



100
YEARS *of*
DESIGN
on the
LAND

100 Years of Design on the Land is organized by the Library of American Landscape History. The exhibition is sponsored by the 1285 Avenue of the Americas Art Gallery, in partnership with Jones Lang LaSalle, as a community-based public service.

100 YEARS *of* DESIGN *on the* LAND

LANDSCAPE DESIGN is the most familiar of all the arts, yet rarely do we stop to think about the designs of the landscapes we walk through, bury our loved ones in, and, in some cases, commute back to at the end of the day. The ten landscapes featured in this exhibition—from Mount Auburn Cemetery in Boston (1831) to the Camden Public Library Amphitheatre in Maine (1931)—have been settings for funerals and weddings, declarations of love, graduations, pageants, and solitary insights into the workings of nature. Each of these places was shaped by a deliberate design process, and each has an individual story to tell. Taken together, they tell a much larger story of a nation's beliefs and aspirations—who we are, where we long to go or what we want to get back to.

Since 1992, Library of American Landscape History has been developing books that explore the meaning of influential American places and the ideas motivating the people who created them. LALH books are richly illustrated with plans, drawings, and photographs that record landscapes from their beginnings to the present day. Contemporary landscape photographs fill an especially important role in LALH books. They not only evoke the original spirit of a site but also capture the layers of change that have occurred since the site was first designed—and that, of course, is part of the story, too. “The story does not end,” the landscape architect Fletcher Steele once observed. “On it goes, getting more and more interesting as we get old and have time to understand.”

Robin Karson

Executive director and exhibition curator

EDSEL AND ELEANOR FORD HOUSE

Grosse Pointe Shores, Michigan (1929)

The 65-acre estate on Gaukler Point, north of Detroit, was one of four residential landscapes that the Danish landscape architect Jens Jensen (1860–1951) designed for Edsel and Eleanor Ford. In this, his final work for the Fords, Jensen's lush “prairie style” of planting was modified by Edsel's taste for sleek modernist form. The major feature of the plan is a great meadow that leads to a vista of the setting sun. By dredging a channel in Lake St. Clair, Jensen also created an island that frames a view to the lake and provides habitat for wildlife.

COVER: *Silver maples at meadow edge, Edsel and Eleanor Ford House* by Carol Betsch, 1996. Gelatin silver print, 23 x 19 inches. From *A Genius for Place: American Landscapes of the Country Place Era*.



MOUNT AUBURN CEMETERY

Boston, Massachusetts (1831)

The design for Mount Auburn, the nation's first rural cemetery, contrasted sharply with the grim graveyards of the colonial era. Rather than fear and foreboding, shady forest glades and pools offered mourners solace, inspiring them to reflect on the meaning of their own lives and those of their forebears. Immediately after the cemetery opened its gates, legions of Boston's urban dwellers began to visit the "silent city on a hill" much as they would a park. Prominent citizens in New York soon began advocating for a public park for Manhattan, one that might serve similarly restorative purposes—without the graves.

*View southwest below Washington Tower, by Carol Betsch, 2005. Gelatin silver print, 19 x 19 inches. From *Silent City on a Hill: Picturesque Landscapes of Memory and Boston's Mount Auburn Cemetery*.*



BUFFALO PARK SYSTEM

Buffalo, New York (1868)

When Frederick Law Olmsted (1820–1903) and Calvert Vaux (1824–1895) were invited to prepare a plan for Buffalo's first public park, they instead proposed an entire park system, consisting of three large parks and a series of Parisian-inspired parkways connecting them. It would be the first such plan for any city in the world, prefiguring Boston's Emerald Necklace by almost two decades. Olmsted's campaign to rescue nearby Niagara Falls from the effects of industry extended this system of public reservations still farther. Although freeways have obliterated sections of the parkways, preservationists are now taking steps to bring back the original character of this historic landscape.

Delaware Park Meadow by Andy Olenick, 2012. Pigment inkjet print, 13 1/4 x 19 inches. From *The Best Planned City in the World: Olmsted, Vaux, and the Buffalo Park System*.



TOWER GROVE PARK

St. Louis, Missouri (1868)

Born in Sheffield, England, Henry Shaw (1800–1889) adopted St. Louis as his home in 1819, and there made a great fortune importing goods from his native country. He used his wealth to create a botanical garden and a city park, with the goal of elevating the citizenry by enriching their appreciation for science and aesthetics. In his layout of the 300-acre park, Shaw drew heavily on the ideas of John Claudius Loudon, a Scottish botanist and garden designer who recommended the gardenesque approach to planting, a style that featured wide spacing of specimens so that the color and form of each plant could be best observed and appreciated.

Pond and ruins in early morning
by Carol Betsch, 2004. Gelatin
silver print, 19 x 19 inches. From
Henry Shaw's Victorian Landscapes:
The Missouri Botanical Garden
and Tower Grove Park.



MARSH-BILLINGS-ROCKEFELLER NATIONAL HISTORIC PARK

Woodstock, Vermont (1869)

Now a property of the National Park Service, this Vermont country estate is the site of one of the nation's oldest surviving experimental forests. It was laid out in the 1870s and 1880s by its owner, Frederick Billings (1823–1890), for both scenic and economic purposes. An extensive system of carriage roads, designed in the picturesque style, winds through the working forest, opening to scenic overlooks. The Billings home landscape, designed by Robert Morris Copeland (1830–1874), features a curving approach, broad lawns, formal gardens, pastures, and greenhouses, all of which are still maintained according to original principles.

The Pogue by Carol Betsch, 2014.
Pigment inkjet print, 19 x 23
inches. From *Frederick Billings*
(forthcoming).



REYNOLDA

Winston-Salem, North Carolina (1908)

Conceived by Katharine Smith Reynolds (1880–1923) as a model farm, estate, and village—complete with employee housing, schools, and a church—the design of Reynolda was influenced by the nearby Biltmore estate, laid out by Frederick Law Olmsted for George Washington Vanderbilt in the 1890s. Katharine Reynolds, with her husband, tobacco magnate R. J. Reynolds, also visited estates in Europe and England to gather ideas for her utopian experiment. The plan was created by the Philadelphia-based landscape architect Thomas W. Sears (1880–1966). The Reynoldses' bungalow-style house by Charles Barton Keen serves today as the Reynolda House Museum of American Art.

View across cut-flower garden
by Carol Betsch, 1998. Gelatin
silver print, 19 x 23 inches. From
A World of Her Own Making:
Katharine Smith Reynolds and
the Landscape of Reynolda.



FOREST HILLS GARDENS

Queens, Long Island (1909)

Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. (1870–1957), son and namesake of the famous designer of Central Park, was one of the most innovative planners of his day. In 1909, he and the architect Grosvenor Atterbury collaborated on the design of a 142-acre planned community. The model commuter suburb—inspired by the new “garden cities” in England and planning experiments in Germany—has its own rail station and commercial center, as well as an extensive system of squares, commons, and small parks that give the community distinction and charm. Although originally aimed at middle-class buyers, the suburb has acquired considerable cachet, and today houses command high prices.

Greenway Terrace by Carol Betsch, 2001. Gelatin silver print, 13 1/4 x 19 inches. From *A Modern Arcadia: Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. and the Plan for Forest Hills Gardens*.



FINGER LAKES REGION STATE PARKS

Ithaca, New York (1914)

Warren H. Manning (1860–1938), who trained as an assistant to Olmsted Sr., went on to found one of the country’s largest landscape architectural firms in Boston. Manning based his designs for new towns, campuses, parks, and country estates on environmental principles that emphasized the most dramatic and efficient use of existing resources—scenic views, great trees, rolling terrain, and bodies of water. Working closely with Ithaca businessman Robert H. Treman, Manning created a system of state park reservations that would protect the gorges and waterfalls of the Finger Lakes region, keeping this sublime scenery forever accessible to the public.

Taughannock Falls by Carol Betsch, 2013. Gelatin silver print, 23 x 19 inches. From *A Force of Nature: Warren H. Manning, Landscape Architect and Environmental Planner* (forthcoming).



OLDFIELDS

Indianapolis, Indiana (1920)

Hugh McKennan Landon built his country estate Oldfields in the new town of Woodstock, Indiana, as part of a real estate development. In the 1920s, the Landons commissioned Percival Gallagher (1874–1934), an Olmsted Brothers associate, to design new landscape elements for it. These included European features, such as the grand elm allée and formal garden, as well as informal flower borders and a wild garden. Several years later, J. K. Lilly Jr. and his wife Ruth bought Oldfields. The Lilly children eventually donated the estate as a site for the new Indianapolis Museum of Art. Many parts of the grounds have been restored to their original design principles.

Informal border gardens by Carol Betsch, 2004. Gelatin silver print, 23 x 19 inches. For more about Oldfields, see *Pioneers of American Landscape Design*.



CAMDEN PUBLIC LIBRARY AMPHITHEATRE

Camden, Maine (1931)

Fletcher Steele (1885–1971) designed the parklike space behind the newly constructed town library with several goals in mind. First and foremost was to provide a view of Camden Harbor. This alignment required “bending” the axis of the horseshoe-shaped theater in relation to the library building, an innovation that Steele had seen used to striking effect in modernist gardens in Paris a few years before. Recently designated a National Historic Landmark, the Camden Amphitheatre is considered one of the first examples of modern landscape design in the United States.

Camden Amphitheatre, view to library by Carol Betsch, 2014. Pigment inkjet print, 19 x 23 inches. For more about the Camden Public Library Amphitheatre, see Fletcher Steele, Landscape Architect.

The mission of the **Library of American Landscape History** is to foster understanding of the fine art of landscape architecture and appreciation for North America's richly varied landscape heritage through LALH books, exhibitions, and online resources.

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Visit LALH.org to learn more.



CAROL BETSCH (b. 1948) has contributed photographs to many LALH publications. She lives in Amherst, Massachusetts, and is managing editor of the University of Massachusetts Press.

ANDY OLENICK (b. 1947) contributed digital photographs to the LALH book *The Best Planned City in the World*. He lives in LeRoy, New York, where he is a freelance photographer (fotowerks.com).

Gelatin silver and pigment inkjet prints created by Panopticon Imaging, Rockland, Massachusetts.

Antique benches courtesy Barbara Israel Garden Antiques.

Since 1985, Barbara Israel Garden Antiques has specialized in the finest antique garden ornaments and furniture from Europe and America. The firm's diverse collection includes nineteenth-century English sundials, fourteenth-century Italian wellheads, Victorian cast-iron garden seats, and important American bronze sculpture.

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