Just a Little Love, a Little Care: Architecture

By ADA LOUISE HÚXTABLE

New York Times (1923-Current file); Dec 9, 1973; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times

Architecture

Just a Little Love, a Little Care

By ADA LOUISE HUXTABLE

confection. put up at Columbus Circle as a shelter for passengers

and also of the park's other quisitely detailed ornament and omnipresent fluttering pennants. Most of them have been gone from the park for a long time.

The Ladies' Pavilion can now be seen at 75th Street, on the west side of the lake, in a reconstruction, or reincarnation if you will. The ornate iron supports with gilded touches, the heavily bracketed roof with overhanging eaves, and the lacy ridge are carefully repro-f duced. There are no fluttering pennants. One wonders if they actually flew on opening day in 1871, or thereafter.

In 1912-13, the Ladies' Pavilion was moved to its present site, the Hermshead, a land protrusion on the west lake. From that point on, it suffered the fate of most original park structures neglect and deterioration. Some of them were replaced buildings in Robert Moses's brick-and-tile lavatory style.

By 1969, there had been enough of an outcry from park groups and preservationby Adams and Woodbridge.

preservationists, the park's almost ludicrously routine. friends and the city decided

N 1871, the Ladies' Pavil- cast and hand-forged iron The costs for repairing this stand either the nature or the heavily used, and is currently ion, a 9 by 15 foot cast with some original pieces. 90-foot ornamental iron span problems of the park. First, disrupted by subway and wrought iron Vic- The ironwork alone took nine are \$327,500.

was months to produce.

as Except for the metal, the ern on the Green, originally restoration program becomes elsewhere.

— rest of the work was done the Sheepfold, has been taken a joint matter of civil engi- It was, presumably ladies - waiting by Parks Department crafts-over by Warner LeRoy of neering and landscape resto-Harry for horse cars. It was built men under Joseph Bresnan, Maxwell's Plum. Mr. LeRoy ration. from the design of Calvert director of Monuments and has suggested that it is an Vaux, who was responsible Restoration. Because the ugly building, which it is not; system, designed and in-retouched glamour photo ads for many of the buildings and Parks people did so much, it is a handsome Vaux structures of Central the outside costs came to turn much tompored with analysis. small structures of Central the outside costs came to ture, much tampered with analyzed and overhauled; Central Park South, that Park, working in collabora- only \$21,000. If a contractor that deserves more respect erosion, forestation, preser-kicked the long-simmering tion with Frederick Law Olmsted, the park's creator.

Those who have seen the building, remember, is a ersatz Victorian, so popular clearing of silted lakes and Mr. Helmsley \$300,000, but original watercolor drawings small, 9 by 15 foot open with restaurateurs, would ponds, as well as repair of it became evident that much of such designs by Mr. Vaux, structure.

There is a moral of course be because the building original watercolor of \$200,000 from the Astor There is a moral, of course be hoped that the building orities.

19th - century architectural A little care, a little appre-will not become a Jolly embellishments by J. Wrey ciation, some proper evalua-Green Tulip. Mould, have been enchanted tion of the worth of the But there is more planned and Cultural Affairs Admin-started, and the civil engiby their delicate washes, ex- park's ornamental landmarks, for Central Park, and that is istrator Richard M. Clurman, neering firm of Praeger, Kav-

Reconstructed ladies' pavilion in Central Park For want of a nail . . .

The Bow Bridge, 114 years due. on reconstruction. The old old and in very sad condition, If anyone thinks for a mincoping stones and steps were is being restored after years ute that this is a matter of would rehabilitate the area both counts. It is an intrinsic used. The restored metalwork of inattention. Its benefactors restoring a few plants and south of the 65th Street part of Central Park, the finit required 500 cast parts are Mrs. Lila Acheson Wal-topsoil and shoring up some transverse, which is the most est bit of environmental deis a combination of new lace and Mrs. Henry Moses gazebos, they fail to under-artificial area and the most sign to grace New York.

ists for the city to undertake a modicum of maintenance very good news indeed. The is expected to take 10 years letter from Mrs. Eric Valde restoration plans for the Pa- over the years, would have Parks Department has finally and to be done in five stages, mar Larsen shows an even vilion. Funds for architectural been much cheaper. More im- undertaken a total rehabili- at a currently estimated cost greater concern than usual studies were contributed by portant, the original struc-tation study and is develop- of \$55-million. The project is That is not surprising, since the Greensward Foundation ture, not a copy, would be ing a master plan for the under the supervision of Dep-Mrs. Larsen's great grand-

The structure was in bad to the Ballplayers' House — and the plan can be seen at

while. In 1971 it was totally make these copies at astro- has been attempted since the tenance that can handle "highly colored," and that nomic prices, when we real-1920's, when the wear and heavy use, vandalism and the building she cares so All that was left was to ize what we've lost. It is an tear had become alarming, staffing problems, and to ar- much about might not be bury it, or start all over. The ironic procedure, becoming The work was then, and is rive at activity patterns com-"architecturally

shape but, unlike so many neglect, decay, vandalism the Metropolitan Museum fold: to bring the park back erations of her family lived other casualties, at least it and, in addition, fire — and through January 1.

was still there. Or was for a that, too, is to be reduit. We Incredibly, nothing like this to develop a system of main-view of the place may be again now, desperately over- patible with rehabilitation cally" notable. and maintenance.

Central Park is not natural; struction. It would also take Another structure, the Tav- it is entirely manmade. Any care of spot emergencies

> It was, Helmsley's desire to desilt the duck pond, which The park's entire drainage serves as foreground in the and overhauled; Central Park South, that

> of \$200,000 from the Astor The program, announced Foundation, matched by city this fall by Parks, Recreation funds, got the over-all studies anagh, Waterbury was hireds The first phase research was completed last August.

The second phase will deal with the section north of the 100th Street cross drive. New housing in the area will increase recreational park use uptown. The three remaining phases will cover the east and west central sections, divarious vided into zones.

"We have a grasp now of what the major problems are," Mr. Post says, "but not necessarily of the solutions. We have to match Olmsted's ideas against the things he did not have to cope with."

But Olmsted had to cope with a great deal. The park has always been popular. There were 10 million visitors a year in the 1860's when it was new. The figure is 15, million a year now, with 100,000 on a fine weekend day in season. In the 1870's; the use was as heavy as it is today and, even then, Olmsted's carefully planned horticulture was threatened.

Many people are concerned about Central Park. A recent and the drawings were done there. For want of a nail, etc. park's restoration and care, uty Administrator Herschel father, James Conway, was by Adams and Woodbridge. The same thing happened An exhibition on the park Post. the first shepherd-keeper of The objectives are three- the Sheepfold and three gento standard through repairs, there. She worries that her

We hasten to assure her The first phase of the plan that it is indeed notable on-