

WARD ASSOCIATES, P.C. Landscape Architects, Architects, Engineers

May 21, 1974

Mr. Paul McEachern
Trustees of Trust Funds
P. O. Box 1103
Portsmouth, New Hampshire 03801

Re: Four Tree Island

Dear Mr. McEachern:

As per our last meeting, I have enclosed our revised Land Use Analysis and cost estimate for the above project.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Very truly yours,


Arthur H. Mittelstaedt, Jr.
Vice Chairman of the Board

AHM/il
Encl.



FOUR TREE ISLAND
LAND AND USE ANALYSIS

This Report is submitted as
supportive text to the graphics
reflecting the proposed design
for Four Tree Island.

Prepared for
TRUSTEES OF TRUST FUNDS
Portsmouth, New Hampshire

Prepared by
WARD ASSOCIATES, P. C.
Landscape Architects, Architects and Engineers

in Collaboration with
PLANNING ASSOCIATES
Education and Recreation Consultants

40 Orville Drive
Bohemia, New York 11716

May, 1974

BACKGROUND

THE PROPERTY:

Four Tree Island located off of Prescott Park is an island considered a segment of Pierce Island.

Pierce Island is in turn a landmass of rolling topography located within the city of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, in the Piscataqua River. The north shore of the island is exposed to an industrial skyline and very strong ocean currents, contrasted to the south shore which is exposed to pleasant views and peaceful waters.

Basically, the main island is oriented laterally along the northwest axis. In discussing the island, it will simplify description to divide the area into the two distinct attached land sections along its northwest axis. Four Tree Island is a smaller island to the northwest of the main island. The two main sections are referred to as the northwest section and the southeast section of the island.

Little information concerning the physical history of the islands is available, therefore not much commentary here can be presented. Over the past few decades the island has been subjected to constant changes in surface composition and configuration due to the dumping and scattering of sanitary fill by the city within the limits of the island. This effect is most apparent in the main islands' northwest section. Also, due to the changing composition of the soil surface, there is no comprehensive soils information available from either the Soils Conservation Service or private sources. Lack of this information makes it impossible to determine specific soils limitations in relation to development of highly intense or active recreation facilities. However, such active use has been delineated from the island because of other characteristics.

Basically, the Four Tree Island landmass is tabled on a subsurface ledge protruding out from the mainland. This ledge lies between zero and twenty to thirty feet below the soil surface. Soil depth varies across the island. Several rock outcroppings are evident on the main island, the most predominate being located in the north central part of the northwest section of the main island.

The two islands have varied topographical contrasts. The shoreline of Four Tree Island is gradual but rocky. The shoreline of Pierce Island, the southwest section is predominately sharp, rocky, steep, and very ledgy, whereas the shoreline of the northwestern section is comparatively gently sloping to the water. The highest ground on the islands is located on Pierce Islands southeastern sections being in the area of the old Fort Washington. Much of this elevation here was man-made during construction of the fort.

Four Tree Island has a limited space of open spaces which consists of noncultivated fields and shrubbed areas. Major vegetation characteristics of Four Tree Island include three of four trees from which the island gets its name. Additional grassy and brushy

areas are scattered throughout the island.

The entire island provides a habitat for several common species of animals. Squirrels, chipmunks, mice and numerous other rodents can be seen at anytime during the year on the island. Song birds of many species can be observed on and around the island during their appropriate seasons. Ducks, seagulls, and other waterfowl can be observed nesting and foraging for food on the island and in the shoal waters surrounding the island.

Reports indicated no specific knowledge of any interesting or unique wild flowers, shrubs, or herbs growing on the island

THE VICINITY:

The vicinity of the island is known as Strawberry Banke. The highlight of the historic and aesthetic area is known as Prescott Park.

Prescott Park presently consists of one open lawn with paths, waterfront bulkhead, parking lot, pier, warehouse, and museum on one segment of the property and bandshell, low gardens and marina on another segment of the property. It is separated by privately owned property.

Prescott Park is presently used by many quasi-public groups and organizations for historic events, shows, and pageantry, as well as nearby residents for free play and strolling. Future use could mean expanded programs sponsored by the Trustees and the City. The extent to which they are carried out is dependent upon the implemented scheduling. The additional activities could include lawn games, such as clock golf, lawn bowling, boccie and horseshoes for adults. Except for a small table games area, it is not suggested that extensive active activities be installed for teenagers, as it would destroy the park's character.

Prescott Park has been under consideration for improvement, but it does not have large areas for many activities. Though the residents in the area have limited access to other facilities, it has not been suggested that extensive redevelopment take place.

With the rate of development and the increase in population, Portsmouth will be needing more open space for recreational activities to serve the desires and needs of the people. With limited space within city limits, the city should consider the preservation of Pierce Island and Four Tree Island as an open space area, reserved for recreational activities. The city and the Trust could also look into the feasibility of extending the Four Tree Island development to Pierce Island south.

The General Plan, 1969, of Portsmouth, under the Policy Plan for Recreation, proposes the expansion of Pierce Island facilities and improvement of the existing facilities and for the island to be considered a community park.

Future Land Use Plans, 1973, Southeastern New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission, proposes that the island be considered open space for recreational use.

The Open Space Plan, Portsmouth, New Hampshire, proposes that Pierce Island be developed as a community park.

Waterfront development along the Piscataqua River, with development of boating facilities and marine oriented businesses would cater to the owners of small commercial craft and particularly to the Recreational boating enthusiasts. Pierce Island near the bridge could become an important boating center with a well-protected docking and anchorage facility. It is also close to many attractions that would bring people to the area. Strawberry Banke, Pierce Island, Four Tree Island, and the shopping and other downtown facilities would appeal to visiting yachtsman.

There is talk of development in the Great Bay Area, which has potential recreational, docking and boating facilities and fishing improvement. This development would definitely have an impact on Pierce Island as to whether or not it should stay as it is or develop its own resources. Studies and proposals have been made, now it is important for the city of Portsmouth to decide what to do with this ideally located recreational open space and historically oriented island. The accompanying proposal identifies a significant value to the use of Four Tree Island as a first step in improving the city's untapped waterfront attributes.

THE CITY:

The city of Portsmouth is attracting more industry and commercial businesses into the community will bring more people into the city. This will increase service demands. It will also put an increasing demand upon the public services provided by the community, in particular, the recreational services, activities, and facilities. As more people move into the city and surroundings the need for open space will increase. The development of the Central Business District in Portsmouth will also increase the number of people using the city. Strawberry Banke and Prescott Park and Four Tree Island and Pierce Island can provide for much of the needed open space. While people are shopping in the area, these open spaces can provide a rest from the congestion and noise of the city.

The southeast region is dependent on its commercial recreational facilities for a significant portion of its economic base. In the city of Portsmouth this includes the marinas, the parks, and especially Strawberry Banke, which is of historical significance. Four Tree and Pierce Island is accessible from Strawberry Banke by car or walking and draws people who are site-seeing. The slow scenic drive along Route 2-A, the many points of access to the ocean, and the hotels, motels, and restaurants, of the region are part of the commercial recreational picture. In 1960, for example, the seacoast developments in the coastal region produced a total income of \$15,000,000.00 from approximately 700,000 tourists.

Portsmouth depends largely on the year-round tourist and recreational trade which patronize their commercial establishments and offers a source of income. Strawberry Banke is a large district of great interest to tourists. Four Tree Island, Pierce Island and Prescott Park afford the tourists a chance to stop and rest, get out for a walk and stretch, and perhaps have a snack.

Portsmouth is rich in historical value, as it is one of the earliest settlements in New Hampshire. In colonial days, major dependence on water-borne commerce gave rise to numerous seaports along the New Hampshire coast. One of the most prominent areas was Portsmouth with its sizable and well protected harbor and its tributary region. Growth along the coast and tributary was centered in the central part of Portsmouth which is now called Strawberry Banke. This area, the south end, is of major historical interest as it contains over one hundred, eighteen structures that date back before 1825. Notable sites are Strawberry Banke, Prescott Park, the Langden House and the Wentworth Gardner House.

Pierce Island and Four Tree Island are historically noted because they have served the community for three hundred years. In April 1773, the militia prepared defenses on Pierce Island for the Revolutionary War.

The building of Fort Washington in the shape of a star with cannons aimed into the harbor, was done to ward off British ships. This star still remains in parts. Again in the War of 1812, the local defenses at Pierce Island scared off the British. Also, up until the time the Island was owned by the city of Portsmouth, trading of private ownership after the war was of historical interest.

With the distinctive history of the region, the early maritime traditions, the colonial buildings and aesthetics, this area is very rich in appeal to the tourist and those interested in history.

Population concentration is largest in the downtown area with fifty-three percent of the city population residing in the central section. Substantial and continued growth is still expected. The census for 1970 in Portsmouth was 19,737. By 1980 it is projected to be 21,000 and in the year 2,000, a population of 22,000 is expected. With Strawberry Banke, Prescott Park, Four Tree Island and Pierce Island in the vicinity of the central section, passive recreation is available to the population. The few active facilities can be used by the public to relieve themselves of the warm, muggy summer days. A relaxing walk or picnic is just a short walk from the central district.

The Four Tree Island and the Pierce Island is easily accessible by either road or by boat. New Hampshire Interstate 95 and Route U. S. 1, take care of the coastal traffic and Lafayette Road, while the Spaulding Turnpike takes traffic from the west and northwest directly into the center of Portsmouth and to Strawberry Banke leading to Pierce Island and Four Tree Island.

Portsmouth central district has the following categories to offer to the community:

1. Pleasant living conditions.
2. Recreational opportunities.
3. Availability of cultural and intellectual activities.
4. Well-suited with respect to its landscape and recreational environment.
5. Pleasure boating.
6. Historic buildings.
7. Attractions to local residents.
8. Profitable and growing tourist business.

FOREGROUND

Four Tree Island must be considered in the future as a component of the total waterfront development composed of Strawberry Banke, Prescott Park, and Pierce Island. The background analysis presents a picture of a very aesthetic historic and esoteric area. Any intrusion in the mix could affect the entire Waterfront. It is therefore by the consultants submitting this presentation that Four Tree Island be the next step in rounding off the waterfront complex for recreational, educational and historical use.

Four Tree Island, because of its' size, has limited development potential. The consultants analysis indicates that in sequence, the following uses should be established on the Island.

Causeway - The causeway connecting Pierce Island with Four Tree should be improved as a pedestrian walkway lined with boulders, graveled surfaced and wide enough for only a service or emergency vehicle. A bike-rack would be placed at the entrance to the cause to discourage bike riding.

Reception Plaza - The plaza would be an open sitting area on the axis of the Causeway. It could contain benches, flagpole, historical monument or market. An alcove might be set aside for a licensed portable vending unit to be placed on busy days. A drinking fountain would also be available.

Pathway - From the Reception Plaza, two Pathways would emanate to circle the perimeter of the Island. The pathway will have scattered benches.

Nautical Playground - A path will lead to a nautical playground in the theme of a lighthouse, boat, porpoises and other forms of play equipment with piers and logs.

Picnic Ground - Past the Playground, the perimeter path will lead to a Picnic ground which will contain approximately 34 tables in the two acres. This is based on the standard in the park field. Each table will contain a gravel pad, barbeque grill, ash can, garbage can and bolt down table. A 16 foot diameter pavillion will be located on the edge of the picnic ground. A chemical tank- Rest Room will be located in this pavillion.

Overlook - The perimeter path will lead to an overlook opposite Prescott Park. The overlook will contain bench areas and coin operated sightseeing scope. The path will then lead to the fishing wall.

Fishing Wall - The path will lead past a fishing wall which will have a leaning rail. This wall will be overlooking the key fishing spot in the channel. The pathway will then lead back to the plaza.

Marine Exploration Flat - The Flat will be for study and collection of shell fish and soils in the marine environment.

ESTIMATION-
CAPITAL COSTS

Causeway

Approach walk	\$1,000.00
Bikerack	300.00
Approach road barriers (R.R. ties or logs)	400.00
Sign	400.00

Reception Plaza

Walk (gravel)	1,000.00
Edging (stone or brick)	300.00
Marker or Monument	450.00

Pathway

Walk (gravel)	3,500.00
Rock Edging	1,200.00
Benches (timber/10)	3,000.00

Nautical Playground

Apparatus (10 units)	8,000.00
Boat	400.00
Rock piles	1,000.00
Pilings -outside	2,000.00
R.R. tie dividers	2,000.00
Sand	600.00
Grit Gravel	300.00

Picnic Ground

Tables (34) @700.	22,800.00
Gravel Pad	1,700.00
Barbeque grill (34)	13,600.00
Ash Cans (34)	6,800.00

(Continued)

Garbage Cans	3,400.00
Pavillion 200	4,000.00
Rest Rooms (chemical units)	4,000.00

Overlook

Benches (4)	1,600.00
Scope (2)	2,000.00

Fishing Wall

Bulkhead	3,000.00
Deck	2,000.00

<u>Marine Flat</u>	500.00
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\$91,250.00

TOTAL