

EDITOR'S NOTE

Now approaching forty years old, the Landscape Institute's certificate programs have clearly influenced the evolution of the Institute itself in important ways. First offered in 1968 under the auspices of the Landscape Program of the Radcliffe Seminars, the certificate has become an important credential in the landscape design profession. Students come to the Institute for particular courses that meet their immediate needs. Others seek a working knowledge of the landscape design profession, choosing what they need and leaving after taking six or eight courses. Landscape history scholars take design studios to deepen their understanding of the design process or they take specific history courses to complement previous studies. But more and more students opt for one of the three certificate programs—landscape design, history, and preservation—each with its own complete curriculum. These programs have come to set the standard for education in the field; and the graduates' professional preparation is validated by the rigor and comprehensiveness of the required courses. (For listings, see <http://www.arboretum.harvard.edu/programs/ld/ld.html>.)

It's been five years since the Arnold Arboretum

assumed administrative oversight of the Radcliffe Seminars in Landscape Design, expanded the offerings, and changed the name. Much has remained the same, including the administration's willingness to develop new offerings in response to ever-changing demands. The Institute is now integral to the Arboretum's education mission and will complement its commitment to generating new knowledge in plant biology with programs that further our understanding of the role of plants in the human environment.

For this special issue we decided that the best vehicle for introducing the Landscape Institute to *Arnoldia* readers and illustrating the scope of its interests is to present a sample of final projects from the 347 completed since 1981, when digital records were first kept. (All 347, including the fifteen presented in 2006, are listed at the back of the magazine.)

In choosing the six projects included here we looked for a representative variety that could withstand drastic abridgement without losing their core meaning. The task of abridgement was ably undertaken by guest editor Jane Roy Brown, herself a graduate in landscape design history who writes on both contemporary and historical landscapes.

INTRODUCTION

The independent project is usually the last step a Landscape Institute student encounters before earning the certificate in landscape design, history, or preservation. It represents a major commitment in time and cannot be undertaken until most of the course requirements have been fulfilled. After their topics are approved, students work with a faculty advisor who meets frequently with them for the full year or more that is needed to finish the project. In addition, as the coordinator of the program, I schedule regular seminars for all students working on independent projects; at these meetings, students present their works-in-progress and exchange critiques and suggestions.

The program requires students to focus on a specific area of landscape design or history and to

carry out a real or theoretical project from beginning to end. Ranging widely in scale from residential to regional, most case studies deal with public or semipublic landscapes. Typical final products include master plans for institutions; environmental policy recommendations for wetlands or other conservation areas; regulatory standards for urban developments; playground designs for schools and neighborhoods; studies of historical designs and designers; and plans for preserving historic landscapes. The clients include institutions and agencies such as the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, The Trustees of Reservations, the National Park Service, and local cities and towns throughout New England. The projects listed below illustrate the breadth of interests at the Landscape Institute.

Most design and preservation projects are mutually beneficial: the community or institution gets help in solving its landscape-related problems while the student gains experience in dealing directly with a client. “Reclaiming Walden”—Joan Popolo’s 2001 project—resulted in recommendations for re-using the Concord, Massachusetts, landfill. In 2005 Karen Longeteig presented proposals for street tree improvements at Lexington, Massachusetts, town meetings; and Phil Bevin’s 1994 “Landscape Rehabilitation Plan for the Codman Estate for the Town of Lincoln, Massachusetts” was implemented to become Historic Massachusetts’ outdoor museum. Heidi Kost-Gross’ project, the York River Open Space Study (1995) grew out of a 1994 landscape studio project. The document was widely used and reprinted and helped to preserve open space in the York River watershed.

Many of the projects in landscape design have productive afterlives. They may be used by clients to get funding, to raise public awareness, to document important landscapes, or to get a long-delayed building process underway. Drawings for community improvements, be they playgrounds or streetscapes, often sit in office file drawers for years awaiting funding for implementation. Since graduates of the Institute usually

live near the areas of their projects, they remain available to work with local officials to raise public awareness, to write grants for funding, or to modify plans in response to the changing needs of the client, or to get a long-delayed building process underway.

Many recipients of certificates in landscape design history also continue to work on their projects after graduation, building on them, refining them, and often finding publishers. Alan Emmet’s expanded project, “Changes in a Cambridge Landscape,” (1977) was published by Harvard University Press. “Boston’s South End Squares, Inventory, Analysis, and Recommendations” by Phoebe Goodman also evolved into a book, as did “Money, Manure, and Maintenance: The Life & Work of Marion Cruger Coffin, 1876–1957” by Nancy Flemming.

After my many years at the Landscape Institute—beginning when it was the Landscape Design Program of the Radcliffe Seminars—I am still impressed by the professional quality of the projects completed by our students. I believe that after reading the summaries of those that were chosen for this issue, you will feel the same way.

John Furlong
Director of the Landscape Institute
of the Arnold Arboretum

A Sampling of the Institute’s Concerns

- *Sherborn Open Space Study*: a proposal for the use of open space in the rapidly growing community of Sherborn, Massachusetts
- *Dome Community Garden Study*, New York City: a history of the evolution of a community garden illustrating the political decisions that influence the shape of a community’s open space
- *Common Places*: a proposal for realizing the full potential of the many town commons in the Town of Brookline
- *Schooner Park Development Plan*: a design for public open space at the town dock of Duxbury, Massachusetts, that reflects the town’s shipbuilding traditions
- *Guidelines for Therapeutic Landscapes*: applying guidelines to develop a proposal for continuing-care retirement center communities in Hanover, New Hampshire
- *New Hampshire Landscape Inventory Study*: the first inventory of 350 historic and noteworthy gardens in the state
- *York River Open Space Study*: a study that resulted in recommendations for conservation and development around an endangered tidal river estuary in York, Maine
- *Landscape Plan for Cambridge Friends School*: a guide for the school as it expands both in size and enrollments, including public open space used by neighborhood residents
- *Master Plan for Chauncy Allen Park*: a plan for revitalizing a public park and restoring the historic “Grandmother’s Garden” in Westfield, Massachusetts
- *The Paine Estate Development Plan*: a proposal for Wayland, Massachusetts, that includes an assisted living facility, 20 single-family homes, a soccer field, and walking and ski trails—all on 166 acres
- *Salk Institute Study*: an examination of the lessons to be drawn from architect/theorist/teacher Louis Kahn’s La Jolla, California, landscape
- *The Congregational Church of Topsfield Plan*: a history of the town common and the historic church in this Massachusetts town
- *Plaza Del Sol, Lechmere Canal Area*: An imaginative look at a streetscape in Cambridge, Massachusetts, proposing ways to integrate commercial activities, social life, transportation, and open space