



To the east, forming a valley between two slopes, is another area suitable for performances.

Art has many forms. The natural terrain creates the light and shadow, and commanding vistas that invite landscape painting.



Tanya Maggi, Director of Performance Outreach, New England Conservatory - "One of the most important principles behind our community outreach program is the concept of building partnerships with organizations in the neighborhoods in which we work and live. Because so many of our students live in Jamaica Plain, it would be a great benefit to New England Conservatory to be able to develop a series of free community chamber concerts at Pinebank. This kind of series would provide NEC students with valuable educational experience and would give them a chance to perform in their own neighborhood."

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For larger performances, the field to the north offers a level site which will accommodate an audience of up to 2,000. This was the site of the well-attended Landmarks Orchestra performance in August 2005.

The surrounding landscape, sculpted by glaciers during the last Ice Age, offers slopes, fields and dells where music and plays can be performed.

The "stage" on the south -- using the 30' x 40' patio -- is ample space for most concerts or plays. A panoramic view through the stately pines of Jamaica Pond, shimmering in the late-afternoon sunlight, offers a magical setting.



Another performance site (right) on the north side is a dell. Under the spreading limbs of a champion beech tree, this area provides a more intimate experience for artists. The natural slope allows seating "in the round", while serving as a buffer from noise from other activities.

Pinebank Center for the Arts "Tanglewood in Boston"



Courtesy Children's Museum (c. 1930)

The Pinebank Center stands overlooking Jamaica Pond, one of the jewels in Frederick Law Olmsted's Emerald Necklace park system. A former Victorian mansion, this "Tanglewood in Boston" serves the diverse Jamaica Plain, and wider, community with a variety of "performance centers" here in this subdued Victorian setting.

With a 3,000 square-foot interior on each of its 2 full floors, Pinebank offers the potential for concerts in the main performance center, as well as practice rooms and an office. Students of the arts can refine their skills in classes and public performances and presentations.

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History

Pinebank is situated on a promontory overlooking Jamaica Pond. Its name, "Pinebank", is derived from the stately pines that filter the view of the pond from the brick south patio. It remains the only original building in Boston's Emerald Necklace Park system designed in the 1890's by Frederick Law Olmsted.

The first Pinebank was built as a summer home in 1806 by James Perkins, senior partner in the China Trade shipping firms of James and Thomas Handasyd Perkins. His grandson, James Newton "Ned" Perkins, replaced it in 1848 with an elegant mansard-roofed home for year-round use. After this burned down in 1868, sick at heart, he instructed architect John Hubbard Sturgis "I do not want to recall the old house; that is a picture for memory."

The result was a new "English" Queen Anne-style house on the same foundation. The ornamental brick, specially imported from England, and terracotta tiles, were later more extensively used in the first Museum of Fine Arts in Copley Square. Sturgis continued using these architectural embellishments in Boston's Back Bay. Two of the most well-known examples are the Ames-Webster mansion at the corner of Dartmouth Street and Commonwealth Ave. and the Church of the Advent on Brimmer Street.

Fearing that Jamaica Pond commercial ice-making houses would expand and eliminate any potential for creating a park, the City of Boston purchased a few of these estates in the early 1890's during the creation of Jamaica Park.

Olmsted considered the architecture and siting of the English-influenced Pinebank country estate to be in keeping with his vision of a pastoral setting.

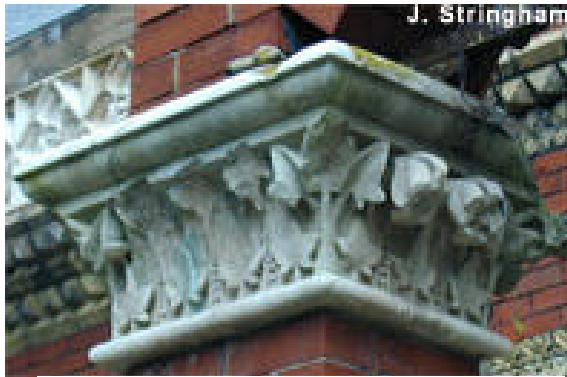
From 1913 to 1936, Pinebank served as the first Children's Museum. From 1936 to 1970, it was occupied by the Engineering Department of the Boston Parks Commission. From 1970 to 1975, Pinebank was used for a city-sponsored community arts program. Since then, Pinebank has been abandoned, awaiting its next opportunity to serve the Boston artistic community.



This historic card shows the sweep of the carriage drive from the nearby Jamaica way

In 1987, Pinebank, as a structure in Olmsted's Emerald Necklace Park system, became a State and National Registered Historic Landmark. Restoration was also recommended in the Emerald Necklace Master Plan.

In 1996, Historic Massachusetts, Inc. (now PreservationMass), named Pinebank as one of the ten most endangered historic resources.



Ornate capital hand-carved in England



Directions

Pinebank is located on the north end of Jamaica Park. At the intersection of Chestnut and Perkins Streets, ascend the flight of granite steps and follow the walkway. Parking is available along the west edge of Jamaica Pond on Perkins Street.

By MBTA—On E line, walk west from South Huntington Ave., on Perkins Street cross the Jamaica way.