

**FRANKLIN PARK ZOO, BEAR DENS**

**Seaver Street**

**Boston**

**Suffolk County**

**Massachusetts**

**HABS MA-1316**

**MA-1316**

**HABS**

**MA-1316**

**PHOTOGRAPHS**

**WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA**

**HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY**

**National Park Service**

**U.S. Department of the Interior**

**1849 C Street NW**

**Washington, DC 20240-0001**

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

### FRANKLIN PARK ZOO, BEAR DENS

HABS NO. MA-1316

Location: Seaver Street, Boston, Suffolk County, Massachusetts. The bear dens are located in Franklin Park within the Long Crouch Woods Area.

Present Owner: City of Boston, Maintained by Boston Parks and Recreation Department.

Present Use: The Bear Dens are currently used for daily recreation within Franklin Park. The New England Cross Country Running Consortium uses the area for a section of running meets. Leisure park users follow the paths that are around the front and back of the Dens.

Significance: Built in 1912, the Bear Dens were among the first structures to be erected in Boston's Franklin Park Zoo, and were used continuously until 1971. The design for the dens was the work of landscape architect Arthur Shurtleff,<sup>1</sup> who also assisted the Olmsted-led design team with the plans for the larger park. The Franklin Park Zoo Bear Dens provides a prime example of how animals were housed in zoos of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, prior to the development of more humane, naturalistic animal habitats. The Dens feature a relief with two bears holding up the city seal of Boston from 1912.

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### PART I: HISTORICAL INFORMATION

#### A. Physical History

1. Date of Erection: The dens were erected between the winter of 1911 and the summer of 1912.
2. Architect: The architect for the bear dens was Arthur Shurtleff (1870-1957). Born in 1870 in Boston, Massachusetts, Shurtleff graduated from the prestigious Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in 1894 with a degree in engineering, and then went on to do graduate work in landscape architecture at Harvard University. He began his profession career with Fredrick Law Olmsted after graduating in 1896. During this time Shurtleff assisted the Olmsted firm with the Boston Park System and other smaller projects. Together, he and Frederick Law Olmsted formed a four-year program in landscape architecture at Harvard, the first of its kind in the nation. He spent the majority of his career in Boston as a consultant for both the

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<sup>1</sup> It is important to note that Arthur Shurtleff changed the spelling of his last name in 1930 to Shurcliff.

Boston Metropolitan Parks Commission and the Metropolitan District Commission. Yet, Shurtleff is probably best known for his work as chief landscape architect for the restoration of Colonial Williamsburg, from 1928 until 1941. In addition to his architectural pursuits, Shurtleff was also an amateur photographer. He took pictures not just for pleasure, but also of much of his work around the Boston area. His family donated the collection of 1500 glass lanternslides to the Massachusetts Historical Society in 1968.

3. Original and Subsequent Owners:
  - a. The original owner of the property was Lucius Manlius Sargent, a Boston writer, antiquarian, and temperance advocate. His home was built in 1830. Also included on the property was an observation tower, which is visible in Olmsted's initial drawing of the area from 1885. His son sold the property to the City of Boston for the building of Franklin Park.
  - b. Franklin Park Zoo was owned, built, and operated by the City of Boston and the Boston Metropolitan Parks Commission from the inception of planning in 1909 through 1958.
  - c. The Metropolitan District Commission, a regional parks and recreation group, operated the zoo from 1958 with the Boston Zoological Society.
  - d. Zoo New England, a non-profit group, currently operates the zoo. The Massachusetts State Legislature formed zoo New England in 1997 to consolidate operations of both the Franklin Park and Stone Zoos.
4. Builders, Contractors, Suppliers: Between 1911 and 1912, the city approved William L. Morrison Company for "work and material for concrete bear cage floors" and Smith and Lovett Company for "iron work" for Bear Dens. John A. Rooney also helped with work on the bear dens.<sup>2</sup>
5. Original Plans and Construction: The Boston Metropolitan Park Commission (BMPC) suggested the construction of the Franklin Park Zoo in 1909 as a way to bolster falling general park attendance and as a source of entertainment to those who were not interested in the landscape. According to the *36<sup>th</sup> Annual Report for the Boston Park Commissioners*, a sponsor, the Parkman Fund, was chosen for the Zoological Gardens. Arthur Shurtleff was approved as the main landscape architect on March 16, 1910. The BMPC consulted with Dr. Baker from the National Zoo in Washington DC, William Hornaday from the Bronx Zoological Gardens, and Doctor Bean of Albany in regards to

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<sup>2</sup> Cynthia Zaitzevsky, *Franklin Park Bibliography*, (Boston: Department of Environmental Management, May 1989), 81-82.

preliminary plans for the zoological gardens. The report suggested a June 1, 1912 opening date and construction of the “winter bird house, the summer out-of-door flying cage or aviary, the duck pond, the bear dens, and dens for smaller animals”<sup>3</sup> to begin in 1911 and continue through the spring of 1912. On September 14, 1912, the BMPC approved Shurtleff’s *Preliminary Plans for the Arrangement of Zoo Grounds* at Franklin Park and authorized the initial expenditures.<sup>4</sup> The approximate cost for the “carnivorous group” cages and dens was estimated at \$24,000.<sup>5</sup> In March of 1911, Shurtleff presented both a revised *Preliminary* zoo plan and his plans for four bear dens for the Long Crouch Woods area. The Bear Dens opened in the fall of 1912 along with the Aviary and Waterfowl Pool as the first exhibits of the Franklin Park Zoo.

6. Alterations, Deletions, Additions: The Vulcan Rail and Construction Company was awarded a city contract to furnish and erect iron or steel fences on walls and ledges of bear cages January 6, 1914.<sup>6</sup> Repairs were made to concrete floors and walls of Bear Dens January 4, 1933. The exact nature of those repairs is unknown.<sup>7</sup> Abandonment of the dens began in December 1970 and was complete by January 1971.

## B. Historical Context

The ability to both capture and showcase animals has existed for thousands of years. The first recorded structure that housed animals for showcase was located in Egypt around the year 2500 BC. Since then, many cultures from both the East and West have marveled at the idea of nature just out of one’s reach. Housing and showcasing animals in seventeenth and eighteenth century Europe and America were signs of wealth and imperial superiority. Into the nineteenth century, the idea of a zoological garden—better known today as simply a zoo—formed. There are three reasons that zoos flourished in mid-late nineteenth century America. There were intellectual needs for both scientific justification and classification in the “golden age of exhibition.” It became affordable to invest in, transport, and gain support of governmental institutions to showcase animals. Finally, American imperialism took shape during this period and the theme of human authority and control over lesser beings was predominant.<sup>8</sup>

The planning for the first zoological garden in the United States began in Philadelphia, PA in 1859, culminating in the establishment of the Philadelphia Zoological Society in

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<sup>3</sup> Robert Peabody, 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Report for the Boston Park Commissioners For the Year 1910, City of Boston Archives, 20.

<sup>4</sup> Zaitzevsky, *Franklin Park Bibliography*, 79-80.

<sup>5</sup> Peabody, 20.

<sup>6</sup> Zaitzevsky, *Franklin Park Bibliography*, 84.

<sup>7</sup> Boston Parks and Recreation Engineering Division. *Building Files*. “Franklin Park Zoo.” 1933.

<sup>8</sup> Hoage, Robert. *New Worlds, New Animals: From Menagerie to Zoological Park in the Nineteenth Century*. Smithsonian Press, Washington, DC. 1996. Pg. 111-113.

1872 and the public opening of the Philadelphia Zoo in 1874. Using the open space in Fairmount Park, a variety of architects designed spaces for animal residence in a variety of styles. Brigham Young, the leader of the Mormon religion in the recently settled Utah territory, donated two bear cubs to the zoo. Theophilus Chandler designed what are likely the first completed bear pits in the United States for the gift. "Bear dens...represent a product of human thought and culture, and whether conscious or unconscious, these designs are expressive. They are a result of how the natural world is to be presented."<sup>9</sup> Chandler designed his pits "after the medieval design that was used in nearly every zoo established though the nineteenth century. The stone structure was divided into three compartments, each of which contained a central climbing pole. Iron gates secured each bear pit, adding to the fortress-like quality of the edifice. Because they were banked into the hillside, visitors could either look down on the animals from atop a wall or view them at ground level through the gates. By 1878...a polar bear was added."<sup>10</sup>

The idea of creating zoos within the existing open space of city parks became popular after the success of the opening of the Philadelphia Zoo. The city park movement of the nineteenth century used public funds to design and construct open space for people of all classes, races, and ages to gather for leisure. The following is a list of zoos that were built in city parks supported with public funding:

- Central Park Zoo-New York (1873)
- Buffalo (1875)
- Baltimore (1876)
- Atlanta (1889)
- National Zoo (1891)
- Cleveland (1895)
- New York Zoological Park (1896)
- Denver (1896)
- Pittsburgh (1898)
- Toledo (1899)
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Boston's urgency for an updated park system was a response to New York City's grand achievement—Central Park. The first areas to be restored in response to New York's improvements were the Public Gardens and the Commonwealth Avenue Mall in the newly built Back Bay neighborhood. In the 1870s the city of Boston began purchasing land in the recently annexed Dorchester, Roxbury, and West Roxbury. When Fredrick Law Olmsted was hired in 1878 to create what would become known as the Emerald Necklace, the city of Boston had set aside approximately 527 acres of city-owned land for the "crown jewel" of the Emerald Necklace—Franklin Park. Olmsted's other contributions to the Emerald Necklace include the Arnold Arboretum, the Back Bay Fens, the Jamaica Pond area, and the carriage and pleasure roads, known as parkways, which connected these areas.

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<sup>9</sup> Mullan, Bob. *Zoo Culture: The Book about People Watching Animals, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*. University of California Press, Berkeley. 1999.

<sup>10</sup> Ott, Cynthia. *HABS Report: Philadelphia Zoological Gardens*. 1996.

Olmsted was not a designer nor was he a proponent of zoological gardens, though the plans to use animals as entertainers existed in both his Central Park and Franklin Park plans. He felt that the upkeep was too expensive, especially when exhibiting exotic animals, that zoos poorly impacted visual pleasures, and that most sites were inadequate to support large-scale zoos, especially in the area that would become known as Franklin Park.<sup>11</sup> In 1885, Olmsted introduced his plan for the area of the park to be known as the *Greeting*. The *Greeting* was intended to be parallel drives and walkways under American elms that formed a promenade and meeting ground about ½ mile in length. It was to reach from Blue Hill Avenue along Seaver Street and along the Playsted.<sup>12</sup> Attractions dedicated to the enjoyment and entertainment of park goers were developed along the *Greeting*, including a Music Theatre and a Little Folks Fair. The Little Folks Fair was to be “a popular feature for the entertainment of children . . . providing a great variety of games and amusing exercises and exhibitions including swings, scups, see-saws, sand courts, flying horses, toy booths, marionettes, goat carriages, donkey courses, bear pits, etc.”<sup>13</sup> The Boston Metropolitan Parks Commission was formed by the state legislature in 1893 to assume responsibility and funding for Boston’s park system. Olmsted died in 1903, never to see the completion of his grand plan for Boston.

In 1905, John Pettigrew was appointed as the superintendent of the BMPC. He and Charles Sprague Sargent, the director of the Arnold Arboretum, made major changes to Olmsted’s plans. Where Olmsted planned his *Greeting*, Pettigrew planned a “long, grassy glade extending from Blue Hill Avenue to the Playsted, surrounded on both sides by a meandering path.”<sup>14</sup> The estimated costs for Olmsted’s plans were upwards of \$175,000 to complete whereas Pettigrew’s plan was estimated at \$15,000. Much of Pettigrew’s plans used trees, shrubs, and plants that were native to New England and would have a better chance for survival. Along with Robert Peabody, Pettigrew was responsible for advancing plans for a zoological garden in Franklin Park in order to boost faltering attendance.

A 1905 report to the BMPC stated that Pettigrew “strongly urged a collection of hearty animals needing only occasional and slight protection. The occupation of zoological gardens by anything like the jumble of large but cheap and unlovely buildings of the usual zoological gardens was repugnant.” Pettigrew also stated his concerns about noises, smells, and the general location of a zoological garden in Franklin Park so as not to disturb the outer neighborhoods and sanctuary that Franklin Park was meant to offer.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> N.D.C. Hodges, “A Boston Zoo,” *Science: A Weekly Paper of the Arts and Sciences*, Volume 17, No. 417 (January 1891): 62-64. The article describes Franklin Park as the most ideal location for a Boston zoo due to its size and natural setting. It recognizes Olmsted’s plans for his “Little Folks Fair” with a small zoological garden in the Long Crouch Woods section of the park.

<sup>12</sup> *Franklin Park Coalition Bulletin*. Adaptation from Olmsted’s plan for the *Greeting*. March, 1984. 4.

<sup>13</sup> Zaitzevsky, Cynthia. *Fredrick Law Olmsted and the Boston Park System*. Belknap Press of Harvard University, Cambridge, MA. 1982.

<sup>14</sup> “The 1900 Investigation of the Boston Parks Department, Special Committee of the Board of Aldermen Report,” Reprinted in *the Franklin Park Bulletin*, No. 8, July 1979. 7

<sup>15</sup> John Charles Olmsted, “Two Reports on Franklin Park,” *Reprinted Franklin Park Bulletin*, No. 8 July 1979. 70.

Like Olmstead, John Pettigrew would never see the completion of the zoo that he lobbied so hard for or for the completion of his plans for the *Greeting* area (completed 1919); he died on July 8, 1912.

Arthur Shurtleff was hired by the BMPC in 1910 as the head landscape architect for the planned zoological gardens. Shurtleff worked closely with the Olmsted Brothers firm, beginning in 1911, to plan the zoo along the area originally intended to be Fredrick Law Olmsted's *Greeting*. The zoo stretched from the Long Crouch Woods and followed the lines of the original *Greeting* plan. The Olmsted Brothers were responsible for plantings along the zoo's walkways and for consultation with Shurtleff in regards to their father's original plans for the area. Shurtleff began his work in the Long Crouch Woods area, which was the area that Fredrick Law Olmsted had proposed as a site for the bear dens (also referred to as the bear pits). In October 1910, he proposed his preliminary plan for the zoo to the BMPC. The initial zoological collection included a combination of indigenous animals (brown and black bears, raccoons, waterfowl, and deer) and exotic animals (tropical birds, llamas, pumas). Zoological professionals made a case for using indigenous animals. The New England climate was considered too harsh, and the setting of Franklin Park-- with its collection of trees and rocks-- would suit native animals in a natural atmosphere. The BMPC insisted on the use of exotic animals along with the indigenous.

The first exhibits at the Franklin Park Zoo included the Bear Dens, which opened in 1912. It was determined that "Because bears could be displayed outside all year round, bear displays were the logical place to start building."<sup>16</sup> The BMPC wanted construction completed by June 1, 1912 of three structures—the birdhouse, the deer house, and the bear dens. The plan for the "Elevation of the Bear Dens" was completed in March 1911. The plan for "Details of the Bear Dens" was completed in September 1911. The "General Plan of Bear Dens" was completed in March 1912. Construction begins on the bear dens in late 1911 and continues through the summer of 1912. The Bear Dens open in the ca. fall of 1912. Cage Four was for the polar bear exhibit. Cage One was for grizzly bears. Cages Two and Three were for Black Bears.<sup>17</sup>

In the first two decades of the zoo's existence, the goal of increasing visitation to Franklin Park was met. The peak visitation occurred in 1920 with 20 million visitors entering the park. Visitation of the park and the zoo were impacted by a variety of factors throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Major declines in park visitation are first noted during the Great Depression of the 1930s. Likewise, expenditures on the zoo and park proper also decline due to Depression.<sup>18</sup> Care and upkeep of the animals was very difficult, especially at a time when many Bostonians had meager amounts of food on their tables. The zoo would see its next major challenge during WWII. World War II and rationing also affect the Bears. In January 1945, the *New York Times* reported that city councilor William Keenan, proposed a plan to shoot the animals at the Franklin Park Zoo and to use their

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<sup>16</sup> Elizabeth Hanson, *Animal Attractions: Native on Display in American Zoos* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 144.

<sup>17</sup> Zaitzevsky, *Historic Structures and Furnishings Reports*, 27.

<sup>18</sup> Zaitzevsky, *Franklin Park Historic Landscape Report*, 196.

remains as fertilizer. The \$23,500 annual food allotment for the animals was to be placed towards new playground space in Boston. A Boston youth group called the "Save the Animals Club" stated that they would rather have the zoo and animals [since] many of the animals were purchased by the school children "with their own pennies."<sup>19</sup> While plans for eliminating the animals were stalled, the situation did not improve. On June 7, 1946, the Associated Press reported that a bread shortage was going to affect the bears at the Franklin Park Zoo. The bears usually consumed about 400 pounds of bread daily and would only last until June 8, 1946.<sup>20</sup>

Though lovers of the zoo did exist, the 1950s witnessed a continued decline in visitation in both the zoo and the park. In 1954, the landscape architecture firm, Shurcliff and Shurcliff, Inc., published the *Environmental Impact Report of the Expansion of the Franklin Park Zoo* for the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC). The 1954 Shurcliff and Shurcliff study suggested the closing of the Bear Dens due to both distance (1600 feet from nearest exhibit) and the unacceptable nature of the exhibit in comparison to existing bear exhibits around the country at that time. The Massachusetts legislature transferred MDC care, custody, and maintenance of the zoo to the MDC on September 4, 1957. The MDC in turn transferred its rights to the Boston Zoological Society, a new state agency that was responsible for the Stone Zoo (Stoneham, MA) and the Franklin Park Zoo. "Boston's long-neglected Franklin Park Zoo was subjected to no less than three separate master plans during the fifties and sixties, with proposals ranging from a modernist monkey island . . . to the shopping center style . . . to the twelve story exhibit gallery."<sup>21</sup>

The conflicts that surrounded the zoo's operations reached into the populous of the neighborhoods surrounding them. The demographics of the neighborhoods that surrounded Franklin Park in the 1960s were different from the neighborhoods that surrounded it when it was built in the late 1890s. There was a fear for the safety of the animals and their caretakers as a result of the urban violence that plagued Boston in the late 1960s. Proposals to close the zoo, especially the Bear Dens, became more frequent. Tim Anderson, an activist in Roxbury in the 1960s-1970s stated, "the removal of the zoo would be an act of contempt to black Roxbury."<sup>22</sup> Many other activists were involved with the zoo, including Elma Lewis, who sat on the Board of Directors.

The dens were eventually abandoned in 1970. The bears were sold to various zoos around the country. *Zoo New England Records* exist about the Black Bear Inventory in the Franklin Park Zoo from July 30, 1966 through December 3, 1970 when the final bears were shipped to Howard Baynes of Clifty Acres in Indiana. The last polar bear was included with the above trade to Clifty Acres Farm. Two polar bears were previously transferred to the Boston Zoological Society's other property, the Stone Zoo, in July

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<sup>19</sup> "Children Unite to Save Boston Zoo Animals: Girl of 9 Forms Club to Balk at their Killing," *New York Times*, January 29, 1945.

<sup>20</sup> "Boston Bears Face Bread Cut," *New York Times*, The Associated Press, June 8, 1946.

<sup>21</sup> Jeffrey, Hyson, "Jungles of Eden: The Design of the American Zoo," *Environmentalism in Landscape Architecture*, Vol. 22 (2000): 35.

<sup>22</sup> \* Mirsky, Mark Jay, "In Search of Franklin Park," *Boston Globe Magazine*, September 30, 1979.

1966. They were only at Franklin Park for a temporary exhibit. The bear dens were abandoned after this time for a variety of reasons. The most legitimate reason exists in correspondence between the Boston Zoological Society's purchasing agent Alfred Holland and Director Richard Naegeli from November of 1970. "With the upgrading of the recent exhibit areas, we must upgrade the quality of livestock . . . I am recommending the closing of the Bear Dens as soon as the bears can be traded, due to unsafe conditions."<sup>23</sup> In an interview with John Linehan, the current director of Zoo New England, the speculation of the isolation of the Bear Dens from the updated zoo is perhaps one of the main reasons for its closure. Security in Franklin Park during the late 1960s and 1970s was a major concern, both for the animals and for people who may have wished to visit the isolated areas of the park. Another speculation for the closure was the cost of heating the Bear Dens.

In 1980 and 1990, the Boston Parks and Recreation Department issued its *General Plan* for Franklin Park. Both plans included surveys from neighborhood residents, the majority of whom stated that the animals at the zoo were what they liked best about Franklin Park. The plan stated ideas for an interpretive area, a stop on a nature trail, a playground, or a snack bar location. However, there are no plans in the foreseeable future to implement any of the proposed suggestions. Specifically, the 1980 *Revised General Plan* for Franklin Park suggested a set of "Crouch Wood Trails" be added to existing suggested "Node" trails through other parts of Franklin Park. The area was chosen for its ease of access from Seaver Street and for the interesting scenery of the old Bear Dens and the rocky terrain that surrounds them. The Boston Parks and Recreation Department advised for securing unused buildings, cleaning the area of garbage, broken glass, and rusted hardware, and removing the weeds that are harming the stone work. In addition to a walking trail, the Department also suggested using the area for interpretive activities, a snack bar, or a special play facility. The 1990 *Master Plan and Overview for Franklin Park* suggested serious consideration for the development of the Long Crouch Woods and old Bear Dens to become a major park activity center in the spirit of "the originally conceived Little Folks Fair area." The plan also called for an improvement of views of the Dens and woods to promote safety, and the redesign of the play space into a more "naturalistic" structure.

## PART II: ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: The Bear Dens are typical of animal enclosures designed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Unique features of the area include the relief in Cage 2, the stairway leading to the Dens, and the naturalistic setting of Roxbury puddingstone, found only in the Boston and Brookline area. The Dens were built with rear service areas that were not

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<sup>23</sup> Letter from Alfred Holland to Richard Naegeli dated November 9, 1970 requesting authorization to trade animals for upgrade and the recommendation of the closure of the Bear Dens. *Zoo New England Archives*.

accessible to the public when the Dens were in use. The service areas consisted of rear pathways and entrances into the shelter areas.

2. Condition: The granite walls are sound, but are missing blocks in some areas. The iron caging is merely rusted but intact in some areas, missing in other areas, or dangerous and dispatched from its original structures. Repairs are needed for missing granite blocks in the seating areas surrounding the Dens. The concrete relief is cracked. There is graffiti on most structures. The stairs leading to the Bear Dens seem to be structurally sound.

#### B. Description of Exterior

1. Walls: The walls are made of Cape Ann concrete. They are 11' high and 2'6" thick in most areas. The interior walls are smooth to prevent climbing, but the exterior walls are rough to allow for the growth of vines. The walls still have teasers attached in most areas (original measurements: 3/4" round and the tip was located 9' from the floor of the cage).
2. Floors: The floors are made of concrete slabs set on pilings so that there is access to the soil underneath to allow for the growth of natural vegetation and trees. The floors were made of a smooth concrete for ease of cleaning and sanitation.
3. Barriers: Existing cages are iron (original measurements: 3/4" round bars, set 4" apart) set into concrete. In some areas, the iron hoods (original measurements: 3'6" from either side of the cage) still exist which provided some shade to the exhibits as well as an additional precaution against escape instead of the use of additional teasers. When built in 1912, the Dens also featured a layer of shrubs and an additional iron fence to separate spectators from the exhibit.
4. Openings:
  - a. Service Area Doors: Either boards or stone and concrete currently barricade the doors.
  - b. Cage Doors: No exterior cage doors exist.
5. Windows: There is one existing window space, covered by iron bars, in the easterly den. The other windows have been either boarded up or blocked by stone and concrete.
6. Stairs: The staircase is made of granite and concrete. The stairs rise to an elevation of 184' from the entrance to the Dens. The first stair is 44' in length and they taper to 40' at the top of the seventeen steps. Walls that are 2'9" thick, built of granite and concrete, frame the stairs.

7. Seats: The seating area is located on either side of the stairs. It is an extension of the frame of the staircase and is also what forms the frame of the plaza. There are six granite/concrete seats on each wing.

### C. Description of Interior

#### 1. Cage Plan<sup>24</sup>

- a. Cage 1: Located on the Northwest corner of the Bear Den area is Cage 1. There is a large round pool, an iron cage that was meant to protect the trees from being climbed by the inhabitants, and two openings into the shelter building. There are two large boulders in the rear of the exhibit. The shelter building is located in the rear of the exhibit. The cage is 113' long and 37' wide.
  - b. Cage 2: In the eastern area of the Dens is Cage 2. There is a large, round pool towards the spectator barrier, one iron cage for tree protection, and two openings for the rear shelter building. There are two large boulders located near the back wall of the exhibit. Cage 2 has the concrete relief of the two bears holding the city seal of Boston, commemorating the opening of the zoo in 1912.
  - c. Cage 3: Before deterioration, Cage 3 was separated from Cage 2 by iron fencing and teasers. The total length of Cage 2 and 3 is 322' in the rear of the structure and 125' in the spectator area.
  - d. Cage 4: Cage four features the steepest rise, the largest pool, and two openings into the rear shelter area. There is one boulder located behind the sheltered tree in the exhibit. The cage is 97' long and 37' wide.
2. Openings to shelter: The openings to all shelters, with the exception of one in Cage 4, have been barricaded by the Boston Parks and Recreation Department with iron fixtures. The far left opening in Cage 4 still has the original iron cage closure over the opening, but it does not seem to function.
  3. 1912 Relief: The relief in Cage 2 shows two bears holding up the city seal of Boston from 1912. The relief is cracked and has been graffitied in the past and not properly cleaned. The relief is approximately 9' tall and 9' wide.

### D. Site

1. Franklin Park: The area in which the Bear Dens are located is known as Long Crouch Woods, which consists of 23.3 acres of the total park area of 527 acres. According to a description from the 1990 *Master Plan and Overview*: "Long Crouch Woods lies at the northeastern edge of the park, and forms a

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<sup>24</sup> Zaitzevsky, *Modified Historic Structures*, 27-28.

woodland boundary and backdrop around three sides of the Playsted. The woodland is small but dramatic with rock outcroppings and mature beech and hemlock trees. The puddingstone rocks spill out along the park's boundary to edge Seaver Street. The rocks rise twenty feet above the relatively flat area inside the zoo to the east. Long Crouch was the name given to Seaver Street in colonial times." The main east-west walkway is parallel to Cage 4.

#### PART IV: SOURCES OF INFORMATION

##### A. Plans and Drawings:

1. Fredrick Law Olmsted National Historic Site Archives:
  - a. 1885 Study for Playsted.
2. Boston Parks and Recreation/Arthur Shurtleff:
  - a. Elevations of Bear Dens for Zoo at Franklin Park, March 1911
  - b. Details for Bear Dens, September 18, 1911
  - c. Stairway at Bear Dens, December 1911
  - d. Franklin Park Zoo Diagram of General Plan, June 1, 1912
  - e. General Plan of Bear Dens, March 1912
  - f. Detail of Iron Work on Bear Dens, undated
3. Department of Conservation and Recreation/Metropolitan District Commission; 1954 Shurcliff and Shurcliff plan.
4. Massachusetts Historical Society:  
Arthur Shurtleff Glass Lantern Slide Collection; No.357 (Olmsted's Original Plan for The Greeting; and No. 421 (Plan of Bears Den)

##### B. Photographs

1. Lindsay Niegelberg, Large Format Photography
2. Landscape Architecture Journal, Photograph of completed Den from 1912 before bears
3. Zoo New England, Photograph of people looking in from outside of Den; a photograph of cages two and three
4. Massachusetts Historical Society: Arthur Shurtleff Glass Lanternslide collection; No. 360 (Photograph of Cages Two and Three); No. 366 (photograph of Cage Two); No. 400 (photograph of people looking into the Den); No. 424 (photograph of man watching bear).
5. Dorchester Historical Society  
Postcard Images of Bear Dens

##### C. Interviews

1. Christine Poff. Executive Director of Franklin Park Coalition. Phone Interviews on September 30, 2005, November 1, 2005.

2. Margaret Dyson. Director of Historic Parks, Boston Parks and Recreation Department. Interview on October 5, 2005.
3. Sal Giantoni. Guard at the Lemuel Shattuck Hospital and Lifelong Roxbury Resident. Phone Interview December 4, 2005.
4. Linda Rohr. Librarian of Zoo New England. Interview on December 5, 2005.
5. John Linehan. Director of Zoo New England. Phone Interview on December 5, 2005.

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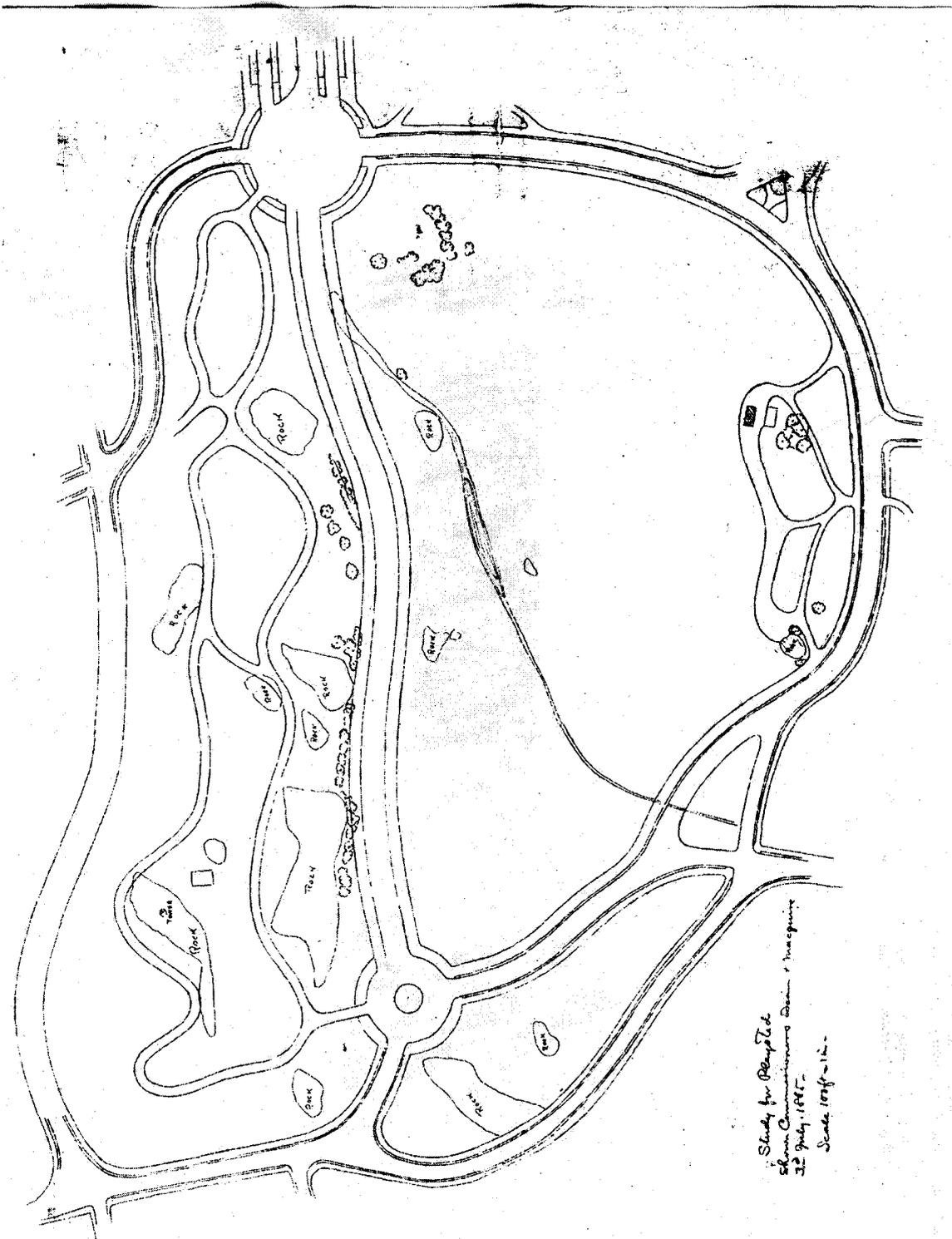
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#### PART VI: PROJECT INFORMATION

The final assignment for class HST G244 at Northeastern University for the Fall 2005 semester was a choice of a research paper, a landmark designation project, or a preservation project. Through my initial research, I realized that a landmark designation for this area would be impossible within the time frame, so I searched for other options to document the Bear Dens. The HABS project was an ideal addition to the collection that the Library of Congress already possesses for the Franklin Park Zoo. The research period for this project was September 2005-December 2005. The photographic period for the project was November 21, 2005-December 7, 2005. I would like to acknowledge the following individuals: Lindsay Niegelberg, Photographer was an invaluable addition to the success of this project/ Northeastern University; Neal Rantoul, Northeastern University Photography Department/Professor; Margaret Dyson, Director of Historic Parks for Boston Parks and Recreation Department; Linda Rohr and John Linehan, of Zoo New England; Michaela Thompson, Northeastern University; Christine Poff, Franklin Park Coalition; Mark Swartz, Alan Banks, and Michelle Clark, Fredrick Law Olmsted National Historic Site and Archives; Chris Carden and Holly Smith, The Bostonian Society; Kristen Swett, City of Boston Archive Department; Kim Nusco, Massachusetts Historical Society; and Earl Taylor, Dorchester Historical Society.

**Figure 1: Study for Playsted** (Olmsted Plans and Drawings Collection; #918-13 Franklin Park, Boston, MA) Courtesy of National Park Service, Fredrick Law Olmsted National Historic Site



**Figure 2: Transfer of Property to the City of Boston by the Sargent Family**

Courtesy of the City of Boston Archives

Know all Men by these Presents, THAT we, Horace B. Sargent, Jr.

of Boston in the County of Suffolk  
and Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and J. Jefferson Coolidge, Jr.  
of Manchester in the County of Essex and Commonwealth  
aforesaid, administrators of the estate of Lucius M.  
Sargent, late of said Boston, deceased.

in consideration of the sum of ten thousand five hundred and  
seventy seven and  $\frac{12}{100}$  dollars, to us paid by the City of Boston, the receipt  
whereof is hereby acknowledged, do hereby release, acquit and forever discharge the  
said City of Boston of and from all claims and demands whatever, for damages, costs,  
expenses, and compensation for, on account of, or in any way growing out of  
the taking of a certain parcel of land containing 14,395 square  
feet, more or less, situated on Seams street in that part of said  
Boston formerly Rosbury, and belonging to said Horace B. Jr. and  
Lucius M. by an act of the Board of Park Commissioners of said  
City of Boston, passed March 27, 1893, and I, said Horace B. Sargent, Jr.  
and do hereby for myself, my heirs, executors, and administrators, covenant  
with said City of Boston, forever to indemnify and save harmless the said City of  
Boston against all claims and demands of all persons, for damages, costs, expenses or  
compensation, for, on account of, or in any way growing out of said taking, so  
far as said parcel of land or any interest therein is affected  
thereby.

Witness our hands and seals this nineteenth day of  
February in the year eighteen hundred and ninety-four.

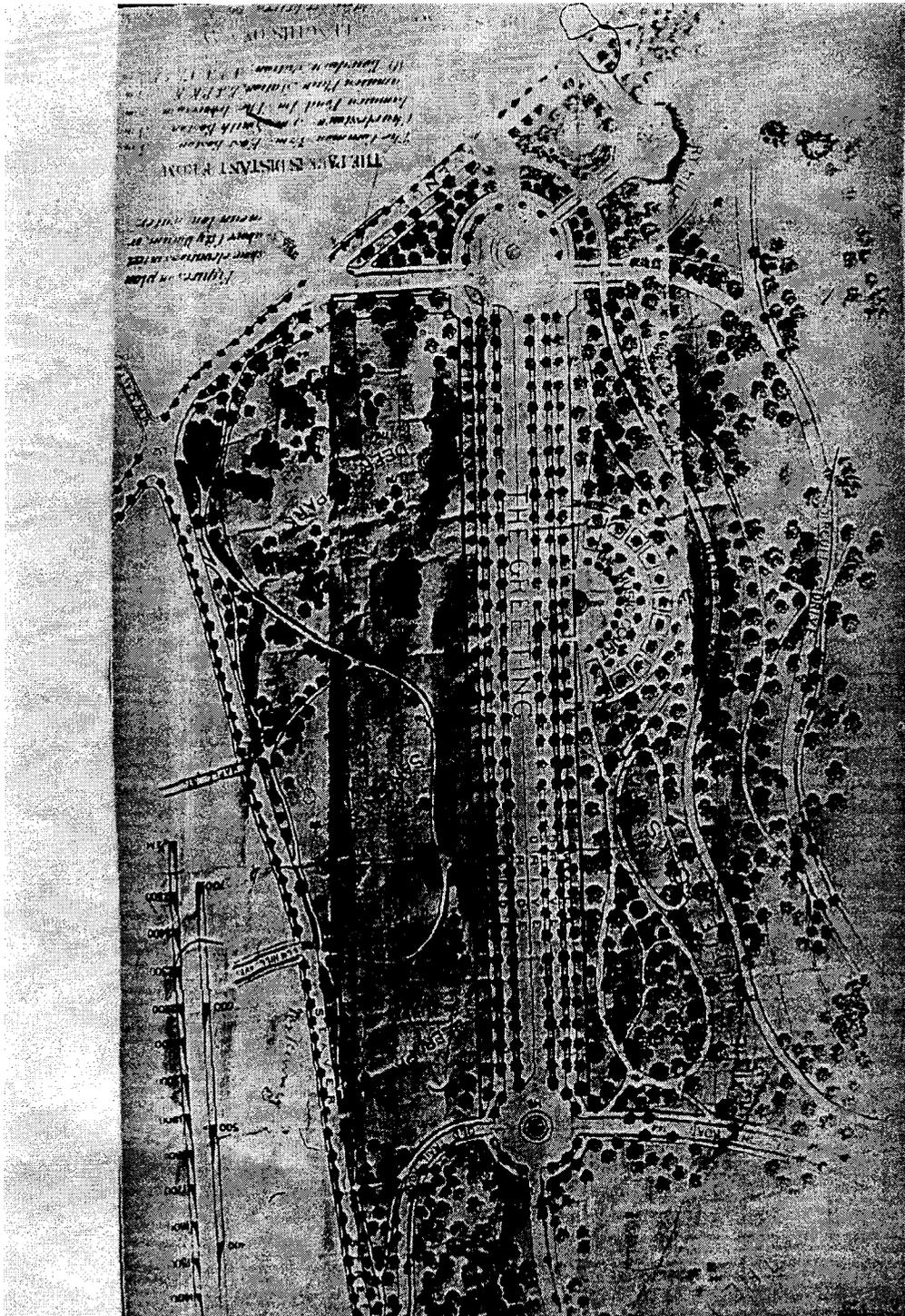
In presence of

Horace P. Owen }  
J. Jefferson Coolidge, Jr. }  
Admin. of the Estate of Lucius M. Sargent }  
Horace B. Sargent, Jr. }



**Figure 4: Plan for the “Greeting” by Fredrick Law Olmsted**

Courtesy of the Massachusetts Historical Society



Courtesy of the Massachusetts Historical Society, 2005  
from the Arthur Shurcliff Glass Lantern Slide Collection

**Figure 5: People watching bears at Franklin Park Zoo**

Courtesy of Zoo New England Archives

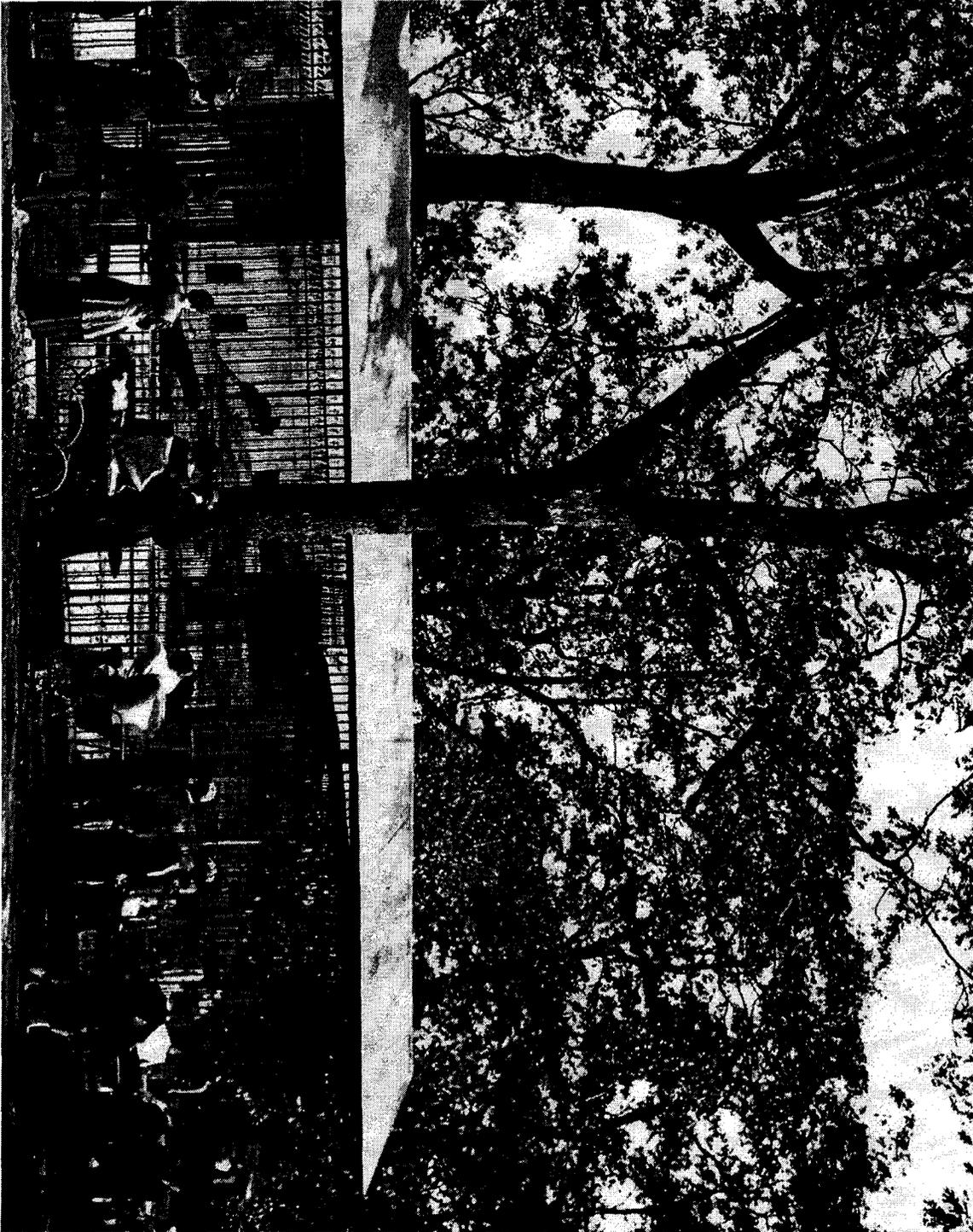
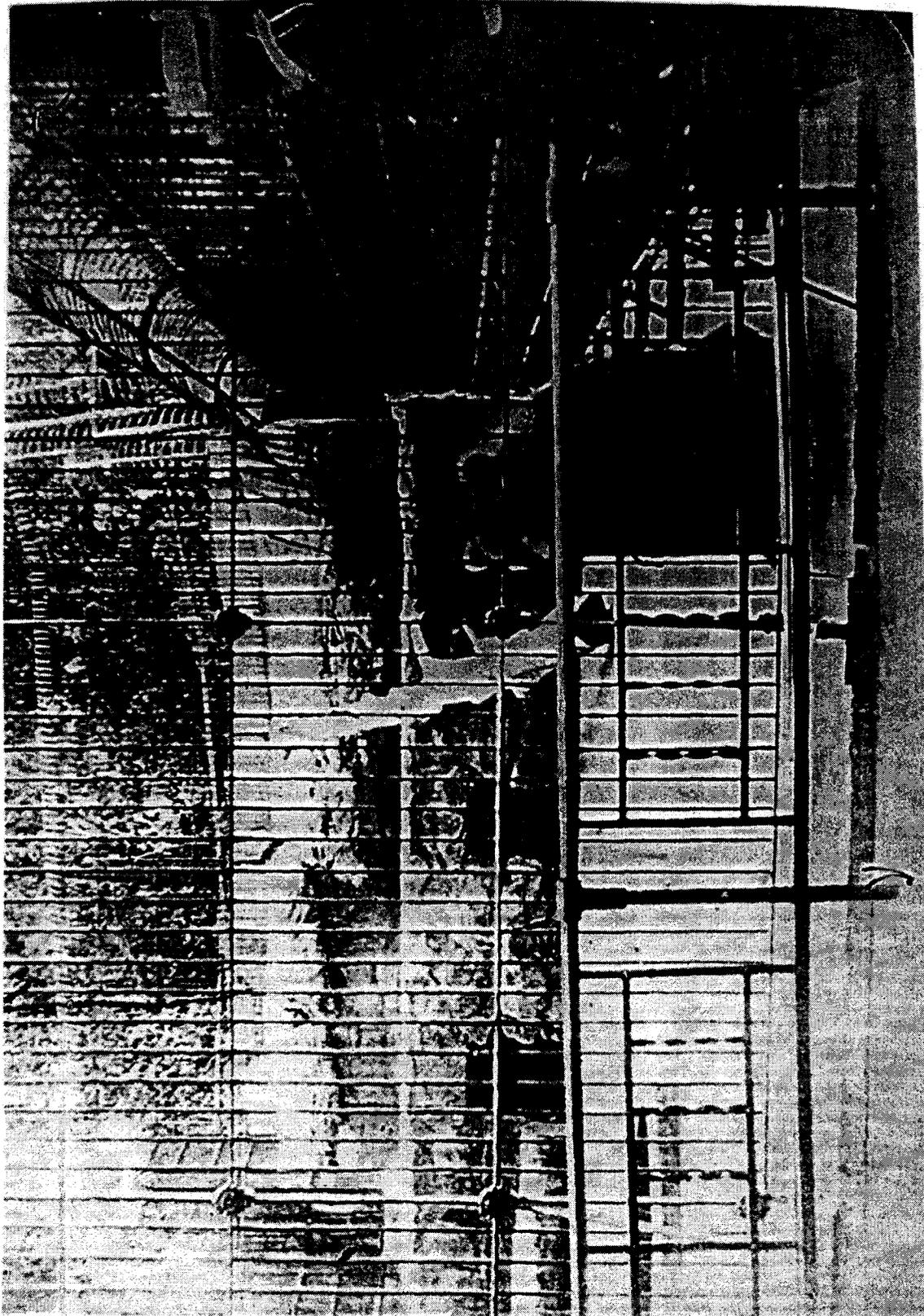


Figure 6: People watching bears at Franklin Park Zoo, Courtesy of Zoo New England Archives

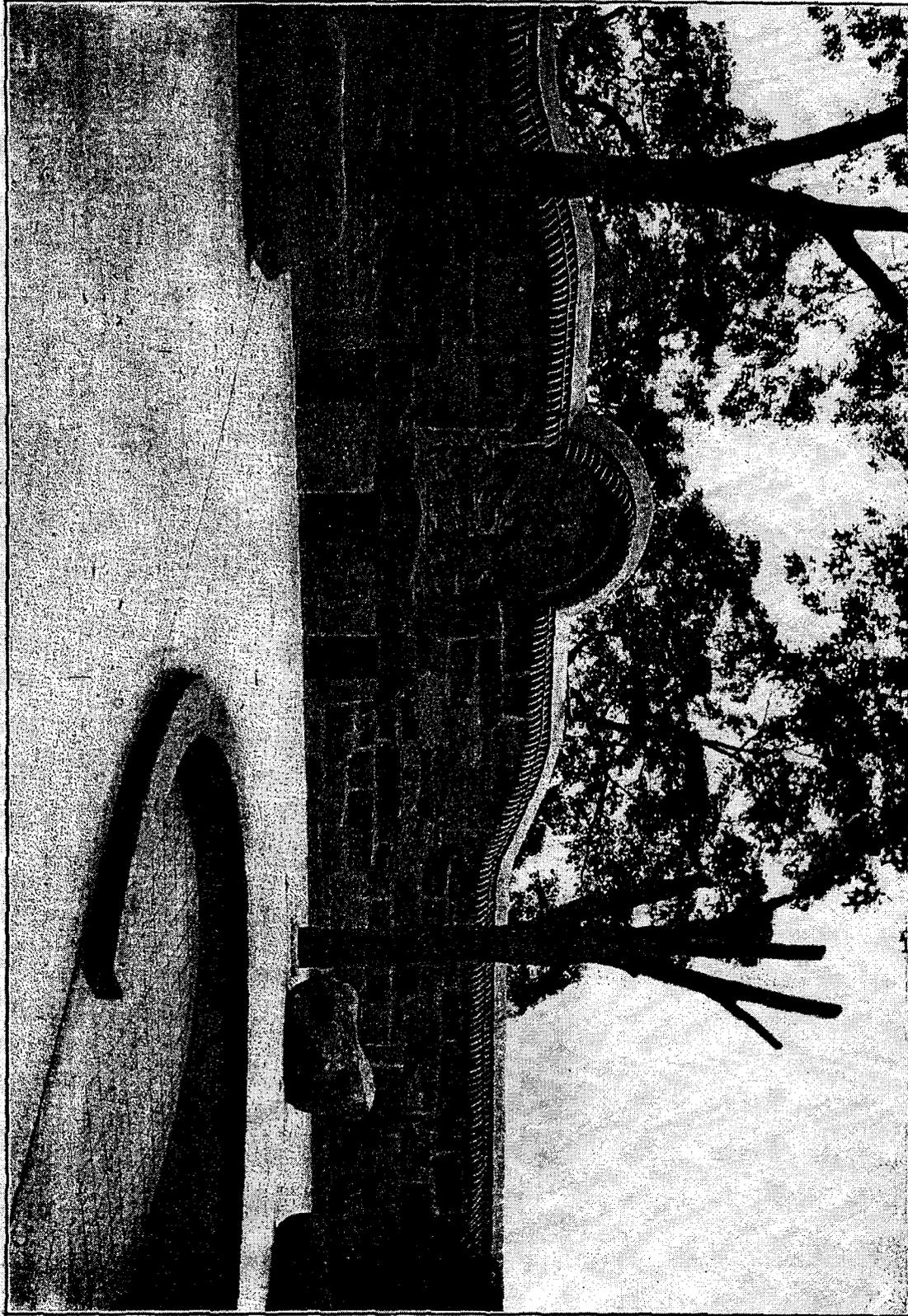


**Figure 7: People watching bears at Franklin Park Zoo; taken from rear of dens**  
Courtesy of the Massachusetts Historical Society



Courtesy of the Massachusetts Historical Society, 2005.  
From the Arthur Shurtleff Glass Lantern Slide Collection

Figure 8: Bear Dens upon completion in 1912, Courtesy of Landscape Architecture Quarterly, Oct. 1912



**Figure 9: Bear Dens**

Courtesy of Massachusetts Historical Society

