

Alliance for Historic Landscape Preservation

35th Annual Meeting

Abstracts of Papers, Works-In-Progress, and Posters



***Resilience, Renewal, and Renaissance:
Keeping Cultural Landscapes Relevant***

Lynchburg, Virginia

March 20–23, 2013

The Question of Relevance: Ideas from Italo Calvino

Ian Firth, Professor Emeritus, University of Georgia, Athens

In May 1999, Lynn Beebe, Poplar Forest's first president, challenged a group of professionals and academics involved in preservation to come up with ideas that would go beyond a conventional museum approach for this preservation project and give it additional relevance. At that time, acquisition of the surrounding landscape was still a major hurdle though restoration of Jefferson's house was well underway, so responses to Beebe's challenge focused on the use of the house. Now, in 2013, with work on the curtilage underway, the best way to treat and use the wider agricultural landscape of Jefferson's plantation remains the subject of debate. This situation is not unusual at many historic places. It can be attributed to various factors including the complex ecological and social problems that have to be addressed in large-scale landscape preservation projects, while the substantial costs of initial work and long-term maintenance inevitably raise questions about the relevance of such ambitious undertakings.

Several authorities in the field of historic preservation including Kevin Lynch and David Lowenthal have addressed the issue of relevance and their ideas have been widely circulated. This presentation considers questions raised by someone less well known in this field, Italo Calvino. In his book 'Invisible Cities', Calvino presents a wide variety of ideas, many in the form of questions and caveats concerning attitudes towards our environment and our past. The book, first published in 1972, is highly regarded as a work of literature and has received some attention in the fields of architecture and urban design, but its potential contribution to the field of landscape preservation has been generally overlooked. This paper presents several of Calvino's most provocative ideas and discusses their implications for the treatment of the landscape at Poplar Forest.

In 'Invisible Cities,' Calvino imagines conversations between Marco Polo and Kublai Khan, in which the explorer describes a series of fantastic places he has visited while the emperor searches for patterns and meanings. At a first reading one is struck by the fertility of Calvino's imagination in conjuring up such magical places, but on further study one realizes that he is offering both provocative questions and warnings about the ways we see, understand, and manage cities and, by extension, cultural landscapes. Early chapters focus on issues associated with our perception and understanding of places that inform us about our past, while later chapters address the relevance of such places to our fears about, and hopes for the future.

In this paper, examples of the first set of issues are discussed with reference to a variety of historic landscapes, and then Calvino's ideas about relevance are considered with particular attention to the landscape at Poplar Forest. Calvino does not endorse a museum approach to preserving remnants of the past and his ideas should stimulate a lively discussion.

The Renewal of Echo Park: Lessons in Preservation and Sustainability

Rachel Evans Lloyd, LEED AP, Charlottesville, Virginia

Echo Park is one of Los Angeles' oldest and most delightful parks and a designated historic monument, but its renewal as part of a multimillion dollar urban engineering project generated a surprising array of rehabilitation challenges: the need for cultural landscape preservation that was sensitive to the tangible and intangible heritage of a diverse community; a sustainable scheme to reduce excessive storm water pollutants; a procedure for moving the park's delicate historic artwork; and an emergency plan for relocating the park's most famous resident, Maria the goose.

The land now occupied by Echo Park was once simply a large lake constructed in 1870 as "Reservoir #4," serving Los Angeles as part of a vast urban water supply system. The historic significance of the park derives from its design, implemented in the 1890s, featuring an artfully irregular lake, collection of rare trees, long views, and a small but captivating boathouse. The design exemplified the Picturesque style, which connected it to the City Beautiful movement that inspired the creation of so many municipal parks during that era. Echo Park enjoyed a reputation as the cultural center of a large, diverse neighborhood and remains the site of an annual Lotus Festival, a Pan-Asian celebration of the historic lotus plantings in the lake, featuring the famous dragon boat races.

Over time, however, Echo Park's lake became terribly polluted and was leaking the city's precious potable water. In 2008, city managers dedicated themselves to solving these problems—resulting in not only the engineering overhaul of the lake, but also the cultural rebirth of the park through the replacement of its once-rich plantings, addition of new park amenities, habitat improvement for its teeming waterfowl, and interpretive signage that told the story of the landscape's evolution.

Still under construction, the park's rehabilitation has not been without controversy. One aspect of the lake improvements was a "soft" approach to storm water management—the addition of new wetland vegetation—a solution to which some preservationists objected, arguing that it was not in keeping with the park's significant historic design character. Also problematic was the displacement of the park's avian population—much beloved by the neighbors—in what came to be known as "the goose issue."

Ultimately, flexible and creative preservation planning will enable Echo Park to flourish in many different ways: by restoring the park's Picturesque character through the addition of lush new plantings and historically appropriate landscape features, by improving the site's ecosystem through the creative application of storm water and habitat improvement best management practices, and enabling it to once again serve as the focus of the neighborhood's vibrant cultural heritage.

As historical landscape architect for this project, the author will provide an inside look at the theoretical underpinnings, process, and technical challenges for the park's remarkable rehabilitation.

Questions for Discussion:

- How does Echo Park reflect a Jeffersonian approach to landscape design?
- Although Echo Park is located in California, its rehabilitation lessons could be applied anywhere. What can we, in Virginia, learn from Echo Park's renewal?

The Rohwer Memorial Cemetery HALS: Utilizing Conventional and Cutting Edge Tools in the Classroom

Kimball Erdman, PLA, Assistant Professor, Department of Landscape Architecture,
University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

A new course in historic landscape preservation was offered to undergraduate landscape architecture students in spring 2012. The course objective was to introduce the subdiscipline—its history, methods, tools, terminology, and theories—through seminar discussions and a real-world preservation project. The selected project was a Historic American Landscape Survey (HALS) for the Rohwer Relocation Center Memorial Cemetery near Rohwer, Arkansas. In 2011, concern over the deteriorated state of the built elements in this National Historic Landmark, and the associated risk of their permanent loss, prompted three universities to team together in pursuit of a \$250,000 grant through Japanese American Confinement Sites program for conservation of the monuments. The documentation conducted by the class provided a match through donated services that was essential for obtaining the grant and aided the conservation process. It also provided a classroom opportunity to explore the strengths and weaknesses of traditional and evolving technologies.

The cemetery is the most intact remnant of the former Rohwer Relocation Center, one of ten World War II-era concentration camps built in the United States to hold Japanese Americans from Pacific Coast states. The need for a cemetery was overlooked when the center was built, but internees were granted permission to create one after the birth and subsequent death of the camp's first infant in October 1942. By the time the camp closed in November 1945, the cemetery contained 24 headstones marking gravesites, a large monument memorializing another 144 internees who had been cremated, and another large monument commemorating 30 internees who enlisted in the U.S. Army and lost their lives fighting in Europe. All aspects of the small cemetery, from the layout of walks, plantings, and the perimeter fence to the highly sculpted and detailed concrete monuments replete with Japanese and American symbolism, were designed and installed by internees using found and inexpensive, everyday materials. Following the closing of the center in 1945, the buildings were removed and most of the land was converted to agricultural fields, while the cemetery fell victim to vandalism and neglect. In 1960, former internees and camp officials initiated the first of many attempts to maintain, protect, and recognize it. Despite time, periodic neglect, and well-intentioned but character-altering interventions, the overall integrity of the cemetery remains largely intact due to the retention the monuments, headstones, and other hardscape elements.

This paper explains the methodology utilized in the documentation process. Through collaboration with the Center for Advanced Spatial Technologies, the students used multiple data collection methods during a three-day field reconnaissance, including hand measurements, Global Positioning System equipment, photogrammetry, and mid-range laser scanners to produce a high density survey (HDS). The HDS point cloud served as the primary source from which the two-dimensional HALS drawings were created, although the fine details of headstones and monuments had to be generated by other means. This presentation will explore the benefits and shortcomings of the various tools and methods used to create the HALS drawings and will generate discussion of the pedagogical values and challenges for such an undertaking.

Climbing Out of the Rut: Finding the Future for Cultural Landscapes in Australia and New Zealand

Paulette Wallace and Kristal Buckley, Deakin University,
School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Burwood, Victoria, Australia

The 1992 adoption of ‘cultural landscape’ as an additional type of site on the World Heritage List was supposed to be groundbreaking for Australia and New Zealand, as both countries had pushed for continuing and associative landscapes to change the perception and practice of the World Heritage Convention. Certainly, the initial burst of activity suggested change was in the air, with the inscription of New Zealand’s Tongariro National Park as the first World Heritage cultural landscape in 1993, for the associative cultural values of Ngati Tuwharetoa with Mount Tongariro. A year later, Australia’s Uluru Kata-Tjuta National Park became the second associative cultural landscape to be inscribed on the World Heritage List, providing international recognition of the beliefs of the Anangu traditional owners. The momentum continued with Australia and New Zealand taking leading roles in further defining the associative cultural landscape category. There were ‘think tanks’ and conferences held in both countries, and the three World Heritage cultural landscape categories were even starting to be translated into local heritage planning schemes.

Yet fast forward to 2013, and one might be left wondering what happened? While there is no longer the need to convince people of the value of cultural landscapes for addressing the ‘interface’ between nature and culture, the initial impetus experienced by cultural landscapes has diminished and has been replaced with the questioning of what now? How do we effectively transmit cultural landscapes the concept, into heritage management in practice?

At the same time the Critical Heritage Studies scholars are highly critical of heritage practice, positioning cultural landscapes as an initiative that the World Heritage Committee was “forced” to adopt in order “to incorporate a broader range of values around heritage” (Harrison 2013:118). Their critique of the under-theorised heritage field falls short of providing any real guidance for practitioners, and is such that it is difficult to discern whether they think cultural landscapes is a good idea, or whether it is just an extension of the Authorise Heritage Discourse. All of this is creating a heritage field where the gulf between theory and practice is growing wider apart rather than coming together.

To try and address all of this dysfunction, this paper suggests that we need to focus on innovation, and feeding the theorization through practice. Practice might come from the local/community/grassroots, but it can also come from site managers and policy makers who try new things. Attention to these kinds of initiatives might assist us to move forward with cultural landscapes. This paper will outline the current state of cultural landscape heritage management in Australia and New Zealand and introduce a group of examples where local communities, site managers and policy makers are simply getting out there and getting stuck in to the conservation of their heritage. The question for discussion here is whether North America has similar examples where communities are managing their heritage in ways that have all the attributes of a cultural landscape approach, without formally being recognised as such.

Fort Proctor: A Conditional Preservation

Audrey Cropp, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana

The preservation and sustainability of building cultural heritage in indeterminate landscapes and sites at extreme environmental risk raises several questions regarding methodology.

1. What are the priorities for preservation of built works where degradation is accelerated by global environmental shifts?
2. What does one preserve of past cultures when the physical ground it once occupied is gone?
3. What are the methods for Historic Preservation when to preserve means much more than stabilizing a built project in time but also includes the preservation/sustenance of the land, the environment, and the cultural relevance?
4. If one cannot physically preserve does that mean its presence and cultural significance is nullified?

To investigate these questions, we selected Fort Proctor, a National Register of Historic Places site at extreme environmental risk. Fort Proctor is one of several forts built adjacent to Lake Borgne in Southeastern Louisiana following the War of 1812. The fort was designed and construction commenced in 1856 but was halted in 1859 due to the start of the U.S. Civil War. Since then, Fort Proctor has remained in a fluctuating landscape as a static marker or datum, recording major ecological changes within the dynamic coastal environment. To begin, a multidisciplinary team assembled a rich historical context to understand Fort Proctor's deconstruction and degradation as well as the changing Gulf of Mexico ecologies. From this complex array of disparate datasets (physical site and geographical condition surveys, material analyses, photogrammetric and photographic documentation, and geographic information system mapping) the researchers developed time-based animations that explore Fort Proctor in four time-scales; one day, one year, 200 years, and geologic time. The animations present perspectival visualizations that show the aesthetic and atmospheric qualities of each environment while overlaying analytical data and historical facts. The animations allow the viewer to digest the disparate datasets as single narratives creating a composite temporal framework.

The research has generated a new procedural methodology for preservation of sites at extreme environmental risk. In the case study of Fort Proctor, both the building and site exist in a state of decay. To preserve the architecture requires the preservation of the environment and that is not only cost prohibitive but also disproportionately scalar. As the world's global environment continues to shift, more and more preservation sites will face similar dilemmas. We argue this does not preclude preservation however but instead changes the methodology and resultant. In museum conservation ethics there exists a precedent for our methodology; reformatting unstable media. When a media is unstable and/or threatens the existence of other media the secondary form of preservation is reformatting. The goal is to capture the information from the media but not to preserve said media. Thusly, in constructed sites where physical preservation is prohibitive and loss unavoidable, we propose "*the conditional preservation.*" Beginning with the traditional Historic American Buildings Survey methodology, we have elaborated on that documentation procedure to create a more experiential and holistic preservation method for at-risk sites. This paper will elaborate on this procedural methodology and present via the films, the methodology employed on the case study, Fort Proctor.

Inspiration from the Colonial Potager

Laura S. D. Greloch, The Outdoor Room, LLC, Walnutport, Pennsylvania

Contrary to a fast-paced schedule, the inclusion of Potager Garden design applications into the American landscape has influenced cultural awareness, historical appreciation, and property value offering many lifestyle benefits. Today's trends of seamless integration telecommuting, pursuit of well-being, indulgence, multi-generational households and dynamic home entertaining has had a significant impact on how home owners are utilizing, valuing and enjoying their homes and properties.

Looking back at the simplistic, holistic and sustainable practices of our earliest forefathers who appraised our young America as a beautifully wild, abundantly lush with flora and fauna and ripe example of God's Creation that could be restored and associated with richness, we have returned to a more restorative mindset and appreciation of our unique resources.

Colonial land use was in part an incentive that supported work ethic, responsibility and exemplified being a good steward to the land. Providing for one's family fostered independence and was economically beneficial and purposeful to the community. Cottage crafts as well as other necessities bore forth from the Potager or community garden including the trades of apiculture, lepidopterology, and apothecary.

We have been creating and incorporating food gardens into our projects at the request of client's who are looking to supplement their diets with home grown vegetables, fresh eggs and fruits, and whether they are in command of the work or have requested support from our staff have been reaping the benefits of living closer to the land.

With the goals of drawing people out into the landscape, we have transitioned architectural elements, living patios, and modern conveniences in combination with decorative vegetable gardening creating fresh-air living spaces for today's expectations.

Even at the minutest scale, horticultural therapy has a pronounced and renewed effect on family and community relationships and as we look to create an aesthetic atmosphere for ourselves, we are more conscious of sharing what we have learned with our friends and neighbors.

We have been very inspired in the results of the seeds we have planted. The rebirth of a need to get our hands dirty and reap the benefits of our sweat! People have slowed down, are taking stock in the rhythm of the seasons, and are learning to plant, harvest, and cook again.

Through this topic, we seek input on:

- Sustainable practices in residential farming
- Positive/ negative impact on minimizing pest and disease through the horticulture of heirloom crops and crop rotation
- Quality family experiences and enhanced communication
- Health benefits of growing a portion or all of one's own produce
- Study of the historical Kitchen Garden and it's practical utilization as a cultural practice today

Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship, Purcellville, Virginia

David B. Post, ASLA, Landscape Architect and Owner, PostModern Landscape Architecture, LLC
Facilities Chair, Board of Directors, Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship (BRCES)

The Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship is located in an area known as “Between the Hills,” nestled between the Blue Ridge and Short Hill mountains just 2 miles south of historic Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. The 900 acre property witnessed over 10,000 years of human occupation including Native Americans, colonial settlers, Confederate and Union Civil War troops, Agrarian expansion during the Industrial Revolution and Contemporary conservation, education and stewardship.

A pre-Civil War community thrived as witnessed by 33 identified sites along Piney Run, a perennial stream. These sites are highlighted by:

1. A two-story log house originally built in 1848 and currently used as a rental vacation retreat
2. Dairy barn ruins
3. Restored spring house
4. Stone house ca. 1890 in restorable condition
5. 2 log house ca. 1880–1890 (one restorable, one near collapse)
6. Various other ruins of a mill, blacksmith, bridges, cabins, a road, stone fences
7. Remnants of a dam

Archeological research uncovered 3,000 artifacts from the periods, which are catalogued and stored but not on display. Current uses in addition to the rental house include a sustainable organic vegetable and livestock farm, numerous conservation activities including a very active birding group, recreational activities including hiking and camping and educational opportunities related to sustainable practices.

Questions are centered on how to be the best stewards of the property. Much of our efforts involve maintaining the current usable facilities, trails, and farm. Conservation efforts I currently focused on meadow management.

1. How do we develop a steady stream of income resulting in a sustainable staffing level? Current staff consists of one part time administrator.
2. Where do we focus limited resources first?
3. How can a master plan be used to guide items 1 and 2?

