought to work with the natural elements of the site and recognized the need for green spaces in the urban environment. The Industrial Revolution brought technological innovation and craftsmanship, but did so at the detriment of the environment and human health. Positively, the Industrial Revolution called for expansion, which gave way to tourism. The City of Brooklyn desired tourism and wealthy residents, however that doesn't accurately reflect the social and economic diversity of the city's inhabitants. Olmsted and Vaux challenged the City of Brooklyn's desire for a space the wealthy elite can enjoy by designing Prospect Park for the people. People of any social status may be able to enjoy the park, from its busier thoroughfares, open entrances, and intentional programming, to its hidden pathways, reflection nooks, and greenery one could get lost in. Prospect Park embodies the picturesque and pastoral design styles, holding onto the identity of nature before The City Beautiful Movement shifted design towards urban enhancement.

Olmsted and Vaux transformed over 800 acres of rural farmland into winding paths, sweeping meadows, dense woodland, elevated views, and water features. The Long Meadow, the largest of the park's open spaces, exhibits pastoral design elements with 86 acres of rolling terrain and trees along its border. The grass of the rolling terrain sways in the wind, giving a dreamy look to the landscape. Users may use this space for reflective walks, group picnics, and relaxation. The vast openness of the meadow, enclosed by woodland, provides an escape from the busy streets just beyond the tree line. Prospect Lake is also pastoral. The 60-acre lake is accessible via multiple winding walkways, both small and large. A social user can use this lake recreationally and may enjoy the accompaniment of others, while a single person may take advantage of the park's tight, canopy-enclosed pathways to enjoy a secluded viewpoint. The use of water features by Olmsted and Vaux imbues tranquility and a sense of a stillness- a feeling far removed from the adjacent streets of Brooklyn.

