

APRIL PHILIPS DESIGN WORKS, INC.
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE · PLANNING · ILLUSTRATION

Board of Trustees
c/o Carolyn Mitchell, Honors and Awards Coordinator
American Society of Landscape Architects
636 Eye St. NW
Washington DC 20001

Honorary ASLA Membership Nomination

Nominee: John King, design critic

Nominee's address: jking@sfchronicle.com

Nominating Member: April Philips, ASLA – California Northern Chapter, ASLA PR Committee; Outgoing Chair of the Professional Practice Network Council; Past Chair and current officer of the Sustainable Design and Development PPN

It is an honor to nominate John King for honorary membership in the American Society of Landscape Architects. John is the urban design writer of the architecture column in the San Francisco paper, the *Chronicle*, one of the few American papers to present a regular column on architectural issues. Now online, his weekly SF Gate features in *Cityscape* look at a distinct slice of San Francisco. With the Chronicle for 18 years, John has covered San Francisco City Hall and planning issues and was a news columnist before moving on to the topic of urban design.

As an urban design writer John expands on traditional architectural criticism to include issues of urban design and the wider cultural impacts of growth. He has been a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in Criticism twice. His thoughtful blend of commentary expands the public's preconceptions of the urban realm. He is a strong ally of our profession, recognizing the contribution of landscape architects to the urban environment. He understands that urban design requires an interdisciplinary team. This is evident in an article written in 2004 on three books about ground zero where he points out that Daniel Liebskind in his lengthy descriptions of shaping the ground zero proposals "*never mentions the respected landscape architects or planners who were offstage members of Liebskind's team.*" His recent piece on the Mission Bay development in San Francisco coherently discusses the maturing of the project, revealing how successful new approaches to buildings, infrastructure, plaza and park work together to create new and innovative city form.

He is responsive and listens to his readers and the designers he covers. As an example, when John wrote his first article on Peter Walker's elegant landscape design at ground zero, the piece was extremely articulate and raised awareness of the role of landscape architecture in the city but he called Pete a "landscape". I felt this was not the correct, cool or respectful terminology for a landscape architect, especially one of Pete's stature, so I wrote him an editorial response, chiding him for its usage. John wrote back apologetically, and to this date, I have not seen him use this word in this capacity again!

John's critiques range from the basic architectural, to green development, parks and open space, streets, and include commentary on the local politics and policies that affect the shaping of the urban environment. He shares strong opinions without being opinionated. Recent articles on homeless teen shelters and neighborhood community gardens in leftover spaces enlighten the public on the cultural impacts to our urban spaces and raise the bar on how people perceive open space in their own backyard. In his recent *"Berkeley plan weds the natural, the practical"* about Walter Hood's proposal for an approach to deal with urban open space in a sustainable manner, John provides enough detail on the design process, history, and the detail to allow a reader to make up their own mind, and even allows readers to see his own skepticism and hopefulness for the future outcome.

John's approach has been recognized by a number of architectural organizations. In 2002, the California Council of the American Institute of Architects presented him a special commendation for his "delicate blend of vision and pragmatism" in writing about urban design. The California Preservation Foundation in 2005 presented him with a President's Award for his survey of how the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake reshaped San Francisco's landscape. It's interesting to note that his graduate thesis was on the beloved local and legendary Herb Caen's daily column.

Besides his newspaper work, John contributes to such periodicals as Architectural Record, Metropolis and Planning. He also contributed an essay to the National Building Museum's "Up, Down, Across: Elevators, Escalators, and Moving Sidewalks" (Merrill, 2003), and the introduction to "Marcel Sedletzky: Architect and Teacher" (Wild Coast Press, 2002). Before joining The Chronicle, King worked at the Boston Globe and the Contra Costa Times.

At the 2007 ASLA Annual meeting John participated in a roundtable to discuss how he writes about design to encourage landscape architecture participation in his critiques.

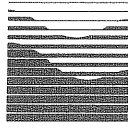
To describe John's unique, fair approach it is best to use his own words:

"Here's the difference between architecture and other forms of art: It must be judged by how it functions, as a matter of course, not merely by how it looks or sounds or feels."

John truly is a strong ally of our profession, recognizing the contribution of landscape architects to the urban environment. It is with great pleasure, respect and admiration that I nominate John King for an honorary membership in the ASLA in recognition of his achievements to the profession.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Hertz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.



ASLA

ASLA Board of Trustees

American Society of Landscape Architects

636 Eye Street, NW , Washington, DC 20001-3736

Dear Board,

I am writing in support of nominating John King for honorary ASLA membership. John's articles have helped me expand my understanding of the built environment like few other writers. His enlightened articles and evocative prose is engaging for everyone from professional to layman.

Many of us in the urban design profession both love and fear the day we hear John has written an article about one of our projects. He searches for the truth in design and is quick to compliment as well as criticize. His knowledge and understanding of urban design and planning give him a voice of authority in these matters, but even so his writing does not seek to tear down but to build up, educate, and edify.

Most recently John has written an article about the controversial decision whether or not to daylight a creek in downtown Berkeley. He did not weigh in on either side but challenged the reader to envision something out of the ordinary and to focus on results rather than process. Words like this directed to the public at large are a huge boost to the urban design community.

John continually articulates what succeeds and what fails in urban design. He gives the Bay area a design platform on which many of our design conversations start. I wholeheartedly express my recommendation for John King as an Honorary ASLA member.

Sincerely,

Christopher Kent

ASLA Trustee, Northern California Chapter

575 Market Street, Suite 2125

San Francisco, CA 94105

AMERICAN
SOCIETY OF
LANDSCAPE
ARCHITECTS
NORTHERN
CALIFORNIA
CHAPTER
5 THIRD STREET
SAN FRANCISCO
CA 94103
415 974-5430

February 19, 2010

ASLA Board of Trustees
c/o Carolyn Mitchell
American Society of Landscape Architects
636 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

Re: Honorary membership for John King, *San Francisco Chronicle Architecture Critic*

Dear Ms. Drobins:

I am writing to express the support of the ASLA -NCC Executive Board for awarding an Honorary Membership to SF Chronicle Architecture Critic John King. John King has been writing for the Chronicle for 18 years and writes cogent, reflective articles about public spaces, urban design and landscape architecture as well as architecture. He is a strong ally of our profession, recognizing the contribution of landscape architects to the essential and iconic elements of San Francisco from the waterfront to the Presidio to the great variety of downtown plazas.

Throughout his reviews and opinion pieces, John reveals a responsiveness to the designers he highlights and the perspectives of readers. He provides description and detail to allow a reader to make up their own mind about a project and opens views into design history, and process in doing so.

Recently John wrote an excellent piece about a proposed plaza and streetscape in downtown Berkeley, CA in the process of being designed by Landscape Architect Walter Hood. The article conveys sensitivity to social and environmental context and describes the proposed design in a clear and compelling fashion. This is the type of article that informs and educates Bay Area residents about landscape design quality, and also landscape design process, that contributes to the increasing public understanding of the vital role of landscape architects in creating public space.

John realizes that good urban design is the result of strong collaborations across the design disciplines. For example, his piece on the Mission Bay development discusses the maturing of the project by detailing successful approaches to new buildings, infrastructure, plaza, and park space, and reveals how they together create new innovative city form. As the sole

newsprint architecture critic in the Bay Area, John does a great job revealing the many aspects of design and the role of the various design professions in creating livable communities.

For all of these reasons, we would like to see John awarded an Honorary Membership in ASLA and look forward to having him a member of our design community.

Sincerely,

Ann Baker, President
American Society of Landscape Architects
Northern California Chapter
510.418.2424