

V I N E Y A R D

revealing the relationship between Americans and their land

AN OCCASIONAL RECORD OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE HISTORIC LANDSCAPE INITIATIVE

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New Landscape Index Developed by Historic Landscape Initiative

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The fields of landscape history and landscape preservation have burgeoned over the past several decades. It seems hard to imagine that it was only sixteen years ago that the National Park Service published: *History and Prehistory in the National Park System and the National Historic Landmarks Program* (1987). During which time the number of recognized historic themes was increased from 9 to 34. With this increase came, Theme XVII, Landscape Architecture, which at that time included eight National Historic Landmark (NHL) designations:

- Boston Common, MA
- Boston Public Garden, MA
- Central Park, NY
- Lawrenceville School, NJ
- Middleton Place, SC
- Missouri Botanical Garden, MO
- Frederick Law Olmstead (sic.) House, MA
- Riverside Historic District, IL

Two years after this publication, in 1989, the NPS published the National Register Bulletin: *How to Nominate and Evaluate Historic Designed Landscapes*. Since that time an increasing number of designed landscapes have been nominated to the National Register. Today, there are 1,840 landscapes listed on the National Register of Historic Places whose significance is attributed to “landscape architecture.”

During the 1990s, assistance for registering landscapes increased with National Register Bulletins dedicated to a myriad of landscape types: rural landscapes, cemeteries and burial grounds, battlefields, mining sites and landscapes associated with cultural values. In 1996, the Preservation Brief: *Protecting*

Cultural Landscapes was published and for the first time the NPS partnership programs recognized “cultural” landscapes, hence, landscapes associated with continuing cultures. That same year, *History in the National Park Service: Themes and Concepts* was also published (it was officially adopted in 1994.) With this development the NPS recognized the “multi-faceted history” of its cultural resources including their “historic buildings, structures, landscapes and archaeological sites.”

Yet, even though there was a dramatic increase in research and registration, the necessary historic context was not available to go one step further—for historic designed landscapes to achieve National Historic Landmark status.

The Need for Historic Context for America's Landscape Legacy

In response to this need, a recent reorganization of the National Park Service's Washington DC Center has relocated the Historic Landscape Initiative (HLI), now under the Manager of Heritage Preservation Services. The results of this management decision is to broaden the HLI's mission, and as a result the program will now support the development of National Historic Landmark designations and National Register nominations for significant historic landscapes nationwide. In addition, the HLI will serve as a catalyst, working closely with NPS colleagues and partnership programs to create a strategic framework to increase both National Register and NHL nominations for America's historic landscapes. To accomplish this the Historic Landscape Initiative is about to embark on a new project, which will create a new comprehensive index of designed landscapes. This index, will allow information about historically significant designed landscapes to be searched

in many fields, such as, classification, location, designer and time period. While encompassing landscapes already on the National Register this index will also provide a framework for properties, which are not yet registered. The purpose of this index is to create a means of prioritizing and realizing potential NHL and National Register nominations. The index could serve as a catalyst for future state and local landscape inventories, cultural landscape reports, treatment/management plans, heritage tourism and assorted interpretive endeavors.

Before the myriad issues surrounding the designation of historic designed landscapes can be explored, it is first vital to understand what National Historic Landmark status means and why historic contexts and theme studies are essential to be undertaken as part of this quest.

National Historic Landmarks

National Historic Landmarks are preferably identified through theme studies. Theme studies are the most effective way of identifying and nominating properties because they provide a comparative analysis of properties associated with a specific area of American history. Representative examples of such designations include Balboa Park in San Diego, CA, under the theme Spanish Mission; and Rye Playland Amusement Park, NY, under the theme of Moderne Art Deco. Central to these nominations are their significant landscape designs—the Spanish-style gardens of the exposition by architect Richard Requa and the design of Playland, ca. 1932, part of the overall Westchester County Parks System by landscape architects Gilmore Clarke and Michael Rapuano.

Bumble Bee Farm, Little Compton, RI. For more about the Rhode Island Landscape Survey, see page 11.



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Mission of the National Park Service
The National Park Service is dedicated to conserving unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The Service is also responsible for managing a great variety of national and international programs designed to help extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.



HPS

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Welcome to VINEYARD

These past months have been particularly exciting for the Historic Landscape Initiative (HLI). As you will note in our cover story, the HLI is embarking on perhaps one of its most ambitious projects to date—to support the development of National Historic Landmark and National Register nominations through a first-ever index of designed landscapes. It is the aim of the National Park Service's HLI that researchers in the future will be able to readily access information about a particular historically significant designed landscapes. The goal of this index is that just a click away, users will be able to obtain information on a landscape's type, location, designer and time period to establish the necessary historic context. In sum, the index will create a means of prioritizing and realizing potential NHL and national register nominations.

In addition to the development of this national index, this past July, the HLI along with Gunston Hall and the Cultural Landscape Foundation hosted a two-day conference, *Mission Impossible*. Since the event was sold-out and the audience response requested that the keynote address be made available, this paper has been posted at www.tclf.org/conf_papers.htm

This issue of *Vineyard* again highlights HLI partnership stories, survey and treatment efforts. As reported under cover, the diversity of landscape types including rural landscapes, parkways, and modern works of landscape architecture attest to the growth of the field of cultural landscapes. It is exciting to witness these efforts occurring at all levels of government. From county-wide cultural landscape reports (Fairfax Parks) and parkway management initiatives (Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs) to comprehensive state-wide surveys—one by a state preservation office (Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission) and the other by a university (University of Miami, School of Architecture)—the field of landscape preservation and cultural landscapes is truly burgeoning.

Finally, please note that this edition of *Vineyard* and all of the HLI web offerings reside at our web site at www2.cr.nps.gov/hli. I am pleased to write this welcome letter to *Vineyard*.

Charles A. Birnbaum, FASLA
Coordinator, Historic Landscape Initiative

Mission of the Historic Landscape Initiative

The Historic Landscape Initiative develops preservation planning tools that respect and reveal the relationship between Americans and their land.

The Initiative provides essential guidance to accomplish sound preservation practice on a variety of landscapes, from parks and gardens to rural villages and agricultural landscapes.

The Historic Landscape Initiative is committed to ongoing preservation of cultural landscapes that can yield an improved quality of life for all, a sense of place, and identity for future generations.

HLI's New Landscape Index

continued from cover



Richard Requa (1881-1941) designed the Spanish-style gardens for San Diego's 1935 exposition, Balboa Park. Courtesy HLI.

Theme studies also provide a national historic context for specific topics in American history or prehistory. In order to make the case for national significance, a theme study must provide that necessary national historic context so that national significance may be judged for a number of related properties. Some theme studies are mandated by Congress, while others are determined by the NPS, and generally prepared under cooperative agreements or contracts with other governmental entities or private organizations. In the development of theme studies, partnerships with the academic community, independent scholars, and others knowledgeable about the subject are encouraged. Emphasis is placed on the preparation of theme studies that meet academic and professional standards. In all cases theme studies should provide a context from which the most appropriate properties are identified that can be used to assist in the evaluation of historic properties at all levels, and that can be used to educate the public about the nation's heritage.

Historical Context and Theme Studies

Historic contexts provide broad-based information about historic trends and cultural resources. Historic contexts are organized by theme, resource type, place, and time, and link multiple historic properties to important historic trends.

Historic context studies provide baseline information and analytical frameworks that allow preservation and design professionals as well as the general public to evaluate historic landscape resources and understand the ways in which an individual landscape may relate to broader cultural developments. Most specifically, they provide frameworks for determining the significance of properties and determining their eligibility for National Register or National Historic Landmark listing. State and national significance is clear only when resources are seen in relationship to broad patterns of history and prehistory.

Our understanding of the significance of many historic designed landscapes is currently limited by the lack of contextual information on relevant themes. While the National Historic Landmark and Park History program have sponsored many important studies, these programs tend to focus on broad social, cultural, and political trends. For example, in the past such broad themes as The Civil War, World War II or Transportation were the norm. Today, theme studies are being undertaken on related landscape architecture topics. This includes *Landscape Architecture of the National Park Service, 1917-1941* (completed in 1999) and the current, *Design of the*

Commemorative Military Park. Both of these endeavors signal not only the need to place these resources in context, but to also make educated treatment and management decisions regarding their ongoing care and interpretation.

A carefully conceived approach to prioritizing and realizing potential NHL and National Register nominations in the absence of a comprehensive theme study in the subject area of landscape architecture is addressed in the text that follows. In sum, beyond the recognition, such an index could serve as a catalyst for future state and local landscape inventories, cultural landscape reports, treatment/management plans, heritage tourism and assorted interpretive endeavors (enriched websites, biographical narratives, books, brochures.)

Now that the existing situation has been presented, the summary that follows aims to explore the myriad opportunities and constraints of advancing this agenda.

The Strategy

Recognizing that the magnitude of this undertaking is monumental, research parameters and strategies need to be articulated when putting forth the scope of this work.

The theme study, "Landscape Architecture of the National Park Service, 1917-1941," researched and analyzed this period of American park history and has even led to National Historic Landmark designations. Illustrated here, Mirror Lake at Yosemite. Courtesy HLI.



These assumptions are as follows:

■ The focus of this first HLI Index is on historic designed landscapes (formerly known as Theme XVII, Landscape Architecture) and does not include vernacular or ethnographic types. This does not diminish the import of these resources but suggests that they are outside of this first landscape history initiative and warrant their own study in the future;

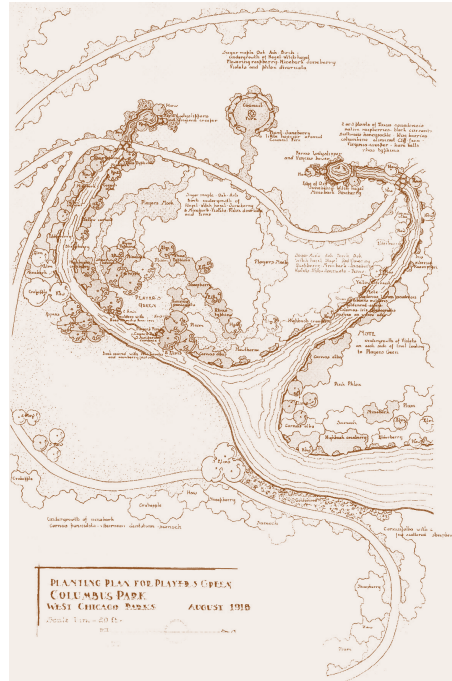
■ This project recognizes that landscapes associated with such subthemes as the Colonial Experience (1620-1776) and Establishing an Orderly Republic (1776-1830) are well served by earlier theme studies. It assumes that resources from these earlier two centuries, if extant, are surely recognized, documented and already protected;

■ Therefore, this Index begins around 1830, with the subtheme of Landscape Gardening and the Birth of Landscape Architecture;

■ A traditional chronological listing will not serve this theme sufficiently and would limit the opportunity to peruse a particular resource type in its entirety such as Residential Suburbs. For example, if Romantic Suburbs and Resorts of the 19th century were the subject of a research request, the option should exist for the reader to consider this resource type in an uninterrupted fashion, within the context of later Suburbs, New Towns and Post War Suburbs which followed without jumping around the document;

■ Because many landscapes represent true palimpsests, and as a result possess multiple subthemes and facets, this Study needs to accommodate such situations. For example, the recent NHL designation for Chicago's Columbus Park should be considered under the working subthemes outlined in the Index list which follows, referred to as, "Social Over Naturalistic" and "Prairie Style;"

■ The initiative will integrate all lists generated to date, including but not limited to Linda McClelland's 1980s draft theme list; the ASLA medallion list (1999); executed related themes, regional guidebooks, state-



Jens Jensen's (1860-1951) greatest prairie-style park masterwork, Chicago's Columbus Park, designed in the 1910s became a National Historic Landmark this summer. Illustrated here is the 1918 planting plan for the park's Player's Green. Courtesy Chicago Park District.

level and regional survey efforts, *Pioneers* files, and listing of public landscapes, etc;

■ At the onset of this process, the HLI would seek the advise and guidance of NPS partners and NCSHPO partners including the National Historic Landmark and National Register Programs and interested SHPOs with state-level survey experience among others;

■ A committee of national stakeholders including universities, landscape historians, national and regional organizations should be developed for outreach, shared knowledge and peer review. Representative examples include the Catalog of Landscape Records in the United States, the Council of Educators in Landscape Architecture, the American Society of Landscape Architects Historic Preservation Professional Interest Group, the Garden Conservancy and the Alliance for Historic Landscape Preservation;

■ This project recognizes that a natural partner/interested party is the Historic American

Landscapes Survey (HALS) who are currently exploring the need to create a prioritized list of landscapes worthy of documentation;

■ Whatever management tool is selected for this project, the key to the management of this information will be flexibility. For example, the Index list may be managed as a desktop database using an appropriate software program such as Microsoft Access. As part of this undertaking, the database should be designed in such a way that information can be "tagged" with appropriate search fields and affiliated data dictionary. For example, Prospect Park in Brooklyn, NY, derives its significance from both its 1870s General Plan by Olmsted and Vaux as well as its equally significant 20th century Beaux Art's contributions by McKim Mead and White (e.g. Grand Army Plaza, Boat House, etc.); or, Lakewood Cemetery in Minneapolis, MN, significant for both its rural design by C.W. Falsom or its later Memorial Park addition by Morrell and Nichols;

■ The Index list will serve as a compliment to the National Register database and will not duplicate information contained in that database. All landscapes included in the database that are already listed on the National Register will include the "unique" number assigned by the National Register;

■ This project will need to comprehend which landscapes are already recognized as NHL's or are listed on the National Register. Additionally, we should know, 1) when the property was registered, 2) a determination if the listing includes an attribution of the landscape architect/designer, 3) accuracy, and 4) recognition as having a contributing "site" or "landscape." For example, a database search of the Index list under a designer's name, such as Howard Daniels, yields 12 rural cemeteries—two listed on the National Register and two pioneering landscape projects. These last two examples are both potential NHL's: Druid Hill Park, Baltimore (the nation's third largest urban park after Central and Fairmount) and Llewellyn Park, West Orange, NJ, one of the nation's first Romantic Suburbs;

■ Unlike earlier NPS theme lists in this area, it should include post-WWII resources from urban parks and plazas to play spaces.

Benefits of this Approach

Each week the HLI receives multiple requests driven by historic context, National Register or NHL query. Consider these most recent questions as examples: What is the first municipal park system in America? How many important historic designed landscapes are not registered in Indiana? Is the Allerton estate in Urbana, Illinois, a suitable NHL in landscape architecture? Is the landscape important if it is not recognized in a nomination? What is the oldest surviving designed landscape in the picturesque style? Any thought on an NHL landscape in the Midwest?

Questions such as these are best served with an appropriate reference database. The HLI has already done this for “treatment” with the *Making Educated Decisions* database which has a subject, author and geographic location search capability (to see this go to www2.cr.nps.gov/hli). The time has come for the creation and management of an easily accessible database that will “add value” to the existing National Register and NHL databases. In the process, this index will not only spark future nominations, but will also

Modernist works of landscape architecture, such as Mill Creek Canyon Park, Kent, WA, by environmental artist Herbert Bayer (1900-1985) relied on the earth as sculpture rather than introducing “man-made” sculpture. The park was part of a statewide project where eight artists contributed designs in different areas for the reclamation of environmentally damaged landsites. Courtesy Charles Birnbaum.



promote revisions to earlier nominations where the historic designed landscape were not often fully recognized. For example, this Index will:

- Accommodate the generation of targeted lists based on a variety of topics: subthemes, facets, chronological listings, resource type, designer, and geographic requirements. Although this will take significant time to build this database, beginning with a review of all existing nominations, it will allow maximum flexibility in crafting specific historical, contextual, scholarly or funding/partnership opportunities;

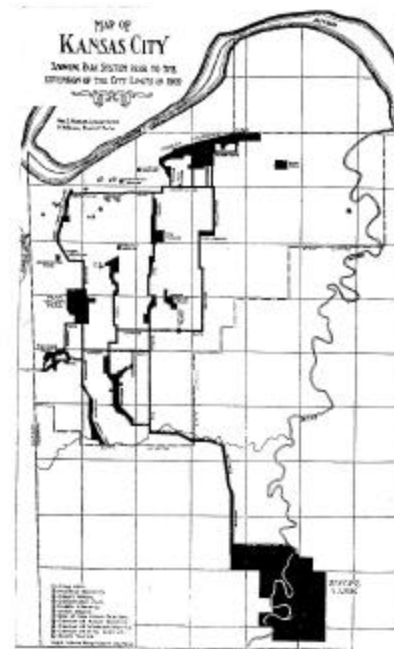
- Require a database dictionary with consistent nomenclature (e.g. the various incarnations of the Olmsted Firm can be particularly complex beginning with Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. For example, dropping the “Sr.” or misspelling as “Olmstead” can limit the success of a particular search);

- Easy revision can be made to the list based on reviewer comments and additional knowledge of recognition;

- The list has the potential to prioritize the effort by “tagging” potential NHLs (e.g. the Kansas City Parks and Boulevards, the first City Beautiful park system) and even World Heritage Candidates (e.g. The Emerald Necklace Parks, Boston, Brookline, MA, the first greenway in the world);

- The magnitude of efforts and subthemes could be more readily recognized and hence priorities and strategies for understanding specific theme areas could be more readily articulated;

- Within this context, because the list is pliable, it can be tailored to suit a variety of needs. For example, a potential request from the American Cemetery



Already listed on the National Register, George Kessler's (1862-1923) plan for Kansas City's park system may be a future National Historic Landmark candidate as the country's first City Beautiful park system. (NPS files).

Association or the American Association of Arboretum and Botanical Gardens to understand their legacy could result in a cooperative endeavor. Additionally, if a request came from someone in a particular locale to understand how their state fared and what the extent of the legacy was, a state, county or city search could easily be undertaken.

The development of this Index will allow for a more comprehensive understanding of the contributions of designed historic landscapes to our cultural heritage and recognize their potential for National Register and NHL nominations. The goal is to develop a flexible database, which will provide contextual information for stakeholders. By seeking the advice and guidance of National Park Service partners and a national task force of scholars in the field of landscape architecture, the HLI hopes to create an Index, which will have a broad range of applications.

For additional information on this project contact: Nancy Slade at the Historic Landscape Initiative, Nancy_Slade@contractor.nps.gov

Exploring Multiple Cultural Landscapes for Interpretative Gain: The Partnership of the Fairfax County Park Authority and the Historic Landscape

Elizabeth A. Crowell, Ph.D
Manager, Cultural Resource
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The Fairfax County Park Authority, which was founded in 1950, is responsible for the management of the cultural resources of Fairfax County, Virginia. Over its 53-year history, the Fairfax County Park Authority has acquired 388 parks that contain more than 21,615 acres of land. The mission of the Park Authority is “to set aside public spaces for, and assist citizens in the protection and enhancement of environmental values, diversity of natural habitats and cultural heritage to guarantee that these resources will be available to both present and future generations.” With the acquisition of this land, the Park Authority became owner of properties containing numerous archaeological and architectural resources important to the pre-history and history of the county, region and nation. In the second half of the 20th century, the Park Authority identified, evaluated, preserved, protected, studied and interpreted the architectural resources, historic districts and archaeological resources under its stewardship.

With the advent of the 21st century, the Fairfax County Park Authority has recognized the importance of the cultural landscapes within Park properties. In an attempt to document and treat several important cultural landscapes, the Park Authority developed a partnership with the Historic Landscape Initiative (HLI) of the National Park Service.

This collaborative undertaking began February 4, 2003 when the HLI coordinator presented an all day symposium for the benefit of the historians, archaeologists, and other preservation and planning professionals who would be involved in conducting or overseeing the preparation of the cultural landscape reports. In addition to the formal presentation, the staff of the HLI has been available for consultation.

Fairfax County's New CLRs

As a result of this partnership, the Park Authority has embarked upon an ambitious program to document cultural landscapes within the county. The Park Authority has identified five properties that will be the subject to Cultural Landscape Reports within the year. These properties include Sully, Huntley, Mount Air, Union Mills and the Margaret White Gardens. Other Park Authority properties, such as Green Spring Garden Park, will be on the agenda for the development of a CLR in the near future. Each of these properties is very different both in nature, in current use and condition, however, for each property the landscape is integral to its historical interpretation. In each case, the evolution of land use has not been thoroughly examined and analyzed with reference to historical and archaeological evidence, as well as changes made by the Park Authority in the last fifty years. Two of the cultural landscape investigations are currently underway; and the others will be initiated in the next several months.

Research on all of the properties will follow the same general methodology. Each of the five properties has been subject to extensive archival research. Review of primary and secondary source material, including historic maps and land records; topographic maps; aerial and infrared photography; historic photographs; prints and paintings; probate records, letters and letterbooks; and other documentary evidence will lead to the development of an historic context for each landscape. In addition, the properties have been or are scheduled to be subject to archaeological survey. The archaeological findings and historic context will allow for the identification of periods of significance for the landscape features on the property. A survey of existing conditions will document the landscape as it appears today. For each property, a period plan and base map will be prepared illustrating the cultural landscape for each period of significance. The studies also will include treatment plans for the long-term management of resources. These plans will address site access and visitation, the public interpretation of landscape elements from multiple periods of significance, and strategies that will not compromise the integrity of the cultural landscape and preserve those significant elements that remain. Described below are the five properties to be documented.

Sully

The Sully Historic Site is a staffed park that has an active long-term interpretation program. Sully was built in 1794 for Richard Bland Lee and was owned by a series of families until it was acquired by the Park Authority in 1959. There are seven historic structures: the main house, kitchen/laundry, smokehouse, lumber house and stone dairy, as well as gardens, archaeological resources and a reconstructed slave cabin. Sully is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The Sully Historic Site is comprised of 128 acres of the original 750 acres that were primarily used for agricultural purposes. The property has been the subject of extensive archival research and several archaeological investigations, including one study that is currently underway. The goal of the CLR is to assist in the preservation of the landscape



Sully south yard showing stone dairy to the left in the foreground and the main house in the background. Courtesy Elizabeth A. Crowell.



1937 aerial view of Huntley showing the house, terracing and agricultural outbuildings. Courtesy Elizabeth A. Crowell.

while accommodating the construction of a new entrance road and visitor center. The report will assist in long-term interpretative plans for the property.

Huntley

The Fairfax County Park Authority acquired Huntley and 2.75 acres of adjacent land in 1988. The house was built in the nineteenth century. Thomson Mason, the grandson of George Mason of Gunston Hall used Huntley as his summer home. His primary residence was in nearby Alexandria. The associated property was used for agricultural pursuits. In addition to the main brick house, several outbuildings are still intact on the property, including a brick privy, a large, vaulted brick, subterranean icehouse, an “office” with an extensive root cellar below it just adjacent to the icehouse, and a late nineteenth-century tenant house. A series of terraces extend from the house to the road level on the south elevation. The house continued to be occupied by a series of private owners until the Park Authority acquired it. Currently, it is not open to the public. The cultural landscape report is part of a larger program for the stabilization and interpretation of the historic site, which is scheduled to be open to the public in 2005. The treatment plan that results from the cultural landscape report will be incorporated into the final development of the site.

Mount Air

The Fairfax County Park Authority acquired Mount Air, the archaeological remains

of a ca. 1750-plantation house, and 15.53 acres of land in 1992, after the house was destroyed by fire. Dennis McCarty patented the Mount Air tract in 1727. The McCarty/Chichester family continued to own the property until just before the Civil War. It had several subsequent owners until the Park Authority acquired it. The property included a terrace patio, gardens and several outbuildings, as well as the ruins of the house. There are several standing outbuildings, including a barn, chicken coop, corncrib and several other farm buildings. This property is of particular significance, since the main feature, the remains of the house, and several other contributing resources are archaeological in nature. The property also has an associated meadow, a rare occurrence in Fairfax County. The CLR will provide information on the evolution of land use and will be important in the interpretation of the garden on the property.

Union Mills

Union Mills was the site of Civil War occupation by both Union and Confederate forces. The earthworks were built by Confederate forces and later taken over by Union Forces. This resource is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The land use is characterized by earthworks, extensive summer and winter camps, commanders’ quarters, wells, privies, and other Civil War features visible on the landscape. Both Camp Early and the Great Redoubt are incorporated in the Park system. The property is currently wooded and has been largely undisturbed since the cessation of hostilities in 1865. The CLR for Union Mills is part of a larger study that includes a detailed topographic survey of the property, and an archaeological survey and testing program. The goal of the study at Union Mills is to analyze archaeological and documentary evidence and design a treatment plan for the stabilization and interpretation of this Civil War resource. The treatment plan will likely depict an 1860s landscape that is much different than today.

Margaret White Garden

Margaret White Garden is a property that was acquired by the Fairfax County Park Authority in 2000. This historic garden, designed in the 1930s, contains a significant collection of azaleas and rhododendrons. The

goal of the CLR for the garden is to identify the heirloom trees within the garden; to evaluate the condition of the landscape material; and to identify original and introduced planting materials. The treatment plan will include a proposed landscape plan for the garden. The cultural landscape report will contribute to the development of a master plan for the site.

The Benefit

Each of the subject properties, though different, will benefit vastly from the analysis of their cultural landscapes. At each property, the changes in the landscape over time are reflective of changes in mindset, just as can be observed in architecture and material culture. An understanding of these changes will significantly contribute to the interpretation of each of these sites. Sully will be able to modify their interpretative program and effectively plan for the construction of the new entrance road and planned visitor center as a result of the proposed treatment plan for cultural landscapes. The other sites, not currently open to visitation, will be able to design their interpretative programs to include those important elements of the cultural landscapes. In the case of Union Mills, the treatment plan will inform the program for the stabilization of the Civil War resources at the site and will assist in bringing the property back to its 1860s condition. As each of these, and future, cultural landscape reports unfold, the Park Authority will continue to gain invaluable assistance and insight from its partnership with the Historic Landscapes Initiative.

Acknowledgements

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Skyline Park: Public/Private Partnerships Aim to Preserve Modern Landscape

Ann Mullins
Principal, Civitas, Inc.

Skyline Park is located at the center of downtown Denver, a park stretching three blocks along Arapahoe Street, from 15th Street to 18th Street. Developed to be a destination, activity area, and refuge for urban workers it was one of only two park like areas in downtown Denver. The park was designed by Lawrence Halprin and built in 1974 after a decade of urban renewal efforts, which had resulted in the demolition of most of the older downtown buildings and replacement of these buildings with parking lots. Skyline Park was a jewel in the middle of the bleak cityscape of Denver, anchored by one of the few remaining early Denver buildings; the well loved Central Bank Building and with the D & F Tower, all that remained of the Daniels and Fisher department store, as a focal point. At this time with no other parks near downtown except the Civic Center Park, it was a valued and well-used place. Its unique design as a canyon in the city worked well, creating some visual interest in a sea of park-



Skyline Park aerial from the Southwest.
Courtesy Ann Mullins, FASLA.

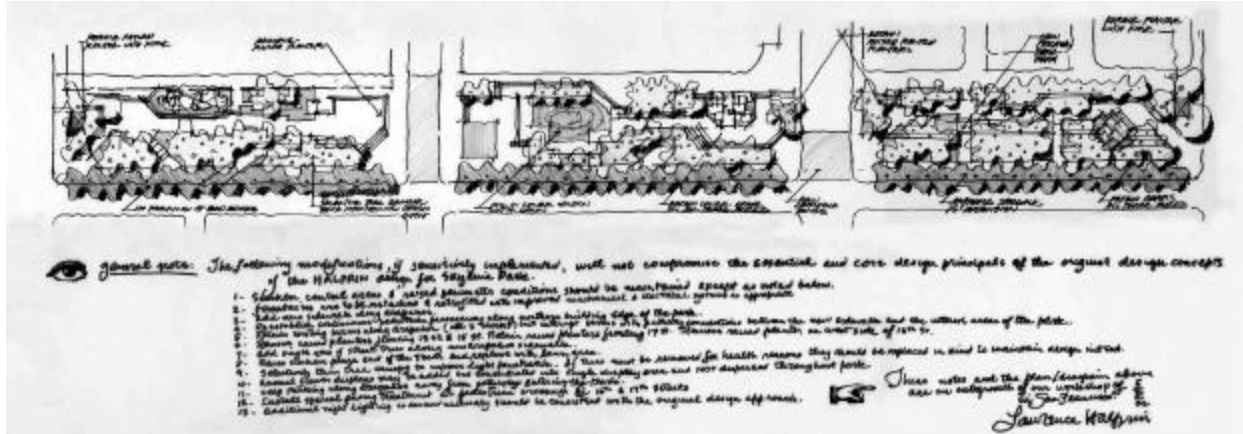
opening innovative solutions for the revitalization of city centers. Many of these solutions involved the management of the automobile and stressed the separation of the pedestrian and the automobile. It was at this time that skyways, second story pedestrian passages between buildings, were purposed to minimize car and pedestrian interaction as well as other means of separation. Not only physical separation was promoted, but visual separation was endorsed as well.

The design of Skyline Park is similar to other Halprin designs in the extensive use of hard surfaces, effective use of water and plant materials and the complex angular design. It is also similar in its uniqueness; the use of unlikely or awkward spaces for a park area. Consider Freeway Park in Seattle (1976); a series of spaces spanning a freeway or the sequence of outdoor “rooms” at the FDR Memorial in Washington DC, (1997). The Skyline site is a linear, elongated and narrow site, which was perceived as three separate spaces, trisected by two busy streets. Halprin developed a design which gave each block a distinct character, but more importantly he created a design which tied the three spaces together so strongly that the park is perceived as a whole rather than a combination of sub-areas. As in his other parks he uses colored concrete with varying amounts of aggregate and different finishing techniques to enhance the already interesting angular spaces. Plant materials are used abundantly to contrast with

ing lots and creating a strong sense of place in the dehumanizing effect of urban renewal.

Denver began to address the deterioration of the lower part of downtown in the early fifties. It was having a detrimental effect on the businesses of downtown and the business community responded by initiating numerous studies and conferences to address the urban problem. At this time, also, architects and landscape architects were studying the decline of downtowns and the accompanying problems of these city centers caused by their age and the emergence of the suburbs. Designers like Lawrence Halprin were devel-

Based on the framework of consensus elements, which were developed in the group plan score, Halprin summarized his feelings about which elements would be compatible with his original design. The following diagram/plan, that Tom Balsley drew up for the group, grew out of this summary. Lawrence Halprin wrote the general note that accompanies the plan. Courtesy The Office of Lawrence Halprin.





Fountain in South Block. Hopefully, it can be saved, but it is unknown if mechanical problems can be solved. Courtesy Manish Chalana.

and soften the hardscape. There is a fountain in each block, again following the principles of the larger design. The fountains are each distinct in character and are strongly related by material and design.

Like Olmsted, Halprin designed the park to separate cars and pedestrians. The canyon-like design combined with the perimeter berms created for the users of the park a seven to ten foot visual barrier to the street. No physical access, and limited visual access was provided from the street and no on street parking at the park edge was provided. Visual and physical links from the surrounding buildings are limited. Today, still existing, are the stairways to second levels, which would have been accessed from the skyways but are unused today.

As the city grew, several significant events changed the use and success of the park. In the late 70's buildings were constructed adjacent to the park making it a canyon within a canyon and creating perceived safety problems, limited visibility, and restricted access issues. The 16th Street Mall was constructed in the early 80's. The mall with its active retail businesses and restaurants took users from the park. In 1990 the Central Bank Building, the anchor at the south end of the park was demolished and replaced with a parking lot. Also, in the 1990's new parks were constructed along the Platte River and development of the Platte Valley accelerated. Skyline Park, instead of being an isolated park, became physically the center point of the downtown Denver Parks system, but it was symbolically and functionally unable to fulfill this role.

The current effort to redesign Skyline Park to accommodate today's needs began in 1998. An Inventory and Assessment Report

was done and that report led to the completion of a new Master Plan for the park. The Report unfortunately emphasized the problems of the park and said little about the successes of the park. This created the momentum for the Master Plan to recommend a complete redesign of the park. Neither the report nor the Master Plan acknowledged the importance of the park as a significant historic landscape designed by Lawrence Halprin. Halprin was one of the innovators and leaders in the 70's in both the fields of ecological design and urban design; and Skyline Park is one of his most intact works. In March, 2003, Halprin received the Medal of Arts from President Bush, the highest artistic honor an artist can receive in America.

The process continued with a new more detailed plan from a firm from Canada eventually ending in the hiring of a New York landscape architecture firm to do the final redesign of the park. It was at this point that the local community contacted the Historic Landscape Initiative (HLI). The HLI met with local and national organizations in an effort to create a national discourse regarding the future of this "modern masterwork of landscape architecture." The HLI coordinator lectured on the topic to local constituents and engaged the original designer, Lawrence Halprin. The option of saving the park with some modifications had not been seriously considered because of the momentum of the previ-

ous reports and studies and because the process had not involved to a great degree those interested groups such as local historic preservation groups and local landscape architects. A concerted effort was put forth to stop or at least slow down the process before the park was lost.

The University of Colorado at Denver, with the help of preservation groups and local landscape architects, sponsored a symposium about Skyline Park. It covered the historic significance, its current condition, the role of public space, the privatization of public space, and the social context of the park. The symposium did a commendable job of informing the participants about the issues and importance of the park.

Concurrently, the city realizing the need for further discussion formed the Skyline Park Advisory Committee. The eighteen members of this committee are representatives of local neighborhood associations, preservation groups, business associations, design associations and property owners. The goal of the committee was to reach consensus about the future of Skyline Park. The monthly meetings began in March of 2002 and were scheduled to end in August of 2002.

After setting goals and determining objectives at the first meeting each subsequent meeting addressed a different aspect or problem of the park with these goals and objectives as a framework. At the conclusion of each meeting changes were agreed upon and the designer directed to incorporate these changes into three alternative designs.

View looking north to Daniels and Fish Tower and the 16th Street Mall. Courtesy Manish Chalana.



Skyline Park

continued from previous page 9

The first was the preservation alternative, the second a combination of preservation and new design, and the third was a complete redesign of the park. In May of 2002, the city sent three of the committee members and the designer to San Francisco to meet with Lawrence Halprin, who volunteered, to discuss his view of the redesign of Skyline Park.

Halprin structured the day in his RSVP cycle format, a process he created to direct creative thinking. This process—Resources, Scores, Valuation, and Performance is explained in detail in his book, *The RSVP Cycles: Creative Processes in the Human Environment*. The day was fascinating, informative, and productive. Halprin described his experience in the design and construction of Skyline Park as one of his more gratifying and fun projects. Fun because the city residents were so supportive and enthusiastic about the project and gratifying because the quality of the construction was so exceptional. The current problems of the park were explained along with a review of the work done to date by the designer and the city. At the end of the day a plan was produced which incorporated changes that Halprin found acceptable and which he considered preservation of the park. The plan provided solutions

Water flowing through fountain of South Block. Because of Denver's drought, no park fountains were turned on this year. Courtesy Ann Komara.



to many of the problems in the park and became the foundation of the preservation alternative.

Through the summer the preservation alternative gained more support, the combination alternative was abandoned but by August the committee members had still not reached consensus. At a well-attended public meeting in September the two alternatives were presented, i.e. modify the existing park or build a new one, again there was not a prevailing viewpoint expressed at this meeting. The city asked that the work of the committee be extended through December 2002 to again attempt to come to consensus.

The effort was difficult because many of the committee members had strong opposing views about the future of the park. A plan was presented in December that preserves some parts of the park but destroys most of it. Pieces of the walls will be reused, some trees will be saved, two of the three fountains will stay and the third, with some modification may be retained. Some of the pavement patterns mirror the original angles of the concrete work and some of the angled entrances and seating areas are reflected in the new plan.

This plan was presented to the Skyline Advisory Committee but even while those interested in preserving the park were unhappy with the solution it was moved on to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board of Denver where it was approved. A contractor was chosen to do the work and the construction fencing went up on May 12, 2003.

Currently there is an effort to undertake HALS documentation of the park. Some funding has been secured, but more is needed. Most of the documentation that needed to take place before the construction fencing was put up has been accomplished. Photographs, both large format and field photographs, have been taken and indexed. A team of twelve, verified measurements and noted changes with the original drawings throughout the entire park. Plant materials were surveyed to identify original plantings, new plantings and lost plantings. Many sketches were done of significant elements such as the fountains and other site furnishings. One individual did rubbings of the concrete to establish the vocabulary of the amount of aggregate and degree of exposure



Children climbing on the fountain in the middle block. Courtesy Ann Komara.

for different conditions and locations. A unique part of the documentation is a video recording of use and interaction in the park. While the measured drawings illustrate the design of the park and the photographs document it in a more emotive way, the final video will show the interaction of people with this landscape, and will reveal some of the successes and failures of this unique urban park. In the next six months the raw material that has been collected will be put in archival formats for preservation. While the archival formats for the photographs and measured drawings are well established, a format for the video/film still needs to be determined.

The loss of Skyline Park is great and presents a dilemma in preserving modern landscape architecture. Skyline Park was almost entirely intact due to the fine design and attention to detail that is a hallmark of Halprin's designs as well as the high quality of the park's construct. The park also possessed a high degree of integrity of Halprin's original design. But it was never modified to keep pace with the changing urban context. As a result of the physical changes and the population surge in Denver over the last thirty years, Skyline no longer functioned as the park it once was or should have been.

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The Rhode Island Landscape Survey

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Rhode Island Historical Preservation
and Heritage Commission

Only twenty years ago, the concept of surveying a whole state to catalogue and evaluate landscapes was a radical idea in historic preservation circles. Fifteen years ago, Rhode Island began to do just that.

Rhode Island has a long and strong history of surveying historic resources and publishing survey findings for public distribution. The first of these, *Providence's College Hill: A Demonstration Study of Historic Area Renewal*, conducted by Antoinette F. Downing and published in 1959, became a model for many future surveys. Following the establishment in 1968 of Rhode Island's SHPO, the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission (RIHPHC or Commission), with Ms. Downing as its first chairman, made the statewide survey of historic resources its highest priority. The state's small size and decision to inventory historic resources at the municipal level (there is no unincorporated land in Rhode Island) enabled completion of the survey of the state's thirty-nine cities and towns by the late 1980s. These surveys provide a fine context for the evaluation of a community's historic resources. They also revealed classes of properties whose context was broader than the local community, as had been suggested as early as 1978, when the *Historic American Engineering Record* published its survey of

the state's industrial properties. As the RIHPHC concluded the municipal surveys and their publication, staff members began to identify further categories of resources better understood in a statewide context.

An almost harmonic convergence allowed historic landscapes to become the first of several large-scale surveys. In the 1980s, Rhode Island was blessed with the presence in the state legislature of a talented, aggressive landscape architect, Robert A. Weygand. Weygand's professional involvement in preparing the master plan for Providence's Roger Williams Park, designed in 1878 by Horace W.S. Cleveland, probably played a significant role in increasing his interest in historic landscapes. In two separate appropriations by the General Assembly, Senator Weygand secured funding that enabled the RIHPHC to undertake its landscape survey. The first appropriation allowed the survey of designed landscapes to begin in 1988; the second funded the survey of cultural landscapes in 1990. Additional funding for the project beyond the survey was provided by the National Park Service's Historic Preservation Fund annual allocations to the Commission. As originally conceived, the survey was limited to designed landscapes and funded accordingly. The second phase grew out of the realization of its necessity as the first was conducted.

To conduct the survey, the RIHPHC sought the services of a consultant expert in identification and analysis of historic landscapes. The Commission issued a Request for Proposals in 1988 and interviewed four consultants. Lucinda A. Brockway of Kennebunk, Maine, was selected.

Developing the Survey

Developing a specific methodology for the designed landscape survey was the first step. Designed landscapes were defined as those for which a conscious, aesthetics-driven effort could be documented through written or graphic sources. The survey thus began with a literature search of primary and



*Butler Hospital, Providence, Engraving from American Journal of Insanity, Volume V, 1848-49
Courtesy of RIHPHC.*

secondary sources. Archival searches included the Catalogue of Landscape Records in the United States (whose Director, Catha Grace Rambusch, was reliably a great source of help), the Harvard Estates Guide, and archives for landscape architects active in Rhode Island, including those for the Olmsted firm, Fletcher Steele, and Beatrix Jones Farrand. Secondary sources included published diaries and theses (critical for documenting seventeenth- and eighteenth-century landscapes), landscape and gardening publications beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, and information gathered in the Commission's municipal surveys. The literature search produced a master list of designed landscapes. Fieldwork then verified and documented survival, degree of integrity, and current condition. Survey sheets tailored specifically for evaluating designed landscapes as well as black-and-white photographs and color slides were the initial work products. Evaluation of individual properties and establishment of a historic context for their understanding produced an inventory of properties and a narrative that described the evolution of Rhode Island's designed landscapes within the context of American landscape architectural history.

Vernacular Landscapes

Following the conclusion of the designed landscape survey and with funding in place for the cultural or vernacular landscape survey, the second phase was ready to begin. Vernacular landscapes were defined as those



*Wildacre, Newport, RI, photograph circa 1900.
Newport Historical Society. Courtesy of Rhode
Island Historical Preservation & Heritage
Commission.*



Burial Ground, Little Compton Common, RI. Courtesy of RIHPHC.

where human intervention had played a significant role in organizing land and land-use patterns, principally for goals or uses other than aesthetic. Ms. Brockway and landscape architect Elena Pascarella conducted the vernacular survey. The methodology adopted for the designed landscape survey, adapted for cultural landscapes, remained based on existing documentation. Restricted to agricultural landscapes, scenic rural roadways, and mill villages because of the need to limit the project's scope, the survey excluded landscapes for industry, commercial use, and some transportation-related networks. The Commission's municipal-survey files as well as information from each of the state's municipalities provided lists of properties that, like those of the designed landscape survey, were then verified, documented, analyzed, and evaluated. Like those for the designed-landscape survey, work products included detailed survey sheets, photographs, slides, an inventory of significant properties, and a historic context statement. The survey also included carefully sketched site plans for agricultural complexes which proved exceptionally useful and could be further mined by the avid student of spatial organization of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century farms.

Communicating the Findings

Following the completion in the mid-1990s of both phases of the landscape survey, the Commission was faced with the best way to present the findings to the public. While identification and evaluation of landscapes had occurred in two discrete surveys, the need for a single publication that included all categories of landscapes easily emerged as the obvious answer. As the survey pro-

gressed, staff members had become increasingly aware of the growing interest, both locally and nationally, in landscapes of all kind, but neither the market nor the funding suggested two separate publications.

Developing the landscape-survey book was an interesting challenge. Creating an inventory of significant landscapes was methodologically simple. Ample information had

been assembled for many properties, so analyzing and describing significant aspects of each property toward using that information for property management was little different from preparing similar inventory entries for any other historic resource. But crafting a context statement, a narrative history of Rhode Island landscape design keyed to existing historic resources, was more exacting. Histories of landscapes available by the mid-to late 1990s design were sweeping in scope, focused on specific property types or designers, or highly polemical. Studies that address an exceptionally wide range of landscape forms and types and places them in a broad cultural context, like Elizabeth Barlow Rogers' *Landscape Design: A Cultural and Architectural History*, had not yet seen publication.

For Rhode Island, the narrative context statement had to explain the culture that created astonishingly diverse landscapes dating from the mid-eighteenth through the late twentieth centuries and ranging in purpose from strictly utilitarian through recreational and commemorative to exclusively aesthetic. In the end, the four key phases of Rhode Island's developmental history suggested the framework: settling and organizing the land, the slow-paced era of maritime trade, the increasingly frenetic and complex century and a half of industrialization, and post-industri-



Miramar, Newport Photograph, 1941, Newport Historical Society. Courtesy of RIHPHC

alization. Definable economic and cultural circumstances that affected general attitudes toward land and its use characterized each of these periods and thus explained the creation, development, or disappearance of landscape forms and types.

Rhode Island's inventory of historic landscapes is rich. Subsistence farms, public spaces, identifiable town plans, and burying grounds remain from the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Large agricultural complexes, private gardens around large houses, and institutional grounds are the chief legacies of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The advent of industry, (and Rhode Island was the cradle of the Industrial Revolution, begun at Slater Mill in Pawtucket in 1793), brought a proliferation of landscape forms. Many of them reactions to industrialization and urban expansion: garden cemeteries, therapeutic hospital grounds, schoolyards, elaborate private gardens (especially in the lush watering spots of Watch Hill, Narragansett, Newport, and Little Compton, to name only a few), golf courses, larger commercial farms, public parks, parkways, mill villages, and suburban plats. Many of the traditional historic property types continue to be designed and created in the post-World War II period, but they have been joined by landscapes so enlarged in scale as almost to become a new form, such as the in-

Lonsdale, Lincoln, Lithograph by O.H. Bailey & Co. Courtesy of RIHPHC.

terstate highway or the enclosed shopping mall.

The completed survey was published by the Commission in 2001 as *Historic Landscapes of Rhode Island*. In addition to the historical narrative and the inventory of several hundred properties, the heavily illustrated publication includes biographical sketches of landscape-design individuals and firms active in Rhode Island.

Like all the Commission's published surveys, *Historic Landscapes* serves both to educate the general public and to assist property managers in making appropriate decisions about the appropriate treatment of historic landscapes. To some, landscape as an historic resource is still a relatively novel concept, and even when understood as historic may well be perceived as secondary to buildings and structures. Rhode Island's landscape survey seeks to establish landscapes as an important category of historic resources—just like Victorian houses and industrial complexes a generation ago—and to advocate for their considered preservation.

To order: *Historic Landscapes of Rhode Island*, see this issue of *Vineyard*, "THE LAST WORD."

William McKenzie Woodward, an architectural historian on the staff of the RIHPHC, is the author of *Historic Landscapes of Rhode Island*. E-mail him at mwoodward@rihphc.state.ri.us.

IMAGE BELOW: *Washington Square, Newport*. Lithograph by John Collins, 1875, Rhode Island Historical Society. Courtesy of RIHPHC.

CIRCULAR COVER IMAGE: *Blanche Borden Frenning Residence, Bumble Bee Farm, Little Compton*. Photograph by Lucinda A. Brockway, 1989. Courtesy of RIHPHC.



Unique Project Provides a Survey of Historic Landscapes of Florida

Joanna Lombard, Professor
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The significant architecture and landscape of Florida is indebted to a history that weaves native and imported plant materials into a vision of "paradise." Over the past ten years, students and faculty from the University of Miami School of Architecture documented twenty-seven of these historic properties, spanning over a century of design, the first such assembled body of work on these significant historic designed landscapes.

The Deering Foundation awarded the University of Miami School of Architecture the funds to produce the traveling exhibition and book entitled, *Historic Landscapes of Florida*. The drawings represent a method of combining plan measurements with pictorial elevations to produce a unique image that accurately renders scale and overall design as well as character and detail. In addition to featuring the twenty-seven drawings, the four-color, 130-page book offers historic and contemporary photographs, explanatory text, two essays on the drawing methods and Florida's history. It also contains focus sections on the impact of the Deering landscapes and the work of William Lyman Phillips, a graduate of Harvard's landscape architecture program in its earliest years.

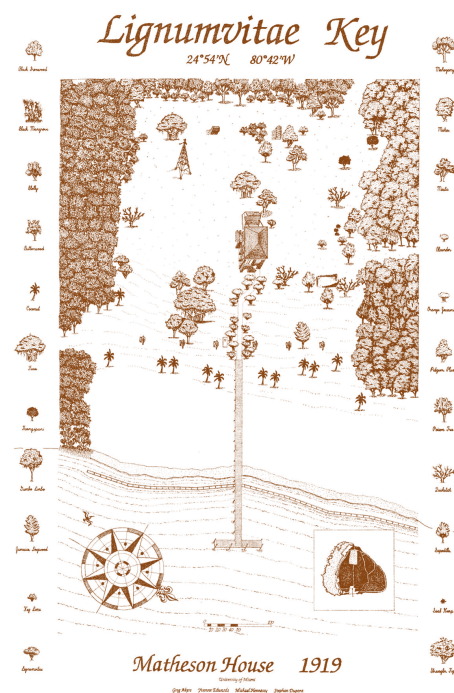
Beginning with Indian Key in 1838 and concluding with the Harry P. Leu House and Gardens, in Orlando in 1961, the book includes landscapes that are diverse in size, organization, and intention. From the major public commissions of William Lyman Phillips, a professional of national stature, to the small and idiosyncratic creation of Edward Leeds Kalnin's Coral Castle, the projects reveal the ongoing encounter of imaginative expectations and the reality of Florida.

Cultural landscapes, such as Indian Key extend a sense of history to prehistoric humans and forward through the Spanish occupation of Florida to the era of salvaging wrecks, an important industry in the early development of the Keys. Across the state,



The gardens of Vizcaya, designed by Diego Suarez in 1914, the National Historic Landmark estate is in Miami, Florida. Courtesy HLL.

the Koreshans' founder, Cyrus Teed, a Midwestern physician, hoped to establish a new world order based on his concept of the earth as concave. His utopian point of origin for the world was centered in Estero, Florida. His community aspired to become a New Jerusalem and its goal of urbanity illustrates the confrontation of a clear design intention with the material reality of its rural site.



Lignumvitae Key Drawing, from "Historic Landscapes of Florida." Courtesy Joanna Lombard.

Historic Landscapes of Florida

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The Deering Estates in Florida include Charles Deering's ephemeral Buena Vista estate and two of South Florida's leading gardens, the Charles Deering Estate at Cutler and Vizcaya, now a National Historic Landmark. At one point, Vizcaya encompassed 180 acres and included an itinerary that took the visitor through the hardwood hammock and mangroves in a series of canals, ultimately reaching what remains of the estate today—the casino, formal gardens and villa. A neighboring estate, El Jardin, in Coconut Grove, now Carrollton School of the Sacred Heart, was designed by the architects, Kiehnel and Elliott, and built by the steel tycoon, John Bindley, and reveals some of the qualities of the earlier Vizcaya, while it was still domestic in its use.

Other properties, such as Lignumvitae Key, one of the few places in the world where the lignum vitae (tree of life) grow as a native represent the contribution of the Matheson family. While Everglades City, a 1920s company town for Barron Collier, is iconic of the intersection of settlement and wilderness. And Mountain Lake Sanctuary, originally designed for Edward Bok, by William Lyman Phillips while he was a member of the Olmsted firm, still evidences the aspects of the garden that express Olmsted's philosophies regarding community and privacy.

As communities rescue endangered properties, such as the timely intervention of the Indian River Land Trust in its preservation and restoration of the remaining acreage

of the original McKee Jungle Garden, the value of these properties as aspects of cultural history is more widely appreciated. In Palatka, the Ravine State Gardens, which began in 1933 as a Works Progress Administration, Civilian Conservation Corps project merits attention today to ensure

its protection. Cypress Gardens, first established in Winter Haven in 1936 in a cypress hammock in Florida's lake region has just closed its doors and national press and local discussion regarding its future is an important and open question. In all cases, the *Historic Landscapes of Florida* brings worthy attention to these often overlooked, nationally significant resources.

In some cases, many of the landscapes portrayed no longer exist as originally designed, or they have been lost. In these cases the drawings document both time and place serving as "period plans" which document the landscapes evolution over time. The urgency of the potential loss makes the drawings significant. The value of the exhibition is that the drawings are large enough (from 24"x36" to 36"x60") to assist the viewer in interpretation of the landscape, or in the case of the

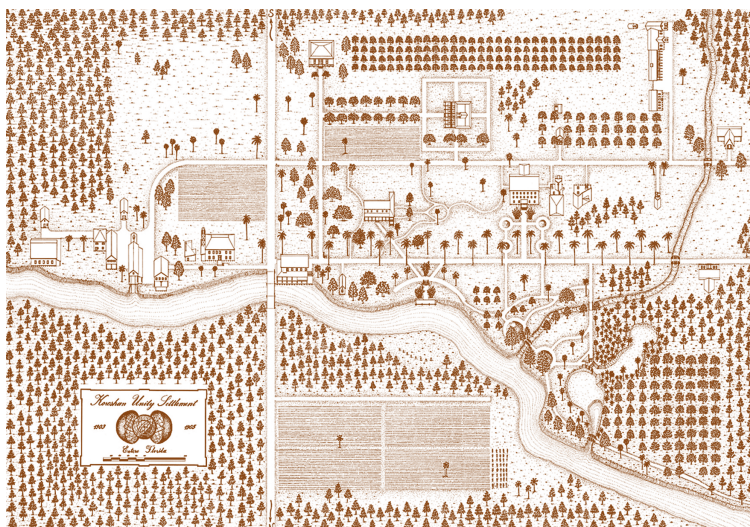
"reconstructions", to gain a sense of what might have been.

The drawings opened in an exhibition at the Charles Deering Estate, Cutler in partnership with the Park and Recreation Department of Miami Dade County. To date, large numbers of Floridians have

visited the exhibition as it has traveled across Florida with openings at the Edison & Ford Winter Estates Museum and the Mennello Museum of American Folk Art in Orlando. Additionally, the book won a 2002 Preservation Award from the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation. The goal of this endeavor is to open avenues of interest to Florida's landscape history. By giving shape to the visions and voice of the original designers and owners, it is hoped that a broad audience of professionals, students, and garden enthusiasts will focus on this significant and fragile legacy.

TOP: View of the Palm Glade at Fairchild Tropical Gardens in Coral Gables, Florida. Designed by William Lyman Phillips in 1938. Courtesy Joanna Lombard.

BOTTOM: Koreshan Drawing, from "Historic Landscapes of Florida." Courtesy Joanna Lombard.



To Order: *Historic Landscapes of Florida*, by Rocco Ceo and Joanna Lombard, see this issue of *Vineyard*, "THE LAST

Joanna Lombard is a Professor and Rocco Ceo is an Associate Professor at the University of Miami School of Architecture. This article is authored by Joanna Lombard. She can be reached at JLombard@miami.edu

Managing Historic Parkway in Massachusetts

Patrice Kish
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The rich legacy of Massachusetts' historic parkways is one that stretches across the Commonwealth and represents a broad spectrum of parkway types. Although the public may appreciate those elements that give the parkways their character—majestic trees along Boston's Memorial Drive, expansive views from Notch Road at Mt. Greylock State Reservation in the Berkshires—they remain largely unaware of the history and design intent of these unique resources. Consequently, after a century of use, parkways in Massachusetts have deteriorated and suffered from inadequate funding, deferred maintenance, and historically inappropriate “improvements.” The result is a parkway system in need of rehabilitation and an improved maintenance strategy.

Over the years, opinions have varied as to the best way to protect historic parkways in Massachusetts. Since the early 1990's various administrations have attempted to merge the two agencies responsible for managing the state's parkway resources—the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management (DEM) and the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC)—and to transfer the care, custody and control of the parkways to the Massachusetts Highway Department (MHD). These efforts were seen as threatening to the integrity of the Commonwealth's parks and open space system and were repeatedly defeated by advocates and the state legislature.

The Creation of Massachusetts Historic Parkway Initiative

In August of 2001, in response to continuing efforts to transfer the parkways to the MHD, the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) voted to proceed with National Register nomination of the nationally significant Metropolitan Parkway System conceived of by Charles Eliot and Sylvester Baxter. This, in combination with the environmental agencies' historic landscape preservation agenda, resulted in an ambitious

interagency effort to support the preservation of historic parkways and park roads. The far-reaching goal of this newly created Massachusetts Historic Parkway Initiative is to lay the groundwork for an integrated planning and decision-making process for the treatment and management of historic parkways in Massachusetts.

The interagency collaboration involved in this initiative provided a model for a successful unification of the two parks agency, the MDC and DEM. Under the leadership of Environmental Affairs Secretary Ellen Roy Herzfelder, the new Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) will build on the strengths of the two agencies to manage the Commonwealth's parks, including its historic parkways.

The Historic Parkway Initiative—a coalition of the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA), the Department of Conservation and Recreation and other public and private organizations—works to protect, preserve and enhance historic parkways throughout the Commonwealth. Through advocacy, education and action, and in the spirit of partnership, the Initiative celebrates the invaluable scenic, cultural, recreational and transportation roles of these remarkable and diverse parkways. As a catalyst for change, the Initiative is building new models of stewardship and revitalization for these treasured resources.

Parkways Have a History

The concept of the parkway has evolved over time under the thoughtful creativity and direction of many individuals. As early as 1844, the plan to expand Boston's land area into what is now the Back Bay included the development of a 200-foot wide band of “boulevards” laid out along the banks of the Charles River. In 1868, Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., advanced his concept of the “park way” in his plan for Prospect Park in Brooklyn by proposing a wide, tree lined boulevard to connect public recreation grounds and expand a verdant, park-like set-

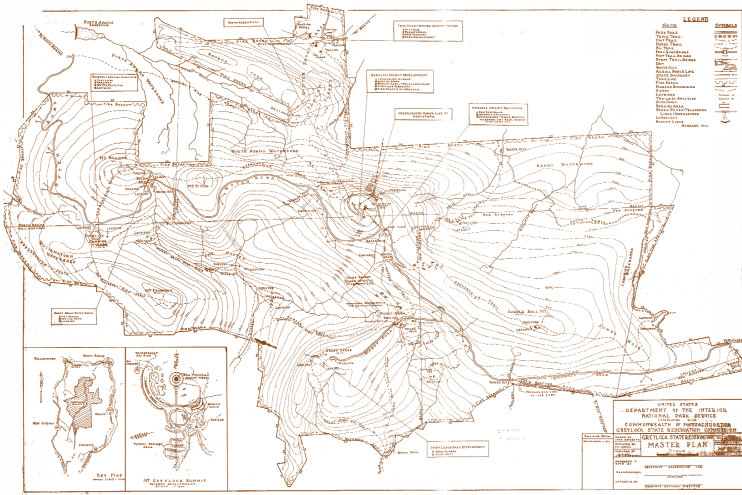


*Little is left of the Fitch Overlook due to severe structural failure. Today, Jersey barriers have replaced the historic furnishings, which separate the parkway from the overlook, 2002.
Courtesy DCR/Vollmer Team.*

ting through the city. By the late nineteenth century, park and parkway systems were developed in Chicago, Minneapolis and Buffalo. However, it was Olmsted's work in Boston creating a system of parks and recreational spaces linked by parkways that inspired the creation of the Metropolitan Park System, the country's first regional public reservation, parks and parkway system, as well as other parkways around the Commonwealth.

Learning from the Past, Planning for the Future: Treatment Guidelines

Today, the term parkway can be broadly defined as a roadway that links, and provides access to, recreational amenities. Parkway expand and reinforce the park experience and are characterized by verdant surroundings, alignments that conform to topography and adjacent natural features and provisions for multiple modes of travel. However, parkways have evolved to serve purposes other than recreation. Drivers, joggers, bikers and walkers often share the parkways but have different functional needs, and at times, conflicting requirements. These multiple stewardship challenges involve traffic calming, vegetation management and adap-



CCC master plan for Mount Greylock, 1937. Significant vistas to be restored are marked by the project consultant. (DEM Archives/Vollmer Team).

tive reuse, (e.g. dedicating a former bridle path for joggers/cyclists) to name a few. Unfortunately, landscape preservation values have not been regularly incorporated into the process of planning parkway improvements and often the result has been to the detriment of preserving the character-defining features of the road. The Historic Parkways Initiative is the first attempt to create a preservation planning protocol for the treatment and management of historic parkways in Massachusetts.

The Massachusetts Historic Parkways Initiative has been developed as a multi-pronged preservation approach from inventory to treatment guidelines. The development of these guidelines brought together a number of disciplines including historic preservation, landscape architecture, structural and civil engineering, transportation planning and arboriculture.

Last spring, the Halvorson Design Group of Boston, conducted a statewide inventory of 45 representative parkways and park roads across the Commonwealth. This critical piece of the Initiative provided public agencies with an in-depth understanding of parkway types, scope and nature of stewardship challenges. The purpose of the inventory was to document and analyze historical significance, integrity, character, physical condition of built and natural features and the visual qualities that contribute or detract from the parkways. The inventory fieldwork, coupled with the historical research conducted

for the preparation of the National Register nominations, led to a better understanding of the differences between parkway type, historic design intent, character-defining features and preservation needs. A typology to classify the different “types” of parkways was created

as a tool to determine an appropriate preservation treatment. Eight historic types are now recognized to classify the parkways:

Connecting Pleasure Roads are designed to link residential residents to public parks and reservations, and to link parks and reservations with each other. Character-defining features include, but are not limited to, routes that connect to a public reservation or to other parkways; wide, planted medians; rights of way that support a park-like setting, and curvilinear alignments.

Internal Park Roads are designed to support the use of a park for recreational and interpretive purposes, and may provide access across a park. They are primarily characterized by alignments that follow natural topography and take advantage of scenery; wooded setting and naturalistic vegetation, and connections to recreational sites (picnic areas, trailheads, overlooks).

River Parkways are aligned along a river course, making the river one edge of the parkway, with a landscaped edge and private development on the other. Broad and screened views of the river, structures including culverts and bridges, and curvilinear alignment are some of the primary features of the River Parkway.

Ocean Parkways are aligned along ocean frontage that offers sweeping water views and access to the beach. The alignments emphasize the coastal landform. Their design is similar to that of the connecting pleasure roads, with the exception that there is usually no over-story vegetation between the road and the beach.

Border Roads are intended to form the edge of parks and reservations to ensure public accessibility to public land. An entrance

to a park or reservation is sometimes, but not always, present. Border roads are chiefly defined by the presence of protected open space on one side of the parkway and private, usually residential, development on the other.

Summit Roads are designed to bring visitors to the summit of mountains and provide an experience of rugged progress up steep, winding topography as well as provide dramatic views. Upon reaching the summit, there is a formal sense of arrival that might include buildings, structures and other recreational facilities. Dramatic long distance views are paramount to this parkway type.

Estate Roads are designed to serve estate grounds which have been converted for use in the present-day park. These roads consist of formal entry sequences creating a sense of arrival. The surrounding landscape is controlled. Plantings (natural or formal), views, and structures are generally part of a larger master plan.

Vernacular Roads are a type of historic road found in virtually all forests, parks and reservations in the Commonwealth. These roads are diverse in their origins and are not typified by common physical, character-defining features. Their significance is related to their surrounding land uses. Many currently function as recreational and facility access to a forest or park.

The guidelines make treatment recommendations in relation to parkway types, demonstrating that the specific character and conditions will dictate solutions to strengthen and preserve the character-defining features in the context of rehabilitation of the parkway. The guidelines provide definitions, issues and recommendations of key parkway elements including landscape character (setting and views); roadway and related elements (alignment, drainage, lane width, curbs, surface, guardrails, lights and signage); multi-use features (recreational, pedestrian, vehicular and bicycle amenities); structures (walls, bridges, culverts); and vegetation (trees, shrubs, turf). The guidelines are presented as both system-wide recommendations and by parkway type.

The Mount Greylock Treatment Demonstration Project

As the first state reservation (est.1898) Mount Greylock in western Massachusetts is a fitting location for one of the two Historic Parkway Initiative demonstration projects.

The other project is Memorial Drive along the Charles River in Cambridge.

Between 1885 and 1937 the historic parkway system at Mount Greylock was transformed from 18th century rural road to a complete recreational parkway designed by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) as part of the New Deal era. The 13.5-mile parkway is comprised of three roads. Notch Road from the north, and Rockwell Road from the south, converge at Summit Road, to makes the final ascent to Greylock Summit. The parkway reflects the CCC aesthetic including hand craftsmanship, rustic forms and the use of native materials. Much of the parkway was intended to be forested “tunnel” with a series of selective vistas and “window” views in anticipation of the summit. As the elevation climbs, scenic overlooks along the parkway provide vistas and views that can be seen for miles. The parkway experience culminates with arrival at the summit and its 360 degree panoramic view encompassing four states.

Designed to demonstrate the goals of the Historic Parkways Initiative, the rehabilitation of Mount Greylock parkway focuses on the preservation of existing parkway character of the CCC, including alignment, stone features, historic vistas and overlooks. The effects of time and weather have taken their toll on the parkway’s features and significant repairs are needed.

Rendering by project consultant depicts a rehabilitated Fitch Overlook. The proposed work strikes a balance between insuring safety and preserving the historical and visual integrity of the overlook.
(2002) Courtesy DCR/Vollmer Team



Utilizing the skills of landscape architects, botanists, preservation planners, engineers and environmental specialists, the project consultant, Vollmer Associates of Boston, undertook a historic parkway assessment. The assessment documented the history of the parkway from its nineteenth century origins as a recreational road to its current management. To understand the features that make up the parkway, a detailed analysis of the entire road system by segment was necessary. Identification of physical features allowed the agency to understand how the parkway landscape was manipulated by the CCC through the design of drainage systems, overlook points, recreational structures, signage and selective clearing for vistas. The determination of the treatment approach was not only based on the parkway’s historical significance and physical conditions but also took into account the parkway type, traffic and safety characteristics, natural resource protection (in particular, endangered species), public use and management and operations consideration. Rehabilitation was determined to be the best treatment to balance the projects landscape preservation goals, with infrastructure, safety, and recreational requirements.

In working to balance these goals, challenges often became opportunities. For example, structural failure due to landslides at the Fitch Overlook along Notch Road created an opportunity to restore the physical fabric of the overlook, while also adapting it for present-day use. Erosion and the very narrow road width have created a very hazardous condition for the public, with no automobile pull-off to enjoy the road’s scenic advantages. As a safety measure, unsightly Jersey barriers

had been installed to separate the roadway from the eroding overlook compromising the parkway’s character.

An understanding of the parkway’s typology as a Summit Road, as well as an evaluation of the physical conditions, helped to guide treatment decisions for the Overlook. The treatment plan for the overlook proposes re-

construction of the CCC-built dry laid wall; addition of a steel reinforced rustic timber guardrail, provision of a pedestrian zone separate from parking, a chip seal surface and interpretive signage. The result: a rehabilitated landscape feature that strengthens, preserves and interprets the CCC design intent while providing safe access to, and enjoyment of the Overlook’s commanding views.

The project is an example of the comprehensive assessment evaluation and treatment approach promoted by the Parkways Initiative. More importantly, the end result of the rehabilitation project will seamlessly integrate landscape preservation, recreational use and public safety, creating a one-of-a-kind experience that can be appreciated by all who travel to the Summit.

In the Future

The responsibilities and implications of protecting historic parkways are vast. The lessons learned through the demonstration projects have broadened an understanding of stewardship and provided valuable information that can be used when undertaking future parkway preservation projects. However, the vision of the Massachusetts Historic Parkways Initiative extends beyond just making physical improvements to the roadways. Engaging the public is critical to the success of the Initiative. The creation of a training curriculum, website and other educational efforts will assist to bring about a change in perception so that the public will come to understand, and advocate for, the Commonwealth’s historic parkway legacy.

Patrice Kish, landscape architect, is the Director of Project Planning, Design and Development for the DCR/Division of State Parks and Recreation. This work is the result of an interagency collaboration between the former Metropolitan District Commission and the Department of Environmental Management. DCR staff members, Wendy Pearl and Joe Orfant, have greatly contributed to the effort. Halvorson Design Group was the consultant to the Initiative. Patrice.Kish@state.ma.us.

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Learn More About the Massachusetts Historic Parkways Initiative

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