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VIEW

FROM THE LIBRARY OF AMERICAN LANDSCAPE HISTORY



VIEW FROM THE DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

Greetings! Once again we bring you news about LALH books and their impact on North American landscapes. We are very grateful to our contributors, whose numbers continue to increase. The LALH program is thriving because you are supporting our hard work. Thank you.

In January LALH opened a new office in the old Amherst Creamery, at the edge of one of Amherst's historic neighborhoods and a stone's throw from the Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning at the University of Massachusetts. We now have space for all our files, our expanding library of books, our interns, and our new staff members, Jane Roy Brown, Director of Educational Outreach, and Janet MacFadyen, Administrative and Research Assistant.

We have added new members to our boards, too. Mark Zelonis, Director of Oldfields, Indianapolis Museum of Art, has become an LALH Trustee. And Cornelia Hahn Oberlander, one of North America's most highly regarded landscape architects, has become an LALH Adviser. Welcome!

New Towns for Old by John Nolen, with a new introduction by Charles D. Warren, has just hit the bookstands. The early response to the new edition has been terrifically positive. As *Land Online*, the ASLA news digest, notes, "this very rare book's republication is already generating intense interest."

There are several exciting projects on the horizon. Former LALH boardmember Daniel J. Nadenicek is writing a book for our Designers and Places Series. Dan's forthcoming book is on Frederick Billings (1823–1890), a scientific farmer and forester and president of the Northern Pacific Railroad, whose Woodstock, Vermont, farm is now a National Park Service site. Another new project in the works is a revised and updated edition of Blanche M. G. Linden's award-winning *Silent City on a Hill*, the story of Mount Auburn, America's first rural cemetery, in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

This issue of *View* features a new LALH book about Henry Shaw, a Victorian gentleman who created a world-famous botanical garden in St. Louis in the mid-nineteenth century and then turned his horticultural skills (and his fortune) to making Tower Grove Park. Carol



View from LALH office, Amherst, Mass. Photograph by Carol Betsch

Grove's fascinating text is filled with insights—about "botanizing" and American culture, the role of plant hunters at the frontier, and the relationship between the gardenesque and the picturesque. Grove's book is also filled with wonderful photographs—old ones from the Missouri Botanical Garden archive and new ones by Carol Betsch.

Preservation profiles in this year's *View* bring you news of activities at the Missouri Botanical Garden and Tower Grove Park, the story of a Fletcher Steele garden in Milton, Massachusetts, recently saved from development, and the discovery of a Jens Jensen landscape in Indianapolis.

Thanks to our supporters, LALH continues to publish books that expand the field of American landscape history. Since 1992 we have been engaged in uncovering and recovering the careers of forgotten American landscape practitioners through scholarly, book-length studies—Fletcher Steele, Henry Shaw, Frederick Law Olmsted Jr., John Nolen, and Ellen Biddle Shipman, among them. With your help, we are achieving our mission—to educate and thereby encourage thoughtful stewardship of the land.

Sincerely,

Robin Karson
Executive Director



LALH Trustee Charles McLaughlin with Tupper Thomas, president, Prospect Park Alliance, and other LALH boardmembers and staff in Prospect Park, New York.

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Cover: Henry Shaw's house, seen through grove. Photograph by Carol Betsch.

Henry Shaw's Victorian Landscapes

By Carol Grove

The Englishman Henry Shaw saw little scenic value in the gently undulating parcel of Missouri prairie he purchased about 1842. To him, this land was a raw canvas, and he planned to use it as a setting for a remarkable display of plants, a botanical garden of greater size and scope than any other in the United States. Shaw believed that his garden would be beautiful, but his goal was loftier: cultivating the taste of his middle-class visitors and thereby elevating society. Shaw's other remarkable horticultural gift to his adopted city of St. Louis was Tower Grove Park, which he began in 1868. Both garden and park were intended to shape the lives of the citizenry of the town that had begun as a river port on the prairie.

Shaw was thirty-nine years old when he retired from business—importing precision instruments from his native Sheffield and conveying them north and west on the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers. He then began a decade of intermittent travel, to England, the



Portrait of Henry Shaw by Emil Herziger, 1859. Courtesy Missouri Botanical Garden Archives.

Continent, and Asia Minor, to educate his own middle-class tastes. Over the course of his travels, he collected beautiful objects; "he collected ideas as well," writes Carol Grove, author of the new LALH book *Henry Shaw's Victorian Landscapes*, "by means of firsthand experience, by communicating with people from other cultures, and by the acquisition of books for his personal library." Grove's text chronicles Shaw's visits—to museums, chapels, palaces, the waterfalls of Wales's Mt. Snowdon, and the crater of Vesuvius—and his return trips, when he visited the Royal Botanic Garden at Kew, the botanical garden at Glasgow, and Sheffield Botanic Garden. None left greater impressions than the new glasshouses at Chatsworth, the magnificent country estate of William Cavendish, and the Crystal Palace, the centerpiece of the London world's fair. Joseph Paxton's iron-and-glass structures were revolutionizing the culture of rare, tropical plants, and Shaw was determined to bring such wonders to St. Louis.

Shaw began planting his private garden about 1849, almost immediately after commissioning a new Italianate country villa on the outskirts of the city. One senses, from the staggering numbers and varieties listed in his plant orders (still meticulously preserved) that the impetus for his public enterprise a few years later grew directly from the private endeavor. Simply put, once Shaw started, he could not stop. But while his personal garden was an enlightened amateur effort, his botanical garden was undertaken with advice from the highest authorities in the



Plan of Missouri Botanical Garden, 1883. Courtesy Missouri Botanical Garden Archives.

field. Foremost among these was George Engelmann, a medical doctor (serendipitously located in St. Louis) who was also a well-known botanist and author. Engelmann's plant-hunting expeditions into the unexplored territories of the American West and Southwest yielded hundreds of new discoveries.

In 1856 Shaw arranged for Engelmann to go abroad to study the collections of noted botanical gardens, to acquire plans and catalogues, to purchase rare books for Shaw's already substantial library, and to buy seeds and dried plants for a herbarium. Relying heavily on the writings of John Claudius Loudon, Shaw then laid out a three-part scheme that featured herbaceous grounds, a fruticetum (for shrubs and fruit trees),



Main garden parterre, Missouri Botanical Garden, c.1890. Courtesy Missouri Botanical Garden Archives.

and an arboretum. He used the gardenesque method of planting, in which ample spacing would result in individual specimens that visitors could view from all sides.

Today, we tend to dismiss this Victorian aesthetic, in part because it often resulted in chaotic compositions and "an overabundance of ornamental effects," as Grove observes. But, as her study makes clear, our prejudices have prevented a clear understanding of the influential principles that shaped landscapes such as those designed by Henry Shaw. "Besides representing Shaw's taste," writes Grove, "these early gardens and their aesthetic represent the culmination of a century of experimentation with new plant types and methods of planting that best displayed their unique characteristics. The profusion of color and pattern, bounded by stone walls and surrounded by countryside, juxtaposed nature and culture in a contrast as clear as that between orchids and haystacks."

Shaw's Garden opened to the public on June 15, 1859, attracting throngs of admiring visitors. In 1867, when Shaw's attention began to turn to the creation of Tower Grove Park, he hired the English plantsman James Gurney as supervisor of the garden. Gurney's specialty was the giant *Victoria* water lily, whose gargantuan circular pads were strong

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Arboretum, Missouri Botanical Garden, 1893. Courtesy Missouri Botanical Garden Archives.



Music Stand at Tower Grove Park (old postcard). Courtesy Missouri Botanical Garden Archives.

enough to support a person (with wooden braces underneath)—much to the delight of the garden’s visitors. Among the many celebrities who visited over the years was Frederick Law Olmsted.

Not surprisingly, Olmsted was critical of Shaw’s design, which ran directly counter to his own tastes for the pastoral and the picturesque. He was enthusiastic about the idea of an adjacent park, however, and wrote appreciatively of the site’s “majestic simplicity of surface,” and the potential for “noble breadth and delicious repose of character.” Henry Shaw had decided, again, to adhere to a gardenesque method, dismissing the picturesque as a style best suited to landscape painting.

In Grove’s view, Shaw’s choice reflected two changes in the American public.

The middle classes—the citizens of St. Louis—were increasingly fluent in aesthetics; ideas about beauty were no longer an elitist monopoly. That aesthetics could contribute to intellectual development, moral sensibility, and the refinement of taste was a topic of public discussion. . . . Second, the distinction between art and nature was taking on new importance in a country more visually literate than ever before. . . . The idea that the picturesque evoked nature and the gardenesque evoked art was one the viewing public could increasingly appreciate, and a distinction the park’s board of commissioners clearly understood.



Playground Pavilion in distance, Tower Grove Park. Photograph by Carol Betsch.



Plan of Tower Grove Park, 1883. Courtesy Missouri Botanical Garden Archives.

Among the influences Shaw named for his park design were his wide travels (to England, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Russia, and Spain), the examples of Olmsted and Vaux’s new parks in New York City (their circulation systems, in particular), Jean Charles Adolphe Alphand’s work in Paris, and many authors, including A. J. Downing. Shaw’s plan for the parcel, measuring one and one-third miles long, had two main parts: the eastern section was bisected by a secondary central drive and meandering secondary walks of brick, gravel, and grass; the western section consisted of an unbroken meadow and pedestrian walks along the



Central meadow, Tower Grove Park. Courtesy Missouri Botanical Garden Archives.

perimeter. The plan called for ten bridges, nearly seven miles of circulation routes for horses, pedestrians, and carriages, and a 19,500-foot hedge of American arborvitae to surround the perimeter. Twelve colorful pavilions, a sailboat pond, and mock ruins were constructed about 1871–73. James Gurney oversaw planting at both garden and park, where an abundance of “the hardiest and healthiest” trees were mixed with exotic species.

Shaw’s park attracted appreciative crowds, and it continues to do so today—more than a million visitors each year enjoy the “delicious repose” Olmsted predicted. Both Tower Grove Park and the neighboring Missouri Botanical Garden, which has undergone more dramatic landscape changes, continue to enrich lives, broaden horticultural horizons, and, perhaps, even elevate taste. The citizens of St. Louis might think fondly of Henry Shaw. It would have been a very different city without him.—R.K.

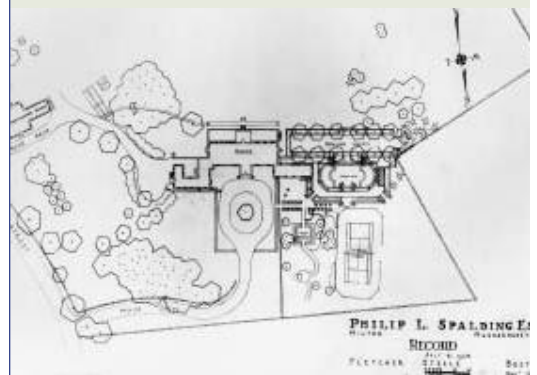
Garden Club Rescues a Steele (and Shipman) Garden

In spring 2004 members of the Milton, Massachusetts, Garden Club learned that there were plans afoot to demolish and redevelop on the twelve-acre former estate of Philip and Katherine Spalding. They stepped in rapidly to preserve the charming, if neglected, formal garden on the northwest corner of the lot, which was built between 1924 and 1932. “This was an historic property, at one time the grandest in town, and its garden had been commissioned by our third president, Katherine Spalding,” says Meredith Hall, the current club president.

At the time, Hall and other garden club members were not aware that the garden was principally designed by Fletcher Steele (1885–1971), one of the twentieth century’s most celebrated landscape architects. But after touring the garden, a club member recalled reading about it in Robin Karson’s book *Fletcher Steele, Landscape Architect* (revised edition, LALH, 2003). The association with Steele raised the stakes of the preservation effort. “Because of Karson’s book we were able to make the case to the town planning board that the garden was worthy of preserving,” Hall says.

The club negotiated with the developer to spare the half-acre garden if another buyer could be found. They approached the planning board with a request to deed the property to the Milton Land Trust or to the town. Instead, the board “asked us to buy the property, because of our visible track record with civic beautification projects in the community,” Hall recalls. Although it had never acquired property before, as a charitable and educational organization and an affiliate of the Garden Club of America, Milton Garden Club was legally positioned to do so. The developer, Tom Corcoran, transferred the deed to the garden club for one dollar in November 2004.

Judith B. Tankard, author of *The Gardens of Ellen Biddle Shipman*, was contacted for advice, and she recalled that Shipman (1869–1950) had also been commissioned to work for the Spaldings in



Spalding estate plan, 1928. Courtesy SUNY ESF College Archives.



Spalding estate today. Photograph by Julia Gaviria

1924. (Shipman often worked on planting details in frameworks designed by other landscape architects.) The club has not determined whether the Shipman design, or portions of it, was ever realized.

More evidence exists for the Steele design. The Spalding garden was one of more than two dozen commissions in Milton over the course of Steele's career, and, according to Karson's biography, it was substantial: Spalding was president of New England Telephone and Telegraph, and this estate would be the grandest in Milton. Karson notes that Steele's scheme for the Spaldings' Georgian Revival mansion differed from his other work from this period "in its sobriety and lack of historical reference. . . . Its restrained character was abstract, almost industrial."

Hall reports that portions of the garden, including the brick paths and the eight-foot brick walls defining the bowling green and rose garden, remain structurally intact. But many elements are now gone, such as the tennis court, the elms, the bosquet, and the original roses, and invasive species have overrun the perennial beds. Only the patio, which lay outside the kitchen on the building's west wing, remains to reveal the garden's original connection to the Spalding house. But even in the present condition, the garden is widely admired for its soft-edged beauty.

"Because there are so few extant gardens that were designed by Steele—and fewer still open to the public—the Spalding project is a great opportunity," Karson observes. "Kudos to the Milton Garden Club for seizing the moment and saving this property."

The Milton Garden Club has not yet decided how to interpret the garden, which will determine plans for rehabilitation. "One option is to do repairs and maintain it as a garden ruin," Hall says. "We will definitely use the garden to educate the public about garden history and native plantings, but that doesn't necessarily mean restoring it to its original state."

Hall says that despite her club's affiliation with the Garden Club of America, whose broader mission is "to restore, improve, and protect the quality of the environment through programs and action in the field of conservation, civic improvement, and education," it is unusual for a garden club to own property. But the connection is harmonious: Steele was the first male member of the Garden Club of America, which is how he met many of his clients.

Missouri Botanical Garden

The Missouri Botanical Garden grew out of the passion and generosity of a prosperous St. Louis businessman, Henry Shaw, in the mid-nineteenth century. Today the garden not only is still extant and thriving, but also has grown into a world-class botanical research, conservation, and educational institution. Although the landscape and plantings have changed over time, generations of stewards have managed to preserve the element most crucial to the garden's longevity: Henry Shaw's vision.

From the beginning, the botanical garden was as much about ideals as it was about displaying plants from around the world. Those ideals—public education, social improvement, and scientific research—took root in Shaw's imagination long before he began creating the garden near his home on the outskirts of St. Louis.

His private garden surrounding Tower Grove, as he named the Italianate countryhouse he built about 1849–50, tested many of the principles he applied in the great public botanical garden he began planting a few years later. Although Shaw's early garden no longer survives, some features, such as a maze, a rose garden, and an elaborate star-shaped perennial bed with a statue of Juno, have been re-created on the grounds surrounding Tower Grove House. The building, now a museum, stands almost in the center of the Missouri Botanical Garden, symbolically balancing the garden's educational, historical, and scientific missions.

The house (restored in 2005) features new exhibits that allow visitors "to enter the Shaw era and visually understand how the house connects to the botanical garden," explains Dr. Luther Williams, Tower Grove House's William T. Kemper Director of Education and Interpretation. That connection, he says, is intellectual as well as proximal. "We are displaying original documents that reveal how extensively he consulted with experts from England and from Harvard in planning the botanical garden. We want the displays to convey how an extremely visionary person was able to do the practical day-to-day activities to make a product. How does one actually shape a vision, see it evolve incrementally, and design and redesign a garden?"

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Shaw house and mausoleum (foreground), Missouri Botanical Garden. Photograph by Carol Betsch.

PRESERVATION



Victorian-style flower beds in the Juno garden, Missouri Botanical Garden. Photograph by Carol Grove.

As the new exhibits reveal, the garden that Shaw built between 1853 and 1859 relied on extensive botanical, horticultural, and design research—his own and that of others. After much thought and consultation about how to display the plantings,

Shaw chose the gardenesque treatment championed by the British horticulturist and landscape designer John Claudius Loudon. The gardenesque method, writes Carol Grove in LALH's new book *Henry Shaw's Victorian Landscapes*, "dictated that plants, shrubs, and trees be treated individually, as specimens." It was a spare aesthetic, which, paired with bright Victorian floral beds, might shock today's sensibilities.

But the public of Shaw's era overwhelmingly approved. On opening day, visitors thronged through the classical gates to ramble Shaw's creation. A sunken parterre, whimsical pavilions, brilliant beds, and plant houses were among the eye-catching features in the garden's three divisions. Though the garden now spreads over seventy-nine acres (it originally occupied only forty-five), few of the plantings remain. The grove of trees in front of Shaw's house, planted by him more than a hundred fifty years ago, has now grown to towering heights. A few ancient remnants of the Osage orange allée that once lined his private approach to the garden also survive.

Shortly after Shaw's death in 1889, the Victorian scheme was supplanted by a more fashionable, Olmstedian landscape, which grew to slow maturity. Like many public landscapes, the garden struggled with maintenance issues that worsened during the urban funding crisis that hit the U.S. in the late twentieth century. Elements of this design were recovered in the 1970s and 1980s, and the garden was recognized as a National Historic Landmark in 1989. The lush grounds now support the wide-ranging collection of plants benefiting one of the world's leading botanical research institutions.

Today the Missouri Botanical Garden maintains the world's largest botanical database, and a staff of PhD researchers helps to protect and manage global biodiversity. The garden's director, Dr. Peter Raven, whose botanical achievements are well known, views these programs as part of Shaw's legacy, too. "Mr. Shaw began to think of his creation as not simply a garden, but as a *botanical*

garden, where the knowledge of plants would be increased and spread throughout the world," Raven writes in the foreword to Grove's monograph. "Carol Grove has shed important new light on the influences that affected Henry Shaw in his planning for his botanical garden."

Grove says she hopes her new book will help visitors and others understand why designed landscapes look the way they do. "History helps us make sense of what's going on around us today," she says. "It's fascinating to observe the shifting taste in garden design from Shaw's day to the present, and to recognize the ideas that continue to shape and inform public taste."

Tower Grove Park



Sailboat pond, Tower Grove Park, historical view. Courtesy Missouri Botanical Garden.

In the years following Henry Shaw's death, the landscape at Tower Grove Park saw change, but it was more gradual and far less drastic than the wholesale redesign that transformed the Missouri Botanical

Garden. Dead trees were not always replaced, structures deteriorated, and a more picturesque aesthetic crept in, perhaps unconsciously, when officials did restore plantings. The park's director, John Karel, notes that some of Shaw's original tree species proved to be ill suited for the climate, and short-lived flowering trees cycled out within a few generations.

"On top of that, St. Louis was an industrial city, and air pollution started killing the trees, as it did in many cities, between 1900 and 1920," he says. "This coincided with a time when funding was growing less adequate, and the park began a long, slow decline."

Insufficient funds resulted in a far less diverse collection of trees, as park managers chose from what was affordable and readily available. As a result, the park today has an overrepresentation of silver maple (*Acer saccharinum*), pin oak (*Quercus palustris*), and sweet gum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*).

Since its mid-twentieth-century low point, however, Tower Grove Park has undergone a renaissance led by a committed constituency. As Karel writes in his afterword to Carol Grove's book, "A crusade of sorts was undertaken from the late 1980s that mobilized the latent energies of . . . the Commissioners, the staff, the surrounding neighborhoods, hundreds of volunteers and donors, and a new organization regional in scope, the Friends of Tower Grove Park."



Sailboat pond today, Tower Grove Park. Photograph by Carol Grove.

In 1989 their efforts culminated in the park's designation as a National Historic Landmark, the fourth urban park to be so recognized. The designation raised the profile of preservation efforts and opened new funding opportunities.

After making urgent structural repairs, Karel and his staff have turned their attention to the living landscape over the last decade. "We have good documentation, including a map from the late 1870s depicting the species and locations Shaw had in mind, and park reports from the 1880s," Karel says. "Fortunately for us, the park was born in the age of photography, so we also have lots of photographs." The pictures in particular reveal the degree to which later plantings had "muddied the crispness and diversity and liveliness of the gardenesque," he observes.

After studying these documents in depth, Karel and his staff concluded that the founder regarded the park in part as a demonstration area for woody plants that would be viable in the local climate, and that could thrive with the limited level of care possible in a public park. "We feel he wanted to grow as diverse a collection as possible, with particular interest in native trees of the Mississippi Valley," Karel says.

These concepts, along with restoring the original gardenesque aesthetic, have guided the current replanting plan, which is being carried out as older trees die naturally. "We haven't ripped out post-Shavian trees, but as trees have cycled out, we've replaced them gradually, which doesn't result in social trauma," Karel says.



Planters at Tower Grove Park, historical view. Courtesy Tower Grove Park.



Planters at Tower Grove Park today. Courtesy Tower Grove Park.

Over the last ten years, the staff has increased plantings to about 120 new trees a year, with a focus on shade trees lining streets and paths. Trees planted in the 1920s are now dying out, and the park staff is deploying an enriched palette of original species—including willow oak, red and scarlet oak, sour gum, sassafras, sourwood, persimmon, redbud, amelanchier, arrowwood viburnum, and witch hazel—and planting them in the original gardenesque spirit. This diversity will produce, among other things, more exciting seasonal color changes. Grove and Karel say that Shaw's clearly emerging design, coupled with Grove's book, could help visitors realize that American parks were not always Olmstedian.

Karel also says he believes that the new LALH book will help support efforts to restore and preserve Tower Grove Park in at least three ways: "First, it provides new insights on some basic design issues that enrich our understanding, so that our landscape decisions are better informed. Second, the book will provide a public-relations stimulus, which should prove valuable in raising funds for park projects. Perhaps most important, it will broaden and deepen public comprehension of Tower Grove Park as a work of art, an intact product of nineteenth-century human imagination that survives with almost miraculous integrity in our time. This comprehension will be the park's best defense against a future recurrence of harmful neglect, or worst yet, well-intentioned development or redesign that would corrupt or degrade that integrity."

Indianapolis Park and Boulevard System and the Jensen Landscape at Riverdale

A park system may be divided into three parts: the smaller parks and squares, the larger parks and the boulevards connecting them with each other. The smaller ones, in the thickly populated parts of a city, become the breathing spots and often playgrounds, independent or more or less connecting with each other. These are necessarily merely oases in a desert of houses and make life more tolerable.

—George Kessler

George Kessler, also known as the "landscape architect of the American Renaissance," spoke these words in 1893. By this time, Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux had created a park and boulevard system in Chicago, as had Horace Cleveland in Minneapolis. Kessler, though, "may have been the first to suggest a hierarchy of parks that served a variety of needs," writes the Kessler biographer Kurt Culbertson in *Midwestern Landscape Architecture* (University of Illinois Press, 2000). Kessler's important contributions to landscape architecture—in Cincinnati, Dallas, Houston, Kansas City, and St. Louis—have resulted in a new understanding of his place in American landscape history.

Beginning in 1905 Kessler also designed a remarkable system of parks and boulevards for Indianapolis. This countywide network of transportation and recreation corridors has become a driving force in what might be seen as rebirth of the city in the twenty-first century. In 2004 the Indianapolis Park and Boulevard System was listed on the National Register of Historic Places, after a concerted effort was made by local, state, and national preservation officials and a local landscape architecture firm, Storrow Kinsella Associates. At 3,474 acres, it is the state's largest single National Register listing.

The designation will likely lead to the preservation of roads, bridges, structures, and plantings, according to Meg Storrow, principal at Storrow Kinsella. "Today the park system is in fair condition, but the connecting boulevard system is fragmented," she observes. Her firm is working with the Indianapolis Department of Public Works to repair a section of the network as a demonstration project.

The city also will likely seek preservation grants to rehabilitate parkway landscapes and landmark bridges. The first steps, however, will be to restore views, control invasive plants, and strengthen the system's identity. The Kessler plan links five cultural districts and more than fifty historic districts and sites that are either listed or eligible for inclusion on the National Register. A steering group is exploring ways of more visibly tying the Kessler system with some



Jens Jensen-designed lake, now reverting to wetlands, Riverdale, Indianapolis. Photograph by Robin Karson.

PRESERVATION



Bridge on Capitol Avenue, Indianapolis. Park and boulevard system by George Kessler. Courtesy Storrow Kinsella Associates.

of these nationally recognized historic landscapes, such as Oldfields, at the Indianapolis Museum of Art.

Kessler died in 1923, having fallen ill while on park business in Indianapolis, at the early age of sixty. Culbertson writes, “It is remarkable that a man of such professional accomplishments, one so loved and respected throughout a vast region of the country, could be virtually forgotten.” Efforts like those under way in Indianapolis are reintroducing a new generation to Kessler and his contributions to the quality of life in cities throughout the Mississippi River Valley.

A Jensen Landscape at Riverdale

Another historic property adjacent to the Indianapolis Park and Boulevard System may benefit from the recent recognition of the Kessler plan. A Jens Jensen–designed landscape has been rediscovered at Riverdale, a sixty-four-acre former private estate built between 1911 and 1914 by James A. Allison and now owned by Marian College.

Jensen (1860–1951), a Chicago-based landscape architect associated with the Prairie School, created more than 350 residential landscapes in the Midwest in the early twentieth century, though fewer than 10 percent of them survive. The Danish immigrant who embraced indigenous plants and flowing open spaces “attempted to relate forms and materials to the surrounding native landscape” in his designs, writes Jensen’s biographer, Robert E. Grese, in his essay in *Pioneers of American Landscape Design* (McGraw-Hill, 2000).



Planting plan for Riverdale by Jens Jensen. Courtesy Storrow Kinsella Associates.

Riverdale comprised all of Jensen’s signature features: a large meadow, naturalistic ponds, a stream, a player’s green for outdoor performances, and Jensen’s most identifiable element, a council ring—a stone seating circle with a central fire pit for communal gatherings.

In 1936 the founders of Marian College acquired Riverdale and later bought two adjacent estates built by Carl Fisher and Frank Wheeler, auto-parts manufacturers who, with Allison and another partner, started the Indianapolis Motor Speedway as a test track in 1909. Their properties lined a road nicknamed Millionaire’s Row. “This was the Newport of Indianapolis,” says Deb Lawrence, special assistant to the president for community engagement at Marian College.

The landscape architect David Roth, an associate at Storrow Kinsella who researched the history of Riverdale’s landscape for a cultural landscape report in 2003, explains that as other parts of the campus developed, the Riverdale grounds gradually fell into benign neglect. Some older trees survive, including cedars providing a backdrop for the player’s green. Jensen’s meadow now supports a baseball field, and the lakes have become wetlands.

Malcolm Cairns, of Ball State University, identified Riverdale as a Jensen landscape during a statewide historic survey in 1995; but specifics of the design were not uncovered until 2000, when a Marian College biology professor led a project to restore a wetland and forest on the estate. Further investigation turned up copies of the plans in the college’s maintenance office.

The Allison mansion, which houses the college president’s office and is used for special events, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1970. In the coming year Roth and Lawrence will seek funds to amend the mansion’s listing to include the entire estate. Robert Grese, who has visited the estate since the excavation, says, “portions of Riverdale have a great deal of integrity or could be restored. It might be one of the best preserved examples of Jensen’s integration of a player’s green in a formal garden setting.” Roth says his firm and Lawrence would like to raise money to restore the formal gardens near the house—a \$2 million undertaking—with the idea that this will build awareness to fund rehabilitation of the larger landscape.

To maintain momentum, Lawrence organized a conference, “Hidden Treasures of Indianapolis: Historic Landscapes and Gardens and the People Who Created Them,” on June 9–10, 2005. Speakers included Culbertson, Grese, Storrow, Roth, and Charles A. Birnbaum, Historic Landscape Initiative, National Park Service.

Preservation profiles written by Jane Roy Brown.

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New Towns for Old: Achievements in Civic Improvement in Some American Small Towns and Neighborhoods

John Nolen (ASLA Centennial Reprint Series, 1927 edition)
New introduction by Charles D. Warren
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Long out of print and increasingly rare, this illustrated study is of primary interest to planners and urban historians.

John Nolen (1869–1937), a pioneer in American town planning, combined the social, economic, and physical

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"It is good to have Nolen's famous little book in print again, especially with Charles Warren's introduction bringing it to life. It is now clear that Nolen is a once and future American hero."—Andres Duany

FORTHCOMING



Henry Shaw's Victorian Landscapes: The Missouri Botanical Garden and Tower Grove Park

Carol Grove
UMPress/cloth \$39.95. October 2005.

The story of two remarkable landscape designs created by Englishman Henry Shaw for his adopted city, St. Louis. Early photographs from the Missouri Botanical Garden are supplemented by modern views by Carol Betsch.



A World of Her Own Making: Katharine Smith Reynolds Johnston and the Landscape of Reynolda

Catherine Howett
UMPress/cloth \$39.95. Spring 2006.

With the help of the landscape architect Thomas W. Sears, Katharine Reynolds laid out an estate, farm, and village in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Richly illustrated with historic photographs and modern views by Carol Betsch.

BACKLIST

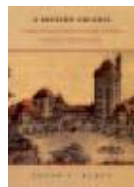


Fletcher Steele, Landscape Architect: An Account of the Gardenmaker's Life, 1885–1971
Robin Karson.
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Susan L. Klaus.
UMPress/paper, \$24.95 (cloth, \$39.95).

Winner of the Historical Preservation Book Prize, Mary Washington College

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"Klaus has produced an exemplary short architectural monograph: succinct, eloquent, contextual, and copiously illustrated."—*Choice*



Midwestern Landscape Architecture
Edited by William H. Tishler. Univ. of Illinois Press/paper, \$19.95 (cloth, \$37.50).

"Written by a talented cast of landscape scholars, the chapters are well researched, well documented, and well written."—*Landscape Journal*

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Pioneers of American Landscape Design

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Temporarily out of print.

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The Muses of Gwynn: Art and Nature in a Garden Designed by Warren H. Manning, Charles A. Platt, and Ellen Biddle Shipman

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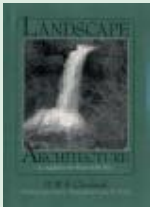
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Charles W. Eliot (ASLA Centennial Reprint Series, 1902 edition)

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NEWS

The Honor Society of Sigma Lambda Alpha—the only national honor society for the recognition of the scholarship of landscape architecture—selected LALH Executive Director Robin Karson to receive its 2004 distinguished member award for her "continued high-quality contributions to the scholarship of landscape architecture and the literature of landscape architecture history."

Past recipients of the award include renowned twentieth-century landscape architects Garrett Eckbo, Roberto Burle Marx, Ian McHarg, and Hideo Sasaki, among others. Karson is one of the few recipients who are not landscape architects. Peter Trowbridge, professor of landscape architecture at Cornell, and the late landscape architect and author Christopher Tunnard also received the 2004 award.

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Featured in this issue of *View*:

- ✦ Aforthcoming book about Henry Shaw, creator of the world-famous Missouri Botanical Garden and Tower Grove Park in St. Louis, Mo.
- ✦ John Nolen's *New Towns for Old*, the latest volume in the ASLA Centennial Reprint Series
- ✦ Preserving gardens, parks, and parkways in Indianapolis, St. Louis, and Milton, Mass.
- ✦ How you can become a member of LALH, and receive discounts on LALH books



LALH Begins Warren H. Manning Project

In 2004 LALH launched the research phase of a two-volume biography of Warren Henry Manning (1860–1938). Horticulturist, landscape architect, town and city planner, and author, Manning began as an assistant to Frederick Law Olmsted, and went on to work on more than 1,700 projects in almost every state in the U.S. Many of these projects have never before been analyzed; the current conditions of many are still unknown.

LALH will work collaboratively with scholars all over the country, and multiple authors will contribute to both volumes. To organize information, LALH plans to develop an electronic database that will be accessible to the public once the book is published.

LALH welcomes help from property owners, preservationists, historians, and landscape architects to locate surviving Manning properties and documentation. If you have information or would like to join the search, please contact Jane Roy Brown: jroybrown@lalh.org, (413) 549-4860, P.O. Box 1323, Amherst, Mass. 01004-1323.

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