

# S I T E L I N E S

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## Letter from the Editor

In this issue of *Site/Lines* we have chosen to focus on monuments – monuments in landscape settings and landscapes themselves as monuments. The former include statues and memorials such as obelisks, columns, and other symbolic forms, as well as commemorative art and architecture in cemeteries, parks or other publicly accessible places. The latter consists of the preservation of particular landscapes because of their historic importance or scenic and recreational values. It also consists of the setting aside of certain sites in honor of an individual or historical event, or the sanctification of a place as a reminder of heroic death or acts too terrible to be forgotten.

It would be impossible in a single issue to explore all of the ways in which people

mark places as monuments or place monuments in landscapes. Indeed, it would take a book – and several have in fact been written – to describe the evolution of a landscape such as the National Mall in Washington, DC, as a designed space or to discuss the form and significance of its numerous monuments and memorials. Battlefields and national cemeteries also deserve essays in a future issue, as do prison camps, Holocaust memorials, and monuments to the civil rights movement. Spontaneous memorials, such as roadside shrines marking automobile deaths or offerings of flowers, candles, and mementoes marking private losses, are another topic awaiting attention. In addition, we are postponing an article on the World Trade Center memorial until an informed analysis can be made following the long-awaited realization of its much-debated design.

Here, however, is a preliminary exploration of a special genre of place making. We begin with cemeteries, monumental landscapes that typically contain mausoleums, sculptures, or stone markers to perpetuate the memory of the deceased. In “Memory and Landscape: Nature and the History of the American Cemetery,” David Sloane traces practices for burying the dead from the committal of remains beside the community meeting house to the new trend of woodlands burial (featuring gravesites in a dedicated natural landscape marked by GPS coordinates). In “Lednice-Valtice: A Monumental Liechtenstein Landscape within the Prague-Vienna Greenway,” John Stubbs and Stefan Yarabek describe the way the World Monuments Fund

is fostering protection of an entire regional landscape as a scenic monument with recreational, cultural, and educational uses. Its crown jewel, the Lednice-Valtice UNESCO World Heritage Site – will serve as a self-supporting enterprise perpetuating a large piece of the cultural, architectural, and landscape patrimony of the Czech Republic.

In “An Island Named Roosevelt: Presidential Monument and Planned Community,” I have written about the dual form of commemoration embodied in the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial in New York City and the “new town within a city” that was constructed forty years ago following the honorific renaming of the island on which it is sited. The construction of the monument, which was sponsored by the Four Freedoms Foundation and designed by the late architect Louis I. Kahn, was long delayed but is at last

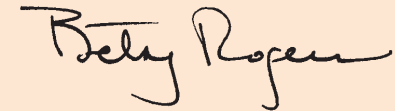
moving forward. My article is based on conversations with proponents about its history, planning, and architecture. I also interviewed some of the longtime residents of the new town on Roosevelt Island – now a mature community – who describe what it has been like to live there over time.

In previous issues of *Site/Lines* we have included an essay on either a place maker or a place keeper: a designer or steward of place. In this issue we feature a “place marker”: Theodore Roosevelt, the twenty-sixth president of the United States. Roosevelt’s championship of the Antiquities Act of 1906 made it possible for the United State to designate and thereby preserve a large number of Native American sites as historical monuments – a protection that was extended by later presi-

dents to other important aspects of the nation’s architectural and landscape patrimony.

We would like to draw your attention to a Foundation for Landscape Studies-sponsored tour in May 2011 of the Czech Greenway, led by Stefan Yarabek, coauthor of the essay on this special landscape in the current issue of *Site/Lines*. Further details can be found on page 23. We wish to remind you as well that this journal is entirely donor-supported. We urge you therefore to help the Foundation for Landscape Studies continue its publication by sending a contribution in the envelope you will find in the centerfold of these pages.

With good green wishes,



Elizabeth Barlow Rogers  
President

### On the Cover:

The National Cemetery, Santa Fe, NM. Photograph by Elizabeth Barlow Rogers.



# Landscape as Monument, Monuments in the Landscape

## Memory and Landscape:

### Nature and the History of the American Cemetery

**A**ncient cemeteries remind us that humans have been constructing homes for the dead for thousands of years – perhaps as long as we have been constructing houses for the living. Why do we care so deeply about the dead? They represent our past and our future, our mortality and our morality. Over the last two centuries, the cemetery has also come to exemplify our need to maintain a relationship to nature within the context of large-scale industrial cities. It is a pastoral haven meant to provide respite from the frenetic routine of our daily lives. The desire to have the cemetery express memory and spirituality – to be both monument and landscape – creates a tension between nature and culture with which we continue to struggle today.

Forever Fernwood Cemetery, in Mill Valley, California, is an indicator of America's growing environmental sentiment and reflects a potentially radical change in the nation's burial practices. While the cemetery still offers conventional burial plots with modest monuments set on fairly steep lawns, its owners, drawing upon the "woodlands burial" movement, have set aside part of their thirty-two acres for "natural burials." In these sections, the hills are covered with tall grasses and a slightly ragged arrangement of trees and shrubs. The graves are not marked by stones but by trees, whose positions are recorded by a Global Positioning System (GPS). Burials are made in unfinished pine boxes and families are discouraged from embalming the body.



The idea of the woodlands cemetery emerged about twenty years ago in England but has only very recently found a place in America. To date, twenty-seven cemeteries have been certified by the Green Burial Council, and only nine of those have received designation as "conservation" or "natural" burial grounds; the first was Ramsey Creek Cemetery in North Carolina, which opened in 1998. At Ramsey Creek, unlike Forever Fernwood, natural burial is the only disposition option. The landscape is disturbed as little as possible, retaining its natural style rather than being reconstructed as a picturesque garden or a suburban lawn. In a profile published in *Landscape Architecture* in 2002, J. William Thompson reported that Billy and Kimberly Campbell created the cemetery as a way to conserve land from development and as a rejection of the modern way of death critiqued by Jessica Mitford a half-century ago; the Campbells feel that contemporary burial more closely resembles the disposal of toxic waste than a spiritual ritual.

The role of nature in the landscapes of the dead has always reflected popular perceptions of the relationship between the built environment and the natural landscape. Tracing the history of its evolution helps us to understand the current trend toward the growing practice of burial in unadorned nature.

### Nature and Culture in the Cemetery Landscape

The earliest American burial places were small spaces along the side of a pasture or adjacent to the town's meeting house or church. These grounds reflected established European practices, and were as unplanned as the ones across the sea. And while the delicate carvings of East Coast gravestones poignantly remind us of the constant presence of death in the early colonists' lives, these cemeteries display no corresponding sentimentalism about the often inhospitable natural world the settlers did battle with daily.

Later generations, however, would embrace Romanticism – which valorized the serenity and moral meaning of nature – leading them to redesign many old burial places with new trees, shrubs, and flowers. New cemeteries would result from these changing cultural attitudes to nature and the growing



density of towns and cities. Although the new burying ground (later Grove Street Cemetery) in New Haven,

Lowell's Monument, Willow Avenue, Mount Auburn Cemetery. Engraving by James Smillie, 1851.

Connecticut, in 1797 provided sections for indigents, visitors to New Haven, blacks, and members of the Yale community, it also marked the creation of the nation's first chartered association dedicated to preserving the graves of the city's families. John Brinckerhoff Jackson noted in *Landscape in Sight* that the "novelty" of the new cemetery was "the nonpublic, almost domestic quality" of the grounds, where people paid to own family lots so they could inter family members next to each other in a "secluded place," ensuring the privacy of the graves and the survivors' mourning.

The establishment of Mount Auburn Cemetery outside Boston, Massachusetts, in 1831 forever altered the look and experience of the burial place in the United States. Groups of civic leaders, such as the fifteen Protestants who established

Nature provides the setting. Bench seating area, Forever Fernwood. Photograph by David Sloane, 2007.

Mont Royal Cemetery in Montreal, created cemetery companies throughout North America. As Brian Young has related in *Respectable Burial*, his history of that cemetery, the companies were looking for parcels that possessed “sufficient depth of soil, rivulets and springs to make ponds and lakes, well wooded, and with an undulating surface. . . retired from the bustle and heat of the City, and yet near and convenient of access.” The founders imagined cemeteries that were not only a place of stone memorials, but also of natural peace and tranquility. As Frederic Whitney reminded the crowd at the 1850 consecration of Evergreen Cemetery in Boston, “the Saviour was laid in a garden.”

By the 1870s, virtually every city and town in North America proudly advertised its new “rural cemetery” – so named because the founders contrasted them to urban burial places. Catholics and Protestants, northerners and southerners, sophisticated urban elites and western boosters, all embraced the need for what civic leader Elias W. Leavenworth called in 1859, at the dedication of Oakwood Cemetery in Syracuse, New York, the “last great necessity” of the city, “an ample permanent and attractive resting place for our dead.” The words were indicative of the movement’s aspirations to create a new memorial space in the growing cities: the cemeteries were far more “ample” in size than previous places; the graves would be “permanent” in this protected space; and the sites’ natural beauty combined with the inserted artificial monuments would define the “attractive” place of remembrance. Leavenworth presumed that visitors and mourners would “commune with nature in her loveliest form, and in these secluded retreats forget for an hour the toils and cares of life.”

Enveloped in nature, visitors could be enticed to leave behind their commercial concerns and focus on the moral values reformers hoped the cemetery would inculcate.

As Leavenworth’s words suggest, nature was more than a backdrop for the monuments; it played an active role in the visitor’s experience of the space. Jackson quotes a Boston clergyman who exults that the “child of nature is clasped again to the sweet bosom of its mother, to be again incorporated in her substance.” At the same time, artistry and status vied for prominence in the landscape. Increasingly elaborate family monuments and individual markers, carved in revival architectural styles, appeared throughout the grounds. Representational images of nature itself proliferated as well. A broken tree trunk signifying a brief life, a crown of ivy for faithfulness, and a lamb of innocence for a child’s grave: all were part of



Nature envelops the visitor.  
Oakwood Cemetery, Syracuse NY.  
Photograph by David Sloane, 1985.

the complex, nineteenth-century language of memorials. The crowds that visited the cemeteries came for both the monuments and the bucolic setting that reinforced the powerful moral message of death and memory.

### Smoothing Nature

Just as the rural cemetery movement was spreading across America in conjunction with the Anglo-American settlement of the Midwest and California, cities began constructing urban parks. These were built to a large degree in response to the popularity of rural cemeteries as pleasurable retreats from the city. In 1859, Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux’s Central Park officially opened to the public, propelling a nationwide urgency to imitate New York City. Although the first parks mimicked the Romantic “rural” taste of the antebellum cemeteries, a new field of city management soon appeared, with

“lawn plan.” Strauch, a German horticulturalist, was named superintendent of Spring Grove Cemetery in Cincinnati, Ohio, in the 1850s. Confronted by a swampy area near the cemetery’s entrance, he designed a long natural vista of ponds and islands leading into the main burial sections. Water, lawns, and more formal plantings were the principal components of the new design rather than fenced family plots enclosing impressive monuments set within groves of trees. In this generation’s view, the cemetery’s entire landscape, rather than any single monument or flower bed, made it a work of art. The focus needed to be on the complementary function of each element to ensure the cemetery’s beauty for perpetuity.

No cemetery space exemplified the starkly coherent landscape as effectively as the new national cemeteries reserved for the nation’s veterans. During the Civil War, even as workers were moving the earth in Manhattan to finish Central Park, hospital transport ships were bringing the Union dead back north for burial. These bodies were interred in existing cemeteries such as New York’s Green-Wood, but later, as the war progressed and the battlefields became sacred spaces, the notion of burial with military honors for even ordinary soldiers gave birth to national cemeteries – the most prominent

park superintendents focused on providing active and passive recreation. The Picturesque aesthetic of the antebellum period did not suit this need well, since clusters of trees and shrubs hid views and interrupted movement. In the parks, and the cemeteries that emulated them, a new conception of nature emerged that would smooth the edges of the landscape.

The first generations of professional landscape architects, such as Adolph Strauch, Jacob Weidenmann, and Ossian Cole Simonds, refined the principles of the new aesthetic, called the



being Arlington National Cemetery, the former home of Robert E. Lee, across the Potomac from the capital. Here the bright white individual markers, identically carved and precisely placed, create endless geometric patterns against the sparkling green lawns. The result is a stunning collective memorial of honor and loss, sharply contrasting with the chaos of the battlefield. At Arlington, a visitor is awed by the nation's commitment to remembrance of the honored dead; it and other military cemeteries elsewhere in the country serve as patriotic celebrations of national purpose.

In national cemeteries and private ones as well, the relationship of nature to culture shifted. Instead of emphasizing botanical diversity in a Picturesque landscape of woodlands and green glades, cemetery designers now opted for broader lawns and sparser plantings. This style provided an effective backdrop to the increasingly large and sometimes beautiful mausoleums and monuments that Gilded Age clients commissioned well-known architects to design. Neoclassical and gothic motifs dominated in these mausoleums, as well as in sculpted memorials produced by prominent sculptors and the monument companies that imitated them. Augustus Saint-Gaudens's dramatic statue in honor of Henry Adams' wife, Clover, in Rock Creek Cemetery in Washington, DC, captured the emotion of the deceased's tragic death and spoke of loss to any visitor. Nevertheless, many monuments of the period were standardized obelisks and angels, with little artistic merit.

America's growing ethnic and religious diversity meant that different communities created very different cemeteries. Even as lawn-park cemeteries emulated urban parks, small cemeteries for Catholic Italians and Poles or Russian Jews maintained the tradition of individual markers tightly lined up in sparse natural spaces. The remnants of fenced graves, iron crosses, and small gravestones in the campo santo churchyards of the Southwest are vernacular expressions of the importance of family relationships beyond the grave. Ceramic photographs grace some markers, enforcing a heightened form of remembrance and intimacy between the living and the dead.



Stewart Mausoleum, Green-Wood Cemetery, Brooklyn, New York.

The general trend, though, was to tame nature into serving as a backdrop for the artistry of the memorial. In the last decades of the nineteenth century, some cemeteries, such as Spring Grove, had the resources and skilled superintendents to sustain a lovely parklike landscape, but in too many others the memorials overwhelmed the natural setting as lot holders vied to erect monuments to their economic status. Mausoleums imitated French châteaux, while obelisks raced toward the sky. The competition became so intense that by the early twentieth century, superintendents and critics began searching for an alternative approach – an effort that resulted in the development of the memorial park.

The memorial parks were the creation of another generation that wished to separate itself from the past – this time from the perception of the cemetery as an overcrowded assortment of gravestones. Yet these new cemeteries did not reverse the decades-long shift of the balance between nature and culture; nature continued to assume an almost passive, stage-setting role.

Memorial parks tended to be more like other twentieth-century consumer businesses, focused on profits although still structured as nonprofit organizations. Their management also exerted ever greater control over the landscape, replacing upright individual gravestones and family monuments with markers flush to the ground. Very elaborate memorials were still erected, but these reflected institutional values such as patriotism, family, and religion, rather than commemorating individuals or families. As a result the memorial park took on the appearance of a vast lawn punctuated here and there with monuments of a generic nature such as a statue of Christ, an eagle, or a Masonic emblem. The number of plantings declined dramatically as the landscape was simplified to trees and lawns, with an occasional flower bed, and individual vases on the graves.



Grave marker with ceramic portrait, Green-Wood cemetery, Brooklyn, New York.

## Portraits in Granite vs. Trees as Monuments

Although innovative and engaging when it was originated in the early years of the twentieth century, the memorial park as a design paradigm came to be perceived as increasingly stale over time. As the practice of cremation grew, garden mausoleums with cremation niches became de rigueur. Changing family demographics led to orderly rows of two-grave lots meant for a husband and wife; the diminishing number and size of family monuments gave rise to long, attractively landscaped, communal memorial walls. These alterations, though, did nothing

to resuscitate the cultural excitement cemeteries inspired during the antebellum period or to recapture the popularity

achieved by the early memorial parks. James Stevens Curl notes in *Death and Architecture* that society seemed to turn away from “a celebration of death,” suggesting a form of emotional anemia. As a result, today many Americans never erect a memorial anywhere, much less in the cemetery, and rarely visit family gravesites after the burial.

Yet these trends have hidden important developments that may invigorate old traditions and offer new hopes. First, perhaps due to a combination of recent wars, the AIDS epidemic, and other tragedies, 21st-century theater, film, television, and other arts have persistently and graphically portrayed death and dying. Perhaps in response, a new public emotionalism is evident in the growing number of roadside shrines and memorial graffiti in our cities.

Borrowing from the tradition of the ceramic photographs and even older epitaphs, a new generation utilizes innovations

in the technology of monument carving to produce more personalized memorials in America's cemeteries. Many of these new memorials also draw on the old symbolic language of nature, employing deer and crowns of ivy in bucolic portraits gracing black granite.

Perhaps most importantly, a desire to have a more "natural" disposition of the dead has driven both the green burial movement and a rise in cremation. As late as April 1970, when Americans celebrated the first Earth Day, fewer than 5 percent of dead bodies were cremated, according to the Cremation Association of North America. In the decades since, the rise in the numbers has been stunning, given religious objections and conservatism regarding changing burial options. In some regions, such as along the West Coast, over 50 percent of the deceased are now cremated. Many Americans view cremation as a disposition of remains that reconnects death and nature, and therefore prefer it for their loved ones. Although not as radically innovative as the woodland cemeteries with their green burials, cremation represents a similar perspective.

All these trends create an intriguing cultural paradox: the cemetery continues to recede from cultural visibility for some Americans even as it grows in importance and meaning for others. One group wishes to bury the dead in a place that only allows biodegradable memorials intended to disappear into the earth, with nothing left in the end but a digital record of the grave. Another set of Americans is using real-life images transferred from their still and video cameras to create elaborate portraits of the dead on black granite tombstones. Other contemporary technologies offer additional means of commemorating the dead – for example, posting tributes and memories of friends and relatives on Internet memorial sites.

How will memory endure in places that only allow trees as monuments and where survivors rely on GPS to mark the grave? Is the decision to return to a more natural burial process in keeping with the mobility and alienation of post-modern life, where ties to communities are ephemeral and memories of achievements short? Is portraying a stylized natural scene on a monument the same as designing a compelling physical environment of tranquility and solace? Can we integrate the digital ether with the physical space of memory? How will we continue to balance memory and landscape, nature and culture? The remarkable reality is that the evolution will continue, reflecting the tensions and the opportunities of American life and death. – David Charles Sloane

### An Island Named Roosevelt: Presidential Monument and Planned Community

In 1973, Welfare Island was renamed Roosevelt Island in honor of the thirty-second president of the United States. Unlike the rechristening of Idlewild Airport as JFK in honor of President John Fitzgerald Kennedy, or the designation of three acres of Central Park as Strawberry Fields in memory of John Lennon, however, this name change was not merely a titular form of homage. The very identity and purpose of the island was already being radically altered, and its new incarnation was to include an impressive Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial designed by architect Louis Kahn.

As it turned out, the rebirth of the island as a town of fourteen thousand inhabitants proceeded at a speed unusual in government, whereas the eponymous monument soon became mired in setbacks. Only now, almost forty years later, has ground been broken for Kahn's last project. This is a matter of considerable rejoicing for the segment of the architectural community for whom Kahn ranks, after Frank Lloyd Wright, as the twentieth century's preeminent American architectural genius. It is also a celebratory moment for the Four Freedoms Foundation, the monument's sponsor throughout the entire period.

Welfare Island – originally called Blackwell's Island – seemed in many ways an unlikely place for a presidential com-

memoration. For centuries, this isolated protrusion of Manhattan bedrock in the middle of the East River had been the location of choice for public institutions serving those who were either quarantined or ostracized by society. Scattered across the island's 143 acres, these institutions had included a smallpox hospital, a lunatic asylum, a workhouse, an almshouse, and a penitentiary. In 1968, when I first explored the island, many of these buildings had either been torn down or survived only as vine-covered ruins in a rubble-strewn wildscape; the two municipal hospitals remaining, Bird S. Coler and Goldwater Memorial, served patients with long-term disabilities and chronic illnesses. A forlorn, out-of-sight-out-of-mind place, the island was also an arguably odd location for honoring the wheelchair-bound Roosevelt, who had been careful to disguise his disability in order to protect his political image.

Yet by 1970 the island was already undergoing a profound transformation. It had recently grown by three acres at its southern tip – part of a thousand-foot-long extension created from the disposal of excavation debris from a new subway tunnel beneath the East River. This publicly owned parcel of land was in effect up for grabs. With its views of the Manhattan skyline and the United Nations, the latter almost directly opposite on the Manhattan shore, the site was a tabula rasa awaiting some kind of dramatic punctuation. Hence it appeared to

some to be the most logical spot in New York City for an important presidential monument. Furthermore, the island had already been slated to become a site for badly needed, middle- and lower-middle-income housing – an entire new town – a socially beneficial goal that the Democratic president would certainly have embraced.

The 1960s and 70s were confidently utopian decades when such terms as "master planning," "urban renewal," and "slum clearance" had not yet fallen into disrepute.



Roosevelt Island, contemporary view from the East River.





Historic preservation as a civic ethos was yet in its infancy, and the leveling of old neighborhoods and rebuilding of large areas within cities was still being fostered as a matter of policy at all levels of government. Although Jane Jacobs's revisionist urban theories had recently begun to inspire opposition to the wholesale, top-down, megaproject reconfiguration of neighborhoods, this long-ignored part of New York was already city-owned and essentially vacant except for the two still-functioning city hospitals and the remaining historic ruins, which were being used by the fire department for training exercises. It was highly unlikely that a community group or civic watchdog organization would campaign to prevent the de novo reconstruction of Welfare Island. Moreover, New York had become a city with a chronic housing shortage.

The first notion of a total redesign of Welfare Island dates back to 1961 when a syndicate of developers, including the architect Victor Gruen, proposed acquiring it from the city. The consortium planned to erect eight, Gruen-designed, fifty-story slab buildings to be used for housing and related amenities. They unapologetically claimed that the realization of this radically modern, Le Corbusier-style proposal would "mean unscrambling the melee of flesh and machine [in order to make] the first twentieth-century city." This arrogantly utopian private-enterprise vision was turned down, but the decision in 1963 to build a new subway tunnel under the East River where the island stands stimulated a host of other proposals.

One idea, which was seriously considered, was to build a school there for the children of United Nations families. Other proposals included turning the entire island into a recreational park, building a pleasure garden like Copenhagen's Tivoli,

or using it as a place to reinter the remains of those buried in the large cemeteries of Brooklyn and Queens in order to free up land for housing in those boroughs. All of these ideas were eventually dismissed as economically or politically impractical. With no firm plan in hand but determined to move forward, Mayor Lindsay confirmed the city's intention to redevelop the island soon after he took office in 1966. The first stage of this process was its "cleanup," and at Lindsay's behest the New York City Department of Buildings promptly condemned forty-five of the island's deteriorating structures.

In 1968 Governor Nelson Rockefeller, a man with a passion for building and a penchant for modern architecture, encouraged state legislators to pass a bill establishing an independent, public-benefit corporation that would be structured to fast-track the design and construction of large-scale, urban projects. Funded by moral-obligation bonds and thereby relieved of layers of state and city bureaucracy, the Urban Development Corporation (now known as the Empire State Development Corporation) was intended to create jobs, community facilities, and housing. To head the new government entity, Rockefeller appointed Edward Logue, an urban-renewal planner with a reputation almost as formidable as that of the legendary Robert Moses.

To implement specific projects, the state created subsidiary corporations operating under the aegis of UDC. The first of these was the Battery Park City Authority, which was established by the New York State Legislature in 1968 to finance and supervise the construction of offices,

Ruins of former smallpox hospital, designed by James Renwick, Jr., 1856.



apartment houses, and a park on a section of Hudson River shoreline that had been augmented with landfill derived from the construction of the World Trade Center in Lower Manhattan. A year later the city signed a ninety-nine-year lease with the state, creating the Welfare Island Development Corporation to build and subsequently manage a planned community on Welfare, soon-to-be Roosevelt, Island.

Logue lost no time in commissioning Philip Johnson, the city's most renowned architect at the time, and his partner, John Burgee, to develop a master plan. The WIDC plan called for the retention of the two hospitals; the construction of four building groups containing twenty thousand low- and moderate-income apartment units (because of the large disabled population on the island, around fifty of these were reserved for hospital patients who could be mainstreamed into the community); the creation of five parks and four miles of waterfront promenade; and the building of a two-thousand-car garage. Its financial underpinnings were provided by the 1955 federal Mitchell-Lama law, which offered tax abatements and other incentives to developers who would build affordable

housing. Additional subsidies from federal, state, and city governments made low rents and low-interest mortgages for cooperative units possible, ensuring affordability for residents.<sup>1</sup>

When the Johnson/Burgee plan was presented in 1969, it garnered warm reviews from the architectural press. It was praised principally for its "unmodern" modesty of scale, sense of livability, stepped-down building heights, and provision of water views at the pedestrian level as well as from the apartments above.

<sup>1</sup> Today these forms of tenant assistance no longer exist except for the original residents of Roosevelt Island. For them rents are stabilized at figures far below market rate. Most early tenants continue to occupy their original apartments because of this economic benefit. There is a long waiting list of applicants for apartments that are still subsidized. However, many of the apartments in the older buildings are no longer rent-controlled, and the new buildings erected by developers on the island all bill themselves as offering luxury apartments.

Its attention to mixed use (street-level shops and living quarters above), sociable population density, and overall human scale caused the stylistically versatile Johnson to assert, “This is my Jane Jacobs period.” However, the exhibition’s accompanying catalogue, entitled “The Island Nobody Knows,” promoted the plan with sophisticated similes that would appeal to world travelers rather than with the sort of neighborhood-oriented terminology used by Jacobs. Its open-ended, colonnaded Arcade was compared to Milan’s Galleria Vittorio Emmanuele, while the Harbor’s riverside steps were said to evoke the ghats of the Ganges. A museum goer’s knowledge of art – Feininger’s photographs, Piranesi’s drawings, Sheeler’s paintings – supplied the imagery used to describe the thrilling views of Manhattan. By naming the central transportation corridor “Main Street,” however, the architects brought the plan back into the realm of small-town America.

The publicity and praise for the Johnson/Burgee plan brought the island’s potential to the attention of the statesman and diplomat William vanden Heuvel. In his capacity as chairman of the Four Freedoms Foundation (so named for the four freedoms enunciated by President Roosevelt in his State of the Union address in 1941), vanden Heuvel suggested the placement of a New York City Roosevelt memorial on Welfare Island. At the same time, he put forth the notion that the island be renamed in Roosevelt’s honor.

The mission of the Four Freedoms Foundation, which was later incorporated into the Roosevelt Institute, a Hyde Park and Washington-based organization, is to perpetuate the legacy and values of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt. When I interviewed vanden Heuvel in April 2010, I asked him to tell me why Roosevelt was such an important figure to him personally. He said that his admiration goes back to his boyhood when he was growing up in Rochester, New York, as the son of Dutch immigrants during the Great Depression. Although an assistant attorney general under Robert Kennedy and ambassador to the United Nations during the Carter administration, he maintains that “FDR was always for me the greatest president. My brother was in the Civilian Conservation Corps, and my father would take me to torchlight parades. After the president’s death in 1945, my classmates, who knew how much I admired Roosevelt, raised money for me to go to Hyde Park for the funeral. I hitchhiked with a Catholic priest, and when I got there I managed to slip in with a group of students who had been invited to attend the ceremony. After the Secret Service counted heads and found one extra, I ran over to Eleanor Roosevelt and told her I had come all this way, and



Southern end of Roosevelt Island depicting the future monument by Louis I. Kahn.

she gave me permission to stay.” This was the prelude to their future friendship. Vanden Heuvel remembers, “She was a

formidable force in politics. Later I got to know her well, and in 1960 when I ran for Congress against John Lindsay, she and Adlai Stevenson campaigned for me.”

For vanden Heuvel, getting the island renamed in a legislative document signed in 1973 by Lindsay, who by that time was nearing the end of his second term as mayor of New York City, was easy. Getting the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial built proved to be far more difficult. The first obstacle was Kahn’s sudden death from a heart attack in Pennsylvania Station on March 17, 1974, shortly after his final design for the memorial had been approved; the second was New York City’s fiscal crisis the following year, which put the project on hold indefinitely. But while Kahn’s design languished on the drawing boards, the bond-financed Welfare Island Development Corporation was already realizing the Johnson/Burgee master plan.

To fill in the plan’s general outlines as rapidly as possible, Logue simultaneously commissioned several prominent practitioners to undertake various projects. The former Harvard Graduate School of Design dean Josep Lluís Sert designed both 1,003-unit Eastwood (510-580 Main Street) and 360-unit Westview (595-625 Main Street). The firm of Johansen & Bhavnani was commissioned to design the island’s two other original towers: Rivercross (531 Main Street), a Manhattan-facing building, and Island House (555-575 Main Street), which overlooks a plaza containing the restored Chapel of the Good Shepherd. (Today this building is used as a multi-denominational church.) The modernist landscape architect Daniel Kiley was given the contract for Blackwell Park, which would surround the preserved historic farmhouse, and Lawrence Halprin was asked to design the main plaza, a large central activity space dividing what the plan designated as Northtown and Southtown.



Logue was not above using ruthless tactics, pugnacious behavior, and strong language in the interest of getting things done. Armed with the power of eminent domain granted by the legislation creating UDC, which also allowed him to side-step city building-code review and other time-consuming, city-mandated approval procedures, he was able to get thirty-three thousand units of affordable housing built in seven years. When Rockefeller dismissed him from office in 1975, the first residents were already moving in. One challenge remained, however. No matter how agreeable and humane the plan, how praiseworthy the architecture, or how abundantly green and recreationally rich with parks, Roosevelt Island had to be better connected by transportation to the rest of the city.

During its years as a place of quarantine and incarceration, Welfare Island's inaccessibility except by boat had been an asset. Then in 1916, to improve access for those who were employed on the island, two elevators were installed where the Queensboro Bridge crosses overhead; for decades, workers in the island's hospitals would take a trolley to the bridge's mid-way point, where elevators installed in an adjacent structure would carry them to the island below. In 1955 a lift bridge linking the east side of the island with Long Island City in Queens was constructed, but vehicles from Manhattan had to drive over the Queensboro Bridge and navigate several blocks of Long Island City in order to reach it. Then, when the plan for the new town on Roosevelt Island was already underway, a novel solution to the problem of direct Manhattan-Roosevelt Island access was found in the form of an aerial tramway. Constructed alongside the trusses supporting the Queensboro Bridge, this unique feature within the New York City transportation system allows residents and visitors to spend three-and-a-half exhilarating minutes in a gondola arcing to a height of three hundred feet above the river before landing at the tram station on the island. Finally, in 1989, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority was able to complete the F-line subway station on Roosevelt Island a hundred yards north of the tram, thereby providing a single mode of transportation linking the island with both Queens and Manhattan.

To get an insider's perspective on Roosevelt Island's storied past, as well as a sense of what it is like to live there now, I went to see Judith Berdy, the head of the Roosevelt Island Historical Society. Berdy has been a resident since 1977, only two years after the first thirty-

four middle-income tenants moved onto the island. Her apartment on the seventeenth floor of 531 Main Street is a sunny, one-room studio looking across the East River toward Queens. The Historical Society archives, consisting of newspaper clippings, letters, documents, old photographs, brochures, books, ephemera – anything that bears on the island's past up to the present day – are housed here. As the unofficial keeper of the town's history, Berdy continues to collect whatever materials related to Roosevelt Island she can find. They now fill plastic sleeves in around 130 white, spine-labeled, three-ring binders, which occupy a series of six-foot-tall cupboards and wall shelves in the apartment. Her dining table is a work surface covered with items she is arranging according to subject matter in yet more notebooks. "The whole thing is a giant jigsaw puzzle," she exclaimed. "I just love putting it all together."

I asked Berdy how she is able to keep continually finding new items. She said, "Many people have memories of the place that they want to share. They find me through word of mouth or on the Internet. Some send me reports, some send stories, some send old snapshots. Often these are doctors who were doing their internships or residencies at Coler or Goldwater Hospital or nurses who lived in the dormitories on the island. The two hospitals – now merged into one that is designated a rehabilitation center for the disabled – were designed to provide care for the chronically ill, so I sometimes hear from patients who stayed on the island for long periods of time. Besides Coler and Goldwater there was City Hospital before it moved to Elmhurst in the fifties and Metropolitan Hospital before it relocated to First Avenue and 97th Street. I get letters, newspaper clippings, and old photographs from many of the doctors and nurses who worked in all four of these hospitals, and sometimes their descendants get in touch with me

as well." To encourage such contributions to her ever-growing Roosevelt Island memory bank, Berdy runs advertisements in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. She says that she gets a response at least every couple of months from that source.



Judith Berdy, Roosevelt Island historian.

As we talked, Berdy pointed to a photograph of the 1786–1804 Blackwell House, one of six remaining landmarks among the ninety abandoned buildings that I'd encountered while wandering around the island in the 1960s; the others had all been bulldozed in readying the island for the new town. "Here is where the head doctor lived," she said. Another photograph captured a group of nurses in front of their dormitory, and a third featured a row of pleasant Victorian cottages with front porches; these were where the senior staff members lived.

A social historian of the island, Berdy has trained herself to be its architectural historian as well. And her knowledge doesn't stop with the medical facilities that were once set in a gloomy but picturesque landscape of weeds, wildflowers, and spectral ruins; she is also an expert on the modern town that replaced them. She has a sound knowledge of city planning and period building styles as well as strong opinions about the pros and cons of the structures and landscapes of the island. The hefty tome *New York 1960: Architecture and Urbanism Between the Second World War and the Bicentennial* by Robert A. M. Stern, Thomas Mellins, and David Fishman is within easy reach on her bookshelf and she can practically recite by heart the chapter on Roosevelt Island detailing the various stages of the island's transformation from mid-twentieth-century vision to twenty-first century reality. She was recently able to obtain an old trolley entrance kiosk from the line that used to run across the Queensboro Bridge – a charming structure built of ornamental cast iron and ceramic tile – and have it moved to the island. This period relic, which has been restored to its original appearance, now serves as a visitor center.

Berdy gave the kind of back-and-forth wrist rotation that means "sort of but not quite" when I inquired how much of what we are looking at from her window is the fulfillment of the Johnson/Burgee plan and how much has been wrought by others. Inevitably the plan's realization was here and there compromised by cost and other factors, and by decisions that have been made over the years by the WIDC's successor entity, the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC). But the overall appearance – buildings of varying heights, car-free roads, a Main Street spine, a waterfront promenade, and openings between building blocks to permit numerous water views – is generally in keeping with the original scheme. Since land was reserved for this purpose from the beginning, the new luxury towers on sites that RIOC has leased to developers in the past few years in order to sustain its budget for maintaining the island's public spaces, roads, and basic infra-

structure can still be considered part of the intended implementation of the town plan.

With some outspoken reservations – she calls sixties-style architecture in the then-fashionable idiom called brutalism, “cementotecture, all rather bleak and gray” – Berdy praises the original structures, adding that “it really doesn’t matter that it is ugly outside because inside it is so nice. If the apartments are small, they have wonderful views and are filled with sunlight. The buildings themselves occupy a generous amount of square footage when you factor in the large lobby spaces and their surrounding grounds. This kind of open landscape around the buildings would be impossible in the city where every square foot of real estate is too valuable to leave open.” Describing the layout of her own apartment, she says, “Look how they paid so much attention to detail here.” Then, of course, there is the matter of rent. “Where else,” Berdy asked me rhetorically, “am I going to find an apartment under a thousand dollars a month?”

I asked her about the island as a whole and what it was like to live there. “Well, first of all, it is an island, which has its advantages and disadvantages,” she replied. “It’s peaceful and quiet, which is nice, but it has none of the liveliness of the city and practically no stores. It really is its own little world, and in a sense you feel cut off. Even though it is just a short subway or tram ride into Manhattan, if you work off the island you don’t feel like coming home, changing clothes, turning around, and going back.”

When I remarked on the somewhat desultory appearance of Main Street with its many empty shop windows, Berdy said, “We have never been successful in keeping stores; there is not enough traffic. We are a town of fourteen thousand, but you see very few people walking up and down Main Street during the week. Except for the hospital workers, no one works on the island. We have a deli, a dry cleaner, a bank, a hairdresser, a video store, and a public library – that’s about all. There used to be a fish store, a bakery, and a liquor store, but they all went out of business.”

RIOC leases these ground-floor venues, and building management companies maintain the residential stories. Residents like Berdy have an activist role in just about everything else that goes on. “We’re really a tight-knit community, and some of us have been here thirty years or more, so if you add up the time four people sitting in a room have been here it is 120 years! Naturally we have a say in what happens on the island.” The boundaries of Community Board 8 encompass the island,

providing one forum, and there are committees of various kinds. Berdy engages with the RIOC administration on a wide range of cultural and service issues, from the opening of the historic Blackwell House as a museum to the maintenance of roadways, parks, and the promenade. There is a residents’ association to voice the same concerns, but she has chosen not to affiliate with it formally, allowing that, “I’d rather be an expediter at large. As a simple gadfly I can get more done.”

While Berdy has been focused on the island’s past, William vanden Heuvel and the architectural aficionados who have long dreamed of seeing the realization of Kahn’s final work have persisted in promoting the FDR Memorial as part of the island’s future. The project has been beset with many frustrations. In 1986, for example, the state revoked the six million dollars earmarked for the memorial after its own financial collapse. In 1998, vanden Heuvel and other board members of the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute had to fight to defeat a plan to construct a twenty-four-story Marriott hotel on the site reserved for the memorial.

To meet these and other challenges along the way, vanden Heuvel has used his political and diplomatic skills to good advantage. In 1980 he obtained a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to make an educational film narrated by Orson Welles showing FDR’s importance in American history. (Now on CD, this has remained a promotional tool for fundraising over the course of three decades.)

The following year vanden Heuvel was instrumental in getting Senator Patrick Moynihan to reintroduce a bill in the Congress “to establish a national memorial. . . on the [Roosevelt Island] site according to the plans prepared by the late, preeminent American architect, Louis I. Kahn.” With the completion of working drawings according to Kahn’s original plan by the architectural firm of Mitchell/Giurgola in 1985,

New York governor Mario Cuomo established a bipartisan commission to assess the desirability of moving forward with what would eventually become a \$50 million project. Its affirmative decision left vanden Heuvel and the board of the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute with the task of raising this sum from a combination of public and private sources.

As a fundraiser vanden Heuvel has had two strings in his bow. One is Roosevelt’s popularity with people like himself who still see the president’s accomplishments as cornerstones of twentieth-century American democracy. The other is Kahn’s reputation as a twentieth-century genius. Thanks to philanthropists Arthur Ross, Jane Gregory Rubin, Shelby White, and others, most notably Fred Eychaner, the founder of Alphawood Corporation in Chicago, the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute is only \$15 million away from its \$50 million campaign goal. This spring it was possible, finally, to break ground for the monument on Roosevelt Island – thirty-six years after Kahn’s design was approved.

To oversee the public outreach needed to achieve the final construction budget and an endowment for the memorial’s ongoing maintenance, and also to administer the day-to-day meetings involved with the project as it goes into construction, vanden Heuvel asked Sally Minard, the former head of an advertising and marketing communications firm and a prominent Democratic party fundraiser, to serve as pro bono president and CEO of a corporation called the Franklin D.

Roosevelt Four Freedoms Park, LLC. Gina Pollara, an architect, serves under Minard as its paid executive director.

Pollara came to her job equipped with a deep understanding of the planned memorial, having organized “Coming to Light,” a 2005 exhibition at the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art in which Kahn’s notes and sketches for the project were displayed. The model built for the exhibition, now in Pollara’s office, shows Kahn’s concept as a thorough integration of landscape, sculpture, and architecture. Kahn spoke of the design as a room and a garden. The conjunction in Kahn’s sentence is important. His FDR memorial is not a room *in* a garden, but rather a garden *and* a room as its focal point, the culmination of a monumental axis. The garden is essentially a long triangular *tapis vert* defined by two allées of little-leaf



Gina Pollara displaying model of Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial.



linden trees (*Tilia cordata*). This tapering plane of lawn slopes downward as it is compressed inward, creating a foreshortened view of the granite-walled, roofless cube that is the “room” at the southernmost end of the island.

This forced perspective will carry the eye toward a large-scale bronze bust set within a niche in the north wall of the roofless chamber. Wide openings between this freestanding granite slab and the rest of the wall give entry to a temple-like space – Kahn’s “room.” Once inside the room, turning one-hun-

dred-and-eighty degrees to face the opposite side of the stone backdrop for the bust, one will find a monumental full-length sculpture of the president. The room will have only three sides and will be therefore entirely open on the south. This absence of wall provides a thrilling view of the Manhattan skyline, which includes the gleaming glass slab of the United Nations on the shore of the East River. In this way Kahn’s design makes the city itself the visual apotheosis of the grand controlling axis. By focusing the eye first on the bust of FDR at the end of his central axis and then dissolving its terminus into the scenic panorama on the opposite shore, Kahn has performed a feat not unlike that of the Greeks, who sited their temples in relation to spectacular natural forms within their mountainous landscape.

Kahn’s imagination was indeed fertilized by his love of Classical ruins, and although completely modern in his architectural approach, he never abandoned the principles of symmetry and geometrical order derived from his education in the Beaux-Arts neoclassical tradition. But the model of the FDR Memorial shows something else besides a sensibility attuned to Greek temple architecture. The part that is a garden recalls the brilliant spatial geometries of André Le Nôtre,



Aerial view of Roosevelt Island looking north.

But there is another way to approach the memorial room, and it provides an equally

intriguing example of grade manipulation for experiential purposes. Below the triangular lawn are granite-paved promenades next to the water’s edge. Here on the periphery of the site Kahn uses the same cool mathematical approach to subtly influence the visitor’s experience as he has along the progression of its central axis. Only now, instead of sloping down, the grade has been manipulated so that it slopes gently upward as the visitor approaches the southern tip of the island. This means that the granite-block revetments on the sides of the elevated lawn above appear to taper as the downward- and upward-slanting grades converge at the level of the room. “Look,” Pollara points out, “You start at one end feeling small as you walk along the flank of the raised lawn, but then as the revetment seems to dwindle down you sense that you are getting increasingly taller and on a more equal footing as you approach Roosevelt.” Like the stone blocks at Lawrence Halprin’s FDR Memorial on the Mall in Washington, D.C., the granite blocks of the revetment will be inscribed with significant quotations from Roosevelt’s speeches.

Kahn did not live to see the word minimalism become common parlance for architects or modern architecture classified as a historical style called modernism. But surmising how he might have designed the FDR Memorial today were he alive is irrelevant. Unlike Philip Johnson, whose keen sense of shifting trends and malleability as an architect propelled him to appropriate postmodernism and give a nod to several other planning and design ideologies, Kahn is *sui generis*. The design he created for the FDR Memorial is couched in a timeless idiom. Like all memorials, the ultimate test of this presidential monument will rest in the realm of emotion. Will it inspire reverence for Roosevelt and appreciation of Kahn’s architectural genius? Will it become a place of visitation, education, and homage? These questions can only be answered after it has been unveiled and visited by people.

Berdy is lukewarm on the subject of the FDR Memorial. “We used to be able to walk down to that end of the island and enjoy the wild atmosphere without anything obstructing the fabulous views,” she laments. “There was all this wild vegeta-

Louis XIV’s royal gardener and the father of French seventeenth-century landscape design. Kahn’s landscape is especially reminiscent of that of Vaux-le-Vicomte. There Le Nôtre, equipped with a thorough understanding of geometrical principles recently expounded by Descartes, created optical illusions through the manipulation of ground-plane grades. Thus his gardens are not comprehended in a glance; the eye at first traverses their geometrical axes with uninterrupted ease; the visitor on foot then discovers ingenious shifts in perspective and previously concealed parts with delighted surprise. In addition, the quiet dissolution of an axis as it approaches the garden’s ambiguously defined border produces a sense of unbounded infinitude that parallels the Cartesian Theory of Space.

The monument sits only a few feet above the riprap<sup>2</sup> stabilizing the crisply linear shoreline. To gain the elevation needed for the allée-embraced lawn to slope downwards toward the tip of the island, excavated fill has been mounded and then graded in the manner of one of Le Nôtre’s earthen terraces. To dramatize the ascent to the twelve-foot-high northern end of the garden, Kahn designed a monumental set of stairs. Climbing them will offer a sense of imposing arrival – something akin to the sensation of ascending the broad steps of Michelangelo’s Campidoglio in Rome or those of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC.

<sup>2</sup> The riprap will be underwater when the tide flows up the estuarine river, bringing Kahn’s room into even closer proximity to the swift-moving currents.

tion, and now, like the rest of the island, everything is getting so tidy. There is nothing mysterious left to make you wonder who used to be here.”

Indeed the landmarks on the island have lost the evocative ghostliness they had when it was still called Welfare. The cut stone salvaged when City Hospital was torn down has been recycled and is now a retaining wall in what will be a new park just north of Four Freedoms Park. It will be an attractive landscape offering recreational opportunities, but these will come at the expense of the sense of adventure that this part of the island formerly provided. James Renwick’s Smallpox Hospital, which occupies part of the site for the new park, has recently been “stabilized.” Now exposed scaffolding holds up its picturesquely moldering walls. The building will be incorporated into the park and, if funds become available, it may someday be turned into a small museum. The Strecker Laboratory nearby, where bottled organs from autopsies were stored, is now the fenced off premises of a New York City Transit Authority power-conversion station. At the other end of the island, luxury apartments have been annexed to the Octagon, the great domed space that was left when the wings of the old Insane Asylum were demolished. Thus, whereas on Ellis Island the ghosts of the past are memorialized and “interpreted” by the National Park Service, here they have been exorcized by the metamorphosis of Welfare Island into Roosevelt Island.

When I told Berdy that I wanted to speak to someone who could provide me with a firsthand, old timer’s comparison of the island in its before-and-after-new-town incarnations, she put me in touch with Nancy Mirandoli Brown, who lives at 540 Main Street. Brown was one of the first patients at Goldwater Hospital to be “mainstreamed” into an apartment, a year after the first building was ready for occupancy in 1975. When I went to see her in her cozy, houseplant-filled home, she told me that although she found the island’s former atmosphere rather romantic, there was a real sense of desolation. Back then she would go on excursions around the island with other patients, but the dirt roads were hard to navigate in a wheelchair and of course most of those with disabilities could not explore the ruins but only look at them from the outside.

“I like it much better now,” she said, “especially the promenade. Once the park and the memorial at the southern end are finished, you’ll be able to go around the entire perimeter of the island. There are at least forty or fifty – maybe more – people like me in wheelchairs, and we like to just sit for hours by

the water enjoying the sun and the views of the city, so I know I am going to like being down there.”

Brown is a quadriplegic, and her life story stands in stark contrast to the many incidents of scandal, corruption, bureaucratic ineptitude, and patient abuse that have marred the reputations of New York City’s welfare, education, and health systems. It is, in fact, a testament to the humane liberalism that once made the city a cynosure in the area of government-funded social services.

“I missed the Salk vaccine by two years and got polio when I was seven,” she told me. Being a victim of a severe form of this disease, her chest muscles as well as her arms and legs were affected, creating a chronic difficulty with her breathing. When first hospitalized, she was placed in an iron lung. After being weaned from this artificial respiration apparatus, she was able to go home to the Mirandoli’s walk-up apartment in Greenwich Village where she received home schooling from a visiting teacher, eventually earning her diploma from Washington Irving High School. Before she was strong enough to walk with crutches, two or three times a week her mother carried her down the four flights of stairs so she could go to the movies or the park. But whenever she had trouble breathing she would go to Goldwater Hospital because it was the only hospital in the city system that had a ward that dealt exclusively with this problem.

“That’s where I met my future husband, Tom Brown, who also had polio,” she said. Once they were married, Nancy, who was still an outpatient, asked if she could move into the hospital and live there full-time with him. After a year they were given a private room with a bathroom, and for eleven years they stayed in the hospital. As soon as the new Roosevelt Island apartments, some of which were designated for handicapped residents, became available, the couple applied for one.

Because of her dysfunctional lungs, a large rectangular box is attached to the back of Brown’s wheelchair and extending from it is a flexible hose with a mouthpiece from which she draws air day and night. When she says, “I don’t cook,” it is not that she doesn’t have an interest in good food but because she lacks use of her arms and hands. Until a few years ago she was able to stand, but because of the long-term degenerative effects of polio, her leg muscles are now weakened to the point where

she is completely wheelchair-bound. Since she must be cooked for, fed, dressed, washed, assisted in the bathroom, and put to bed by a helper, she needs home care attendants around the clock seven days a week. In addition, they help her do her deskwork, writing letters, answering e-mail, and paying bills; they also perform a host of other chores such as grocery shopping and watering the lush greenery that dominates one side of her living room.

One would think that such physical dependence would lead to psychological depression. Yet Brown feels herself in control of a full and happy life. Instead of simply accepting caregivers sent by the city, she and others in her building got permission to set up their own publically supported, independently directed agency called Concepts of Independence. This allows her to recruit and interview the five attendants who care for her in twelve-hour shifts as well as the housekeeper who comes twice a week. Photographs of her nieces and nephews fill one wall. They come to see her regularly, and two or three times a year she makes the necessary arrangements to take a special bus that runs between New York City and Pennsylvania where she visits her brother and his wife for a few days. At home, her schedule is a full one. She goes to mass in the Catholic church on the island four times a week. She belongs to the Roosevelt Island Garden Club and is assigned a plot where she grows tomatoes, zucchini, string beans, and cucumbers with the hands of her attendants doing the planting and weeding (“I like flowers, but being Italian, I have to have a vegetable garden,” she says). She is an active member of the Roosevelt Island Disabled Association, an independent organization that organizes picnics and other kinds of get-togethers on the island and arranges frequent trips to museums, restaurants, and parks. Their bus, which holds around ten people, four or five of whom are in wheelchairs, takes her shopping at such places as Wal-Mart and Trader Joe’s.

The Roosevelt Island Disabled Association’s most recent trip was to Hyde Park. The motivation behind the visit to the former president’s home and National Historic Site was the group’s intention to have a slightly larger-than-life-size, bronze sculpture of Roosevelt in a wheelchair become part of the memorial. The architects who endorse the Kahn design in its current form are not in favor of adding another sculpture – especially one that depicts Roosevelt as a paraplegic, a condition he took great pains to hide. As may be imagined, Brown and other members of the Roosevelt Island Disabled Association are proponents of a second monument. She explained, “Since the official memorial will just have a bust of



Roosevelt and a statue of him standing up, we think it is important to have another one that shows that his legs were paralyzed by polio, particularly since there are so many of us on the island who have similar disabilities." Fortunately, a compromise has been reached, and there will be a sculpture of Roosevelt in a wheelchair in the new park a few feet north of the entrance to Four Freedoms Park. Brown told me, "We're still in the talking stage and deciding which artist to choose. I think it would be nice to have a little girl in bronze looking up at him."

I realize that Brown is, in fact, a great deal more challenged than Roosevelt was when I unthinkingly try to shake her hand as I am leaving. He could sign the acts that made the New Deal a reality, but the hand I try to grasp is completely limp. I am struck with the sobering thought that, were I in her place, I could not have held a pen to take notes for this essay. It also strikes me with special force how different Brown's life would be without the amenities of Roosevelt Island and the ability to partake of daily life rather than live within the confines of an institution. "I love this place," she says. "It is a little oasis in the middle of the big city with a warm community atmosphere. Here everybody knows everybody. People go out of their way to be helpful. When the blackout occurred one of my neighbors went to the garage and unhooked the battery of his car and brought it up the stairway all the way to my apartment

on the tenth floor because he was concerned that my respirator would stop working."

If one is looking at Roosevelt Island from the outside as a landscape historian and urban critic, it is easy to say that the place is too divorced from the rest of the city and too much of a government-run community to have the kind of diversity and vibrancy that make New York such a dynamic and interesting place to live. The homogeneity of the single-period architecture, relieved here and there by the few isolated historic structures that have been preserved or "stabilized," and the ubiquity of the island's red-and-white graphics provide the kind of strictly controlled good taste that makes you long for the serendipity of a more diverse and surprising streetscape. The concrete building material of the early structures has grown even more dreary looking over time. There is no admixture of brownstone with Beaux-Arts, no grit to contrast with sleek, no eccentric private enterprise to leaven brand-name swank, and indeed no swank to contrast with ordinary.

But Roosevelt Island's so-near-yet-so-far quality has its advantages. When you emerge from the tram or subway and walk along the promenade you observe the city from a unique vantage point. This quiet observation deck provides the necessary physical and psychological distance to experience New York City in the way Wordsworth, standing in the morning

light on Westminster Bridge, once saw London as "a sight so touching in its majesty." When I stood there recently recalling his great sonnet and enjoying the awe-inspiring urban prospect across the river of the residential towers near the FDR Drive (the highway's name yet another memorial to the president), I became aware of the quietness. Besides conferring on the city an aura of sublimity, the atmosphere of unwonted stillness attuned my senses to what was close at hand. A freight barge moved upriver with the estuarine current. I breathed

the pleasant marine smell of the seaweed clinging to the rocky riprap below the promenade. Then I walked through the plaza to the opposite side of the island. From that vantage point I saw the tall chimneys of Con Edison sending plumes of steam into the sky. In this quiet space with its campus-like atmosphere and lack of urban tempo you are more aware than anywhere else that the city is a vast machine, a miracle of engineering.

Roosevelt Island is itself a miracle of engineering. Its lack of noise is not just the absence of the hubbub of ordinary street life. Garbage removal by an underground system of pneumatic pipes means that there are no large black bags containing trash mounded along street curbs and no big sanitation trucks blocking traffic as they follow their collection routes. Indeed, there is no traffic to block: Motorgate, Kallman & McKinnell's multistory, thousand-car garage may be a cavernous warehouse for cars, but its presence at the end of the bridge on the eastern side of the island means there are no automobiles parked on the streets and no yawning mouths of individual garages at the bases of residential buildings elsewhere. The free electric bus that serves as an alternative mode of transportation emits no motor noise or carbon dioxide as it plies back and forth between the tram station and the Octagon at the north end of the island. A special security force patrols the island and crime is virtually nonexistent.

But the appropriateness of the island's renaming in honor of Roosevelt resides more in the successful implementation of certain humane goals than in Wordsworthian intimations of the urban Sublime and the realization of utopian planning ideals derived from twentieth-century, new-town planners. Although its social services and housing benefits have been diminished in recent years by state budget cuts, they are still the island's underpinnings. Today when urban renewal is in disrepute, it is good to remember that its motive force in terms of decent and affordable shelter was one pillar of Roosevelt's freedom from want. Moreover, free-market conservatives would do well to observe the degree to which government-granted security has given Nancy Brown as nearly normal a life as possible along with an uncompromised sense of personal dignity. That is surely an example of freedom from fear. In such ways both the island's name and the memorial-under-construction are tributes to Roosevelt's vision and policies. In a nation running amok in its determined pursuit of consumer capitalism, this landscape as monument and monumental landscape as memorial are salutary reminders of a time of honorable commitment to the values and standards of American democracy. — Elizabeth Barlow Rogers



Roosevelt Island promenade.

## Lednice-Valtice: A Monumental Liechtenstein Landscape within the Prague-Vienna Greenway

The fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989 revealed to a wider world one of the most amazing historic cultural landscapes in existence – the vast Lednice-Valtice estate in Southern Moravia, created and maintained by the Liechtenstein dynasty for over five hundred years. The estate included a wide variety of cultural treasures: not only two zameks, or manor houses, dating from the late Renaissance, but also elaborate gardens, numerous follies, and some two hundred square kilometers of fields and woodland. The detailed archival records and library holdings accumulated during the Liechtenstein's lengthy tenure on the estate were also extremely valuable. At the same time, these abundant resources represented an enormous financial and tactical challenge. In fact, when Lednice-Valtice was discovered by international heritage-protection advocates and organizations in 1991, the conservation of this remarkable cultural reserve was by no means certain.

The Palava Hills, and the rolling lands adjacent to them on which Lednice-Valtice is situated, have witnessed millennia of human history. Dramatic evidence of this was discovered during archaeological excavations in 1925 in the form of a figurine called the Venus of Dolní Vestonice – one of the oldest ceramics in the world, dating to c. 27,000 BCE. Scholars now believe that some of Europe's first agrarian communities were located here. At the crossroads of Central Europe, the region also became a center of trade. Its rich limestone soils and semi-Mediterranean climate proved a seductive lure for the Romans, who established fortifications and planted vineyards here during the reign of Marcus Aurelius. A local viniculture continues today.

It was these rich agricultural lands that initially attracted the first Liechtensteins in the fourteenth century, and each generation attempted to cultivate and improve upon the family's original holdings. The next five centuries entailed the careful assembly and development of the estate, which comprised the Valtice and Lednice zameks, their finely designed ornamental gardens and landscapes, and their vast surrounding agricultural reserves. From the late-eighteenth century, the lands between and around the castles were connected with road and trail systems that were embellished with a series of impressive garden follies. As high members of the Habsburg Court, the Liechtensteins were ever alert to the most fashionable artistic, architectural, and landscape concepts of the day and they employed the best professionals to execute their

wishes, including the Habsburg court architects Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach, Joseph Hardtmuth, and Georg Wingelmüller, and equally prominent artists, artisans, gardeners, and estate managers.

Conceived on a very grand scale, the agricultural management of the estate was planned with as much care as its architectural and artistic features. The integration of culture and nature was held as an ideal by the Liechtensteins from the early eighteenth century onward, and the library at Lednice contains an impressive array of European sources on architectural and landscape design. Among the most remarkable aspects of the larger estate were the water management system at Lednice, aquaculture in the form of fourteenth-century fish ponds, a five-kilometer-long alleé of horse-chestnut trees on the straight road that connects the two zameks, and a stand of fast-growing hickory trees brought from the region of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in the early nineteenth century, as evidenced in correspondence between Prince Johann I Joseph Liechtenstein and the American botanist William Bartram.

Also evident in the historical record is the crucial role that horses played in the history of the landscape. The Liechtenstein family became involved with horse breeding in the 1600s and are believed to have participated a century later in the production of some of the famous Royal Lippizaners in their Eisgrub stables near Lednice. Among the grandest buildings on the estate are the stables at both zameks; the Lednice stable – designed by Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach –

was described by the prominent art historian Hans Sedlmayer as a “palace for horses.”

The architectural development of the estate reached its zenith in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In the eighteenth century selected improvements were made to the façades at Valtice in the neoclassical style, and in the late 1840s the baroque façades and interiors of Lednice were extensively and imaginatively modernized in the neo-Gothic taste. It was also at this time that Lednice's magnificent glass conservatory was added.

Corresponding improvements were made to the landscape throughout this period, with each component conceived as a part of a larger, harmonious design. To give just one example, the Minaret Folly is carefully aligned not only with the central portals of Lednice but also with the Valtice zamek some five kilometers to the south.

All this came to an abrupt halt at the end of the Second World War. The Liechtenstein family, primarily based in Austria and Moravia, had allied themselves with the Germans in the Sudetenland accord. When the liberated Czechoslovak government regained authority in 1945, Franz Josef II and his family were evicted from Lednice-Valtice. The subsequent new Communist government recognized the estate's artistic significance and distinctive landscape and opened it to the public, but its upkeep gradually declined; over the ensuing half century many of the art collections were dispersed or relocated. By the late 1980s, measures to maintain and protect the zameks

and their surrounding grounds had come to a near standstill.

But if various aspects of Lednice-Valtice fell into disrepair, the estate was also spared the intense modernization and development that was taking place throughout Europe. The Soviet Union considered the territories along the boundaries of the Iron Curtain a high-security zone; as a result, this ancient agrarian landscape and the communities within it were frozen in time due to the strategic aspects of their location. In Bohemia, some of the fields were only converted to modern agribusinesses in the 1980s, and in much of Moravia fields were still being scythed by hand in 1990.

At the time of the rediscovery of the Lednice-Valtice castles by various heritage-protection organizations two years later, however, some of the estate's most picturesque



Antique car show, Valtice Chateau forecourt, May 2010.





Lednice Chateau.

lands were about to be bought by an American developer for a golf and recreation facility, due to the region's proximity to Vienna. Lednice-Valtice was not alone in its dilemma. Hundreds of other national monuments were also in peril as the young Czech Republic – faced with multiple challenges and limited financial resources – struggled to rebuild itself as a democratic nation. In this period of transition to a free-market economy, all kinds of possible new paradigms were considered for operating historically and culturally significant sites. At Lednice-Valtice alone, ideas ranged from continuing business as usual to establishing a not-for-profit, heritage-site development corporation that would lease the estate for, say, fifty or one hundred years with the goal of restoring it and making it once more a self-sustaining operation. Importantly, the most viable proposals all suggested approaching the future of Lednice-Valtice in a holistic and integrated manner that would include all possible stakeholders. There was also a parallel effort underway, initiated by several Czechoslovak and Czechoslovak-Americans, to develop agritourism as a means of preserving the unique landscape of the Czech region as a model of sustainability.

Conducting planning *charrettes* (results-oriented planning symposia) for both zameks in 1993 and 1994 turned out to be a particularly effective and efficient method of ferreting out the history of the estate and brainstorming solutions to its various conservation challenges. These symposia, sponsored by the

World Monuments Fund, were important in forging consensus, articulating specific conservation projects, and – perhaps most significantly – envisioning possibilities for conserving the estate through economically sustainable means. One notion was to develop the extensive upper floors of the stables of both zameks into guest accommodations based on the British models of self-catering apartments; another was to establish cultural programs at each zamek that celebrated various aspects of their history, such as continuing the Valtice Baroque Music Festival that had been introduced a few years earlier or featuring horse and horticultural projects at Lednice. This mode of heritage-conservation planning boosted interest in and knowledge of the estate and brought forward new conservation constituencies.

Gradually a broad coalition of local, national, and international heritage and conservation agencies and interest groups took shape to stabilize the estate. Among the proudest accomplishments of the international efforts at Lednice-Valtice were several summer training courses for Czech and American students of landscape and architecture conservation, subsidized by the Samuel H. Kress Foundation. In 1993 and 1994, interns from the University of Pennsylvania, Cornell University, and the University of Litomysl lived at a neighboring farmstead and offered their services to the estate for free.

In 1996, Lednice-Valtice was listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and that same year its follies were placed on the World Monuments Fund's Watch List of Endangered Sites, which helped draw attention and support for several timely conservation efforts. Since then, the Baroque chapel at Valtice, the Rendezvous Folly, and the magnificent conservatory adjacent to Lednice have all been restored. In May 2010 a long-planned project to restore the stables of Lednice with principal funding from the European Union was announced. It is hoped that this will include a reconstruction of what was once its central sculptural feature: a horse bath.

But these monuments, however remarkable in and of themselves, are only a part of the restoration challenges at Lednice-Valtice. Actions to protect the landscape in recent years have included surveys of plant materials and cultivation patterns, research on the water-supply systems serving Lednice's English Picturesque and formal French gardens, restoration of view corridors, and restoration and reactivation of riding and walking trails in the region. An extremely important locally-based initiative has been the reopening of the Gregor Mendel Horticultural School at Lednice, which was originally established in 1524. This school hosted a competition in 2008 for a new garden on the estate. The result was the ecofriendly Tíree Chemlar Herb Garden, planted in the former kitchen-garden

area of the Valtice zamek and inaugurated last May. This award-winning new garden is one of a series of amenities and improvements to Valtice that will help contribute to that zamek's sustainability by underscoring its significant heritage. The sixteenth-century Codex Liechtenstein, the most comprehensive botanical archive of its era, was created and preserved within this zamek's walls.

While these heritage-protection measures for the Lednice-Valtice estate were getting under way, an even larger conservation-oriented program called Czech Greenways was launched. This not-for-profit organization began by interpreting and restoring the historic paths and roadways on the Lednice-Valtice property. Its founders then decided to create a Prague-Vienna Greenway, so that tourists could walk from one country to the next. Using the Hudson River Greenway as a model, they selected the best pathways between the region's former security-zone towns and linked them together, like a string of beads, creating a continuous trail between the two famous cities. This trail stimulates the local economy by drawing tourists to the area while simultaneously providing a strong argument for preserving these precious landscapes and communities. When linked with similar systems that were inspired by the Prague-Vienna Greenway, a network of trails can be seen to cover most of Central Europe. The links between these interdependent trail systems can be found on [www.greenways.pl/en/gws-network-in-central-eastern-europe](http://www.greenways.pl/en/gws-network-in-central-eastern-europe).

Numerous aspects of the history of Lednice-Valtice are yet to be investigated, and the estate's archives could keep historians and researchers busy for years. But for those who have become increasingly intimate with the former Liechtenstein holdings, the process has been a continual discovery of superbly conceived and executed art, architecture, and landscape design. Miraculously the elements of the inspired plan survived the twentieth century, resulting in a rare and remarkably intact example of an ancient European estate – a monument that protects the heritage of the past while serving as an educational and recreational resource for the future. Although many challenges still lie ahead, Lednice-Valtice has already served as an exemplar and call to action for the conservation of other sites in the region. Thanks to the hard work and cooperative efforts of local, national, and international cultural-heritage conservation interests, and the valuable experiences gained and shared over the last two decades, future generations will be able to enjoy this place for the ecological and cultural marvel it is. – John H. Stubbs and Stefan Yarabek

## Place Marker:

### Theodore Roosevelt and the Native American Patrimony

A hundred-foot-tall weathered pyramid near St. Louis, Missouri. An effigy mound in the shape of a serpent on a ridge overlooking the Brush Creek Valley in Ohio. Dwellings hewn out of cliff faces and kivas – circular pit chambers – built into the earth in Colorado and New Mexico. These astonishing monuments predate European occupation of North America. They stand as mute reminders of the large-scale civilizations that flourished all across what is now the United States centuries before the first Spaniards arrived on the Georgia coast and the English reached Massachusetts and Virginia. In the soil-rich southeastern and central regions of the country these monuments take the form of great earthen mounds or totemic animal forms. In the arid Southwest, on the other hand, many of the enduring remains of Native American places were built of dressed masonry quarried from local rock.

The original purposes of these impressive earthworks and stone constructions remain obscure. We do not even know the names given these monuments in the landscape by those who built them. Ignored in American history books, which for generations taught that the first settlers encountered a “virgin” continent, only in recent years have archaeologists begun to recognize them as fortresses, places of worship, ceremonial grounds, and gathering places for trade and other purposes. But their visual impact is as powerful as it is mysterious: even without the benefit of metal tools, the Indians built *big*. For this reason it is all the more sobering that many of these monuments have vanished from the landscape as well as from the national consciousness. Were it not for Theodore Roosevelt’s decision to assume the role of presidential “Place Marker,” many of the remains of what were once large, Native American cities, villages, and ritual centers would no longer survive.

Roosevelt was an unlikely savior. Unapologetically hostile toward Native Americans throughout his time in office, this “wilderness warrior” strongly identified with the mythology of the Western frontier, which cast the Indian as the settler’s natural enemy. Only much later did his attitudes toward some of the Western tribes soften. At the same time, however,

Roosevelt’s affinity with the Western landscape led him to a keen appreciation of its geological splendors and scientific wonders, including its numerous Native American ruins. He was determined to see that they were protected in the same way that the recently established national parks were being protected – as preserves within the federal domain.

It is true that Roosevelt viewed these places as geological and archeological curiosities rather than as sites sacrosanct to living Native Americans and only later came to appreciate their ethnic significance. Nevertheless, it was through his decisive action that they became part of the tangible patrimony of their descendants. Acting with alacrity to short-circuit the cumbersome congressional bureaucracy and protect the sites from explorers and amateur archaeologists, he sought the right to classify these remarkable discoveries as national monuments, a prerogative he achieved through the passage of the Antiquities Act in 1906. The act states that the president of the United States is authorized “to declare by public proclamation historic landmarks, historic and prehistoric structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest that are situated upon the lands owned or controlled by the Government of the United States to be national monuments.” These words put the power of the presidency squarely behind the protection of ancient monumental architecture on federal land, along with the works of art buried within them.

Since a stroke of the pen was all that the president required to designate a piece of federal property a national monument, within the space of two years Roosevelt had named eighteen. Prominent among these were El Morro, a cliff in New Mexico incised with Native American petroglyphs and inscriptions of seventeenth-century explorers, and Chaco Canyon, the great Ancestral Puebloan ritual center in New Mexico. Roosevelt even managed to have the Grand Canyon designated a national monument because it was a very large “object of scientific interest.”

All of the national monuments created by Roosevelt were in the West, a landscape of prominent rock formations, mesas, and canyons. An entirely different type of monumental landscape existed in the temperate Midwest and South. There, enormous workforces carrying baskets of dirt and mud had built huge earthworks even more impressive than those being created today by certain artists with the aid of large-scale machinery. These huge forms were so astonishing that contemporary viewers, biased by racism, ascribed their origin to Old World builders such as the Egyptians. Monumental by their very size and presence in the landscape, many had pyra-

midal configurations and cosmological alignments similar to those of the Mayan ruins of Meso-America. As early as 1815, Ephraim George Squier and Edwin Hamilton Davis had observed and recorded their mathematically precise dimensions and orientation to the movements of the sun and moon in *Ancient Monuments of the Mississippi Valley*, a Smithsonian Institution-sponsored publication. Squier and Davis also recorded the size and appearance of the Great Serpent Mound, a 1,370-foot-long serpent built on an Ohio plateau by the Fort Ancient culture around 1070 CE. Other equally astonishing mound configurations were later found elsewhere. In Effigy Mounds National Monument, north of Marquette, Iowa, there are 206 mounds in all, 31 of which are in the shape of bears and birds. Most were built between 700 and 1100 CE.

Unfortunately, many of these monuments were far more vulnerable to human interference than those of the West. In 1862, almost a half-century before the legislation creating the Antiquities Act was intro-

Theodore Roosevelt Monument by James Earle Fraser, 1940.





duced in Congress, the Homestead Act had accelerated the conversion of federally owned lands from prairie to farmland. The Anglo-American buyers of the fractional sections of surveyed lands sold by the government saw the mounds merely as impediments to cultivation and urban settlement. Even after the link between the mound builders and extant tribes in the United States was made by the Bureau of Ethnology in its *Twelfth Annual Report* (1890–1891), the sites frequently suffered the same depredations from amateur archaeologists and artifact hunters as their Western counterparts. And although many of these national monuments were eventually put under the aegis of the National Park Service after its creation in 1916, the agency's official sanctions were not sufficiently enforceable to stop the monuments' destruction; 90 percent of them had vanished by 1948.

Monuments have meanings that change over time. Some that were once revered no longer compel attention and respect, whereas changing values cause others to acquire new significance. Gradually over the last half-century the Plymouth Rock colonial creation story has faded and Native American monuments have come to be seen as patrimony rather than alien curiosities. In recent years the U.S. government, spurred to action by tribal lawsuits, has accorded Native Americans the right to repossess some of their ancient lands, along with certain sacred artifacts that the government and institutionally sponsored archaeologists had sent to natural-history museums for the purposes of research and ethnological display. Luckily, protection of the immovable sacred elements of these sites – mesas, springs, mountains – has made possible the perpetuation of certain religious practices that foster a consciousness of tribal myth, history, and identity. The preservation of such sacred sites has become especially meaningful to modern-day Native Americans seeking to maintain a link with their ancestral cultures in the face of pressure from government supported energy companies directed toward the exploitation of natural resources on their reservations.

Against this ever-shifting historical backdrop it is interesting to consider the recent history of a very different sort of monument from the ones given protection under the Antiquities Act of 1906 – the 1940 bronze equestrian statue of Roosevelt by James Earle Fraser (1876–1953) in front of the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. A mounted Roosevelt, son of one of the founders of the museum, is flanked by two men on foot: an African American and a

Native American. All three figures appear to be moving forward in concert as they gaze toward Central Park. Some find this sculpture particularly beautiful – indeed, New York City's finest equestrian monument after Augustus Saint-Gaudens's Sherman Monument at Grand Army Plaza – whereas others maintain that it projects a patronizing Anglo-American attitude toward other races. Out of political concern with regard to this sensitive issue, the deterioration of this prominent work has gone unchecked, notwithstanding the Arts Commission's approval of its restoration in 2003. The statue has not been removed from its granite base in front of the Central Park West entrance to the museum, but until now it has remained in a kind of moral purgatory, its bronze surface streaked, soiled, and corroded from exposure to the long-term effects of atmospheric pollution and acid rain.

To make the case for conserving the statue we need to first weigh the following propositions. The rapacious conquest of this continent and the subjugation of its original inhabitants along with the institution of slavery are the two greatest blights on American history. At the same time, most of us recognize that the preservation of cultural patrimony by one's own people or others is a clear good, and America has been moving in the direction of a more just society during the half-century since the Roosevelt statue was erected. Indeed, the sculptor's intention when the work was commissioned was to project an image of unity rather than one of racism and strife: an embodiment of a new attitude embracing a nonxenophobic appreciation of other cultures. Now, ninety years after Roosevelt's death, the Museum of Natural History has undertaken the restoration of its façade, and the cleaning and repatination of the president's statue will be part of this multi-million-dollar project. Working with conservation experts in the Department of Parks, museum officials plan to see that the sculpture regains its original appearance. Perhaps the moment has come to give a brighter shine to the monument of the president whose efforts as a place marker began the salvation of Native American monuments – evidence of pre-European occupation of the American landscape – and prevented their heedless erasure. – Elizabeth Barlow Rogers

The author thanks David Hurst Thomas, curator of anthropology at the American Museum of Natural History, for his helpful reading of this essay. She also thanks Frances H. Kennedy, editor and principal contributor of *American Indian Places* (Houghton Mifflin, 2008) for providing some of the background information on Native American monuments upon which this article is based. In addition, she is grateful to Commissioner Adrian Benepe and Jonathan Kuhn of the New York City Parks Department for their helpful information regarding the future restoration of the Theodore Roosevelt Monument.

## Books

### *Naked City: The Death and Life of Authentic Urban Places*

By Sharon Zukin

New York: Oxford University Press, 2010

When the little wine shop appeared in the storefront across the street from my apartment in Greenpoint, I was worried. Was this trendy new installation here for me? Was I the one expected to coolly browse

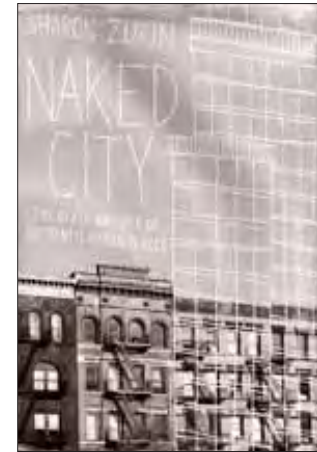
the custom-built wooden shelves for the perfect bottle? I imagined an elfin entrepreneur trying to anticipate my local shopping desires, feverishly pulling the levers of urban change behind a curtain of once-derelict façades. But I did not welcome this change to my neighborhood, a working-class Polish and Latino enclave. The wine shop seemed to both advertise my presence there and force me to confront what I was reluctant to admit: this patch at the northern end of Brooklyn was absorbing more and more of the educated, professional, wine-

buying classes with a taste for quaint, well-appointed little shops. . . and I was implicated in that process.

The sociologist and social critic Sharon Zukin would immediately recognize that

Greenpoint was in the midst of the pervasive urban process commonly known as gentrification. Zukin has distinguished herself as an acute observer of the evolving New York scene by insisting

that culture must be viewed alongside capital as a motive force in urban (re)development. It's not enough just to follow the money. We must consider, too, the cultural aspirations and consumption patterns that drive urban transformations. In *Loft Living: Culture and Capital in Urban Change* (Johns Hopkins, 1982), Zukin traced the emergence of SoHo as a posh residential address for affluent people – newcomers inspired by the



artists who had appropriated loft spaces abandoned by a shrinking manufacturing sector. In *The Cultures of Cities* (Blackwell, 1995), a collection of essays on subjects ranging from restaurants to the museum industry, Zukin sharpened her critique of monied interests who appropriate art and culture to remake a city. Now, in *Naked City: The Death and Life of Authentic Urban Places*, Zukin pins her analysis of urban change on the craving for *authenticity* – a magical quality that includes architectural charm, unique retailing, ethnic flavor, and other talismans of local character and community.

And therein lies the rub. As upwardly mobile seekers (or “cultural migrants,” as she calls them) descend on neighborhoods in a greedy quest for authenticity, Zukin argues that they unwittingly erode the very qualities that made these places interesting or desirable in the first place. Gentrifiers consume authenticity at its own expense. At the scale of the retail environment, the spiral begins when “artists and gentrifiers move into old immigrant areas, praising the working-class bars and take-out joints but overwhelming them with new

cafés and boutiques, which are soon followed by brand-name chain stores.” Zukin allows that the middle stage may yield a tolerant, cosmopolitan urban mix – as wine shops and whimsical boutiques mingle with bodegas and dollar stores – yet it is a fragile balance and difficult to protect. As gentrifiers arrive, rents rise to accommodate what the market will bear. Both longtime residents and business establishments are displaced if they cannot keep pace. And though sophisticated cultural migrants may not like chain stores, eventually these are the only sellers who can afford a place in the new neighborhood.

*Naked City* is organized around six New York stories. Each chapter leads with a vignette from Zukin’s own foray into a particular neighborhood or public space. Then the author launches into an historical narrative of the economic, political, and cultural crucible in which the neighborhood or space has been formed. Zukin crashes an underground arts party in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, where *gritty* has become *cool*. She sips cappuccino in a trendy café in Harlem, where new businesses emphasize local roots and trade on the neighborhood’s cultural heritage. She escorts a group of Japanese college students through

Astor Place and the East Village, where the expensive boutiques on East Ninth Street are “both elegant and derelict, hippie and yuppie, distinctive and diverse.” In Union Square, the bustling Greenmarket feels democratic even though it is sponsored by a private Business Improvement District (BID). At the Red Hook ball fields in Brooklyn, Zukin browses the Latino food carts, commenting on how a spontaneous local tradition became a destination. And, finally, she examines the struggles of community gardens in East New York and elsewhere to survive in an atmosphere of intense real estate speculation.

Zukin is especially interested in the way the media feeds our obsession with “locavore” food culture and its relationship to place making. She scrolls through foodie blogs like Chowhound to show how media outlets chart new, gastronomical geographies of authenticity. Local food – fresh produce from regional farms sold at the Greenmarket, Salvadoran *pupusas* from Red Hook food carts, or homegrown veggies raised in a community garden – underscores Zukin’s theme

of *terroir* and the contested terrain of authenticity. In the case of community gardens, “the specific form this authenticity takes has changed over time, as the gardens shifted from a grassroots social movement challenging the state to an embodiment of ethnic identity, then an expression of secular cultural identity in tune with gentrifiers’ values, and finally a form of urban food production consistent with the tastes of middle-class locavores and strategies for sustainable development.”

Zukin’s subtitle, *The Death and Life of Authentic Urban Places*, nods to Jane Jacobs’s classic 1961 study of urban character. Jacobs’s inversion of “life” and “death” implied a hopeful renaissance for cities plundered by urban renewal. But Zukin might have returned to the more conventional construction to signal her pessimistic appraisal of the current urban scene. The city, she insists, has become a “smooth, sleek, more expensive replica of its former self.” Jacobs herself must bear some of the responsibility, Zukin argues, because she possessed the “gentrifier’s aesthetic appreciation of urban authenticity.” Indeed, it should come as no surprise that precisely the neighborhoods that Jacobs and her fellow activists worked so hard to preserve

from the wrecking ball are now among the most exclusive and affluent parts of the city. The landscape of authenticity – nineteenth-century brownstones, little shops, and cobblestone streets – is too easily divorced from the complex social world it hosted.

Jane Jacobs was among the first to recognize the charming aspects of authenticity when more powerful people sought to bury them in favor of banal monumentality. Yet the recognition of authenticity is generally born of privilege, for it requires the detached, discerning perspective of the connoisseur. During the earliest stages of gentrification you must have the vision to perceive, and thus gravitate toward, authenticity. After that, you just need a little money and the ability to follow directions, as the frontiersmen with cultural capital give way to sophisticated yuppies. Eventually, if you don’t figure it out for yourself, you can rely on *New York Magazine* to steer you toward the next hip location. By this time, though, the neighborhood has already been discovered and ratcheted up to the next round of economic development, driven by corporations like Barnes &

Noble and Whole Foods. Soon it will be derided as overexposed by the *New York Observer*. In other words, “authenticity,” once recognized, becomes a powerful mode of urban development, setting into motion, as Zukin persuasively argues, the forces that will destroy it. Because the irony of authenticity is that it is guileless. It is not, in fact, for sale on the market, because it does not, finally, reside only in the local buildings and storefronts but also in the people who live and work in them.

Zukin creates an alarming vision of a New York leached of vitality and variety: “the city’s historic diversity of uses, local specializations, small stores, and cheek-by-jowl checkerboard of rich people, poor people, and people broadly in the middle has been submerged by a tidal wave of new luxury apartments and chain stores.” Although she admits that authenticity is not an a priori condition, she delights in pointing her finger at all the dupes, arrivistes, and phonies who are unwittingly colluding in the destruction of the city’s soul: she describes the IKEA ferry shoppers in Red Hook moving toward the big blue and yellow box “with a sense of purpose, like astronauts transferring from a space shuttle to the mother ship.” This wry, breezy style is part



of the book's appeal but also a sign of the intellectual imprecision of her approach. At times the author's lament for a time when local communities organized "against wealth and power" instead of for the right to a well-frothed cappuccino is acerbic and to the point. But at other moments Zukin seems simply nostalgic – not for a better New York, but for *her* New York, the city *she* discovered and made her own. Anyone who remembers the vitality and variety of Harlem twenty or thirty years ago longs for a more complicated telling of this story.

The author would be more convincing if she had spent a little time acknowledging not only the benefits that come with gentrification – neighborhood safety, rehabilitated housing stock – but also the difficulty of controlling it; many government interventions in urban planning and growth are later judged as failures. Zukin suggests "new forms of public-private stewardship that give residents, workers, and small business owners, as well as buildings and districts, a right to put down roots and remain in place," but says next to nothing about the present landscape

of rent control and stabilization in New York, or how we would get from where we are to where she would like us to be.

Moreover, is it also possible that the city is more resilient, more complicated, than Zukin allows? It constantly regenerates new social spaces of authentic, hybrid communities, even if they evade prying eyes. A walk today from Greenwich Village to Wall Street – or from Astoria to Jackson Heights – still takes you through a number of ethnic enclaves and a tremendously mixed set of communities. Even within the most upscale environments there remain informal and contested spaces. Nevertheless Zukin is underscoring a central and brutal urban paradox. Gentrifiers are people who love cities for their diversity. And yet their arrival triggers a process whereby the older, poorer groups that produced neighborhood authenticity are forced to leave.

It's hard to see your neighborhood change before your eyes and easy to resent newcomers and media outlets for overexposing the little place you discovered on your own. We want the gate to come down just after our own arrival, to preserve what we found before it is destroyed. When the wine shop appeared, my first reaction was juvenile: boycott. I

did not want to be associated with the embourgeoisement of my neighborhood, even though I knew I was a part of it. My disingenuous boycott ended when I gave in to the convenience of picking up a bottle of wine not twenty yards from my home, and over the course of a year I came to know the owner of the store, her dog, and several other regulars. One of these, a local artist, contributed a large, whimsical chalk mural across the shop's back wall. On Friday evenings, the shop hosted wine tastings. Local distributors uncorked bottle after bottle, carefully explaining the provenance of each, while an affable employee refilled platters of high-grade cheeses and thinly sliced prosciutto. I shared knowing looks with a few other familiar strangers from the neighborhood as we observed the Friday night crowd. These urban explorers were visiting to see what Greenpoint was "all about" and lap up its "authentic" charms. Although a recent arrival myself, I still regarded these people as tourists who could not appreciate the gritty quirks of the place I called home. Sharon Zukin would understand exactly how I felt. – Elihu Rubin

***The Collected Writings of Beatrix Farrand: American Landscape Gardener, 1872–1959***

Edited by Carmen Pearson  
University Press of New England, 2009

***Beatrix Farrand: Private Gardens, Public Landscapes***

By Judith B. Tankard  
The Monacelli Press, 2009

Unlike many of her contemporaries, Beatrix Jones Farrand (1872–1959), now considered one of the foremost landscape designers of her generation, never wrote a book. As architect/landscape architect Robert W. Patterson,

her friend and frequent collaborator of her later years, observed in his obituary tribute, "She wrote less so that she could do more." Instead she chose a different way to make a permanent contribution to her profession. In 1939 Farrand and her husband, Max, formed the Reef Point Gardens Corporation: a horticultural study center at her family home in Bar Harbor, on Mount Desert Island, in Maine. Farrand also assembled a large col-

lection of archival and educational materials to be used by students of landscape design at Reef Point, and published bulletins on the organization's projects and development.

Unfortunately Bar Harbor's tax base was severely eroded, first by the Great Depression and then by a disastrous fire in 1947, which destroyed the homes of



many of the town's wealthy summer residents. As a result, Reef Point Gardens was denied tax-exempt status. Recognizing that the foundation now had little chance for survival, Farrand chose to dissolve it. She also made the radical decision to destroy the house at Reef Point and its gardens, realizing that later owners would be unlikely to maintain them

to her standards. In addition, she decided to donate her professional papers, consisting primarily of plans and photographs, to the University of California at Berkeley. For many years these archives were stored off-site and were difficult of access, discouraging most scholars; with little new research, Farrand's formerly stellar reputation went into a partial eclipse. In the early 1980s, however, papers presented in two Farrand symposia were published, ushering in a revival of scholarship on this leading American landscape

designer, research that was also fuelled by a growing interest in the lives and careers of women professionals.

The recent collection of Farrand writings edited by Carmen Pearson follows a volume published in 1997 by the Island Foundation in Bar Harbor, in which the Reef Point Gardens *Bulletins* were reprinted in facsimile with an introduction by Paula Deitz. Farrand had published

the original *Bulletins*, which included articles written by her as well as by several of her associates at Reef Point, at irregular intervals between 1946 and 1955. Although there is an overlap of five essays, Farrand aficionados will want both the Deitz and Pearson volumes in their libraries.

An especially valuable feature of the Pearson collection is its inclusion of the full text of the neophyte landscape designer's 1893–1895 “Book of Gardening,” which has never before been published. This was a handwritten diary the author kept while visiting Europe with her mother; the title, her own, seems a misnomer, since Beatrix was not then gardening or giving advice on gardening herself. A close comparison with Charles Platt's book on Italian gardens (1894) and with *Italian Villas and Their Gardens* (1905) by Edith Wharton, Farrand's aunt, could at some point be revealing since they visited many of the same places.

Another interesting item included in Pearson's book is an article Farrand wrote on landscape gardening for a book entitled *Vocations for the Trained Woman: Opportunities Other Than*

*Teaching*, which appeared in 1910. Here she somewhat sternly lays out a demanding course of study for aspiring women landscape designers. This immediately raises the question: where had she herself learned these skills, and who were her teachers? Farrand never took formal courses of any kind but received all of her education, from the elementary level on, from tutors. We know that Charles Sprague Sargent, director of the Arnold Arboretum, provided instructors for her in plant identification and horticulture from the ranks of his staff. Her tutors in civil engineering, a key component of landscape design, were recruited from Columbia University, but here again we have no names. For these reasons and many others, a Farrand study of the scope and caliber of Judith Tankard's book has been needed for a long time.

Farrand was her own first biographer. In 1956, at the age of 84, she wrote a third-person narrative of her life that was published after her death in the last issue of the Reef Point Gardens *Bulletin*.

With characteristic verbal economy, she summed up her nearly sixty-year career in less than three printed pages, mentioning by name only a few of her more than two hundred clients. She listed her honors, revealing that in 1899, only three years into her profession, she had felt unworthy of being named a charter member of the American Society of Landscape Architects. A lifelong Episcopalian, Farrand ended her brief memoir with a phrase from the Roman Catholic requiem mass: “Lux perpetua luceat eis,” appending to it only the word “FINIS.”

Five months after her death from heart disease on February 27, 1959, two perceptive and affectionate reminiscences of Farrand were published in *Landscape Architecture Quarterly*. The first, written by Patterson, was called “Beatrix Farrand, 1872–1959: An Appreciation of a Great Landscape Gardener.” Patterson's article is invaluable because, of the many people who worked closely with Farrand, either in her office or as a consultant, he was the only one who has described her working habits in detail.

The second article, “An Attempted Evocation of a Personality,” was written by Farrand's most important

client, Mildred Bliss of Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, DC. Bliss, who had been very close to Farrand, recalled her profound sensitivity to music, her fine voice, and her ultimate decision to become a landscape gardener rather than a singer. She also described Farrand's perfectionism, her almost obsessive attention to detail, and her insistence on working with her clients as codesigners rather than as passive recipients of her own ideas. The following year Bliss gathered together Patterson's article, her own appreciation, an article by Lanning Roper on Dumbarton Oaks, and a list of Farrand's work and had the compilation privately printed, using the same title as that of Patterson's article. Almost a quarter of a century would pass before comparable attention was again focused on Farrand's life and career.

In the 1960s and well into the 1970s, the cultural climate in America was inimical to renewed appreciation of Farrand or, indeed, any landscape designer who specialized in private gardens. Instead, in the era of Earth

Days and enthusiasm for all things environmental, open space, especially “green” open space, was hailed universally as a blessing. At first there was little awareness that this precious space, rather than simply being “leftover” land, had sometimes been designed by human beings. Then came the realization that Central Park in New York City and many of the nation's other urban parks had been designed by Frederick Law Olmsted Sr. This was the dawn of the “Olmsted Renaissance,” a welcome development but one with a shadowy underside: parks were “good” because they were not only open to the public but belonged to the public. By contrast, private gardens were seen as elitist because they belonged to individuals – wealthy individuals.

Interest in Farrand lay dormant during this period, although her professional library, plans, photographs, herbarium, and print collection were safely stored at Berkeley, along with the plans of Gertrude Jekyll that she had purchased and the plans, photographs, press-clipping albums, and slides left to her for Reef Point by her contemporary Mary Rutherford Jay. It is impor-

tant to remember that the purpose of her gift was to aid aspiring landscape architects in their own design studies. Almost certainly Farrand would be astonished if she knew that historians were now using the collection to study her own life and career.

Contrary to Farrand's wishes, however, her books and prints and Jay's glass slides (the latter copied onto 35mm) were not kept together but were instead absorbed into the library of Berkeley's College of Environmental Design. Unfortunately public universities are chronically underfunded and specialized archival collections are rarely a priority. Because the Jekyll, Farrand, and Jay plans, along with the library's impressive holdings of California architectural drawings, had no full-time curator until recently, they were not readily accessible to historians. In fact, few people knew they were there.

In the 1970s, however, a renewed interest in historic private gardens arose, and modern scholarly investigation of Farrand was launched, appropriately by a



Berkeley student. In 1976, Marlene Salon wrote her MLA thesis on Farrand, which she followed a year later with an article in *Landscape Architecture* entitled “Beatrix Jones Farrand: Gilt-Edged Gardens.” In 1980 Eleanor M. McPeck published an article on Farrand in the fourth volume of *Notable American Women Vol. IV* (Harvard University Press) and Diane K. McGuire edited and published *Beatrix Farrand’s Plant Book for Dumbarton Oaks* (Dumbarton Oaks), and in 1985 Sagapress published another compendium of essays, *Beatrix Farrand’s American Landscapes: Her Gardens and Campuses*, with contributions by McPeck, McGuire, and Diana Balmori. In the same year, a major symposium on Farrand, the first fitting tribute to her in many years, was held at Dumbarton Oaks; its proceedings, with essays by leading scholars, were published in 1982 (Dumbarton Oaks).

Interest in Farrand and her accomplishments has continued to grow. In 1995 Viking published a monograph by British garden writer Jane Brown entitled *Beatrix: The Gardening Life of Beatrix Jones Farrand*, a work marred by sweeping assertions with little basis in fact and inadequate research on

these shores. For more than a decade, a new book on Farrand has been badly needed, both to give a more complete picture of the landscape architect and as a scholarly corrective to the Brown book. Judith Tankard has bravely taken on the task.

Rigorous scholarly study of Farrand is not an easy undertaking, but Tankard is well suited to the job. The author of six previous books, including monographs on Jekyll and on Farrand’s American contemporary Ellen Biddle Shipman, her research is exhaustive and her writing is clear and illuminating. She has thoroughly traced Farrand’s career, discussing all of her most important projects, and her book is fully illustrated with plans and period, black-and-white illustrations. There are also contemporary color views, some by leading architectural and landscape photographer Richard Cheek. An appendix in the form of a gazetteer lists Farrand’s commissions.

Perhaps the most remarkable of Farrand’s early commissions was Crosswicks, the Mr. and Mrs. Clement B. Newbold property in

Jenkintown, Pennsylvania, which she worked on between 1900 and 1916.<sup>1</sup> The main feature of Crosswicks was a large walled garden with a central rose panel divided into two dozen beds, flanked by perennial gardens and surrounded by a multiplicity of shrubs and vines. Tankard discusses Crosswicks well and illustrates it with three stunning watercolor renderings – a plan, a perspective, and a sheet of wall elevations – as well as two 1910 photographs. It is fortunate that the visual record is good – there are numerous additional photographs at Berkeley – since the 75-room, Georgian-revival house at Crosswicks, an early Guy Lowell commission, burned down in the

<sup>1</sup> There has been much confusion about the starting date of the Crosswicks project. In the list of Farrand commissions at the back of the Sagapress book, its inclusive dates are given as 1891–1916. The compiler of the list would have known that the Berkeley file for Crosswicks included an engineering drawing labeled “Profiles of Proposed Drive,” dated November 11, 1891, which is not by Farrand. Yet Clement B. Newbold did not buy the ninety-acre Satterthwaite farm, which he developed into

late 1940s. It had been standing empty for over 20 years and the gardens had long since vanished.<sup>2</sup>

Although Farrand was related to Clement Newbold through her paternal grandmother, she developed a particularly close relationship with his wife, Mary. Over the course of the Crosswicks project, they discovered many common interests: both, for example, were singers, and in Farrand’s words, “we grew to love each other as well as two women can.”<sup>3</sup> In 1905, a few months after having her third child, Clement Jr., Mary Newbold died unexpectedly, leaving Farrand in a state of nervous collapse that lasted for four months, three of them spent in bed.<sup>4</sup> The bed rest may have been prescribed by Silas Weir Mitchell, a Philadelphia doctor who specialized in

Crosswicks, until 1897, the same year that he married Mary Dickinson Scott. Farrand’s first design project was actually Chiltern, the Edgar Scott property in Bar Harbor, which she began in 1896. She selected the site with the architect Alexander Wadsworth Longfellow and worked on it intermittently for years. Scott was the brother of Mary Scott Newbold.

<sup>2</sup> [www.commentarymagazine.com/viewarticle.cfm/the-battle-of-abington-township](http://www.commentarymagazine.com/viewarticle.cfm/the-battle-of-abington-township).

women’s nervous disorders and who was the brother-in-law of John Lambert Cadwalader, her mother’s first cousin and the most significant male presence in Farrand’s life before her marriage; her father had abandoned his family when she was in her teens. Mitchell was also a summer resident of Bar Harbor, and it is obvious from an article in the Pearson collection that Farrand not only knew him but was fond of him. His draconian treatment of “nervous” women (and, more rarely, men), which included a ban on nearly all activity, whether practical or intellectual, is described in Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s chilling autobiographical

<sup>3</sup> (Beatrix Jones), undated autograph letter, Reef Point Gardens Collection, College of Environmental Design Archives, University of California, Berkeley. Although there is no salutation, this letter must have been written to Max Farrand, because she refers to herself as “your ‘girl’.” The date is probably spring or summer of 1913 (not 1911, as Tankard indicates), as the Farrands only met about a year before their marriage, which took place on December 17, 1913. In this letter, Beatrix describes twelve of her early projects, all begun by the probable date of this letter, and seems to be planning a tour of her gardens for Max.

story “The Yellow Wallpaper” (1892). Farrand, of course, not only recovered fully but also developed the hardy physique that she deemed essential for women landscape gardeners.

In 1914 Farrand designed a charming enclosed garden at Bellefield, the Newbold house in Hyde Park, New York, for Thomas Newbold (1886–1939), a New York state senator and a distant cousin of Clement Newbold.<sup>5</sup> She laid out this garden, which was located directly off the dining room, in three sections of diminishing width, creating a false perspective that made the garden as a whole appear longer than it actually was. The section nearest the house was surrounded by a stone wall and the other two were enclosed by hemlock hedges.

<sup>4</sup> The exact date of Clement B. Newbold, Jr.’s birth (January 17, 1905) is given in Rash’s Surname Index ([www.pennock.ws/surnames/fam/fam42434.html](http://www.pennock.ws/surnames/fam/fam42434.html)). His mother Mary Scott Newbold died on May 2, 1905 after an appendectomy (obituary note, *New York Times*, May 3, 1905, p. 9).

<sup>5</sup> Limited biographical information on Thomas Jefferson Newbold may be found at [www.familysearch.org/eng/default.asp](http://www.familysearch.org/eng/default.asp).

Bellefield directly abuts Springwood, now The Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site, and the narrow end of the garden comes right up against the property line. Luckily, the Newbold and Roosevelt families were friends, and a Newbold daughter played as a child with the future president.

In 1975, Bellefield was purchased by the National Park Service to serve as administrative headquarters for the Roosevelt and Vanderbilt National Historic Sites. Park Service historians studied the house, part of which goes back to the late 1790s, but were unaware that the garden was historically significant. Its plantings declined, and by 1991, when I first saw the Bellefield garden, little was left except towering hemlock hedges and a few straggling peonies in the planting beds. A few years later, it was discovered by a local garden club and by Katherine H. Kerin, a graduate student in landscape architecture from Cornell, who made it the subject of her master's thesis. The Beatrix Farrand Garden Association was formed and undertook the restoration of the Bellefield garden. Unfortunately, there were no

planting plans among the set from Berkeley, and surviving family photographs were too recent to be relied upon as evidence of Farrand's original choices. The Garden Association decided to replant the Bellefield garden with the same plant materials that Farrand had used in a garden further down the Hudson in Garrison, New York. While this is a questionable preservation practice, the garden today looks splendid, as can be seen in the color photographs chosen by Tankard – especially one taken from a third-floor window.

One of Farrand's most distinguished midcareer projects, undertaken at about the same period as Bellefield, was Elmhurst (later called Apple Green) in Old Westbury, on Long Island. Farrand designed the garden for Mrs. Willard D. Straight (Dorothy Payne Whitney) between 1914 and 1932; the house had recently been remodeled by Delano & Aldrich. The most striking feature of the landscape was a Chinese garden that reflected the Straights' extended honeymoon in that country and their continuing interest in its culture. Tankard includes a watercolor plan and perspective of the garden. Farrand would have contracted with professional delineators to produce these

exhibition-quality renderings, but we do not know the artists' names. Similarly, the draftspeople in her office, unlike those in the Olmsted firm, did not initial the plans they prepared, although we know the names of some of her later assistants.

Dorothy Straight was another client with whom Farrand developed a close friendship. After Willard Straight died in the flu pandemic of 1918, Dorothy married a Yorkshireman, Leonard K. Elmhirst, moved with him to England, and developed the grounds of Dartington Hall in Devon, again with Farrand's help. The Straight garden in Old Westbury was subdivided in 1951, but Dartington Hall survives.

Two other major Farrand gardens that have recently been restored are the rose garden at the New York Botanical Garden (1915–1916) and the garden at the Hill-Stead in Farmington, Connecticut, which she designed for Theodate Pope Riddle about 1920. In both gardens, Farrand's intended plantings have been installed, although there is no evidence, photographic or otherwise, that her planting

plans for either place were ever implemented in her lifetime.

Tankard's book includes a chapter on Farrand's college landscapes, building on the solid foundation offered by Diana Balmori in an essay in the Sagapress book. Tankard also ably discusses Farrand's numerous gardens on Mount Desert Island, devoting a chapter to The Eyrie, the John D. Jr. and Abigail Rockefeller garden in Seal Harbor, which she worked on for almost a quarter of a century (1926–1950) and which is extant and occasionally open to the public. Farrand's last garden, her own Garland Farm in Bar Harbor (1955–1959) – a diminutive space compared with The Eyrie and most of Farrand's other gardens – is discussed in Tankard's final chapter.

Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, D.C., perhaps the best loved and most visited of Farrand's gardens, is the subject of one of Tankard's best chapters. The history of the Dumbarton Oaks landscape is also the story of one of the most complete collaborations between landscape designer and client in the known history of the profession – this in spite of the fact that the clients, Mildred and Robert Woods Bliss, were living out-

side North America during the first eleven years of the project. Anticipating their spring and summer stays in this country and Bliss's eventual retirement from his diplomatic career, they bought a somewhat rundown property in the Georgetown section of Washington in 1921 and proceeded to totally reshape it over the next several years. In 1940 they donated the house, its collections of Byzantine and pre-Columbian art, and its formal gardens (sixteen-plus acres) to Harvard University, and its naturalistic garden (twenty-seven acres) to the National Park Service.

As the letters between Farrand and Mildred Bliss in the archives of Dumbarton Oaks reveal, the women became intimate friends. Bliss, the more extraverted of the two, was probably responsible, at least initially, for the informal tone of the correspondence, which their husbands were drawn into through affectionate exchanges between “MilRob” and “MaxTrix.” Although Tankard cites this correspondence, she rarely quotes it, apparently feeling that it is adequately dealt with in Susan Tamulevich's *Dumbarton Oaks: Landscape*

*Into Art*, also published by Monacelli Press (2001).

Today, we are in the midst of what might almost be called a Farrand renaissance. Under the leadership of Patrick Chassé, the Beatrix Farrand Society has been formed, adopting once again some of the goals of the Reef Point Gardens Corporation that were abandoned so many years before. A number of Farrand's projects have been restored, including her final Bar Harbor home, Garland Farm.

2009 also saw the publication of two books (both reviewed in the last issue of *Site/Lines*) that helped place Farrand in the context of other women landscape gardeners/architects. These were Thaisa Way's *Unbounded Practice: Women and Landscape Architecture in the Early Twentieth Century* (University of Virginia Press) and my *Long Island Landscapes and the Women Who Designed Them* (W. W. Norton). It appears to have been a fortuitous coincidence that these, as well as the Tankard monograph and the Pearson collection, all appeared during the fiftieth anniversary of Farrand's death.

May eternal light continue to shine on the memory of one of America's finest landscape designers!  
– Cynthia Zaitzevsky



## Tour

### Historic Gardens from Vienna to Prague

May 14–27, 2011

Historic parks and gardens famed for their innovation and grandeur flourished in the ancient lands of the former Hapsburg empire – in particular those that are now part of Austria and the Czech Republic. They offered not only the pleasures of the eye but also a rich tradition of carefully documented horticultural and agricultural techniques. Despite disruptions in ownership and land management in the region during much of the twentieth century, many of these landscapes and gardens have been renovated using state-of-the-art restoration and conservation techniques.

A custom-planned, expert-guided, nine-day study tour organized by the Foundation for Landscape Studies and the Friends of the Czech Greenway will examine historic landscapes

and gardens and natural treasures in Vienna and Prague and at key locations in between. En route, tour leader Stefan Yarabek, a landscape architect who has been active in the development of the Czech Greenway as well as a greenway along the Hudson River, will discuss the area's gardens, landscapes, and land management techniques, past and present. Key sites to be visited include three UNESCO World Heritage Sites; the new Tíre Chmelar Herb Garden and the Folly of the Three Graces in the Lednice-Valtice Area Cultural Landscape; Podyji National Park and nearby Vranov Castle; a UNESCO Biosphere reserve; the walled medieval town of Trebo; the Renais-

sance town of Tel; and the baroque theater and garden with its Neptune fountain at Cesky Krumlov on the meandering Vltava River. There will also be visits to the royal gardens of Vienna and Prague as well as Vienna's trendsetting sustainable garden projects. We will benefit from special access to several sites not normally open to tourists, and local and national experts will receive us at each stop.

The itinerary has several optional features, including opportunities to bicycle or hike amid the spectacular scenery of the Czech Greenway corridor. Throughout the tour, we will enjoy delicious regional cuisine and local wines. For more information and a detailed itinerary, please contact [elizabethbarlowrogers@gmail.com](mailto:elizabethbarlowrogers@gmail.com).



Tíre Chmelar Herb Garden dedication, May 2010, Valtice Chateau.

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**Stefan Yarabek** is a landscape architect, environmental planner and advocate, and owner of Hudson & Pacific Designs, Inc. He is Congressman Maurice Hinchey's representative to the Hudson Valley National Heritage Area and serves on the Landscape Council for Manitoba and the Greater Hudson Heritage Board. He has employed his design and advocacy skills to the formation and development of the Czech Greenway since its inception and continues to serve on the Board of Friends of Czech Greenways.

**Cynthia Zaitzevsky**, Ph.D. (Harvard, Fine Arts), is a historian of architecture and landscape architecture. For twenty-two years, she taught courses on historic American parks and gardens at the Radcliffe Seminars Landscape Design Program, now part of the Boston Architectural College. Her books include *The Architecture of William Ralph Emerson, 1833-1917* (Fogg Art Museum, 1969), *Frederick Law Olmsted and the Boston Park System* (Harvard University Press, 1982), and *Long Island Landscapes and the Women Who Designed Them* (W.W. Norton, 2009). She has also written the site-history sections of several cultural-landscape reports for the National Park Service, among them one for the Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site in Hyde Park, New York (1992).

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