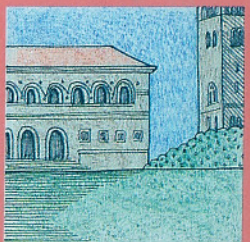
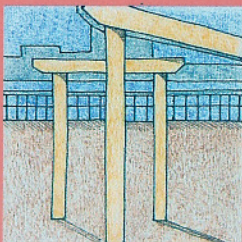
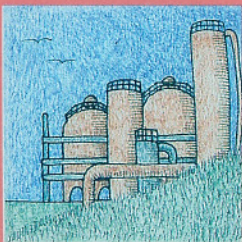
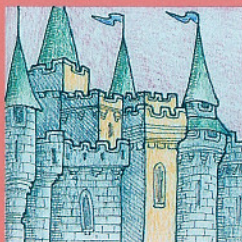
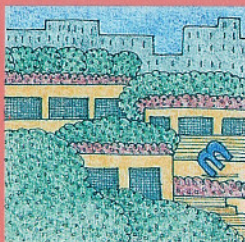
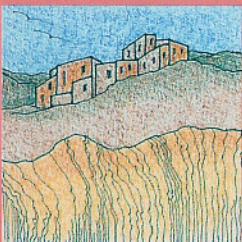
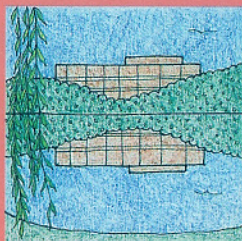
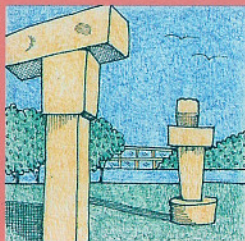
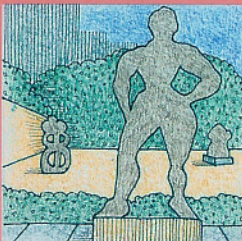
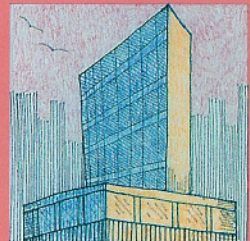
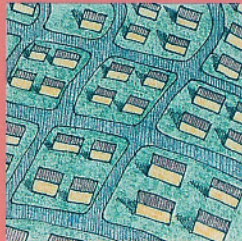
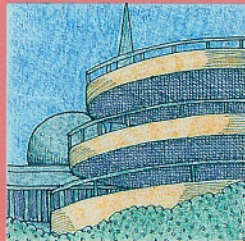
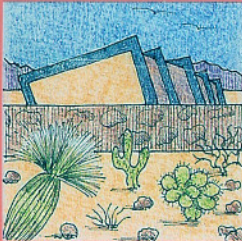
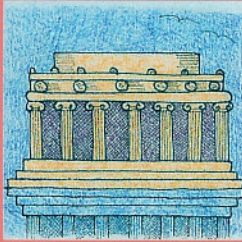


LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE



L O O K I N G B A C K

AT THE BEGINNING, LOOKING BACK

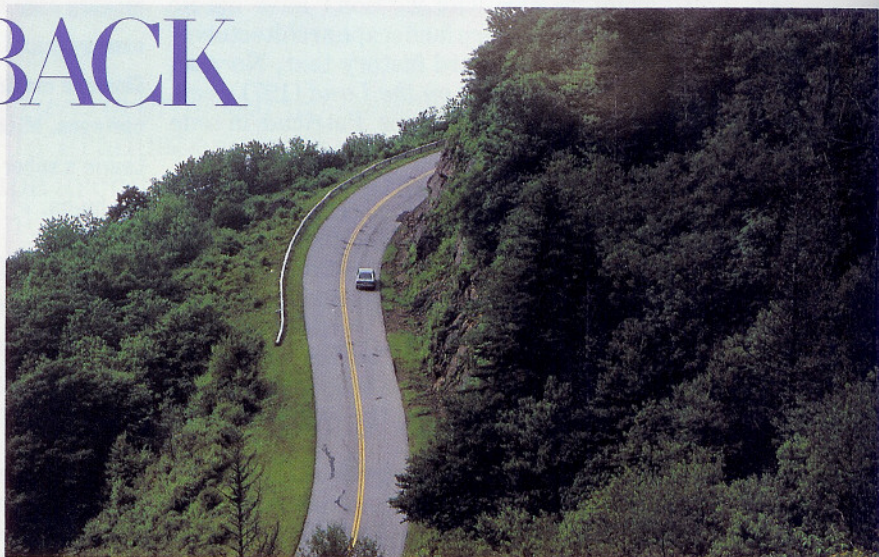
BY MICHAEL LECCESE

PORTRAITS BY MICHAEL ANDERSON

An opinionated quartet ponders the profession's ups and downs

Are the best times ahead for landscape architecture? You could draw that conclusion from a recent exchange among two of the field's most outspoken figures and two of its most reasonable. They met in Washington, D.C., to assess

eight decades of building parks, planning roads and saving the environment. The four also broached such "terrible tragedies" as the rejection of Lewis Mumford's humanist values and the debacle of urban renewal. □ M. Paul Friedberg, FASLA, and Ian McHarg, FASLA, looked every bit the iconoclasts. Urbanistic designer of plazas and indoor gardens, Friedberg personified the crisp New Yorker, clad entirely in black. Regional planner and incendiary ecologist, McHarg wore a pleated tuxedo shirt with his academician's blazer.

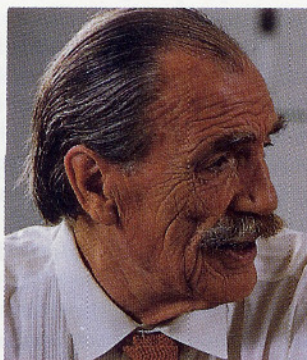


JOHN RILEY/FOLIO

Their foil was the bespectacled Ray Freeman, FASLA, 30-year veteran of major planning efforts with the National Park Service. Moderating was William H. Tishler, ASLA, a professor at the University of Wisconsin and editor of *American Landscape Architecture: Designers and Places* (Preservation Press, 1989).

Each speaker seemed to view the profession's legacy as intertwined with his own. Friedberg, McHarg and Freeman have been friends and colleagues through the years with many of the field's shining lights. Tishler has edited essays appraising the careers of designers from Thomas Jefferson to Thomas Church. More amiable bull session than history lesson, the forum began with Friedberg and Freeman exchanging playful punches and ended with McHarg crooning Louis Armstrong songs.

Tishler started the discussion by asking for examples of seminal contributions since 1910. "My own agency was very much shaped by the



"Conservation did not figure in the education of landscape architects during [the 1940s]. The working environmentalist didn't exist."
—McHarg

Olmsteds," said Freeman. "The first professional person that the Park Service actually hired after the first Act of 1916 was a landscape architect, Charles B. Punchard, Jr. He was stationed in California because all the parks were in the West in those days. This harks back to Olmsted, Sr., and his role in the Yosemite Valley. Landscape architects made a major contribution to the environment of this country in the early 1900s. Arthur Carhart, a landscape architect, was a strong environmentalist with the U.S. Forest Service in 1919, and is one of the founders of the Wilderness Society. So the profession was very active."

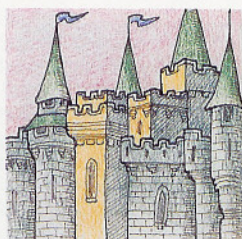
Tishler turned to McHarg, "Ian, would you say that we've lost that—"

"No, no, I received none of that during my education at all," countered McHarg, rubbing

Parkways like the Blue Ridge (above) and Rock Creek (opposite) melded conservation, aesthetics and roads.

1970

Walt Disney World
Orlando, Florida
Walt Disney Productions
Once 27,000 acres of rural Florida, America's premier theme park has altered our concept of vacation and recreation.



1971

SUNY-Buffalo
Buffalo, New York
Sasaki, Dawson, DeMay
A 1,250-acre branch campus for 50,000 students, its central feature is a 70-acre man-made lake. The campus maintains much of the feeling of its rural setting.

1973

Amelia Island, Florida
Wallace, McHarg, Roberts & Todd
On the southernmost of the Atlantic barrier islands—Florida's only one—this 1,600 acre resort community was planned to accomplish the "optimum fit between man's requirement . . . and the existing ecology."

1974

Inner Harbor
Baltimore, Maryland
Wallace, Roberts & Todd
This centerpiece and catalyst for Baltimore's revitalization mixed new commercial buildings and the city's historic waterfront open space. Commented *Landscape Architecture* in 1981, the design "clarifies a kaleidoscope of visual elements [and facilitates] the best qualities of urban life."

out a cigarette. In his recollection, landscape architects heard little of the environment in the 1940s at Harvard. "Indeed, I wasn't really introduced to the conservation movement at all. It did not figure in the education of landscape architects during those times. There was a concern with urban design, but no one was remotely concerned about the environment or the people who occupy it. The Conservation Foundation was about the only thing going and the working environmentalist didn't exist."

Friedberg recalled otherwise from his career in the 1960s. He drew a picture of ascendant conservationists and urbanists—who rose at the expense, ironically, of human values, urban scale and cities. "I entered the profession when the conservation movement was well underway. I was invited to do a project in New York in a low-income neighborhood. The architects had absorbed all Jane Jacobs' views, and said, 'I put on a hair shirt, I'm now going to repent. I'm going to consider the community, the people, the sociological aspects of urban design.' Meanwhile I went to Washington and heard Ian for the first time. . . . Design in the profession was being vacated. The profession took a sharp turn to the right or the left, I don't know—"

"To God, actually," interjected McHarg.

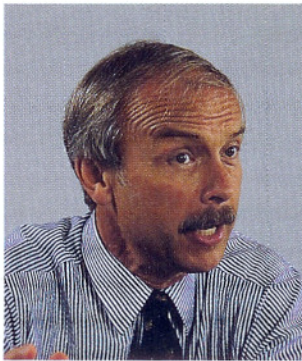
"To God, right. [They embraced] human values and environmental values that could be scientifically quantified. But they left behind the design issues necessary for the development of an urban environment. . . ."

"That's not it at all," shot back McHarg, sensing he was going to be scored again for promoting environmental values over design skills. He protested that ecology was undervalued given rapid and pervasive decay in cities, particularly in the Third World. "One of the biggest tragedies has been the lack of significant movement in the environment until now. The problems with cities are becoming more and more obvious. I was in Mexico last week. Mexico City is beyond redemption."

Tishler referred to a letter from Harvard president emeritus Charles W. Eliot about the landscape architecture profession that was published in the first issue of *Landscape Architecture* in 1910. "He called it a fine art," said Tishler. "You feel we haven't lost that [the



E D C A S T L E / F O L I O



"Charles W. Eliot called landscape architecture a fine art.

You feel we haven't lost that?

That it still has a critical role?"

—Tishler

design art], Ian? That it still has a critical role?"

McHarg preferred to speak of the landscape architect Charles Eliot (son of Charles W. Eliot), who expanded the Olmsted open-space vision into an ecological planning method, which he applied to the Boston metropolitan region. "His premature death was one of the two terrible tragedies in the history of landscape architecture. The other tragedy involved Lewis Mumford [McHarg's friend and colleague]. Between 1946 and 1950 he was speaking to landscape architects and others at Harvard and MIT—and he was rejected. In a good and fair world, these men would have been embraced. These two are terrible losses, and we still suffer from them."

Freeman, who knew Charles Eliot II, nephew of Charles Eliot, added praise for the third-generation Eliot: "He made a great contribution here in Washington. He laid out the entire Montgomery County [Maryland] streamline park, including Rock Creek. Once I took him

1976

Freeway Park
Seattle, Washington
Angela Danadjieva
Lawrence Halprin & Associates
This park reunites two sections of central Seattle severed by an interstate. With broad pedestrian areas, sitting spaces, generous plantings and a "water canyon" to drown out traffic noises, project demonstrates potential of creating beauty from chaos.

1977

Wintergarden
Niagara Falls, New York
M. Paul Friedberg & Associates
"A cathedral of horticulture," this four-story greenhouse beside the falls is "an outdoor space inside." Not intended as a conservatory, it is a garden for people and is composed of more than 100 plant species.



1978

Simmons Company Headquarters
Atlanta, Georgia
Robert E. Marvin & Associates
Corporate headquarters sited to preserve dense forest on a rural hillside. The large structure is stilted above the ground. Parking is dispersed within the forest, with minimal loss of trees. Storm-water runoff is recycled.

Faneuil Hall Marketplace
Boston, Massachusetts
Benjamin Thompson Associates
Once the wholesale market district, the space between and around three 500-foot long warehouses and behind historic Faneuil Hall was transformed into a pedestrian precinct. The addition of cafes, bright awnings and banners, seats and trees helped reintroduce shoppers to the city.

there and he showed me a boundary change I had often wondered about. It turns out there was a landowner who wouldn't sell."

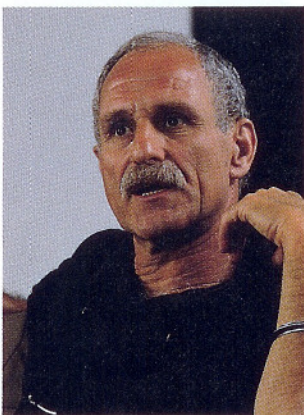
"That's nostalgia," said Friedberg. "We're designing for today." He argued that landscape architects have narrowly defined their role as "bringing nature into the city," while being seduced by a romantic notion of nature. In fact, he said, they need to comprehend and synthesize such issues as urban design, economics and politics into a more complicated whole to build healthy communities.

"Good point," said Tishler. "I think some of the beginners in their profession knew their times and could design accordingly. Have we lost that?"

"We've got other professions moving in on us," said Freeman. "Geographers, for one. Other professions are beginning to broaden their scope to include what landscape architects have always done."

"Just to get back to this 80th anniversary," said Tishler, "what are some of the key projects, the key works? I'm afraid I'll have to eliminate discussion about Central Park."

"The development of parkways," said Freeman. "Landscape architects melded conservation, aesthetics and roads into pleasing park-



"Design in the profession was being vacated [in the 1960s]. The profession took a sharp turn to the right or the left. [They embraced] human values and environmental values that could be scientifically quantified. But they left behind the design issues."
—Friedberg

ways that lay lightly on the land. The Blue Ridge Parkway and Westchester County parkways in New York are excellent examples."

"In more recent history, I think Tommy Church has not been recognized widely enough," said McHarg. "This man discovered that in the beautiful climate of California, people want to live outdoors." McHarg recalled Church showing his gardens to "a Scotsman in California for the first time. And to my astonishment, everyone was swimming! . . . I was actually founded, because he had discovered privacy, beauty, introspection, elegance. He made beautiful gardens, and not only was he modest, his techniques were modest. That was a fantastic contribution."

Friedberg mentioned the contribution of a purely American concept of space: the 1960s urban plaza that "had to be animated in a special way to bring people to it. It was a very conscious invention. It didn't look to European antecedents for its form or program."

This "invention" was often designed by landscape architects, noted McHarg, but usually done badly "with all those colored awnings and umbrellas." Until Lawrence Halprin: "The creation of the Portland plaza [Lovejoy Plaza] was the first time an American plaza was totally animated."

"Because he made it into a stage set," said Friedberg. "He said, 'Make it a theater. If it's not going to be an organic part of the city, I'll make this special complex for people to enter and see each other, a place that animates itself by the fact there is a constant show.' You only need two people to create a spectator and actor relationship."

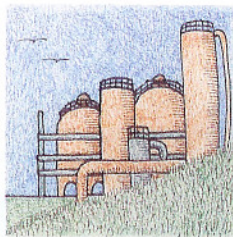
"His wife is a dancer and she made a big contribution a lot of people don't know about," said Freeman, referring to Anna Halprin's influence on her husband's concepts of choreographed space. "Another thing that began back in the 1920s, that a lot of people don't know about, is that the National Park Service invented the term master plan. A landscape architect named Tom Vint coined that term. It was a type of planning for large parks that was later

Left: Hartford's Constitution Plaza, devoid of life. Opposite: At Portland plaza, Halprin 'choreographed' space.



1978

Gas Works Park
Seattle, Washington
Richard Haag & Associates
Winner of an ASLA Presidential Award, this project converted a defunct gas generator plant into a 20-acre park on a promontory at Lake Union. The site was "recycled," with spacious grassy fields, performing arts arena and playground whose structures were equipment once used in the gas plant.



1979

Pioneer Square
Seattle, Washington
Jones & Jones
Seattle's first public meeting place and transportation hub, this triangular urban space was restored to reflect 1909 character. Attention was given to reuse or replication of materials, pavement and furnishings, such as the curved cast-iron pergola, benches and a totem pole.

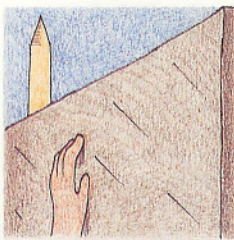
Woodland Park Zoo
Seattle, Washington
Jones & Jones
"The animals were the client" in this zoological park based on natural habitats, which are replicated in each of the park's "regions."

The Bagel Garden
Boston, Massachusetts
Martha Schwartz
This "petit parterre" (484 sq. ft.) in front of the SWA Group's office, "intended to be both artistically serious and humorous," ignited a fury when published in *Landscape Architecture* in 1980. It is composed of 96 lacquered pumpernickel bagels formally arrayed on a bed of purple aquarium gravel.



1981

Vietnam Veterans Memorial
Washington, D.C.
Maya Lin
Displaying names of 58,000 casualties, this minimalist composition of two intersecting black granite walls won from nearly 1,500 entries in a national design competition, causing brief public furor. Commented *Time* magazine: "... all but the most relentless cranks were moved and subdued."



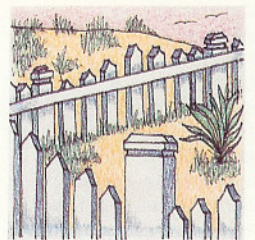
1982

Harlequin Plaza
Englewood, Colorado
George Hargreaves
SWA Group

Two mirror-glazed office buildings flank a parking garage with a black and white harlequin-patterned roof. Surrealistic visuals result from mirrored surfaces, skewed mechanical forms, red and purple walls, with a forced perspective to the distant Rockies.

1984

Seaside New Town
Seaside, Florida
Andres Duany
Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk
Opined *Time*, "This is a real old-fashioned small town, built from scratch [based on] simple, thoughtful rules derived from epicenters of charm such as Charleston, S.C. . . . Seaside could be the most astounding design achievement of its era."



used in city parks, and then in regional and ecological planning. Landscape architects should take more credit for this type of planning because it came from them."

"It again addresses the diversity of the profession as one of its strong points," said Friedberg. "Also as one of its weak points. It confuses a clear definition of the profession."

The Park Service also made mistakes, said Freeman. Most resulted when other designers tried to do the landscape architect's job. "One major problem is the location of buildings in major parks. . . . Take Gettysburg. [The Visitor Center] is a beautiful building, but it's sitting in the wrong place historically. It's sort of right in the middle of Pickett's Charge."

"The remarkable thing about the American parks system is how it continues to evolve," said McHarg. "It started in the West, then moved east with Cape Hatteras National Recreation Area, the National Historical Park in Philadelphia, other urban parks. The thing about the civil service in most countries is that they're uncivil. The National Park Service was modest, and they took care to hide [buildings] away."

The subject of the ASLA arose. What has the organization's effect been? McHarg contended it should be a major lobby for conservation. "Twelve years ago, we did nothing," said Freeman, who has worked as a government affairs consultant for the ASLA since retiring from the Park Service in 1978. "We now have two full-time people in government affairs. The AIA has, I suppose, a dozen. But we're attending and participating in more hearings. Improvement is coming along."

"We're not yet allies in the conservation field," said McHarg.

"I disagree," said Freeman. "We're very much involved with all the conservation groups here in Washington. I personally know all of them. We're a dues-paying member of the Natural Resources Council of America. Congress views us as a design-oriented group with strong interests in conservation."

"That's all true and it takes us off the hook," said Friedberg. "But it's not a strong advocate role." Tishler interrupted to remind Friedberg to name his seminal moments in landscape architecture. "The thing I'd like to talk about is



"Other professions are beginning to broaden their scope to include what landscape architects have always done."

—Freeman

evolution of the ecological movement," interjected McHarg sharply.

"We're at a threshold right now," said Friedberg. "There are very few past examples within the urban environment. We mentioned Halprin because he opened the door—"

"—mention Friedberg, identify yourself," prodded McHarg.

"I've matured in a sense, too," Friedberg continued. "I no longer come in as a Christ figure who is going to solve all the problems. I feel I'm lucky if I can identify the problems in an urban environment. That's why we have to deal with urban problems politically and economically. How can we understand those systems, how can we relate them to aesthetics? So, I think we're at the beginning of something rather than looking back." Pressed again, he expressed admiration for Rockefeller Center, the public works of Robert Moses, and the Brooklyn Promenade combining highway, residences and a waterfront park. "These have not been the epic works of the landscape architectural profession. But we are beginning to contribute to this world in a more significant way. And I'm encouraged."

Friedberg excused himself to catch a plane, leaving the others to discuss the situation of landscape architecture around the world, and finally, to reminisce. While with the U.S. Army at the Battle of the Bulge, Freeman was told to chainsaw many rows of trees along a supply road. A Belgian sat by the road smoking a pipe. "He said, 'American soldiers planted those trees after World War I as part of a conservation effort. Your daddy probably planted them. And here you are cutting them down.' Things were going bad in the battle, but it still made me feel bad cutting down all those beautiful trees."

McHarg then recalled his days in Edinburgh, listening to Louis Armstrong on his uncle's gramophone. That's where he heard "Stars Fell on Alabama," among other tunes filled with the names of mysterious places in a country whose destiny he would someday help shape. McHarg sang some of them in a warm baritone, then tapped out the door to his next appointment. ■

Opposite: Cape Hatteras culminates the west-to-east sweep of public park land.

1985 1986 1987 1988

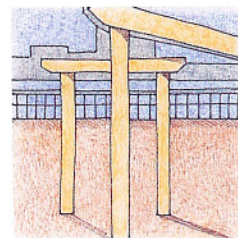
Williams Square
Irving, Texas
Jim Reeves
SWA Group

This 1.5-acre plaza in the planned community of Las Colinas was inspired by the flat, arid Texas prairie. Focus is a "symbolic" stream through which are charging a herd of wild mustangs, sculpted in bronze.

Bloedel Gardens
Bainbridge Island, Washington
Richard Haag & Associates
A series of four gardens within a 140-acre nature preserve owned by the University of Washington. Visitors move from an abstract Garden of Planes to a trail through the mossy Anteroom, the Reflection Gardens, where a long, rectangular pool mirrors dense forest, and finally to a bird sanctuary.

Tanner Fountain
Cambridge, Massachusetts
Peter Walker
SWA Group
On Harvard's campus, 60-foot circular field of granite boulders is an "all-seasons fountain" bathed in mist in summer and vapor in winter. "The same artistic effect was achieved through different media, each appropriate to its season," wrote *Landscape Architecture*.

Battery Park City Esplanades
New York City
Hanna/Olin, Ltd.
Linear green park extends along Hudson River at edge of lower Manhattan, where new 92-acre residential/commercial development has just been completed. A public-access point to the mouth of the river, it features "Olmstedian" light fixtures, sculpture and vistas.





ERIC H. POGGENPOHL/FOLIO

ILLUSTRATIONS BY MARGARET SCOTT

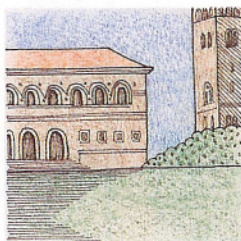
1989

Codex World Headquarters
Canton, Massachusetts
Hanna/Olin, Ltd.

An 11-acre horse farm with racetrack was transformed into an office park, which preserves the rural, open character of the rare undeveloped site along Boston's Route 128. Horse farm was retained. Office building and site details were designed to evoke agrarian New England.

Copley Square
Boston, Massachusetts
Dean Abbott

Twenty years after it was revamped, space was found user-unfriendly. Winner of a national competition, new design recalls the village green.



1990

National Peace Garden
Washington, D.C.
Eduardo Catalano

Selected from 900 entries in a national competition, this scheme, featuring a stylized olive branch, is to be created in parterre. The site is near the flight path of National Airport. Thus the bold image of the olive branch will be highly visible from the air as well as from the garden.

A professor at the University of Georgia, William A. Mann is the author of Space and Time in Landscape Architectural History, from which this timeline is adapted and updated.