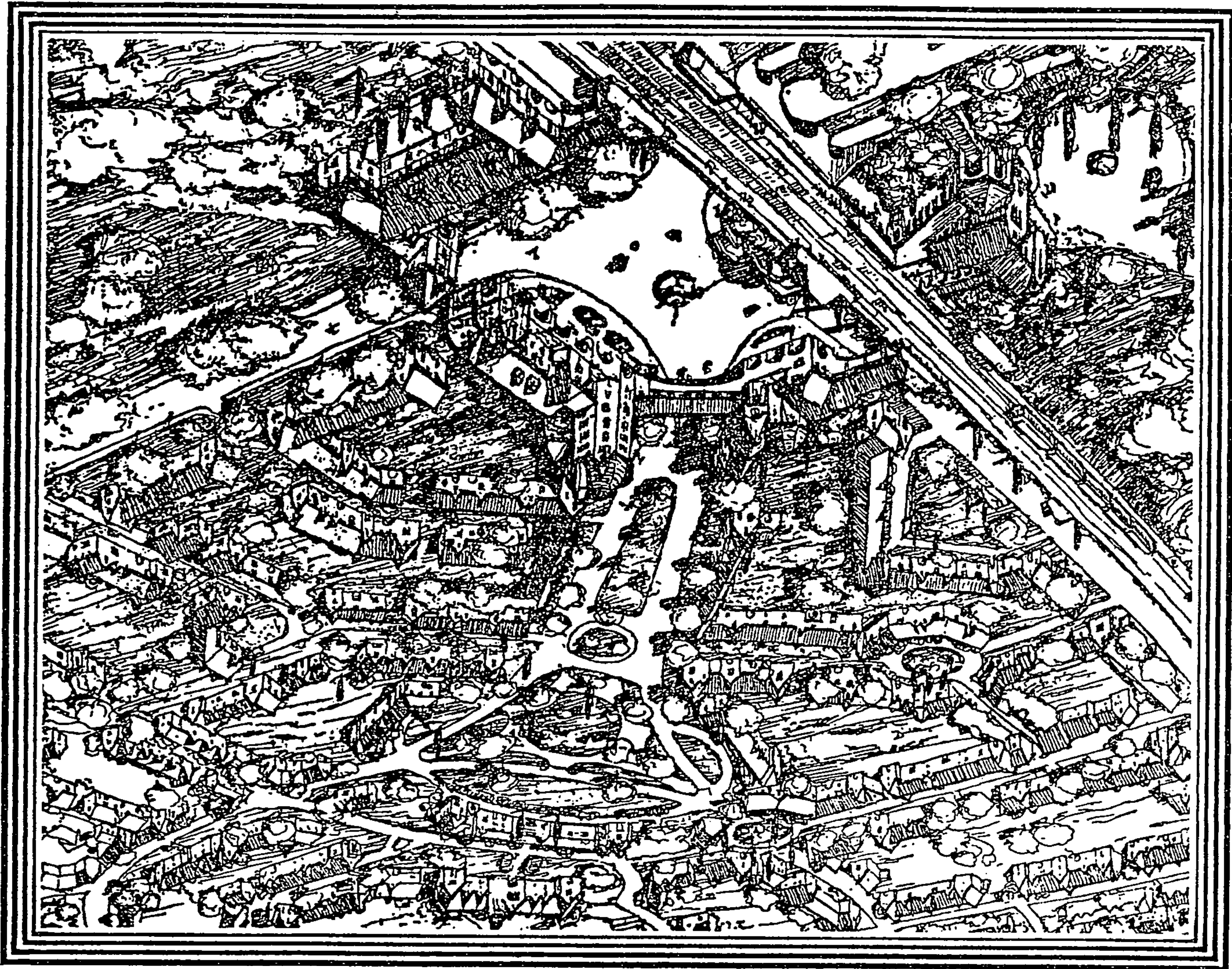


ARTISTIC HOME COMMUNITY AT FOREST HILLS GARDENS

Many Interesting Features Provided for Suburban Dwellers in the Russell Sage Foundation Tract Near Jamaica—Harmony in Landscape Gardening and Architecture—Not a Charitable Scheme.



Bird's Eye View of Proposed Streets and Buildings in Russell Sage Foundation Tract at Forest Hills.

An interesting plan of development has been worked out for the 142-acre tract at Forest Hills, L. I., near Jamaica, controlled by the Russell Sage Foundation. The general scheme, which has just been approved by the officers and the advisory architects, was formally announced last week, and if the hopes of the trustees are realized, Forest Hills Gardens, by which name the foundation home development will be known, will become an interesting suburban locality adorned with picturesque landscape features, artistic homes, and all necessary improvements and conveniences of comfortable living.

Robert W. de Forest, Vice President of the Foundation, expresses clearly just what the purpose of this latest large suburban development scheme is. He says:

"In its business purpose Forest Hills Gardens does not differ materially from other Long Island real estate enterprises. It is not a charity. It will not be managed as a charity. Whoever deals with it, whether as tenant or purchaser, will be expected to pay a fair value for everything received."

This tells the truth plainly and at once disposes of all doubts and false impressions regarding the practical workings of the Sage Foundation in its home-supplying work. A mistaken idea has obtained a certain amount of credence that in some way this land development was to provide peculiar advantages for the laboring man, permitting him to secure neat homes on a most reasonable basis. The Forest Hills property, as officers admit, is too valuable to use for anything except fairly high-class development. Houses are to cost from \$7,000 to \$15,000 and over, a large hotel is to be built, and many other attractive features included. There will also be two-family houses. The

officers stated, however, that at a later date homes costing from \$2,000 to \$5,000 will be erected on the property.

Grosvenor Atterbury, the architect of buildings to be erected, says in explaining something of the building plans:

"Many people will doubtless be disappointed to find that the first housing demonstration to be made by the Russell Sage Foundation will not reach the so-called laboring man, or even the lower paid mechanic, which is impossible in this instance by reason of the cost and location of the land. The fact seems the more surprising when it is realized that the larger number of the houses erected in this first operation are contiguous or block houses, and on plots oftentimes smaller than our usual city ones. In a large measure the reduction in the individual lot area is purposely made and carefully compensated for by larger public open spaces from which in various ways it benefits.

"Plans have been prepared for an initial operation contemplating ten different groups of buildings, involving an expenditure in land improvement and building construction of a million and a quarter of dollars. The majority of those to be erected in this first operation, which will be largely confined to the more expensive and central property, are in the form of contiguous houses, the detached and semi-detached types of dwellings of various grades and sizes being necessarily possible only on the less central and lower priced portions of the property.

"The different types of buildings included in these groups cover as wide a range as is permitted by the economic conditions, which necessarily determine also their distribution and location on the property. Adjoining the railroad station and forming the station square will be three and four story buildings, containing stores, offices, and restaurant, and in the upper stories small, non-houskeeping apartments, both for men and women. From this centre out toward Forest Park, which bounds the property on the southeast, the houses are planned to correspond to the varying values of the lots as determined by their size, location, and prospect, the larger single-family dwellings containing ten or twelve rooms and the smaller four or five. Following the land and road contours these are com-

bined in smaller and more detached groups as the property becomes more hilly. While they will vary greatly in size, arrangement, cost, and architectural treatment, an attempt will be made to make them alike in their domestic and livable character."

Frederick Law Olmsted, the landscape gardener for the Forest Hills tract, calls attention to three principles in city planning which are being worked out in the development.

"One of these principles," he says, "relates to the main thoroughfares, which should be direct, ample, and convenient. Two eighty-foot streets are carried straight through the property on lines 1,200 feet apart, fixed by the location of bridges under the railroad and in accordance with the city's tentative plan covering adjacent territory. A boulevard, 125 feet wide, also coinciding with the city's tentative street plan, is provided along the line where the property fronts on Forest Park, a 536-acre tract, forming the largest reservation of public park lands in the Borough of Queens.

A second principle, and which has been too generally ignored in American street layouts, is that those streets which are not needed as thoroughfares should be planned and constructed to meet the purposes of quiet residence streets in the best possible manner. To this end the local streets at Forest Hills Gardens are laid out so as to discourage their use as thoroughfares. While not fantastically crooked, they are never perfectly straight for long stretches; and their roadways, well paved with bituminous macadam, are narrow, thus permitting additional space to be devoted to the front gardens.

"A third principle that has controlled the design of Forest Hills Gardens is the deliberate setting apart of certain areas for the common use and enjoyment of the residents. In addition to the school playground and the green, a space of about an acre and a half, surrounded by streets, is being held in another part of the tract for use as a public recreation ground."

Foundations for some of the larger buildings are now being laid, work on street improvement is well under way, and active building operations will begin in the early Spring.