

SECOND WAVE OF MODERNISM IV: MAKING SPACE WITHIN PLACE

OCTOBER 4, 2019 | HORCHOW AUDITORIUM, DALLAS MUSEUM OF ART, DALLAS, TEXAS

PRESENTED BY: **THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE FOUNDATION**

WITH SUPPORT FROM: **ABC STONE, BARTLETT TREE EXPERTS, WHITACRE GREER, VERMONT QUARRIES, AND VICTOR STANLEY**

Abstracts

Foundations for Change

Charles A. Birnbaum, FASLA, FAAR, *President & CEO*, The Cultural Landscape Foundation

Making Space from Place and the Increasing Visibility and Appreciation of Landscape Architecture

As the forthcoming presentations will attest, Dallas is indeed a growing city with ambitious plans. And as this conference will demonstrate, Dallas can now take its rightful place among a handful of cities that are raising the bar in planning, designing, and maintaining parks and open spaces as both centers of energies in the communities they serve and as nodes in an interconnected collection of public spaces that are, by design, porous and equitable. These places are being realized and managed through the efforts of innovative public-private partnerships, generous philanthropists, and strategically positioned non-profits, often with landscape architects leading the way, not only in design but also through meaningful public engagement.

But in order to fully understand the present one must always look first to the past. It was 143 years ago that Dallas began to establish its first public park, City Park, in 1876. And 100 years ago, on February 10, 1919, Mayor Joseph Lawther appointed a temporary City Plan Commission to advise on "all natures of public improvements, civic improvements, and city planning" and to "secure a charter amendment providing an official city plan commission." With these important dates as a launching point, this presentation will provide an overview of the earlier planning efforts that were the precursors to the work that is now underway. To illustrate this continuum of design and planning, we will look back at city plans and park plans by George Kessler, Harland Bartholomew (with landscape architects Hare & Hare), and Hargreaves Associates, recognizing how the individual and collective planning goals of earlier generations are in many cases being realized only now.

The presentation will also highlight significant strides that were made along the way. We will look back to the City Beautiful era, for example, when the business community and the municipal education bureaucracies surprisingly advocated to keep Kessler's ideas about comprehensive planning alive; and we will examine trends of the Modernist era, which focused once more on pedestrians and the idea that parks can attract and serve visitors year-round, while responding to the call for freedom of movement, porous edges, and park equity. Finally, the case will be made that here in Dallas, especially in the city's Arts District, exceptional works of landscape architecture have been elevated to the highest levels of art, taking their rightful place alongside great works of architecture and sculpture.

Panel 1: Transforming the Downtown Core

Amy M. Meadows, *President*, Parks for Downtown Dallas

Setting the Stage

In 2002, the mayor appointed a group of civic leaders to create a simple physical plan that would spur economic development in Downtown Dallas. One of the findings from the Inside the Loop Committee (ILC) was the lack of parks in the Downtown core. As a result, the ILC supported the creation of the first-

ever Downtown Parks Master Plan, which was unanimously adopted by City Council in 2004. With 2006 city bond dollars and private funding, Main Street Garden, Belo Garden and Klyde Warren Park were completed, and land was acquired for Pacific Plaza.

Recovery after the 2008 recession led to much greater investment Downtown, including a significant increase in housing stock. This occasioned a re-examination of the 2004 Master Plan. In 2013, the Downtown Parks Master Plan Update was approved. This plan reiterated the priority of building Pacific Plaza and West End Square, redesigning Carpenter Plaza due to thoroughfare changes that enlarged the park boundaries and developing a park in the burgeoning Farmers Market District, Harwood Park.

In 2017, \$35 million in bond funding was approved for Downtown parks, and a public-private partnership was formed between the City of Dallas and Parks for Downtown Dallas to ensure the implementation of the Master Plan Update. Once completed, Dallas will have added seven new parks comprising 23 acres of green space in the heart of Downtown. No other American city has accomplished such a dramatic transformation of its core geography in recent times.

Ken Haines, *Principal*, Hargreaves Associates

From Master Plan to Two Signature Parks – A Sixteen Year Story

Hargreaves Associates led the original Dallas Downtown Parks Master Plan from 2004 as well as the Updated Plan of 2013. The goal of the master plan was to make downtown more walkable and to make it a more inviting place to live, work and spend leisure time by creating a connected system of green corridors and destinations. A comparison to competitor cities showed that Dallas fell behind in terms of parks and green spaces in the downtown, so this was an issue not only for quality of life, but for the economic health of the city as well. The plan outlined an aggressive approach to making a turnaround in these statistics and the City has followed that plan with resolve and results.

Hargreaves Associates were also the landscape architects for two of the signature parks identified in the plan – Belo Garden, which was completed in 2012, and Carpenter Park, which will begin construction in the spring of 2020. The master plan identified different types of parks for downtown – each to be distinct in character and in program so that the result would be a collection of parks and plazas that would add richness to Dallas by creating a variety of experiences and design vocabularies.

Belo Garden, which replaced surface parking, is intentionally a place of respite and a park that showcases planting and trees of Texas. The donors were clear in their desire to make a place of beauty and an escape from the urban environment. The hill creates a high point within the flatness of the city that attracts users, as does the fountain, which in its design speaks to the botanical nature of the park. The park's design is also oriented to the views from above from the surrounding residential and office towers. Carpenter Park is a redesign and enlargement of a 1970's park made possible by the removal of a freeway off-ramp. The park features a major sculpture by Robert Irwin – reimagined and re-made for the new design, as well as gardens, open lawn, a signature fountain, café, dog play, a food truck plaza and games area. Carpenter Park will be an active participant in urban life, connecting to the emerging residential and cultural district east of downtown, serving as a catalyst for change in this rapidly changing part of Dallas.

Chuck McDaniel, FASLA, *Managing Principal*, Dallas, SWA

The Dallas Urban Quilt

The City of Dallas is a living organism that evolves to sustain and continually redefine itself. The Downtown Dallas Core is especially dynamic as it considers, debates, modifies, deletes and adds pieces to the "urban quilt" that forms the metroplex. In pondering this question in the context of Pacific Plaza, this

new urban park should then be first understood in the context of a larger collection of spaces, neighborhoods, communities, and linkages.

SWA has for 45 years had a relationship with Downtown Dallas that includes the design and implementation of The Dallas West End, the original Carpenter Plaza, the 8-acre Griggs Park in Uptown, and the 3.5-mile linear park The Katy Trail. As Pacific Plaza, the first of four signature parks sponsored by Parks for Downtown Dallas, nears its opening, SWA would like to review and explore how it will contribute to a next layer in the city's downtown urban quilt – one that will aim to be safe, livable, sustainable and desirable for all.

In addressing this overarching challenge, this presentation will address the following questions:
How will this work of fashioning the urban quilt inform the design approach at Pacific Plaza?
How has/can the new work leverage public-private partnerships thus provide added value at Pacific Plaza and beyond?
How can the Plaza respond to specific needs of the other three companion parks?
How can Pacific Plaza utilize design solutions that promote inclusivity?

Isabel Castilla, ASLA, *Principal*, James Corner Field Operations
West End Square- Balancing History and Innovation

West End Square, located at the center of Dallas' West End Historic District, presents an extraordinary opportunity to create a vibrant and world-class public space- a next generation neighborhood park that is both a great civic space and an armature for innovation. Today, the West End Historic District is one of the leading tourist attractions in the City of Dallas. In recent years, the West End has experienced growth in residential development, as well as an influx of both new and adaptive reuse in commercial developments geared towards creative and innovative companies. Recently rebranded as the Dallas Innovation District, over 32 tech, media and innovation companies occupy the West End today. This spirit of innovation echoes the historic district's original positioning as a manufacturing district— a district of making.

The design of West End Square, developed by James Corner Field Operations for Parks for Downtown Dallas seeks to balance history and innovation, creating a much-needed neighborhood park catered to the District's growing population and a testing ground for incorporating technology in a public space both as a means to support maintenance and operations but also as a public amenity in itself.

To that end, the Square's design creates two unique environments. The first, is a U-shaped trellis framing three edges of the site, envisioned as a flexible armature for a plug-and-play approach to technologies, allowing these to be incorporated over time as the square's uses and needs evolve while supporting the daily uses, occasional programming and seasonal interactive installations. In contrast, the interior of the Square is composed of organically shaped planting beds planted with a palette inspired by the Texas Blackland Prairies creating a much-needed place of respite within the Downtown Core.

Christine E. Ten Eyck, FASLA, *President*, Ten Eyck Landscape Architects
Harwood Park

The new downtown park, Harwood Park has an opportunity to connect area residents with a unique and fascinating ecological and cultural history of downtown Dallas. Taking full advantage of the four-acre site that sits on the southeast edge of downtown, the future park is surrounded by both preserved historic landmark buildings, including three on site, complemented with burgeoning new residential projects. Recognizing this physical and historical context, Harwood Park can tell a story that spans the last 150

years – from tributary to the Trinity River, to residential neighborhood, to automobile service industry to film industry full circle to its present role as a contemporary residential enclave for downtown living. This talk will focus on opportunities the park has to become a downtown community gathering and play space with unique connections with nature, the incorporation of existing significant buildings with recreational and passive courts, and the prospect of striking views to nearby architecturally significant structures, while leveraging cultural memory of this rich and powerful cultural lifeway in downtown Dallas.

Panel II: Transforming and Connecting the City

Gail Thomas, Ph.D., Hon. AIA., *Director*, Center for the City of The Dallas Institute of Humanities and Culture

Introductory Remarks

This conference is about the profound relationship between our habitat, our culture, and Nature.

In turning our attention to natural spaces within our inhabited places, we are experiencing the work of recapturing the soul of the city.

Every great city on our planet was founded adjacent to a body of water. In 1842, Dallas' founder, John Neely Bryan, terminated his western exploration at the banks of the Trinity River in order to trade with the Indians he met there and because of the verdant soil and rich vegetation present where three tributaries of the Trinity River come together.

The 20th Century brought people and industry to Dallas. First the railroads and then the highways and ultimately the airports drew attention away from the source of Dallas' initial habitation, and the Trinity River lapsed into obscurity, becoming a dumping site--the repository of discarded refuse.

People came and continue coming until now Dallas finds itself the fourth largest metropolitan area in our nation.

Symbolically, the institutions concerned with healing, education, and re-creation are leading the way to a recovery of our natural habitat, acknowledging the role Nature plays in the body, mind, and spirit of every human being. Dallas, one of the most air-conditioned cities in the world, is venturing outside.

Brent A. Brown, AIA, *President & CEO*, Trinity Park Conservancy
Harold Simmons Park

For a century now, the Trinity River has cut through Dallas like a dividing wedge, but it has also given Dallas an opportunity almost any city would envy.

Directly at our core is a vast tract of underutilized, neglected green space. Thanks to the generosity of early donors, to the wisdom of city leaders and to the engagement of residents and neighbors, this land can become something more than an afterthought or dividing line.

Connecting Downtown, West Dallas and Oak Cliff, Harold Simmons Park will encompass over 200 acres and almost one mile of the Trinity River. The Park invites all of Dallas to reimagine our river as a wellspring of connection – to nature, to one another and to new opportunities shared across our neighborhoods. The Park extends beyond the Trinity River and its levees to unite the city and will anchor a network of green streets and trails that link thriving, inclusive neighborhoods on both sides of the river.

What does it mean to develop a great centralized park today? How can a park make a city more equitable? Trinity Park Conservancy is working to answer these questions and Dallas is poised to be the place where it will happen.

Janette Monear, *President & CEO*, Texas Trees Foundation

R for a Medical District – Restoring Body and Soul to the Southwestern Medical District

Medical districts, beyond the footprint of the buildings, can be inhospitable and inhumane which results in increased anxiety and stress.

Terrified is a word that comes to mind and stress is what invades the body when the environment is, and feels, unsafe—not a good combination for already stressed patients, visitors, doctors, and hospital staff who need to transect the District to get from one hospital to another or to visit a clinic.

The Southwestern Medical District is an economic hub for the City of Dallas and North Texas Region. Lack of a cohesive and connected district between the public right of ways of this 1,000-acre district and the building campuses is the result of countless decisions over the years that placed the needs of our vehicles over the needs of the people the District is intended to serve. The result is an inefficient, unattractive, unhealthy and unsafe infrastructure that fails to complement the world-class medical facilities that represent the heart and soul of the District and the well-being of its users.

Healthy systems, healthy people and healthy environments provide the framework for transforming a “sick” medical district into a place of “healing” beyond the footprint of the buildings.

Through this presentation the audience will discover the multi-faceted approach to a private design process within a public/private partnership that prioritizes people and a prescription for a healthy and healing environment.

Philip C. Henderson, *FAIA, Board Trustee*, Circuit Trail Conservancy

Connecting Dallas by connecting the 14 Dallas Council Districts Trails

Over the past 25 years, Dallas and Dallas County have built trail segments within the official City and County trail master plans. There are significant gaps.

In 2012, a 130-mile trail connecting all fourteen council districts was identified within the existing city and county Master Plans. 50% of the trail was missing.

The Circuit Trail Conservancy (CTC) was formed to be the nonprofit private partner with the City to design, fund and build the missing trail segments.

This presentation will focus on the first CTC project, the LOOP. Four missing trail segments in four different locations, a total of ten miles, are being designed to connect 40 miles of existing trails. The new 50-mile LOOP will connect the neighborhoods of Dallas’ central council districts.