

## **PS31 Change, Time, and Designed Landscapes**

12:30 - 2:40pm Friday, 16th April, 2021

Category Paper Session - Track 8

Session Chair(s) Marc Treib

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12:35 - 12:55pm

### **An Olmsted Park into the 21st Century: Lake Park a Case Study**

Chris Szczesny Adams

Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design, USA

#### **Abstract**

In the late nineteenth century, Milwaukee was poised to take its place as one of the most prominent cities in the United States. Its position was supported by its geographic location, transportation opportunities, burgeoning population, cosmopolitan architecture, manufacturing prowess, and socialist tendencies. Concerning the latter topic, in 1889 the Parks Commission of the City of Milwaukee was founded, purchased lands, and hired the Olmsted firm to create three parks including the city's premier Lake Park. Overlooking Lake Michigan this 138-acre park extends on a bluff three miles north of downtown and continues to serve as a gathering place for Milwaukeeans into the twenty-first century. This has been evident during COVID-19 – “safer-at-home” with the park providing a solace for the community. Yet, what is experienced in the park today showcases how the landscape has transitioned through both natural and human influences that are expressed clearly in its current form and its preceding historical layers. It is through an unpacking of these layers that an understanding of the connections between nature, design, government, community, and the public can be gained. From its original inception the park has undergone nearly continual change through expansion, revision, neglect, human restoration, and natural evolution. This talk will frame the current landscape in the park within its historical context addressing: invasive species, bluff erosion, deferred maintenance, controversial closure of the concrete footbridge, innovative public-private enterprise of the pavilion, and restoration efforts from the non-profit community group within the scope of continually decreased funding from the local government. As a case study, Lake Park embodies the concept of designed landscapes over time expressing key historical changes through the built and natural environment.

#### **Categories**

Designed Landscapes through Time

12:55 - 1:15pm

## **Navigating the Illusive landscapes of Parisian Suburbs**

Pari Riahi

University of Massachusetts Amherst, USA

### **Abstract**

This project examines the shifting landscapes at the foot of social housing projects in Parisian suburbs nominally labeled as 'green' and 'public spaces'. Some of these large-scale social housing projects which were conceived to offer affordable housing to a sizable population from the interwar period to the early 90s, created landscapes that were as monumental in their appearance as were the architecture. Focusing on Emille Aillaud (1902-1988) and Renée Gaillhoustet (b. 1929), as two architects whose work exhibit compelling and at times contradictory visions for landscape as an integral part of their design projects, this paper investigates three projects and their evolution to the present time. The projects are: the Cité de l'Abreuvoir in Bobigny, (early seventies), and the Tours Aillaud, built at the edge of La Défense (late eighties) by Aillaud, and *La Maladrerie* by Gaillhoustet in Aubervilliers (early nineties). While the three shared the objective of offering a harmonious collective life, the passage of time has counteracted on them very differently. The pressure of socio-cultural, political and economic complexities of French welfare and immigration policies have turned these landscapes into terrains upon which inequity, segregation, conflict, and violence unfold. Left on their own to counteract these complex vectors, these landscapes have turned into voids that defy publicness. The paper analyzes these projects trajectory in time and interprets these hollowed out landscapes by understanding them as part of a complex built environment. Identifying passage, lingering and play as the three types of public activity to unfold in those spaces, the paper identifies the elements that were intended to support such actions and their change over time. Looking into thresholds, platforms, surfaces, and apertures, in the immediate context of these projects and their complex material and tectonic juxtapositions, the paper offers a reading of these complex landscapes in their history, their potential and their altered life.

### **Categories**

Designed Landscapes through Time

1:15 - 1:35pm

## **The Designed Landscapes of the Black Freedom Movement in Watts, Los Angeles**

Charlotte Leib

Yale University, USA

### **Abstract**

When the urban planner Kevin Lynch published *What Time Is This Place?* in 1972, following the social unrest of the 1960's, he sought to augur an alternative future in which the spatial environment would be understood and activated as a temporal, communicative medium and portent of change. In the book, he argued that in areas where development had stalled, incremental landscape improvements—such as the planting of trees and the conversion of vacant lots into parks—could serve to generate hope and further action. Yet in presenting these ideas, Lynch neglected to mention two key facts: that Black communities were already advancing similar strategies in an effort to ensure their future existence; and that he had seen these strategies in action while working for the City of Los Angeles. Lynch's oversight is representative of a broader tendency that this paper seeks to redress: the chronic omission of Black perspectives from narratives of landscape change.

This paper foregrounds the ways in which Black activists leveraged landscape as a medium of expression and empowerment in the wake of the 1965 Watts uprising and uses historical mapping techniques to illustrate the scope and long-term impact of their work. Specifically, it traces the evolution of three designed landscapes: a community farm established in 1968 on a power line right-of-way; a network of pocket parks created in collaboration with the architecture firm Smith & Williams; and the neighborhood's urban canopy, which was expanded significantly through a community-led tree-planting program initiated in 1967. In tracing the ways these landscapes have transformed, the paper highlights the myriad factors that have contributed to their varied endurance and upkeep, and furthermore argues that the landscapes themselves can be read as symbols of the historic and ongoing struggle for Black Freedom.

### **Categories**

Designed Landscapes through Time

1:35 - 1:55pm

## **The Enduringly Pleasing Pastoral: Corporate Estates in Obsolescence**

Louise Mozingo

University of California, Berkeley, USA

### **Abstract**

Beginning in the 1950s American businesses built large, lavish suburban headquarters sited within hundreds of acres of precisely articulated pastoral landscapes. By the 1990s these sites began to be abandoned under the force of corporate restructuring, the waning hegemony of American enterprises in the face of globalization, and an urban turn in elite taste. Some of the largest and most celebrated landscape designs of the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century—Connecticut General Life Insurance Company (1956), American Can (1971), Union Carbide (1982), TRW (1986), and Weyerhaeuser headquarters(1971)—have undergone an array of modifications ranging from grudging preservation to abrupt parceling for a variety of uses.

While parallels between suburban headquarters and aristocratic estates are easily drawn as manifestations of elite power expressed through landscape design, their ongoing legacy is quite different. The public regard for the headquarters' landscape varies, depending on the visual and physical accessibility of the sites by the surrounding communities. The subdividing of Connecticut General in Bloomfield, Connecticut, long open to casual visitors, produced more local outcry about the loss of open space than the possible destruction of a modernist landmark. The unbreakable development covenants and the incentive of a generous subsidy from the state government forced the local Greenwich, Connecticut authorities to protect American Can's private woodland site, which locals prized as a visual benchmark of the regional woodland landscape. The fate of the 1600 acre Weyerhaeuser headquarters outside Tacoma, Washington, bought by a property developer in 2016 whose proposals includes a variety of warehousing and industrial uses, has generated the formation of the advocacy group, "Save Weyerhaeuser Campus." Ultimately, aristocratic estates carry a national historical narrative, however cleansed of harsh political realities, while the corporate estates generate a localized interest in preserving the pastoral landscape, with its many positive popular associations.

### **Categories**

Designed Landscapes through Time

1:55 - 2:15pm

## **The Future of a Civic Landscape. Santiago, Chile 2020s**

Romy Hecht

Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Chile

### **Abstract**

This project reflects on the imminent development of one of the landscape operations that have given identity to Chile's capital city since the 1870s: Parque Forestal, the extended linear park to enhance the channelization of the Mapocho River and transform the main watercourse's wasted riverbeds into a dense, lush and large-scale growth of trees resembling a forest.

The cultural transformation that Parque Forestal brought to Santiago, with trees displaying a connection between utility and beauty, sustenance and the representation of an independent nation must be nurtured in order to ensure future advances, especially when considering that, to this day is a focal point of ongoing proposals. Furthermore, since October 2019 the so-called Plaza Baquedano, where Parque Forestal converge, has turned into the epicenter of massive protests, only stopped by the coronavirus dispersal five months later.

The riots launched a seemingly endless cycle of despicable squander and feeble restoration attempts, with the park's trees standing as a living testimony of the events, highly debilitated in physiological and structural terms after suffering the burning of their branches and the defoliation of their canopies by the effects of water cannons. And the COVID pandemic has reinforced the need for even larger parks, capable to remain open while preventing the spread of diseases.

Thus, events like these have forced me to ask enduring questions: how to add contemporary and visible manifestations of social changes to landscapes without subtracting their former civic role? How to maintain visible their everlasting role as active living laboratories unfolding tree-planting initiatives relieving and uplifting the city from its arid geographic and political condition first, and from its social emptiness later?

### **Categories**

Designed Landscapes through Time