



The Central Park project discovers the existence of the plan of New York City embedded within the plan of Central Park.

The designer of Central Park, Fredrick Law Olmstead, deplored the non-design approach of placing a rational grid over the natural island of Manhattan in order to design a city. In his writings, he implies that he would have preferred that the design of New York be more like that of a romantic “European continental city.” In observing the plan of Central Park, one can see that he used the existing road structure of New York as an underlying order for his design of Central Park. One concludes that he designed what he imagined to be the ideal romantic plan for New York City.

One might consider the Park to be a city clothed in foliage, rather than the stone, concrete, glass, and steel forms of traditional cityscapes. The model is a reconstruction of the city implied by the existing plan of Central Park. The paths and roads become streets in a dense urban fabric. The architectural structures (the Grand Promenade, the Mall, Bethesda Fountain, the Bowling Green, etc.) become boulevards and piazzas held within the myriad of streets. One begins to perceive the plan of a medieval city. The twentieth century mind observes the cityscape of New York’s imagined history in the romantically idealized plan.



