



October 31, 2022

Mr. Michael Chihoski  
Senior Associate Vice President  
University Facilities and Services  
University of Rochester  
271 East River Road, Box 270345  
Rochester, New York 14627-0345

Dear Mr. Chihoski,

Thank you for your letter of October 26, 2022, concerning the entry for a portion of the Olmsted-designed Genesee Valley Park featured in *Landslide 2022: The Olmsted Design Legacy*. We appreciate the University of Rochester's statement about its "strong commitment to the preservation of Genesee Valley Park." Moreover, we are encouraged by the news that the proposed "operations center building" will likely be located elsewhere.

Concerning future development, we are interested to learn about the guidelines the University uses when planning work in a historically significant site. We see the following statements from the University as inconsistent and contradictory: "we don't think that constructing a facilities operation on this portion of University property would disturb the park at all ..." and "any future proposed development of this particular parcel will be aligned with the preservation and stewardship of Genesee Valley Park." This suggests, based on the University's claim that it would not "disturb the park at all," that construction of the proposed "operations center building" would or was determined to be "aligned with the preservation and stewardship of Genesee Valley Park."

This inconsistency raises several questions. What are the overarching principles and guidelines that inform planning and development at the University's section of this historically significant park? What are the qualifications of the individual and/or team that determines the impact of a proposed project on a historically significant landscape, qualifications sufficient to substantiate the claim that the proposed "operations building center" would not "disturb the park at all"? How has the University's "strong commitment to the preservation of Genesee Valley Park" been documented, codified, and/or otherwise memorialized? To the extent that the University's "strong commitment to the preservation of Genesee Valley Park" been documented, codified, and/or otherwise memorialized, how is this overseen and enforced?

Again, we thank you for your letter and appreciate the University's stated "strong commitment to the preservation of Genesee Valley Park." However, as noted above, the University's letter does raises questions that, we feel, require additional information.

Sincerely,

Charles A. Birnbaum, FASLA, FAAR  
President & CEO