september 27, 2018

Pilgrim Road Crossing to the All Hallows Amphitheater



Path beckoning toward
the Amphitheater

A long-awaited piece of the Cathedral Close landscape has just been completed. It has been either 100 years or only ten years in the making, but either way we are so very pleased. A stone crossing of Pilgrim Road linking the Bishop’s Garden and its south lawn with the All Hallows Amphitheater and the adjacent Olmsted Woods feels like a finishing touch to the Amphitheater, completed in 2008. The Amphitheater was the capstone of the ten-year project that rescued the Woods from invasive species, tree decline and soil compaction, and corrected erosion using innovative water control and filtering. These efforts continue through the efforts of the Guild.

An Amphitheater was on early plans of the close as envisioned by Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., but the reality for a century was simply a natural bowl at the northwest edge of the Woods.

The present Amphitheater was designed by Michael Vergason Landscape Architects and built by Serra Stone. We called on that same team for the stone crossing and after considerable time spent in design, modifications, and approvals, we were able to proceed in August. The resulting porphyry and granite path seems to beckon visitors in either direction –- from the south lawn toward the grandeur of the stone and grass Amphitheater or back up into the garden via the Aquia Quarry steps and the new steppingstone path.

We relied on the cooperation of the several entities on the close as well – a parking space swap, the patience of those passing down Pilgrim Road during demolition and construction, and the vigilance of Facilities staff and security personnel while the road was closed. It has not been a smooth or easy path – but we can rightly say the new crosswalk is just that – a small but smooth and beautifully-paved link between the north and south landscapes that will increase both use and enjoyment of our beautiful grounds.



Crossing toward the Bishop’s Garden