

NAUMKEAG

Restoration of the Marble Stairs and their environs in the Evergreen Garden

The Trustees of Reservations
Stockbridge, Massachusetts

Project Data

Date: 2003

One flight of marble stairs

Garden Size: 1 acre

Total Site: 45 acres

Context: Berkshire Mountains
in western, Mass.

Construction Date: Summer 2003



Existing conditions, March 28, 2003



During restoration, May 30, 2003



During restoration, June 27, 2003

Project Description:

Naumkeag was the summer home and Country Place Era estate of Joseph Choate and his family. The estate, built on a hillside in the Berkshire Mountains, consists of 45-acres and several distinct garden rooms. One such room, the Evergreen Garden, was originally designed and laid between 1884 and 1894 by the Choate family and Nathan Barrett, who designed the structure of the hillside landscape. In 1926, Fletcher Steele began his 32-year working relationship with daughter Mabel Choate and the entire property was improved physically and aesthetically.

In 1959, The Trustees of Reservations (TTOR) acquired Naumkeag, which is a National Historic Landmark and an outstanding example of a historic designed landscape. Since 1959, major portions of the house and pieces of the designed landscape have been restored. In 2003, while TTOR was restoring the Summer House, they moved their attention to a set of marble stairs that connected the Evergreen Garden to the Chinese Garden. The stairs, adjacent brick planters, extant plantings, and underground utilities were in poor condition and needed to be disassembled and rebuilt.

Elmore Design Collaborative (EDC) was hired to assess the existing conditions and prepare construction drawings, technical specifications, and budget projections for the marble stairs and their environs. Additional work included bidding assistance and construction observation, which included detailed meeting minutes of on-site construction meetings to review progress and address unanticipated situations. EDC worked closely with TTOR to meet their needs and time schedule, while restoring this significant piece of this historic designed landscape. **The restored garden received the 2005 Massachusetts Historical Commission Preservation Award.**



Restoration complete, August 19, 2003