



NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION *for*
OLMSTED
PARKS



August 17, 2017

Mitchell J. Silver, FAICP
New York City Parks Commissioner
The Arsenal
830 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10065

Dear Commissioner Silver,

The National Association for Olmsted Parks (NAOP) and The Cultural Landscape Foundation (TCLF) enthusiastically support the preservation and interpretation of Frederick Law Olmsted's Tosomock Farm on Staten Island. Internationally, Olmsted is the seminal figure in development of 19th century urban parks and scenic reservations, as well as the celebrated founder of the profession of landscape architecture. The Staten Island farm is key to telling the story of his professional journey from experimental farmer to designer of landscapes. The critical early years he spent experimenting in "modern" agriculture and landscape design and engineering are directly related to the landscape designs of his nationally celebrated career from New York's Central and Prospect Parks (1857 and 1866) to Asheville, North Carolina's Biltmore estate (1886-95).

The life of Frederick Law Olmsted, and the legacy of nearly 6,000 projects accomplished by him and his successor firm (1857-1979), tell a unique American story that touches millions of New Yorkers' lives, and millions more in cities and communities across the continent. While we applaud the decision to update a historic structures report, The Cultural Landscape Foundation has recently placed the Tosomock Farm on its Landslide list of "at risk or threatened" landscapes (<https://tclf.org/olmsteds-tosomock-farm-staten-island-ny>). TCLF and NAOP both agree that without additional study and commitment, the equally critical landscape setting could be lost.

National Association for Olmsted Parks
1200 18th Street, NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20036
www.olmsted.org

The Cultural Landscape Foundation
1711 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20009
www.tclf.org



NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION *for*
OLMSTED
PARKS



The year 2022 will mark the bicentennial of Olmsted's birth which will undoubtedly be nationally recognized. As the cultural landscape where Olmsted developed his ideas and professional skills which he would hone throughout his career, his Tomosock Farm could play an integral and important role in the 2022 celebration -- but only if it is ready to welcome visitors.

Sincerely,

Lucy Lawliss, FASLA
Co-Chair, NAOP

Arleyn Levee, Hon. ASLA
Co-Chair, NAOP

Charles Birnbaum, FASLA
President and CEO, TCLF

cc: Lynda Ricciardone, Staten Island Borough Commissioner; Peg Breen, New York Landmarks Conservancy