

# Landscape

a r c h i t e c t u r e



Steven Moorhead  
Editor

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**Steven Moorhead**  
Editor

**Gordon Grice**  
Coordinating Editor



Rockport Publishers  
Gloucester, Massachusetts



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Courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts.

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(bottom) Appalachian Regional Educational Center, Berea,  
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Landscape

architecture

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# INTRODUCTION

*Landscape architecture: a profession only a little over a century old; an art as old as human existence.*

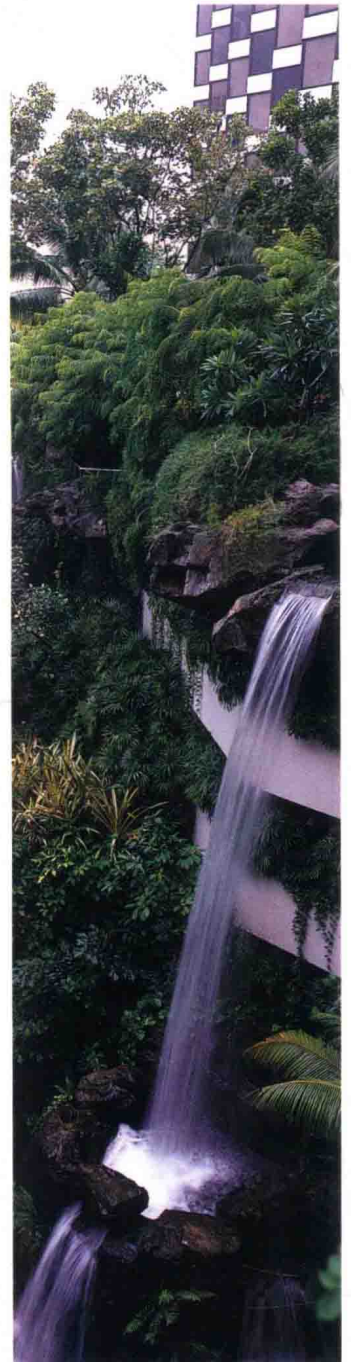
—Norman T. Newton,  
*Design on the Land*, 1971

The art of landscape architecture predates the profession by thousands of years. Ancient cultures venerated the garden as one of the highest achievements of a civilized society. Descriptions of the magnificent gardens of ancient Babylon and Egypt have survived, even though the landmarks themselves have not. Subsequent Greek and Roman civilizations contributed the arts of urban design and space planning. But it was not until the last half of the nineteenth century that the title *landscape architect* was officially used to describe a practitioner of landscape design. Invented by Calvert Vaux and Frederick Law Olmsted, it was intended to suggest an approach to a landscape that, as Norman Newton writes, would reflect “the same relation that an architect bears toward a building with the essential emphasis on *design*.”

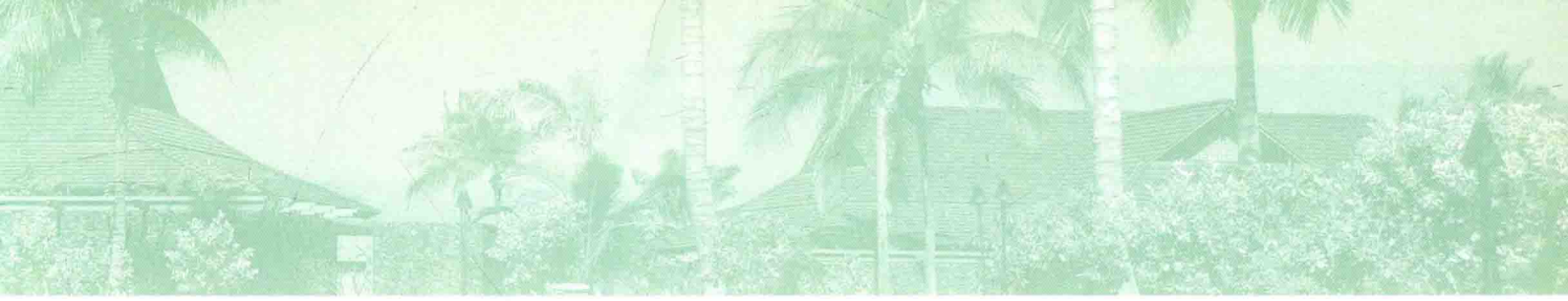


Despite its well-documented history, landscape architecture isn't an easy profession to define. Even members of the profession have difficulty rendering a description that captures all of its nuances and possibilities. Today there are many more concerns relating to the landscape and built environment than ever existed in the past: disappearing habitats and environmental degradation on a global scale, overcrowding in urban areas, a loss of privacy due to population density and the intrusion of commercial enterprise in every aspect of life, blurring and changing cultural identities and demographic balances, and the apparent triumph of profit over public benefit, to name a few. The abundance of ideas about how to deal with these concerns makes the possibility of a simple description of landscape architecture more remote every day.

This book offers a broad definition of landscape architecture by example, presenting the current work of thirty-one offices and individuals. Some writers have suggested that landscape architecture cannot be defined







as simply what landscape architects do—a lazy explanation, they say, that does little more than beg the question. We disagree, and have taken the position that there is, in fact, no better way to define it. Rather than trying to decide beforehand what constitutes landscape architecture and then selecting work that reflects this preconceived ideal, we have instead selected offices whose work is exciting, challenging, and current. We present this work as our broad definition of landscape architecture in its many configurations at the end of the twentieth century.

Landscape architecture constitutes an approach to solving problems—a method as well as a product. In the course of their training, landscape architects acquire a variety of skills that may be applied to

many kinds of problems. In this book, we present the work on an office-by-office rather than a project-by-project basis, so that a method of approach is more apparent. Also, while some of the offices presented here dwell in specific areas of the profession (such as public spaces, private gardens, or restorations), others are more general. Accordingly,

we have not tried to classify the offices or the work by project type. This gives the advantage of viewing a landscape solution in more than one way. The restoration of a natural habitat may also serve as a public park; a public park may also be an entertainment facility. The resulting product may defy categorization entirely.





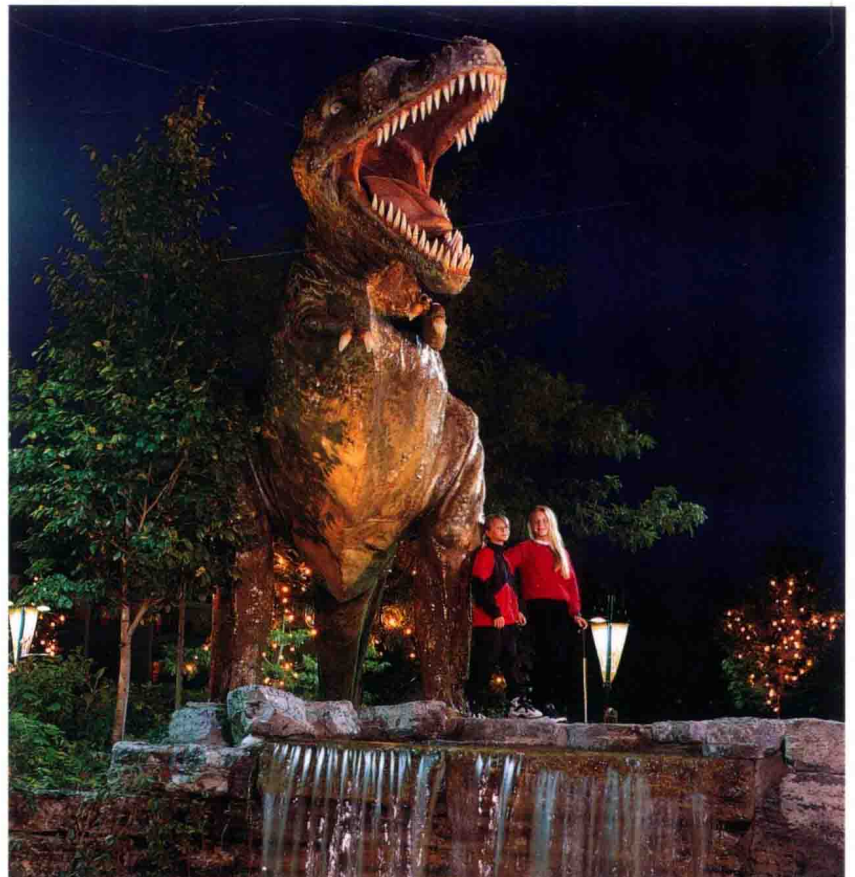


Some of the work shown on these pages may fit neatly into everyone's idea of normal professional activity. Other examples are far from the norm. In trying to achieve as broad a definition of the profession as possible, we have included an equally broad range of offices, from local to international, from theoretical to practical, from sole practitioners to multi-office corporations. All of our contributors are landscape architects and consider themselves to be practicing landscape architecture in a significant way, and in every case, we think so too.

One area of the profession that is frequently overlooked and under-represented is what might be called "everyday" landscape architecture; not the kind you have to dress up for, or read an article about in order to understand. If some books on the subject of landscape architecture err in the direction of too much theory, we hope to compensate by erring perhaps on the side of too much practicality.

We include in this broad category examples of work by landscape architects that has rarely, if ever, appeared in books on the subject: golf course design, leisure and entertainment design, indoor landscaping, and the work of public agencies. The rarity of this work in print is in contrast to its increasing importance in our built environment. Golf courses, for example, represent an idealized version of landscape, and are becoming more and more important in the

Middle and Far East. Leisure and entertainment design has become a powerful force in international development, and its best examples employ the talent of many landscape architects. Indoor landscaping has become increasingly important as a result of our modern technical ability to create fully climate-controlled, unobstructed spaces that are large enough to accommodate artificial lakes, rivers, and mountains. Public agencies such as the City of New York Department of Parks and Recreation, and the City and County of San





San Francisco Department of Public Works perform miracles of accessible landscape architecture, but have no marketing budget, so if you don't visit their handiwork, you may never know of it.

This brings us back to Frederick Law Olmsted and the origins of our profession. Central Park is today one of the many parks under the care of the New York Department of Parks and Recreation, but it was on that project, in 1863, that *landscape architect* became an honest designation. In the years since, much has changed in the demands placed on the design of an urban park, and on the demands of landscape architecture in general, but the ideal remains the same: to create environments of quality and delight. In the pages of this book, you will find examples of many forms that may help you to understand and appreciate this ancient art and recent profession.

Steven Moorhead, FCSLA, ASLA



# J. Robert Anderson, ASLA

The work of J. Robert Anderson embraces a broad palette of planning and design, including site preservation, water conservation, and the selection of native plants and regional materials that respond to the rugged Texas Hill Country. His firm gracefully integrates large architectural projects into difficult, environmentally sensitive habitats.

Central Texas' geology, endangered species, threatened aquifers, and dwindling tree cover are given primary consideration. The firm's respect for the state's history, culture, and countryside is reflected in landscape designs that require little water and are characterized by natural plantings and features. As Texas' growing urban areas are filled with gardens, plantings, and forms that are foreign to the state, the creative work of this firm proudly borrows influence, inspiration, and integrity from a rough, rugged landscape.

Robert Anderson's award-winning firm has championed the use of native plants for a

decade and continues to test them in a diverse set of micro-niches and project types. Natural formations of stone have been used by the firm to shape ponds, pools, walks, planting beds, walls, and arbors. Compositions created by hand-hewn rock terraces and billowy native grasses are especially prominent in his work.

In addition to residential projects, the marriage of architecture and Texas landscape is seen in J. Robert Anderson's projects for universities, schools, memorials, and cemeteries. Although less akin to natural shapes and forms, this work is designed to blend in an architectural sense.

The firm's orientation always has been toward design connecting with the surroundings rather than dominating. "We've been altering and changing the face of the earth too long," Anderson says. "We need to give something back in the image of our Creator."

## *National Wildflower Research Center Austin, TX, USA*

The Wildflower Research Center is a botanical garden for native plants comprising ten buildings, five major open space units, twenty-three theme gardens, water features, and rainwater harvesting.



▲ The central plaza of flagstone is surrounded by stone buildings. Here, native plants are arranged by their water needs in formal beds.



◀ At the entrance walk approaching the complex, a stone cistern catches rainwater and stores it for drip irrigation of native plants.