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By Mark Sommer

## Complex cited for ‘at risk’ grounds

The Richardson Olmsted Complex has been named one of 16 at-risk landscapes by a national preservation group.

The Washington, D. C.-based Cultural Landscape Foundation did so to draw attention to the current condition of the grounds, designed more than a century ago by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux.

The site’s inclusion comes despite the formation in July 2006 of the not-for-profit Richardson Center Corp., which has crafted a master plan to chart the future course for the National Historic Landmark and has had \$76.5 million in state funds set aside.

Appreciation for the landscape led to the name change to include “Olmsted” when describing what used to be called the H. H. Richardson Complex. An exhaustive landscape study inventoried the poor condition of the grounds of Buffalo Psychiatric Center, including every tree on the 91-acre site.

“The Cultural Landscape Report was beautifully done, and is a hallmark for such things,” said Melanie Macchio, the foundation’s project manager.

“But in these economic times, it’s not assured that the landscape will be addressed in a timely manner and will be given the same consideration as the structures themselves. That’s the fear we have,” Macchio said.

“It’s important as [decision makers] move forward that the significance of the landscape be recognized. It was not an act of nature, it was an extremely thoughtful design.”

The Cultural Landscape Foundation gives its annual “Landslide” designations to educate the public and rally support for the landscapes’ preservation.

Washington Park in Chicago, also designed by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux with H. W. S. Cleveland, also is on this year’s list. Others included Santa Barbara Botanic Garden, Santa Barbara, Calif.; 16th Street Mall, Denver; Scripps Estate, Lake Orion, Mich.; Elizabethan Gardens, Manteo, N. C.; Olana home, Hudson; and North and South Parks, Allegheny County, Pa.