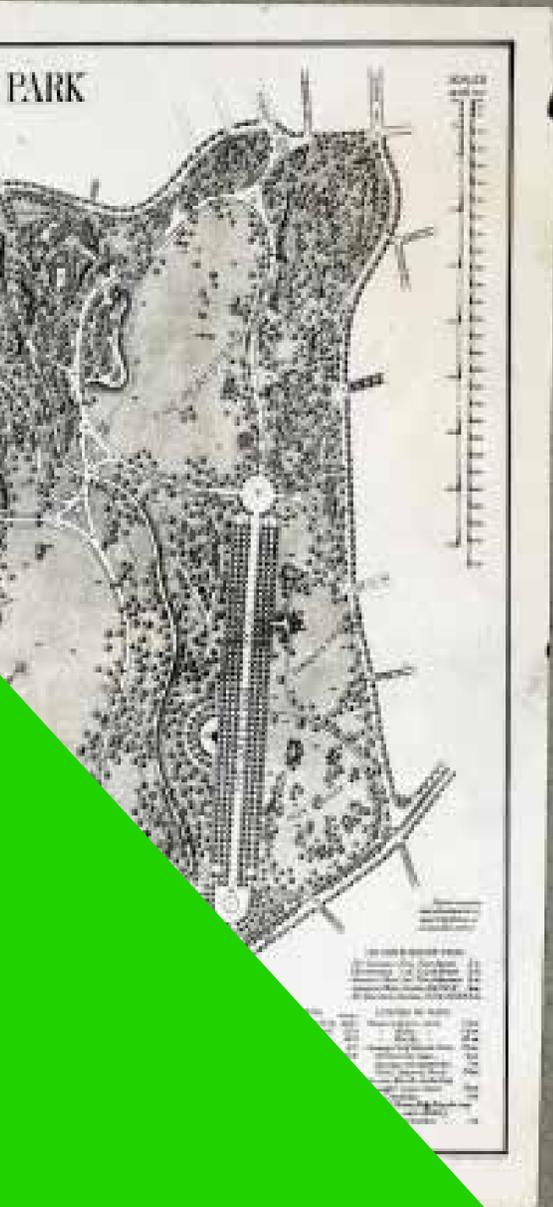


Photo to the right courtesy of Olmsted Archives. Photo below courtesy of the Boston Public Library's Leslie Jones Collection.

GENERAL PLAN OF FRANKLIN PARK



BEAR DENS

The Franklin Park Zoo was opened in 1912. When the zoo opened, its first official exhibits were the aviary and the bear dens, designed in 1911 by Arthur Schurcliff. Holding a variety of bear species, purchased from Germany and Yellowstone National Park, as well as a badger held in a nearby cage, the bear dens attracted thousands of people to the zoo every day.

On October 3, 1912, at least 10,000 people came to the zoo and visited the bear dens, bringing in a total of \$10,000, a very large amount in the early 1900s. The dens became so popular that when funding became scarce, Boston schoolchildren started a campaign to collect pennies to keep them open.

In 1954, due to the growing popularity of many other local and national zoos and attractions, the lack of safety, and the large distance between the bear dens and the rest of zoo, Schurcliff suggested closing the bear dens. The zoo officially closed in 1960 but has since been reopened as a new attraction for future generations. Over the years of abandonment, the Old Bear Dens have become overgrown and vandalized. In 2014, part of the rusting iron work went missing from the dens and was presumed to have been stolen for scrapmetal use.

Many question the current state of the Old Bear Dens. Do you think that the city should make room in its budget to preserve this piece of park history?

To participate in this program, take a picture of this place as you see it today, respond to our questions in the text on the left, and then post your photos with your reflections in the caption online using #ENSafari and #FindYourPark.

