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March 4, 2025

Andy Kitzmann  
Executive Director, Hudson River Valley Greenway  
Director, Maurice D. Hinchey Hudson River Valley National Heritage  
Area Andy\_kitzmann@nps.gov  
Via Email

**Request for Inclusion of Downing Park to National Heritage Area**

Dear Andy Kitzmann,

As outlined more fully in the attached, we request inclusion of Downing Park in the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area.

From September 13- 15, 2024, the Olmsted Network and hundreds of friends from across the country were delighted to visit Newburgh as part of our national conference— [Landscapes of Renewal: Olmsted, Vaux, and Downing](#). Our day in Newburgh included talks, music, guided tours of the park and a dinner cruise along the Hudson River, giving us an appreciation of what the city has to offer to both its citizens and visitors. There was nature and history abound, and it was amazing to experience so many of America's 19<sup>th</sup> century iconic landscapes and buildings after only knowing them from books and photographs.

Much to our surprise, despite its national significance, Downing Park has yet to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the list of our country's most important historic properties. We also note that Downing Park is not included in the Hudson River Valley National Historic Area. Accordingly, we write to request that it be added to the Maurice D. Hinchey Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area.

As requested, we are attaching the completed form for your consideration.

We and our friends from across the continent believe that designation of Downing Park to the Hudson River Valley Heritage Area would go far to enhance the public's understanding and appreciation of the park's role in the history of the Hudson Valley and the country.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Philip Schultz & William Bell  
Board Chairs,  
Olmsted Network

**PARKS, PLACES & PEOPLE**

Kathleen Stradar  
Newburgh, NY

Susan Chernek  
Newburgh, NY

Frederick Wells  
Hopewell Junction, NY

Carrie O'Leary  
Washingtonville, NY

Alex Watson  
Newburgh, NY

Fenella and Morrison Heckscher  
Newburgh, NY

Downing Park has several aspects of significant National Heritage: Andrew Jackson Downing as the founder of a national horticulture movement being honored in this park; The final Olmsted park of the partnership, Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux as creators of this park and joined with their sons—the only Olmsted park with two generations. Historic recognition will support this park and in turn support Newburgh. Thank you.

Christopher McKeown  
Central Valley, NY

Johanna Porr  
Newburgh, NY

Naomi Hersson-Ringskog  
Newburgh, NY

Valerie Korzec  
New York, NY

Marcy Wagman  
Wappingers Falls, NY

Christine Dominguez  
Shandaken, NY

Yes, I agree that Downing Park in Newburgh, NY, ought to be included in the nearby heritage area.

Danielle Banta  
Poughkeepsie, NY

Alexandra Panarese  
Milton, MA

Chloe Vital  
Newburgh, NY

#### **PARKS, PLACES & PEOPLE**



Jane K Glazman  
Warwick, NY

E. Mary McGowan  
Poughkeepsie, NY

Carol Bayer  
Naples, FL

Dominic Cordisco  
Cornwall on Hudson, NY  
Downing Park is an incredible resource that should be protected and preserved to the greatest extent possible - for current and future generations.

Kathleen Scherer  
Pawling, NY  
The perfect addition to the Hudson River Valley National Heritage

Susan Gillinder  
Port Jervis, NY

Maryalice Hartshorn  
Rhinebeck, NY  
Downing Park deserves to be included in the Maurice D. Hinchey River National Heritage Site due to its incomparable history and its support of its surrounding community. It is a jewel.

Steven Fabrizio  
NY  
Needs to be preserved!!!!!!

Sarah Peacock  
Poughkeepsie, NY

Sheila Melville  
Hyde Park, NY  
Yes I agree. Downing Park, Newburgh, NY, should be included in the nearby heritage area.  
Serene Swirbul  
Tuxedo Park, NY

Stacey Hawkins  
Wallkill, NY  
Such an important park. Let's do all we can to protect it!

Barry Breeman  
Tuxedo Park, NY

#### **PARKS, PLACES & PEOPLE**

Art Korzec  
New York, NY  
Please make this lovely park a part of our heritage.

Doris Haas  
Wappingers Falls, NY

Nancy Rubsam  
Poughkeepsie, NY  
Thank you, Pam, for spearheading this splendid effort.

Susan Maloney  
Georgetown, SC  
I am a former Newburgh resident and a member of the Garden Club of Orange & Dutchess Counties. Although I live in S. Carolina, I remain involved with the garden club & Downing Park.

Linda Onofry  
Port Jervis, NY

Nanette-Alixis Mendez Hull  
Warwick, NY

Nancy Rider  
Newburgh, NY

Tim Mullally  
NY

Christine Baumann  
Highland Mills

Beth Devine  
Wappingers Falls, NY

Susan Macheska  
Pine Brook, NJ

Beth Devine  
Wappingers Falls, NY

Michael Acedansky  
West Orange, NJ

Jane Gyulavary  
South Windsor, CT  
Great cause!

Jenna Field  
Warwick, NY

#### **PARKS, PLACES & PEOPLE**



Susanne Williams  
Tuxedo Park, NY

Frances Schuster  
New Paltz, NY

Elizabeth Allen  
Pawling, NY

Kevindaryan Lujan  
Newburgh, NY

Jeannette Ross  
Newburgh, NY

Ryan Rosa  
Newburgh, NY

Downing Park deserves National Heritage status without question! More than just a local landmark in Newburgh, this park is a vital piece of American history and a tribute to Andrew Jackson Downing, a local Newburgh legend, and one of the founders of American landscape architecture. Designed as a memorial to Downing, it was the final project of his legendary mentees, Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux—the visionaries behind Central Park and Prospect Park. Beyond its historical significance, Downing Park remains the heart of Newburgh, offering beauty, community, and a bright spot for residents and visitors alike. Recognizing it as a National Heritage site will honor its legacy and ensure its preservation for future generations.

Harrison Lawrence  
Newburgh, NY

Mike Noble  
NY

Anecia Jefferson  
Newburgh, NY

Stephanie Conte  
Marlboro, NY

Jessica Williams  
Newburgh, NY

Steven Baltsas  
New Windsor, NY

Jennifer Gervasi  
Palm Beach Gardens  
Please make Downing Park a National Heritage Site.

#### **PARKS, PLACES & PEOPLE**

Kenneth Caruso  
New Windsor, NY

Danielle Bonanno  
Newburgh, NY  
Protect and fund our parks!

Spencer Tunnell  
Atlanta, GA  
This park is of NATIONAL importance and should be treasured and restored to the extent possible. The last thing this park needs is a cemetery in it.

Christopher Manzione  
Newburgh, NY

Jennifer Goldfrank  
Newburgh, NY  
Yes! Definitely! This park is a gem!

Julia Raskin  
Newburgh, NY  
Downing park is of great historical significance to Newburgh and the region, and should be preserved as such. Thank you for this effort!

Marianne Marichal  
Newburgh, NY  
As a Downing Park Conservancy board member, I would like to ask that you consider the historic significance that Downing Park would add if it were to be recognized as part of the Maurice D. Hinchey Hudson River Valley National Heritage. Thank you for this consideration.

William Bell  
New York, NY  
It is incredibly important that this Olmsted/Vaux creation to honor their mentor and Newburgh resident Andrew Jackson Downing, a true pioneer in creating urban parks and open spaces for all people, be preserved. It is irreplaceable.

Lisa Murray-Roselli  
Buffalo, NY

Esley Hamilton  
St Louis, MO

Mary Elin Korchinsky  
Newburgh, NY

Paris Roselli  
Buffalo, NY  
These green spaces provide meaningful benefits to the community and should be actively managed and preserved.

#### **PARKS, PLACES & PEOPLE**



Arleyn Levee

Watertown, MA

Downing Park is unique in that as a memorial tribute to an American horticultural pioneer, it represents the design work of both FLO and his then partner, Calvert Vaux, with an expansion of the original park by their sons, John Charles Olmsted and Downing Vaux. Beyond this important design inheritance, there is a great still to be discovered about the cultural significance of this site and its place in this historical and richly diverse city.

Karen McCarthy

Newburgh, NY

Loïc MASSIAS

Paris, France

Colleen Fogarty

Newburgh, NY

Downing Park has roots that spread to people across this country who have enjoyed and loved this picturesque sanctuary which offers a respite for a present city of immigrants and minorities. Downing Park is deserving of inclusion in Hudson River Valley National Heritage.

Rosemarie Murane

Denver, CO

Downing Park is one of Newburgh's greatest assets and should be preserved for its historical importance. It's ties to Andrew Jackson Downing and design by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux make it one of New York's treasures.

Thomas Elmore

Suffield, CT

Mary McTamaney

Newburgh, NY

I am the Newburgh City Historian and quite ashamed that our beautiful central park was never registered as the special place that it is. We all just assumed its status since we knew it to be so beautiful and historic. This designation will help right that oversight. And, please don't forget Andrew's brother, Charles Downing too. The city did open the park in 1897 to honor both brothers, the landscape architect and the horticulturist who continued to make Newburgh a center of botanical research and pride.

Joan Paese

Newburgh, NY

Yes I agree, Downing park, needs to be included in the Hinchey Hudson River Valley National Heritage.

Marjorie Greville

Boston, MA

Urban parks are a very important cultural heritage and need to be protected.

Patricia Phillips

Newburgh, NY

#### **PARKS, PLACES & PEOPLE**

Sounds very exciting and collaborative.

Karen Smythe  
Red Hook, NY

As President of the Garden Club of Orange & Dutchess Counties, I strongly support this effort to include Downing Park in the Maurice D. Hinchey Hudson River Valley National Heritage. It's both an historic landscape and a vital public space for the City of Newburgh.

Jo Hull  
Warwick, NY

Kathleen Stradar  
NY  
I support this initiative.

Douglas Tawse  
Newburgh, NY  
A treasure that should be preserved as the healthy open space intended by Olmsted and Vaux. A resource that supports the physical and mental well being of those who visit it. Every inch should be kept pristine and allow nature to dominate without the intrusion of traffic.

Amanda Potter  
Poughkeepsie, NY

Linda Tawse  
Newburgh, NY  
A lovely park and a wonderful asset for the surrounding community. Please preserve for the joy and safety of the children I often see running through its landscape.

Elinor Hart  
Campbell Hall, NY  
Please help protect and preserve Downing Park.

Steve Livengood  
Washington, DC  
This historic park is needed as originally intended -- a place for everyone -- and not as a parking lot for a few people.

Joanne Lukacher  
Poughkeepsie, NY

Martine Najork  
Newburgh, NY  
Thank you for supporting Newburgh's Downing Park!

Wendy Carroll  
Chatham, NY

Jill Rowe  
Newburgh, NY

#### **PARKS, PLACES & PEOPLE**





Please help us preserve this beautiful and much needed park in our city!

Elizabeth Heldt  
Cornwall on Hudson, NY

Ann Harrell  
Cornwall on Hudson, NY  
Downing Park is not just a Newburgh treasure, but a state and national treasure as it was the last effort by Olmsted and Vaud. It needs continued support and protection as we move ahead as a community.

Elizabeth Stradar  
Newburgh, NY

Dede Petri  
Fond du Lac, WI

Kathleen Stradar  
Newburgh, NY

Susan Christensen  
Highland Mills, NY  
I fully support this initiative!

Victoria Vanhuss  
Atlanta, GA

Leslie Jacobs  
South Haven, MN

Philip Bean  
Utica, NY  
We wholeheartedly support all efforts to restore Newburgh's historic Downing Park, a significant part of our state and national Olmsted heritage.

Pamela Breeman  
Tuxedo Park, NY  
I wholeheartedly support this effort. This is not just ANY OLD park, it is exceptional and special. We are so grateful to the Olmsted Network for all they have done and are doing to support Downing Park. Thank you!

Patricia Phillips  
Excited about perpetuating this significant work.

Lucy Lawliss  
An important city and park to include in the National Heritage Area.

#### **PARKS, PLACES & PEOPLE**

Mark Roessler  
Northampton, MA

Carolyn Newman  
NY

Michele Lindsay  
Tuxedo Park, NY

I believe this designation of Downing Park will lead to greater awareness of the importance of this beautifully designed public park and more public use and enjoyment of this treasure. As a Member of the Garden Club of Orange and Dutchess Counties, I have participated with community members in planting bulbs and other activities celebrating Downing Park.

Francis Kowsky  
Buffalo, NY

Time and neglect have brought changes to the Downing Park landscape that the Olmsted and Vauxes knew. Many in the community wish to see it returned to its original vision and condition. The present park is a valued recreational asset for Newburgh's diverse population.

Nancy Layne  
Newburgh, NY

Mary Pelletier  
Hartford, CT

Downing Park succinctly integrates unique features of nature into the urban context. This charming neighborhood park deserves in the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area. All too often conservation of natural heritage has been allocated to places far from the urban context. However, Downing, Olmsted and Vaux and their peers envisioned access to nature within the daily life of a city. The Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area will be of greater substance and significance through the inclusion of Downing Park.

Jennifer L. Thomas  
Blacksburg, VA

As someone who has researched and written about the history of New York State institutional landscapes, I heartily support the effort to list Downing Park on the National Hudson River Valley National Heritage area. Andrew Jackson Downing was an important historical figure that significantly influenced landscape design, horticulture, and architecture in New York State (and well beyond) during the 19th century. He resided and worked in Newburgh and this park is part of that critical history.

Alison Filosa  
Newburgh, NY

Davis Winslow  
Newburgh, NY

Laura Degolier

After traveling up the entire Hudson River Corridor last September, it is clear that Downing Park is a significant reminder to people of the area of the contributions that Downing made to the parks movement. Please include this park in the Heritage area.

Yvonne Laube

This important landscape is an integral part of Newburgh's landscape and history. It deserves to be included.

#### **PARKS, PLACES & PEOPLE**



Lori Adams

Hopewell Junction, NY

This is an incredible park, for the design and for the trees and for the walkways and the openness that it brings to the community. It is a treasure that, if preserved, will be an asset for generations. Thank you.

**PARKS, PLACES & PEOPLE**

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