

LEADING WITH LANDSCAPE IV: TRANSFORMING NORTH CAROLINA'S RESEARCH TRIANGLE

APRIL 13, 2018: JAMES B. HUNT, JR., LIBRARY, NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY, RALEIGH, NC

PRESENTED BY: **THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE FOUNDATION**

WITH SUPPORT FROM: **SASAKI AND DIX PARK CONSERVANCY**

AND PRESENTED IN ASSOCIATION WITH EVENT PARTNERS **THE CITY OF RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA MUSEUM OF ART, AND NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY, COLLEGE OF DESIGN**

Abstracts

Foundations for Change

Charles A. Birnbaum, FASLA, FAAR, *President & CEO*, The Cultural Landscape Foundation
Raleigh, the Triangle, and a 225-Year Overview of City Shaping and Landscape Architecture in the Region

This presentation sets the stage for the day by providing a foundation for the pair of presentations that follow (by Boone and Flink) that collectively address the region's rich and intertwined natural and cultural systems. Using the dual lenses of **planning** and **landscape architecture** as a framework, the presentation will commence with an exploration of early (and only partially realized) planning efforts by William Christmas (1792) and Charles Mulford Robinson (1913). Gleaning what can be learned from these centuries-old efforts, the presentation will next move through shifting values that played out throughout the 20th century, exploring how the profession of landscape architecture, initially young to the region and in desperate search of leadership and recognition, evolved to tackle such critical and diverse topics as urban sprawl, the decline of urban centers, Modernism, the birth of the environmental movement, citizen participation and public engagement, equity, healing social wounds, and the present urban renaissance that is playing out in The Triangle.

The presentation will conclude with an overview of the curatorial vision for the three panels that follow which collectively aim to evaluate current project work, both built and on the boards, and how the work is balancing natural and cultural values in the civic and public realm.

Setting the Stage: A History of Coupled Human & Natural Systems

Chuck Flink, FASLA, PLA, *President*, Greenways Incorporated
The Ecology of Place: The Triangle Region's Natural Heritage

The Triangle Region of North Carolina is located in the Piedmont Plateau of North America, anchored by the cities of Raleigh, Durham and Chapel Hill, and characterized by gently rolling hills, broad river valleys and productive forests. During the past 500 years, this region of North Carolina has been transformed from an untamed wilderness to a renowned hub of research, technology, pharma and world-class universities. This presentation will explore the role that ecology and environment has played in shaping settlement, culture and the economy of the region.

Specifically, this presentation aims to examine how geology, topography, silviculture and agriculture provided the framework for community development, industrialization, enterprise, government and education. The growth of the Triangle region has been fueled by its green infrastructure: forests, streams, rivers and ecological systems. Deliberate efforts have been made to preserve and protect elements of this green infrastructure. The Triangle is known for its extensive, world-class network of greenways, parks and

open spaces. However, explosive population growth throughout the Triangle region threatens this magnificent natural heritage with impacts on watersheds, wildlife and green infrastructure.

Kofi Boone, ASLA, *Associate Professor of Landscape Architecture*, North Carolina State University, College of Design

Legacies and Trajectories: Cultural Themes Framing the Triangle Region

The Triangle Region of North Carolina is experiencing rapid landscape change due to unprecedented urban growth. With so much change, what gives this region a sense of place; what is the Triangle Region anyway? This presentation will situate an understanding of the Triangle Region and its transformations in the context of broad cultural themes; The post-Civil War legacies of economy, race and class, the aspirations of North Carolina's contested post World War 2 identity as "The Progressive South", and the influence of 20th century efforts to connect the region to the global economy. The presentation will raise awareness of landscapes that reflect the lifeways of different groups over time in the Triangle Region, highlighting cultural landscapes built by and with African American communities. The presentation will conclude with contemporary cultural landscape challenges facing the Triangle Region as it attempts to balance its desire for inclusion in global networks while retaining local identities.

Panel I: The Research Triangle's Emerging Urban Public Realm: Campus Landscapes Lead by Example as Incubators and Laboratories for Fresh Ideas and Approaches

Mark H. Hough, FASLA, *University Landscape Architect*, Duke University
Introductory Remarks

The geographic region known today as the Research Triangle was borne out of a progressive business venture from the 1950s that sought to maximize the intellectual and economic capital generated by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC), North Carolina State University (NCSU), and Duke University. The three schools, which had evolved in very distinct communities, with unique cultural contexts, histories, and aesthetics, became drivers of a transformative economy. Over time, the Piedmont landscape they shared, with its rolling hills, successional woodlands, and expansive farmland, evolved into an increasingly crowded and suburbanized maze of highways and planned communities. As industries modernized, demographics changed, and the vernacular landscape of the past disappeared, higher education remained the constant.

Campuses—including those found other colleges and universities, along with corporate, institutional, and urban examples—make up the most significant designed landscapes in the region. UNC, the oldest state university in the country, grew incrementally and steadily since its founding in 1789. In Raleigh, Shaw University was founded in 1865 as the first HBCU in the Southeast, NCSU opened as a land-grant college in 1887, and Meredith, the largest all-female college in the state, opened in 1891. Duke, with historic landscapes designed by Olmsted Brothers and Ellen Shipman, was founded in 1924 in nearby Durham. The rich design legacy of the campuses includes modernist landscapes designed by Dick Bell, and contemporary spaces designed by significant landscape architects such as Laurie Olin, Gary Hilderbrand, Warren Byrd, Michael Vergason, and the late Peter Schaudt and Glenn Allen.

Gary Hilderbrand, FASLA, FAAR, *Founding Principal and Partner*, Reed Hilderbrand LLC; *Professor in Practice*, Harvard University Graduate School of Design

Changing Constructs: Student Life and Campus Landscape

Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., advocating for landscape architecture's instrumentality in 1866, urged Massachusetts College of Agriculture trustees to "include arrangements designed to favorably affect the

habits and inclinations of your students, and to qualify them for a wise and beneficent exercise of the rights and duties of citizens and of householders.” Olmsted makes explicit his belief in design as an agent of social order and civic engagement. How does campus design shape student life? And how does social change across generations influence the way we design on campus?

This talk examines a decade-long transformation at Duke University for a precinct that aggregates essential aspects of student life today—dining, convening, shopping, performance, health and fitness, activism and cultural identity, study and relaxation. Duke’s Brodhead Center, Crown Commons, and Penn Pavilion revise the way students live and work on a campus that has evolved from ecclesiastical roots to a culture that promotes open discourse, diversity, inclusion, and empowerment. How do we square traditions of conformity and exclusivity—and the shared memory of the iconic campus landscape that supported this—with the patterns we see today in technology- and media-influenced socialization? We look at landscape architecture’s role as a gathering force for social engagement on campus across time.

Daniel P. Gottlieb, *Director of Planning, Design, and Museum Park*, North Carolina Museum of Art
Mark W. Johnson, FASLA, *Founding Principal*, Civitas
NCMA’s Museum Park | From Prison to Cultural Destination

The North Carolina Museum of Art’s 164-acre campus has been a 25-year experiment in organic planning and intentional design. Its transformation from a state prison into a destination for art and culture has forever changed the character and identity of the museum. Access to the Museum Park’s landscape has expanded community participation in the life of the museum and expanded its curatorial/cultural role into the public realm.

The Museum campus’ development has been opportunistic: taking possession of the highly degraded Polk Youth Detention site; taking advantage of the state DOT’s desire to build a greenway; capitalizing on community and donor interest in land preservation, art and nature. Principals of sustainable environmental design, museum programs and a curatorial approach guided the campus’ development - collaborating with talents including Nicholas Quennell and Barbara Kruger, Thomas Phifer and Walter Havener, and Mark Johnson.

The 2016 Civitas designed landscape unified the Park, giving it cohesion to support the goal of public participation in a diversity of forms. It connected “Gallery” and “Park” perceptions while supporting engagement with art in the landscape. Its design completes campus connections in two directions: from formal to informal, and urban to pastoral.

The presentation will explore how a museum, nature, and the designed landscape can expand the meaning of both museum and nature, engage new people, and satisfy a range of needs. The adaptable landscape supports experiences with art, environmental restoration, social and recreational programs, and collaboration shaping the economic development of its neighborhood

Panel II: The Research Triangle’s Emerging Public Realm and the Story of The New South

Stephen C. Bentley *Assistant Director*, City of Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department
Landscapes in Transition

Multiple cities across the Southeast United States are in the midst transformational projects that have them reflecting on their own physical and historical contexts ranging from postindustrial reclamation to

segregation. Atlanta and Birmingham, just to name a couple, are both experiencing periods of rapid growth, diversifying populations and urbanization. The Research Triangle area is no different and its emerging public realm takes into account influences from a long history and track record of successful regional institutions, an abundance of natural and cultural resources, and ongoing civic support for the public realm. Each of these influences continue to advance community participation and engagement regarding The Triangle's origins, evolution -- and the unique challenges of balancing equitable prosperity with the stewardship of irreplaceable natural and cultural landscapes.

W. Fitzhugh Brundage, Ph.D., *William B. Umstead Professor of History and Chair, Department of History, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill*

The Commemorative Landscape of the Triangle: From Exclusion to Inclusion

The American South, for most of its history, has had no experience with multi-racial or democratic pluralism. Southern society was explicitly organized to create and perpetuate racial and gender hierarchies. To a greater degree than anywhere else in the United States, the authority of the state invasively bolstered the perpetuation of exclusionary, anti-democratic institutions and practices. The organization and use of public space in the South necessarily reflected the logic of this undemocratic, hierarchical ordering of society. Not only were civic spaces conceived to naturalize but also to perpetuate the socio-political order. Although seemingly contradictory, the use of public space to make hierarchies of power in the region timeless, inevitable, and natural, went hand in hand with a conscious effort to ground those hierarchies in history. Thus, elite southerners cluttered the civic spaces of the South with commemorative art and structures that complemented a historical narrative consonant with their interests. The silences and absences on the civic landscape of the South were by design, not happenstance. African Americans, American Indians, and others fashioned counter-narratives but they typically had no means to use the built landscape to express or perpetuate their historical memory.

This presentation will outline the creation of civic commemorative landscapes in the South, the counter-traditions that developed to contest the commemorative landscape, and the legacy of an inherited landscape that remains dense with artifacts of hierarchy in an era of nascent pluralism.

Gina Ford, FASLA, *Principal, Agency Landscape + Planning*

The Grove's Third Century; Sasaki's Revitalization of Raleigh's Moore Square

As one of three remaining squares from William Christmas' foundational Plan for Raleigh (1792), Moore Square has a rich and storied history. Visually connected to the Old Market and punctuating Raleigh's 'Black Main Street', Moore Square is a place of memory and culture. Often referred to as 'The Grove' – a nod to the majestic oaks that line its edges – the Square had suffered from a shortage of maintenance and various cycles of overuse/abuse from large-scale events. Despite these challenges, it remained central to the identity and image of the city, its revitalization rising to the top of all civic planning, including the recent Downtown Plan.

Led by Sasaki and under construction now, Moore Square's renovation will create a vibrant yet sensitive place in Raleigh's thriving downtown – an activated public space with activities and amenities to appeal to a broad array of users. The project preserves essential elements of the extant square – its legacy oaks, historic circulation patterns and visual connections to its urban frame – while introducing new features to enhance vitality. A cafe building with restrooms, an interactive water feature, whimsical play elements, a large civic plaza, integrated art elements, extensive seating and large lawn are among the new civic infrastructure to enable the park's success.

As the project's lead designer – working closely with the City of Raleigh, Sasaki, artist Brad Goldberg, landscape architect Kofi Boone, The Cultural Landscape Foundation, Mary Ruffin Hanbury of Hanbury

Preservation Consulting, Bartlett Tree Experts, HR&A Advisors, Fluidity Design and Kimley-Horn - will discuss the process of seeing, understanding and incorporating the Square's cultural traces in the final design.

Kate Pearce, AICP, *Senior Planner for Dorothea Dix Park*, City of Raleigh

Adrienne Heflich, ASLA, *Associate*, Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates

The Evolution of Dorothea Dix Park

Nearly two decades in the making, Dorothea Dix Park is quickly charting a path to become America's next great urban park. In 2015, the City of Raleigh acquired the 308-acre site from the State of North Carolina for \$52 million. It is a place with the potential to leverage the site's historic architecture and cultural landscape resources into a unique destination in the heart of the capital city. The site's natural, scenic and cultural amenities (rolling hills, expansive lawns, mature oaks) and central location with unparalleled skyline views provide an unrivaled collection of assets for the park's development. Similarly, the rich history and legacy of the cultural landscape -- from its early days as a plantation to the more recent history as the state's first mental health hospital weave a story reflective of the evolution of our community and the nation.

How will the site be enhanced and transformed? How can the history and legacy of the site be not only respected but revealed in the future park design? What does it mean to be a park for everyone, built by everyone? This discussion will explore these questions and share how the creation of a master plan for Dix Park will connect our community, reveal a bold new vision for the site, and unite visitors from across the state and beyond on the path toward a healthier future.