

Illustrated History of Landscape Design

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Boults, Elizabeth and Chip Sullivan. "Extremes of Wealth and Power," 207-209, 249-250.
In *Illustrated History of Landscape Design*. Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.,
2010.



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EXTREMES OF WEALTH AND POVERTY

America experienced tremendous growth in industry and a great wave of immigration in the period between Reconstruction (1877) and the country's entry into World War I (1917). Fortunes were made for investors in steel, oil, and railroads. The very rich indulged

themselves in Roaring Twenties speakeasies, while the very poor struggled to survive in overcrowded tenements. In 1873, Mark Twain collaborated with the author Charles Dudley Warner on a book entitled *The Gilded Age: A Tale of Tomorrow*—a satire about the pol-

ished surface disguising the underlying greed and corruption in society. The term came to characterize the era. The dramatic changes of the 20th century were written on the landscape and completely shifted the priorities of design.

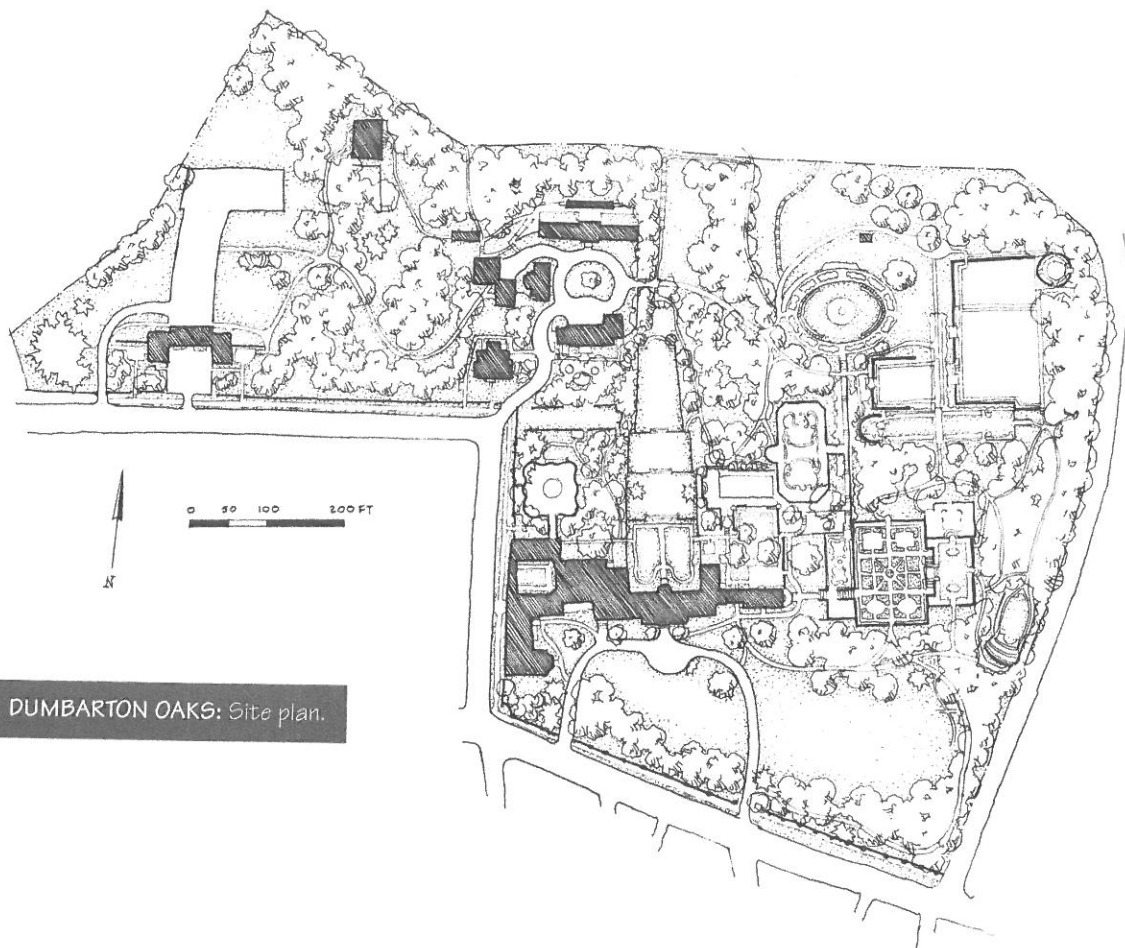
THE COUNTRY PLACE ERA

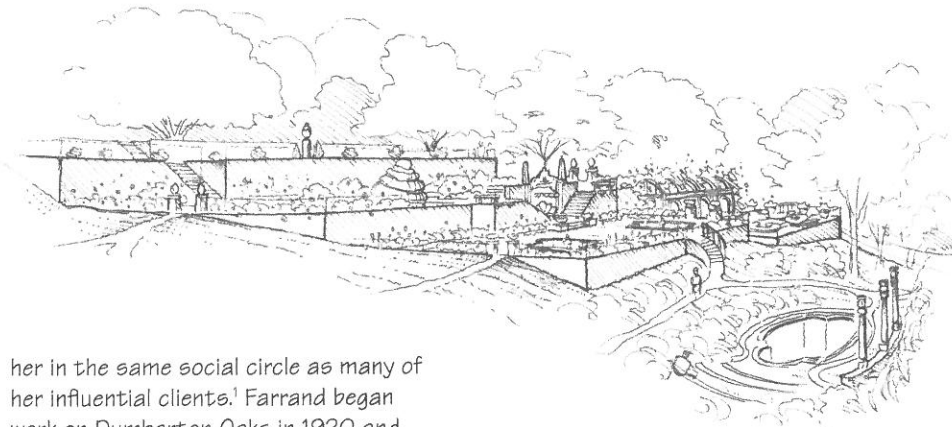
From the 1880s to the 1920s, wealthy American industrialists and bankers expressed their power by building estates in the countryside, much like ancient emperors and Renaissance princes did. European-styled houses and gardens—manors, villas, castles, and chateaux—dotted the landscape outside major cities. The period is

contemporary to that of the Lutyens/Jekyll partnership (1893–1912) and is characterized by a similar focus on high-quality materials and clearly structured space. Typical of the era is an enhanced relationship between house and garden, a balance of naturalistic and formal areas, and a hierarchical ordering of space. The stock market

crash of 1929 and the new income tax laws enacted in 1933 put an end to the Country Place Era.

Beatrix Jones Farrand (1872–1959) was a founding member of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) and a pioneering woman designer. Her privileged background put





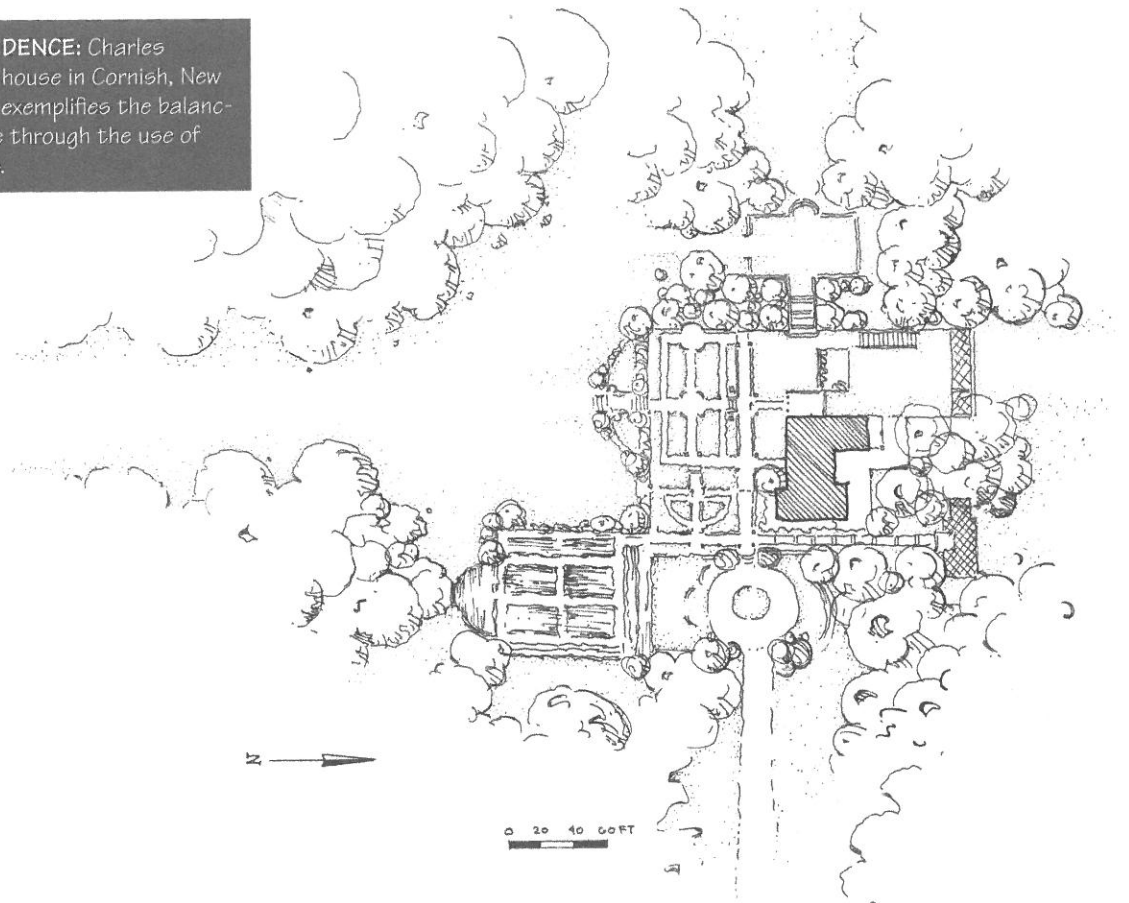
TERRACE GARDEN: Farrand created a wonderful harmony of planting, paving, and architectural elements.

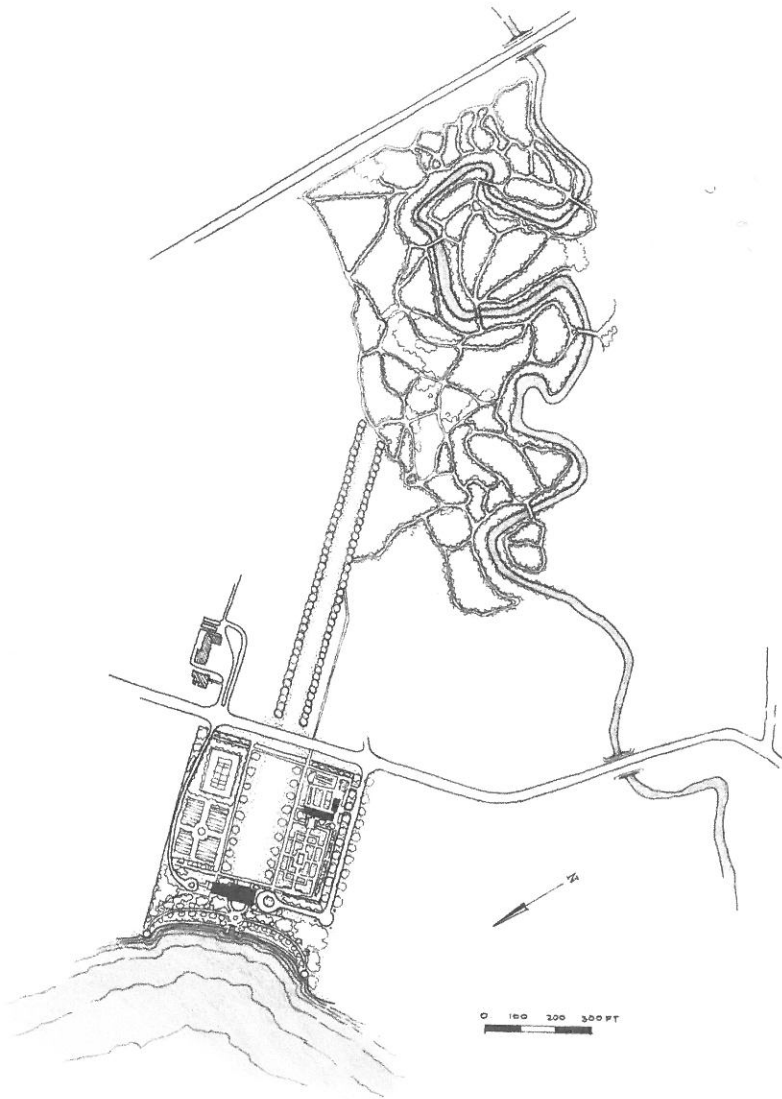
her in the same social circle as many of her influential clients.¹ Farrand began work on Dumbarton Oaks in 1920 and remained engaged in the project for 27 years. Located in Georgetown, near Washington, DC, Dumbarton Oaks was the home of Mildred Barnes Bliss and Robert Woods Bliss. Architectural elements structure the terraces that descend the woodland slope. Outdoor rooms, like the rose garden, north vista, and pebble garden are distinguished by their Arts and Crafts detailing.

Charles A. Platt (1861–1933) was an architect whose work was informed by a sense of spatial order and visual coherence reminiscent of Italian Renaissance gardens. His book, *Italian Gardens* (1894), was influential in introducing architectonic spatial relationships to residential design in America. He conceived

of the house and garden as a single composition, connecting interior and exterior spaces through proportional relationships and sight lines. His work at Gwinn, the Cleveland estate of William G. Mather, began in 1906. Warren Manning laid out the 27-acre estate for which Platt designed the house and its 5-acre

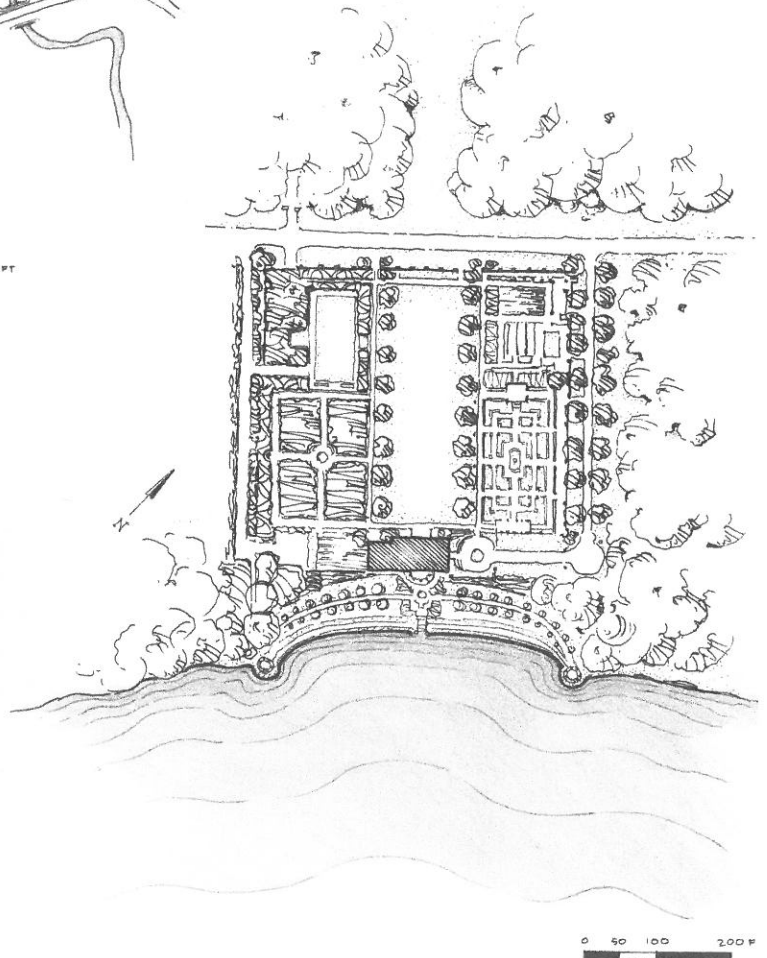
PLATT RESIDENCE: Charles Platt's own house in Cornish, New Hampshire, exemplifies the balancing of space through the use of lateral axes.





GWINN MASTER PLAN: Platt and Manning juxtaposed naturalistic and formal geometries.

GWINN SITE PLAN: A curving terrace formed an elegant seawall on the shores of Lake Erie.



garden. Platt structured the formal and informal spaces through sight lines. In 1935 Mather hired Ellen Shipman to redesign Platt's formal gardens.

Other notable country place estates include Filoli, the Bourn family estate in Woodside, California; Winterthur, home of the du Ponts, in Delaware; the Mount, Edith Wharton's house in Lenox, Massachusetts; John Deering's Villa Vizcaya in Miami, Florida; and Biltmore in Asheville, North Carolina (discussed in the previous chapter). In the second half of the 20th century, the focus of professional practice shifted away from residential design. Landscape architects adopted corporate business models to undertake large-scale projects for corporate clients and municipalities.

19th CENTURY

1. Thacker, Christopher. *The History of Gardens* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1979), p. 237.
2. Wheelchair-bound for the last seven years of his life, Repton became concerned with accessible garden elements and the close-up view of the landscape. See Richard Bisgrove, *The National Trust Book of the English Garden* (London: Viking, 1990), pp. 138–139.
3. See Renzo Dubbini, "Glasshouses and Winter Gardens," in *The History of Garden Design: The Western Tradition from the Renaissance to the Present Day*, Monique Mosser and Georges Teyssot, eds. (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1991), p. 428.
4. See Kate Colquhoun, "The Busiest Man in England": A Life of Joseph Paxton, Gardener, Architect and Victorian Visionary (Boston, MA: David R. Godine, 2006), p. 110. An illustration of Paxton's "Plan for Forming Subscription Gardens" (1834) appears in Alessandra Ponte, "Public Parks in Great Britain and the United States," in *The History of Garden Design: The Western Tradition from the Renaissance to the Present Day*, Monique Mosser and Georges Teyssot, eds. (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1991), p. 376.
5. Bisgrove, *The National Trust Book of the English Garden*, p. 174.
6. Robinson, William. *The English Flower Garden: Design, Arrangement, and Plans*, Fourth Edition (London: John Murray, 1895), p. 30. Retrieved July 3, 2009 from www.books.google.com.
7. Bisgrove, *The National Trust Book of the English Garden*, p. 189. See also Ponte, "Public Parks in Great Britain and the United States," p. 373.
8. Thomas von Joest describes improvements made to the Champs-Élysées by architect Jacques-Ignace Hittorff, in "Hausmann's Paris: A Green Metropolis?" in *The History of Garden Design: The Western Tradition from the Renaissance to the Present Day*, Monique Mosser and Georges Teyssot, eds. (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1991), p. 388.
9. Alphand's book is titled *Les Promenades de Paris (1867–1873)*, and was reprinted by Princeton Architectural Press, Princeton, NJ, in 1984.
10. von Joest, "Hausmann's Paris," p. 392.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 397.
12. Schuyler, David. *Apostle of Taste: Andrew Jackson Downing 1815–1852* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), p. 92.
13. See Roy Rosenzweig and Elizabeth Blackmar, *The Park and the People* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), pp. 65–77.
14. Olmsted's publications include: *Walks and Talks of an American Farmer in England* (1852), *The Seaboard Slave States* (1856), *A Journey in Texas* (1857), *A Journey in the Back Country* (1860), and two volumes of previously published essays titled *Journeys and Explorations in the Cotton Kingdom* (1861).
15. "It is one great purpose of the Park to supply to the hundreds of thousands of tired workers, who have no opportunity to spend their summers in the country, a specimen of God's handiwork that shall be to them, inexpensively, what a month or two in the White Mountains or the Adirondacks is, at great cost, to those in easier circumstances." Olmsted quoted in Norman T. Newton, *Design on the Land: The Development of Landscape Architecture* (Cambridge MA: Belknap Press/Harvard University Press, 1974), p. 289.
16. See Warren Angus Ferris, *Life in the Rocky Mountains: A Diary of Wanderings on the Sources of the Rivers Missouri, Columbia,*

and Colorado, 1830–1835, Leroy R. Hafen, ed., new revised edition (Denver, CO: Fred A. Rosenstock/The Old West Publishing Company, 1983). Ferris's descriptions of Yellowstone appear on pp. 326–329. See also Burton Harris, *John Colter: His Years in the Rockies* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952). Accounts of "Colter's Hell" are described on pp. 91–96.

17. A section of the 1890 census noted that settlement had expanded so rapidly across the West that there was no longer a clear line demarcating populated areas from wilderness areas. Frederick Jackson Turner developed an influential 'frontier thesis' in his essay "The Significance of the Frontier in American History." See *Rereading Frederick Jackson Turner: "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" and other essays*, with commentary by John Mack Faragher (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1994), pp. 31–60.

20th CENTURY

1. See Robin Karson, *A Genius for Place: American Landscapes of the Country Place Era* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), pp. 133–147. Farrand's papers are archived at the College of Environmental Design, University of California, Berkeley.
2. Emily Talen discusses the rise in civic improvement associations and examines the idea of 'urban plan-making' as an instrument of social control in *New Urbanism and American Planning: The Conflict of Cultures* (New York: Routledge, 2005), pp. 114–125. See also Norman T. Newton, *Design on the Land: The Development of Landscape Architecture* (Cambridge MA: Belknap Press/Harvard University Press, 1974), pp. 414–416, for his description of the popularity of Robinson's articles.
3. Spiro Kostof attributes the failure of monumental urban planning in America to the lack of a centralized local authority in *The City Shaped: Urban Patterns and Meanings through History* (Boston, MA: Bulfinch Press/Little, Brown and Co., 1991), p. 217. Burnham created monumental plans for the cities of Chicago, Cleveland, San Francisco, Washington, DC, and the cities of Manila and Baguio in the Philippines. Although only the plan of Washington, DC was implemented (as an extension of the federal government's power), the idea of comprehensive urban planning endured and helped develop a conception of urbanism in America.
4. Talen, *New Urbanism and American Planning* p. 114. See also Newton, *Design on the Land*, pp. 421–423, and Lewis Mumford, *The City in History* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1961), p. 401.
5. In 1925 Walter Gropius published a volume entitled *Internationale Architektur* that showcased some of the work exhibited at the Bauhaus in 1923. Gropius believed that functionalism could express the values of a unified society. See Harry Francis Mallgrave, *Modern Architectural Theory* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 252.

In 1932, the Museum of Modern Art in New York mounted a show titled "Modern Architecture: International Exhibition." The accompanying book *The International Style*, written by Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson, introduced the 'new style' to America. The book and the exhibit highlighted the work of European architects who were working in avant-garde, not historical, styles. The avant-garde represented a progressive ideology that sought to express commonalities rather than differences. See Terence Riley, *The International Style: Exhibition 15 and the Museum of Modern Art* (New York: Rizzoli/Columbia Books of Architecture, 1992), pp. 9–64.

6. In his 1896 essay, "The Tall Office Building Artistically Re-considered," American architect Louis Sullivan (1856–1924) wrote "all things in Nature have a shape...a form...that tells us what they are...Whether it be the sweeping eagle in his flight or the open apple-blossom...form ever follows function, and this is the law." The phrase expressed his belief that the ornamentation of skyscrapers (a totally new form of building) should be inspired from organic nature and not classical motifs. See *Louis Sullivan: The Public Papers*, Robert Twombly, ed. (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 111.
7. Le Corbusier, *Toward an Architecture*, introduction by Jean-Louis Cohen; translation by John Goodman (Los Angeles, CA: Getty Research Institute/Texts and Documents, 2007), p. 87.
8. Imbert, Dorothee. *The Modernist Garden in France* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), p. 128. George Dodds makes a case that Guevrekian's triangular garden was "half of a Paradise garden" bisected by a diagonal cut line that symmetrically reflected the rest of the garden. See George Dodds, "Freedom from the Garden: Gabriel Guevrekian and a New Territory of Experience," in *Tradition and Innovation in French Garden Art: Chapters of a New History*, John Dixon Hunt and Michel Conan, eds. (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), pp. 192–193.
9. Imbert, *The Modernist Garden in France*, p. 128.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 65. See also Dodds, "Freedom from the Garden," p. 185.
11. Karson, Robin. *Fletcher Steele, Landscape Architect* (A Ngaere Macray Book/New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1989), p. 108.
12. Neckar, Lance M. "Christopher Tunnard: The Garden in the Modern Landscape," in *Modern Landscape Architecture: A Critical Review*, Marc Treib, ed. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994), p. 146.
13. See Marc Treib and Dorothee Imbert, *Garrett Eckbo: Modern Landscapes for Living*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997), pp. 16–20.
14. Halprin was involved in "Take Part" workshops in the 1960s. See Jim Burns, "The How of Creativity: Scores & Scoring" in *Lawrence Halprin: Changing Places* (San Francisco, CA: The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1986), p. 57.
15. For discussions of the land art movement and its impact on architecture and landscape architecture, see John Beardsley, *Earthworks and Beyond* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1984), p. 122; also Michael McDonough, "Architecture's Unnoticed Avant-Garde" in *Art in the Land*, Alan Sonfist, ed. (New York: E.P. Dutton Inc., 1983), pp. 233–252; and Catherine M. Howett, "Landscape Architecture: Making a Place for Art," in *Places*, vol. 2, no. 4 (1985).
16. The idea of value-neutral space and open-ended meaning stems from the philosophical discourse of post structuralism and the linguistic theory of deconstruction. Jacques Derrida (b. 1930) is a philosopher whose writing on 'value-laden hierarchies' and 'slippery meanings' has influenced architects. Derrida collaborated with Peter Eisenman and Bernard Tschumi on the conceptual design of Parc de La Villette. The park was featured in a 1988 exhibition titled *Deconstructivist Architecture* at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Excerpts from Derrida's works are included in *Rethinking Architecture: A reader in cultural theory*, Neil Leach, ed. (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 317–336. See also the exhibition catalog, *Deconstructivist Architecture*, Philip Johnson and Mark Wigley/The Museum of Modern Art, New York (Boston, MA: Little Brown and Co., 1988).
17. In 1986 Harvard University Graduate School of Design mounted an exhibit titled *Transforming the American Garden: 12 New Landscape Designs*. The goal of the show was to examine the garden as an expressive and conceptual medium representative of the age. For critical commentary on the exhibit, see *Places*, vol. 3, no. 3 (1986). The July 1989 issue of *Progressive Architecture* magazine was also dedicated to the 'New American Landscape' and examined the "new emphasis on landscape as art." The issue highlighted the work of many of the same landscape architects who contributed to the 1986 exhibit.
- (Interestingly, in 2005 a new set of circumstances affecting professional design practice was examined in the exhibition titled *Groundswell: Constructing the Contemporary Landscape* held at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The show featured creative responses to the design of public urban open space in a postindustrial landscape, and included projects on reclaimed and formerly degraded sites.)
18. McIntosh, Christopher. *Gardens of the Gods* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005), p. 116.
19. Clement, Gilles. *Le jardin en mouvement de la Vallée au champ via le parc André-Citroën*, 3rd edition ([Paris]: Sens and Tonka, 1999), pp. 172–175. See also Alan Tate, *Great City Parks* (London: Spon Press, 2001), p. 45.

21st CENTURY

1. The project as described by its designer, George Hargreaves, in Jim Doyle's article, "The City's Front Yard," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 23 September 2001: CM-10.