

Van L. Cox, "Development of Landscape Architecture: World War II to Present," in Marilyn K. Alaimo (Ed.) *Stewards of the Land, a Survey of Landscape Architecture and Design in America* (St. Louis, Missouri: National Council of State Garden Clubs, Inc., 1999) pages 198-203.

1) Introduction

- a. Landscape architecture evolved as an art form gradually over many centuries.
- b. Landscape architecture is a relatively young profession.
 - i. In existence from the mid-nineteenth century
 - ii. Dominated by Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr.

2) Pre-World War II

- a. Forerunners of Current Thought
 - i. Olmsted is considered the "father of landscape architecture" as a profession
 - 1. His work primarily was the design and planning of land stewardship
 - a. His work was carried on by his sons
 - ii. Jens Jensen was influential in regional use of native plants.

3) Collaboration of Professions

- a. Landscape architects often collaborate with other professions.
 - i. Architects
 - ii. Engineers

4) Period of Great Growth

- a. The period from the 1950's to today has seen the greatest growth in the profession.
 - i. This period is referred to as "contemporary" landscape architecture.

5) The Practice of Landscape Architecture is Extensive and Diverse

- a. Landscape architecture may be involved with solving problems of
 - i. Environmental concern
 - ii. Natural and cultural resource management

- iii. Large scale land use planning
 - iv. Mass transportation systems
 - v. Urban design
 - vi. Site Design
- b. Landscape architects today are more likely to be employed as a
- i. University teacher or
 - ii. In some level of government
- c. Practice forms and products of the landscape architecture profession, in any particular time period, have generally reflected the fluctuations in socio-economic conditions.

6) World War II to Present

- a. Effects of World War II: 1940 to 1950
- i. Decline of social planning
 - ii. Rise of functionalism in design
 - 1. "Form follows function".
 - iii. Multi-talented artists of the German Bauhaus immigrated to America, bringing with them modernistic design philosophies.
 - iv. Hideo Sasaki led the vanguard of landscape architecture education at Harvard.
- b. Technology, communications, and global travel opened up the world of other cultures.
- c. Functionalism became the antithesis of the previous romantic age.
- d. Simplicity, sparing application of decoration, economy of means and materials, and a concept that nature was to be neither copied nor disrespected, followed.

7) Post-War Growth

- a. The "baby boom"
- i. Spawned population growth

- ii. Greater housing needs
 - 1. Suburbia moved outward from the cities.
- b. The term “garden” took on new meaning in suburbia.
 - i. “The garden” came to describe the entire site utilized as an outdoor living space.
- c. Landscape architect Thomas Church re-organized relationships of house to site.
 - i. Developed outdoor living rooms, functional spaces, and private spaces.
- d. International interchanges of ideas became common
 - i. Influenced functionalism as the traditions of many other cultures.
 - ii. The International Style fused the best in design from many different cultures.

8) California Influence on Design

- a. California climate was conducive to outdoor activities.
- b. Cultural influences of early Spanish California were still evident.
- c. Modern architecture embraced patios of Spanish origin.
- d. At home facilities for outdoor recreation became a common feature.
- e. The International style of design flourished.
- f. Traditions of Eastern cultures became pronounced
 - i. Asymmetrical order
 - ii. Strong indoor-outdoor relationships

9) Shapers of Contemporary Design

- a. A group of Harvard students in the 1930s split from the tradition of classicism, becoming the proponents of modernistic landscape architecture in America.
 - i. Dan Kiley
 - ii. Garrett Eckbo
 - iii. James Rose

- iv. John Ormsbee Simonds
 - 1. Pelican Bay master plan at Naples, Florida
- b. Modernistic landscape architecture viewed each client and site as unique.
- c. Emphasis was placed on merging the unique needs of the user and site features.
- d. Modernism profoundly affected landscape architecture.
 - i. Does not have to involve a realistic representation of nature.
 - ii. It is legitimate to simply represent an abstract concept of art.
 - iii. Broke the Olmstead tradition of reverence for Nature.

10) 1950's Expansion of Suburbs

- a. Industrialization expanded into the landscape beyond the cities.
 - i. Suburban housing
 - ii. Arterial highways
 - iii. Shopping centers
- b. Suburban sprawl raised questions of environmental sustainability.
- c. Deteriorating urban centers raised questions of societal sustainability.
 - i. Landscape architects introduced Nature abstracted into the city.
 - 1. Lawrence Halprin

11) Environmental Awareness: 1965-1970

- a. Social awareness expanded the landscape architecture profession into environmental planning and design.
 - i. Landscape architects such as my professor at the University of Arizona, Ervin H. Zube, and his colleagues studied regional problems and attempted to find solutions through natural resource planning.
 - 1. Sites were considered in terms of context beyond the boundary lines.

2. Ecosystems guided optimal relationships of environmental carrying capacity for development.

b. Landscape architect Ian McHarg wrote an important book, *Design with Nature*, about regional planning processes.

12) Expansion of the Profession: 1970s

a. Political unrest expanded the landscape architecture profession into finding solutions for social and environmental improvements.

i. Earth Day inspired American to get involved in improving the quality of life.

ii. Peak of enrollment of landscape architecture students made an expanding impact on environmental concern.

13) Prosperity: 1980's

a. The standard of living increased

b. The population increased

c. Free-time increased

d. Land development increased

e. The landscape architecture profession played a major role.

i. Developers needed landscape architects for planning and design solutions.

ii. Landscape architects became more active in leading the economics and politics of land development.

14) 1990's Economic Boom Cycle

a. Landscape architecture profession expanded into a broad range of projects.

i. Individual sites

ii. Regional planning

iii. Historic preservation

- iv. Visual resource management
- v. Natural and cultural resources planning
- b. Technological leaps in computer, data, and multi-media communications
 - i. Once utilized primarily by larger firms.
 - ii. Became readily available.
 - iii. Enabled landscape architects to solve complex society issues.

15) The Future

- a. Sustainability of natural and cultural resources will become much more a critical issue in the profession.
 - i. Previously eclipsed by Modernism.
- b. As problem solvers, landscape architects can anticipate a future of contributing to the good of humankind.
- c. While the art of landscape architecture remains the same, the scientific tools and communication technologies available are ever changing and advancing, even in the smallest landscape architecture offices.