HARVARD SQUARED

for the Future: The Olmsteds and the American Landscape, fills most of the first floor of the house and reflects the monumental impact of Olmsted’s philosophy and work, emphasizing the collaborative nature of his legacy. “It was not just Olmsted’s vision,” Swartz says, “that made a major contribution to American landscape architecture.”

Others took his ideas, as well as their own, into the future—in particular, Olmsted’s sons, John Charles Olmsted and Frederick Law Olmsted Jr., A.B. 1894. They worked with their father, then took over the firm when dementia forced his retirement. (He spent the last five years of his life at McLean Hospital, whose Belmont, Massachusetts, site he had helped choose years before; see Vita, “Frederick Law Olmsted,”

ALL IN A DAY: Portsmouth, New Hampshire

Sections of this seacoast city, where restaurants, shops, and architecture today charm herds of visitors, were once largely derelict. Residents resisted plans to bulldoze part of the downtown area in the 1950s, and instead helped turn 10 acres into the living history museum Strawbery Banke.

There, costumed reenactors explain the past while showing off buildings that date from about 1695 through World War II. “Mrs. Goodwin, wife of a Civil War-era governor of New Hampshire, is in her garden,” reports marketing director Stephanie Seacord, “Mrs. Stavers is at the Revolutionary War-era Pitt Tavern, and Mrs. Abbott minds her 1944-ish store, talking about rations and making do.” All are present, along with kids’ games, cooking tips, and traditional artisans—blacksmiths, barrel-makers, weavers, cooperers, and spinners—for the museum’s seventh annual New Hampshire Fall Festival on October 11.

But any off-season visit, when summer crowds are gone, reveals the core vibrancy of this community. Local art appears in Enormous Tiny Art at the Nahcotta Gallery through September 28. New films migrate from Colorado to the Telluride by the Sea festival, at The Music Hall September 19-21. Live music, from college bands to folk and jazz ensembles, is played almost nightly at clubs, such as The Blue Mermaid and The Dolphin Striker (a classic surf and turf restaurant). The Portsmouth Athenaeum hosts maritime lectures, on October 15 and November 19, and a chamber music trio on October 19. And the historic John Paul Jones House is open through October.

Portsmouth’s easy walk- and bike-ability is also a plus. Cyclists can take the Route 1B causeway to neighboring New Castle. The beach and park at Great Island Common are open year-round, as is the lesser-trod Fort Stark State Historic Site. Take a picnic and see the remnants of harbor defenses, which, like outspoken residents, proved integral to this coastal region’s survival.