SOCRATES SCULPTURE PARK

LANDSCAPE STUDY

Inventory, Analysis, and Recommendations

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PREPARED FOR
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INTRODUCTION

Socrates Sculpture Park, located at Hallett's Cove on the East River, adds to the legacy of great waterfront spaces in New York City. This 4.5 acre park is a cultural and recreational resource for the surrounding Queens neighborhoods of Astoria and Long Island City, as well as for visitors from the rest of the city and country. The park provides an opportunity for visitors to view large scale sculpture specifically conceived for this unique site.

This study, sponsored by the New York State Council on the Arts, was undertaken to provide a basis for future landscape planning and design at Socrates Park. The park's history and current conditions have been documented in this report for the purpose of establishing appropriate priorities and guidelines.

The study contains two sections. The first is a report covering the history of the site and park, an inventory and analysis of existing conditions, and a user survey. The second section outlines specific guidelines and recommendations formulated to direct the planning efforts at Socrates Park, including a preliminary design based on the recommendations outlined.

Socrates Park is a testament to the vision of Mark di Suvero, the Athena Foundation, and the City of New York, whose combined efforts have converted a former dumping
ground into a valued urban and community resource. The goal of this study is to aid the Foundation in its effort to develop Socrates Park to its fullest potential by providing information and assistance in the continued evolution of the park. In addition, the report is intended to increase public awareness and interest in Socrates Park, thereby insuring support for its continued existence.
SITE HISTORY

Socrates Park is located in the Borough of Queens at Hallett's Cove, opposite the northernmost point of Roosevelt Island. (Fig. 1) Since colonial times, the site has been used primarily for industrial and commercial purposes relating to its waterfront location. The site's history traces the growth of Astoria from a farming to an industrial and urban residential community.

Prior to colonial settlement, Sunswick Creek fed into the East River at present-day Socrates Park (Fig. 2), draining a large swampy meadow inland to the southeast of

Fig. 1, Aerial View of Socrates Park
the site. The existence of this wetland, and the regulation and manipulation of its point of outflow significantly impacted the development of this portion of Queens in terms of neighborhood locations and boundaries.

Colonist occupation of the area began in 1652 when William Hallett, an Englishman, received 160 acres of land from Peter Stuyvesant including the park site and land north and east of the park site. After an Indian raid, William Hallett withdrew and then returned a decade later to secure Indian recognition, buying a 2,200 acre tract of land from Chief Mattano Sachem of the Staten Island and Noyack Indians. William Hallett's descendants remained and continued to farm on portions of the increasingly divided property until the mid-nineteenth century.
In approximately 1679, William Hallett, after whom Hallett's Cove is named, and his sons built a dam across the mouth of Sunswick Creek in order to check the flow of salt water into the meadows and reclaim the land for cultivation. This dam, built on the site of present-day Socrates Park was maintained in some form for a period of close to 200 years. (Fig. 3)

Fig. 3, 1873 Area Map

In the early 18th Century, a tidal mill was built over the dam by a farmer named Suydam. A large pond fed by
sluices in the dam which admitted water at high tide and released water at low tide provided water for the mill. Suydam ground corn and grain for villagers at the mill, which survived in some form until 1876.

As the New York area became more populated, improvements in transportation for this waterfront area followed. The first regular ferry service from this area to Manhattan began in 1782 to accommodate traffic generated by Revolutionary War activities. To serve ferry users, a tavern was established on the bank above the mouth of Sunswick Creek above Suydam's mill. The tavern later became the Sunswick Hotel, owned by William Green. The building survived into the twentieth century, appearing on a map from 1948. (Fig. 4A, 9).

Fig. 4, 1873 Area Map
The first organized community in the area was begun by Stephen Halsey who settled the area in 1835, and shortly thereafter founded and incorporated the village of Astoria to the north and east of the Socrates Park site. (Fig. 4B)

Fig. 5, 1858 Area Map

Halsey initiated the 'Ravenswood, Hallett's Cove and Williamsburgh Turnpike and Bridge Co.' providing a toll road which for the first time accommodated overland travel between the waterfronts of Queens and Brooklyn.

The turnpike (Fig. 5A) came into the public domain in 1868 and has been renamed Vernon Boulevard. Broadway was
built in 1860, following the route of a colonial road that once led inland from the river. (Fig. 5B) At Broadway, the turnpike dropped into the wetland meadows and crossed Sunswick Creek on a short causeway over the tidal dam, creating dangerous conditions for travelers particularly during high-tide periods.

In the mid-nineteenth century, Astoria was primarily a residential town with some industry. While the central portion of the town north of present day Socrates Park was flourishing, the southern end of the village remained mostly undeveloped due to its low-lying conditions. Ravenswood, the coastal area to the south of the park site was separated from inland areas by the marshlands and became an exclusive residential area with a waterfront promenade. (Fig. 5)

After the incorporation of Ravenswood and Astoria into Long Island City, this residential community at Ravenswood declined, and industry and a less affluent population began to move up into the area. Meanwhile, pollution from industry and the damming of Sunswick Creek caused the meadowlands to become stagnant and mosquito-filled resulting in widespread illness. The newly incorporated city began to drain marshes by digging ditches, but problems prevailed due to runoff and pollution from an increasing rate of development.

Events of the early twentieth century significant to the area include: the establishment of Astoria and Rainey
Parks to meet the needs of an increasing population and decreasing open space; the completion of the Queensboro Bridge in 1909, and the opening of the Penn Tunnels in 1910 to rail travel. The last two projects led to a rapid decline in ferry use and an acceleration in the development of Long Island City which included the extensive task of filling in marshlands as a result of increasing demand for land.

Specific developments occurring adjacent to the park site include the first mail-order seed business located immediately north of the site, established in the 1830's and run by Grant Thorburn. After his death in 1863, the gardens were replaced by factories and housing. On the northeast corner of Vernon Boulevard and Broadway lay the Field estate, built in the late 18th century. In the mid-nineteenth century, the property was taken over by the Strang brothers who operated a small sawmill. The structure survived into the 1930's. (Fig. 4C, Fig. 6) North of the site, the Sohmer Piano Factory (now the Adirondack Chair Company) was built in the 1870's. The factory was one of the earliest high-rise industrial structures in the area and remains one of the largest buildings in the immediate vicinity. Its imposing mass and Victorian tower create a striking backdrop for the site.

As can be seen by examining maps for a period of over a hundred years, the configuration of the Socrates Park site
Fig. 6, Field-Strang House

has changed as changes occurred in the use of the land and waterfront. Prior to 1919, the natural land form of the site is still discernible, with the mouth of Sunswick Creek remaining in evidence. (Fig. 7) By examining later maps, it becomes apparent that much of the present land mass is man-made.

In 1915, the Queensboro Chamber of Commerce began a campaign to encourage a Commission appointed by the State of New York to locate potential sites for barge canal terminals. Three waterfront sites were acquired by the State, including the Socrates Park site. The Terminal was built in 1920, and included a bulkhead consisting of a wooden pile relieving platform supported by a concrete
gravity wall surrounding a slip of over 400 feet in depth. (Fig. 8, Appendix - Historical Survey) The State turned the property over to the City in 1944.

The Terminal site was leased by the Colonial Sand and Stone Co. for at least thirty years. Placement of
Fig. 8, 1928 Area Map

Fig. 9, 1948 Site Survey
structures constructed by the Company can be seen on a map of the site from 1948. (Fig. 9)

In 1958, 127 feet of the bulkhead wall collapsed and fell into the slip due to overloading of crushed stone aggregate. The Colonial Sand and Stone Company was directed by the Department of Ports and Terminals to dredge the slip and rebuild the bulkhead at a cost of approximately $120,000.

In 1961, a small tanker terminal was planned but never built immediately adjacent to the site, to the south of the park on the Thypin Steel Company property. The proposal included a mooring barge to be extended 188 feet into the river on hinged steel booms so that it could be folded back against the bulkhead when not in use. (Fig. 10)
In the 1970's, the slip at the park site was filled in, resulting in the present configuration of the site. Landfill material consisted mostly of excavation material from the construction of the 63rd Street subway tunnel. The most obvious remnant of the Terminal is the partially submerged wooden barge, still visible at the water's edge. (Fig. 11)

Fig. 11, Partially submerged wooden barge
Socrates Park was established and is now administered by the Athena Foundation, a not-for-profit organization. The Foundation was established in 1977 by Anita Contini, an administrator of art programs, and Mark di Suvero, one of the leading figures in contemporary sculpture. In 1980, di Suvero acquired two large sheds on the Astoria waterfront (formerly an iron foundry and brick manufacturing facility) just north of the park. There he established the Spacetime Construct Studio and also set up his own studio and residence. In addition to its work at Socrates Park, the Athena Foundation has awarded studio space and materials to artists at the Spacetime Studio. Richard Bellamy has since relocated his well-known Oil and Steel Gallery from lower Manhattan into the other shed. These sheds as well as the overhead gantry cranes, once used to haul bricks from boats, are visible from the Park. (Fig. 12)
The intention of the Athena Foundation in establishing Socrates Park was to allow for construction and exhibition of large sculptures in an outdoor setting with free public access. The Foundation provides technical and financial assistance and exhibition space enabling less-established and on occasion better-known sculptors to produce and exhibit works on a temporary basis. The type of artwork seen at Socrates Park could neither be executed nor properly exhibited in a more traditional studio and gallery setting. The public also has the unique opportunity to witness the creation of the artwork as an ongoing event. (Fig. 13)

Fig. 13, "Songs of Love and Hate", a stone and wood sculpture by Ilan Averbuck in progress
Fig. 14, Neighborhood residents building Socrates Park

Another principle commitment of the Athena Foundation has been to involve the local community in Socrates Park by employing and training neighborhood residents (particularly from neighboring low-income projects). Their participation in the building and maintaining of the Park not only provides employment, but also inspires pride and a greater sense of control and involvement in park affairs. (Fig. 14) According to William H. Cook, Queens Borough Park Commissioner, there is less vandalism in Socrates Park than in other neighboring city parks. He attributes this to the fact that Socrates Park directly involves the community in
building and maintaining the park.

In July 1985, the Board of Estimate granted a five-year lease to the Athena Foundation at a rate of $1 per year for the 4.5 acres of land that the park now occupies, from the New York City Department of Ports and Terminals. As part of the agreement, the Foundation committed itself to clear, grade, and landscape the site, provide a walkway and railing at the water's edge, install sculpture, and erect a sign. At the time the lease was granted, the park was underwritten by the Athena Foundation for $400,000. Contributions have come from local businesses (in the form of money and materials) and other sources, in addition to contributions directly from the Foundation. The agreement was enthusiastically supported by Mayor Koch, who said in a press release of July 18, 1985: "The Socrates Sculpture Space will have something for everyone. It will transform a vacant lot into a cultural facility, improve the waterfront and create an opportunity for artists and young people to work and learn together."

Studies for a master plan for Socrates Park have been undertaken by a number of artists and architects. Mark di Suvero's site plan indicates a series of plazas connected by radiating walkways. Sculpture sites are scattered throughout the park and floating piers extend out from the site into the East River. (Fig. 15)
A plan by artist Meg Webster features a grass oval surrounded by smaller, more informal spaces, a mounded knoll, a pond, and gardening plots. A main entrance would be located at the end of Broadway. (Fig. 16)

For the proposal submitted by the Athena Foundation to the City in 1985, design consultants N. Paul Frishman and Edward J. Potokar produced a plan consisting of large circular exhibition spaces with connecting paths. (Fig. 17)
In 1986, the Foundation published a catalogue of ten solutions for the design of the park produced by students of the Urban Landscape Architecture Program at the City College of New York, under the direction of M. Paul Friedberg. Each solution was based on a specific theme of their choosing: communion, sanctuary, incidence, transitory, theater, interaction, opportunities, quietness, screening, and gateway.

The Socrates Park 'Inaugural Exhibition' opened in September, 1986, followed by 'Sculpture: Walk On/Sit Down/Go Through' in May, 1987 (a collection of participatory sculpture created specifically for the site). 'Artists Choose Artists', a show exhibiting work of artists selected by artists who had exhibited work in previous shows opened in October, 1988. In addition to exhibition openings, music, dance and theater events are programmed for the park and have been well attended both by local residents and a wider audience from the metropolitan area. In the spring of 1988, Socrates Sculpture Park presented 'Sculptors Working', an event that included, in addition to new sculpture, double-dutch jump rope, theater and music performances. This was followed in July, 1988 by 'Socrates Live', a festival of dance, theater and music.

Socrates Park has received recognition and praise in the press, ranging from arts publications (including a cover story in Sculpture Magazine) to major regional publications,
to more local publications such as *The Western Queens Gazette* which has closely followed the Park's developments. In 1987, *The New York Times* said that, "The most heartening sculpture development this year is the emergence of the Socrates Sculpture Park in Long Island City."

The Athena Foundation has received a number of prestigious awards for its work at Socrates Park, the first being from the Art Commission of the City of New York for Excellence in Design, presented in 1985. In 1987, The Doris G. Freedman Award for "contributions to the people of the City of New York that greatly enrich the public environment" was presented to Mark di Suvero by Mayor Koch. More recently, the City Club of New York bestowed their Albert S. Bard Award for Excellence in Architecture and Urban Design on Socrates Park along with nine other projects. Socrates Park was the only open space represented among the award winners.

Socrates Park is considered to be part of both West Astoria and Long Island City. The area immediately surrounding the park is primarily light industrial, interspersed with low-rise housing. Moving inland, housing becomes predominant along with mostly small shops serving local residents. To the north of the park, at the opposite end of Hallett's Cove, are the Astoria Houses, a low-income project, from which many of the workers employed at the park are recruited. Southeast of the park is a high-rise, middle-income co-op development and further south are
more projects. Astoria is known for its ethnic diversity, which includes a significant Greek population in addition to Italian, Hispanic, Black and Jewish groups.

In recent years, Long Island City has become recognized as an emerging art community, with artists moving across the river to take advantage of more abundant and affordable loft spaces and the availability of raw material found in the neighborhood. Long Island City is now the home of several significant art institutions. The Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum, located a block away from Socrates Park, brings many visitors to this portion of Long Island City who take advantage of the proximity of these two resources. P.S.1, located south of the Queensboro Bridge, was established in 1976 and functions as a museum and active studio space, and Creative Time's Art on the Beach has relocated from lower Manhattan to nearby Hunter's Point.
EXISTING CONDITIONS

Over the past four years, Socrates Park has been transformed from an abandoned lot to its present park-like setting. This transformation has been achieved through volunteer help, donated materials, and limited funds. The site improvements reflect the tight budget; amenities are few and what has been constructed is often temporary in nature, giving the park a casual character.
Site Description

The 4.5 acre site is located at the foot of Broadway along Vernon Boulevard, north of 31st Avenue. The park is bordered by the East River on the west, Vernon Boulevard on the east, an empty lot to the north, and industrial buildings to the south.

Along the water's edge runs a rusted steel guardrail approximately 40 inches in height. (Fig. 18) The subtle changes in grade along the river's edge accounts for the slight variations of height along the horizontal rail. This guardrail serves to satisfy code requirements and has an industrial character.

The bank is steep down to the river which is approximately eight feet below the top of the slope. The slope is covered by grasses, large rocks painted in
bright colors, and the remains of the abandoned pier. There is limited vegetation and there is no convenient access to the water from the park above. (Fig. 19)

Fig. 19

The 6'-6" fence between the park and the Thypin Steel Company property along the southern edge is a standard chain link fence and appears to be structurally sound. (Fig. 20) This area south of the park on the mapped street of Broadway is used as a materials storage area and for fabrication of sculptures. Although it is necessary for the site, this area is usually unsightly and should be screened. (Fig. 21)
The chain link mesh fences to the north of the park and along Vernon Boulevard are supported by inverted U-shaped posts. (Fig. 22) Since there is no top or bottom rail to this fence, the mesh sags in numerous places. Another chain link fence similar to these fences separates the park from the sculpture and work area of Mark di Suvero which is located in the southwest corner of the park. (Fig. 23)

Along Vernon Boulevard, there is, in addition to the chain link fence with curved posts, a raised planter whose
Fig. 23

retaining walls are constructed with donated cemetery monument stones. (Fig. 24) Although the quality of installation varies along the length of the planter, the
most handsome, well-executed, and innovative use of the stones occur at the main entrance. (Fig. 25) The variety of stone units, some of which are inscribed with actual words and letters, adds richness to the planter. (Fig. 26) However, there are no apparent drainage weep holes in the walls and the soil appears poor. The chain link fence is installed on top of the planter and looks awkward as it is not integrated into the planter design. In some cases, both the planter wall and the fence are in poor condition and should be reconstructed.
It is unfortunate that this is the side of the park visible from the street. (Fig. 27) With the exception of
the main entrance, with its decorative monument wall and the recently installed steel gate, the general condition of the park edge along Vernon Boulevard is poor. Although the park staff has repaired the sidewalk in some areas, along Vernon Boulevard it is in need of further repairs. (Fig. 28)

Fig. 28

Many visitors walk to the park on Broadway from the subway stop which is eight blocks away. The first sign or indication of the park is a service gate located at Broadway and Vernon Boulevard. This 'back' entrance to the park is marked by a handpainted and temporary-looking sign directing
visitors to the main entrance on Vernon Boulevard, north of the park. (Fig. 29)

The Broadway entrance is primarily used by vehicles loading and unloading materials for the sculpture projects. (Fig. 30) Although there is a newly installed
vehicular gate adjacent to the main pedestrian entrance, there are no designated service drive areas on the site. For those visitors driving to the park, there is parking along the streets. There is no parking on the site itself.

After entering the park, the visitor's attention is drawn to the sculptures and the magnificent view of the Manhattan skyline across the East River. This view is the predominant focus of the park. (Fig. 31) The view north from the park is of the warehouse of Mark di Suvero with Astoria Houses in the distance. Northeast of the park and immediately across Vernon Boulevard is the Adirondack Building. (Fig. 32) Adjacent to this building along Vernon Boulevard to the south are two and three story buildings,
Fig. 32

one of which is used as an office by Socrates Park. The
view south from the park is of the Thypin Steel Company
industrial buildings. In the foreground is a mural painting
on the side of a corrugated steel building by the artist
Richard Mock entitled *Perceiving Space* (1986). (Fig. 33)
Information about the park and the exhibitions is provided on a small free-standing wooden bulletin board near the entrance.

The central area of the park is expansive, used for changing displays of large sculptures, and the site is relatively flat with only subtle changes of elevation along the shoreline. (Fig. 34) The sculptures are the principal objects and are the only vertical elements which serve to delineate the spaces and affect pedestrian circulation. These sculptures are also often used by children who climb and play in/on them.

With the exception of a gravel path along the water's edge, there are no clearly defined pathways in the park. In
addition to the lack of well-defined and comfortable pathways, the park also lacks sufficient seating areas, shaded areas, and restroom facilities. Although there are more intimate and partially enclosed spaces along the water's edge, there are only three benches (made of wood, stone, and marble) on the entire site. (Fig. 35, 36, 37)

The surfaces in the park are earth, grass, and wood chips and the general drainage of the site is poor. There are several low points that tend to collect water and this problem is exacerbated by the fact that there are numerous concrete pads scattered throughout the site. (Fig. 38, 39) These pads, which are primarily from foundations of the former concrete plant buildings that occupied the site, keeps water standing rather than allowing it to percolate down into the soil. (Fig. 40) For locations of concrete slabs and foundations on the site, see Appendix - Subsurface Conditions.
Subsurface information on the site is scarce. Field observations reveal no visible signs of underground utilities including water supply or drainage systems. However, along the southern portion of the site on the mapped Broadway street (Broadway actually dead ends at Vernon Boulevard), there is a massive underground sewer whose outfall is at the East River.
Vegetation

Overall, the vegetation at Socrates Park is minimal and appears arbitrary. Most plantings on the site, whether naturalized or planted, are placed randomly throughout the park. (Fig. 41) There is a 'meadow-like' area located centrally and near the shoreline with a few small flowering trees and poplars. (Fig. 42) At the north end of the site against the fence, planted on a sloped area, are pines and small shrubs. (Fig. 43) The raised planter near the entrance is planted with a few Trees of Heaven. (Fig. 44) Annuals are planted for special events or when donated.
However, because these small plants are usually placed too far apart and are scattered throughout the park, they have little visual impact and often do not survive pedestrian foot traffic.

The seeming randomness, or naturalness, of the vegetation gives the park an informal appearance and can be developed to create a quality unique to this park. Unlike most city parks, which are either hard-surfaced or predictably programmed with grass, trees, and ball-playing areas, the shoreline and landscape of Socrates Park hint at both the earlier marshland landscape and the former piers and docks, giving a sense of a pre-developed natural
landscape. It also provides a 'freer' program of a greater variety of possible activities in the park.

The informal landscape also provides a particularly appropriate setting for the large scale sculptures exhibited at the park. Usually, urban parks and plazas display public sculptures which are built elsewhere then transported to be superimposed on the site. But the sculptures at Socrates Park are built directly on the site and have a greater sense of being integrated or belonging to this landscape. The informality of the landscape helps to soften the interface between the sculptures and the viewers.

The existing landscape can be further developed to create an environment that is conducive to wildlife habitation. The vegetation can serve multiple purposes in that in addition to providing a relief from the urban setting or being a backdrop to art work, it can also support a life system of animals, birds, and insects which are becoming more and more rare in the city.

The vegetative survey of Socrates Park indicated approximately 24 different species divided into the following categories: weed-like herbaceous flowering plants, grass-like species, deciduous shrubs, semi-evergreen and evergreen shrubs, deciduous trees, evergreen trees, herbs, and wildflowers. (See Vegetative Survey in the Appendix) Of these, the most predominant and the least desirable include Mugwort (Artemisia vulgaris), Phragmites, and Trees of
Heaven (Ailanthus Altissima). These species are particularly invasive, easily disturbing other planting and natural systems.
Wildlife

The wildlife species that can be observed in Socrates Park are generally limited to those species that are successful in an urban environment. Although it is unlikely that Socrates Park will be able to support rare or endangered wildlife species, the potential value of the park to educate the urban public about the wildlife that does exist in New York City should not be neglected. In a visit to the park, most visitors will be able to observe birds and butterflies, the park's most visible fauna.

In early summer, the bird species present include common urban species: the European Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*), the House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), the Chimney Swift (*Chaetura pelagica*), and some more 'suburban' species such as the American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*), the Mourning Dove (*Zenaidura macroura*), the Song Sparrow (*Melospiza melodia*), and the Northern Mockingbird (*Mimus poluglottos*). Other species likely to be found on the site include the Grey Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*), the Bluejay (*Cyanocitta cristata*), and the Cardinal (*Richmondena cardinalis*).

In addition, the East River affords habitat for bird species. Double-crested Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) can be sighted both on the water and in flight overhead. In winter more duck species may be observed and a number of species of Gulls (*Larus* spp.) can be sighted year-round.
Mammal species that one may expect to be present on the site are the Eastern Grey Squirrel (*Sciurus carolinesis*), the Norway Rat (*Rattus norvegicus*), the Eastern Chipmunk (*Tamias stratus*), the House Mouse (*Mus musculus*), and the Feral Domestic Housecat (*Felis domesticus*). The shoreline is rocky and generally barren of aquatic plants, which limits its potential for supporting Muskrats (*Ondatra zibethica*) or Shorebirds.

While reptile and insect species were not surveyed, one would expect that hardier reptile species such as the common Garter Snake (*Thamnophis sirtalis*) may be present and a variety of insect and arachnids species could be catalogued, particularly butterflies and moths (*Lepidoptera*) as mentioned, beetles (*Coleoptera*), flies (*Diptera*), and grasshoppers (*Orthoptera*). Some showy species of dragonflies (*Odonata*) which are often found in association with water were observed at the park.

The butterfly species that are generally common in the New York City metropolitan area and are most likely to be found at Socrates Park are the Monarch (*Danaus plexippus*), the Viceroy (*Basilarchia archippus*), the Tiger Swallowtail (*Pterourus glaucous*), the Cabbage White (*Artogeia rapae*), and the Question Mark (*Polygonia interrogationis*).
USER STUDY

Key factors in making any recommendations for improving a park are understanding who uses the park, how the park is used, and perceptions of the park by people who use it. This information is useful in helping to identify both problems and potential improvements that may not be readily apparent to park staff and designers. Although this user study is far from comprehensive, the responses underline the more apparent needs of the park and assist in prioritizing phases of improvement. These findings are tabulated in this report and a summary of conclusions follows.

A questionnaire was developed that established a statistical base for comparison and also allowed for open-ended responses regarding use, desire, and perceived problems.

The questionnaire, in addition to providing a profile of park visitors, attempted to address aspects which are difficult to identify by on-site observations. For instance, is the purpose of a visit to the park to view the exhibits, to participate in special events, or to enjoy the park's inherent natural features? Also difficult to ascertain solely by on-site observation are the users' perceptions regarding possible changes or desired
elements to be preserved within the park. (A copy of the questionnaire form is attached for reference.)

The majority of questionnaires were distributed in May 1988 at the 'Sculptors Working' event. The questionnaires were available at the information table and visitors were asked to fill them out and place them in a box. In the two months following this event, the consultant also approached park users at random and recorded answers to these same questions. A statistical summary of the responses to a total of 171 questionnaires accompanies this report.

Throughout the course of the consultant's year-long involvement with Socrates Sculpture Park, extensive conversations have been held with numerous individuals who have particular interest in the park. The information and insight provided by these individuals has not been tabulated as part of this user study. However, it should be noted that this vital aspect of user research has been incorporated into the development of a program and designs for the park's improvement.
Summary of Findings

Of the respondents surveyed, the largest age group visiting the park were between thirty and sixty years of age (57%), with the second largest group between the ages of eighteen and thirty (31%). Respondents in the 60+ age category were usually retired, and evidenced the greater correlation between distance and park use: the majority of this group lived fewer than eight blocks from the park. Children under eighteen years of age who responded to the questionnaire also lived fewer than eight blocks from the park. The respondents were about equally divided between men and women. Over one-third of them worked in art- and design-related fields.

Seeing the sculpture was the most frequent reason given for coming to Socrates Sculpture Park (84%). Visiting the park for passive recreation, i.e. relaxing and walking, was the second most popular reason for coming to the park (57%). Viewing the river (43%) and attending special events (43%) were both rated third. Six percent stated that they came to the park for active recreation such as jogging and sports. Nine percent came to the park to picnic.

An equal number of people said they came to the park by car as walked, indicating the attraction of the park both for local residents and for visitors from outside the neighborhood. After driving and walking, public
transportation, primarily the subway, was the third most frequent mode of transportation to the park. Almost half of the respondents indicated that they live less than two miles from the park, again indicating the popularity of the park with the neighborhood. The majority of visitors outside the neighborhood came from the Borough of Manhattan.

The respondents said they used the park equally in the spring (58%) as in the summer (56%). The park was also used by 37% of the respondents in the fall and 16% said they used the park in the winter.

One-third of the respondents said they bring children to the park. Of this one-third, 47% were under the age of five years of age and 40% were between the ages of six and ten.

In addition to the statistical information on the questionnaire, the visitors were asked to write responses to the following questions: "What would you like most to see changed in the park?" and "What would you like to see preserved?". There was also a space to respond to "Any other comments?".

There was not always agreement between what should be changed and what should be preserved. What one person liked in the park, another disliked, i.e. one respondent said that he did not like the rocks along the shore painted bright colors, while another person said he wanted to see
the painted stones preserved. However, overall there were comments that were often repeated in the questionnaire.

The most frequently mentioned aspect of the park that respondents wanted to see changed was the landscaping. More trees, bushes, flowers, and grass were most often requested. Some respondents also wanted to see more definition to the landscape, "less rough" and "not all the same". The second most repeated request was for more sculpture, and thirdly, more information about the sculptures and artists.

The specific area of the park that most visitors wanted to see improved was the edge of the park along the road and entry. Access to the waterfront, reducing the muddy areas, and hiding the 'set aside' sculptures were also requested. Specific features requested repeatedly were more sitting areas, restroom facilities, and improved pathways. Overall, what the respondents wanted was not so much change, but more of what was already there, especially the landscaping.

This desire for "more" also was reflected in the answers to the question of what should be preserved. The most frequent and general response was "everything as it is", including the open space, the atmosphere, and "the spirit" of the park. More specifically, individual sculptures were requested to preserved. The landscaping: trees, wildflowers, and meadow were also mentioned, as were the unobstructed views of the river.
Finally, in the space for "Any other comment?", there was an outpouring of grateful responses: "This is the best thing to happen in Astoria!!", "This park is lovely...the sculptures are very unique,...keep up the great work.", "I've always wanted to climb around in big art pieces."; "I really enjoy coming here to think and to look at the water.", "I love this place.", and "Thank you".
RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The goal of any future work undertaken in Socrates Park should be to maintain the integrity of the park while improving its aesthetic quality and functional aspects. The industrial character of the park is essential to its identity. That character is derived from its industrial surroundings, from elements of the park itself (including the built features constructed from unfinished materials), and from the machinery on the site used to construct the works of art. The informality of the park, the sense of a once natural marsh and shoreline, and the remnants of man-made structures must all be respected. Finally, the distinctive interface between land and water needs to be preserved.

Giving additional structure and definition to the park will be beneficial and will not contradict these basic tenets. A better defined and managed landscape would actually create more diversity within the park. At present, the overgrown weeds, scattered plantings and mottled ground surface make it difficult for the visitors to become oriented in the space. Clarity and diversity in the park landscape would also provide a greater choice for potential sculpture sites, an essential criteria in the planning for Socrates Park. In addition, the installation
of primarily native plant material would reinforce the connection between Socrates Park and its site, past and present.

The following guidelines have been developed along with a Schematic Landscape Plan to aid in future planning for the park. (Fig. 45)

![Schematic Design of Socrates Sculpture Park](image)

**Fig. 45**

**Main Entrance**

The main entrance to the park should be located at the end of Broadway, where the service entrance now exists. This
is the way visitors who arrive by public transportation approach the park (from Broadway station on the 'N' train) and it would provide more convenient access to the Noguchi Museum, one block to the south. A ceremonial entrance at the terminus of Broadway, a major street and an historic route that runs through many neighborhoods in Queens, could be a significant landmark. A monolithic Noguchi sculpture, which the Foundation expects to receive for permanent installation, would be a dramatic marker of the meeting of city and waterfront. It is proposed that a plaza be developed at this entrance way to funnel people into the park. The addition of seating would be important in this staging area. Clear, attractive signage should be provided at this entryway, identifying the park, its intent, and those responsible for it.

This entrance would continue to serve a dual function as a pedestrian entrance and as access for City of New York and Socrates Park service vehicles. The existing entry at the north end of the site would continue to function as a secondary entrance to the Park. This entrance would primarily serve residents of the Astoria Houses and other residential areas to the north.

Sculpture Areas

Of primary concern in the park is to provide appropriate and flexible areas for the construction and exhibition of both large and smaller pieces of sculpture. The dynamism
of Socrates Park depends on the interaction between the landscape and the art, and between one work and another. The placement of the sculptures must be appropriate to the scale and media of the pieces. Specifically, smaller art works may be best served by a more intimate setting, with a backdrop of plantings or set in the more developed areas on the site, whereas the largest works are often best seen in an open area.

More variety could be created on the site by introducing islands of large scale plantings to break up the large, undefined space which dominates the park. (Fig. 46) The introduction of these plantings would actually make the park appear more expansive, in addition to providing a broader range of potential sculpture sites. Establishing lawn in the open areas of the park would provide a flexible and attractive surface for the display of sculptures and for public activities.

**Play Area**

Since its founding, a children's play area has been proposed for Socrates Park. An ideal location for this play area is along the northern edge of the park, as it is anticipated that the main user group will be children from the Astoria Houses development. In keeping with the character of the park, play structures could themselves be sculpture pieces; perhaps some could serve as permanent pieces, and some change along with the exhibits in the
Fig. 46, Typical 'island' planting

A. (3) Amelanchier canadensis
B. (9) Cornus sericea
C. (2) Liquidambar styraciflua
D. (7) Hamamelis virginiana
E. (3) Malus spp.
F. (7) Myrica pensylvanica

park. Appropriately, Mark di Suvero was an innovator in this field, having himself worked in the 1960s with play structures as sculptures. Socrates Park could also provide an opportunity to develop an adventure playground, where the children themselves participate in shaping their play environment. Some of the raw materials donated to the park could be reserved for this purpose.
Fencing

The chain link fencing on the site must be unified and made as sturdy and permanent looking as possible. Where the inverted U-shaped fence supports are used, poles properly anchored in concrete footings would create uniform vertical supports. The poles should be spaced closely enough together so that the mesh does not sag.

Park Facilities

A structure incorporating offices, restrooms, and perhaps a small gallery would provide conveniences and information for the public. An indoor exhibition space located within the structure would allow sculptors to exhibit drawings related to their work, and provide an opportunity for the park to provide environmental and historical information on the site. It is recommended that this facility be located adjacent to the new park entryway so that information on the park and its exhibits can be readily obtained.

Park Edges

Along Vernon Boulevard, the sidewalk and curb badly need replacing and the fencing along the park's edge must be made consistent and stable so that the public's first impression of the park is not one of neglect. Weeds should be removed and replaced by thoughtful and more desirable
Fig. 47, Trellis

plantings. On the inside edge of the park's perimeter, the planter edge might be made more varied, with more seating areas, much like the one already developed. A trellis supporting vines might provide shade and cover for some of this seating. (Fig. 47) Small trees would also serve this purpose.
The shoreline, as it exists, is one of the most appealing parts of the park. In order to gain access to the water's edge and to experience the water's movement, di Suvero has proposed constructing floating piers. (Fig. 15). A smaller, more controlled platform might be more feasible and just as effective.

The edge of the site along the Thypin Steel Yard should be heavily screened with dense plant materials to focus views towards the water and away from the Yard and fence surrounding it. In addition, providing a heavily planted edge will give the park some visual definition.

Circulation

To serve all potential users of the park, it would be beneficial to provide a more extensive system of walkways which would at least connect the major areas within the park. Soft materials such as crushed stone or clay, much like what now exists in the meadow area could be used throughout the park. It would be necessary to install a border to contain the material.

Whatever design changes occur in the park must take into account that truck access must be maintained to all parts of the park where sculpture is to be constructed and exhibited.
Drainage

To permanently and effectively deal with the existing drainage problems on the site, it is necessary to excavate a minimum of several feet where concrete foundations exist, replace with clean fill and provide a complete subsurface drainage system to hook up to the city sewer system. Until this costly effort is undertaken, it may be possible to alleviate the problem somewhat by grading the site away from areas where concrete foundations exist, and direct runoff to planted areas where it may percolate down, and drain to the water's edge.

Planting

STRATEGY

Conceptually, the zones of the park have begun to be defined by the types of plants already introduced. Through proper planning and maintenance of plantings, the appearance and functioning of the park would be greatly improved. The effectiveness of the existing plantings on the site would be enhanced considerably by massing plants of the same species together. While single specimen plantings can be appropriate in some instances, if it is done consistently, plantings appear spotty and weak. Larger plant material such as trees and shrubs should be used to give further definition to areas of the park, to
screen undesirable views and to provide shade, critical to comfort in the summer months. Smaller materials, such as wildflowers, grasses and bulbs, can be used to enhance the character of a particular area, and provide color and interest on a finer scale for the park.

A relatively maintenance-free planting can be achieved through the introduction of additional native plants as well as specific plant varieties that have proven successful in the urban environment. These plants can offer seasonal interest of foliage, flowers and fruit, as well as food and shelter attractive to wildlife. Since native plant materials are virtually resistant to most insects and diseases, they are highly recommended for introduction to Socrates Park, as they can provide ecological integrity for the site.

At the edge of the park along Vernon Boulevard, particularly at park entrances, the planting can be more formal and may incorporate some non-native species. For example this would be more formal an appropriate location to plant bulbs donated to the park. (Bulbs, like other materials, are most effectively displayed when planted in masses.)

For all other portions of the site it is recommended that informal plantings of native species be utilized to retain and enhance a sense of the park emerging out of the site rather than appearing as the cultivated landscape of a conventional park or garden.
The existing meadow is one of the most distinctive landscape features of the park. It would be improved considerably, however, by clearing out some of the more weedy invasive material, in particular the Artemesia and Phragmites which choke out more desirable species. Here again it would be preferable for the wildflowers to be planted in clusters to create masses of colors.

For the planted islands previously discussed, native shrubs should comprise the understory, while dominated by major trees and some smallers trees. (Fig. 46) A major limitation for tree plantings anywhere on the site are the difficult sub-surface conditions. Before tree plantings are undertaken, it must be determined that no concrete lies under the surface. Locations of existing foundations can be roughly determined by Subsurface Conditions Map (see Appendix) as well as from the experience of park personnel.

Along the shoreline, weedy growth is emerging from between the rocks. This should be cleared and replaced with more attractive clumps of native grasses such as American Beach Grass and Foundation Grass. These can be established with minimal soil. The planting of berry-producing shrubs has been proposed for the edge of the park adjoining Thypin Steel. An excellent choice in this location would be Highbush Blueberry. Clusters of trees could serve to provide height variation and shade for this edge.
MAINTENANCE

Maintenance procedures are necessary for the successful establishment of new plantings as well as for the continued success of existing plantings. All existing plant material that was installed with the top of the root ball set above grade should be replanted so that the base of the trunk is flush with the soil level. Existing plants should be pruned to remove dead and dying wood, and all dead plant material should be entirely removed. For new plantings, good topsoil should be provided for backfilling operations. Plants must be watered thoroughly at the time of planting and continue to be watered during dry times of the growing season (15 gallons per tree).

A 2" layer of wood chip mulch should be applied to help reduce the loss of moisture and to keep down the soil temperature and weed growth. To help establish plantings, slow time-release organic fertilizer should be applied. Finally, all unhealthy wood or branches which might inhibit good form should be removed at the time of planting.

SUGGESTED PLANT LIST

-Native-

Major Shade Trees

Catalpa speciosa
Fraxinus pensylvanica spp.
Gleditsia triacanthos inermis
Quercus borealis
Liquidambar styraciflua
Tilia Americana 'Redmond'

Hardy Catalpa
Green Ash
Honey Locust
Red Oak
Sweet-gum
American Linden
Minor Shade and Flowering Trees

*Amelanchier canadensis*  Serviceberry
*Celtis occidentalis*  Hackberry
*Cercis canadensis*  Redbud
*Malus spp.*  Flowering Crabapple
*Prunus spp.*  Cherry

Deciduous Shrubs

*Cornus racemosa*  Grey Dogwood
*Cornus sericea*  Red Osier Dogwood
*Hamamelis virginiana*  Common Witch-Hazel
*Lindera benzoin*  Spicebush
*Myrica pensylvanica*  Bayberry
*Rosa virginiana*  Virginia Rose
*Vaccinium corymbosum*  Highbush Blueberry
*Viburnum dentatum*  Arrowwood
*Viburnum prunifolium*  Black Haw

Vines

*Lonicera japonica (naturalized)*  Hall's Honeysuckle
*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*  Virginia Creeper

Wildflowers

*Asclepsia tuberosa*  Butterfly Milkweed
*Aster novae-angliae*  New England Aster
*Coreopsis lanceolata*  Coreopsis
*Helianthus spp.*  Sunflower
*Hemerocallis spp.*  Daylily
*Lythrum spp.*  Purple Loosestrife
*Phlox paniculata*  Perennial Phlox
*Rudbeckia hirta*  Black-eyed Susan

Grasses

*Ammophila breviligulata*  American Beach Grass
*Pennisetum alopecuroides*  Fountain Grass

Evergreen Trees and Shrubs

*Ilex opaca*  Inkberry
*Juniperus virginiana spp.*  Eastern Red-cedar
*Pinus strobus*  Eastern White Pine
-Introduced Plants-

**Major Shade Trees**

Acer pseudoplatanus  
Koelreuteria paniculata  
Phellodendron amurense  
Sophora japonica  
Tilia cordata  
Sycamore Maple  
Golden-rain Tree  
Amur Cork Tree  
Japanese Pagoda Tree  
Little-leaf Linden  

**Minor Shade and Flowering Tree**

Cornus mas  
Eleagnus augustifolia  
Magnolia stellata  
Pyrus calleryana 'Bradford'  
Cornelian Cherry  
Russian Olive  
Star Magnolia  
Bradford Callery Pear  

**Shrubs**

Rosa multiflora  
Multiflora Rose  

**Wildlife**

Most land management techniques to encourage wildlife on a site entail the introduction or manipulation of vegetation. At Socrates Park, attention should be focused on bird and butterfly species as there is a greater likelihood of visitors enjoying the presence of these more visible forms of wildlife. Vegetation is essential to birds for a number of reason - to provide food, to offer shelter in inclement weather, and to provide sites for nesting and roosting at night. To maximize the utilization of food sources, it is important to ensure that adequate "cover" is available near a food plant. A bird is more likely to feed from a plant when it feels protected from predators. Consequently, clumping of vegetation is suggested. Dense vegetation cover which is at least six feet in diameter is most beneficial to songbird species and any future planting
should attempt to develop cover immediately around and between existing vegetation.

Evergreens are particularly advantageous to wildlife because they offer shelter throughout the year. Eastern White Pine (*Pinus strobus*) which is already planted in the park provides food for a large variety of wildlife species and allows for year-round nesting and roosting. Establishing shrub species adjacent to the existing pines is recommended. Holly (*Ilex* spp.) and Cedar (*Juniperus* spp.) are other evergreen species which offer shelter and also serve as fall-winter food plants.

Some of the deciduous tree species which are particularly beneficial to songbirds are *Quercus* spp., *Celtis occidentalis*, *Cornus* spp., *Prunus* spp., *Liquidambar styraciflua*, and *Malus sargenti*. A number of these genera are already represented in Socrates Park, although the trees are young and not yet bearing a great deal of fruit.

Shrub species offer songbirds cover closer to the ground and may greatly increase the density of vegetative cover. Three species that have been very successfully utilized in similarly poor landfill soil at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge in eastern Queens are Bayberry (*Myrica* spp.), Multiflora Rose (*Rosa multiflora*), and Russian Olive (*Eleagnus augustifolia*). In addition to providing dense cover, these species are important food sources, especially in the fall when there are fewer alternatives available. Plants that bear berries also serve this dual purpose.
Some possibilities for the site are Serviceberry (Amelanchier spp.) and Blueberry (Vaccinium spp.), and Viburnum (Viburnum spp.) and Honeysuckle (Lonicera spp.).

Some of the naturally occurring weed-like herbaceous flowering plants including Japanese Knotweed (Polygonum cuspidatum) and Curly Dock (Rumex crispus) provide food sources for birds, however, Artemesia vulgaris and Phragmites communis which are present in abundance at the park should be eliminated as they provide little or no food for birds and are very competitive.

Wildflowers serve as important food sources for birds and as nectar sources for butterflies and insects. Enhancing the wildflower garden, therefore, would be beneficial to these forms of wildlife. One particularly hardy wildflower species that is very attractive for butterflies and which has been very successful at Jamaica Bay is Butterfly Weed (Asclepsia tuberosa). In general, the flowers should be planted in clumps, as a number of plants of the same species is more attractive to wildlife than individual plants in a scattered pattern.

Educational material on wildlife found in the park could serve as an attraction for the public and add another dimension to visits to the park. A brochure or posted information describing the more common bird species would enable visitors to identify and appreciate the wildlife around them. (Appendix - Bird Pamphlet)
Conclusion

Some of the design recommendations outlined in this report have already been implemented in stages by the park personnel. Although it is unlikely that all the recommendations can be implemented at once, tasks should be undertaken following these guidelines as funding and resources become available.

Stabilizing the existing built elements of the site, i.e. fences, sidewalks, and walls, and resolving the drainage problems should be the highest priority for the park. In addition, preserving the existing plant material that has been improperly planted, and clearing the more invasive plants that would threaten any additional planting should be attended to as soon as possible. New plantings can be implemented as resources allow but should follow the guidelines outlined in this report to create a more cohesive park landscape.

Establishing a ceremonial entry to the park at Broadway should be initiated after the sidewalk and fencing has been rehabilitated. Signage should be simultaneously introduced, but the refinement of paving, seating and planting can be carried out over time. The development of a play area could also be a long-term project, changing and growing over time, with input from artists and park users who can work with available materials.

The elements of the park that are intended to be permanent should adhere to a coherent overall plan. For example, plantings established today will have a
considerable presence in the future, and will be difficult to alter or relocate. It is the nature of Socrates Park, however, to be changing and evolving. Therefore, it is important to maintain an open flexible plan to allow for the changing sculpture exhibitions, public events, and unforeseen future projects which are so essential to Socrates Park.
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HISTORY

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Department of Ports and Terminals (Internal Memo r.e. failed bulkhead, to Department Commissioner Lechtman from Chief Engineer Rabbage), March 16, 1959.


VEGETATION


WILDLIFE


Peterson's Field Guide to the Birds East of the Rockies.
  to the Mammals
  to the Insects
  to the Wildflowers
  to the Reptiles

Personal Communication - Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge.
APPENDIX

1. Vegetative Survey
2. Questionnaire
3. Questionnaire Form
4. Historical Survey
5. Subsurface Conditions
6. Bird Pamphlet
7. Photo and Map Credits
VEGETATIVE SURVEY (June 1988)

(In all cases, the botanical name precedes the common name of the particular vegetation and the final column is the origin to the site.)

**Weed-like Herbaceous Flowering Plant**

- *Artemisia vulgaris*  Mugwort  Naturalized
- *Linaria vulgaris*  Butter & Eggs  "
- *Polygonum cuspidatum*  Japanese Knotwood  "
- *Rumex crispus*  Curly Dock  "

**Grass-like Species**

- *Phragmites communis*  Phragmites  Naturalized

**Deciduous Shrubs**

- *Weigelia floribunda*  Weigelia  Planted

**Evergreen & Semi-evergreen Shrubs**

- *Chamaecyparis obtusa aureum*  Gold Sawara Cypress  Planted
- *Myrica pensylvannica*  Bayberry  Naturalized

**Deciduous Trees**

- *Ailanthus Altissima*  Tree of Heaven  Naturalized & Planted
- *Cornus mas*  Cornelian Cherry  Planted
- *Populus tremuloides*  Trembling Aspen  Naturalized & Planted
- *Quercus robur*  English Oak  Planted
- *Quercus borealis*  Red Oak  "
- *Prunus serotina*  Flowering Cherry  "
- *Prunus serotina kwanzan*  Kwanzan Cherry  "
- *Sorbus aucuparia*  European Mt. Ash  "

**Evergreen Trees**

- *Pinus strobus*  Eastern White Pine  Planted
### Wildflowers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Common Name</th>
<th>Status</th>
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<tr>
<td>Centaurea imperialis</td>
<td>Cornflower</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coreopsis lanceolata</td>
<td>Coreopsis</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaillardia aristata</td>
<td>Gaillardia</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trifolium pratense</td>
<td>Purple Clover</td>
<td>Planted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trifolium repens</td>
<td>White Clover</td>
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### Herbs

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<tr>
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<th>Status</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rosmarinus officinalis</td>
<td>Rosemary</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santolina chamae cyparissus</td>
<td>Grey Santolina</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
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QUESTIONNAIRE FOR Socrates SCULPTURE PARK

AGE GROUP:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>0-10</th>
<th>10-18</th>
<th>18-30</th>
<th>30-60</th>
<th>60+</th>
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<td>5</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>171</td>
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<td>3%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>7%</td>
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SEX:

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<th>Sex</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>80</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

OCCUPATIONS:

- Artist 32
- Architectural design 5
- Art dealer 2
- Architect 2
- Photographer 4
- Film maker 3
- Designer 3
- Writer 4
- Advertising 4
- Antique dealer 1
- Actress 2
- Singer 1
- Makeup artist 1
- Musician 1
- Casting director 1
- Dancer 2
- Technical support aide 1
- Investigator/Police 2
- Laborer 1
- Sales 2
- Printer 1
- Hotel business 1
- Stone Mason(?) 1
- Psychologist/Psychologist 3
- Attorney 2
- Retired 9
- School Administrator 1
- Student 8
- Nurse 1
- Computer programmer 4
- Electrician 1
- Researcher 2
- Word processing operator 1
- Park ranger 1
- Cabinetmakers 2
- Paralegal 1
- Production coordinator 1
- Plumber 1
- Driver 1
- Hairstylist 2
- Unemployed 1
- Banking 1
- Editor 1
- Manufacturing Supervisor 1
- Carpenter 2
- Detail manager 1
- Perfume compounder 1
- Systems Analyst 2
- Educator 5
PURPOSES:**

- See the Sculpture 143 (84%)
- Relax/Walk/Dog Walking 98 (57%)
- Jogging/Active Sports 11 (6%)
- View the River 73 (43%)
- Picnic 15 (9%)
- Special Events 73 (43%)
- Other (Specify) 6 (4%)
  - work-1
  - "improvise"=dance-1
  - socialize-1
  - meet someone-2
  - fun-1

HOW DID YOU COME TO THE PARK?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Walking</th>
<th>Subway</th>
<th>Bicycle</th>
<th>Bus</th>
<th>Car</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>62 (36%)</td>
<td>30 (18%)</td>
<td>14 (8%)</td>
<td>3 (2%)</td>
<td>62 (36%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HOW FAR DO YOU LIVE FROM THE PARK?

- 1-8 blocks 33
- 8-15 blocks 6
- 0-2 miles 39
- 3-5 miles 8
- 5-10 miles 7
- 10+ miles 3
- "very far" 7
- Jersey City 2
- Manhattan 37
- Brooklyn 9
- Queens 1
- Roosevelt Island 1
- Long Island City 1

WHAT SEASON DO YOU MOSTLY USE THE PARK?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Summer</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Winter</th>
<th>First Time</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>99 (58%)</td>
<td>95 (56%)</td>
<td>64 (37%)</td>
<td>28 (16%)</td>
<td>10 (6%)</td>
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</table>

DO YOU EVER BRING CHILDREN TO THE PARK?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What age?**

- 0-5 27 (47%)
- 6-10 23 (40%)
- 11-15 5 (9%)
- 15+ 6 (11%)
WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE MOST TO SEE CHANGED IN THE PARK?**

-the landscape
-more trees, bushes, flowers 18
-better landscaping 2
-"the landscape made a bit different - not the same all the time"
-more definition to the landscape, less rough 2
-some shade
-more grass area 3

-more water sculptures/display
-more sculpture 17 (interactive-5) (more variety-1)
-more show rotation 5

-more information about the sculptures and artist 9
-information on how to get involved in the artistic program

-reduce the muddy areas 6
-fix up the edge of the park, near the road and entry 3
-rocks by the shore look better unpainted 1
-move steel sculpture near water to a more central area in the park
-hide the 'set aside' sculptures
-enlarge waterfront
-access to water

-a pool
-more benches/sitting area 6
-restroom facilities 5
-add night lights 1
-new fence 2
-suitable/paved walkways/easier to walk 4
-water fountain

-"maybe some amplified chamber music" 1
-music every Sunday 1
-more games for adults
-more fireworks
-more performances/events 2

-clean up
-better care of the grounds

-more people
-easier to walk
-more of the same
-nothing 7
-less bugs 2

-more "stuff" 1
-refreshments 3
-accessibility
-no rats
-open earlier hours
WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE PRESERVED??

-the natural, asymmetrical beauty
-trees and foliage  6
-the spirit  2
-wildflowers  3
-the open space/atmosphere  9
-views  2
-the grass/meadow  2
-river view/water line 5
-park fence

-the fact that all the sculpture is so accessible, and can be climbed on
-Richard Mock mural  1
-the purple sculpture  3
-"some of the sculpture"  13
-Cathedral white piece 1
-Lifeguard chair 1
-changing sculpture show  3
-coffee can sculpture 1
-the big wooden sculptures to sit on  1
-the house
-quality of artwork
-scrapyard temple
-the maze
-the painted stones by the water
-people working on the site 1

-everything as it is  18
-informality
-the park in general  8
ANY OTHER COMMENTS??

- park to remain for many years to come 1
- good luck in your endeavour, would like to see some culture in Astoria area
- let's make the park permanent and keep the condos from developing along the waterways
- keep on!  6
- this is the best thing to happen to Astoria!!
- very nice place 6
- thank you
- very trippy place, nice atmosphere
- this park is lovely, the sculptures are very unique and keep up the great work. I love it.
- great idea - would like to exhibit my own work 2
- great!!  6
- it's a great idea. I've always wanted to climb around in big art pieces
- good luck
- please continue the exhibitions
- I really enjoy coming here to think and to look at the water
- best place at night
- nice idea to have a park, something new and different
- I love this place
- am a great fan
- It's an oasis in a desert without culture. It's great!
- Ever so grateful.
- Keep the events coming.

- better maintenance during the summer 1
- sculpture to be less playground orientated
- My first impression was: if this was in Paris, I'd be taking pictures. (well, in fact, I did take pictures the first time, but if it were in France, it would have been better cared for and advertised, why can't we?)
- how long is your lease?
- hate ropes surrounding work and would like to see names by works

** More than one response
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SOCRATES SCULPTURE PARK

Age Group

_____ 0-10
_____ 10-18
_____ 18-30
_____ 30-60
_____ 60+

Sex

_____ M
_____ F

Occupation _______________________________

Purpose(s) of your visit to the Park

_____ See the Sculpture
_____ Relax/Walk
_____ Jogging
_____ Active Sport
_____ Dog Walking

View the River
_____ Picnic
_____ Special Events
_____ Other (Specify)

How did you come to the park?

_____ Walking
_____ Subway
_____ Bicycle
_____ Car
_____ Bus

How far do you live from the park? __________________________

What season do you mostly use the park?

_____ Spring
_____ Summer
_____ Fall
_____ Winter

Do you ever bring children to the park?

_____ No
_____ Yes

What ages? __________________________

What would you like most to see changed in the park?

What would you like to see preserved?

Any other comments?

5/19/88
SUBSURFACE CONDITIONS
BIRDS
at
SOCRATES
SCULPTURE
PARK

SONG SPARROW
Melospiza melodia
5-6½" (13-16cm)
The song sparrow is a
small brown bird. Heavy
streaks on its breast
form a dark central spot.
When in flight, the song
sparrow pumps its tail.
Its voice is a mixture of
variable notes, some
musical and some buzzy,
and it feeds mainly on
insects and seeds.

Reference Source: The Field Guide to
the Birds East of the Rockies by
Roger Tory Peterson
Field Research: Regina Keenan
Design: Minou Kwon
Graphics: Nancy Owens

This brochure is part of a larger
landscape study funded by the New
York State Council on the Arts.

AMERICAN ROBIN
Turdus migratorius
9-11" (23-28cm)
The American Robin is a
very familiar songbird
with a clear caroling
voice. Robins are often
seen walking upright on
the grass. They are
recognized by their dark
gray backs and brick-red
breasts. The heads and
tails of the male robin
are black while the
females' are gray. They
feed on insects, worms,
snails, berries, and
fruits.

EUROPEAN STARLING
Sturnus vulgaris
7½-8½" (19-21cm)
The starling is a shiny
black bird. In flight, it
looks triangular, flying
swiftly and directly,
neither falling nor
rising. In the winter,
the starling is speckled
with a dark bill. In the
spring, its feathers
become iridescent and the
bill turns yellow. Its
voice is a mixture of
clear whistles, clicks,
hill-rattles, chuckles,
and sometimes an
imitation of other bird
voices. Starlings feed
on seeds, insects, and
berries.
HOUSE SPARROW
Passer domesticus
6” (15cm)

The brownish-grey house sparrow is one of the most familiar city birds. The males have a black "bib" on their chests. The females and young birds lack the black throats. House sparrows feed mainly on insects and seeds.

MOURNING DOVE
Zenaida macroura
12” (30cm)

Mourning doves are fast-flying birds with plump bodies and small heads. They get their name from their sad cooing voices. They are grey-brown with pointed tails marked with white spots. They feed on seeds, waste grain, fruits, and insects.

CHIMNEY SWIFT
Chaetura pelagica
5-5½” (12-14cm)

These birds look like cigars with wings. They are black with long, curved, stiff wings and narrow tails. They seem to twinkle in their rapid flight, gliding between spurs with their wings bowed in a crescent shape. Their voices make loud chipping notes, and they feed on flying insects.

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT
Phalacrocorax auritus
33” (83cm)

Look on the river for a large, black water bird. Cormorants often stand erect on rocks or posts with their neck in an S-shape or they may strike a "spread eagle" pose. Flocks fly silently in lines or wedges. They swim low like loons with their bills tilted up at an angle and they feed on fish and crustaceans.
PHOTO & MAP CREDITS

Site and Park History

Fig. 1, Sky Views - (Aerial Photo)
Fig. 2, 300 Years of Long Island City, Vincent F. Seyfried, p.8
Fig. 3 & 4, Atlas of Long Island, Part I, Beers, 1873
Fig. 5, 300 Years of Long Island City, Vincent F. Seyfried, p.50
Fig. 6, Strang House, Queens Public Library
Fig. 7, Atlas of Queens Co., Chester Wolverton, New York, 1891
Fig. 8, Atlas of the Borough of Queens, Volume I, Long Island City, Ward I. E. Belcher Hyde, Inc., Manhattan, 1928
Fig. 9, City of New York Department of Ports and Terminals Archive
Fig. 10, New York Times, October 29, 1961
Fig. 11-13, Nancy Owens, 1988
Fig. 14-17, Socrates Sculpture Park Archive

Existing Conditions

Map, p.24, Nancy Owens, 1989
Fig. 18-44, Nancy Owens, 1988

Recommendations

Fig. 45, Map, Nancy Owens, 1989

Appendix

Historical Survey, City of New York Department of Ports and Terminals Archive

Subsurface Conditions, City of New York: Department of Ports and Terminals, Queens Topographical Bureau, Queens Building Department, Department of Environmental Protection, Department of General Services, Public Development Corporation