

VIEW

SUMMER 2016
NUMBER 16

VIEW from the Director's Office

Dear Friends of LALH,

I am happy to announce the publication of *Ruth Shellhorn*, the first book in our Masters of Modern Landscape Design series with the University of Georgia Press. During the midcentury era, Shellhorn created new shopping centers for Bullock's department stores, private gardens for movie stars, and the circulation plan for Disneyland. Check out her story in the new book by Kelly Comras—or watch our new film about Shellhorn on the LALH website. Next up in the series are *James Rose* by Dean Cardasis, *Lawrence Halprin* by Kenneth Helphand, and *A. E. Bye* by Thaisa Way.

This issue of *VIEW* covers the origins of Comras's friendship with Shellhorn and her successful campaign to establish an archive of the designer's work at UCLA. Sarah Allaback follows up with a piece on the inexhaustible Mia Lehrer, whose Southern California practice uses citizen advocacy to achieve wide-ranging goals, one of which is the restoration of the Los Angeles River. We look at another river in Darrel Morrison's piece about his design for the Stella Niagara Reservation in upstate New York. The juxtaposition of current and past practitioners continues with an article on Warren H. Manning's legacy as an environmental planner, reflected in the parks he designed from Ithaca to Youngstown, Ohio.



The LALH Board of Directors at Brooklyn Bridge Park (design by Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates).

Our preservation heroes this year are W. Scott and Jean Peterson, owners of Tranquillity Farm in Middlebury, Connecticut. Shaped by Manning in the late 1890s, this remarkable country estate has been carefully stewarded by the Petersons for three decades. The model farm also bears the design imprint of John Charles Olmsted and Charles Eliot, as well as the practitioner Manning considered the best "flower garden maker in America," Ellen

Shipman. This issue's preservation story features the James Rose Center in Ridgewood, New Jersey, the practitioner's former home and garden. Both were designed by Rose—almost continually—from the 1940s to the 1990s, when he and Dean Cardasis began to conceive of a plan to save this iconic midcentury work.

VIEW concludes with Francis Kowsky's reflections on Andrew Jackson Downing's home and business in Newburgh, N.Y., known as Highland Gardens. Downing (like Rose) designed the house himself and planted the grounds to frame views of the Hudson. It was here that Downing wrote his most important books and laid the foundations for the profession in this country.

In recent news, the LALH book *John Nolen, Landscape Architect and City Planner* received the prestigious J. B. Jackson prize from the Foundation for Landscape Studies. We are very grateful for this recognition—and for everything that the FLS has done to support and encourage our programs through the years.

Thank you, readers, for all you do to help LALH in its mission as a publisher of foundational scholarship and source of education for students, practitioners, and all who care about history, design, and American places. We could not do our work without your support—and there is still much to do. If you are new to LALH, please visit lalh.org to learn more about how you can help us continue our mission.

Robin Karson,
Executive Director



The mission of the **Library of American Landscape History** is to foster understanding of the fine art of landscape architecture and appreciation for North America's richly varied landscape heritage through LALH books, exhibitions, and online resources.

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LIBRARY OF AMERICAN LANDSCAPE HISTORY

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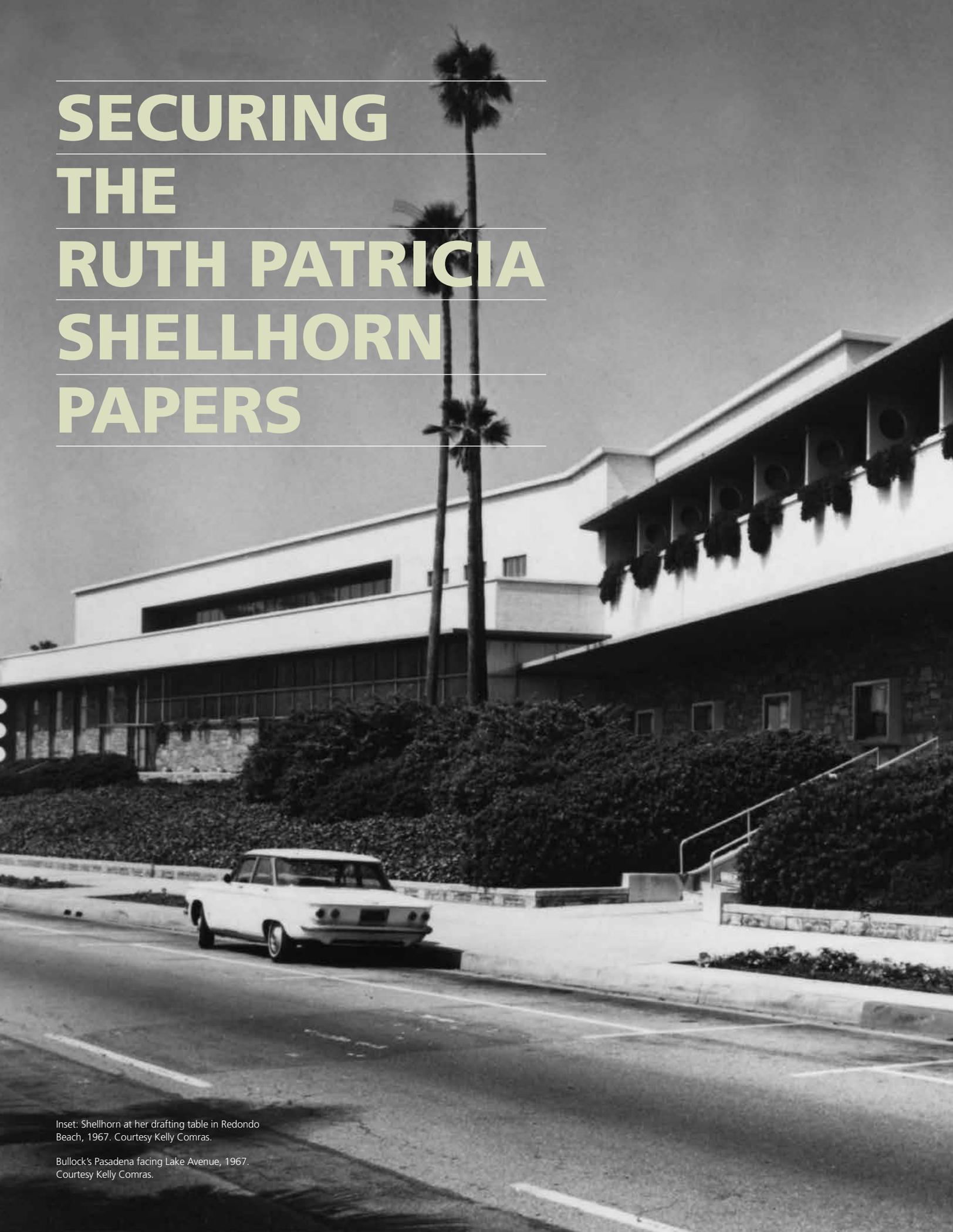
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Inside back cover: Tranquillity Farm. Photograph by Carol Betsch.
Back cover: Hixon garden, Pasadena, 1979. Photograph by Ruth Shellhorn. Ruth Shellhorn Papers, UCLA Library and Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

SECURING THE RUTH PATRICIA SHELLHORN PAPERS



Inset: Shellhorn at her drafting table in Redondo Beach, 1967. Courtesy Kelly Comras.

Bullock's Pasadena facing Lake Avenue, 1967. Courtesy Kelly Comras.



In 1978, I visited the landscape architect Ruth Shellhorn at her home in Redondo Beach. I was there to learn about her professional life for a college project—little did I realize that I would someday write a book about this remarkable woman. During a career spanning six decades, Shellhorn had designed almost four hundred landscape

projects—from department stores and college campuses to parks and private residences. A native Californian, she collaborated with some of her generation's most influential architects and was a leader in shaping the Southern California design aesthetic. I had admired her landscapes since my teenage years without realizing that they began as designs on her drafting table.

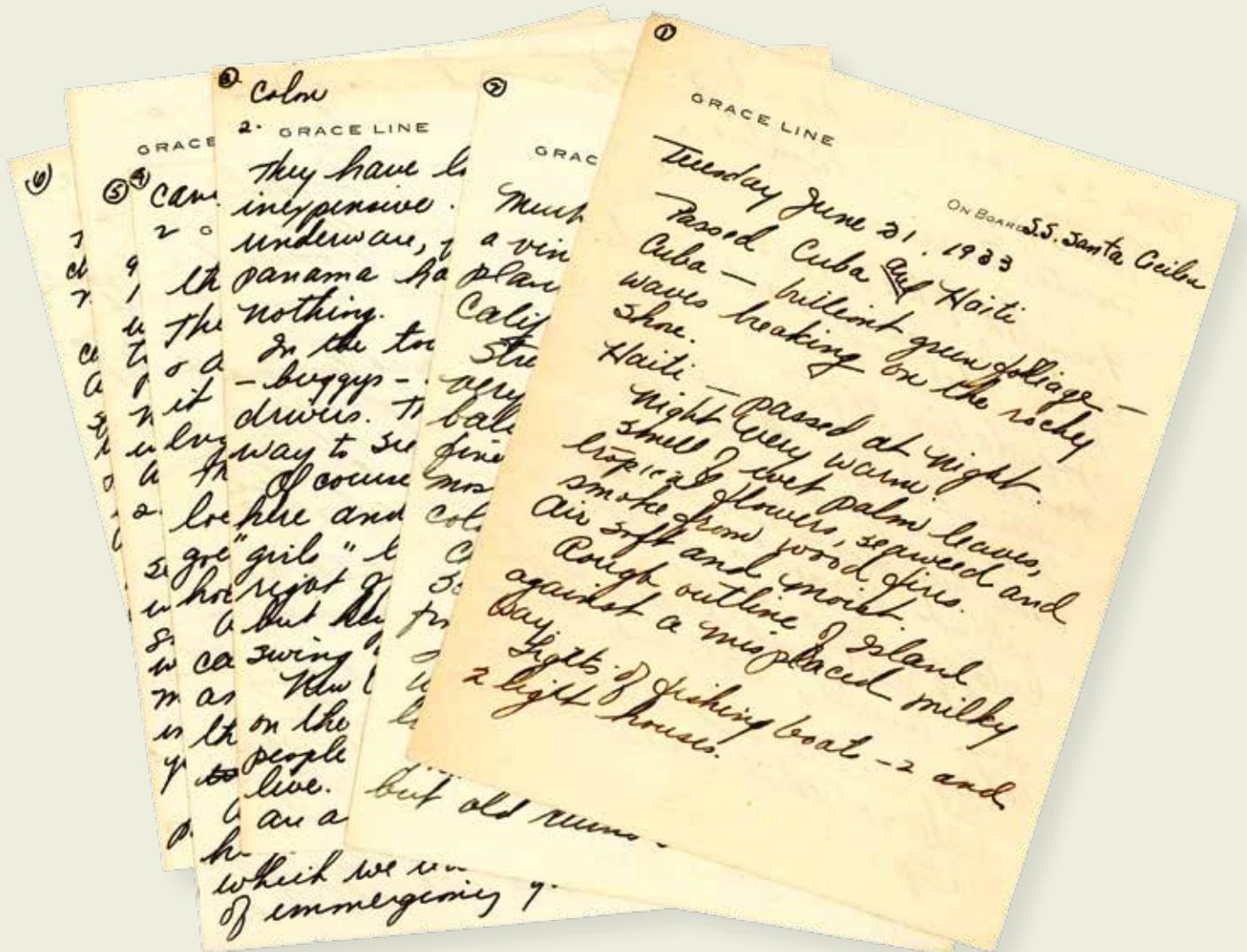
Twenty-five years after our first meeting, I called Shellhorn hoping to find her well and agreeable to being interviewed for a personal writing project. To my surprise, she not only answered the phone but invited me to her studio. There, floor-to-ceiling cabinets held her original drawings on tissue or vellum—neatly labeled, alphabetically organized, and covered with the recycled plastic bags from which she removed her copy of the *Los Angeles Times* each morning. Her client files—each with detailed plant lists, correspondence, time sheets, construction schedules, and hand-drawn sketches—were filed and boxed by decade. I later learned that she kept copies of all the articles she had written, articles written by others, and photographs of her work in books and magazines. After Kodachrome was introduced in 1936, she began to take before-and-after color slides of her work. These, too, were carefully labeled and filed. Throughout her career, Shellhorn kept an alphabetically organized card file of her clients and had recently created a chronological client list as well. It was almost like visiting a museum exhibit, except that Shellhorn was still using the studio—consulting on

private gardens and with long-standing clients, such as the University of California at Riverside.

For the last six decades, Shellhorn had preserved her office records. She went to great lengths to maintain her projects as they aged, and her records were an essential reference in retaining the integrity of her designs. In the way that she thought about her projects—as evolving over time, requiring consistent maintenance and adaptation to new conditions when necessary—she demonstrated her pragmatic faith in landscape preservation. During my visit, Shellhorn self-deprecatingly referred to her “packrat” habits. In fact, she had preserved an invaluable record of a midcentury landscape architectural practice. When I inquired about her plans for the materials, she said she did not know why anyone else would ever want to look at them and expected everything to be thrown out when her estate was settled.

Over the next few months, I persuaded Shellhorn to consider donating her collection to a suitable institution and began searching for an appropriate library in the region. When UCLA expressed interest, Shellhorn and I

Pages from diary of Ruth Shellhorn. Courtesy Ruth Shellhorn Papers.





Shellhorn's office, Redondo Beach, 2006. Photographs by Kelly Comras.



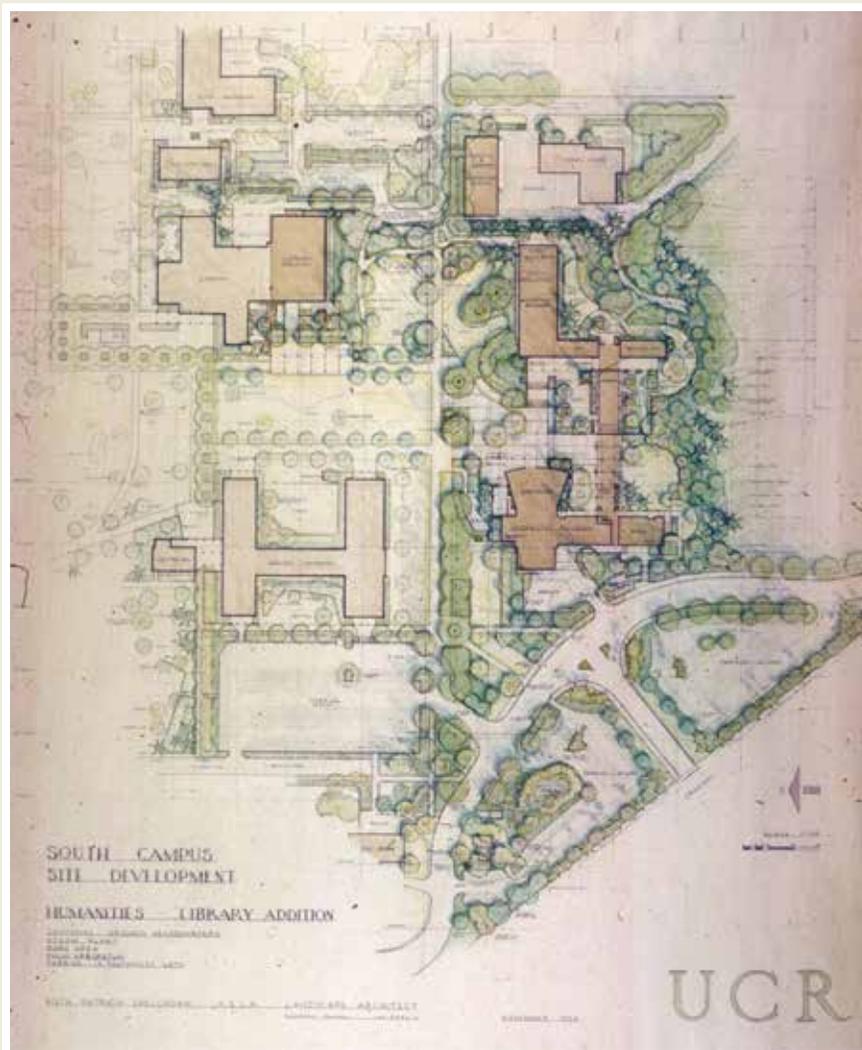
visited the Department of Special Collections at the Charles E. Young Research Library. In January 2005, UCLA accepted Shellhorn's promise of her papers and I agreed to help her prepare the materials for cataloging. The idea of a permanent home for the collection inspired us both. On the advice of the architectural historian David C. Streatfield, I began a series of interviews with Shellhorn—visiting her every three weeks for the next two years; the transcripts and notes from the interviews will eventually become part of her collected papers. I also helped her prepare for an oral history interview by The Cultural Landscape Foundation. Shellhorn gave me the names of people she had worked with who might still be alive and willing to contribute their own perspective. Landscape architects, contractors, nurserymen and clients, now dispersed all over the country, responded to my request for their thoughts and memories. These “new” records would also contribute to the future collection.

When she learned of the archival project, Alexis Slafer, director of the Landscape Architecture program at UCLA Extension, invited me to lecture on Shellhorn's life and legacy. I expected to speak to a small group of students and faculty members and was surprised to find more than a hundred people eager to listen. The event, which Shellhorn attended too, was moved to a different venue to accommodate the unanticipated growing crowd. After the lecture, I realized that Shellhorn's work appealed both to the general public and to those in the profession and academia. As Shellhorn and I continued our work compiling and cataloging the archive, I began to consider writing a book about her life story.

One potential issue would be the availability of high-quality photographs to illustrate the range and character of her landscape designs. Shellhorn's personal collection

of over three thousand color slides focused on “before” and “recently after” shots of her work—shots for reference, and therefore of uneven quality. During one of our conversations, Shellhorn recalled that the late landscape architect Robert M. Fletcher had also taken photographs of her designs during the mid-1980s in preparation for a presentation at an awards ceremony of the Southern California Horticultural Institute to honor Shellhorn. At that time, many of her mid- and late career projects were still intact, and Fletcher was an ideal photographer for Shellhorn's gardens. He responded to her work with emotion, even reverence, and ultimately devoted three months to photographing as many of her landscape designs as he could find. Within a few years, virtually all of the projects he photographed had been remodeled, some beyond recognition, and others had disappeared. Fletcher died in 1995, when he was only forty years old, but fortunately his family preserved his professional records in the basement of their home. His parents generously allowed me to search through Fletcher's files, which yielded dozens of high-quality color slides—additional material for Shellhorn's growing collection.

Shellhorn's painstakingly accumulated records preserve a great amount of detail about her design process and methodology. The collection illuminates her perception of each site's geographical context, her clients' desires, and the responses from the people who owned or visited her gardens. Her photographs constitute an invaluable visual record of her projects and process, as well as a sense of how she intended her gardens to be experienced. She not only controlled what was expressed in her own photographs but also infused her point of view into the work of other photographers. Fletcher interviewed her before photographing her gardens, and *Sunset Magazine* editors



"South Campus Site Development" plan, 1964. Courtesy Ruth Shellhorn Papers.

Opposite: Brackenridge/Niven Garden, 1987. Photograph by Robert M. Fletcher. Courtesy Burton and Patricia Fletcher.

and photographers walked the site with her before shooting. The insight they brought to their subject was inevitably influenced by Shellhorn's vision.

Ruth Shellhorn died in 2006, and four years later, when UCLA finished cataloging her extensive collection, I learned of an extraordinary discovery. Along with her photographs and professional papers, archivists found eighty personal diaries. Since 1926, when she was fifteen years old, Shellhorn had kept a diary, writing almost daily for eighty years. Most of her entries are about everyday life—activities and thoughts she must have considered too mundane or personal to warrant inclusion in her official papers. But the diaries preserve a written record of how Shellhorn perceived her life and the times she lived in, and tucked in among the quotidian entries are mentions of fellow landscape architects, professional events, and, occasionally, a description of a landscape or an event related to one of her projects. When I learned of the diaries, after UCLA completed the collection's finding aid, I had already begun my manuscript. Over the next few years, I read a significant portion of them and incorporated passages into *Ruth Shellhorn*, the first volume in the LALH Masters of Modern

Landscape Design series. Throughout her career, she oversaw every detail of all her projects; I think it is fitting that she should have the last word.

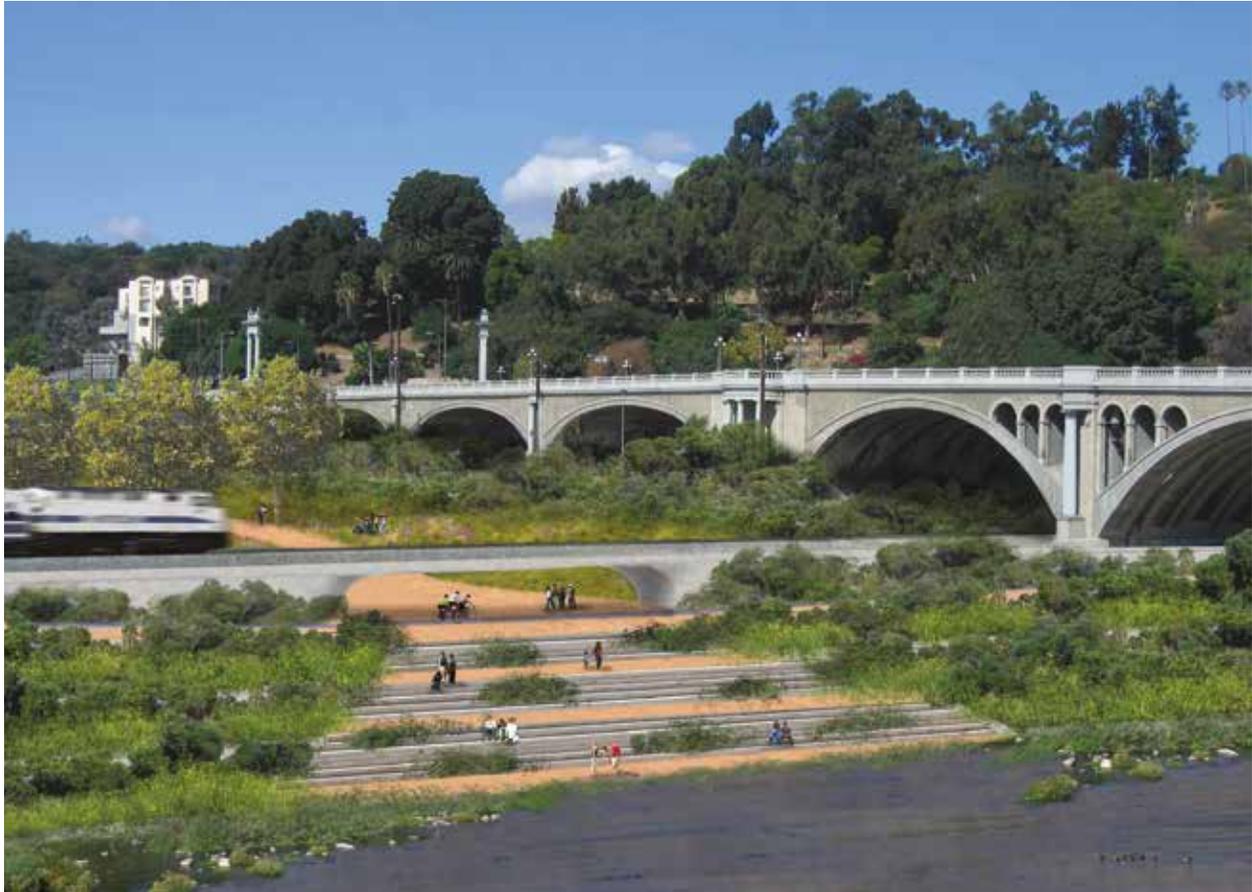
The Ruth Patricia Shellhorn Papers, 1909–2006, officially became part of Special Collections at UCLA in 2011, but that is not the end of its story. Shellhorn would understand that an archive is hardly static—its organization influences the researcher's interpretation, and objects, like landscapes, have their own stories, which lead to new discoveries. Although the Shellhorn archive has a finding aid, additional materials remain to be cataloged. A few months ago, I discovered an envelope in a leftover box of papers on which Shellhorn had scrawled a reminder: "Film to have printed." The sheets of black and white negatives inside will soon become photographs in the archive, adding yet another perspective to our understanding of Shellhorn's artistic vision.

KELLY COMRAS is principal of the landscape architectural firm KCLA in Pacific Palisades, California, and author of *Ruth Shellhorn (LALH, 2016)*.



MIA LEHRER + ASSOCIATES

Advocates for Design and Los Angeles



Since its founding in 1996, Mia Lehrer + Associates (MLA) has developed a deep connection with the Los Angeles metropolitan landscape and its residents. The firm has taken on some of the most significant projects in the region—including long-term master planning, large-scale urban parks, and most recently two new stadiums in addition to renovations at iconic Dodger Stadium. In its two decades, MLA has earned a reputation for comprehensive, ecologically relevant design. But it is perhaps best known for its proactive practice.

MLA identifies advocacy as a primary goal, not only advocating for its paid projects in community meetings and workshops, but also educating people about the power of landscape to improve their lives. Mia Lehrer first engaged

in pro bono work to broaden her experience with meaningful projects for the public realm. Her firm has since transformed a diverse collection of projects, both pro bono and paid, into a comprehensive vision for Los Angeles. The work is often about connecting people to nature—by revitalizing the Los Angeles River, enhancing public transportation, and even building bridges across freeways—all of which can only happen through public involvement. In addition to holding project-related workshops, firm leaders participate in policy groups, serve on nonprofit boards, collaborate in university studio critiques, and engage

BY SARAH ALLABACK

MLA identifies advocacy as a primary goal, not only advocating for its paid projects in community meetings and workshops, but also educating people about the power of landscape to improve their lives.

issues in editorials and interviews with newspapers and local radio stations. Lehrer calls this “advocacy by design” and considers it a method of addressing “the deep issues of our time.”

Mia Gutfreund was born in San Salvador, El Salvador, and learned the value of community activism from her parents. Her mother established a microlending service. Her father, the Salvadorian ambassador to Israel for ten years, worked in construction as a distributor of building materials, and Lehrer often accompanied him to construction sites and factories. During high school, she pursued her interest in building by working in an architect’s office. When she left home to attend Tufts University in the early 1970s, she felt herself drawn to the field of planning, but also wanted to become involved in the burgeoning environmental movement. Tufts did not offer the kind of degree she had in mind, so Lehrer designed her own major, “environmental design,” and wrote a senior thesis on the devastating ecological effects of damming rivers in El Salvador. After graduating, she returned to El Salvador, where she worked for the World Bank Coastal Zone Project.

While attending a lecture at Harvard, Lehrer met the landscape architect Peter Walker, who encouraged her to enter the Graduate School of Design. During her graduate student years, her perception of the urban landscape was shaped by MIT professor Kevin Lynch’s ground-breaking studies of how individuals experience the city and by Carl Steinitz’s view of global design. Despite the powerful influence of contemporary theory, Lehrer describes seeing Frederick Law Olmsted’s drawings exhibited at Harvard as a life-changing experience. After learning more about Olmsted and his sustaining impact on American culture, she became inspired to enter the profession of landscape architecture.

In 1979, Lehrer graduated from the GSD with a master’s in landscape architecture. The year before, she had begun working for POD Design, a landscape and planning firm founded on a rigorous, collaborative design approach. She opened her own firm three years later: Mia Lehrer Landscape Design. In the meantime, she married the architect Michael Lehrer, whom she had met her first semester at Harvard, and had three children. Her first experience with the Los Angeles River occurred in the mid-1990s, when she took her young rambunctious son to “La Gran Limpiza,” a river cleanup event, and met Lewis MacAdams,

the founder of the river advocacy group FoLAR. As she became increasingly involved in community activism, advocating for community projects became the driving force behind her landscape firm. Today, MLA includes a staff of thirty-five.

One important aspect of MLA’s urban advocacy message involves educating the public about the complex role of the contemporary landscape architect. Lehrer, who describes herself as an urbanist and a landscape planner, has developed a “multidisciplinary” firm to take advantage of a range of fields, including social science, ecology, planning, art, and urban design. The firm looks for opportunities to be involved in urban planning and design for large-scale, long-term projects in collaboration with multiple partners. Regardless of the size of a project, Lehrer believes that community involvement is the key to success. Her efforts to seek out diverse opinions, to listen, and to revise her own perspective have not gone unnoticed.

As part of its push to plan for the future, MLA dedicates considerable time and energy to educating policy-makers and the next generation of environmental stewards in sound environmental practices. Much of its work is in public parks, schools, and cultural institutions where children can experience contact with nature. By sitting on juries for the area landscape architecture programs, the firm weighs in with important issues and considerations for students to address. In its practice, the firm designed the first completely permeable driveway approved by the Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety and partnered with TreePeople Center for Community Forestry to design the first storm water collection cistern on a Los Angeles Unified School District campus. It promotes urban agriculture, horticultural therapy, and native plant propagation programs to encourage growing food, connecting to nature, and increasing urban habitat and tree canopy. This type of grassroots environmentalism is more than just a token nod to the current fashion for ecological design. It is central to MLA’s method of community advocacy. Over time, this attention to public education has led to a series of projects that have fundamentally shaped both the City of Los Angeles and its residents’ mindsets. The four projects described here—a cross section of MLA’s recent work—illustrate the principles fundamental to Lehrer’s “advocacy by design.”

Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan

Completed in 2007, the Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan introduced a new vision of the river and how

Los Angeles River Revitalization, Master Plan concept, Spring Street Bridge. Rendering by MLA.



it might become a priceless asset to the city. Since the 1930s, when the Army Corps of Engineers channeled the river in concrete to prevent flooding, the waterway has been perceived as anything but natural. The plan restores thirty-two miles of river to create a public green space that wends its way through the city, linking parks and public transportation networks into a unified whole. As one of three landscape architecture firms involved, MLA worked with the design team and various federal, state, and local agencies on the river revitalization, including habitat conservation and watershed management. The plan features terraced riverfront areas for public use, improved access to the river, native trees and plants, and a system of paths and bikeways that connects different parts of the city.

The Los Angeles River project, and ongoing efforts to further its implementation, exemplifies MLA's commitment to community advocacy. The firm took an instrumental role in creating the plan more than twenty years ago, participating in private and public meetings to gain community support and helping to adopt a new governance structure for river management. Lehrer sees the potential of the river to serve as its own kind of Emerald Necklace, bringing the city together through a shared enjoyment of the landscape. With this in mind, her team created a series of seventy brass and plywood bracelets to raise public awareness of the river. When worn together, the "My City My River" bracelets trace the course of the river as it runs through Los Angeles County.

Piggyback Yard Conceptual Master Plan Project

Lehrer's plan for Piggyback Yard, an isolated 125-acre property owned by the Union Pacific Railroad, is the most

dramatic of her concepts for revitalizing the Los Angeles River. The railroad located its freight yard downtown for a reason: to be at the center of the city and more efficiently connect trains to other modes of transportation. MLA hopes to restore the vibrancy of Piggyback Yard by transforming it into one of the largest natural areas along the river, as well as a center of culture and commerce.

The origins of the Piggyback Yard concept illustrate Lehrer's advocacy-by-design approach, as well as the patience and persistence necessary to engage in this type of work. On Fridays, beginning in 2005, Lehrer met with her friend Lewis MacAdams, the architect Michael Maltzan, and representatives from the firms Perkins + Will and Chee Salette Architecture Office, to develop a concept for the derelict freight yard. Although Piggyback Yard was only a vision, they considered it a real project and discussed redeveloping the property for an art school campus, constructing housing, and creating a park that could sustain annual flooding. Part of the plan involved connecting across the river to the renovated Union Station and its network of light rail lines.

In 2010, MLA completed the Piggyback Yard conceptual master plan pro bono for FoLAR, to celebrate "the symbiotic betterment" of the river and its community. By providing public access to the river and a restored riparian environment, the refurbished yard would offer a variety of opportunities for people to interact with nature and one another. Built into MLA's plan is the need for diverse groups including property owners, public agencies, private developers, and the citizens of Los Angeles to collaboratively support the project. Piggyback Yard illustrates one of the strengths of Lehrer's practice: the willingness to forge



L to r: Piggyback Yard Conceptual Master Plan, Site Plan, 2015. Rendering by MLA; Piggyback Yard model. Photograph by MLA.
Below, Vista Hermosa Natural Park, picnic area, 2016. Photograph by MLA.

One important aspect of MLA's urban advocacy message involves educating the public about the complex role of the contemporary landscape architect.

ahead and create opportunities without the promise of financial remuneration. Over the last several decades, this kind of leading by example has led to her extraordinary success as a community advocate.

Vista Hermosa Natural Park

The first new park in downtown Los Angeles in over a hundred years, Vista Hermosa is both a place for active recreation and an "urban watershed demonstration project." Designed in 2008, the 9.5-acre park incorporates sustainable practices such as storm water collection for its irrigation, the use of permeable materials for its limited hard surfaces, and buildings with green roofs and solar collection trellis panels. Even more important, the park offers city dwellers the opportunity to experience an oak savannah, meadows, and the chaparral native to the region.

The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority, which manages the park, provides a variety of educational programs to connect neighbors and park visitors to nature.



Lehrer's local popularity is indicated by "Caro-Mia Lehrer," a new ice cream flavor made by Coolhaus, an architecturally inspired, Los Angeles-based ice cream company that offers its gourmet brand on the streets of the city and nationally through high-end markets like Whole Foods.

The project offers a new model of urban park. Rather than the traditional turf and tree landscape making up most city parks, Vista Hermosa Natural Park was designed as a "Window to the Mountains," bringing the once-distant nature of the Santa Monica Mountains to an urban park-poor neighborhood. The park provides places for all sorts of activities—from organized soccer on the sports fields to picnics on the meadow to playing on animal sculptures or climbing sycamore trees or scaling the boulders on a constructed waterfall. "From the moment you enter the park, you feel as if you have escaped to a different world. We are no longer in LA," Lehrer said. "We are in the nearby mountains, surrounded by native California plants and trees."

Natural History Museum Gardens

In the 2012 Nature Gardens at the Natural History Museum

of Los Angeles County, MLA created a place that is both an urban ecological laboratory and a park. The firm worked with a team of designers and engineers that included CO Architects, Pace Water Engineering, Wallace Soil Labs, Stephen Mayo, and Green Shield Ecology. Museum and citizen scientists do research outside, while visitors enjoy three-and-a-half acres of gardens. The plan features butterfly hedges, tree-filled areas, flowering shrubs, pond, creek, and urban fountains. There is a dry stream that only occasionally contains water but hosts sycamores and willows. Within the gardens, artistic creations and museum programs set the stage for the exploration of native flora and fauna. The wooded Urban Wilderness provides an opportunity for quiet reflection or a stroll through nature. The Pollinator Garden illuminates the power of bees, butterflies, moths, and birds. And the Get Dirty Zone welcomes immersion in the most basic medium of landscape



Nature Gardens plan, Natural History Museum. Rendering by MLA.



"Ephemeral Stream" pond, Natural History Museum, 2007. Photograph by Tom Lamb; Right: "Living Wall," Natural History Museum, 2008. Photograph by MLA.

architecture: soil. The gardens also encourage indoor-outdoor programming with a sloped outdoor amphitheater that connects to newly daylight exhibition halls in the basement level. Situated in Exposition Park, the gardens are an oasis in South Los Angeles. Children from area schools, many without access to neighborhood parks or yards of their own, are exposed to the wonder of nature through field trips to the museum. This ecological laboratory is educating the next generation of environmental stewards on the biological richness of urban Los Angeles. And the museum's digital iNaturalist app lets citizen scientists of all ages map the locations of plant and animal species wherever they find them. The Nature Gardens are teaching children and adults alike that habitat, or its potential, is everywhere.

Design by Advocacy

What began as an individual effort to advocate for better design has become a firm philosophy. Mia Lehrer and her practice are celebrated for progressive work in the public realm. Lehrer's local popularity is indicated by "Caro-Mia Lehrer," a new ice cream flavor made by Coolhaus, an architecturally inspired, Los Angeles-based ice cream company that offers its gourmet brand on the streets of the city and nationally through high-end markets like Whole Foods. Her caramel ice cream with Maldon sea salt is the only flavor named for a non-architect. Last year, the LA Design Festival presented Lehrer with the Julia Morgan ICON award for her

achievements as a "landscape architect, urbanist, place-maker and River Sister," whose work on the Los Angeles River has proven her "a visionary who is clearly ahead of the game and ready to push the dialogue forward."

Mia Lehrer prides her firm on empowering communities to improve their landscape. Advocating for a better Los Angeles is a time-consuming, often frustrating process, but one that has transformative potential. As LALH celebrates Ruth Shellhorn's environmental advocacy work and design expertise with the publication of a new book, it is fitting that we feature Lehrer and her firm's advocacy-by-design approach here. Few practices engage the public the way MLA does.

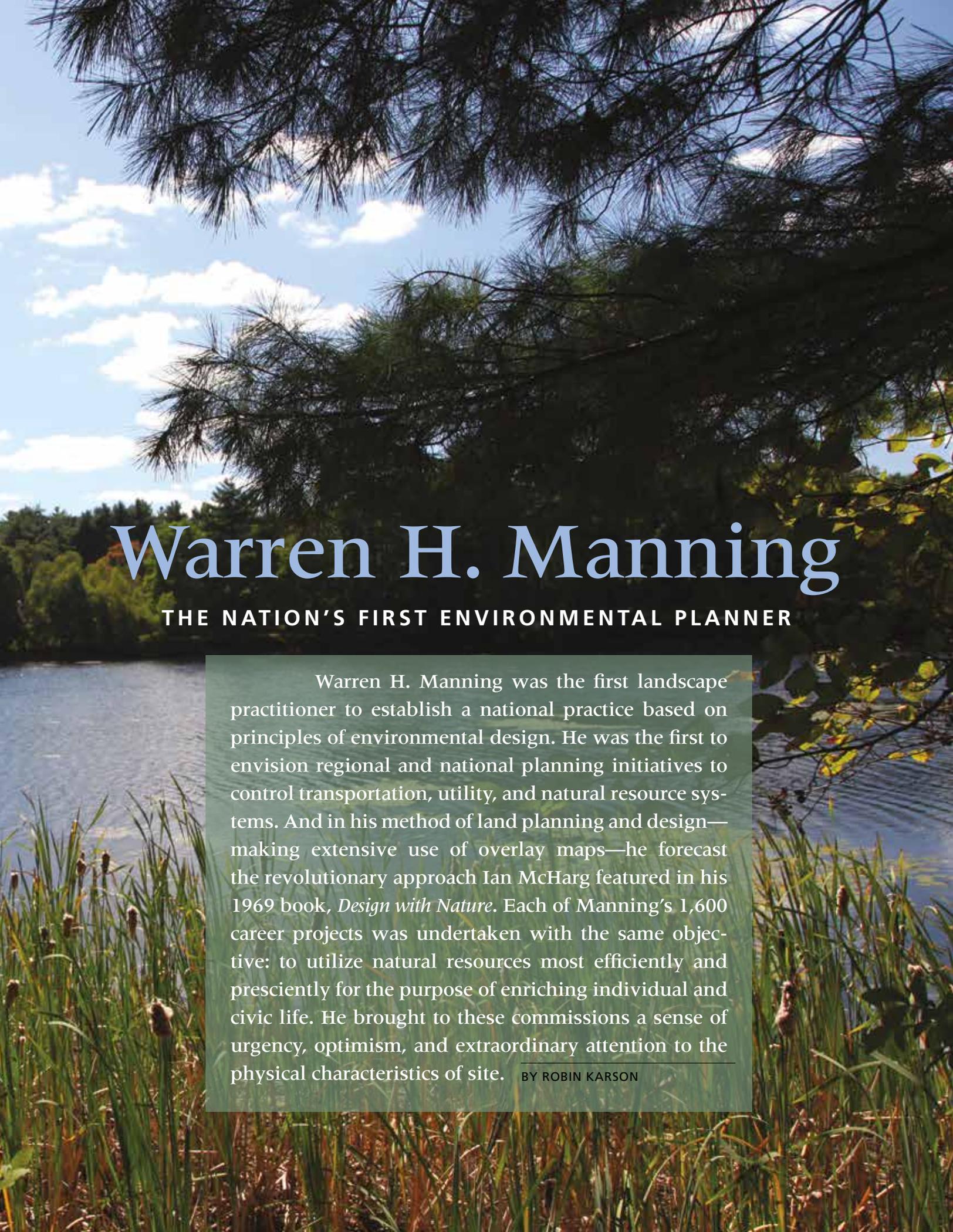
"At MLA, we use advocacy as a design tool," Lehrer said in her recent lecture at New York's Architectural League. "Through advocacy to our clients, communities, elected officials and non-governmental organizations we educate about the deep issues of our time, and how they impact our daily lives. Through advocacy, we create excitement about potential projects, and find the means to make them happen. Through advocacy, we communicate the success and promise of our design ideas. In addition to the unique lens landscape architecture gives to view solutions, advocacy is a special language that we've developed over the past thirty years as a firm."

SARAH ALLABACK is LALH managing editor and author of *The First American Women Architects*.



PRACTICE





Warren H. Manning

THE NATION'S FIRST ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNER

Warren H. Manning was the first landscape practitioner to establish a national practice based on principles of environmental design. He was the first to envision regional and national planning initiatives to control transportation, utility, and natural resource systems. And in his method of land planning and design—making extensive use of overlay maps—he forecast the revolutionary approach Ian McHarg featured in his 1969 book, *Design with Nature*. Each of Manning's 1,600 career projects was undertaken with the same objective: to utilize natural resources most efficiently and presciently for the purpose of enriching individual and civic life. He brought to these commissions a sense of urgency, optimism, and extraordinary attention to the physical characteristics of site.

BY ROBIN KARSON

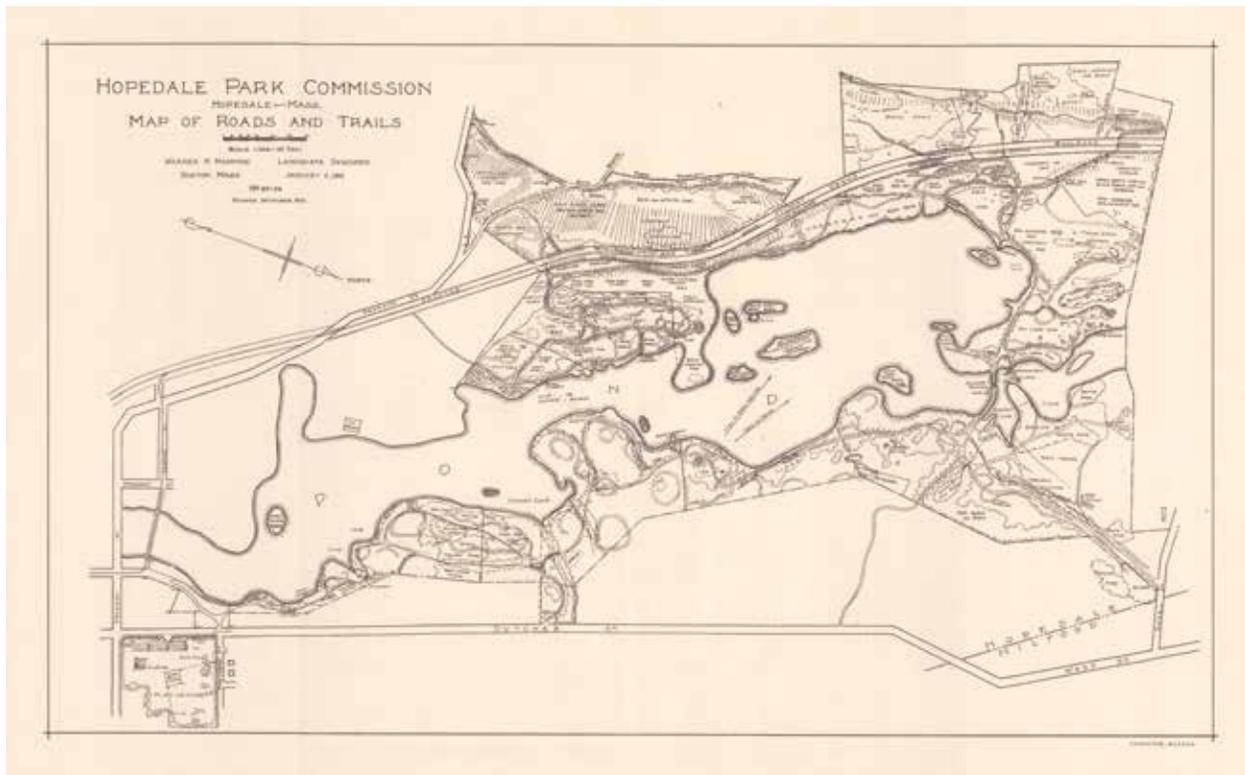
Among the eleven founding members of the American Society of Landscape Architects, Manning was also a key protagonist in its formation in 1899. He served as president in 1914, using this platform to promote legislation for a new National Park Service, a project that resonated with his own strong beliefs in national planning. He published frequently, initially in horticultural magazines such as *Gardening* and *Vick's Illustrated Monthly*, and later in *Landscape Architecture*, *The American City*, and other professional journals, arguing for comprehensive initiatives to address the effects of rapid urbanization and diminishing natural resources, the topics also of countless lectures he delivered to progressive, reform-minded audiences. Manning employed and guided the development of some of the twentieth century's most influential practitioners, among them Fletcher Steele, A. D. Taylor, and Dan Kiley. The story of the landscape architect's transformation from the son of a New England nursery owner to one of the twentieth century's earliest environmental planners illuminates a critical juncture in the history of the profession.

Manning entered the firm of F. L. & J. C. Olmsted as a planting assistant in 1888. He had been hired by the firm's founder to fill a horticultural gap because neither of the two partners (Frederick Law Olmsted and John Charles Olmsted) was a knowledgeable plantsman. Manning came with considerable experience, owing to his years working with his father, Jacob, founder and owner of Reading Nursery, in Massachusetts. The family business had profited from the rise in popularity of gardening, which had been invigorated by a Victorian

preference for the gardenesque—a method of planting that featured wide spacing designed to show off each specimen to perfection. Newly discovered imports, particularly those with exotic bloom and multicolored, peculiar foliage, were avidly sought by American homeowners eager to ornament their grounds. Jacob and his sons were also shipping American species—like white pine and yucca—to England and Europe.

Although Manning's charge in the Olmsted firm was to oversee planting, he almost immediately began to absorb principles related to design and planning. Blessed, or perhaps cursed, with an obsessive, detail-oriented mind, Manning nonetheless was taken by Olmsted Sr.'s approach to landscape design, which differed markedly from the gardenesque tastes that had fueled his father's business. A few months into the new job, Manning noted in his diary, "Mr. O had gained his ideas of treatment by a study of nature on a broad scale by travelling through large sections of country, [and] he had looked rather for the general effects than for the details that made up these effects . . . he did not think of every detail that went to make up [the effect] but only of producing that appearance in the most effective way." The "most effective way" in the Olmsted office was nature's way—in particular, massed plantings of hardy plants. This design aesthetic resonated deeply with a New England native who had spent the summers of his formative years hiking through the wilds with his father, even as they packaged exotics for sale to nursery customers.

Manning took away another life-altering lesson from Fairsted, this one gleaned from his work with Charles





Opposite: Hopedale Parks, "Map of Roads and Trails," January 1913. Courtesy Center for Lowell History, University of Massachusetts Lowell (MCL).
Above: Reservoir Park, Harrisburg Parks, c. 1928. Photograph by Arthur G. Eldredge. Courtesy MCL.

Eliot, who joined the firm in 1893. During Manning's tenure at the office, Eliot evolved a method of recording site data on translucent maps—related to hydrology, topography, settlement, and many other categories—which could then be layered and analyzed as an integrated whole. Eliot used this method as a basis for design in the new parks for the Boston Metropolitan District Commission and other projects where Manning assisted. Manning's uncanny mapping skills may not have been apparent to his mentors at the Olmsted firm, but when he founded his own practice in 1896, the site-mapping techniques he had acquired soon provided a foundation for his own design and planning methods. Over time these became increasingly ambitious, a reflection of Manning's expansive imagination, inexhaustible energy, and determination to improve life for all Americans.

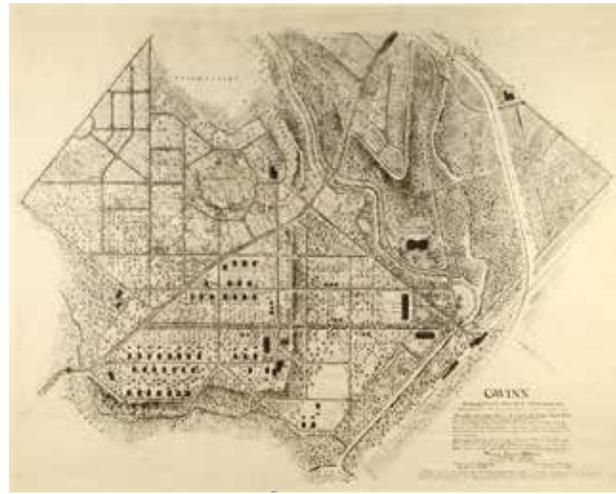
As park, subdivision, and city planning commissions flooded his Boston office, Manning approached each project with the goal of bringing burgeoning urban populations into close contact with nature. One early job, a new park for Hopedale (Massachusetts), begun in 1899, signaled many of the concerns that would enliven his future practice. In keeping with principles developed

by the Olmsted firm, Manning designated a "town park" for active recreation and naturalistic "parklands" for the passive enjoyment of nature. He organized the plan so that Hopedale Pond would function as both scenic and spatial centerpiece of the parklands, which he laid out to surround it. Manning sited islands and bridges to offer a variety of viewpoints across the pond, and created boat launches at several locations to make the water accessible. He planted large stands of native trees throughout, stocked by an on-site nursery. In time, the layout came to include a perimeter road, a train stop (1903), a bathhouse and sandy beach (1904–1905), and a network of several miles of foot paths along the pond shoreline (1904–1914). The park survives today, and is visited by thousands of local residents who enjoy the scenery and wildlife there, escaping from the nearby city to wander through dense woodlands.

In 1901, Manning and his brother, J. Woodward, with whom he was briefly in practice, were commissioned to plan a much larger park for Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. There, too, Manning utilized a large body of water as an organizing feature. He began the work by focusing on the severely polluted Susquehanna River, consulting with

sanitary engineers to create a new system of intercepting sewers and a dam to control water levels. As he had done in Hopedale, Manning persuaded several private landowners to donate land along the riverbank. (Many of Manning's projects were significantly enlarged by such means.) He also laid out a system of parkways to provide connections with other open spaces in a twenty-mile loop north through the city. One of these was a new park surrounding Wildwood Lake, which Manning had created by damming a small creek that wound through a typhoid-ridden swamp. In 1906, the city planner Charles Mulford Robinson praised Manning's Harrisburg plan for its "broad grasp and far-seeing vision." Frank Waugh featured the new park system as one of eleven masterpieces of American landscape architecture in his 1910 book, *The Landscape Beautiful*. Harrisburg native J. Horace McFarland, president of the American Civic Association, took the story of the "Harrisburg Awakening" on the road, holding up the example to other cities across the nation. As a result of this positive press and his own driven personality, Manning's practice continued to expand.

Within a few years, he had been commissioned to design Bellevue Park, a new subdivision in Harrisburg underwritten by McFarland and other local investors. Here, too, Manning looked to the existing landscape to



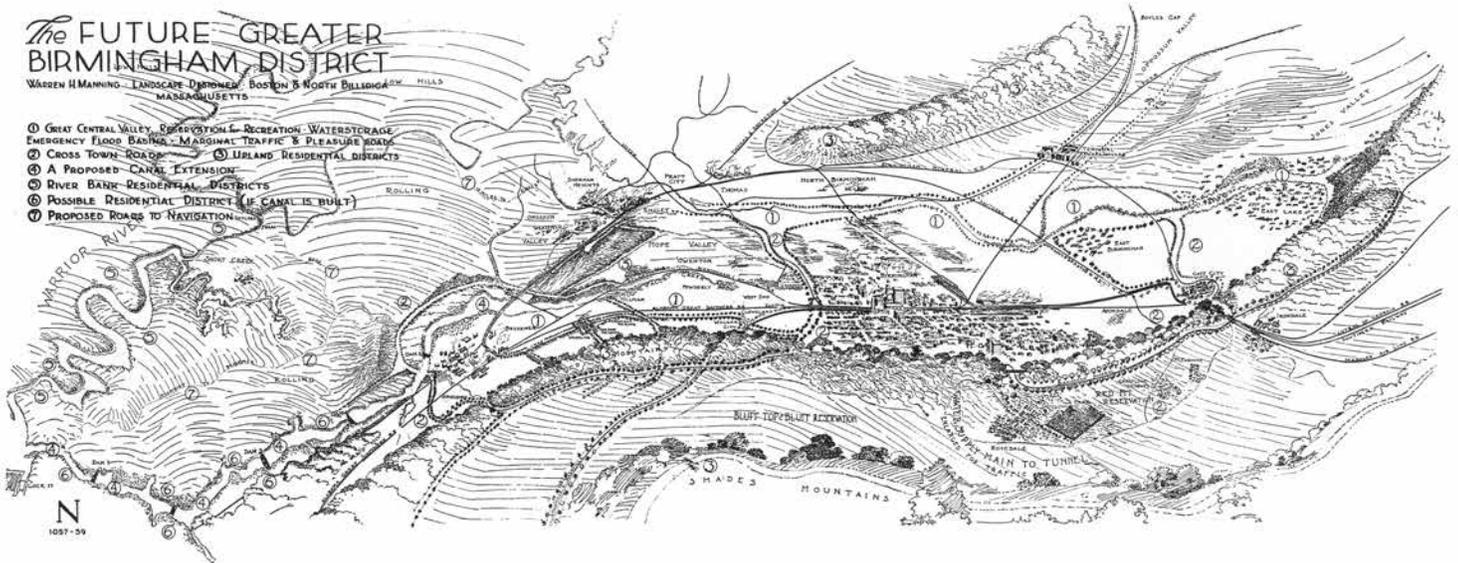
"Gwinn," plan no. 715-100-29, n.d. Courtesy MP. Opposite: Gwinn, wild garden. Photograph by Arthur G. Eldredge, c. 1928. Courtesy MCL. Below: Wildwood Lake, Harrisburg Parks, 2012. Photograph by Carol Betsch.

guide the character of the new project. He developed marshy lowlands near the northern edge of the 132-acre parcel into a series of ponds and wildlife reservations, and he designed a system of curving roads to closely follow the lay of the land. Manning's plan provided small parks and large trees throughout. Promotional postcards advertising the "rural" advantages of the new subdivision urged prospective home buyers to "resolve to live in the fresh air."

Manning's environmental approach also guided his work creating new company towns. In laying out Gwinn, Michigan, in 1907 (work undertaken for William Gwinn Mather, president of the Cleveland-Cliffs Iron Company), Manning staked out the 440-acre settlement at the juncture of two rivers, where workers could "spend more of the outdoor life which they need." The town's landscape amenities were also significant. They included a town park, a system of pine-bordered boulevards, and large lots with big backyards for vegetable and flower gardens. Several years earlier, Manning had designed a private estate for Mather in Ishpeming. His layout included "Mather Grove," 60 acres of which was open to the public.

In addition to new company towns, parks, and other work related to Cleveland-Cliffs—some of this undertaken with thousands of volunteer laborers—Mather also commissioned Manning to design a landscape for his new private estate in Cleveland beginning in 1905. In collaboration with the architect Charles A. Platt, Manning designed the five-acre home grounds of Gwinn to provide Mather with a variety of landscape settings. The project's boundaries expanded (as Manning's projects often did) when Manning persuaded Mather to purchase an additional twenty acres south of Lake Shore Boulevard and commission a large wild garden there. It had become Manning's preferred type of garden, and he was arguably the nation's expert in this genre. Manning and





"The Future Greater Birmingham District," from "The Birmingham District Plan: Report of Warren H. Manning to the City Commission," December 1916. Courtesy Birmingham Historical Society.

his staff inventoried site conditions on the new parcel, where he then laid out miles of trails along Nine Mile Creek, directing local crews to spade out weedy plants and install hundreds of thousands of new ones. Many of these were native wildflowers dug in the Upper Peninsula, transported across the Great Lakes in the holds of the Mather's iron ore steamers. The trails took visitors past scenes of idealized "wild" beauty—from hillsides of fern to groves of rhododendron, floriferous meadows, and densely planted bogs.

By 1914, the year he served as president of the ASLA, Manning had become interested, even obsessed, with planning on a national scale. Determined to create a comprehensive scheme that would better control use of the nation's natural resources, he began an ambitious mapping and data collection effort, known simply as the National Plan. The initiative built on several projects in his office at the time. Among these was the Finger Lakes state parks system in upstate New York; another was a new plan for the City of Birmingham.

Manning's visionary recommendations for the rapidly expanding southern city were based on an integrated analysis of the region's natural resources, its present and future transportation linkages, and its growth potential. Published by private subscription in 1919, Manning's plan sited permanent residential housing in the highlands, where commercial and industrial development was impossible, and it separated burgeoning rail lines and auto roads for safety. The plan recommended siting air landing strips in low-lying areas so they could also function as flood plains, creating commercial districts in regions that could become industrialized in time, and acquiring land not suited to cultivation for public reservations. The utilitarian scheme lacked the Beaux-Arts monumentality of many City Beautiful plans being implemented

elsewhere in the country, emphasizing instead efficiency and adaptability. In the sense that the Birmingham plan transcended concerns with appearance and classical style, it was a harbinger of modern planning efforts.

Political developments precluded the implementation of many aspects of Manning's plan, but several of his recommendations had a lasting impact on development there. He was invited back to Birmingham in 1925 to lay out a new 4,000-acre subdivision, Mountain Brook Estates, southeast of the city. The plan for the ambitious enterprise was completed in 1929, just months before the stock market collapse, but Mountain Brook weathered the financial storm, and many distinguished homes were constructed there. It remains a vibrant and distinctive example of a suburb planned on nature-based principles.

Manning's involvement with the Finger Lakes region dates back to 1901, when he was commissioned to lay out conjoined estates on Ithaca's East Hill for the businessman Robert H. Treman and his two siblings. (Manning's unconventional design included a sheep pasture, which the Treman family planned to allow to return to forest.) Quickly discovering a shared enthusiasm for the region's natural wonders, Treman and Manning worked together on many subsequent projects. One of these was the rescue of Lucifer Falls, a 230-foot cascade on Treman's privately held land. Manning planned a series of improvements to protect against the vandalism and development that threatened the pristine beauty of the region. Over the course of the next decade, he studied the gorge-riven wilds of upstate New York in detail, advising on acquiring and improving several other scenic reservations. By the 1920s, these parcels, all within a short drive from Ithaca, were recognized as the Finger Lake State Parks.

In Youngstown, Ohio, Manning found important park work that had deep ties to his mentor Charles Eliot and

another early American landscape designer who utilized a nature-based approach to design, Horace W. S. Cleveland. Manning began his work there in 1910 at the request of Volney Rogers, a local attorney, who had been the force behind the creation of the new park in the 1890s when he commissioned Eliot and Cleveland to lay out trails and vistas. (Their work was done during the same decade, but apparently not collaboratively.) Manning's suggestions, which would have enlarged their scheme with new land acquisitions and significant improvements, were not implemented, owing to a lack of funds.

But after Volney's death in 1919, finances improved, and the park commissioners invited Manning back to Youngstown. He advised on the acquisition of new parcels, including a sandstone ravine and a new sixty-acre site to the south, where he proposed creating a new lake, Lake Newport. Between 1920 and 1932, when his park contract ended, Manning extended the park's southern boundary by two and three quarters miles, adding another thousand acres. He also added ball fields, a new entrance, a new office building, and several other improvements, including two golf courses designed by Donald Ross. Mill Creek Park, comprising more than four thousand acres, is one of the largest metropolitan parks in the nation.

Published in condensed form by *Landscape Architecture* in 1923, Manning's National Plan did not have its intended impact, even though some of its recommendations provoked lively and productive discussion among planning officials. In its worst aspects, the plan was racist, deeply flawed by then-prevalent notions of geographical determinism. Other aspects of Manning's planning approach were flawed, too—damming streams to create lakes, for example, and draining wetlands. But one key element of Manning's legacy has proved resilient and influential—his sense of the landscape architect's role as a steward of the earth, charged with safeguarding natural resources and creating designs that provide intimate contact with nature. As planetary resources shrink and the environmental impact of humankind continues to intensify, Manning's imperative for the profession seems essential.

ROBIN KARSON is executive director of LALH and the author of several books about American landscape history and coeditor of Warren H. Manning, *Landscape Architect and Environmental Planner* (forthcoming).

Lake Newport Wetlands, Mill Creek Park, 2014. Photograph by Carol Betsch.





Creating a Preserve on the Niagara River

The thirty-six-mile-long strait known as the Niagara River flows northward from Lake Erie through Buffalo and then cascades over magnificent Niagara Falls. Before settling into a broad riverbed at the village of Lewiston, New York, it rushes into the Niagara Gorge, bordered by white dolomite cliffs two hundred feet high. It then flows on to Lake Ontario. Over the course of its journey, the river drops a total of 325 feet, half of that at Niagara Falls.

At the north edge of Lewiston, the Niagara passes a twenty-nine-acre parcel on its eastern bank that was recently designated the Stella Niagara Preserve by the Western New York Land Conservancy. The property was purchased by the Land Conservancy from the Sisters of Saint Francis, who had owned it for more than a century.

By dedicating the land as a preserve, the organization has ensured preservation of a site rich in natural and cultural significance as well as the provision of public access, in perpetuity. Although the Sisters no longer hold title to it, they will have ongoing access to the land they have nurtured and loved since 1907. I was commissioned to design a plan to protect and enhance the unique natural and cultural heritage of Stella Niagara while making it accessible to the public.

Vegetation history here goes back many centuries, when the most recent glacier scraped over the landscape. In the millennia that followed, the land was subject to the effects of floods and ice floes, lightning-ignited fires,

BY DARREL MORRISON



The waves of human impact continued with the work of the Sisters during the last hundred years, in their production of fruits, vegetables, and garden flowers, as well as the periodic mowing that kept the historic river view open.

Niagara River from the Stella Niagara Preserve. Photograph by Jay Burney. Courtesy Western New York Land Conservancy.

wind and ice storms, and burrowing, browsing, and grazing by native wildlife. With the arrival of a human population, these natural phenomena were accompanied by the activities of cutting, clearing, burning, and planting of crops. The waves of human impact continued with the work of the Sisters during the last hundred years, in their production of fruits, vegetables, and garden flowers, as well as the periodic mowing that kept the historic river view open.

I first saw the site with my design associate Nancy Aten, ASLA, on a hot, humid day in August 2015, accompanied by the Land Conservancy executive director, Nancy Smith, and development director, Jajeon Rose. That view of the Niagara River, an azure band with a mixed forest rising up on the Canadian side, remains

with me still. Scrambling down a steep slope at the northern edge of the property, we looked over a gently undulating plain with a scattering of trees in a field of pasture grasses and other oldfield species. A walking tour revealed the diversity of the vegetation on the land as well as many cultural artifacts dating to the Sisters' tenure there and before.

A rustic stone grotto dedicated to Bernadette of Lourdes was built by the Sisters soon after they acquired the land. A historic landing known by the native Tuscaroras as "Yeh-heh-weh-kwah-taw," or "where they take the boats out," survives as well. Throughout history, this landing provided one of the last opportunities for people in canoes and boats traveling southward to come ashore before reaching the cliffs of the Niagara Gorge and the



Left: Morrison, Aten, and members of the Land Conservancy exploring Stella Niagara.

Bottom, left: View to the Niagara River in the distance.

Bottom, right: Existing meadow conditions at Stella Niagara.

Photographs by Nancy Aten.



falls. British troops landed here on December 19, 1813, during the war of 1812, and proceeded to destroy the village of Lewiston and then march northward to capture Fort Niagara.

To the south is the Little Chapel by the River, reputedly the smallest religious structure in western New York. According to local folklore, the building was constructed as a supply shed during the War of 1812. Ninety-five years later, when the Sisters acquired the property, they engaged a local Jesuit building contractor to convert it, and, a half century later, commissioned the Polish artist Joseph Slawinski to create unique “sgraffito” murals on the interior walls. In 1964, the Sisters commissioned the Peace Memorial in memory of President John F. Kennedy. Here, too, Swalinski’s distinctive sgraffito art in rich, deep colors enlivens both the interior and exterior.

Land Conservancy staff provided us with a comprehensive inventory of the natural and cultural features of the Preserve site, including maps showing topography, geology and soils, hydrology, and existing plant communities and lists of invasive plant species on the site. Working with a facilitation consultant, Make Communities, the Land Conservancy also conducted a series of stake-

holders meetings in late summer of 2015 to gain local opinion and expertise. A plan established five goals:

- Protect and enhance wildlife habitat
- Provide access to the Preserve for people to walk, hike, kayak, canoe, learn, and be inspired
- Protect and celebrate the Preserve’s diverse attractions
- Explore and promote the Preserve’s history
- Learn—and adapt—together over time

Three elements are central to the design Aten and I created to respond to these goals: the pathway system, the treatment of historic/cultural features, and the proposed vegetation complex.

The design process that gave form to the pathway system and the proposed plant communities involved elements of both art and science. We began by playing with form, using chalk pastels on overlays of the base map. We were inspired by music (Bedřich Smetana’s flowing composition *The Moldau*, in particular) as we created a series of quick color sketches. These sketches were in turn refined to reflect the patterns of soil types and topographic forms on the site. I have long felt that topographic maps with their fluid contour lines are

We were inspired by music (Bedřich Smetana's flowing composition The Moldau, in particular) as we created a series of quick color sketches.

THE CENTERPIECE of the planting is the series of native grassland communities designed to restore biodiversity and ecological function while maintaining the view of the Niagara River. The plant communities are matched with the topography, soils, and moisture. Starting from the sandy plateau at the eastern edge of the site, they are: (1) an Eastern sandplain grassland; (2) a xeric grassland community in the upper section of the steep west-facing slope next to it; (3) a dry-mesic grassland composition on the lower portion of that slope; (4) a mesic grassland community throughout much of the undulating plain that dominates the central part of the site; (5) an oak savanna, where bur and white oaks will be planted in an "island" within the mesic grassland; (6) a wet-mesic grassland in a low part of the undulating plain which is subject to periodic flooding; and (7) a sedge meadow in a gentle depression near the pathway to the landing. There are typically twenty to thirty species of native grasses, forbs (wildflowers), and ferns in each of the community groupings. Typically, some species carry over from one zone into the adjacent one. As a result, there will be subtle gradations of colors and textures from one zone to the next.



Concept plan detail of new plantings, January 31, 2016. Drawing by Darrel Morrison. Courtesy WNYCL.

elegant compositions themselves and provide a great beginning point for defining vegetation zones.

The selection of eastern grassland communities for the extensive center portion of the Stella Niagara site was also based on a blend of science and art. The botanic richness of the Niagara region was explored by a host of prominent eighteenth- and nineteenth-century botanists—Pehr Kalm, André Michaux, Alexander Agassiz, and Asa Gray among others—who found an abundance of native grassland species there. The site provides an opportunity to restore some of this natural heritage and interpret it to the public.

Aesthetically, the grassland model maintains the long view out over the river, and also provides richly varied experiences for people walking through the different zones on the broad pathways. As an example, the xeric grassland vegetation growing on the hot, dry upper slope near the east edge of the Preserve will have a prevalence of short grasses and forbs, only one to two feet tall, and

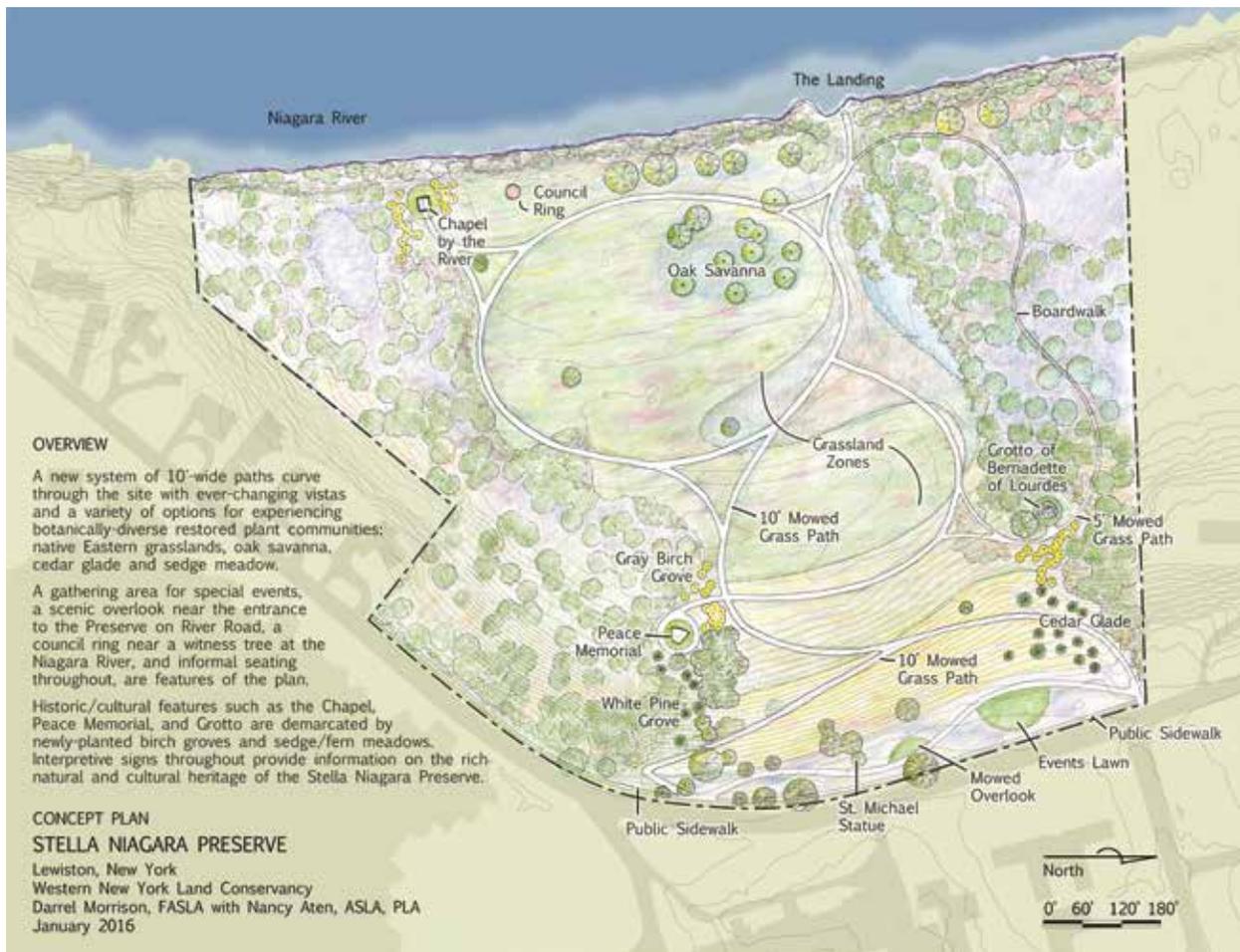
people will be able to look out over it throughout the year. The plant species in the mesic and wet-mesic zones will, on the other hand, reach heights of four, five, or six feet by the end of summer, engulfing visitors in a billowing sea of vegetation.

In addition to new plantings, our plan mandates the removal of invasive exotic species, such as Norway maples, and unhealthy trees, like ashes that have been afflicted with emerald ash borers. The ecological landscape restoration and management firm Applied Ecological Services is doing the selective removals, as well as creating the path system and seeding the open center of the site with a diversity of native plant species, all documented to have been growing locally, although not necessarily on the Preserve site.

As we learned on our initial visit on that hot August day, existing pathways at Stella Niagara can be challenging, traversing as they do 15 to 18 percent slopes in several cases. One goal in the pathway design is to make

Late summer meadow, showing mix of native and invasive species. Photograph by Nancy Aten.





Concept plan overview, February 4, 2016. Drawing by Darrel Morrison.

them more accessible, which led us to propose a system with a maximum gradient of 8.3 percent and an average gradient of 4.9 percent. We wanted to heighten and vary the experience for people visiting the Preserve, replacing long, straight stretches of the pathway with broad, sweeping curves that afford ever-changing views and an element of mystery. Further, we wanted to provide several options from which people could choose the length and character of the loop they might walk.

We designed the approaches to each of the three structures (the Grotto, the Chapel, and the Peace Memorial) through groves of gray birches, early successional trees that often grow at the forest edge. A three-foot wrought-iron fence encircles each of the three structures. Within these enclosures, a mix of Pennsylvania sedge and hay-scented fern contrasts with the surrounding vegetation, setting them apart as sacred places. Our design plan also incorporates a stone council ring as a gathering place on the western edge of the Preserve, overlooking the Niagara. While it is not a replica or restoration of an earlier council ring on the site, it is a symbolic reminder of the people of the Haudenosaunee, who almost certainly gathered here in an earlier era.

As we worked, Aten and I were also aware of the example of Frederick Law Olmsted, who advocated strenuously for the protection of Niagara Falls in the 1870s and 1880s, and who, with his partner Calvert Vaux, designed the nation's first integrated park system in nearby Buffalo. Olmsted and Vaux considered the Niagara Reservation a vital part of this system, and they planned improvements that were designed to protect it and make it accessible to the public.

The goals of the Western New York Land Conservancy closely align with those of these early preservationists. The new design for Stella Niagara will continue to protect the cultural history of the site as it provides access for visitors who want to explore the landscape on its own terms. The enhanced diversity of plants will attract a greater variety of birds, butterflies, bees, and other pollinators in a complex web of life. The very presence of those species will enrich the human experience of the Preserve. In perpetuity. And, in the words of director Nancy Smith, "that's a long time."

DARREL MORRISON is professor and dean emeritus at the University of Georgia and practices ecology-based landscape design. He lives in Madison, Wisconsin.



View southwest, plantings by Thyra Whittemore, 2015. Photograph by Carol Betsch.

Opposite: Scott and Jean Peterson at Tranquillity Farm, 2016. Photograph by Thomas Wedell.

PRESERVATION HEROES

Jean and W. Scott Peterson



Walking the windswept hills of Tranquillity Farm, Scott and Jean Peterson talk about the historic landscape they have stewarded for more than three decades. The Petersons' relationship with this place has been a source of deep satisfaction for them, as well as a process of growing insight about its history, invigorated by a deepening understanding of the land and the people who shaped it.

Tranquillity Farm was originally a 303-acre model farm developed by John Howard Whittemore, a successful Naugatuck businessman, and his wife, Julia Spencer Whittemore. In 1893, Whittemore wrote to Charles Eliot, soon to become a partner in the Olmsted firm, requesting a plan for the property. At the same time, the Whittemores commissioned the architectural firm of McKim, Mead & White to design an expansive Colonial Revival house with a commanding view of Lake Quassapaug, as well as a farmhouse, large barns, and several outbuildings.

J. H. Whittemore took a keen interest in the project, working directly with Eliot and also with John Charles Olmsted and Warren Manning, then a planting assistant in the firm. By the spring of 1896, Whittemore had grown impatient with the pace of landscape development (the house was completed by then) and unhappy with some of the Olmsted firm's charges. In September 1896, the project entered a new phase when Manning established his own design practice in Boston, taking the Whittemore commission with him.

Over the next several years, Manning expanded on the original model farm concept, specifying broad meadows defined by hedgerows and stands of trees, which sloped down to the lakeshore. He also urged the Whittemores to acquire more property to protect viewsheds, to create new roads and walking trails, and to enlarge the woodlands. He added a formal garden in 1897, sited below a massive cobblestone retaining wall, where it would not intrude on the sweeping lake panorama. Near the lake, he created a long flight of rustic stone steps to connect an upland meadow to a boathouse at the shore, planting it with a mix of native and imported species. In 1923, the Whittemores' daughter, Gertrude, commissioned Ellen Shipman to design a rose garden at the south end of the formal garden.

Tranquillity Farm continued to evolve, and each succeeding generation left its mark. In 1927, Harris, the Whittemore's son, subdivided the estate into several large parcels according to a plan developed by Manning, who had been commissioned for the job. In the 1980s, when Whittemore descendants put the core of the model farm on the market, Scott Peterson, a Middlebury-based ophthalmologist, and his wife, Jean, did not hesitate to buy it. As Scott recalls, it was a "yes-of-course" moment. The Petersons understood that the property would be a challenge to steward, yet they appreciated the singular beauty of their twenty-five acres and all that it might become. As for the property's rich cultural legacy, they conceded that they had "little idea of how much was here." Parts of the land, especially near the lake, were hidden in a tangle of brambles, and its glorious past was not widely known. The Long Garden, for example, a herbaceous border designed by J. C. Olmsted that stretches almost nine hundred feet, was completely obscured by overgrowth. Incredulous as she saw its network of brick and stone paths revealed, Jean Peterson remembers thinking that they seemingly "went on forever." Before

BY JAMES O'DAY



“In the 1980s, when Whittemore descendents put the core of the model farm on the market, Scott Peterson, a Middlebury-based ophthalmologist, and his wife, Jean, did not hesitate to buy it. As Scott recalls, it was a ‘yes-of-course’ moment.”

selling to the Petersons, Whittemore’s descendents had made the decision to remove the house from the property—an untraditional choice that essentially privileged the landscape design. (The house was sold, disassembled, and parts of it were moved to a site in North Salem, New York. After learning of its history, the new owner designed an Ellen Shipman-inspired garden for it there.) Robert Whittemore, a great-grandson of J. H., had placed agricultural and conservation easements on the land, which have successfully protected it from inappropriate development. Scott Peterson credits that generation with preserving the landscape’s integrity.

The Petersons renovated the old carriage house as their residence, a process that has stretched over several years. Other buildings from the original farm also survive and have been restored, including the farm manager’s house, large barns, garden sheds, and a charming boat-house with a veranda overlooking the lake. Some of the original garden furnishings survive, too, such as a massive sundial calibrated to render the correct local time, whose gnomon was forged in one of Whittemore’s iron foundries. The inscription on the granite millstone reads, “I am a shadow—so art thou, I mark time—dost thou?”

The Petersons maintain the meadows according to their original layout on the plan created by Eliot and Manning. They lease out a portion of the property to a local farmer, who grows hay for livestock feed. Jean loves the look of the grass in the wind and always has mixed feelings about seeing it mown. But she and Scott firmly believe that a farm should be farmed.

When they bought Tranquillity Farm, the Petersons had only a vague sense of Warren Manning and little understanding of his significance. Their interest and knowledge of Ellen Shipman was a bit more developed, as it had been piqued by the publication of *The Gardens of Ellen Biddle Shipman* by Judith B. Tankard, published by LALH in 1997, and the associated exhibition in New York City. They shared this interest with their neighbor, Thyrza Whittemore, a great-great-granddaughter of J. H. and Julia, who grew up at Tranquillity Farm and, in time, became an avid gardener. Now residing in the estate farmhouse, Thyrza recently collaborated with the Petersons to rework portions of the Shipman gardens.

Over time, the Petersons and Thyrza Whittemore became familiar with LALH and its mission of education and preservation, and they have, as a result, developed

“Over time, the Petersons and Thyrza Whittemore became familiar with LALH and its mission of education and preservation, and they have, as a result, developed a lively interest in the history of American landscape design that goes well beyond the boundaries of Tranquillity Farm.”

a lively interest in the history of American landscape design that goes well beyond the boundaries of Tranquillity Farm. They have been deeply involved with the Warren Manning Project and the forthcoming book from LALH and University of Georgia Press.

One of Dr. Peterson’s guiding principles is the concept of the *genius loci* or genius of the place, dating back centuries but expressed particularly well in the poet Alexander Pope’s Epistle IV, which Scott studied and wrote about at Yale under one of his mentors. Pope also wrote a couplet that Scott often quotes when encountering excess in architectural or landscape design: “Tis Use alone that sanctifies Expend/And Splendor borrows all her rays from Sense.”

Scott is especially intrigued by the concept of landscape philosophy that reflects layers of landscape, specifically the artistically designed gardens closest in, the tended but more natural agricultural fields in the middle distance, and the more sublime and wilder nature of the lakes, hills and forests beyond. This philosophical layering is seen especially well in Warren Manning’s design

for Tranquillity Farm and the over 1200 acres of landscape design initially included. The Petersons love the resulting apprehension of nature’s magnificence, both intimate and distant, managed and natural, which they particularly enjoy sharing with others.

The Petersons press on with their stewardship of the land, which is a source of pride and inspiration. As for the responsibility of looking after this landscape, Scott Peterson notes optimistically that although “the work goes on forever—beauty will triumph.” One of his personal passions is the poetry of William Carlos Williams, which has led to a fine collection of first editions of Williams’s poetry as well as paintings, sculpture, and prints that relate to the poet. In his view, Tranquillity Farm represents “an intersection of poetry, art, and philosophy—and the landscape is the biggest part of that.” About receiving LALH’s 2016 Preservation Hero Award, the Petersons responded in unison: “Very honored.”

JAMES O’DAY, ASLA, is a historical landscape architect based in Washington, D.C.

Left: Lawn at site of original house with carriage house in distance, 2015. Photograph by Carol Betsch. Below: Tranquillity Farm, view to Lake Quassapaug, 1928. Photograph by Arthur G. Eldredge. Courtesy MCL.





Maintaining Change:

THE JAMES ROSE CENTER FOR LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURAL RESEARCH AND DESIGN

THROUGHOUT HIS career, the landscape architect James Rose grappled with the seemingly contradictory idea of preserving change, and his home in Ridgewood, New Jersey, was a materialization of this concept—in Rose’s words, a “creative garden.” His goal was to design space—both indoor and outdoor—that would continually evolve. In 1954, *Progressive Architecture* praised Rose’s new

house, comparing its “spatial discipline” to the aesthetic discipline of the traditional Japanese dwelling. Rose’s house also expressed his perspective that residential design should be flexible to allow for changes in the environment and in the lives of its inhabitants.

During the forty years he occupied the tiny suburban property, Rose endlessly altered his living space without ever throwing anything away. Because he perceived landscapes as living entities undergoing constant change, he was passionate about conserving and recycling materials as part of a natural cycle. His view of preservation was more like creating a moving picture than freezing a particular moment in time. He described this ideal in his first book, *Creative Gardens* (1958), as a project with no end: “I set up the basic armature of walls, and roofs, and open spaces to establish their relationships, but left it free in detail to allow for improvisation. In that way it would never be ‘finished,’ but constantly evolving from one stage to the



Rose house and northern courtyard, 1954. Photograph by Lionel Freedman. Opposite: James Rose Center, northern courtyard, 1996. Photograph by Frederick Charles.

next—a metamorphosis such as we find commonly in nature.”

By preserving everything, Rose left behind the traces of his creative process, which have become the most valuable aspects of the James Rose Center in terms of explaining his philosophy to visitors. Today, those who take the time to look carefully can still see bits of the original

steel edging Rose used to frame spaces, for example, or chunks of the asphalt he mixed himself to achieve an exceptionally flexible, porous surface. The juxtaposition of old and new is also evident in the house where the original block and glass structure yields to new materials and structural additions in a self-evident way. The same trees that Rose preserved as part of the original design remain.

When the Rose Center staff began rehabilitating the Ridgewood home in 1993, two years after Rose’s death, the house had become decrepit and debris littered the landscape. During Rose’s lifetime a fire had burned through much of the roof garden; clerestories were missing, allowing water and small animals into the shelter; two-by-fours propped up parts of the building’s failed ceilings. Outside, delicate and innovative woven fences had collapsed; important plantings had died, and many imaginative site

BY SARAH ALLABACK



Rose holding model of his dream home, 1944. Courtesy JRC.

JAMES C. ROSE (1913–1991) launched his career by collaborating with his Harvard classmates Dan Kiley and Garrett Eckbo on a series of articles published between 1938 and 1940 in *Architectural Record*. The essays—arguably the most influential in the history of the modernist movement in America—challenged landscape architects to design landscapes suited to contemporary life. In a practice that extended over five decades, Rose focused almost exclusively on transforming suburban lots, such as that of his own home in Ridgewood, New Jersey, into artistic expressions of his endless quest for growth and change.

Rose was from a working-class background and had little respect for academic jargon or classical tradition. The four books he wrote—*Creative Gardens* (1958), *Gardens Make Me Laugh* (1965), *Modern American Gardens* (1967), and *The Heavenly Environment* (1987)—were intended to give suburban homeowners a sense of power in their environment. His writings were unique not only in this personal approach to design but also in foreshadowing many principles since embraced by the profession, such as the need to recycle materials and the concept of sustainability. As Rose aged, his home in Ridgewood became a refuge in which he was able to express his artistic principles. Today the James Rose Center is open to the public and also functions as a center for study and research.



Pool under repair, late 1990s. Courtesy JRC.



Volunteers rebuilding woven fences at northern shelter, late 1990s. Photograph by Dean Cardasis. Courtesy JRC.



Below: Restored woven fence, 2000. Photograph by Dean Cardasis. Courtesy JRC.
Opposite: Zendo, damaged by storm, 2016. Photograph by Dean Cardasis.

furnishing made of recycled materials had failed. Rose's unconventional method of working resulted in an environment that was perishable by definition—not only to accommodate change but because he acted on impulse, without considering permanence. He worked quickly, improvising and making do with whatever materials were on hand. From the beginning, the Center faced challenges in how to stabilize the site without losing its fluid character.

One of the repairs involved rebuilding the woven cedar fence on the street side of the property. Rather than replace it with a conventional fence or a replica of the original, the staff salvaged all the usable timbers and rebuilt the fence with the old pieces on one side and the new cedar strips on the other. When the contrast between the two sides was still visible, the feature became a useful tool for explaining Rose's frugal methodology. Today, the fence appears much as it did during Rose's lifetime. Another example is a beautiful wooden bench which had decayed and collapsed. During its reconstruction staff realized that the bench had been made from an old door. The knowledge gained by restoring Rose's bench illustrates his aesthetic of recycling and repurposing materials in accommodating change.

Rose once made the profound but simple observation that "space is the constant in all three-dimensional design," and everything he did over four decades in his Ridgewood home shaped that space and guided the experiences of its users. By the time of Rose's death, many of the broadleaf evergreen plantings near the perimeter had died and much of the complex interrelated space had become less private than intended.



New plantings were installed, not so much in accordance with the precise position of individual plants that had died but to re-form the space in a way that restored its privacy.

Committed to preserving change in a world of increasingly limited resources, the Rose Center sponsors internships for students and hosts exhibitions and competitions intended to educate participants and viewers in Rose's principles and methods. Twenty-five years have passed since his death, but Rose's home continues to represent the potential for designing in meaningful ways that both question authority and push the limits of creativity. At the Rose Center, the landscape architect's work is still seen as an opportunity to develop a moving and inspiring aesthetic. Today this means focusing on the aesthetic as well as the practical dimension of green design.

In 2016, the stewards of the Rose Center continue to look for answers consistent with Rose's philosophy. As the landscape architect observed in *The Heavenly Environment*, his final book: "Change is the essence. To reveal what is always there is the trick. The metamorphosis is seen minute by minute, season by season, year by year.

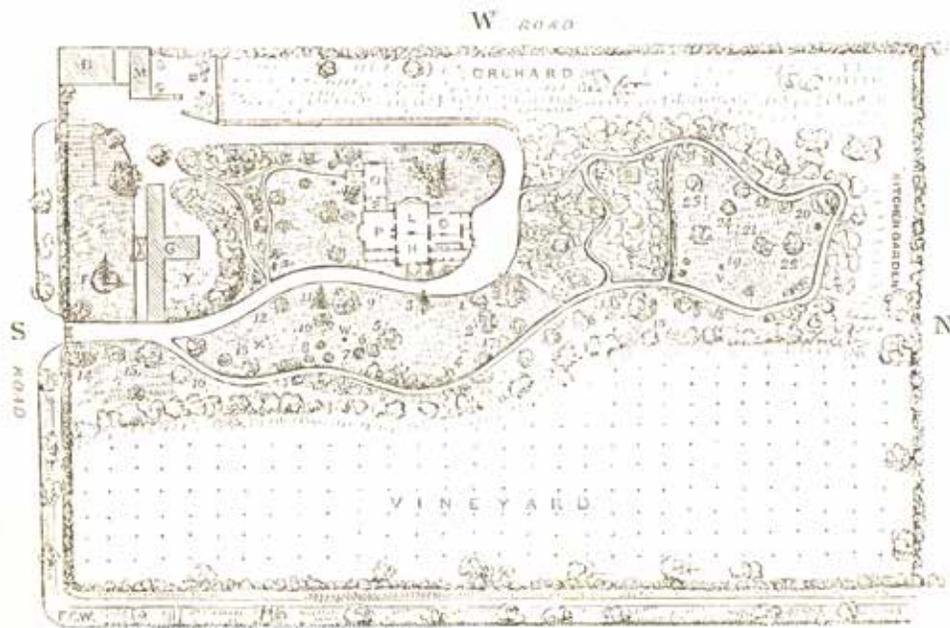
Through this looking glass, 'finish' is another word for death." Rose's philosophy of the "creative garden" endures as the guiding force in the safeguarding of his home and his legacy.

James Rose by Dean Cardasis (forthcoming, LALH/UGA Press) offers the first biographical account of this transformational modernist landscape architect, whose attitudes towards improvisation and metamorphosis in the garden were unique.

A windstorm toppled a tree onto the zendo of the James Rose Center earlier this spring, causing significant damage. To learn how you might help, contact director@jamesrosecenter.org.



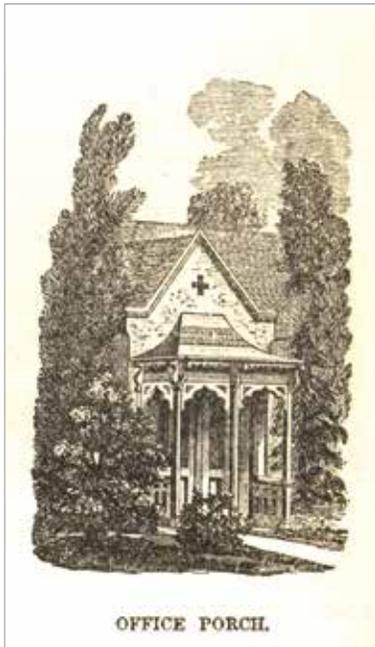
RESIDENCE OF THE LATE A. J. DOWNING, NEWBURGH ON THE HUDSON.



GENERAL PLAN OF HOUSE & GROUNDS.

From Newburgh to Brookline

The Rise of Landscape in American Culture



LAST OCTOBER, I was among a group of landscape historians and preservationists who took a walking tour of Newburgh, New York. We had gathered to mark the two-hundredth anniversary of the birth of Andrew Jackson Downing, the Hudson River town's revered native. Through his widely read books and essays, Downing changed the way Americans looked at the natural world around them and

laid the foundation for a new appreciation of designed landscapes, especially public parks. "Plant spacious parks in your cities," he once urged, "and uncloset their gates as wide as the gates of morning to the whole people."¹

Downing's home and business in Newburgh, known as Highland Gardens, were the center of his universe.² His greenhouse occupied the site of the cottage in which he was born on October 15, 1815, and a rear wing of the dwelling accommodated a cozy office where he prepared house designs for a nationwide clientele. Before 1847, he and his brother Charles earned much of their livelihood running the commercial nursery that occupied most of the four-and-a-half-acre grounds. His ideal of home was epitomized by Highland Gardens, a Gothic Revival villa he designed himself, and the grounds, which he planted with vegetation framing views of the Hudson and the Fishkill Mountains in the distance. "Mr. Downing has

shown in his garden and in his house how much beauty and comfort lie at the doors of those whose means are not very extensive, but are willing to bestow care, and able to bestow taste upon their places, however small," remembered his friend, the popular writer George William Curtis, who termed it "a haunt of beauty."³ Designed according to his principles of architecture and landscape architecture, Highland Gardens was where Downing composed his thoughts and sent them forth to a broad audience eager to improve their own homes.

Downing left his home for the last time on the afternoon of July 28, 1852. He was on his way to Washington, D.C., to supervise the creation of America's first publicly funded large park on land between the Capitol and the White House. His journey ended tragically, however, near Yonkers, New York, when the steamboat on which he was traveling exploded. Downing, who was thirty-six years old, died in the mayhem that ensued. "I reside at Newburgh; I am his partner in business; I have just seen his body; it was taken out from near the wreck."⁴ With these words, Calvert Vaux, who had come from London to work with Downing two years earlier, identified the drowned body of his friend and mentor. Vaux accompanied the body back to Highland Gardens, where Downing lay in state, high above the picturesque scenery he had loved so much. "A terrific storm burst over the river and crashed among the hills, and the wild sympathy of nature surrounded the hills," testified Curtis.⁵

Downing's early death did not curtail the influence of his thought. His books remained in print throughout the nineteenth century. They especially appealed to middle-class homeowners, whose ranks continued to swell after the Civil War. The year after Downing's death, his widow, Caroline, sold the property to an appreciative owner who engaged Andrew Jackson Davis, her hus-

Opposite and above: From "A Visit to the House and Garden of the Late A. J. Downing," *Horticulturist* (January 1853). Courtesy Buffalo & Erie County Public Library.

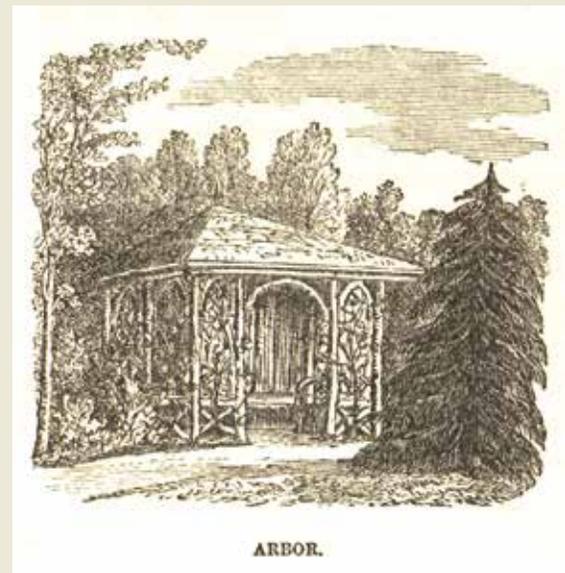
BY FRANCIS R. KOWSKY

band's former associate, to remodel it. By 1870, however, the grounds had been so altered that visitors who knew them in Downing's time found them unrecognizable. In the 1880s, a subsequent owner began selling off the property in parcels for house lots. By 1903, almost all of the land had been divided and the house remained unoccupied. Abandoned and in disrepair, Downing's villa fell to the wrecking ball in the early 1920s. Last year, on that afternoon walk, our little group of Downing devotees could find no trace of Highland Gardens. The memory of a place that might now exist as a hallowed example of American culture survives only in rare photographs, a few engravings, and several written descriptions.⁶

Ironically, during the time that the world stopped thinking about Downing's Highland Gardens, his books continued to enjoy widespread readership. Downing was one of the first to recognize the possibilities of mass communication made possible by new and cheaper methods of printing and illustrating books. His *Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening, Adapted to North America: with a View to the Improvements of Country Residences* (1841), *Cottage Residences* (1842), *The Fruits and Fruit Trees of America* (1848), and *The Architecture of Country Houses* (1850) went through dozens of reprint editions in the second half of the nineteenth century. Downing's books carried his reputation abroad to England and Europe. In 1845, the Queen of the Netherlands acknowledged the pleasure she found in his writings by sending to Highland Gardens "a magnificent ruby ring encircled by three rows of diamonds."⁷ Downing had harnessed the power of the book for popular education, taking it out of the hands of the few and placing it into the hands of the many.

It fell to Downing's partner Calvert Vaux and Vaux's friend and colleague Frederick Law Olmsted to fulfill the Newburgh native's dream of creating public parks for the nation's cities. When, a few years after Downing's death, his call for the creation of a large public park in New York became a reality, Vaux convinced city leaders to sponsor a design competition. The American park movement began when he and Olmsted, who dedicated the second volume of his book on English farming to Downing's memory, collaborated on the Greensward plan for Central Park. Their plans for other parks in Brooklyn, Buffalo, Chicago, and elsewhere answered Downing's plea to "plant spacious parks."

Though he died too soon to design Central Park himself, Downing laid the foundation for the establishment of the profession of landscape architecture in the United States. He would certainly have been proud to know that when the American Society of Landscape Architects formed in 1899, among its founders were Calvert Vaux's son, Downing, and Frederick Law Olmsted's children, John C. and Frederick Law Olmsted Jr., as well as Samuel Parsons Jr., a member of a horticulturist family friendly with Downing.⁸ A year later, landscape architecture entered the curriculum of Harvard. Serious study of



the history of designed landscapes, as well as concerted efforts to restore and preserve historic properties and natural scenery, also began around this time.

AS AN ART HISTORIAN, my personal association with landscape history began when I became interested in Downing and the office he had assembled at Highland Gardens. Living in New York City, I also developed a special fondness for the Hudson Valley, as did many of Downing's artist friends who celebrated its compelling beauty with paintings that stimulated his imagination. While still a graduate student studying with the architectural historian Phoebe Stanton, I learned about the two architects associated with Downing, Calvert Vaux and Frederick Clarke Withers. Their work embodied Downing's Romantic objective to affiliate architecture with nature.

I soon came to know the handful of others who were researching this then little-studied period of American art. First among them were George Tatum and Charles McLaughlin. At the time, Tatum was teaching at the University of Delaware and had recently completed a superb doctoral dissertation on Downing, whom he admired as a "prophet" honored in his own time as an "arbiter of American taste." His work became the starting point for my own researches that would eventually lead to a book on Withers.

Not too far away, Charles McLaughlin was a professor of history at American University in Washington, where



Opposite and right: From "A Visit to the House and Garden of the Late A. J. Downing."

Below: "Washington, D.C., with projected improvements." Lithograph by B. F. Smith, c. 1852. Courtesy Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.





Above, left and right: Downing house, 1917. Photographs by Raphael A. Weed. Courtesy Historical Society of Newburgh Bay and the Highlands.

Left: *Springside: Center Circle* by Henry Gritten, 1852. Courtesy Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Vassar College.

he was in charge of editing for publication many items from the extensive collection of documents and correspondence related to Fredrick Law Olmsted housed in the Library of Congress. Unlike Downing, Olmsted never wrote a book about his art; rather, he communicated his influential ideas through his work and professional practice. *The Papers of Fredrick Law Olmsted* project stemmed from Charlie's association with Laura Wood Roper, the first modern biographer of Olmsted. Because Withers had worked with Olmsted, I turned to Charlie for help in finding references to him in Olmsted's correspondence. The first meeting we had in the library took place in his carrel tucked away in the stacks of the original Smithmeyer & Peltz building. I came upon Charlie and an assistant proofreading a manuscript for an early volume of the *Papers*—reading pages aloud in reverse order so as not to become distracted by the meaning of the text! Charlie became a dear friend as well as a professional col-

league. Beloved by many, he had a distinguished career as a teacher, scholar, and avid promoter of the Olmsted legacy. Charlie's last homage to Olmsted was his introduction to the LALH reprint of Olmsted's *Walks and Talks of an American Farmer in England* (2002).

Charlie McLaughlin's former assistant at the Olmsted Papers, Charles Beveridge, continued this important work. For many years now, he has shepherded the monumental Olmsted Papers project as senior editor. Recently, Charlie, together with Lauren Meier and Irene Mills, published the splendidly illustrated second volume of the supplementary series, *Frederick Law Olmsted, Plans and Views of Public Parks*. For his contribution to Olmsted studies, in 2015, LALH named Charles Beveridge a Preservation Hero.

The third Olmsted scholar, David Schuyler, worked closely with the two Charlies and served as coeditor of the Olmsted Papers. A faculty member at Franklin and

Marshall College and a former student of George Tatum, David pays special tribute to his mentor in his foreword to the LALH reprint of David's Apostle of Taste, *Andrew Jackson Downing, 1815–1852*. Having spent his youth in the city of Newburgh, David has a particular interest in championing Downing's legacy. He devoted much effort to the restoration there of Downing Park, a public park that Vaux and Olmsted designed in 1889 as a memorial to Downing. Most recently, he organized the symposium at Marist College that commemorated the two hundredth anniversary of Downing's birth.

Over the years, I have visited David's hometown many times. These visits were often in the company of Dennis Francis, the first person to seriously research the career of Downing's treasured partner, Calvert Vaux. After a brain tumor tragically cut my young friend's life short, I decided to write a book on Vaux myself.

When I moved to Buffalo to teach at Buffalo State College, Charles McLaughlin and Charles Beveridge told me that Olmsted had done some of his best work for that city. As a resident of Buffalo, I found that very few people in western New York were aware of the role Olmsted and Vaux had played in the creation of the city's once renowned parks and parkways. Their work, begun in 1868, became the first fully evolved park system in an American city. By the time I arrived in the 1970s, much of the historic parkland had suffered significant neglect and even destruction. Nevertheless, there was still a lot left to admire. To look beyond the present was to glimpse the city's remarkably gracious and beautiful past.

Writing of those who strove to elevate life in a raw, nineteenth-century industrial city by offering its citizens the pleasures of public parks, tree-lined boulevards, and natural scenery grew to be a most rewarding experience. I enjoyed the support of many dedicated individuals who hoped to see the city's Olmsted parks restored to their former glory. At a time when Buffalo, like many other American cities, suffered the steep decline of industry and commerce, belief in the enduring value of this extraordinary resource remained. The remarkable improvement of the city in recent years has been fueled by an awakening sense that a renewed historic park system could play an important role in revitalizing urban neighborhoods. Today, the city Olmsted and Vaux mapped out in the nineteenth century is enjoying a second life. The success of LALH's *The Best Planned City in the World: Olmsted, Vaux, and the Buffalo Park System* is surely due to this heartening new understanding of the value of park design in an urban context.

Highland Gardens, once known throughout the land, is gone, but its legacy remains. Fairsted, Olmsted's home and office is now a popular National Historic Site in the Green Hill section of Brookline, Massachusetts. In LALH's *Community by Design: The Olmsted Firm and the Development of Brookline, Massachusetts*, Keith Morgan properly observes: "Few places have ever been as central to the emerging worlds of American architecture, landscape

architecture, and horticulture as the bucolic Green Hill neighborhood in the early 1880s." Downing's residence, the home of America's original tutor in the art of living well in pleasing natural surroundings, once occupied an equally important place in the history of American culture.

Downing surely took pleasure and pride in his highland neighborhood, with its broad streets shaded by old elms and maples and enjoying views of "wide, wholesome, exhilarating landscape with the noble, busy Hudson sweeping about its mountain feet." A nineteenth-century visitor described Newburgh, which was a ferry point along a major east–west route to and from New England, as "New Haven set on a hillside and commanding glorious prospects north, south and east." Travelers from Boston saw resemblance to their verdant suburb of Brookline.⁹ In his embowered abode, Downing prepared the first lessons that most of his countrymen received on the subjects of landscape architecture, domestic architecture, and horticulture. That afternoon last autumn, our little group standing at the site of Highland Gardens, lamented its passing. When we turned and walked down the hill toward the river, as Downing must have done many times, we resolved to erect a plaque informing passersby that here the gates of the profession of landscape architecture and the discipline of landscape history were first opened "as wide as the gates of morning to the whole people."

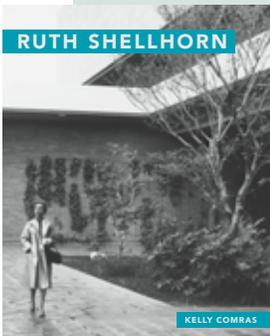
FRANCIS R. KOWSKY is SUNY *Distinguished Professor emeritus of art history and author of The Best Planned City in the World: Olmsted, Vaux, and the Buffalo Park System (LALH, 2013)*.

- 1 The tour, which took place on October 25, 2015, was organized by Mary McTamane, City Historian of Newburgh, and Alan Strauber, executive director of the Calvert Vaux Preservation Alliance. A. J. Downing, "A Talk about Public Parks and Gardens," *Horticulturist* 3 (October 1848): 158.
- 2 The property was sometimes known as Highland Garden.
- 3 George William Curtis, "The Home of the Late A. J. Downing," *Horticulturist* (January 1853), 27.
- 4 "Burning of the Henry Clay," *Albany Argus*, July 31, 1852.
- 5 Curtis, "The Home of the Late A. J. Downing."
- 6 Arthur Channing Downs Jr. reconstructs Downing's house and grounds in "Downing's Newburgh Villa," *Bulletin of the Association for Preservation Technology* 4 (1972), 1–113.
- 7 "Royal Gift to an American Author," *New York Tribune*, December 23, 1845.
- 8 In 2009, LALH reprinted Parsons's 1915 book, *The Art of Landscape Architecture*.
- 9 "Country Homes and Hudson River Real Estate: The Charm of Newburgh," *New York Evening Post*, August 7, 1874.

Ruth Shellhorn Kelly Comras

A volume in the series Masters of Modern Landscape Design

University of Georgia Press in association with LALH
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Paperback \$26.95
ISBN: 978-0-8203-4963-3



In a career spanning nearly sixty years, Ruth Shellhorn (1909–2006) helped shape Southern California’s iconic modernist aesthetic. This is the first full-length treatment of Shellhorn, who created close to four hundred landscape designs, collaborated with some of the region’s most celebrated architects, and left her mark on places ranging from college campuses to Disneyland’s Main Street.

Kelly Comras tells the story of Shellhorn’s life and career before focusing on twelve projects that explore her approach to design and aesthetic philosophy in greater detail. The book’s project studies include designs for Bullock’s department stores and Fashion Square shopping centers; school campuses, including a multiyear master plan for the University of California at Riverside; a major Los Angeles County coastal planning project; the western headquarters for Prudential Insurance; residential estates and gardens; and her collaboration on the original plan for Disneyland.

Shellhorn received formal training at Oregon State and Cornell Universities and was influenced by such contemporaries as Florence Yoch, Beatrix Farrand, Welton Becket, and Ralph Dalton Cornell. As president of the Southern California chapter of ASLA, she became a champion of her profession, working tirelessly to achieve state licensure for landscape architects. In her own practice, she collaborated closely with architects to address landscape concerns at the earliest stages of building design, retained long-term control over the maintenance of completed projects, and considered the importance of the region’s natural environment at a time of intense development throughout Southern California.

“Kelly Comras’s book on Ruth Shellhorn will, at long last, put her in perspective as an important pioneer in landscape design and planning in California. The book is engaging, with clear, direct writing, based on impeccable research and documentation.”

—Darrel Morrison, FASLA, University of Georgia

“Comras provides the context (cultural and physical) that allows the reader to comprehend the legendary Shellhorn as a person and as a designer and to recognize the value of her contribution to the California landscape—and thus to America’s national landscape design heritage.”

—Noel Dorsey Vernon, ASLA, Cal Poly Pomona



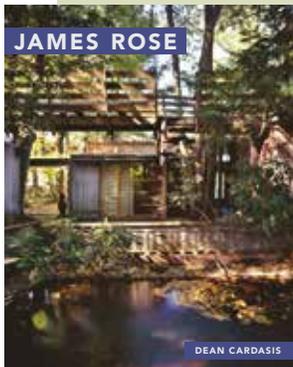
FORTHCOMING

James Rose Dean Cardasis

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Paperback \$26.95

James Rose, the first biography of this important landscape architect, explores the work of one of the most radical figures in the history of mid-century modernist American landscape design. An artist who explored his profession with words and built works, Rose fearlessly critiqued the developing patterns of land use he witnessed during a period of rapid suburban development. The alternatives he offered in his designs for hundreds of gardens were based on innovative and iconoclastic environmental and philosophic principles, some of which have become mainstream today.



A classmate of Garrett Eckbo and Dan Kiley at Harvard, Rose was expelled in 1937 for refusing to design landscapes in the Beaux-Arts method. In 1940, the year before he received his first commission, Rose also published the last of his influential articles for *Architectural Record*, a series of essays written with Eckbo and Kiley that would become a manifesto for developing a modernist landscape architecture. Over the next four decades, Rose articulated his philosophy in four major books: *Creative Gardens* (1958), *Gardens Make Me Laugh* (1965), *Modern American Gardens* (1967), and *The Heavenly Environment* (1987). His writings foreshadowed many principles since embraced by the profession, including the concept of sustainability and the wisdom of accommodating growth and change.

James Rose includes new scholarship on many important works, including the Dickenson Garden in Pasadena and the Averett House in Columbus, Georgia, as well as unpublished correspondence. In letters to his mother, Rose reveals a tenderness toward nature and faith in spiritual harmony that belies his reputation as an alienated social critic. Throughout his career Rose refined his conservation ethic, seeing recycled materials and waste reduction as opportunities to create landscapes for contemplation, self-discovery, and pleasure. At a time when issues of economy and environmentalism are even more pressing, Rose's writings and projects are both relevant and revelatory.



"This is the book that the history of a half century of American landscape architecture is missing. We all owe a great debt to Cardasis for his decades-long work to protect and extend the legacy of James Rose."
—Patrick Condon, University of British Columbia

Warren H. Manning, Landscape Architect and Environmental Planner

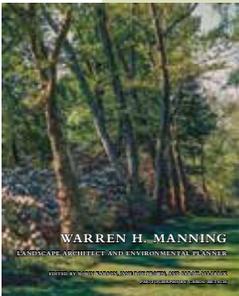
Edited by Robin Karson, Jane Roy Brown, and Sarah Allaback

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Featuring new photographs by Carol Betsch

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Warren H. Manning's (1860–1938) national practice comprised more than 1,600 landscape design and planning projects throughout North America, from small home grounds to estates, cemeteries, college campuses, parks and park systems, and new industrial towns. Manning approached his design and planning projects from an environmental perspective, conceptualizing projects as components of larger regional and, in some cases, national, systems, a method that contrasted sharply with those of his stylistically oriented colleagues. In this regard, as in many others, Manning had been influenced by his years with the Olmsted firm, where the foundations of his resource-based approach to design were forged. Manning's overlay map methods, later adopted by the renowned landscape architect Ian McHarg, provided the basis for computer mapping software in widespread use today.



One of the eleven founders of the American Society of Landscape Architects, Manning also ran one of the nation's largest offices, where he trained several influential designers, including Fletcher Steele, A. D. Taylor, Charles Gillette, and Dan Kiley. After Manning's death, his reputation slipped into obscurity. Contributors to the Warren H. Manning Research Project have worked more than a decade to assess current conditions of his built projects and to compile a richly illustrated compendium of site essays that illuminate the range, scope, and significance of Manning's notable career.

“Manning’s always been something of a cipher in landscape architectural history, and this book does a good job in clearing away some of the murkiness that has existed around him and his career. The overview essay, in particular, provides new insights into Manning’s life, personality, and motivations; it also sheds light on the nature of ‘office practice’ in the profession’s early years, as Manning moves from junior designer at the Olmsted firm to sole practitioner.”

—Heidi Hohmann, ASLA, Iowa State University



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Julie Blakeslee, 2012. Photograph by Darren Carroll.

DONOR PROFILE: Julie Blakeslee

Julie Blakeslee is owner and principal designer of Big Red Sun Austin, a garden design–build firm in Central Texas. A former ballet dancer, Julie has a broad interest in art and design; in addition to her professional work she is a collector of contemporary art and has built a reputation for helping design clients site their acquisitions in the landscape. Julie was introduced to LALH by board member Ted Whatley—though coincidentally she had already collected several LALH publications and referred to them

regularly. "I was thrilled to know that these books were part of a long-term, well-organized effort to encourage scholarship and enjoyment of the breadth of American garden making. I was immediately committed to helping."

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