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June 25, 2024

**Reject plans for White Stadium!  
Comments submitted by the Olmsted Network  
Via email to the Boston Landmarks Commission**

*The following comments are submitted by the Olmsted Network, a national champion for Olmsted parks and landscapes, based in Washington, DC. Founded in 1980, we seek to protect and preserve Olmsted parks, places, and principles through advocacy, education, and stewardship. Our international network includes Birkenhead Park in Liverpool, England; the Emerald Necklace Conservancy; Biltmore; Bok Tower Gardens; the Olmsted Parks Conservancy (Louisville); Lake Park, Milwaukee; Central Park Conservancy; and Olmsted Linear Park in Atlanta. For more information, go to [www.olmsted.org](http://www.olmsted.org).*

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Franklin Park is both a local landmark and a national treasure. It is the last great "rural" park designed by famed social reformer and landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted and designated a Boston Landmark in 1980. It has been called "the jewel of the Emerald Necklace" and provided city dwellers with the restorative benefits of a "country park" landscape for decades. Right now, public agencies are rushing through a massive multi-million-dollar project to rehabilitate White Stadium in the Park. We call on the Commission to reject those plans.

Everyone agrees that White Stadium needs to be rehabilitated. But the failure of the city to restore this space for decades should not give it the ability, now, to fast-track a massive multi-million-dollar project with minimal public review. The environmental justice communities which about the Stadium have had little say when it comes to next steps.

If current plans proceed, Franklin Park will look more like a cityscape of bright lights, idling buses, shops, and crowds. The intrusive plans promise radically to transform this landscape by breaking up historic connections between the Overlook area and the Playstead. They will add to the growing list of visual and physical damage done to the park— the addition of the stadium and the zoo, and more recently plans to build a gigantic new social services building where Shattuck Hospital now stands. They will significantly increase traffic in ways that are incompatible with the park and intrusive to the neighborhoods.

The 1980 designation for the Park notably states that the "intent of the designation is to maintain and to restore to the extent possible, the character of Franklin Park as

established by Frederick Law Olmsted in his designs for the park. ...The development of additional hard, urban recreational facilities is to be avoided...”

Yet that is what is being proposed. If allowed to proceed, the White Stadium design will result in a massive new structure and building envelope— with professional locker rooms, corporate suites, commercial kitchens and more— which will irrevocably undermine Olmsted’s historic design and public access to it.

The Landmark Commission’s mandated obligation is “to protect the beauty of the city of Boston and improve the quality of its environment through identification, recognition, conservation, maintenance and enhancement of areas, sites, structures and fixtures which constitute or reflect distinctive features of the political, economic, social, cultural or architectural history of the city.” In times past, the Commission has been diligent in its duty to protect landmarked spaces and preserve the historic character of Boston. We call on the Commission to be diligent now.

The plans are wholly incompatible with this historic landmark. The Commission should reject them and demand that the parties go back to the drawing board.

*Submitted by Anne Neal Petri, President and CEO  
Olmsted Network  
June 25, 2024*