

FIFTY YEARS AGO, New York raised the curtains on Lincoln Center, the performing-arts superblock on Manhattan's Upper West Side. The campus has been long maligned as hermetic, and nowhere is this criticism truer than in the placement of Damrosch Park, tucked into the site's remote southwest corner. But there, on a concrete surface framed by the back ends of two imposing music halls, Lincoln Center holds outdoor performances by filling the plaza with rows of folding chairs. Delightful as the programs tend to be, the space itself is barren in the off-season and otherwise quite isolated, making it nearly impossible for anyone to wander casually upon the venue.

Starting this year, though, the New World Symphony, an orchestral academy in Miami Beach, is calling all wanderers. In January, the symphony cut the ribbon to its new home, a performance and music education space designed by Frank Gehry, and threw open its doors, so to speak, to attract as large and diverse an audience as possible. In front of the building, a new park, designed by the landscape architecture firm West 8, figures centrally in its populist vision. The project is interesting because it promotes a pointedly unstuffed image of classical performance. It's also intriguing because it represents the first completed public project in the United States for West 8, which is based in Rotterdam and New York and is also working on the redesign of New York's Governors Island and recently completed a public waterfront in Toronto.

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"Most concert halls are designed in a way that requires the potential audience to pass through a threshold that is not open and transparent," says the symphony's president, Howard Herring. "We set out to take a different approach. We hope that people who are strolling in the park, and who are in the frame of mind that parks inspire, will come into a concert or stick around to discover our programs."

Given this ambition, the main facade became an important mediator between the public realm of the park and the performance spaces inside. Unexpectedly, Gehry kept the envelope strikingly restrained, opting instead to confine most of his trademark flamboyant curves to the building's interior spaces. He divided the primary outer facade into two parts; on the left, as you face the building, there is an →



THIS PAGE

Arabesque pathways allow the park to be criss-crossed like an urban plaza without compromising its relaxed, parklike atmosphere.

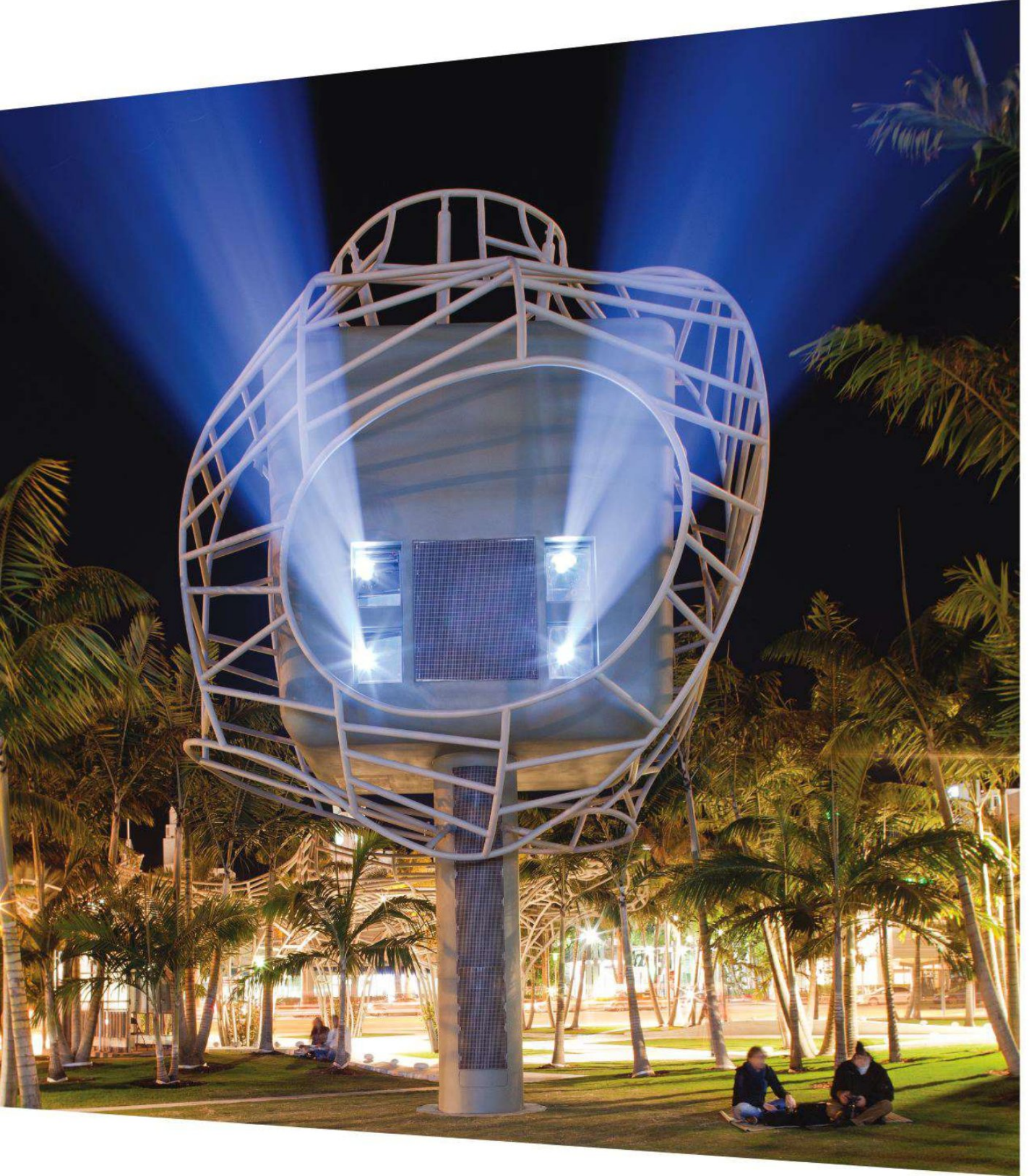
OPPOSITE PAGE

Custom pergolas frame entrances to the park and will soon support bursting growths of bougainvillea.

IMAGE CREDITS

Robin Hill for West 8







THIS PAGE
The Frank Gehry-designed building doubles as the park's projection screen.

OPPOSITE PAGE
West 8 faced considerable technical demands, including miles of cables, potential for hurricanes, and top-shelf AV equipment like this projection system, which they managed to treat lyrically.

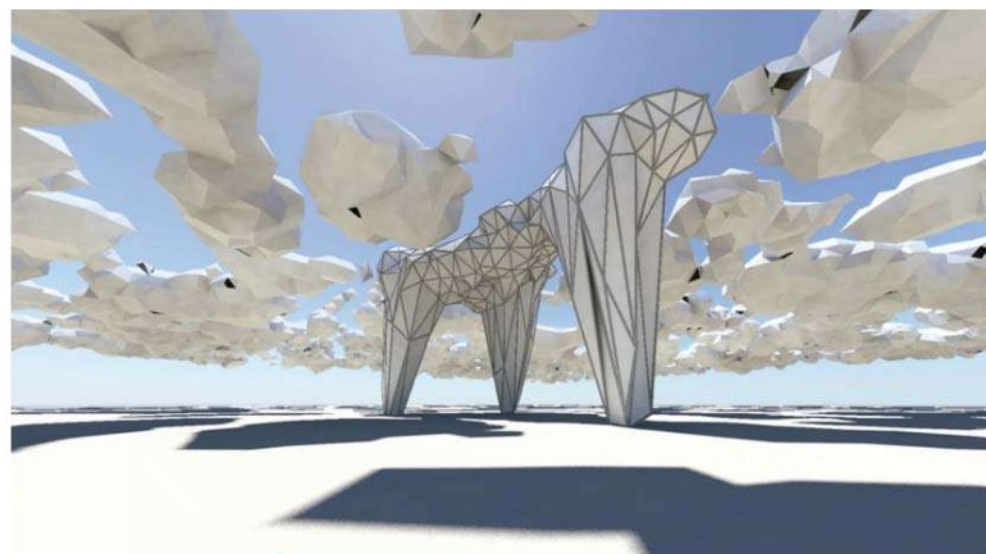
IMAGE CREDITS
Claudia Uribe, this page;
Robin Hill for West 8, opposite

← expansive glass curtain wall meant to entice you inside; on the right is a large white stucco surface that doubles as a 7,000-square-foot projection screen for simulcasting performances going on inside. During these screenings, known as WallCasts, the park becomes the venue—hence the park’s name: SoundScape.

The commission came with a big set of challenges, not least of which was the site’s size. At 2.5 acres, it’s small, scaled more like an urban plaza. At the outset, the city was content to see it become a paved hardscape in the manner of a plaza. This, it reasoned, would satisfy some big objectives: cost, hurricane resistance, and, following the Lincoln Center formula, a workable surface to set up chairs for audience seating.

But West 8, a firm with no shortage of inventiveness, had other things in mind. Plazas work well for buttoned-up Old World municipalities, but this is Miami, after all, a city whose primary public space happens to be the decidedly unbuttoned South Beach (if there are even any buttons to be found at all).

The designers called for a maximalist landscape. They gave the former surface parking lot a jolt of energy, planting it with a bevy of palms, tracing it with a maze of paths, and outfitting it with pergolas gone wild that will soon carry shrouds of bougainvillea. This approach makes the park immediately distinguishable, allowing it to operate both as a destination and as connective tissue between adjoining neighborhoods.



The New World Symphony sits at an important Miami Beach intersection, along the Washington Street corridor at Lincoln Road, a busy pedestrian promenade designed by Morris Lapidus (and, more recently, the site of Herzog & de Meuron’s 1111 Lincoln Road parking garage project—see “Forget Parking Prix Fixe,” Now, *Landscape Architecture Magazine*, April). Amid the mostly white art deco facades of Miami Beach, SoundScape grabs your attention with its bursts of bougainvillea planted on the perimeter. The site is a cultural estuary, where people clad in tank tops and flip-flops stream over from the nearby beach and encounter the flows of businesspeople and fashionmongers and hipsters coming from the convention center and shops. Like great urban plazas, SoundScape absorbs these changes in traffic and demographics and makes them seem perfectly natural.

The park, though, is there to do work. The symphony considers it an essential part of its facility, which means the technical demands are high. The symphony is in the business of perfecting sound, and to bring it outside, it was meticulous. West 8, working with the consultants Acoustic Dimensions and Sonitus, set out to create on the lawn what it calls “immersive sound.” Rather than deploy groups of individual speakers, West 8 pushed for a solution that could be read as a unifying architectural element rather than as a blight of high-tech hardware. The designers grouped the sound system into what they call “ballet bars”—convex elevated tubes that frame the



ABOVE

West 8 likens the pergola shape to Miami’s trademark cumulus clouds.

IMAGE CREDIT

West 8



17th St

LIMIT OF WORK LINE

New World Symphony

Washington Ave

Lincoln Ln

Lincoln Road

Drexel Avenue

SITE PLAN

1 PERGOLA

2 BALLET BARS

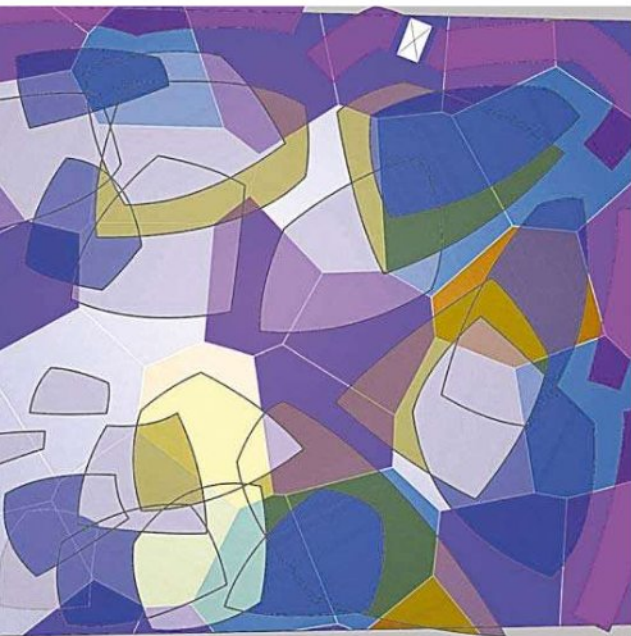
3 PROJECTOR

4 SCREENING WALL

5 BATHROOMS

IMAGE CREDIT

West 8



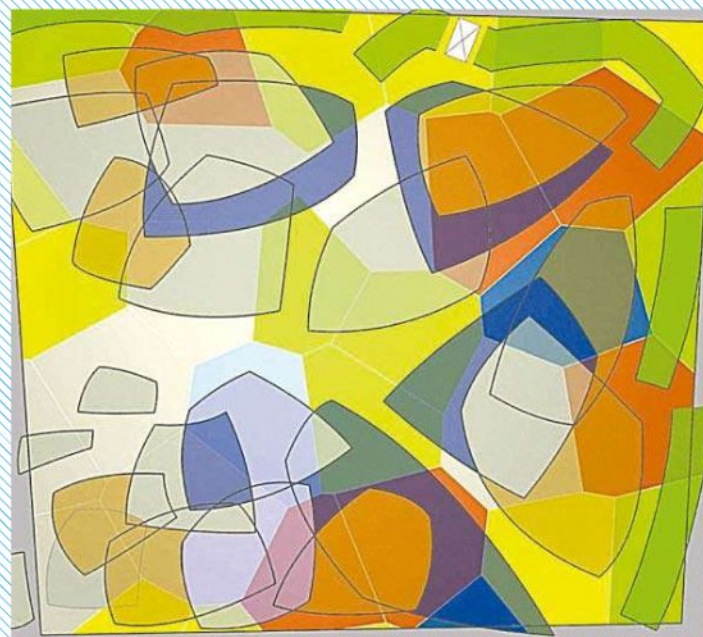
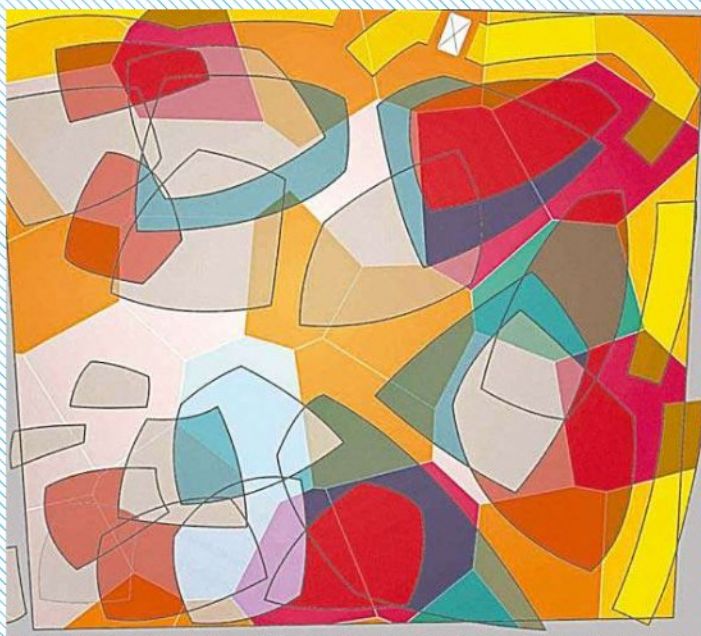
THIS SPREAD

With these pattern diagrams of the site, West 8 played off Gehry's interior volumes, using them to shape the park's pathways.

IMAGE CREDITS

West 8





RIGHT
Custom benches provide seating and shore up topography. West 8 was careful to maintain visual frames of Gehry's building.

IMAGE CREDIT
Robin Hill for West 8





"THE SOUND INSTALLATION
COULD HAVE BEEN COMPLETELY
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TO BE QUITE ELEGANT."

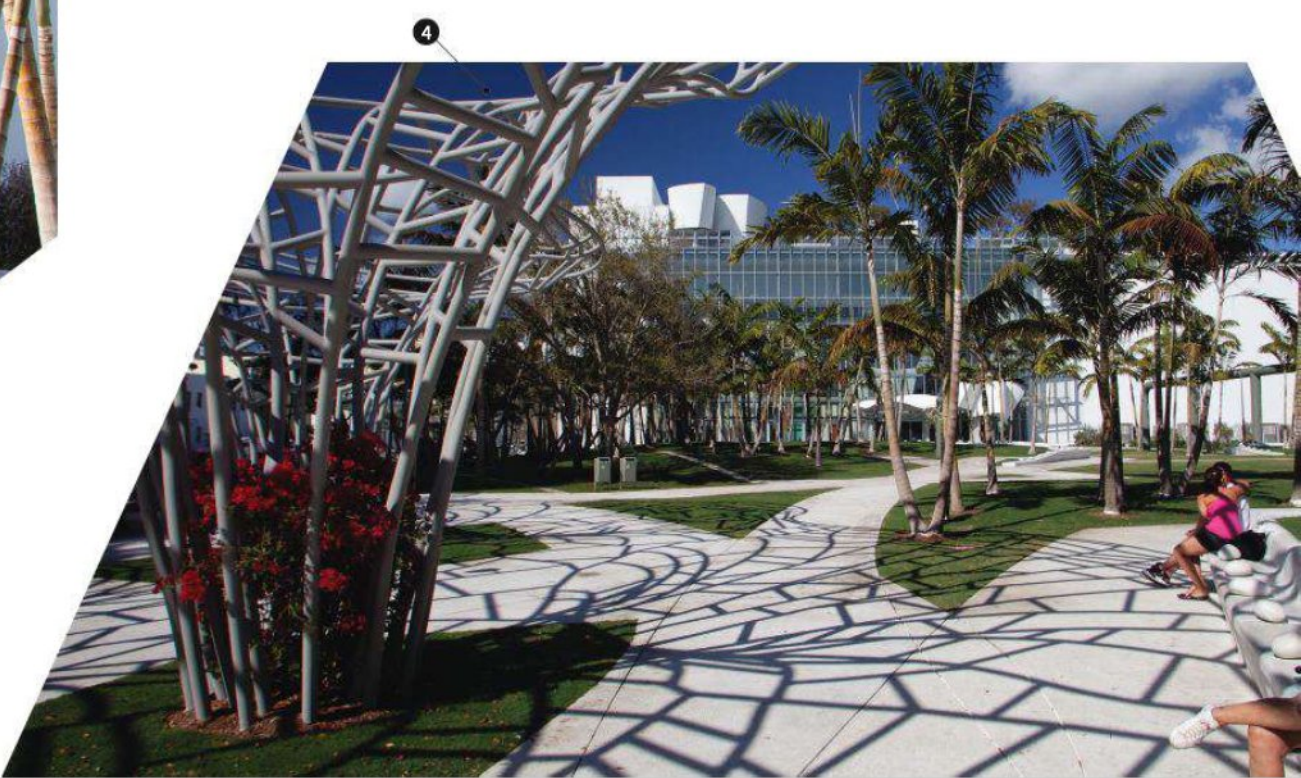
—WEST 8 FOUNDER AND PRINCIPAL, ADRIAAN GEUZE, INTERNATIONAL ASLA

← right and left sides of the lawn where the WallCast is viewed. At the back end of the lawn, four projectors sit inside an elevated climate-controlled box. Miles of cable lie concealed beneath the turf. "The sound installation could have been completely annoying, but it turned out to be quite elegant," says West 8's founder and principal, Adriaan Geuze, International ASLA.

The topography is formally interesting but also supports the program, creating, as it does, a subtle, inclined amphitheater and buffering noise from Washington Street, which is rather busy, behind the audience. The palms that surround the clearing make the space even more intimate. But neither of these measures severs the park from the city.

In fact, the connections between the park and its surroundings are so close that the park might well prove more successful than the symphony anticipates. Both spaces accommodate approximately the same number of people—the lawn seats about 700; inside, the auditorium seats 756. On a recent visit, for a performance that started at 8:00 p.m. on a night when rain was forecast, people began filing into the park with lawn chairs, picnic baskets, and wine in the midafternoon. With the park at capacity, the WallCast kept panning through a performance hall with more than a few empty seats.

Though the WallCast constitutes an important part of the park's purpose, it happens only periodically over the course of a season. For the rest of the time, SoundScape needs to operate as a city park. The fronds of *Veitchia* palms create a shade canopy from the intense Miami sun, but their trunks, which are quite slender, →



THE PARK IS IMMEDIATELY DISTINGUISHABLE. IT OPERATES BOTH AS A DESTINATION AND AS CONNECTIVE TISSUE BETWEEN ADJOINING NEIGHBORHOODS.



1 PALMS

Veitchia palms provide shade without blocking views.

2 GRASS

West 8 was determined to include grass rather than paving the space into an urban plaza.

3 WALLCASTS

The park's WallCasts have quickly become popular events.

4 PERGOLAS

The pergolas animate the entry sequence.

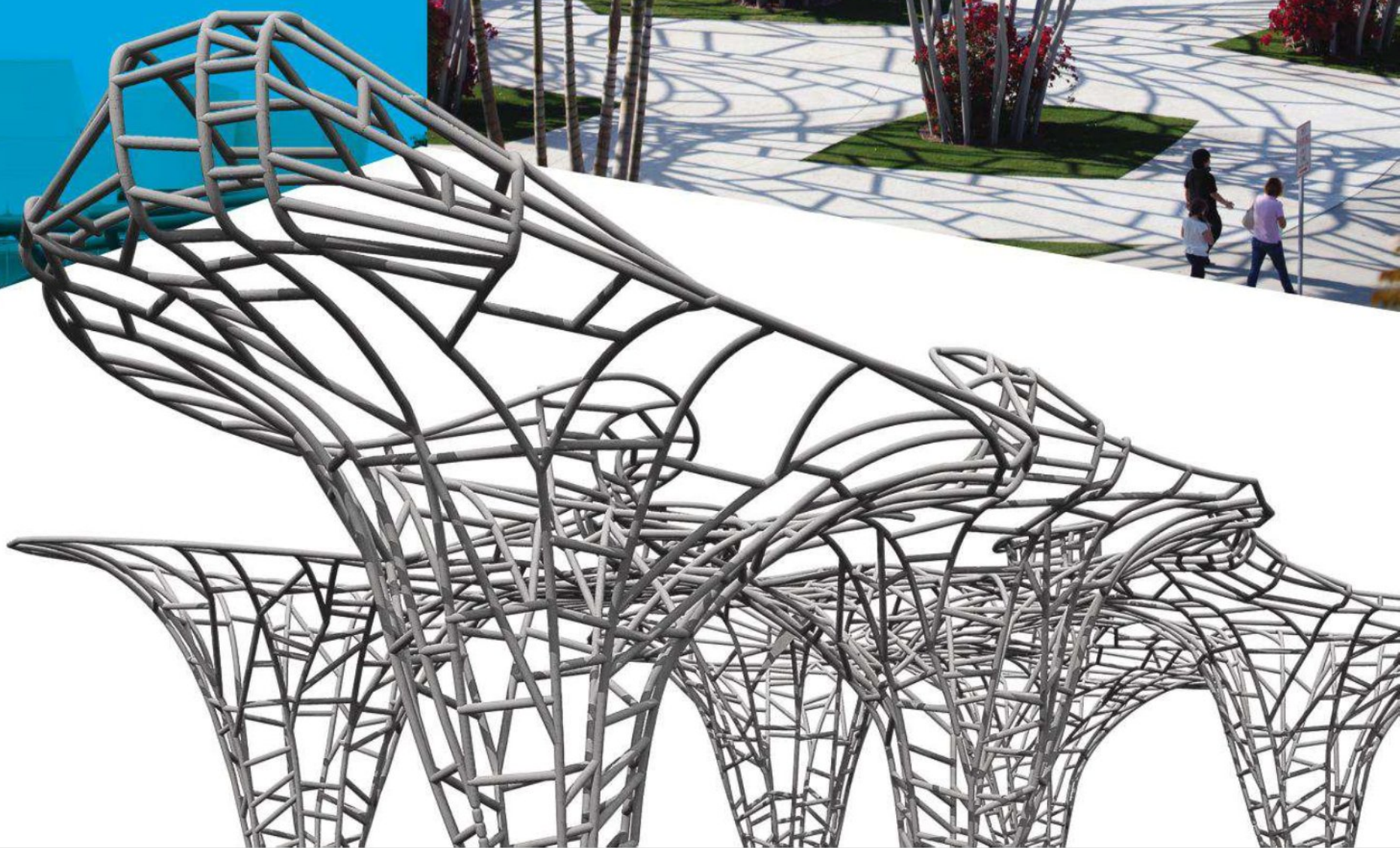
5 CROSSROADS

SoundScape sits at a geographic and cultural crossroads between the beach and business districts.

IMAGE CREDITS

Robin Hill for West 8





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← minimize the visual obstructions of the building. West 8 manages to make the park seem much larger than it really is by giving people a number of circulatory options and different sight lines. The jagged arabesque pathways and densely planted palm trees break up what could have been a single visual plane into a constellation of discrete zones. Topography introduced to the site amplifies this effect. The changes of elevation are subtle, never reaching the height of a berm but gently heaving up enough to make the ground plane dynamic, creating diverse spatial qualities and framing views of the park and its surroundings.

For all its larger imperatives involving performance and technology, the park is scaled to people and their experience. The design never abandons its core constituent: the individual or small group out ambling through the city. The park can be easily reached from any of its three open edges, yet West 8 positioned custom pergolas at three spots along the perimeter, marking off clear points of entry and exit. These twisted mushroomlike metal frames burst up and outward into a canopy, and over the next two years, bougainvillea will cloak them and fill out their forms. The structures, scaled to the human figure, are not meant to be admired from Google Earth or to expound a notion of design theory; they are meant to visually quicken the public sphere and enliven the city. Already, with the bougainvillea still starting out, the structures themselves are a hit.

The design's humanistic overtures appear throughout the park. The paths offer multiple ways to move around. Thinner ribbons of concrete give kids their own opportunities to explore. Mounted on top of the concrete retaining walls that shore up the park's shifts in topography are precast concrete benches, curving continuously along the mound; a white finish keeps the seating cool on hot days. Even with this small site, there is space for quiet lunches and romantic seclusion.

OPPOSITE

Against the relatively subdued Gehry facade, West 8's pergolas provide a distinctive presence.

IMAGE CREDITS

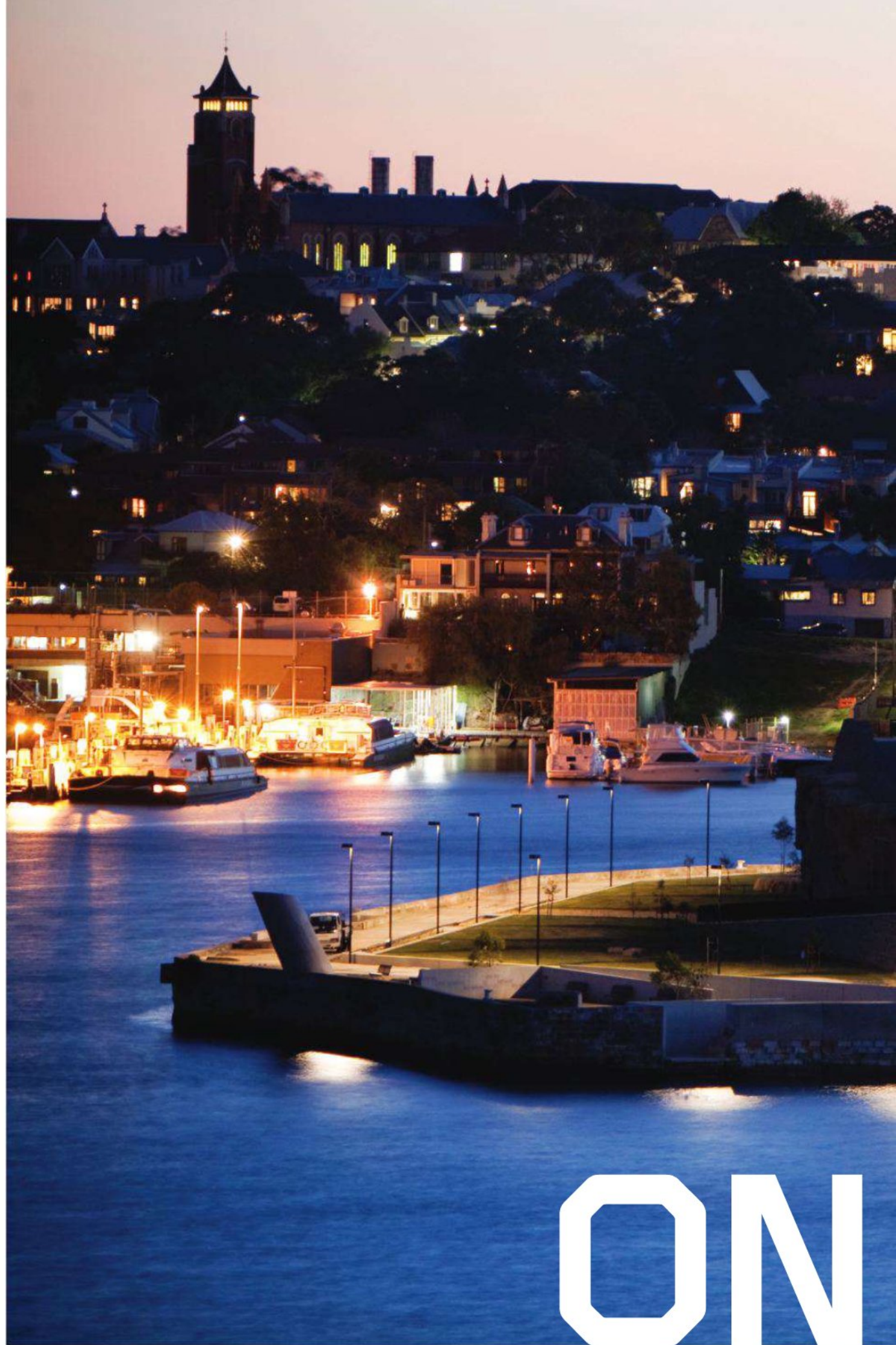
Robin Hill for West 8, photos; West 8, renderings

Like great city parks should, SoundScape manages to embed itself into the city while setting itself apart from the surroundings. The space is richly experiential—when the ocean breeze comes passing through, thin palm fronds flutter to create an audible and visual stir, the rare presence of public lawn creates a relaxing atmosphere, and the explosive bougainvillea on the pergolas is just plain fun. But this is no cloistered garden. It engages not just the building, but the urban context around it, picking up the energy of people moving from one neighborhood to another. ●

JOHN GENDALL IS A NEW YORK-BASED ARCHITECTURAL WRITER, CONTRIBUTING TO *ARCHITECT* AND *METROPOLIS*. HE TEACHES AT THE PRATT INSTITUTE AND PARSONS.

Project Credits

PRIME CONSULTANT/LEAD LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT WEST 8, NEW YORK AND ROTTERDAM (ADRIAAN GEUZE, INTERNATIONAL ASLA; JAMIE MASLYN LARSON, ASLA; BLAIR GUPPY, ASLA; RACHEL LASZLO TAIT, ASLA; KARSTEN BUCHHOLZ; JORIS WEIJTS; GASPARD ESTOURGIE; PIETER HOEN; RONALD VAN NUGTEREN; CLAIRE AGRE, ASLA; PERRY MAAS; ROB KONINGEN; MATTHEW SKJONSBERG; MAARTEN BUIJS; JERRY VAN ECK; MAARTEN VAN DE VOORDE; CHRISTIAN DOBRICK; AND CLAUDIA WOLSFELD). **CIVIL ENGINEER** COASTAL SYSTEMS INTERNATIONAL, CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA (TIM BLANKENSHIP, PRINCIPAL; ANDRES PEREZ; ADRIANA CABRERA). **PROJECT AND AUDIO DESIGN** PROSOUND AND VIDEO, MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA (ROD SINTOW, PRINCIPAL); SONITUS, LA CRESCENTA, CALIFORNIA (FRED VOGLER, PRINCIPAL). **STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING** DOUGLAS WOOD ASSOCIATES, CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA (DOUGLAS WOOD, PRINCIPAL; MARCOS R. PEREZ, PROJECT MANAGER). **MEP ENGINEERING** COSENTINI ASSOCIATES, NEW YORK (SCOTT CEASAR, PRINCIPAL; JOHN HAYLETTS, PROJECT MANAGER; PAUL BUNCHAREON; MARIO LARA). **LOCAL LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT** ROSENBERG GARDNER DESIGN, MIAMI (BILL ROSENBERG, ASLA, PRINCIPAL; KEN GARDNER, ASLA, PRINCIPAL). **LOCAL ARCHITECT** LEO A. DALY, MIAMI (ABDEL MARTEL, PRINCIPAL; J. BEATTIE, ARCHITECT; ISIS MOJICAR-HUNT, PROJECT MANAGER).



**BALLAST POINT PARK IN SYDNEY
TRIES FOR A RIGHTEOUS ENDING
TO YEARS OF INDUSTRIAL ABUSE.**

BY GWENETH NEWMAN LEIGH, INTERNATIONAL ASLA

IMAGE CREDIT
Brett Boardman

THE ROCKS



“ARE WE CLOSE TO BALLAST POINT PARK?”

THE COUPLE, IN THEIR MID-50S,
WERE SWEATY AND LOST.
HAVING JUST DESCENDED
FROM THE PARK, I POINTED
BACK TO THE STEEP STAIRCASE
BEHIND ME. “JUST AT THE
TOP THERE.”

THEIR FACES BRIEFLY FELL.
THEN, WITH PURSED LIPS
AND FURROWED BROWS,
THEY SET OFF.

Ballast Point has always been a place of hard work. From its origins as a supplier of ballast for ships during Australia's colonial settlement to its industrial heritage as a lubricant manufacturing site, this prominent peninsula in the western reach of Australia's Sydney Harbour has not traditionally been regarded as a thing of beauty. Its steep sandstone cliffs have been quarried, carved, and sliced to accommodate industrial tanks, buildings, roads, and car parks. But after decades of industrial occupation, the 2.6-hectare headland has been turned into a new public park and is finally being appreciated as more than just a resource to be ravaged.

OPPOSITE

During early settlement around Ballast Point, visiting ships, after unloading their cargo, quarried sandstone from the cliff face to provide balance and stability for the vessels on their return journey to Europe.

IMAGE CREDIT

Brett Boardman



THE SITE IS
VERY EXPOSED,
SURROUNDED
ON THREE SIDES
BY WATER,
AND OFFERS
BREATHTAKING
PANORAMIC
VIEWS OF
SYDNEY HARBOUR.

LEFT

From the Wharf Road entrance, visitors encounter the large interpretive element of Tank 101. Recycled panels frame the skeleton of its previous form.

BELOW

Ballast Point was originally covered by more than 30 industrial tanks. The grass rings behind the bund wall reference the site's past by "greening" the footprints of former tanks.

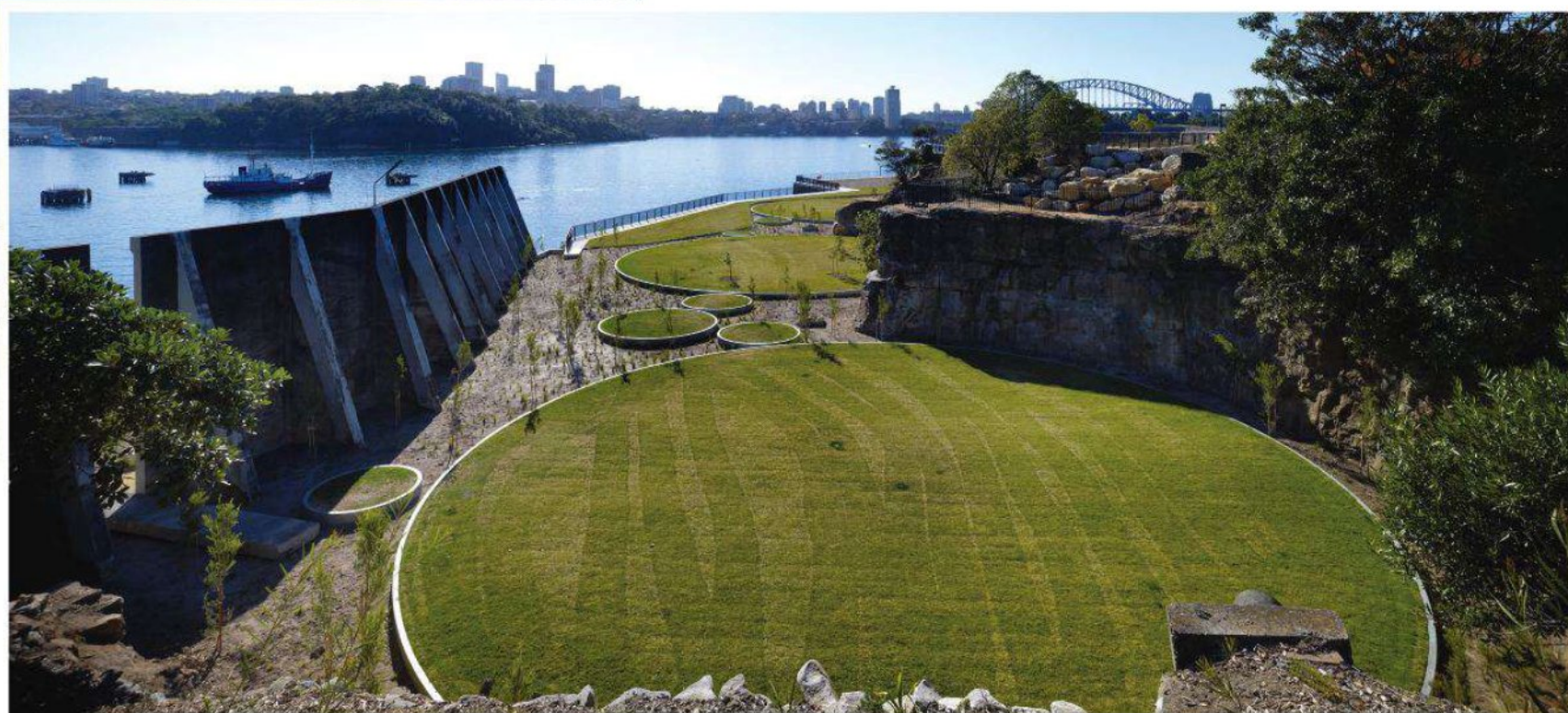
IMAGE CREDITS

Brett Boardman

The plans for Ballast Point Park, by the Australian landscape architecture firm McGregor Coxall, contrast with the site's history as a place of plunder, underpinned as they are by environmentally responsible design principles. The designers strategized ways to retain and reuse as many materials on the site as they could. The park even incorporates wind turbines. However, the journey to the park's creation demonstrates the challenges of constructing a landscape with a reduced carbon footprint.

COMPLETED IN JUNE 2009, BALLAST POINT PARK is located at the top of the Birchgrove Peninsula in the inner western suburbs of Sydney, approximately seven kilometers from the central business district. The site is very exposed, surrounded on three sides by water, and offers breathtaking panoramic views of Sydney Harbour. Along the park's western edge is the residential suburb of Birchgrove, which was historically a working-class community but has gentrified through the years.

The story of Ballast Point's evolution into a public park began more than 25 years ago. People who lived near the site discovered that the petroleum company Caltex—the site's previous owner—was trying to get the property rezoned for high-density housing.





SITE PLAN

IMAGE CREDIT
McGregor Coxall

1 TANK 101

Structure frames the outline of the largest storage vessel on the site.

2 BBQ AND PLAY AREA

Instead of a formal playground, designers incorporated a landform for exploration.

3 BUND WALL STAIRS AND PATH

The bund wall was originally created to contain spills. A path slices through one section.

4 MENEVIA VILLA FOOTPRINT

Designers needed to find a way to incorporate the historical artifact, unearthed unexpectedly during construction, into the park.

5 VIEWING TERRACES

Terraces provide panoramic views of Sydney Harbour.

6 SHADE STRUCTURE

A shade structure overlooks Mort Bay.

0 20 30 40 50M



The locals were unwilling to see the site converted into a series of compact high-rise developments, so they formed the Ballast Point Campaign Committee in 1984 and rallied for the government to convert the property into public open space. After more than a decade of grassroots campaigning, the group gained support from local, state, and federal politicians. Finally, in September 2002, the site was acquired by the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority (SHFA) by eminent domain. After a long struggle, plans for developing the site into a park could begin.

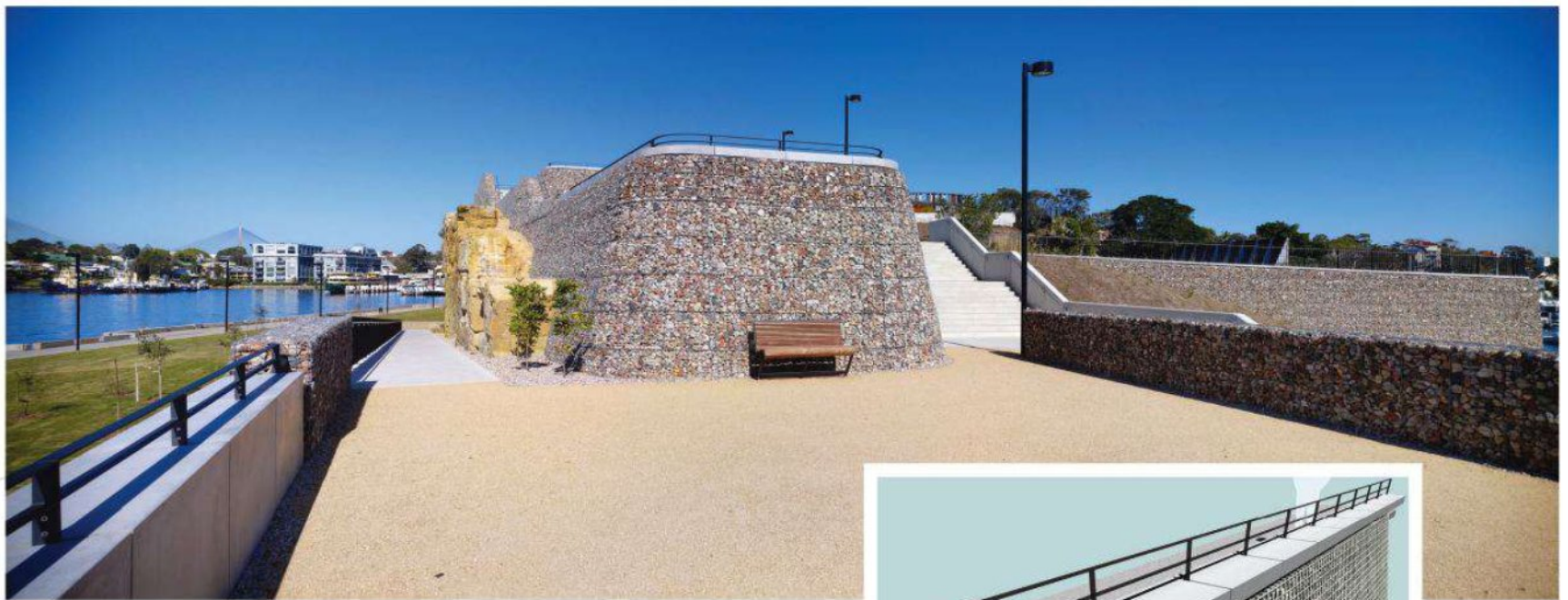
Early in the process, a team of landscape architects including Anton James of Context Landscape Design and Craig Burton worked on a conceptual master plan for the park that won the community's approval. Their proposal called for a harborside park that would connect people with the rich layers of the site's history by retaining several industrial structures and recognizing the foundations of a colonial villa called Menevia that had existed on the peninsula in

the late 1800s. McGregor Coxall was brought on board in 2006 to fine-tune the design details and get the project built.

This was no small challenge, as the site was still undergoing remediation, and the shape of the landscape kept changing. "We didn't know until after the contamination was removed what kind of site we [would be] left with," says Philip Coxall, one of the principals of McGregor Coxall and the lead designer on the project. "When we got our first survey we had to go back in and redesign to adjust and look for new opportunities as a result of these new levels. It was a continual process of discovery." The lack of information on paper was a challenge, but Coxall didn't mind. "In a lot of ways I really liked that, because I could interpret the site a lot closer, and get out there and work directly with what was happening," he says.

Examples of McGregor Coxall's attention to detail are obvious across all sections of the site. Slabs of sandstone bleed onto





ABOVE

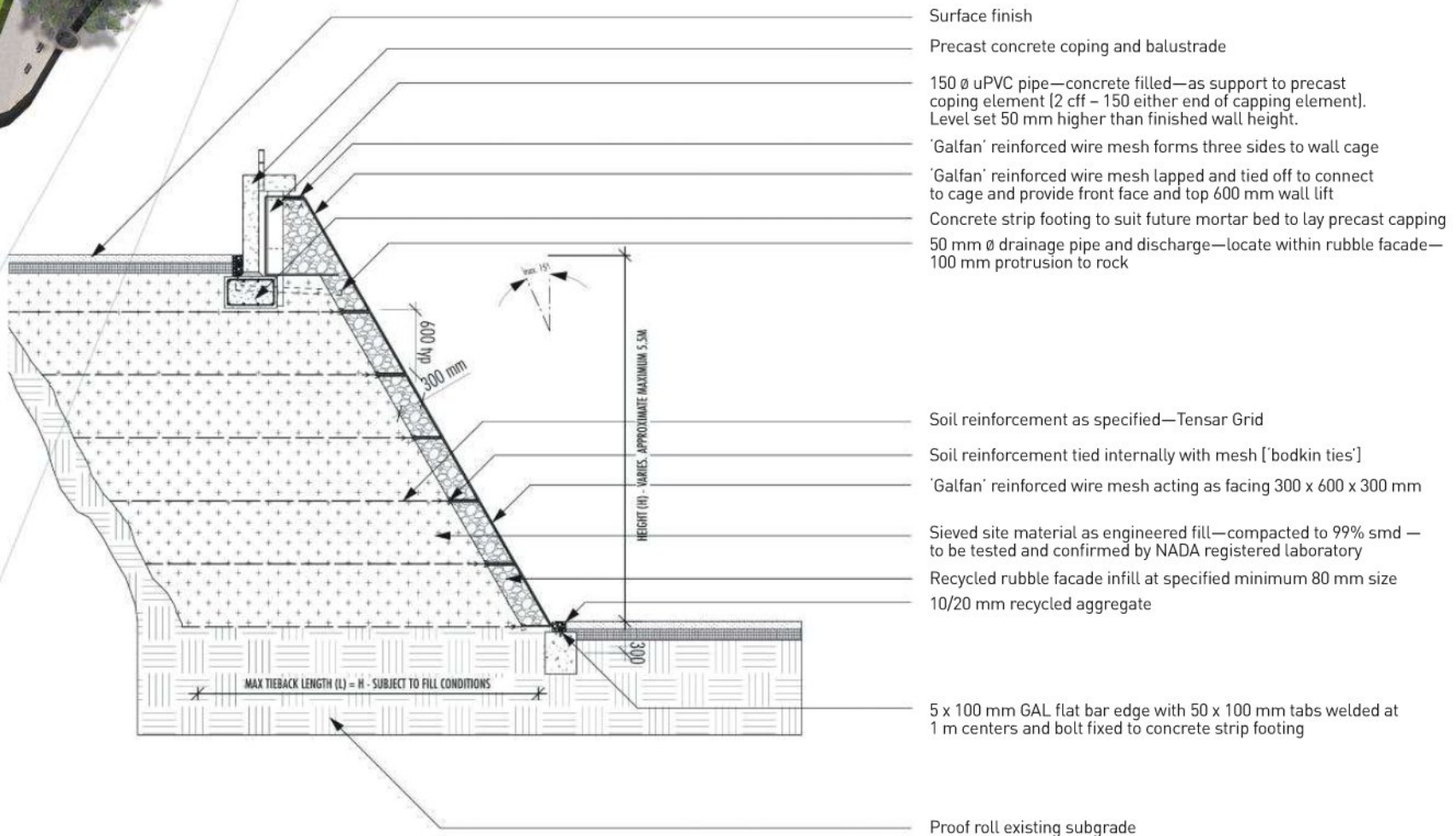
The creation of the viewing terraces using gabion walls enabled recycling of site materials while negotiating nearly 60 feet of grade change.

RIGHT AND BELOW

The gabion walls are actually reinforced dirt walls that use on-site fill, with a front cladding of recycled rubble several inches thick.

IMAGE CREDITS

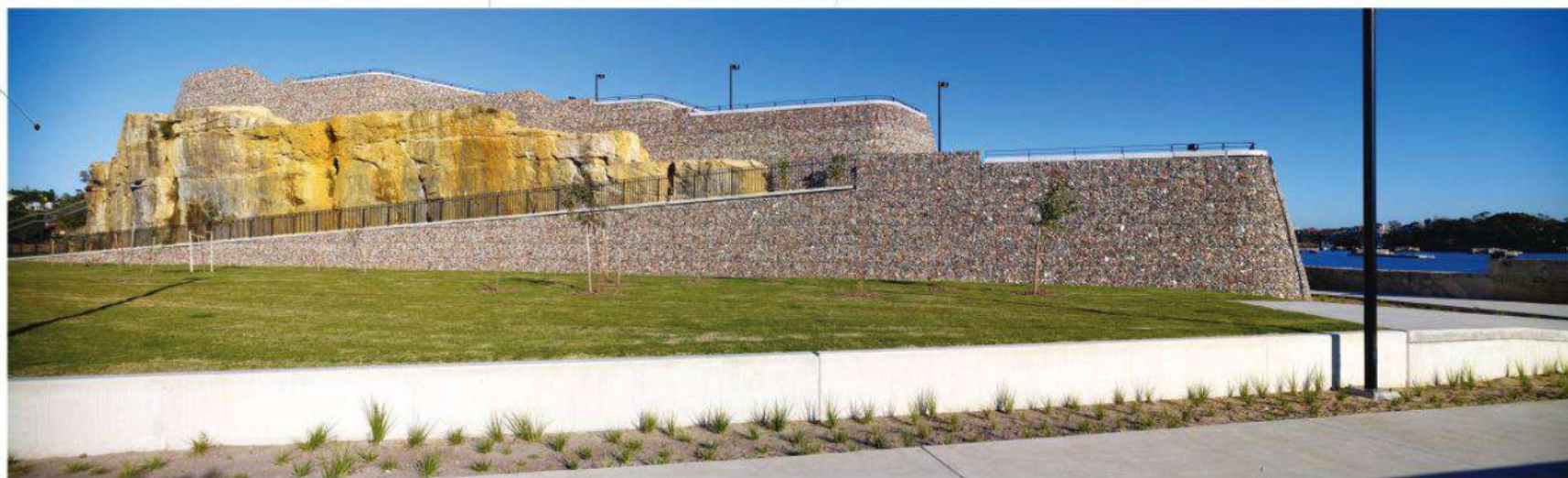
Brett Boardman, above;
McGregor Coxall, right
and below





1

2



1 RAMPS

Ramps carry you up along the sandstone cliff face to the viewing terraces.

2 GABION WALLS

To create the gabion walls, material needed to be transported off site,

crushed, and brought back on site from a local recycling plant.

3 SAFETY BELTS

Recycled safety belts in the canopy of the shade structure create interplay of light and shadow.

4 SANDSTONE FOOTINGS

Remnant sandstone footings of the Menevia Villa were preserved and enhanced with an L-shaped wall featuring the villa's history.

IMAGE CREDITS

Brett Boardman



concrete paths. The ringed foundations of old industrial tanks rise within beds of crushed gravel or grass. Silver railings stretch in long uninterrupted lines, negotiating nearly 60 feet of grade change over rugged and uncertain terrain. During my visit, one section of silver railing was being replaced because it didn't match with specifications. Two years on since the park's opening, and details were still being refined. A workman named Moe explained that he had been involved in the park's implementation from the beginning of construction five years ago. "When we began constructing the park, there were no stairs on the site," he said. "We had to lug a 180-pound generator across the jagged cliff face. It was no easy feat."

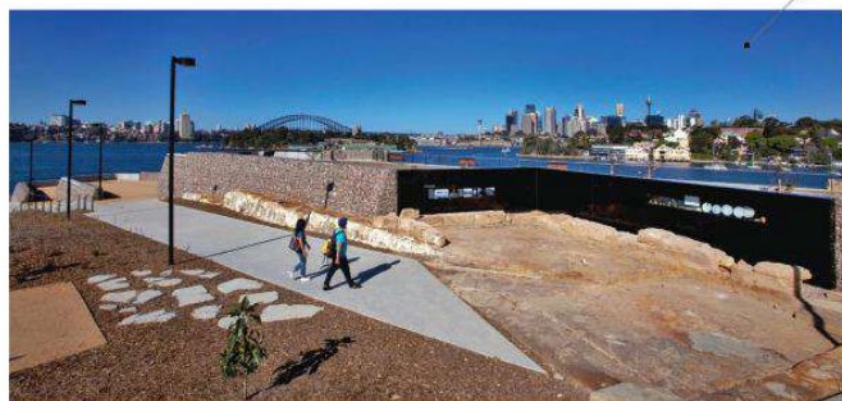
From the entry off Wharf Road you can choose to appreciate harbor views from an elongated table and barbecue facility or wander toward Tank 101, a large interpretive structure that frames the skeletal remains of the largest oil tank that once existed on the site. Panels of the original tank were cut, engraved with a line from Les Murray's poem *The Death of Isaac Nathan*, and remounted. Standing inside the tank, the panels read: *Stone statues of ancient waves, tongue like dingoes on shore*. Eight vertical wind turbines are installed within the framework of the structure, above the etched panels. These turbines can contribute up to 8 kilowatts of electricity into the city grid. That's not a lot of energy—about enough to power eight window air-conditioning units. Although the wind was blowing during my site visit, it wasn't enough to rouse the turbines into action.

Looking northward from Tank 101, one can see the preserved bund wall—an industrial relic once used to contain oil spills—which encloses a series of large, raised grass rings demarcating former industrial tanks. A concrete platform slices through the bund wall,

3



4



acting as both a path and seating, and a series of stepping-stones connect the grass circles, instilling an element of playfulness within the space. Heading due east from Tank 101 along the ridgeline you encounter the remnant sandstone foundation of the Menevia Marine villa, which was unearthed unexpectedly during construction. A black L-shaped interpretive wall along its edge features historic information, photos, and a case of domestic artifacts from the villa. Continuing east from here, you descend past several terraces framed by gabion walls, each outfitted with a bench and tree. The views extend toward Sydney's iconic Harbour Bridge.

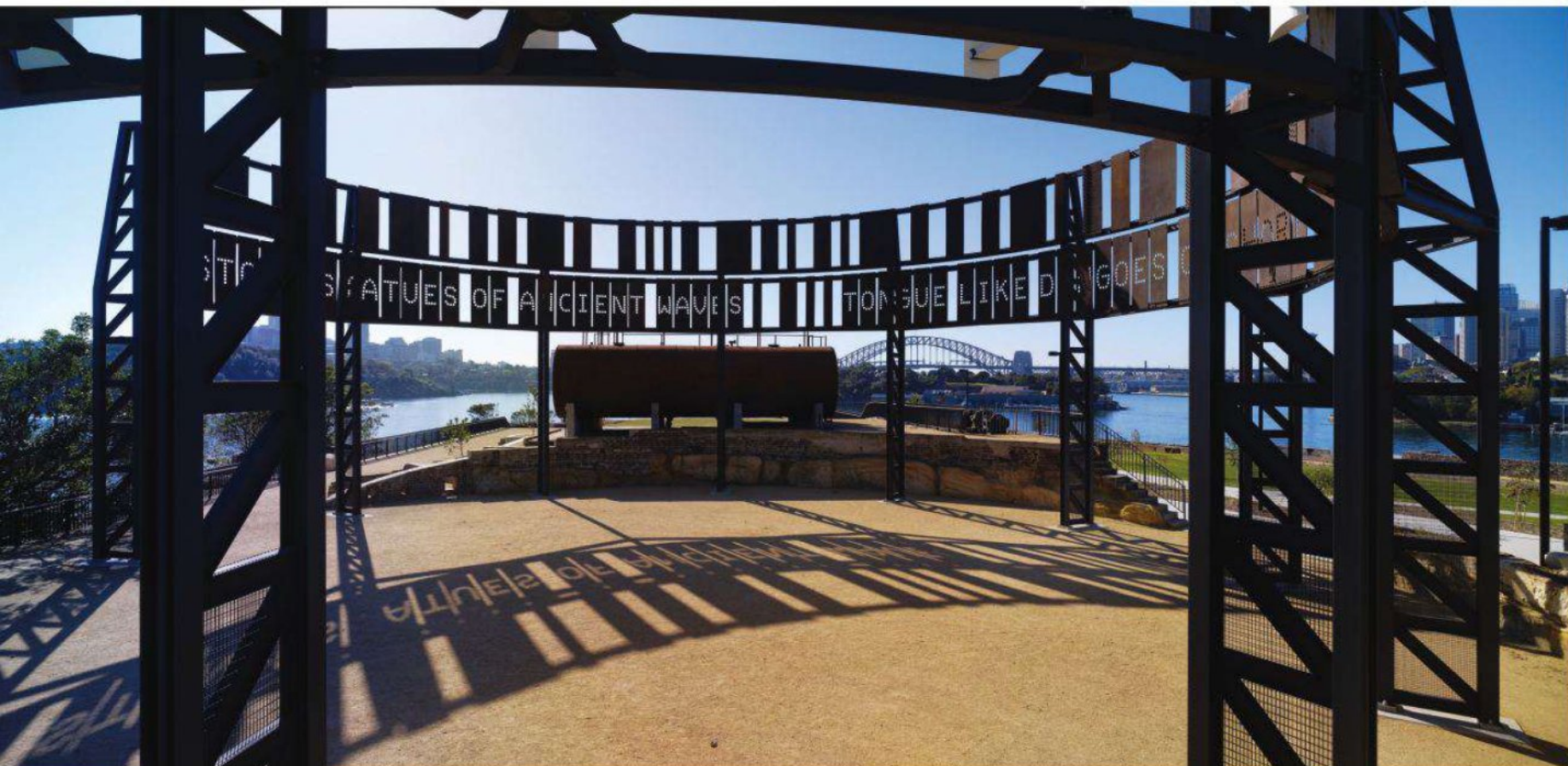
Wrapping down along the park's southern edge is the Ballast Garden, where long swaths of lawn sporadically planted with trees are integrated with more fragments of sandstone and industrial foundations. Throughout the park, you find wetland areas for collecting and filtering stormwater and native trees, shrubs, and grasses grown from locally collected seed. While some paths along the northern edge hem you tightly between walls and plantings, the site mostly leaves you feeling exposed to wind, water, and sun. Part of this can be attributed to the youth of the plantings. However, the generous use of crushed stone and hardscape, particularly along areas south of the ridgeline, does make me wonder whether more shrubs could have been incorporated.

The material palette across the site is simple and consistent. Polished steel railings, concrete paths, and recycled timber benches provide a neutral background against deeply rusted industrial relics. The viewing deck and toilet blocks (designed in collaboration with Choi Ropiha Architects) are sheathed by a brilliant orange canopy woven from recycled safety belts. However, it's the gabion walls that are the biggest conversation piece. From

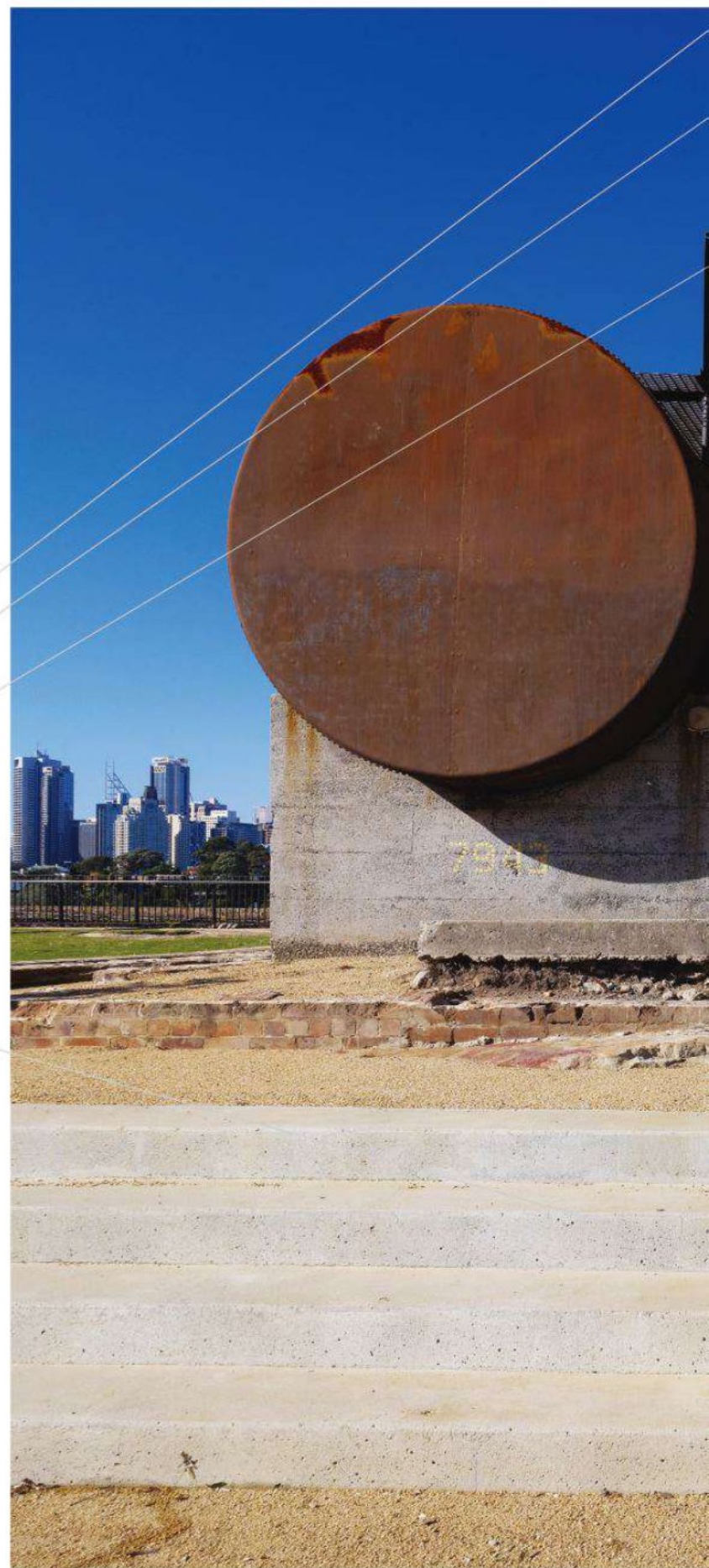
the harbor, they rise above the sandstone cliffs, their straight-lined silhouette resembling section cuts of a drawing—except these slice through history. “Imagine if I came to you, threw you a bag of rubble from the site, and said this is what I want to put on top of your sandstone cliffs in Sydney Harbour,” said Coxall. “It was a big step for the foreshore authority to come on board.”

While many of the former industrial buildings on Ballast Point could not be salvaged, their materials could. Coxall initially tried to have all materials crushed on site for reuse within the walls, but it proved too costly. Instead, the rubble was broken down at a recycling center and transported back to the site for filling the gabion baskets. Coxall is quick to point out that they are not gabion walls in the truest sense—they are actually a reinforced dirt wall, created using on-site fill, with a front cladding of rubble that is several inches thick. Inserted within the rubble are pieces of history from the site, from old pieces of plumbing and shards of porcelain to maintenance signs.

The walls have been embraced by some of the community and shunned by others. At the easternmost tip of the site, a growing collection of padlocks engraved with the names of sweethearts have been locked onto the wire mesh. According to Coxall, some visitors have enjoyed tracking down former Caltex employees to let them know their names are featured in the wall. But some of the community have been upset by the prominence of the walls in the site design, claiming they give the park a fortress appearance from the water. Lindsay Anderson, a local resident, says: “[The process of creating] these gabion walls has determined the way the park looks; I think the designers went overboard. When you sit down at park benches, you are surrounded by gabion walls rather than spectacular views.” →



POLISHED STEEL
RAILINGS, CONCRETE
PATHS, AND RECYCLED
TIMBER BENCHES
PROVIDE A NEUTRAL
BACKGROUND AGAINST
DEEPLY RUSTED
INDUSTRIAL RELICS.





ABOVE

To cut carbon emissions generated by the park's construction, designers sought to recycle as many

materials on site as possible, from crushed rubble, **OPPOSITE**, to pieces of industrial equipment.

IMAGE CREDITS
Brett Boardman



← During my visit to the site on a warm summer weekday in mid-January, I observed a rotation of groups using the barbecue facilities and a steady stream of dog walkers. One man practiced martial arts in the shelter of the bund wall while a group of teenage boys fished near the Ballast Garden and swam in the harbor. While the use of the park wasn't heavy, it was consistent. The gabion walls do dominate the site, especially when viewing the park from the harbor—one hopes that with time, vegetation will provide a natural buffer to soften their effect. But the spaces framed within them are beautifully executed, their grand scale in keeping with the industrial relics.

Close up, there is a sense of folly and fun among the details—for every staircase leading up to a platform, a tempting cluster of rocks is also provided for the more risk-taking explorer. But based on the amount of temporary fencing erected through the site, it's evident that the folly has fallen flat for some within the SHFA, which maintains the park. During my visit, wire mesh prohibits access to interesting overlooks or is mounted to low walls near the ocean.

(The wire mesh does, however, provide good crevices from which to balance unmanned fishing poles). According to Coxall, much of the fencing was erected during 2010 as a safety precaution by the maintenance department at SHFA. Since then, two access audits have been conducted by the designers that confirm the fenced areas are safe for public use. Despite this, authorities within SHFA have informed me that since my visit, the wire mesh has now been replaced with permanent balustrades. Such issues touch on the challenges between McGregor Coxall's design intent and SHFA's interpretation of it.

One visitor from Western Australia commented to me in passing—"It's beautiful and it's grand, but what the f*** is it for?" According to SHFA, no large events are scheduled here outside the occasional wedding. It seems a bit unusual that the Australian government invested \$10 million toward the construction of a local neighborhood park, but it is also unusual that local residents sustained a park campaign for close to 25 years. By 2002, their lobbying had reached the ears of former Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating,

HERE

Owing to the youth of the plantings, the south side of the park provides dramatic views of the harbor, but not much protection from wind and sun.

IMAGE CREDIT

Brett Boardman



who was keen to see the western edge of Sydney's Harbour be converted back into an archipelago of naturalistic headlands and islands reminiscent of early settlement landscapes.

Keating's influence helped tip the scales in favor of securing Ballast Point for open space rather than residential development. What's questionable is whether so many taxpayer dollars should have been invested on such a remote site, or whether a modest neighborhood park would have sufficed.

Ballast Point Park provides us insights to the challenges of reclaiming industrial land and reducing our carbon footprint. The design reflects a thoughtful study of its previous industrial history, where the designers worked hard to deliver a project using sustainable methods. However, if we want to showcase such ambitious projects, we also need to be more strategic about where we place them. Ballast Point Park has a lot to say—but you've got to find your way there to hear it. ●

GWENETH NEWMAN LEIGH, INTERNATIONAL ASLA, IS A LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT AND FREELANCE WRITER BASED IN CANBERRA, AUSTRALIA. SHE CAN BE REACHED AT GWENETH.LEIGH@GMAIL.COM.

Project Credits

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT MCGREGOR COXALL, SYDNEY, NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA (PHILIP COXALL, ADRIAN MCGREGOR, PROJECT DIRECTORS; CHRISTIAN BORCHERT, PROJECT MANAGER; KRISTIN SPRADBROW, JEREMY GILL, PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS). **ARCHITECT** CHOI ROPIHA, SYDNEY, NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA (JOHN CHOI, STEVEN FIGHERA, TAI ROPIHA, TOBY BREAKSPEAR, CLAIRE NYE). **LANDSCAPE CONTRACTOR** LANDSCAPE SOLUTIONS, SYDNEY, NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA. **STRUCTURAL, CIVIL, HYDRAULIC, AND ELECTRICAL ENGINEER** NORTHPROP ENGINEERS, SYDNEY, NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA. **QUANTITY SURVEYOR** WT PARTNERSHIP, SYDNEY, NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA. **GRAPHIC DESIGNER** DEUCE DESIGN, SYDNEY, NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA. **LIGHTING CONSULTANT** LIGHTING, ART & SCIENCE, PYMBLE, NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA. **PUBLIC ART** ROBYN BACKEN, SYDNEY, NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA. **CLIENT** SYDNEY HARBOUR FORESHORE AUTHORITY, SYDNEY, NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA.



FILE UNDER
FOREVER

**LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS
NEED TO PLAN AHEAD
FOR WHAT THEY LEAVE BEHIND.**

BY ERNEST BECK

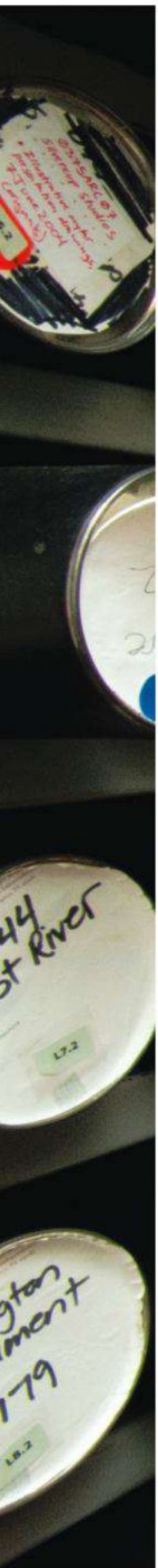
THIS PAGE AND OPPOSITE
The archives of Lawrence Halprin at
the University of Pennsylvania

IMAGE CREDITS
Jeffrey Holder



FIFTY YEARS FROM NOW,
WHEN STUDENTS OF LANDSCAPE
ARCHITECTURE STUDY THE HISTORY OF
THEIR PROFESSION, TECHNOLOGY WILL
LIKELY GRANT THEM INSTANT ACCESS
TO TROVES OF DIGITIZED INFORMATION
ABOUT THE ICONIC PROJECTS AND
PRACTITIONERS OF THE PAST. WITH THE
CLICK OF A MOUSE (OR WHATEVER DEVICE
IS BEING USED THEN), THEY WILL BE
LINKED TO DOCUMENTS AND DRAWINGS,
AND PERHAPS HOLOGRAMS, THAT CHART
THE PATH OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
AND ITS ACHIEVEMENTS. FOR NOW,
HOWEVER, THAT REMAINS A DREAM.





Today's scholars and students of landscape architecture are more likely to be found in musty basements rummaging through boxes and unpacking tubes to find torn and yellowed rolls of drawings. Their gateway to the past is through attics, storage lockers, and warehouses where the legacy of landscape architecture has, for the most part, been lodged. Unlike architects, who by comparison have been more proactive about preserving documentation of their work, most landscape architects have adopted a store-and-forget mentality—or even worse, a store-and-purge mentality—that many say could have dire consequences for the profession's past and future.

"Many documents have already been destroyed and the record of many landscape architects scattered to the wind," says Kurt Culbertson, FASLA, the chairman of the Denver-based firm Design Workshop. "If we don't do anything about this," he warns, "a lot more could be lost."

Some firms are taking action. Last year, Design Workshop announced a unique partnership with Utah State University to create a new digital landscape architecture collection in collaboration with USU's Department of Landscape Architecture and Urban Planning and the school's Merrill-Cazier Library. The collection will feature the firm's most important projects, to be handed over in annual batches, along with other research aids including audio recordings, videos, and visuals that will be available to scholars and will also be integrated into classroom activities and the curriculum. The idea, says Culbertson, is "to make it much more than a collection of papers and drawings."

Meanwhile, SWA Group and Peter Walker, FASLA, the founder and principal of the Berkeley, California-based practice PWP Landscape Architecture, are giving their archives to Harvard University's Frances Loeb Library at the Graduate School of Design. Still, it's tough for landscape architects to even discuss the topic, according to Calvin Platt, Affiliate ASLA, a former chief executive and now consulting principal at SWA Group. "You have to put them in a room and lock the door to get them to talk about archives," Platt insists. "From my experience, it is far from their minds."

Armchair psychologists might argue that landscape architects have for a long time felt undervalued and unappreciated. Waverly Lowell, the curator of the Environmental Design Archives at the University of California, Berkeley, believes the reluctance to deal with archives was related in some ways to the profession being previously considered "pink collar" or "the occupation of leisure ladies and amateur gentlemen," she explains, and therefore not regarded with the same esteem as architecture because landscapes are, in part, more subtle than buildings.

Lowell's pitch to the profession is that preserving archives—UC Berkeley's collection is particularly strong in regional Bay Area landscape architects—is critical because landscape architecture is more ephemeral than buildings. "When they are gone, all you have are the drawings and photographs as historical documentation," Lowell says. "A house has bones, but with gardens people feel the bones aren't as clear. They can't 'read' it so they will go and replant and make it over into their own image."

Firms face many hurdles when it comes to tackling the mess that lies beneath their office, including the lack of time, money, and staff resources for the tedious work of sifting through, cataloging, and digitizing documents from decades of work. The crippling recession that has roiled the industry hasn't helped. Walker was about to start working on preparing his archives when the downturn hit. "The





THIS PAGE
The archives of OLIN,
Philadelphia.

IMAGE CREDIT
Jeffrey Holder

"THE STARS ARE TAKEN CARE OF," SAYS CHARLES BIRNBAUM.
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economy crashed and then we were fighting for our lives,” he recalls. “We’re so busy trying to get work we couldn’t take that kind of time. We told Harvard, ‘we assume we will do it, but it might take 10 years.’”

Universities’ libraries and archive collections are of course the ideal locations for documentation, especially those with landscape architecture and architecture programs. A number of institutions are leaders in this field, from Harvard to the University of Pennsylvania, Cornell University, the University of Texas, and the University of California at Berkeley, among others. Yet these institutions are often bedeviled by inadequate funding and lack of available space, which means documents are sometimes stored in inaccessible off-site warehouses. And the sheer sizes of the collections can be daunting.

For example, when Penn received the much-sought-after archives of Lawrence Halprin, it was confronted with an inventory of some 650 boxes, more than 30 large-format scrapbooks dating from 1946 to 2009, and “tons of drawings,” says William Whitaker, the collection manager of architectural archives at Penn. In addition, archivists were handed Halprin’s prized rubber-stamp collection and some 155,000 slides. SWA’s first batch of materials to Harvard included more than 100 boxes of files, microfilm, slides, and drawings comprising what’s known as “born analog” documentation that was carefully culled by SWA from thousands of projects dating from 1959 to 1990. The plan is for more material to be sent over in 10-year increments.

While there is a gentle rivalry among the bigger schools over acquiring collections—highly regarded landscape architects usually negotiate with a handful of institutions before committing—archivists are forced to make careful choices. “We do very little solicitation these days,” acknowledges Mary Daniels, the special collections librarian at Harvard’s Loeb Library. “We have to pay for warehousing whether it’s a roll of drawings or digital files, so we have to be very selective. We have practical considerations of space and potentially eternal storage.” At Cornell’s Kroch Library, Elaine Engst, the director of the Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, says the school is only “passively pursuing new collections” because it is limited by size, funding, and infrastructure. “These collections require and deserve special care and feeding,” she says, noting that the school’s most recent big catch was the archives of the golf course designer Robert Trent Jones.

When considering an archive arrangement, there are legal, financial, and timing issues to consider. As a rule, the library or archive takes legal and copyright control over the material. Financing usually involves the donor offering a minimal financial stipend to the university to cover some costs, although often there is no financial component at all. According to people familiar with the situation, Harvard famously lost out to Penn on the Halprin collection because it had allegedly demanded a substantial endowment to accompany the material. Now universities are in general less demanding, these people suggest, but have to largely support archives with their own funds (SWA, for example, is charged only a nominal amount by Harvard for storage fees).

Funding and disposition of documentation can be codified in a will or released by the heirs of the estate. There is little tax advantage to donating while you’re alive—except for the so-called pencil and paper value of the materials—but there might be more benefits after your death. Dick Powell, ASLA, an environmental analyst, recently wrote a guide to archives for landscape architects after realizing that there’s scant information out there about how to prepare. As a result, he says, “We have lost a few individuals whose work was groundbreaking, and we don’t know where the plans are. There’s very little recognition of what they did or a way to capture the documentation.”

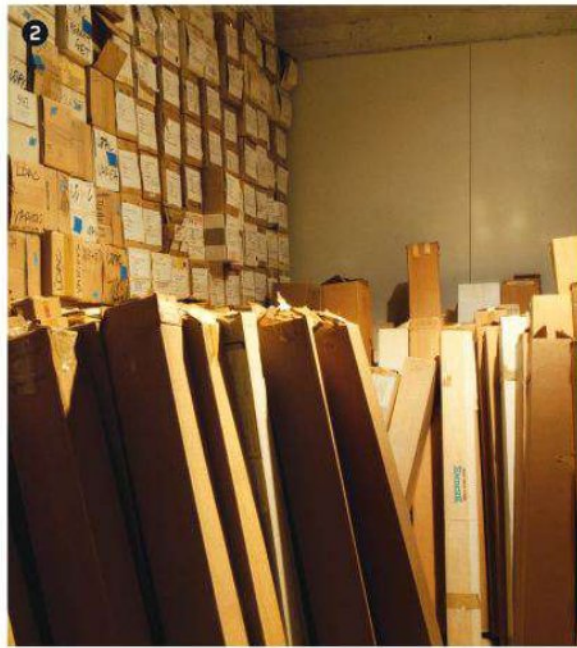
HERE AND OPPOSITE

The archives of Lawrence Halprin at the University of Pennsylvania, this page, 2, 3, 7, and 9; the archives of OLIN, Philadelphia, 1, 5, and 6; Design Workshop archives at Utah State University, 4 and 8.

IMAGE CREDITS

Jeffrey Holder, this page, 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 9; D. A. Horchner/Design Workshop, 4 and 8





Although it is not unusual for designers to plan to donate their records upon retirement or death, Lowell at Berkeley has made an unusual arrangement with one Bay Area landscape architect that might serve as a model: The designer has donated funds in advance of the school's receiving the material, and the money is currently generating income for later funding of archival processing. The designer, who was around 60 when the deal was struck and is a graduate of the UC Berkeley program, is important because the work "brilliantly combines landscape, art, and innovative materials in remarkable ways," Lowell says.

Whitaker, the Penn archivist, says he likes to start early and build a relationship with a person or firm, especially when there is a potential legacy involved, because there are many details to be worked out as part of a long-term commitment. If you plant the idea in their mind, he explains, even if they aren't ready to embrace the subject, "you don't wind up with the situation that someone dies and nobody has talked to them and you get called the day before they throw stuff in the dumpster and you have to respond like the fire brigade." When approached, Whitaker adds, most people are thrilled that someone sees a long-term value in their work.

But motivating them to take action can be difficult. "It's like a lot of people without wills or [with] wills that are out of date," Laurie Olin, FASLA, a partner at the OLIN Studio, points out. "You don't get around to doing it because you're too busy being alive. And then you realize you need to get organized to deal with the chaos."

At OLIN, it was a natural disaster in 2007 that pushed the partners to make a plan. Water flooded the basement of the firm's Philadelphia office where it stored documents and drawings going back to 1975. "That was a wake-up call," says Karl Blumenthal, the firm's full-time library and archives manager, who was hired after the flood to bring some order, reliable shelving, and climate control to the chaotic situation.

For the moment these archives are mainly for clients and staff "to maintain the integrity of the design process," Blumenthal explains, and not for public use. That will change as soon as the archives, dating from 1976 to 1994, are given to Penn, which has had a close relationship with the firm (Olin has taught there for more than 30 years). When the remaining material will be handed over is uncertain. "It is an ongoing firm and we need continued access to the material," Olin says. What's more, "we've generated another mountain of stuff [since 1994], and somebody has to sort through it."

SWA was motivated to strike a deal with Harvard for two reasons: to consolidate and preserve in one place the firm's work, and, in a wider sense, to encourage students and scholars to do research on landscape architecture by making available a large body of information, according to Platt. Before the deal, except for a small amount of material held in a companywide system, SWA's multiple offices largely maintained their

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own archives and relied on individual office managers for administration. This decentralized approach led to some mistakes, he adds, such as the destruction of many beautiful original drawings after they were transferred to microfilm—now an obsolete medium itself—owing to lack of space.

In collaboration with the university libraries, firms like SWA, Design Workshop, OLIN, and others are leading the way in addressing the issue of archives by recognizing the importance of this documentation and coming up with viable, long-term solutions. Organizations like the nonprofit Cultural Landscape Foundation—with its oral history project and other initiatives—are also building a tremendous resource base and increasing awareness of the history of landscape architecture. For its part, ASLA maintains an extensive national archive of libraries and their collections. Taken together, "things are definitely getting better, no question about it," Charles Birnbaum, FASLA, founder and president of the Cultural Landscape Foundation, says.

The challenge, however, is not only gathering the archives of the big names of the profession but also the work of smaller regional firms and lesser-known names. "The stars are taken care of. You can see their work. They write. They have exhibitions," he explains. But the local practitioners, Birnbaum argues, don't promote themselves, which means that their material, which is equally important, might eventually be lost.

Slowly, a growing number of landscape architects are acknowledging that preserving archives is critical to the future of their profession. And that the chore of dealing with the boxes in the basement is a worthwhile task, not only to document the legacy of their work but also for students and researchers for generations to come. They are becoming aware, says Penn's Whitaker, that their work goes "beyond their lifetimes." ●

ERNEST BECK IS A NEW YORK-BASED FREELANCE WRITER.

THIS PAGE
The archives of OLIN,
Philadelphia.

IMAGE CREDIT
Jeffrey Holder



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THE BACK

HISTORICAL VIEWS: TOURISTS AT THE ALHAMBRA

At the New York Botanical Garden,
May 21 to August 21, 2011

Since the Moors built the Alhambra in Spain in the 13th and 14th centuries, artists have marveled at its arches and arabesques, its loggias, gardens, and pools. An exhibition of rare drawings, prints, and photos—including the engraving shown here, *Jardin de Generalife at Granada*, by Comte Alexandre de Laborde—will be on view in this exhibition curated by Patrick Lenaghan of the Hispanic Society of America. There will also be a 15,000-square-foot interpretation of the Alhambra's gardens curated by Penelope Hobhouse and designed by Francisca P. Coelho. For more information, visit www.nybg.org.

IMAGE CREDIT

Courtesy Hispanic Society of America Library

SKY ART

The artist Nancy Holt's environmental works, like her *Sun Tunnels* installation in far northwestern Utah, are usually called land art, but they seem every bit as much about the sky. Holt bought 40 acres of the Great Basin Desert in 1974 and, with the help of an astrophysicist and an astronomer, as well as numerous tradespeople and four truck drivers, she aligned two 18-foot-long concrete tunnels to capture the setting sun on the June solstice and two others to capture it on the December solstice. The tunnels form a large X. The holes in the tunnels' walls correspond to stars. "I wanted to bring the vast space of the desert back to human scale. I had no desire to make a megalithic monument," Holt writes in a book about her work, *Nancy Holt: Sightlines*, published last month by the University of California Press. "The panoramic view of the landscape is too overwhelming to take in without visual reference points." An exhibition of Holt's land art, films, and video appeared last fall at Columbia University, curated by Alena Williams, and will open October 6 at the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts in Chicago, with additional dates to follow through 2013 at Tufts University, the Santa Fe Art Institute, and the Utah Museum of Fine Arts in Salt Lake City. ●

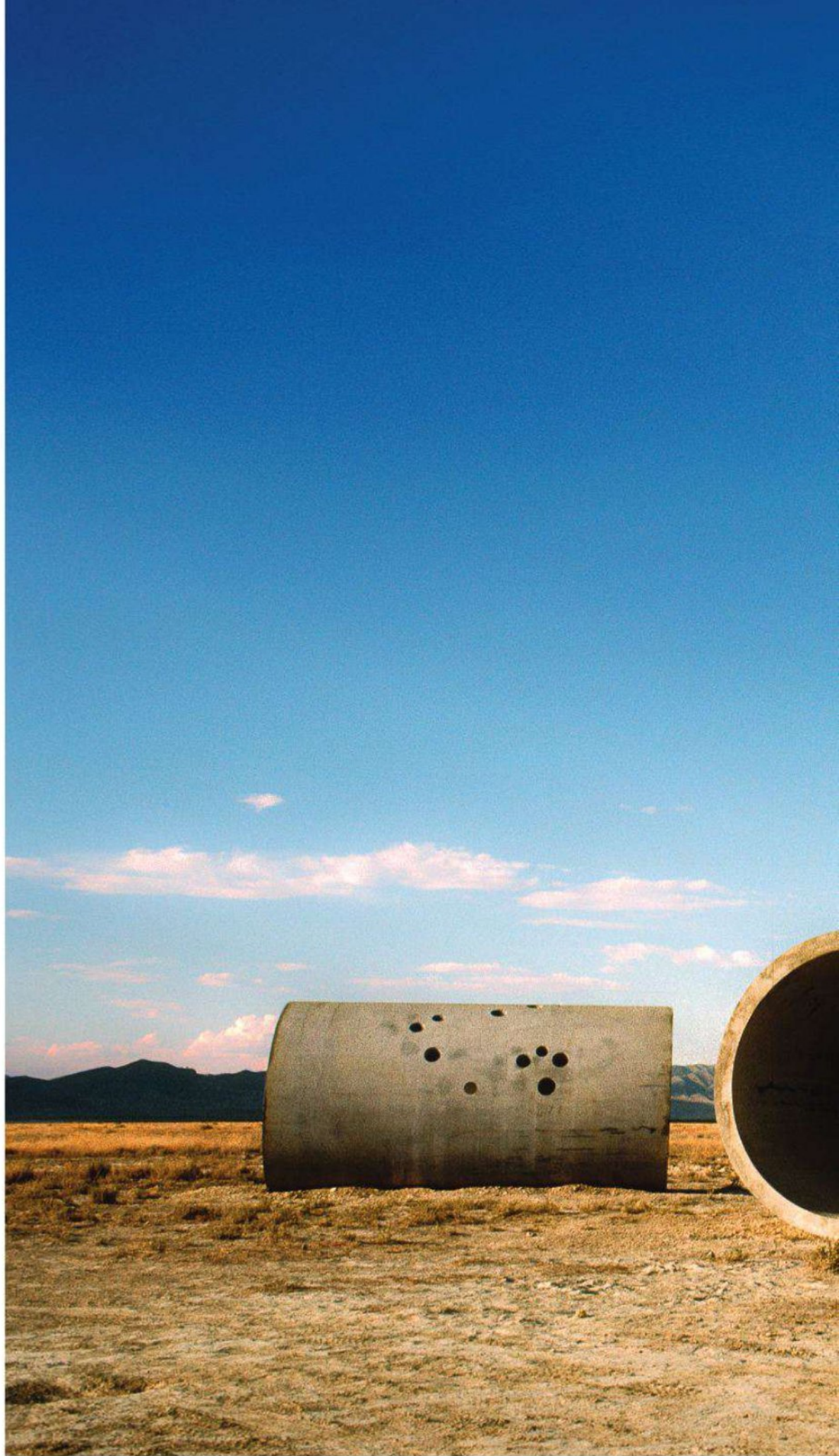
—BRADFORD MCKEE

RIGHT

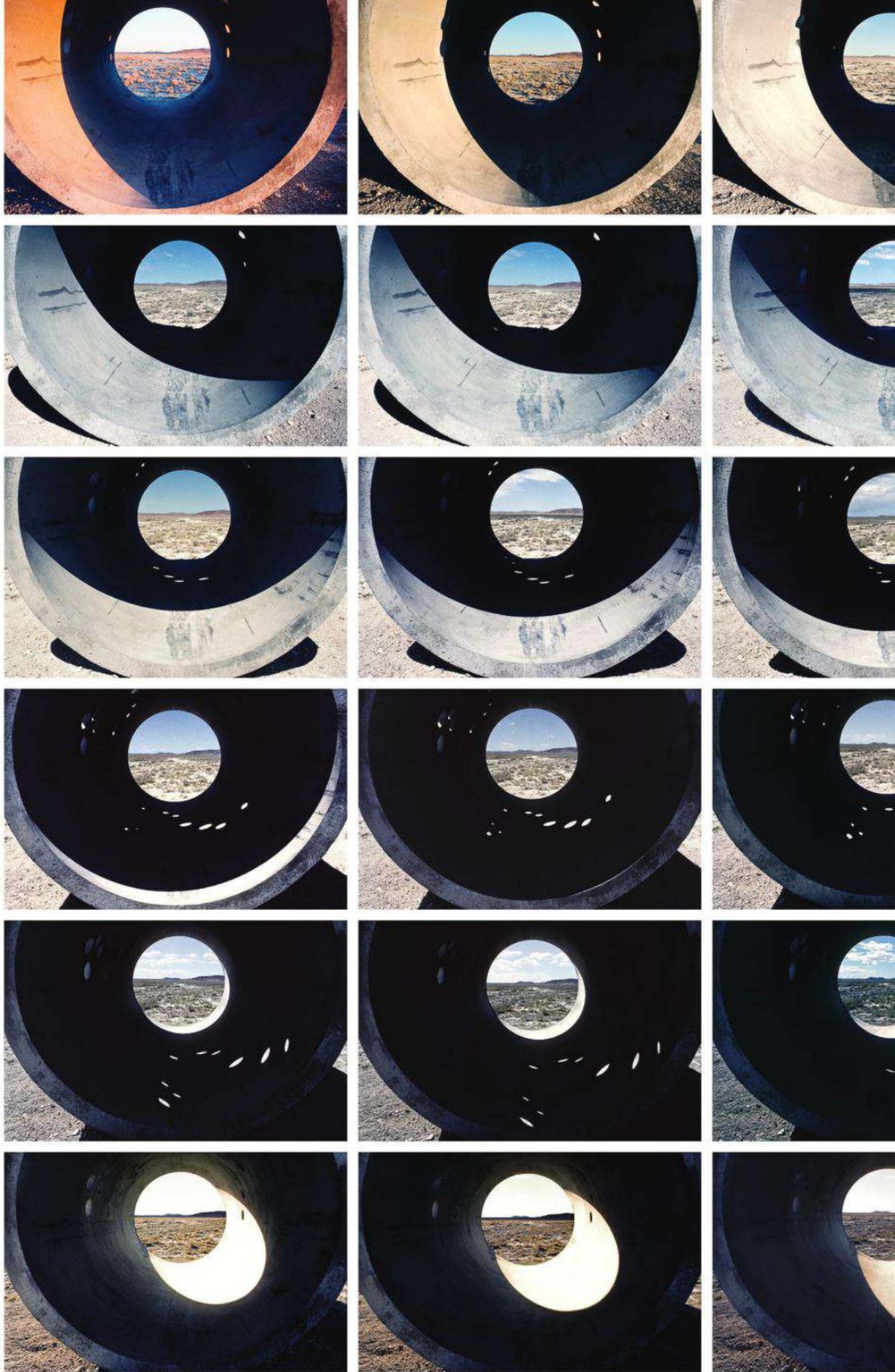
Nancy Holt, *Sun Tunnels*, 1973–1976,
Great Basin Desert, Utah
Concrete, steel, earth

IMAGE CREDIT

Courtesy of the artist © Nancy Holt/
Licensed by VAGA, New York

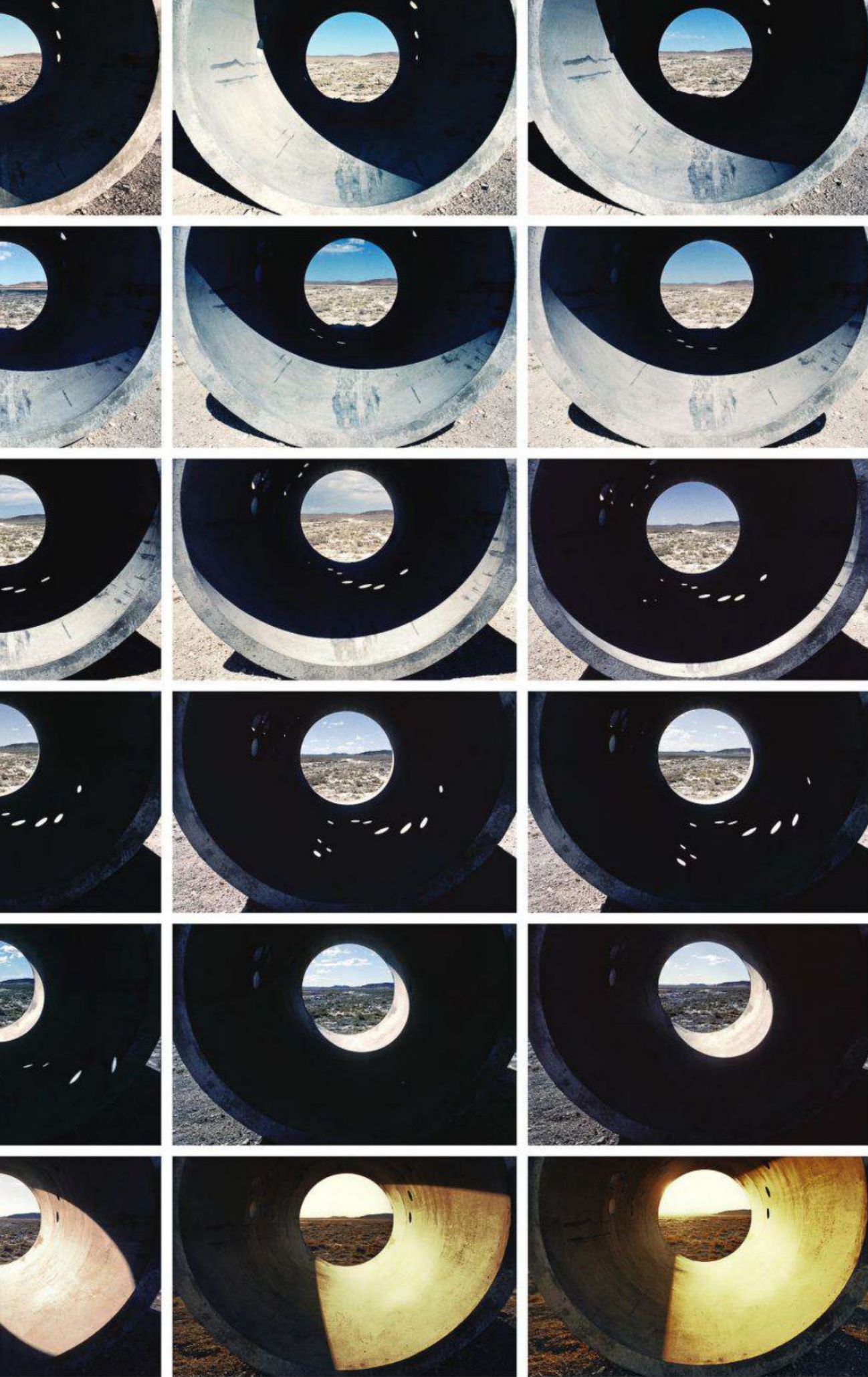






RIGHT
 Nancy Holt, *Sunlight in Sun Tunnels*, 1976.
 Thirty photographs of sunlight and shadow
 in one tunnel photographed every half
 hour from 6:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. on
 July 14, 1976. From original 35 mm
 color transparencies.

IMAGE CREDIT
 Courtesy of the artist © Nancy Holt/
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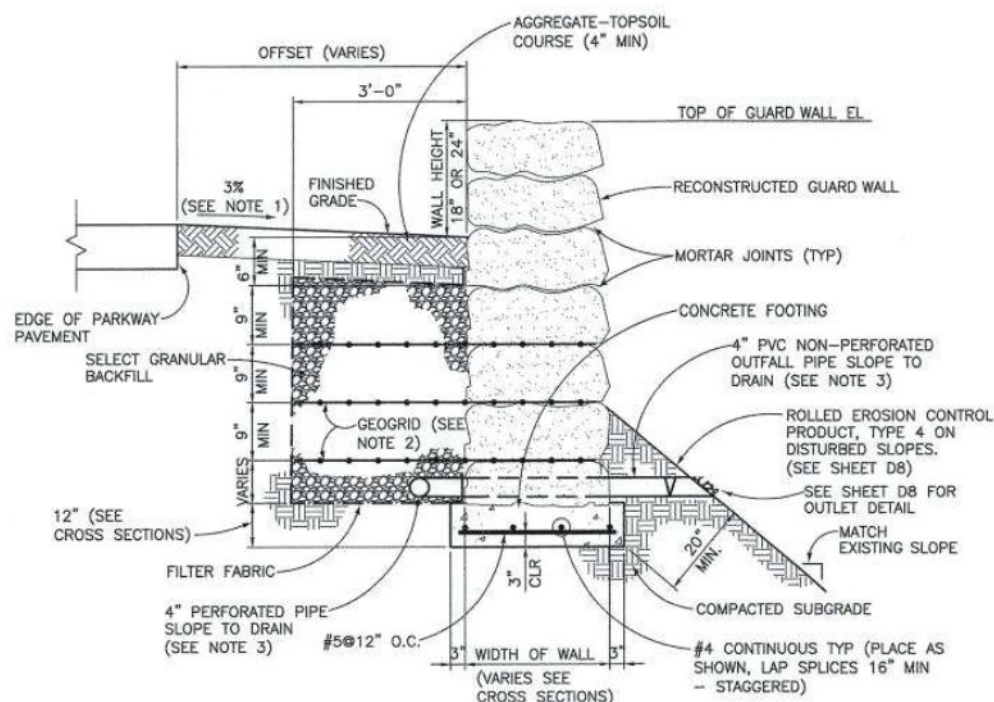
GUARD

OVER THE PAST DECADE, THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE HAS WORKED TO PROTECT THE AMAZING VISTAS OF THE BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY FROM A RASH OF EXCESSIVE ROADSIDE SAFETY BARRIERS.

BY MARK HOUGH, ASLA

IMAGE CREDIT

Courtesy of the National
Park Service



ABOVE LEFT

The stone guard walls are being rebuilt with concrete footings and reinforcement to boost their crashworthiness. Their rustic appearance is being preserved by reusing as much of the original stone as possible.

ABOVE RIGHT

The historic walls were dry stacked without footings using local stone rubble. Stanley Abbott, the chief landscape architect for the parkway at the time, was against using them as safety barriers.

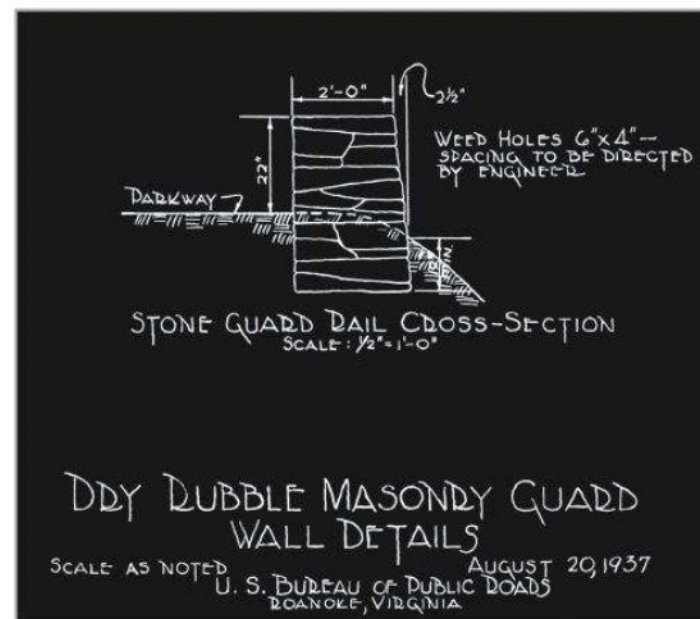
IMAGE CREDITS

Courtesy of the National Park Service

AMONG THE BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY'S defining features is its extensive system of roadside barriers built to keep people from driving off the side of a mountain while disrupting the views as little as possible. There are about 33,000 linear feet of stone walls used as barriers along the oldest portions of the drive, where blasting for tunnels produced lots of rubble. Stanley Abbott, the parkway's original chief landscape architect, in the 1930s, was against stone rubble walls. He thought they cost too much and would narrow the shoulder. But federal highway officials who had jurisdiction over the parkway demanded them. Abbott's cost concerns quickly proved valid, though, and a switch was made to timber rails affixed to concrete posts. Wood guardrails became the roadway's standard after World War II.

The Blue Ridge Parkway is an icon of landscape architecture. It snakes along the southern Appalachian Mountains for some 470 miles through Virginia and North Carolina and connects the Shenandoah and the Great Smoky Mountains national parks. Work on the parkway began in 1935 as a Public Works Administration project meant to help reinvigorate a national economy on life support during the Great Depression. It was conceived in part as an amenity for a new breed of pleasure driver, and it was expertly sited to take advantage of the region's amazing views.

At the time, cars were relatively new, and safety regulations were not as stringent as they are today. For guard walls, it must have seemed sturdy enough to dry lay stone to an average height of 18 inches with no foundation. But decades of settling, freezing, and thawing proved otherwise. By the late 1990s, these walls were crumbling beyond what systematic patch jobs could keep up with. Many of the historic timber guardrails were also deteriorating



or damaged. Gary Johnson, the chief landscape architect for the Blue Ridge Parkway office of the National Park Service (NPS), understood the cultural value of these features and the need to restore or replace them in a manner that respected the design heritage of the parkway.

ACCORDING TO THE NPS'S PARK ROAD STANDARDS, published in 1984, "guardrails are intended to redirect an errant vehicle, to delineate a roadway, or to warn of roadside hazards. These barriers should be installed at points of unusual danger such as sharp curves and steep embankments." Over the years along the Blue Ridge Parkway, a liberal interpretation of this guideline had led to what some considered an overuse of the new standard wooden guardrails endorsed by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO). There were not only a lot more of them, but they were also taller and placed closer to the road than the historic ones.

Johnson had been concerned for some time that these new guardrails were compromising the character of the drive. As he saw it, the big challenge was how to "bring current safety and design standards into a historic, designed landscape and figure out how to make appropriate changes, when to make those changes, or when not to make them." In 2001, he got the chance to answer his own questions when the NPS received funding to repair or replace wooden guardrails along a 100-mile stretch of the parkway near Asheville, North Carolina. To study the impacts of replacing the guardrails, the NPS hired the Jaeger Company, a landscape architecture firm in Gainesville, Georgia, that specializes in historic preservation and environmental assessment.

REDEFINING LIFE OUTDOORS

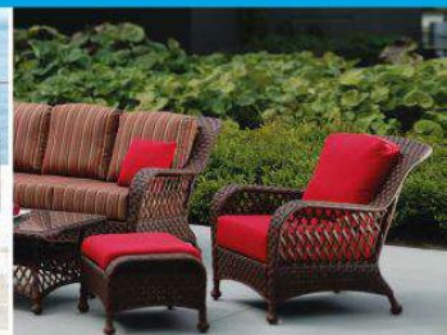


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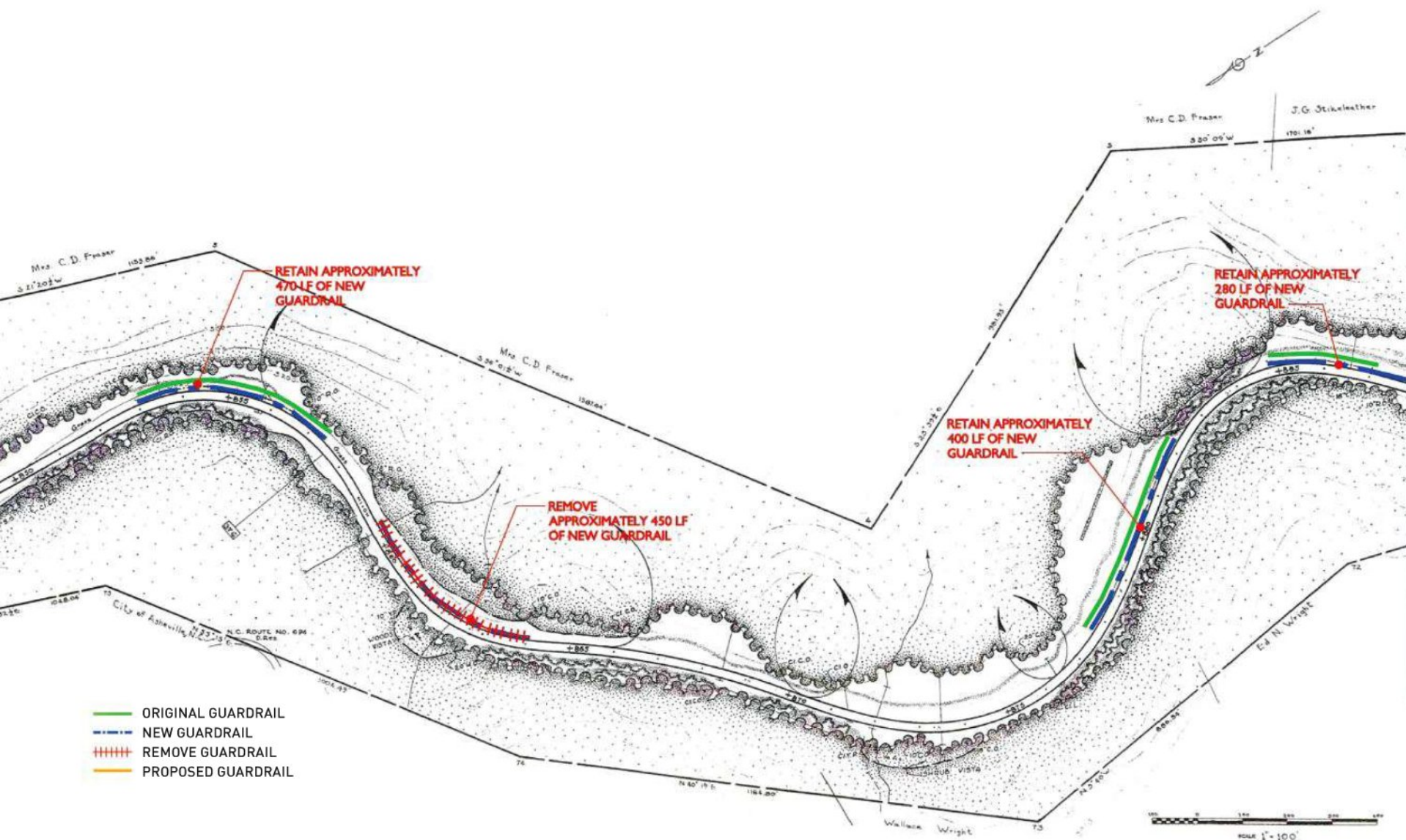
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HISTORIC PARKWAY LAND-USE MAPS CLEARLY SHOW THE DELIBERATE WAY THE PARKWAY WAS DESIGNED.

ABOVE

The Jaeger Company used historic parkway land-use maps as a reference for documenting how standard guardrails had been installed unnecessarily in recent years. The cultural landscape report they produced recommended removing several miles of them to reflect the parkway's original design intent.

IMAGE CREDIT

Courtesy of the National Park Service

Dale Jaeger, FASLA, the principal for the firm, says it was easy to see that Johnson's concerns were justified. "These newer guardrails had been installed all over the place, even where they weren't necessary," she says; their presence may seem trivial considering the grand scale of the parkway, but, she adds, "when you get enough of these seemingly small incremental changes, all of a sudden you have changed the big picture, and may not even realize how it happened." The firm documented the various types of historic and contemporary barriers used along the parkway and carefully mapped those along the stretch of road in question.

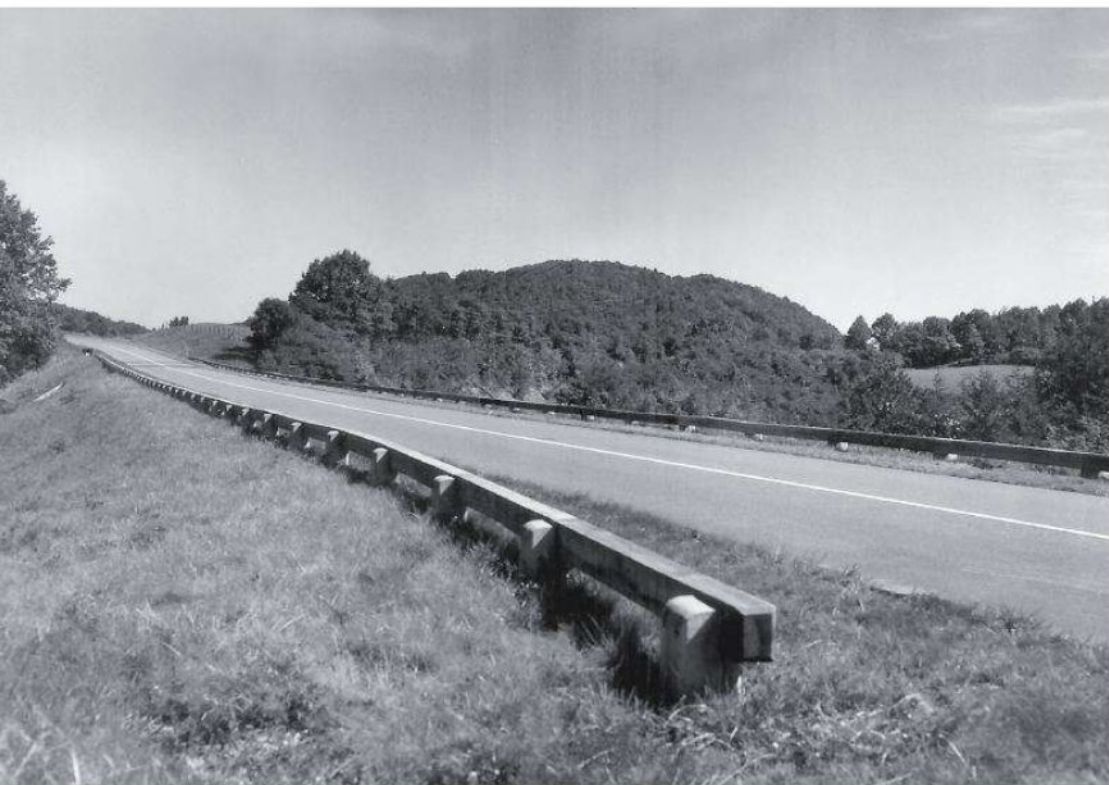
The landscape architects layered this information over historic parkway land-use maps (called PLUMs), intricately detailed as-built drawings made after each section of the drive was completed. These maps clearly show the deliberate way the parkway was designed, and how barriers were located only where they were needed most. But this standard has not always held. The Jaeger Company's cultural landscape report, completed in 2003, said that "newly installed guardrails continue with no interruption for great distances and, in some cases, occupy both sides of the roadway to create a 'tunnel vision' effect." The existing guardrails went far beyond what was required for safety.

They found guardrails on straight sections of roadway that didn't drop off, on medians, and at overlook pull-off areas, "all of which do not typically warrant safety devices," the report says.

Jaeger recommended repairing or replacing deficient guardrails using the current "points of unusual danger" standard, but only where necessary. The company's report recommended removing more than three miles of guardrails that were not needed for safety.

Although none has been removed to date, the report was successful in preventing more unnecessary installations. It also made people aware of the direct relationship between the barriers and the visual quality of the landscape and laid the groundwork for dealing with the historic stone walls.

THE ISSUES CONCERNING THE STONE GUARD WALLS would be more complicated than those around the wooden guardrails because the walls are unique. But at a minimum, they needed to be restored, and cooperation between the NPS and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) would be critical. In an ironic reversal of the same argument between the landscape architect and the highway bureaucracy back in the 1930s, the NPS was now pushing to restore the historic walls in a manner that would protect their cultural value. Johnson and others believed the walls were now part of the park's aesthetic heritage and worth fighting for. The FHWA, however, endorsed replacing them with a standard guardrail.



ABOVE

Timber rails attached to concrete posts were used as barriers on stretches of the parkway where stone was not readily available. They were placed only where needed most, such as the overpass shown above. Wooden guardrails became the standard after World War II.

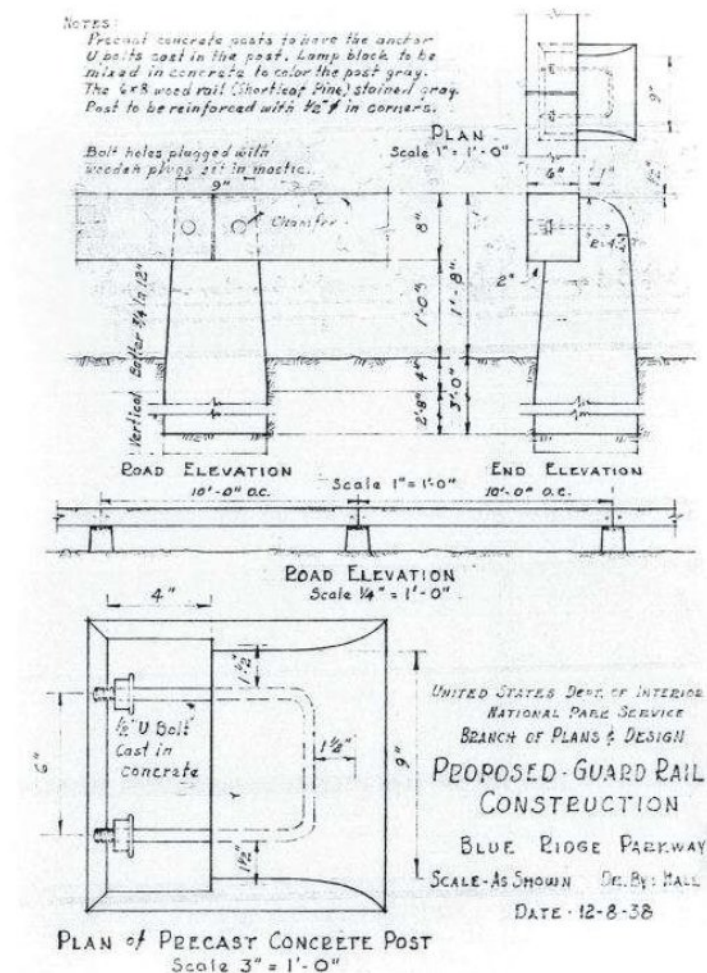
IMAGE CREDITS

Courtesy of the National Park Service

Johnson and the NPS faced an uphill battle in preserving the walls, given the way design heritage issues routinely are trumped by contemporary regulations and standards. He needed a way to combine historic precedent with persuasive research or his case would likely be lost on highway officials. He had in mind a methodology for evaluating proposed barriers and defining the level of impact they would have on the landscape. In 2008, the NPS once again engaged the Jaeger Company, this time to tediously document the height, condition, structure, and appearance of the stone walls, and to record their physical relationship to the drive. They studied this data in conjunction with the PLUMs, which clearly show both the lengths the original designers went to establish views and the way they used the low guard walls to subtly reinforce the curves of the drive.

One of the greatest accomplishments of the Blue Ridge Parkway was the famously successful collaboration between engineers and landscape architects that made it happen. Jaeger says she has always marveled at that process and regrets that "somewhere along the way we lost that collegial attitude to work together." Members of her staff, in the dual role of design consultant and facilitator, sat down with the FHWA and the NPS to develop a mutually acceptable approach to addressing barrier issues along the parkway. Fortunately some of the old spirit of collaboration was still in play, and "once there was a shared understanding of the original planning and design intent, it actually went very well," says Emmeline Morris, Jaeger's project manager. "The FHWA even helped to think of creative alternatives."

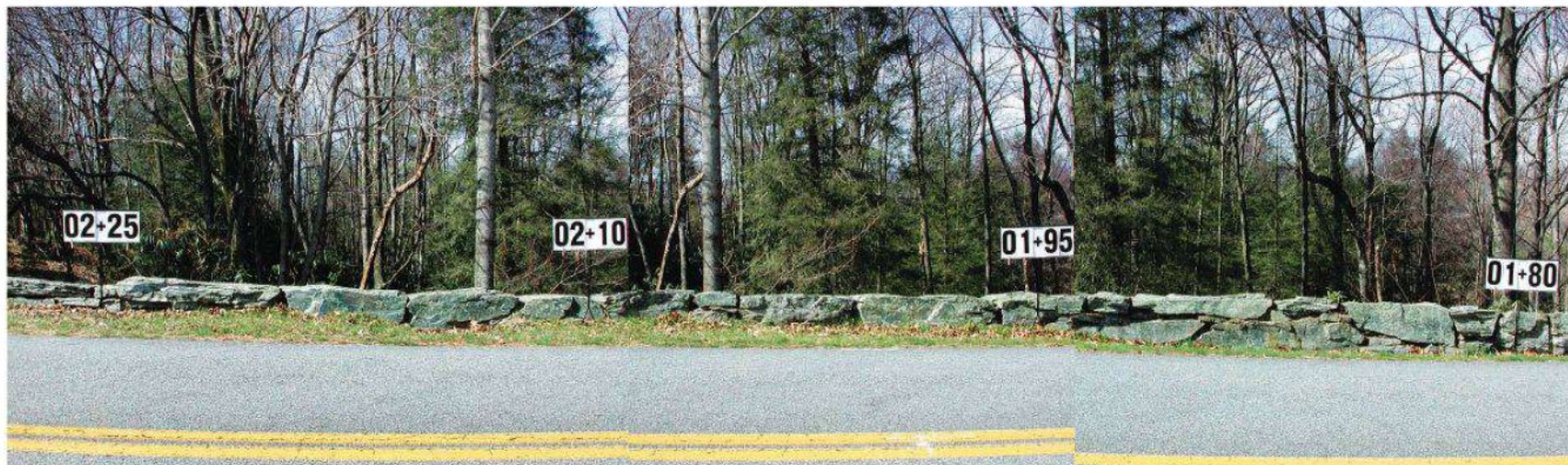
The results of this process are documented in a report titled *Roadside Cultural Resources Preservation: A Guide to Assessing the Effects of Roadside Safety Implementation Projects on the Blue Ridge*



Parkway, which won an ASLA Honor Award in 2009. Basically it picked up where the Jaeger Company's 2003 report left off and set guidelines for road barriers along the entire length of the drive.

The new methodology for placing road barriers is broken into three steps; the first step is called "warranting," whereby designers determine whether a safety barrier is needed for a site. Variables such as the number of accidents reported for the site, available shoulder width, the presence of vegetation, and unusual roadway geometry or physical hazards are assigned values and plugged into a formula that ultimately provides a yes or no answer. If no barrier is required, the process ends here. But if one is needed, then step two is used to figure out what the appropriate application would be.

The first part of step two is to determine "the presence of sensitive cultural or environmental resource conditions." On any roadside project along the parkway, the NPS and the FHWA will together perform an inventory of the roadway conditions and a historic assessment to decide whether the placement of a barrier would negatively affect the visual quality of the parkway experience. Part



ABOVE

This composite image shows the way the Jaeger Company documented existing conditions to assess the walls' integrity or needs for repair.

IMAGE CREDIT

Courtesy of the Jaeger Company

of the mission of the NPS on the Blue Ridge Parkway is to conserve its significant natural and cultural resources. Among these assets are the more than 900 vistas maintained by the NPS, as well as the integrity of historic resources such as the stone guard walls. Historic integrity is determined by information found on the PLUMs, what materials are used, the quality of craftsmanship, and the era from which the resource originates. These factors determine what is worthy of being preserved or restored rather than replaced.

The other part to step 2 is to determine if the landscape can “absorb” a new element without affecting its visual quality. This assessment looks at elements that affect the sight lines of the viewer and the complexity of landscape—vertical and horizontal road alignment, density and location of vegetation, and topography—and assigns

AASHTO standard guardrails would now be allowed in historically and contextually sensitive areas while still providing safety. By following the process outlined in Jaeger’s report, every time a new barrier was added, replaced, or restored along the parkway, objective criteria would determine its height, the materials used in detailing it, and its placement in relation to the road. Neither cultural heritage nor engineering standards would rule over the other. Should discord arise, the NPS would have the final say.

The stone guard walls became the first test of this new methodology. Their value as cultural resources was established by the first step of screening for historic resources. They would be rebuilt reusing as much of the original stone as possible. As part of the compromise, adequate footings and reinforcement would be added to boost their crashworthiness where required. Their height would vary depending on the speed of the road, to a maximum of 27 inches. Most important, their historic appearance would be maintained.

NEW CRITERIA FOR PLACING BARRIERS SHOULD ENSURE THAT CULTURAL HERITAGE AND ENGINEERING CONCERNS DON'T PRECLUDE EACH OTHER.

value to the relative condition of each. For instance, the visual impact of a roadside feature would vary depending on the curvature of the road and if you were looking across a vista or into a forest. A guardrail would recede into a background of dense vegetation but obstruct an open view to a meadow or valley. By assessing all of the conditions, it can be shown whether the landscape can “handle” a new feature without undermining the character or context of the parkway. The results are not based on science or hard data, but rather on a value system agreed to by the various parties involved.

With the Jaeger Company’s help and the FHWA’s willingness to compromise, the methodology Johnson had envisioned was now on paper. It would return aesthetics and design to a conversation that had become dominated by engineering guidelines. Based on this new process, design exceptions to the typically strict

After almost a decade of work, the restoration of the guard walls had become a shovel-ready project, and in 2009 the NPS successfully secured more than \$8 million in federal stimulus funds for the work. Construction began in earnest in the fall of 2010 and will finish by May 2012. As in the 1930s, the parkway is once again being used to provide jobs during a tough economy. In another bit of symmetry that provides a satisfying footnote to this story, some of the masons working for Espina Stone, the general contractor for the project, have roots in the parkway dating back to its original construction. The grandfather of Espina’s owner, Jose Cadiera, was an immigrant from Spain who worked as a mason in the 1930s and 1940s on the parkway’s stone walls and bridges. ●

MARK HOUGH, ASLA, IS CAMPUS LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT AT DUKE UNIVERSITY AND A MEMBER OF THE LAM EDITORIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

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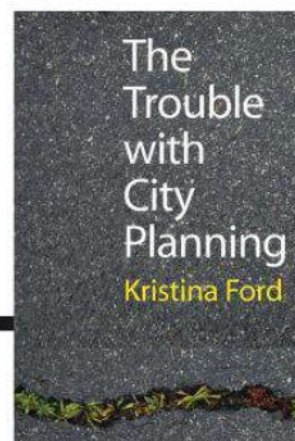
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THE TROUBLE WITH CITY PLANNING: WHAT NEW ORLEANS CAN TEACH US

BY KRISTINA FORD; NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT:
YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2010; 288 PAGES, \$30.

REVIEWED BY KEVIN W. SLOAN, ASLA



City planning, writes Kristina Ford, isn't for people with faint hearts or short tempers. Ford, a former planning director for the city of New Orleans, recounts the story of when a city council president told her, during her introduction to other council members, "This has all been very nice, but the next time you come here, you best wear a suit of armor."

Even on a good day, New Orleans requires that a planner have nerves of steel. Ford vividly describes the complicated racial, economic, and political environment that she and her department had to navigate in getting the routine work of the city accomplished. Then in 2005 came the disaster of Hurricane Katrina, for which Ford was a firsthand witness, and the blizzard of reconstruction proposals, the opportunism, the "starchitect" invasion, and the rather mixed outcome to date.

FORD HAS A PASSION FOR CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN THE CITY PLANNING PROCESS AND A DISDAIN FOR CELEBRITY PLANNERS AND THEIR "VISIONS" FOR CITIES.

Ford's background on the urban history of New Orleans is particularly fascinating. She describes, with the support of illustrative maps, how the unique sedimentation patterns of the Mississippi River embankments, combined with the plantation culture that stipulated property owners must individually have access to the river, produced New Orleans's distinct city form. She notes that most of the neighborhoods that avoided Katrina's floodwaters were those settled in the preplanning profession years of the 18th century, though it is hard to tell if Ford means to make a revelation for future city planning or to criticize her own profession for enabling the proliferation of mid-20th-century subdivisions into the low-lying areas that the early settlements avoided.

Certain themes and issues recur in the book, particularly concerning Ford's passion for citizen participation in the city planning process, and her disdain for and suspicion of celebrity planners and their "visions" for cities. She believes a process driven by "pet planning theories" amounts to a risky experiment. But in leveling this criticism, she does not confine her remarks to recent events: In defining her preference for a more granular city building process via citizen participation, she derides the more heroic visions advanced by individual planners. In particular, unfortunately, Ford goes too far in her remarks about Daniel Burnham's "Plan of Chicago," which are factually so far off the mark they undermine the credibility of her argument.

Her accusation that Burnham ignored working-class Chicagoans in his plan is not the case. According to Kristen Shaffer at North Carolina State, who wrote her dissertation on the Chicago Plan, Burnham designed a number of features for the South Park District that were for the working class, and he advocated day care, better health care, and other services that indicated he did in fact care about the poor.

The Trouble with City Planning, though, is a welcome addition to the growing annals of planning for contemporary cities that have expanded in scale and complexity beyond the conventional reach of historical models. City planning is a knowledge-based activity with a relatively limited amount of scholarship and theory to inform its practitioners. Ford shows in some depth the procedures and technicalities involved in today's planning practice. But in doing so she more or less validates current practices in lieu of the critical reflection implied by the title. Ford leaves the reader yearning for the author's speculations about the future of the contemporary city and its unprecedented realities—its unbounded geography, sprawl, and insatiable thirst for energy. For these problems, we need the kind of knowledge unlikely to materialize from the public participation process and focus groups composed of nonprofessionals. ●

KEVIN SLOAN, ASLA, IS THE PRINCIPAL OF KEVIN SLOAN STUDIO AND A PROFESSOR OF ARCHITECTURE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON.

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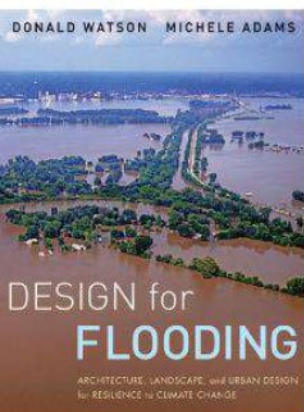
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DESIGN FOR FLOODING: ARCHITECTURE, LANDSCAPE, AND URBAN DESIGN FOR RESILIENCE TO CLIMATE CHANGE

BY DONALD WATSON AND MICHELE ADAMS;
HOBOKEN, NEW JERSEY: JOHN WILEY & SONS, 2011;
336 PAGES, \$85.

REVIEWED BY FREDERICK R. STEINER, FASLA



In late 2010 and early 2011 we saw floods inundate large swaths of Australia, Brazil, and Japan with considerable property damage and loss of life. In the January 2011 flooding in the state of Rio de Janeiro, at least 842 people died, with another 8,777 left homeless. The toll from the March flooding after the tsunami in Japan is still being tallied.

Flooding is a natural phenomenon with many positive benefits such as the deposition of silts that develop into productive soils. However, unwise human settlement can intensify the negative effects of flooding—we routinely see the way paved surfaces can increase storm runoff and accelerate river flows, and we know by now, or you would think we know, of the inherent danger of placing buildings in flood zones. As Donald Watson, an architect, and Michele Adams, an engineer, note in *Design for Flooding*, flooding “is a disaster because of the way we have built upon areas susceptible to flooding.”

Watson and Adams ground their fine book in conventional approaches such as watershed planning, floodplain management, and flood-resistant design, but they go further by employing the emerging notions of resilience, or the ability of landscapes to absorb disturbances; ecosystem services, or the benefits the environment provides to human beings; and the precautionary principle, which is the imperative to consider human and environmental health closely in design decisions.

This combination of conventional and new concepts makes *Design for Flooding* particularly useful. Watson and Adams advocate water as a central focus for resilient design. Their book has four parts: the basics of weather and water-related events, the concept of water balance, building designs that avoid or resist flood hazards, and the question of sea-level rise.

The authors clearly explain key concepts, including climate, the water cycle, carbon sequestration, watersheds, and biodiversity, and discuss

how the natural and altered landscapes differ. They give considerable depth to design approaches, observing that “Each building site is part of a watershed problem or a part of a watershed solution.” Whereas the site design discussion is quite good, the chapter on flood design practices for buildings is outstanding. The detailed design discussion is supported by useful diagrams, illustrations, and photographs. The authors link design to flood and coastal zone planning and policy in the United States. Although much of the design material is transferable to other nations, international readers will need to reference their own flood and coastal management laws.

“EACH BUILDING SITE IS PART OF A WATERSHED PROBLEM OR A PART OF A WATERSHED SOLUTION.”

The book has a few minor weaknesses. The authors profile several “case studies” involving good examples of design and planning for flooding that offer relevant lessons, but they are poorly organized and of uneven depth. The examples would benefit from a consistent case-study method and format. And I have a minor quibble with the subtitle: Some architects seem to be unable to use the full name of the landscape architecture profession.

Design for Flooding contains considerable useful information for practitioners and students. Watson and Adams fill the void for new thinking that has developed since Thomas Dunne and Luna Leopold’s classic *Water in Environmental Planning* (1978), and they advance our ability to create more sustainable, regenerative, and resilient places. ●

FREDERICK R. STEINER, FASLA, THE AUTHOR OF *DESIGN FOR A VULNERABLE PLANET*, IS DEAN OF THE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN.

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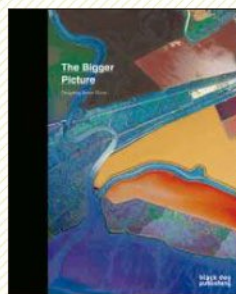
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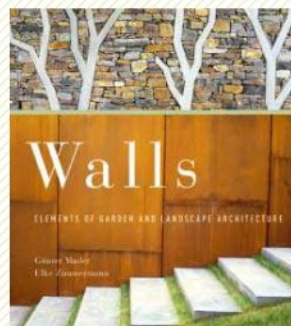


THE BIGGER PICTURE: DESIGNING BETTER PLACES

EDAW | AECOM DESIGN + PLANNING, BY FAY SWEET; LONDON: BLACK DOG PUBLISHING, 2010; 381 PAGES, \$60.

In 2005, EDAW, one of the best-known landscape architecture and planning firms, merged with engineering and planning behemoth AECOM. This monograph presents some of the final work of EDAW and the early work of its successor company, AECOM Design + Planning. Most of the projects presented are giant master plans, involving collaboration among a variety of disciplines, including plans for the 2012 Olympic village in London; a coastal park system in Shenzhen, China; and Shanghai Chemical Industrial Park, Natural Waste Water Treatment System. A few smaller projects like parks and children's gardens are featured as well. ●

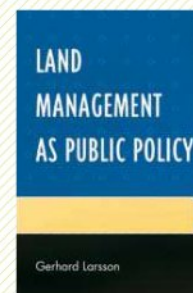
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WALLS: ELEMENTS OF GARDEN AND LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

BY GÜNTER MADER AND ELKE ZIMMERMANN; NEW YORK: W. W. NORTON, 2011; 136 PAGES, \$40.

Originally published in German, this book provides a comprehensive introduction to the design of walls in the landscape. The authors begin with a cultural history of wall construction, move on to a discussion of design fundamentals, then talk about design issues surrounding a variety of materials—everything from stone to concrete to rammed earth. The entire volume is richly illustrated with photographs of interesting and unusual walls—many excellent sources for design inspiration. Some construction details are provided, though the book would have benefited from more of them. ●



LAND MANAGEMENT AS PUBLIC POLICY

BY GERHARD LARSSON; LANHAM, MARYLAND: UNIVERSITY PRESS OF AMERICA, 2010; 233 PAGES, \$37.99.

This book, authored by a professor emeritus in the department of real estate science at the Royal Institute of Technology in Sweden, was boiled down from a larger research report the author produced for the Swedish Council on Building Research. Thus this is a fairly weighty, dense read, intended for students and practitioners with a strong interest in how various levels of the public sector influence land management decisions. ●



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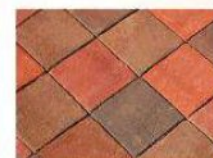
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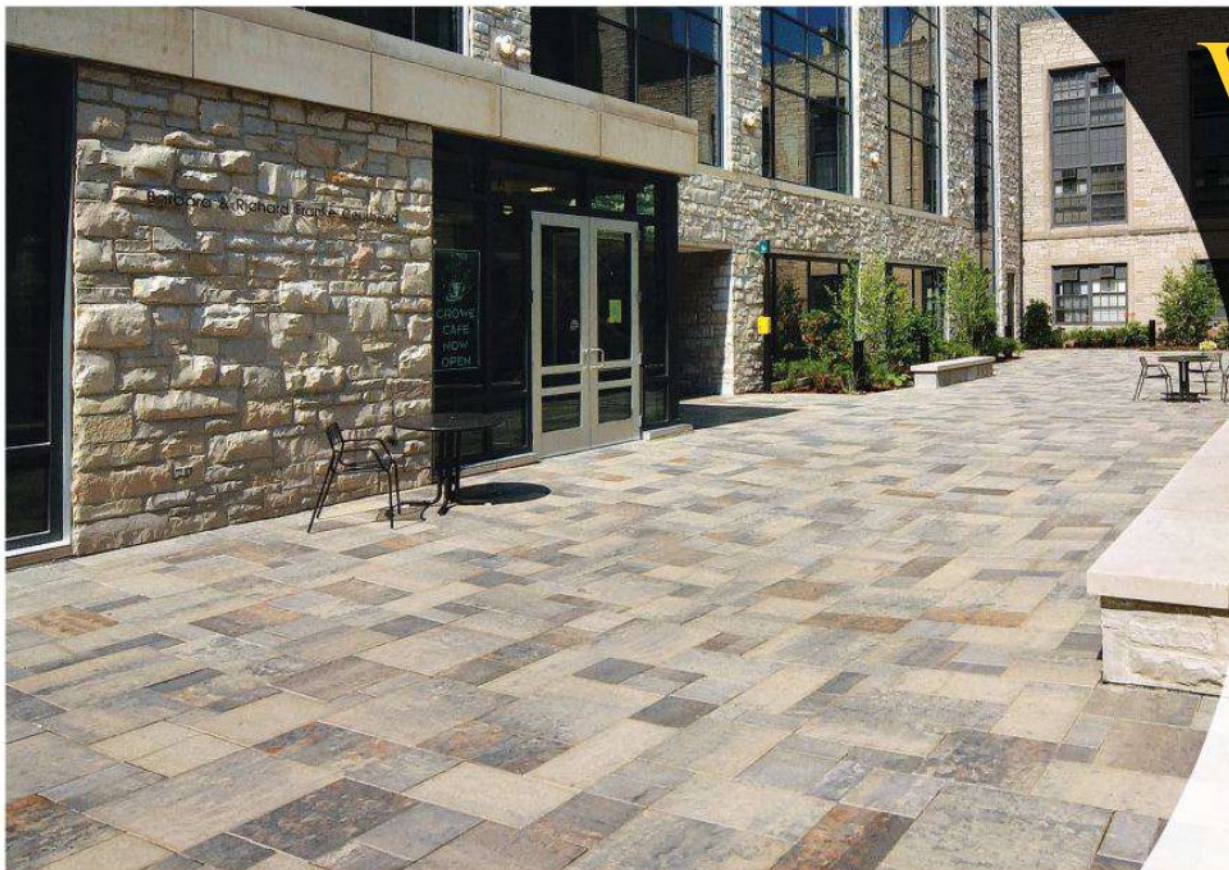
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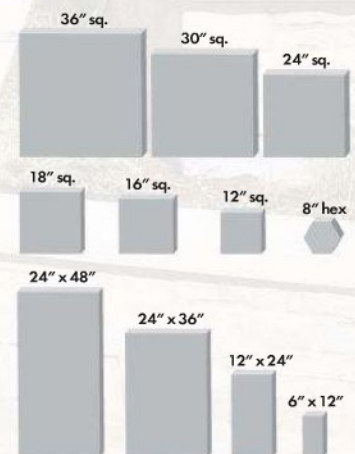
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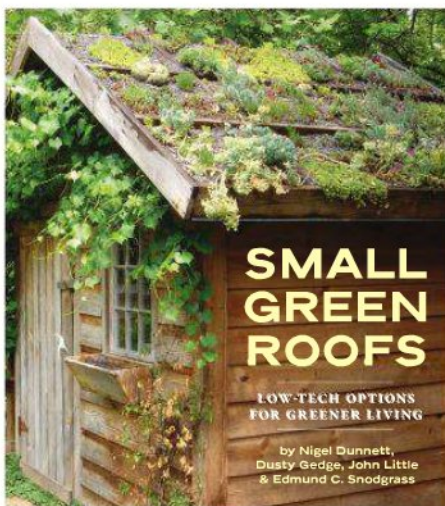
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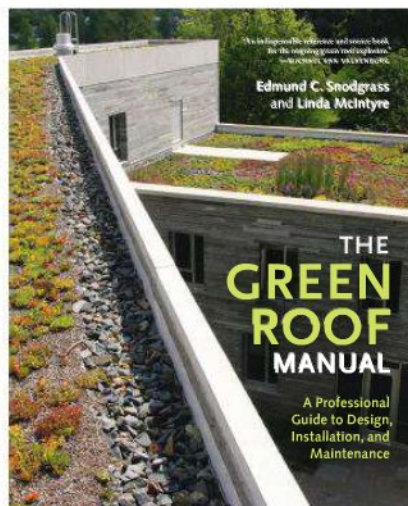
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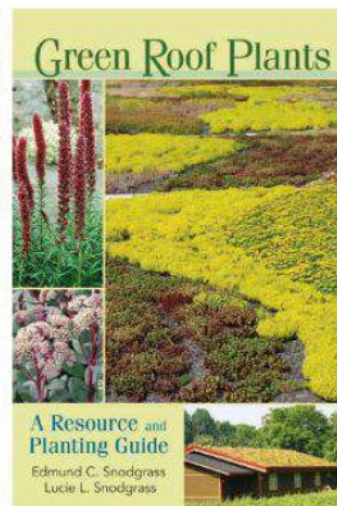
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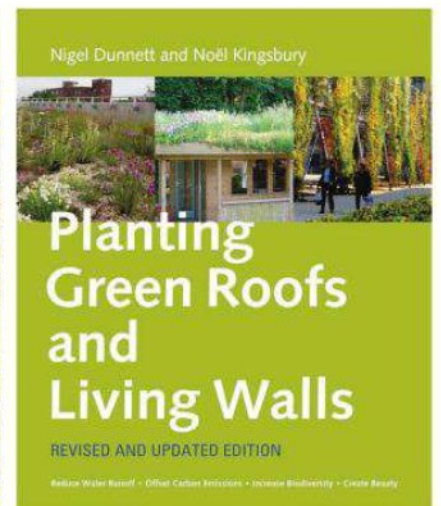
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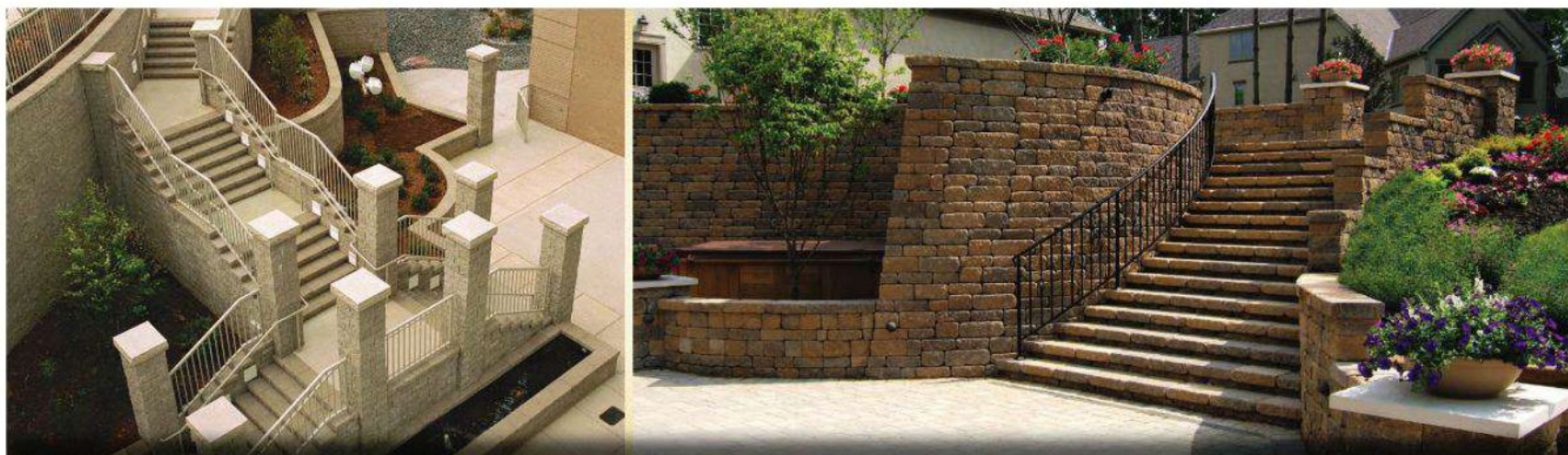
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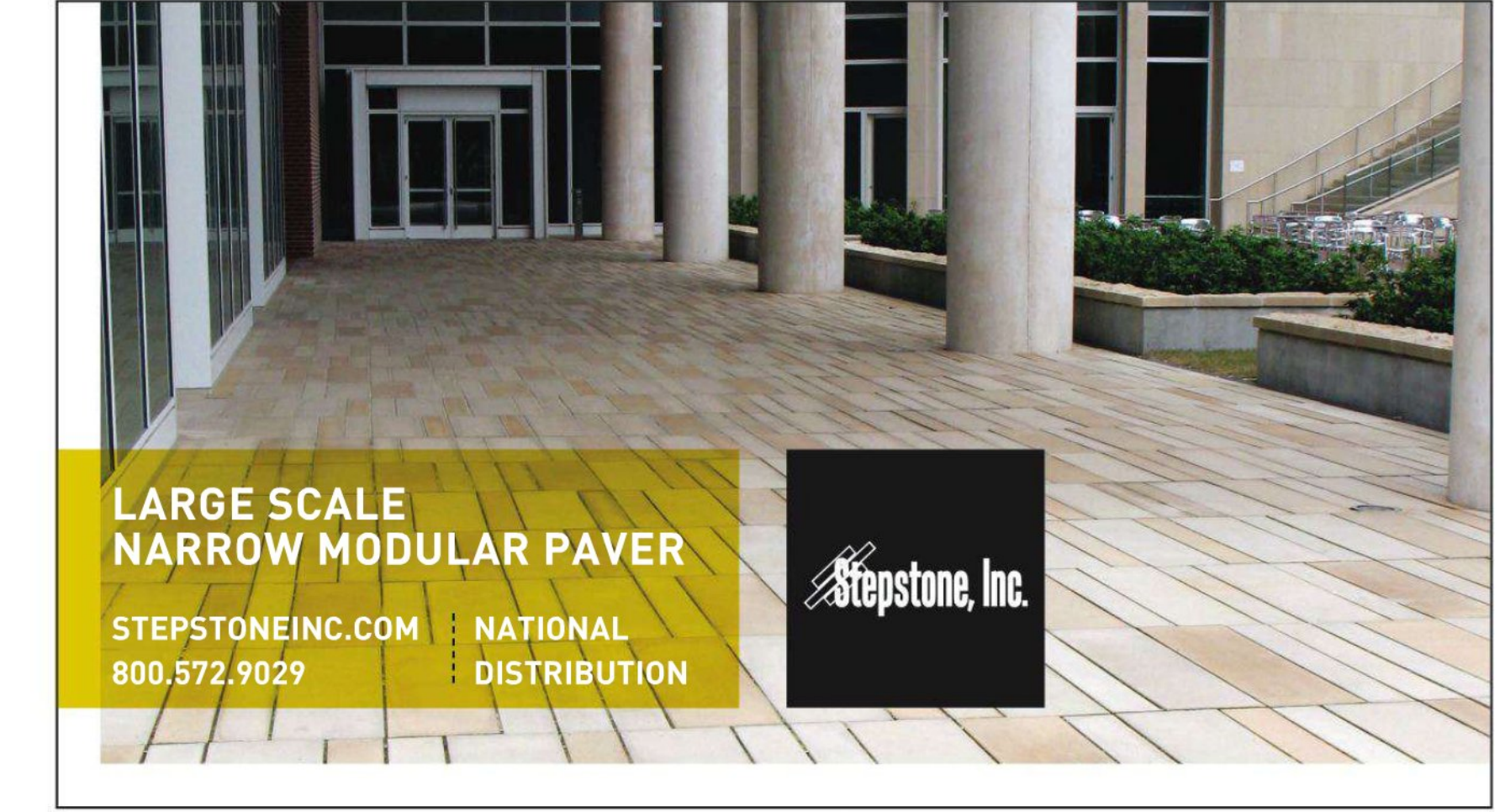
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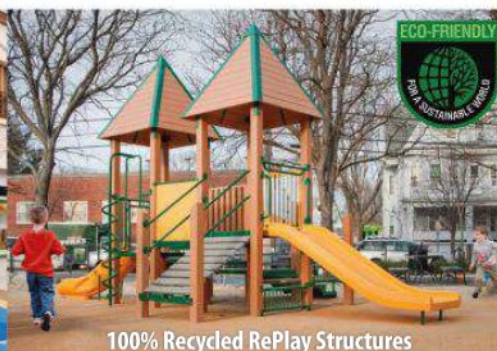
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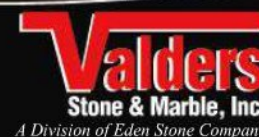
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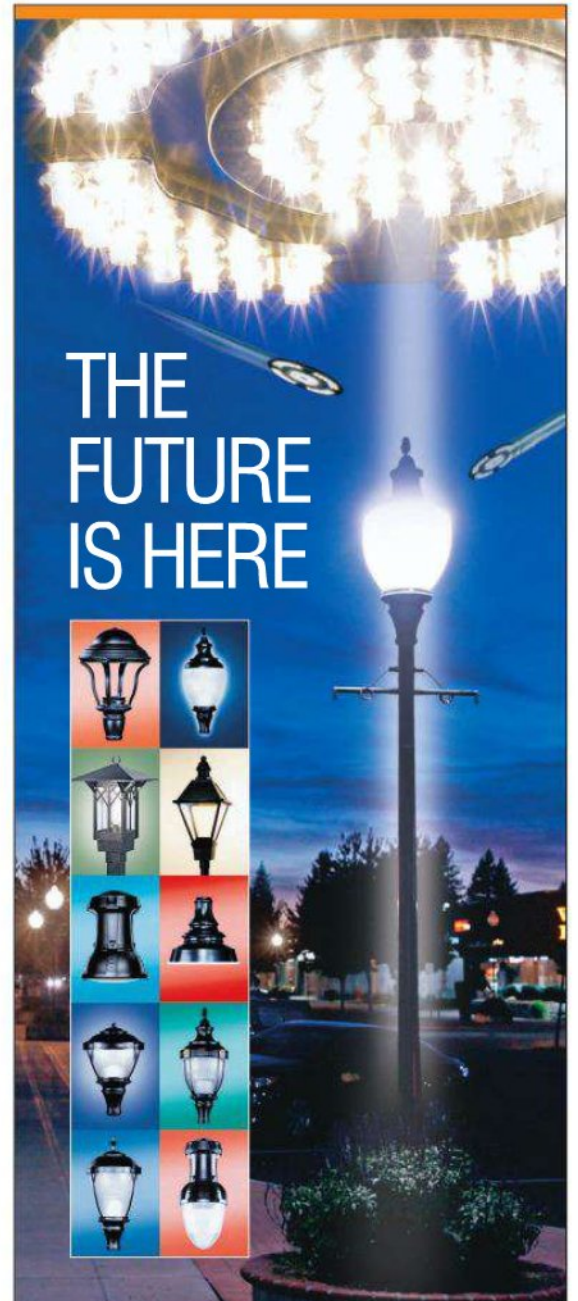
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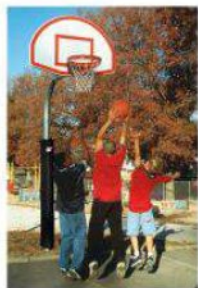
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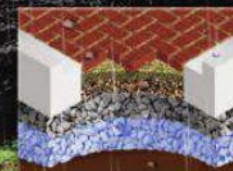
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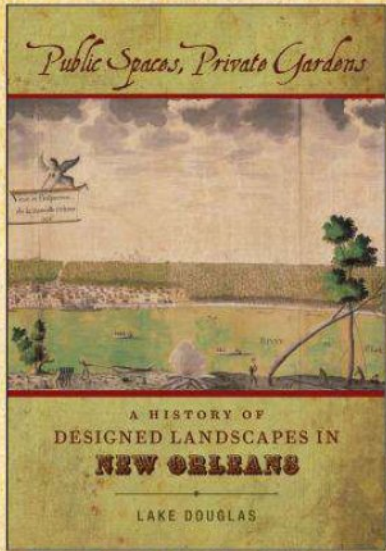
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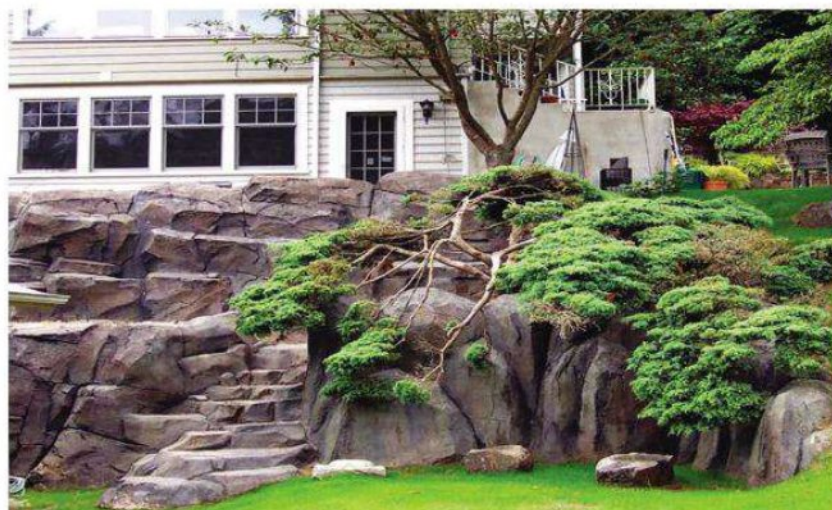
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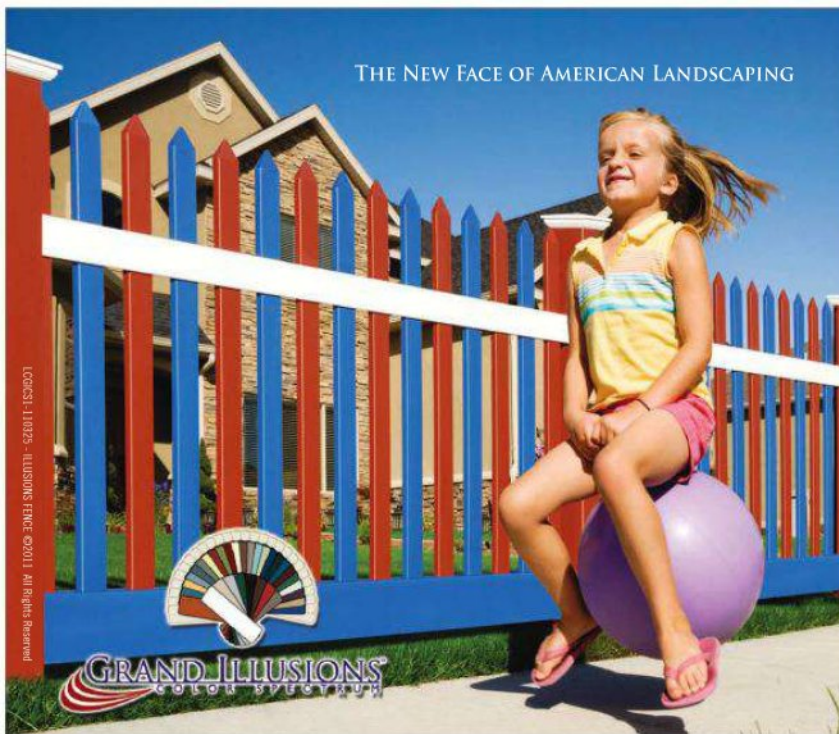
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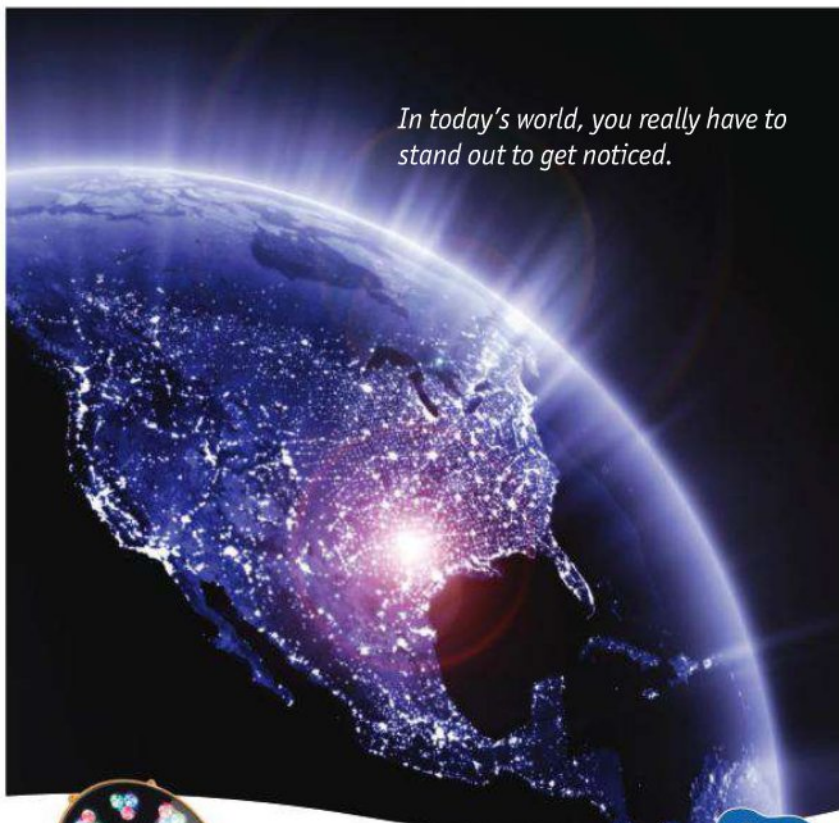
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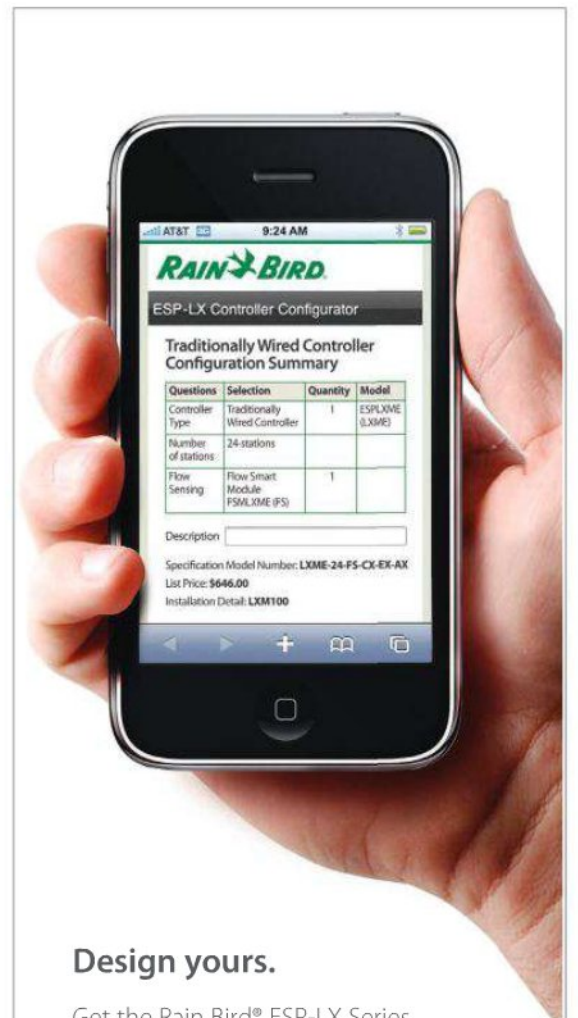


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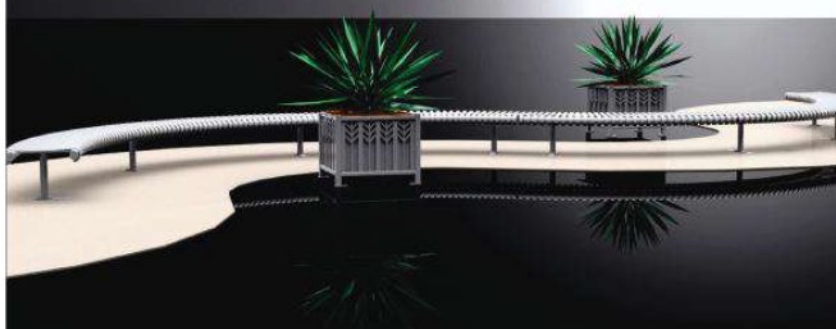
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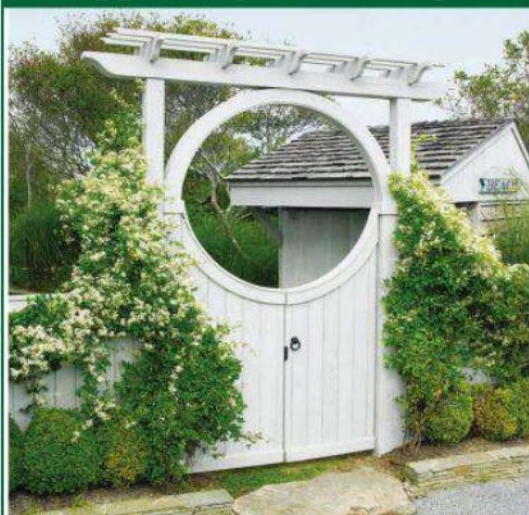


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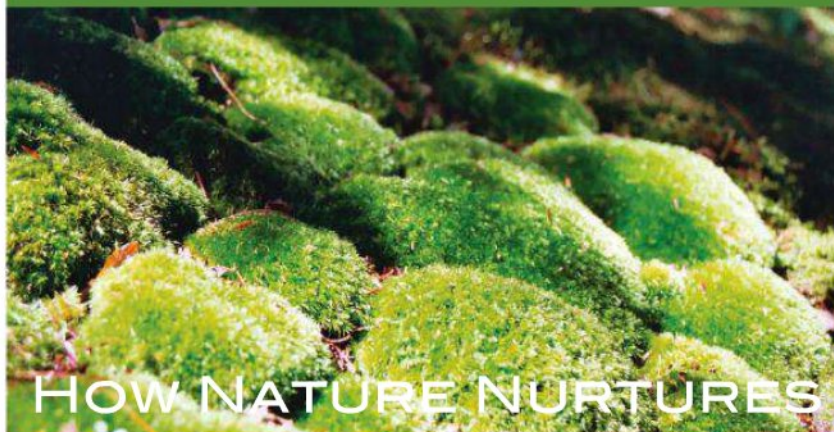
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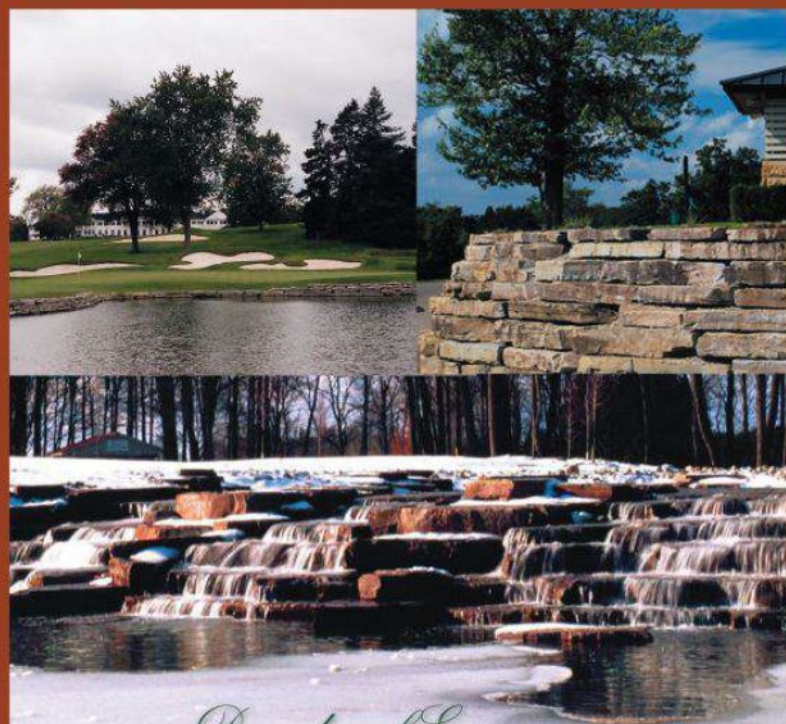
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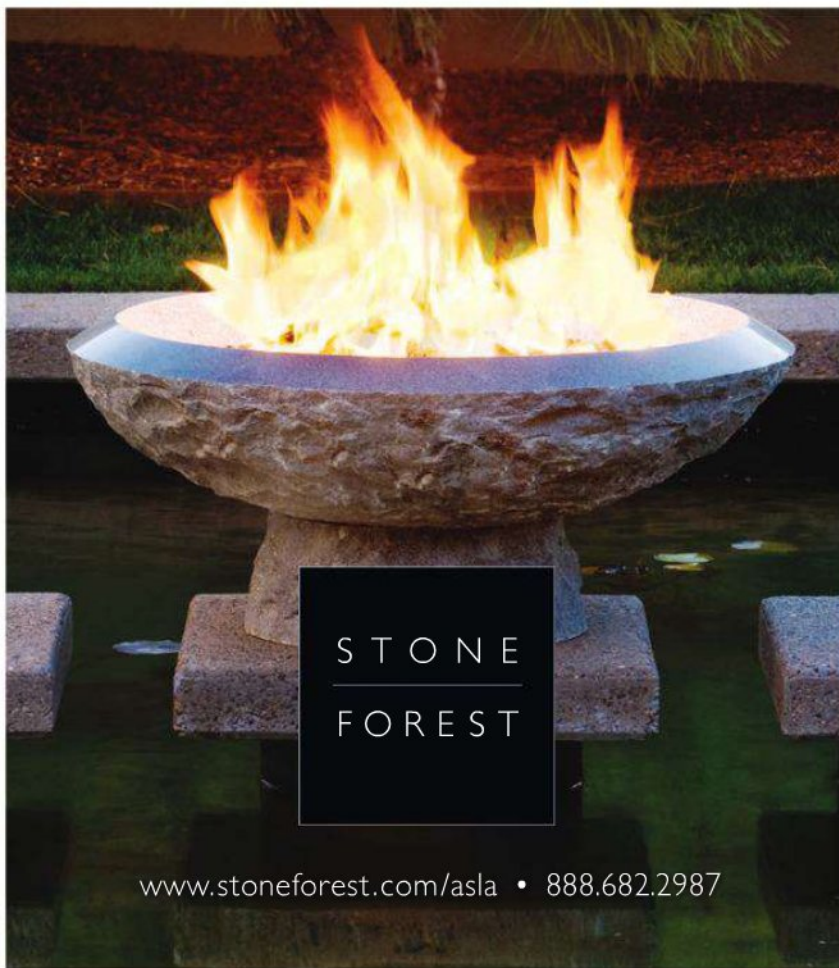
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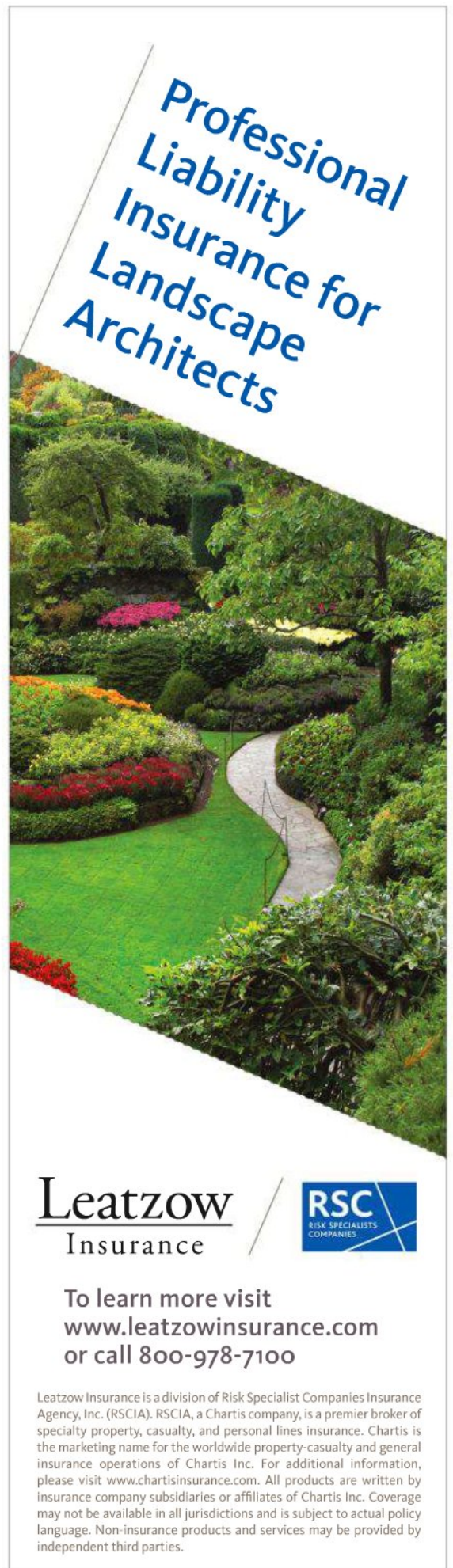


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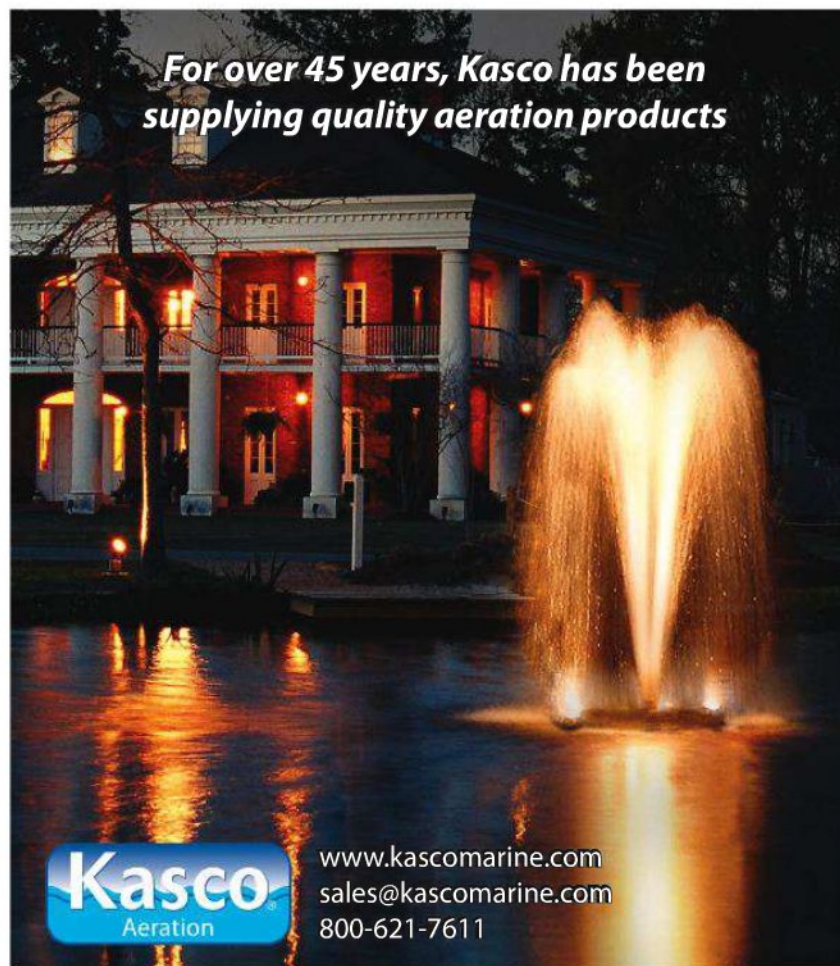
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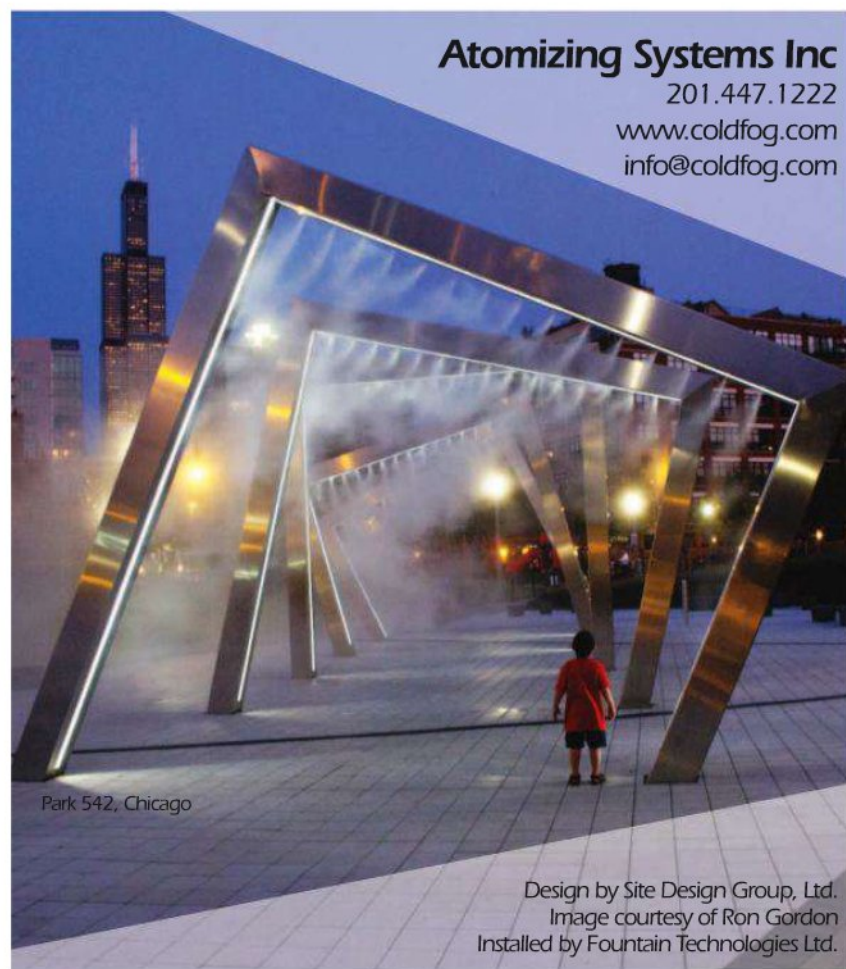
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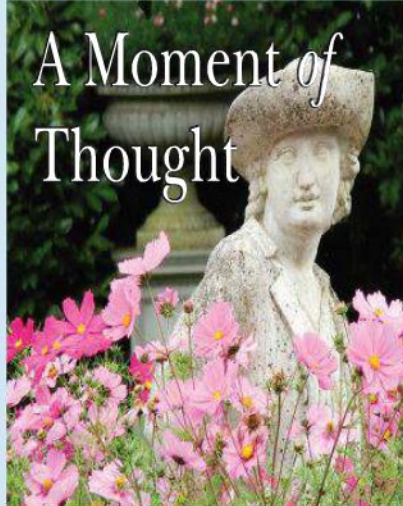
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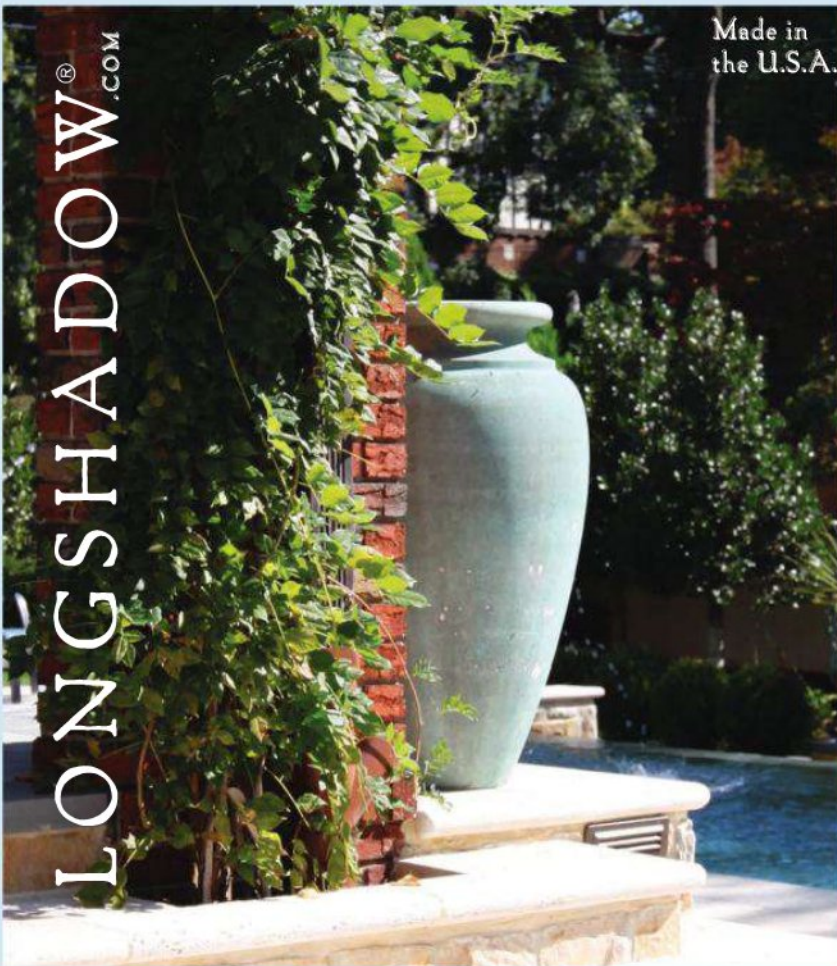
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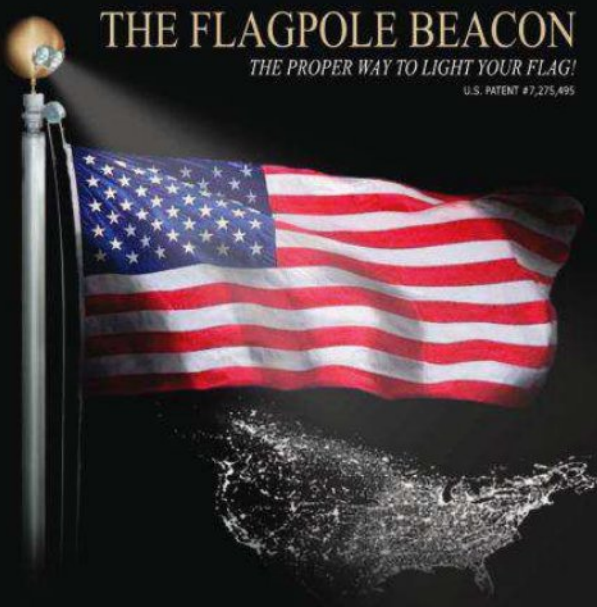
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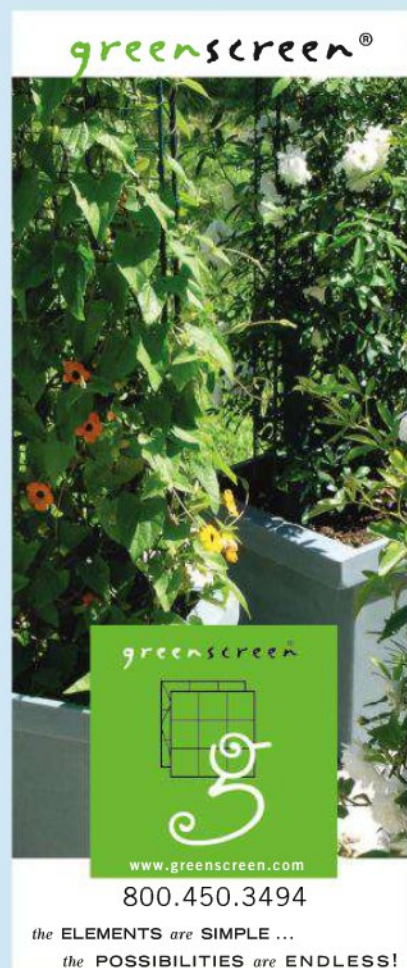
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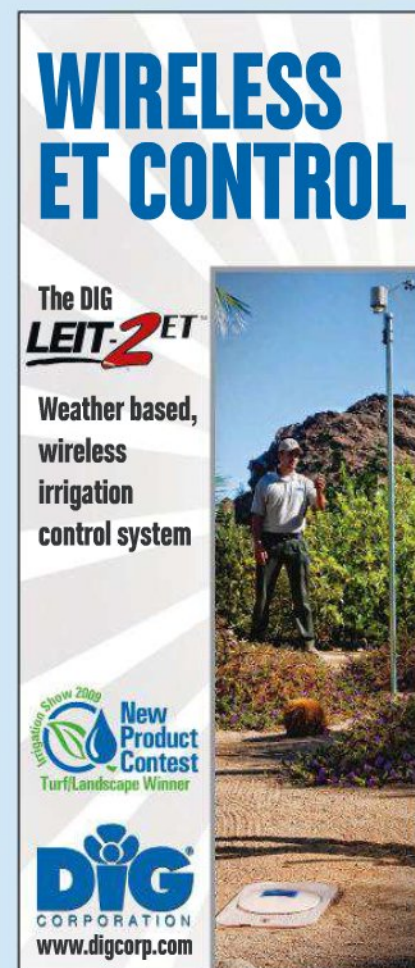


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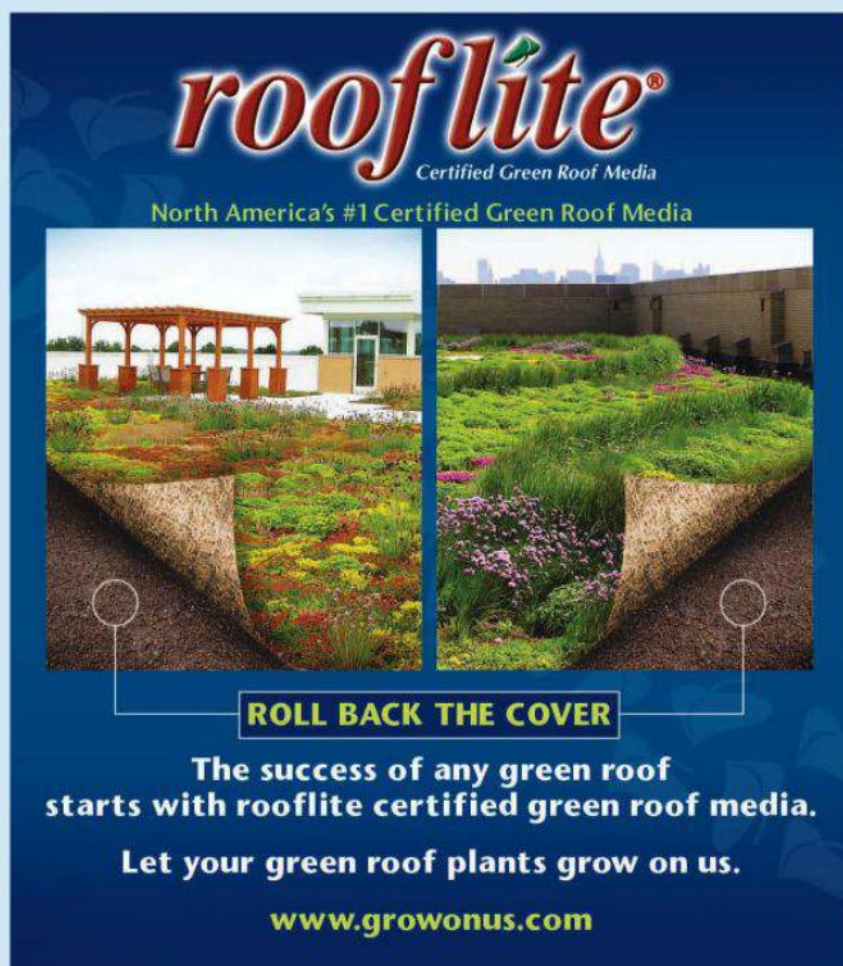
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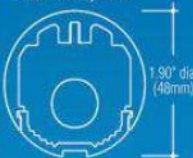
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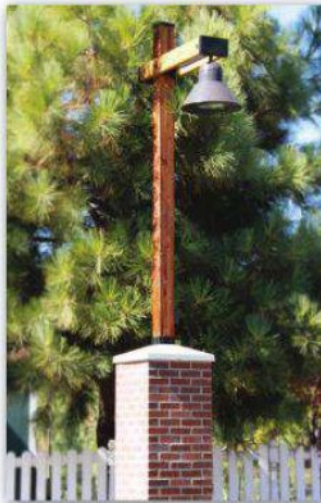
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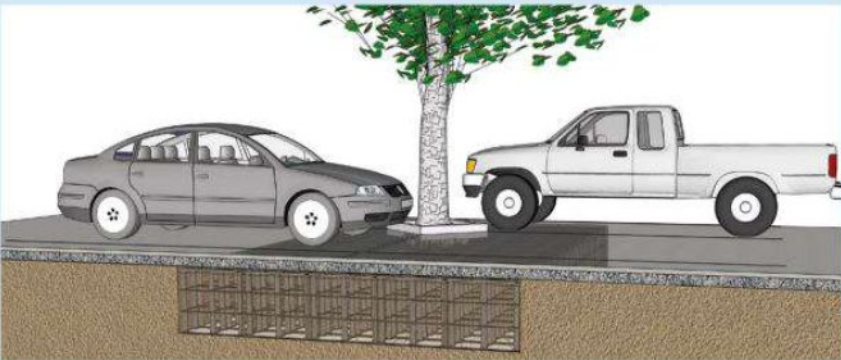


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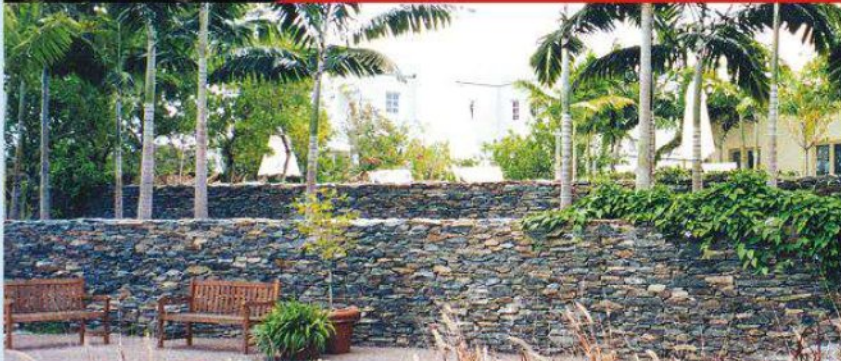
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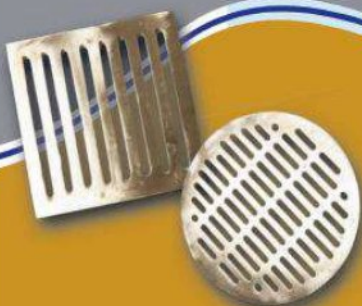
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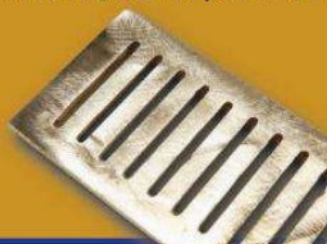
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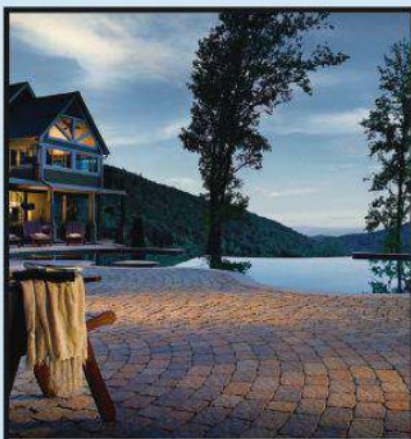
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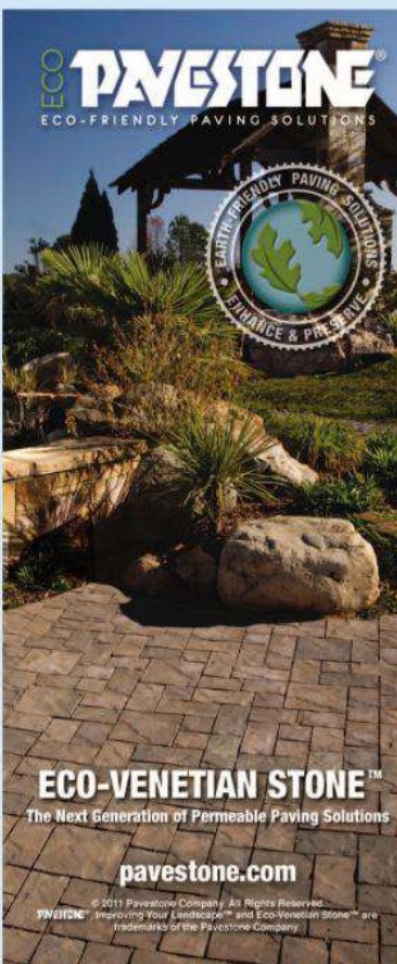
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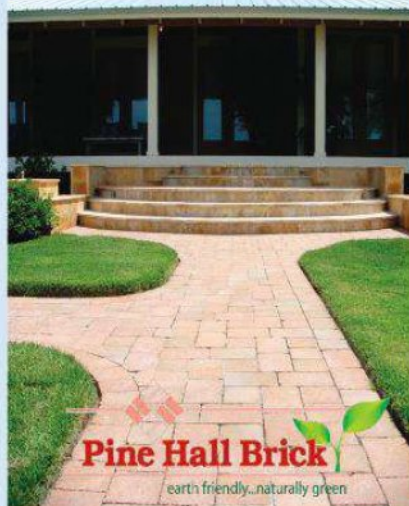
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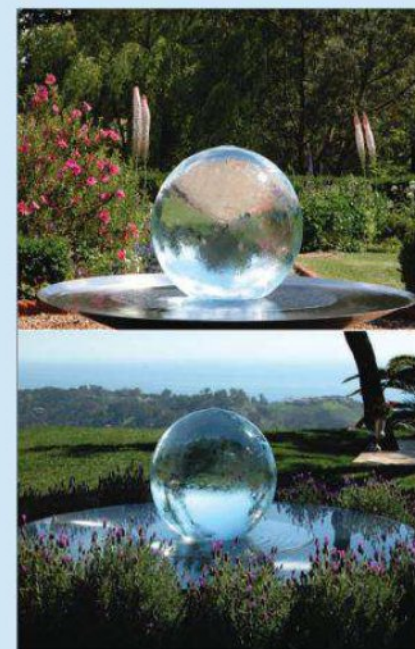
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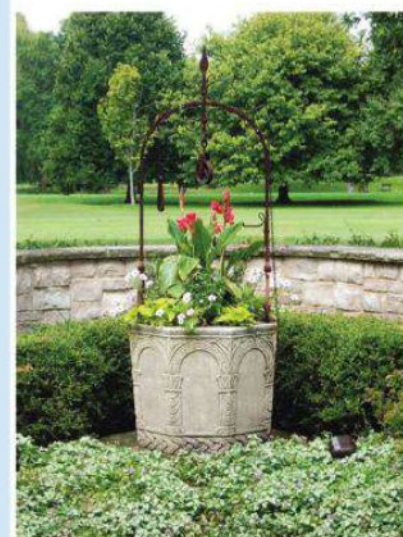


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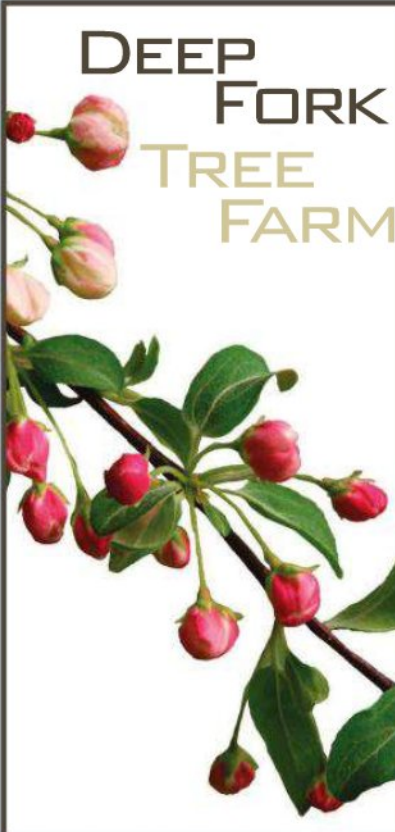
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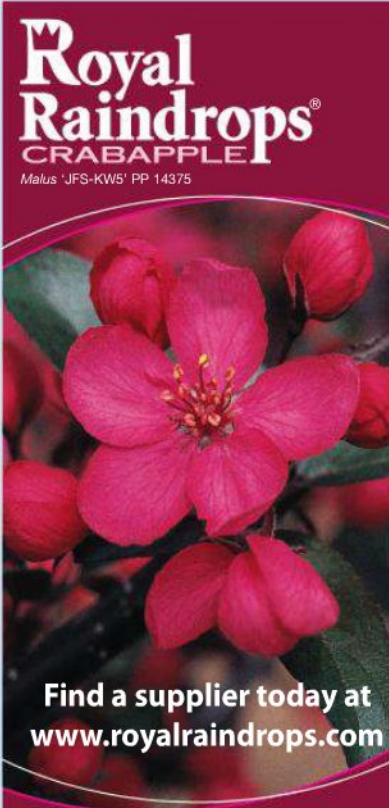


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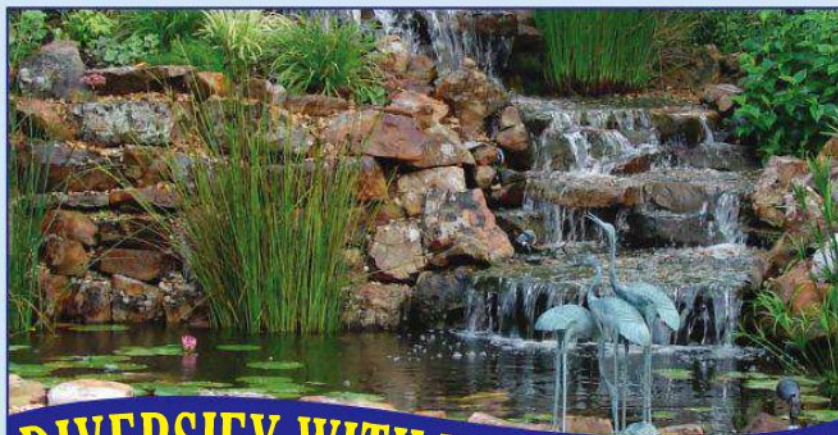
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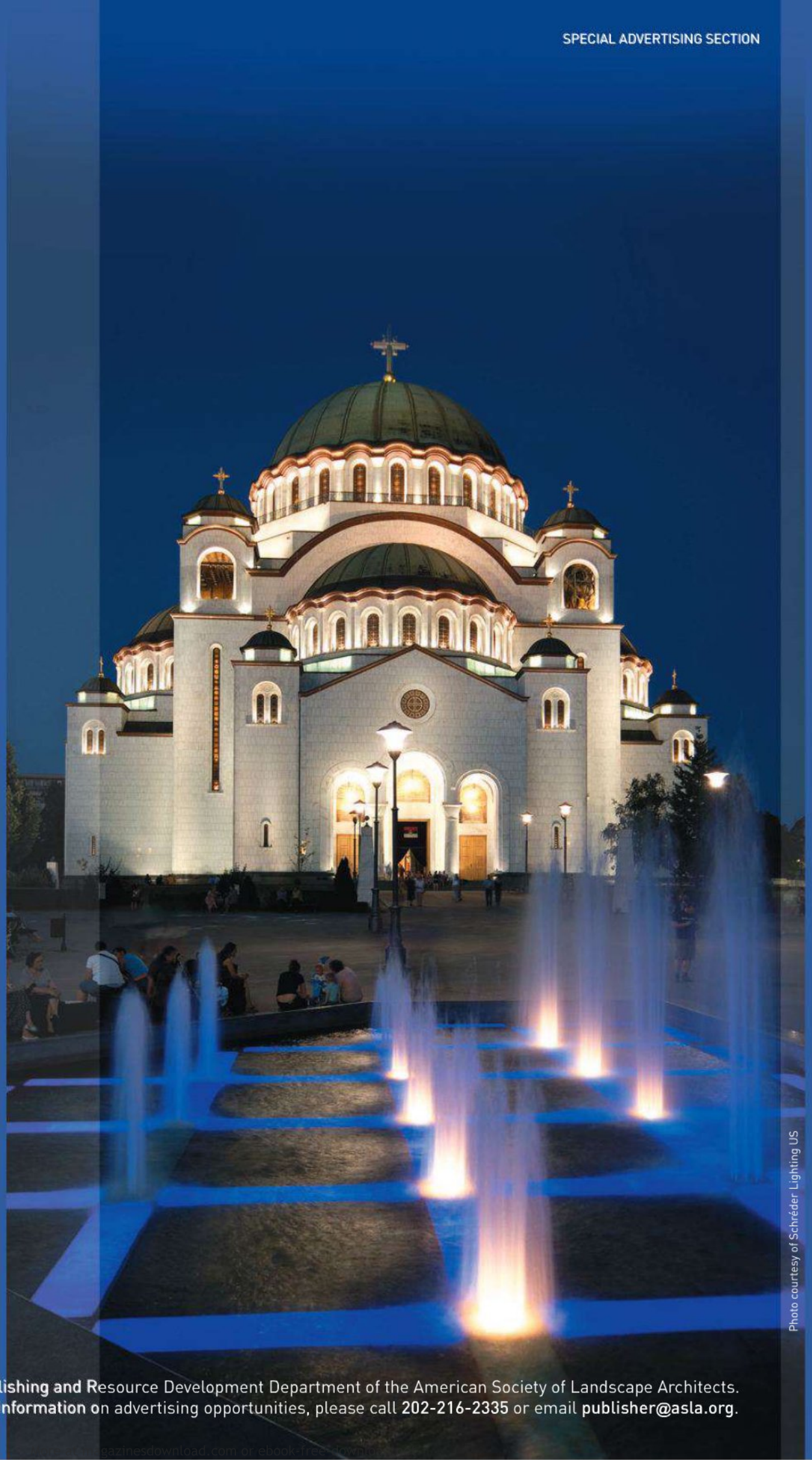


Photo courtesy of Schröder Lighting US

Creating the Landscape for Outdoor Lighting

Modern Luminaires provide Style, Security, and Energy Savings

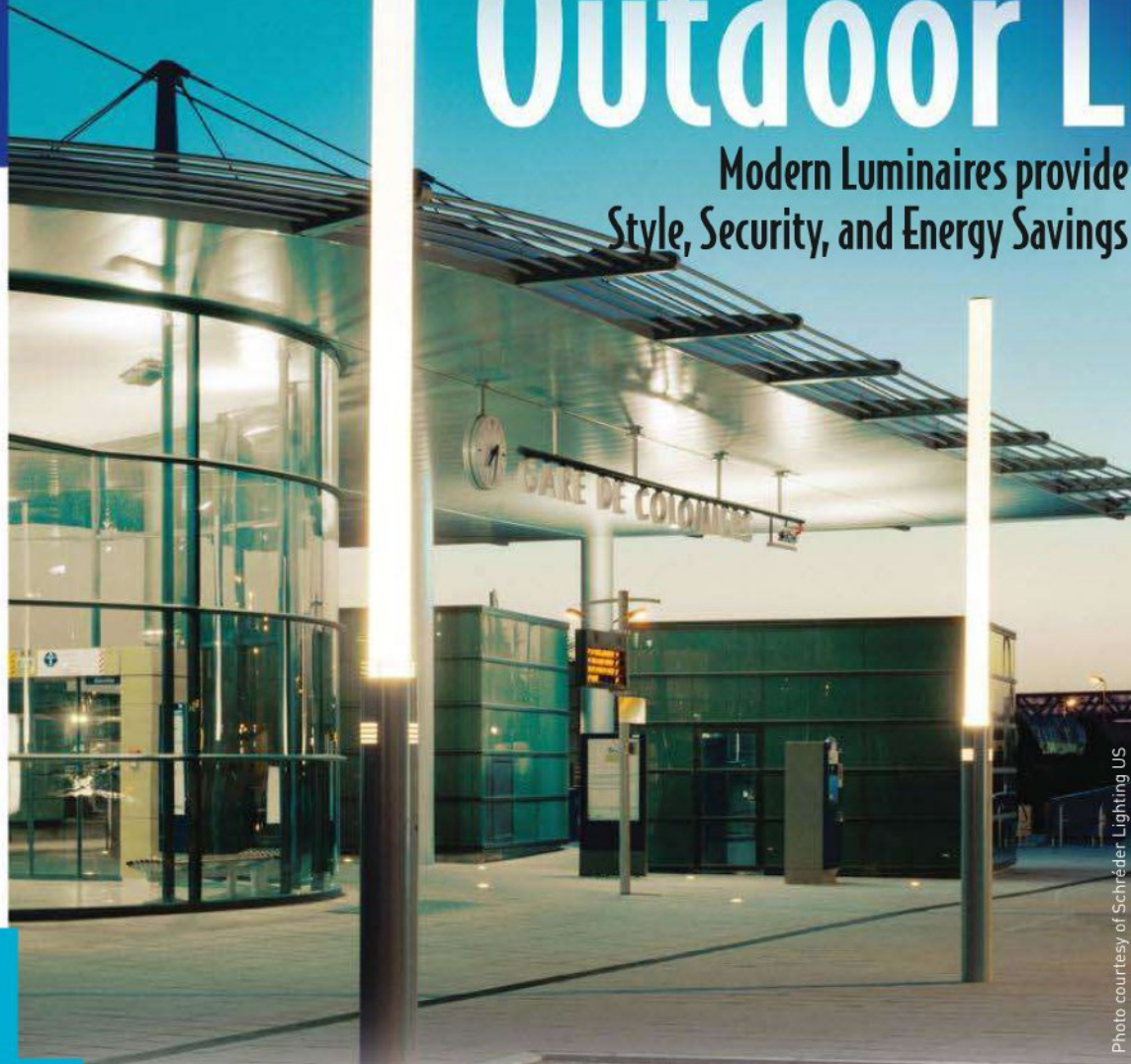


Photo courtesy of Schröder Lighting US

Landscape architects, lighting designers, electrical contractors, end users, and consumers have come to demand outdoor lighting that features a higher level of aesthetics, performance, and energy efficiency. To meet these challenges, manufacturers have expanded their landscape lighting offerings for homes and public spaces with impressive architectural designs and advanced technology.

Extraordinary outdoor lighting systems have evolved over the years, with new designs that accentuate the style, drama, and beauty of a landscape while creating a warm, welcoming atmosphere. Effective landscape lighting transforms curb appeal, expands living space, and delivers effective outdoor illumination of private gardens or public landscapes that results in nighttime safety, security, and public accessibility. Originally designed for utilitarian tasks, outdoor lighting provides much-needed security by deterring thieves, vandals, and other criminals, as well as nocturnal animals, from trespassing on residential and commercial properties.

A fine-tuned illuminated home, public space, or commercial environment is safer, more secure, and helps prevent after-dark accidents. State-of-the-art luminaires have increased public safety and reduced crime and fear by transforming the collective psychology of citizens living and working in urban, suburban, and other public areas.

High performance, durability, and high quality play a key role in landscape lighting. Lighting fixtures are engineered to endure and perform in Mother Nature's precarious and volatile conditions—from wind, rain, and sleet to snow, blistering heat, and freezing cold. Superior durability, lifetime resistance from the ingress of water, dirt, dust, and other elements, and the ability to deliver consistent, robust task lighting are essentials for effective, high-performance landscape luminaires.

Your lighting supplier should offer strong expertise, experience, and extensive research and development resources to custom design landscape lighting, whether the fixtures are

designed for residential, commercial, or urban environments. Nighttime lighting entails a creative and professional approach to illuminate public spaces such as paths and trails, pedestrian walkways and bike routes, parks, playgrounds, roads, statues and water fountains, building facades, architectural accents, stairways and benches, and college and corporate campuses. Landscape lighting may showcase a residential exterior and property after dark by creating dramatic highlights on trees, accenting bushes and shrubbery, as well as illuminating backyards, driveways, patios, decks, and swimming pool areas.

Landscape lighting includes a broad range of luminaires, available with pole or wall mounts; luminous bollards (luminaires mounted onto posts or piers); floodlights; wide-angle spotlights (narrow beam); and inground uplights. Modern luminaires deliver higher levels of light than older generations while minimizing energy and maintenance costs. On the residential side, successful landscape lighting is established with unobtrusive fixtures that create desirable effects without necessarily using an attractive fixture design (e.g., inground recessed luminaires, step lights).

Commercial landscape lighting is usually specified during a public layout or building plan prior to construction, while residential lighting is usually installed after home construction and landscape design.

For areas where crime is an issue, the robust construction of the luminaires' IP66-rated (International Protection rating offering total protection from dust ingress and high-pressure water jets from any direction) optical units have dramatically reduced the crime rate, as well as significantly lowering maintenance and energy costs. The high level of optical efficiency of modern reflectors has reduced the number of lighting fixtures needed to illuminate any given area. Micro reflectors are designed for high efficiency, energy savings, and precision beam control to reduce glare. State-of-the-art photometric performance, light distribution uniformity, outstanding color rendition, and

"Outdoor lighting can be both functional and aesthetic. It's an art to understand how much light to place on a house or determine where the focal points are."

— Joe Rey-Barreau, Consulting Director of Education
American Lighting Association

strong light output are integrated into the luminaire design to create an optimal visual comfort.

Although many suppliers are importing fixtures that require long lead times, look for companies that are able to produce outdoor lighting in state-of-the-art manufacturing facilities here in the United States. These suppliers offer quick-ship programs that offer fixtures to be ordered and shipped within a 48-hour period.



Photo courtesy of Schröder Lighting US

Contemporary luminaires achieve dark sky-friendly distribution with high-performance reflectors and a tempered flat glass lens. Dark sky-friendly optics comply with lighting intrusion laws, offering full cutoff photometry with a flat lens to reduce glare while asymmetric distribution controls back light from the fixture. The right light is achieved with optimal "point source" lamp positioning inside optical units while illuminating the installation's parameters, without lighting pollution and spillage into windows of residential homes.

Landscape lighting has been upgraded with the latest modern and contemporary sleek aesthetics, as well as a broad range of bracket and pole options. Depending on the geography and inherent weather conditions, outdoor fixtures may need highly durable finishes. UV- and salt spray-resistant and humidity-proofed finishes are available, in accordance with industry standards.

"The challenge with landscape lighting is that most people don't immediately see all the possibilities," says Joe Rey-Barreau, American

Lighting Association Consulting Director of Education and director of the Lighting and Design Center at the University of Kentucky. "Outdoor lighting can be both functional and aesthetic. It's an art to understand how much light to place on a house or determine where the focal points are."

In addition to the lighting fixtures, today's light bulbs and lamping technology have improved greatly. Many outdoor luminaires operate with energy-efficient LEDs (light emitting diodes) that use much less energy and cost much less while lasting 20 to 30 times longer—up to 50,000 hours. A valid alternative to traditional light sources, LEDs produce no UV radiation and very little heat; they light and dim easily, operate silently, and are used with low-voltage power supplies for increased safety.

Other landscape lighting fixtures are now designed to use other energy-efficient lamping alternatives such as metal halide and compact fluorescent lamps. In addition to lamps, today's luminaires have been designed with other efficiencies including optimal thermal and optical management. All landscape lighting fixtures should be UL (Underwriters Laboratories) listed for wet locations. Listings for damp locations include lighting under covered porches and in kitchens and baths.

For intriguing landscape applications, specifiers may integrate a variety of luminaire styles to create a dramatic design statement. A vast array of louvers and lamps shields is also available to create different visual and decorative looks.

For larger outdoor lighting applications, such as corporate campuses or college campuses, telemanagement systems use open technologies and secured connections for monitoring, controlling, metering, and managing outdoor lighting. These systems save energy, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve outdoor lighting reliability, and lower maintenance costs. Individual fixtures can be switched on or off or dimmed at any time. Operating status, energy consumption, and possible failures are reported and stored in a database with exact time stamp and geographical location.

The lighting plan should be designed to adapt to the changing environment as new landscaping grows with plants and trees, or cityscapes change with new retailers. Fixtures should

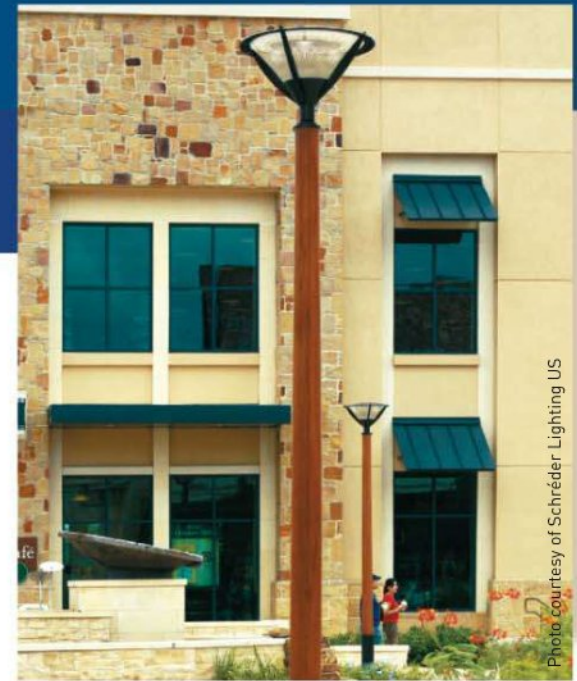


Photo courtesy of Schröder Lighting US

be strategically placed to allow for growth and change within each and every type of environment.

Professional specialty landscape lighting or electrical contracting companies specializing in landscape lighting will install, design, and maintain outdoor lighting effectively for private or public properties. These professionals are responsible for relamping, cleaning lenses, maintaining the landscape to ensure effective lighting, adjusting fixture positioning, and managing the electrical systems.

A reputable supplier will recommend luminaires and lighting techniques that enhance the property's landscape as well as deliver the security and task lighting solutions required. Energy savings, quality, durability, and aesthetics are all crucial issues that should be considered to create an effective landscape lighting plan.



John Camp is the general manager of Schröder Lighting US, a member of the Schröder Group G.I.E. located in 36 countries on four continents. Before joining Schröder, he worked for W.A.C. Lighting/W2 Architectural Lighting and was president of Light Lines Inc. and a partner at DHC Associates, both commercial lighting sales agencies. He has an Executive MBA from the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania.

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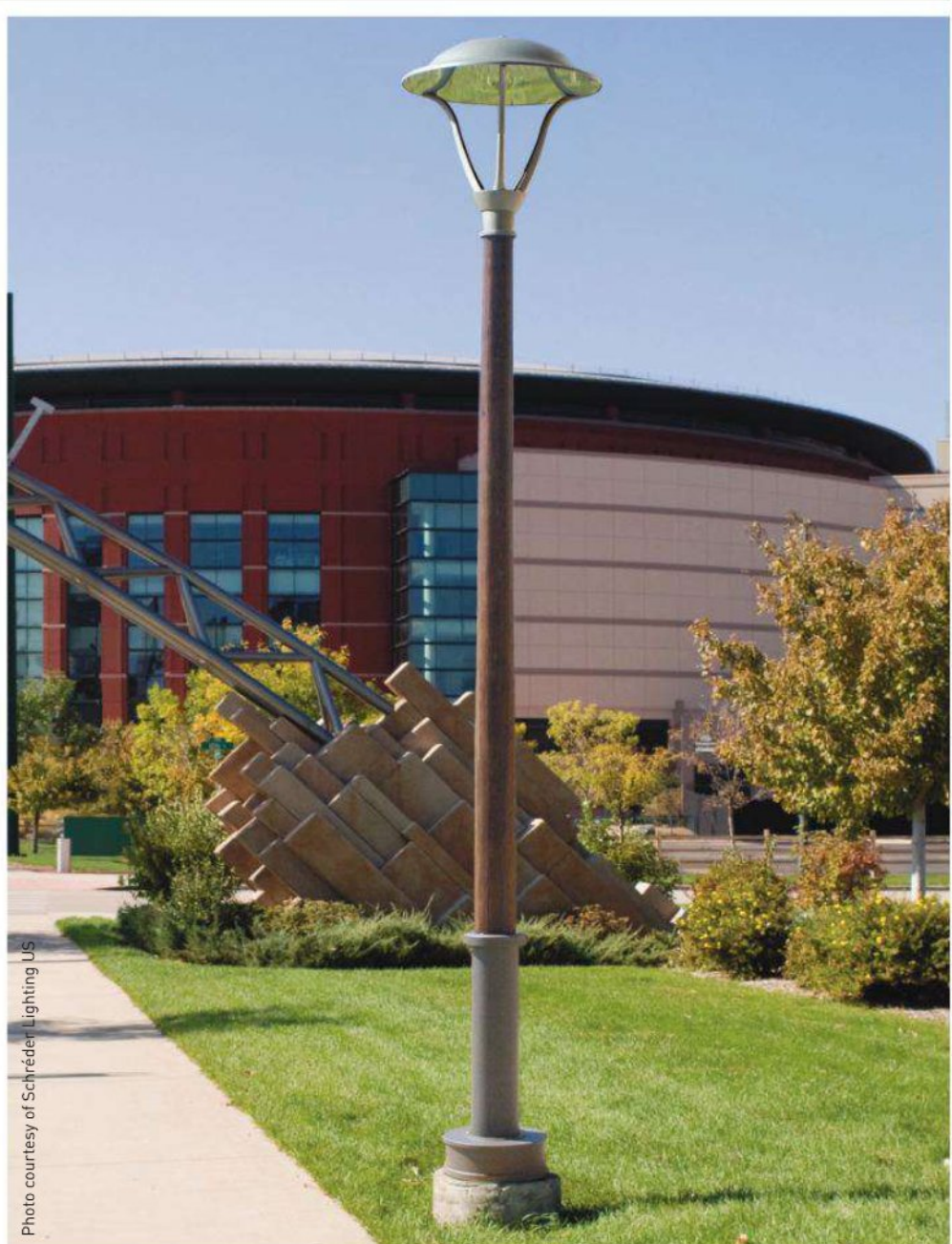


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THE GROUNDWORK AHEAD

BY DONNA F. EDWARDS

President Obama called on Congress to help generate 80 percent of our energy use through clean energy sources by 2035, invest significantly in our nation's crumbling infrastructure, and expand innovation through research and development. These are the right priorities for Congress and the American people. These priorities offer a significant chance to create jobs and grow our economy in the short term while also laying the foundation for long-term economic development and global competitiveness in the coming decades. The American people simply can no longer afford an outdated energy policy with 85 percent of our energy consumption coming from fossil fuels, an infrastructure system graded as a "D" by American engineers, and a research and development tax credit that ranks 17th in the world and that does little to promote innovation and domestic manufacturing. We must do better.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE CAN REDUCE OUR ENERGY CONSUMPTION, CREATE JOBS, AND PROMOTE ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP AND LONG-TERM ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

One platform presents President Obama and Congress with an opportunity to address all three of these initiatives: green infrastructure—using the natural environment for clean water, flood control, and stormwater management. Green infrastructure can reduce our energy consumption, create jobs, and promote environmental stewardship and long-term economic development. The evidence confirms this conclusion. In my own congressional district, Maryland's 4th, Edmonston, Maryland, secured federal funds to incorporate green infrastructure techniques into the city's main street. The funds brought good jobs, sustainable flood control, low-cost LED streetlights, and quality of life improvements to the residents of Edmonston. In California, the Sun Valley Watershed is an alternative to a \$42 million concrete drain intended to eliminate flooding in the Sun Valley. With funding from 20 state and federal agencies, the multipurpose project returned \$100 million in savings in recaptured water, cleaner air, and reduced waste hauling.

We know there are tangible benefits to investing in green infrastructure, but more must be done to learn about the best green infrastructure practices and to create incentives for future projects. That is why I am championing the Green Infrastructure for

Clean Water Act, which I plan to introduce in May. This legislation would establish up to five regional centers for studying green infrastructure in the United States. The centers would be charged with conducting research on green infrastructure relevant to the geographic region where the center is located. Communities would receive training and technical assistance on how to implement the best green infrastructure management practices. To move forward, we must assess the broad, positive implications of green infrastructure and low-impact development. We know different regions will require nuanced policies. My legislation will be instrumental in developing those policies and ensuring that projects maximize the benefits for communities.

The bill would also create funding incentives to help communities develop green infrastructure technologies and would require the Environmental Protection Agency to examine how green infrastructure approaches can be incorporated into clean water programs. Investments in infrastructure, innovation through research and development, and clean energy use—these are priorities that President Obama has set for the 112th Congress, and these are the priorities captured in my legislation.

The United States stands at an important moment in its history. Right now, China is implementing a \$100 billion infrastructure investment plan, the European Union is investing €4 billion in its space agency, and Brazil is overhauling its tax code to streamline investments, particularly in education. The United States cannot afford to fall behind these countries and become less competitive in the global marketplace.

Some of my colleagues are busy implementing a "cut-grow" strategy they believe will reduce economic burdens for future generations. They miss a key point. Our deficit is increased not only when we borrow money, but when we fail to make much-needed investments in our future. If we do not make critical investments now in infrastructure, innovation, and education, we burden future generations of Americans. Government must play a role in improving our economic competitiveness. Green infrastructure is a great place to invest, and I look forward to pursuing it vigorously in the 112th Congress. ●

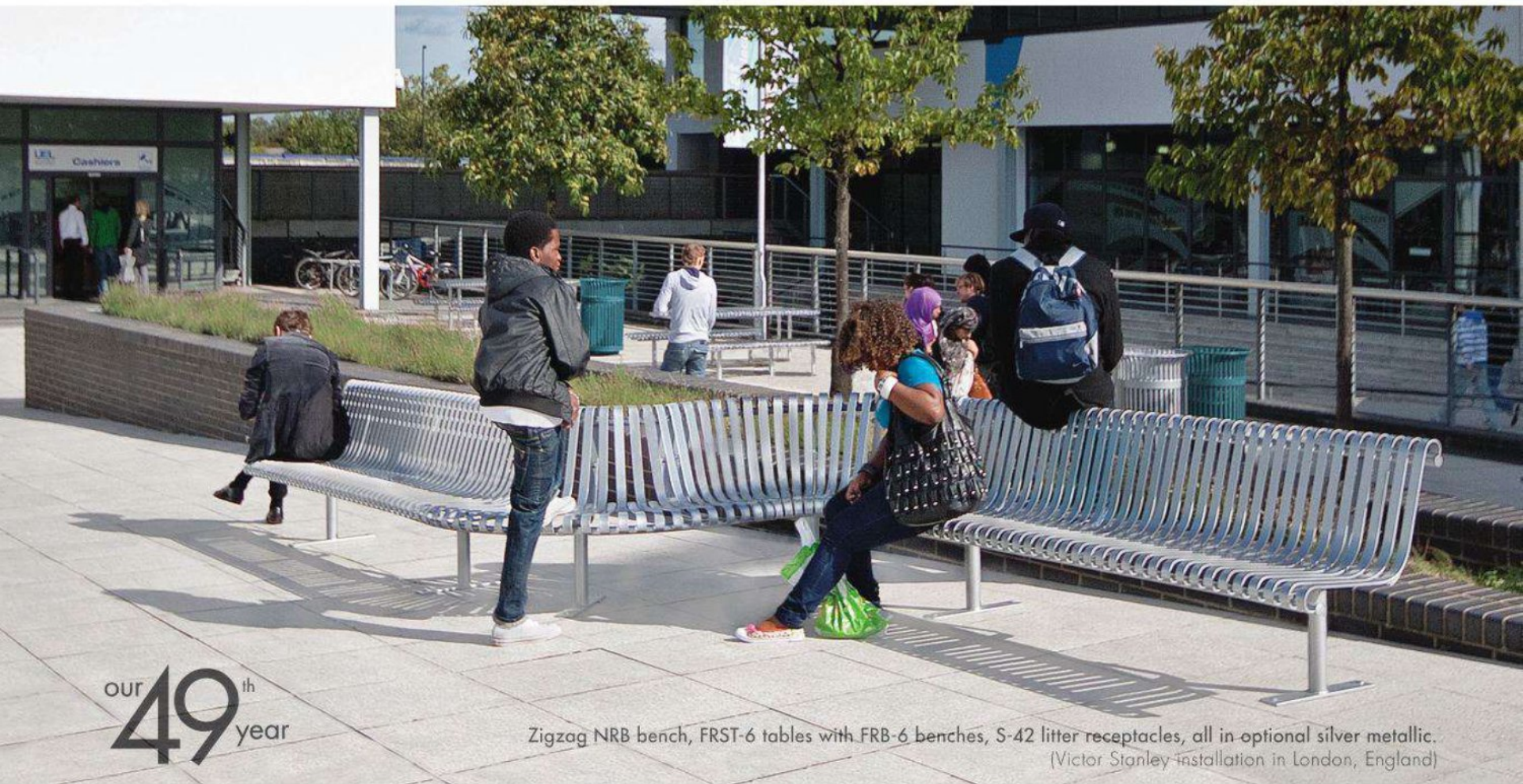
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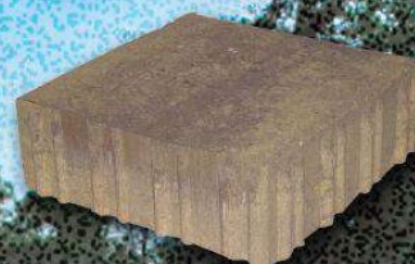
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