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CELEBRATING OUR PAST AND FUTURE

50 Years



By Don Vaughan, LMBCSLA, FCSLA, FASLA

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Landscape architecture as public art, Granite Assemblage, West Vancouver, BC. Sculptor and landscape architect, Don Vaughan. Image courtesy of Don Vaughan.

When I was asked to be the guest editor for this 50th Anniversary issue, I didn't want to go back to review the past, but I wanted to look toward where landscape architecture might be able to go in the future. Many of our members have responded to this with a collection of writings in this, the 50th anniversary edition of Sitelines.

In 1964, when the BCSLA was founded, there were 20 members. It has now grown to over 500 members. Throughout those years we have seen the ebbs and flows in our profession. There were times when we played a bigger part in the planning of major projects and there were times when we struggled to secure our place in the design team, but through those times we have become better recognized by the clients as well as other members of the design professions as a valuable part of the projects. As the scope of Planning, Urban Design and Architecture has changed, landscape architects have been a part of that change. Landscape architects have had significant part in the planning and design of both civic and private major projects, where they are often team leaders. ▶

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Cover Image: Project Urban Fabric. Image courtesy of Brett Hitchins.

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MAGLINTM

Continued from page 3.

The growing number of members who are joining our ranks every year has brought with it a new mix of people with the varied skills and values that landscape architecture requires. The new technology has allowed us to be more effective stewards of the environment. The increased number of women within this profession at every level has also been one of the creative forces that has added a new perspective to landscape architecture. Finally, as the numbers of landscape architects increases, it is gratifying to see the camaraderie and fellowship in this organization that only gets stronger through the years.

What will our role be in the next 50 years? Will we navigate the political and professional mazes to secure a leadership role between city building professionals? Will we be able to create a clear image of our role with the public? Will landscape architects become better recognized for what we do? The creation of Project Urban Fabric during the 2014 BC Land Summit in May 2014 was a positive example that may begin to answer those questions. There are opportunities to expand our role as landscape architects. We need to be looking for those opportunities and when they appear, we need to take advantage of them. [SL](#)



Concord Pacific model – The Bays Scheme for Concorde Pacific Place, Overall Development Plan, ODP. Plan developed by Don Vaughan Ltd.

The team also included Downs Aschambult Architects, Davidson Yuen Architects, and Hulbert Group. Image courtesy of Anthony Redpath.

All images courtesy of Brett Hitchins. Project Urban Fabric.



Transformations

By Derek Lee, MBCSLA

It couldn't have been a nicer evening in Vancouver on the evening of May 14, 2014 as we stood atop the rooftop of the Sheraton Vancouver Wall Centre Hotel watching the sun set beyond the silhouette of Vancouver Island, illuminating the waters of the Georgia Straight with a soft orange glow. Panning to the east, Mount Baker with Mount Rainier stood crowning the horizon while the luminescent windows of the surrounding towers below turned on one by one like a digital mosaic. It was the night before the BC Land Summit and it was as if we were at the top of the world taking in the clear Spring evening with my BCSLA colleagues, celebrating the 50th anniversary of our Society. As a group of volunteers, we had just completed Project Urban Fabric, representing Vancouver's largest pop-up park, and so we were enjoying the stunning aerial view of our accomplishment from 35 stories above.

It would be an impossibility to stand surrounded with a breathtaking view of our city and not be inspired, nor be compelled to reflect on how far we've come in our profession over the last 50 years. I stood there with my fellow colleagues beaming with excitement as we looked down at the bosque of bright fuchsia wrapped trees surrounding a lawn dotted with blue cubes, together with a fuchsia ribbon canopy that danced in the evening breeze above the fountain plaza. Never before have I seen so many people enjoying such a beautiful evening in this transformative space, as they

lay in the blue Adirondack chairs and stop for "selfies" in front of the fuchsia backdrop.

I turned to Jacqueline Lowe, MBCSLA, our current president, and the mind behind the project, "Can you believe that in a matter of days, we've been able to create something so transformative for our city?"

What we've accomplished in those past days represents the beginning of a new era in our profession. Project Urban Fabric, aka @projecturbanfab in the Twittersphere, speaks to who we've become as a profession in so many ways. It represents our desire to break out of the mold of the back seat consultant and recognizes that our time has come to be in the proverbial spotlight in shaping the culture of our environment. It determines us as agents of a changing value system within our urban context that emphasizes experiential dynamism over static infrastructure and the desire to enable civic life filled with vibrancy and spontaneous encounters.

Our confidence as a profession is increasing and it is projects like Project Urban Fabric that illustrate our readiness to break out of a mold that has simply been defined and limited by our own self perception. We are ready to take advantage of our unique positioning on a number of fronts: we've been able to increase public awareness and appreciation of well designed open space as an essential component in the health of our cities; we are now seeing the benefits of our ▶



All images courtesy of Brett Hitchins. Project Urban Fabric.

strategic and serendipitous positioning as architects of next generation infrastructure within the green economy; our training as generalists and holistic thinkers has positioned us to tackle the increasing scale and complexity of projects; and we are a profession with a strong ethical underpinning that is attracting a young and innovative talent pool.

With such credentials, it is critical that we are able to position ourselves accordingly and to market our unique strengths effectively. How do we accomplish this? Well, in several ways:

We must appreciate our unique role in the consulting world as “Agents of Change:

the Small Number Advantage”. Our training as generalists and creative thinkers gives us a unique advantage to apply “out of the box” solutions—social engagement is in our DNA which puts us in an advantageous position to work collaboratively with governments, developers, and other influencers in high-level thinking in redefining and reshaping our cities.

We must take advantage of our unique ability to always keep the big picture in focus and of our creative airtime in our work and discourse with key influencers and decision makers, as our work is not as technically focused as other disciplines such as engineering and architecture.

As generalists, we should embrace collaboration with technical experts particularly in the realms of water management, transportation, energy, and ecology. Our profession is growing and outpacing our professional counterparts, but our relative numbers will always be smaller so

we cannot expect to do everything—this gives us the competitive advantage of understanding things from a systems perspective in our planning and design work and leading technical experts in executing those systems. We have the ability to concentrate our efforts as innovative thought leaders.

Our profession is on a growth curve and that in and of itself, we should celebrate and be confident about. Our personal and professional attitudes needs to shift from a protectionist model to a growth model; think big and be bold in who we are and what we do.

So as the BC Land Summit draws to a close, so too does Project Urban Fabric. No question, we made a splash in the news, on the Twitter feeds, and on the street. While the intervention was short lived, it has transformed the public’s view of who we are and what we represent as a profession who has stepped up to the plate and embraced the spotlight.

...so what next you ask? Well, with all that extra fuchsia fabric, our next headlining act may be to yarn bomb the lawn of City Hall. 51



Looking AHEAD

By Mark van der Zalm, MBCSLA

It has been a relatively short time since I began my landscape architecture practice, but in that time there have been numerous occasions where I have pondered the significance of our evolving profession in British Columbia. Since the late 90s, the scope of work for landscape architects, as well as the sphere of influence, and geographic field of practice has altered significantly. Although this experience is different for all practitioners, I have found personally, that the opportunities for landscape architects, and landscape architecture firms in particular, have grown exponentially. The lack of definition in our formal scope and the “blurry edges” of our profession has provided the opportunity for savvy landscape architects to put themselves forward for tasks that might otherwise be consumed by architects, planners, environmental consultants, or civil engineers. I applaud the work of many of our local firms in their breadth of work and their influence beyond the provincial boundaries.

My own experience has been that to insulate oneself from local economic downturn, or temporary swings in the local market due to competition, elections, and municipal budgets—it is wise to expand the field of practice. Establishing footholds in other regions of Canada, the US, and Asia has certainly helped to expand our practice, and the quality of our projects. I have noticed that we are not alone in this venture and I am struck by the number of colleagues I run into at baggage carousels and project job interviews. The marketplace is maturing in British Columbia. Long established firms have senior staff who are striking out on their own, and the competition has changed dramatically. To sustain a small to mid-size practice, one needs to look outside of the local market and ensure that our services

are considered in other places in Canada and a host of US locales. The good news here is that we are well equipped to do so. BCSLA practitioners by virtue of our considerable variety in work experience, are competent, confident, and sought after consultants in various regions of the country.

Another shift in our province has been the evolution of suburban communities into viable urban centres, independent of larger, more established cities. The City of Surrey plans to become a livable and vibrant city. The opportunities for landscape architects cannot be understated. Largely considered a bedroom community to the larger centres in Metro Vancouver, nothing could be farther from current reality. Surrey has less out-migration of commuters leaving the city for places of work beyond its borders than ever before. The City district energy system will supply heat and power generation for new development in the city centre. “Innovation boulevard” at the south end of the civic core offers city development incentives to knowledge-based industry. These optimistic improvements are evidence that a new city is emerging, one that offers significant opportunities for participation from our membership. Similar prospects are emerging



Top: Castle Hill Trail, Township of Langley, BC.
Above: Holland Park, Surrey, BC.
Bottom: Tamanawis Sports Field complex: community integration, Surrey, BC.
All images courtesy of Brett Hitchins.

in the Okanagan, on Vancouver Island, and in the northern parts of the province.

It is always difficult to prognosticate about the future, but I am more than cautiously optimistic about the growth of our profession, the abilities of our newest graduates, and our collective ability to seize the opportunities afforded us by urban densification, expanding transportation systems, and alternative stormwater management design. The next 25 years will foster greater opportunities for contributions to the field of knowledge in landscape architecture. It is incumbent on each of us to seize this opportunity and rise to the challenge. [SL](#)





Adaptation by Design

By Kelty McKinnon, MBCSLA

Sherbourne Common, Toronto, ON.
Image courtesy of Waterfront Toronto.

Typhoon Haiyan, Hurricane Sandy, flooding in Toronto and Alberta, wildfires in Russia and Australia, pine beetle infestations, rising sea levels, crop failures, the polar vortex... These events are becoming the new normal. The World Meteorological Organization has found that Canada's temperatures have increased by nearly three times the global average, and the overall global likelihood of extreme heat wave has increased by 500% with climate change. Global weather extremes have moved the general public over the threshold of understanding the realities of climate change. With this acceptance comes an expanding awareness of the impacts that design can have on the capacity of cities to cope with weather-related catastrophes. Extreme climatic events are estimated to cost Canadians \$21-\$43 billion per year by 2050. Investing in smart and adaptive civic infrastructures will pay off—a recent TD Bank report estimates that every dollar invested in climate change prevention will yield anywhere from \$9-\$38 worth of future avoided costs.

A radical rethinking of how our cities have been built is required, and this rethinking will necessitate a reassertion of the public realm as a multifunctional, adaptable, dynamic, absorptive, responsive, relational, democratic space.

A radical rethinking of how our cities have been built is required, and this rethinking will necessitate a reassertion of the public realm as a multifunctional, adaptable, dynamic, absorptive, responsive, relational, democratic space. The practice of landscape architecture, when done well, orchestrates numerous forces—ecological, economic, cultural, social, and political to create spaces that systemically function as part of a greater immanent field. While landscape architecture has traditionally done this, we are challenged by the exaggerated circumstances that climate change delivers

to create spaces that are designed to function robustly and ecologically, yet socially and culturally as well.

Climate change affects infrastructure demands, food security, water quality, economic activity, and quality of life, and will increasingly lead to large-scale climate-based migrations. In fact, a new report based on the latest UN population and climate change figures estimates that one billion people (one in seven) could be forced to migrate in the next 50 years due to climate change. Increased density and diversity in the receiving cities will necessitate well designed public spaces

Splice

By Leslie Van Duzer, UBC School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture Director

As a student at the University of California, Berkeley, I studied architecture under the same roof as landscape architecture students. Never once during my undergraduate or graduate studies did I transgress disciplinary boundaries within the College of Environmental Design. We were encouraged by the faculty to study theatre, philosophy, linguistics, and other arts and humanities, but it never occurred to us, or to them, that we should study site planning or plant identification from the experts. To this day, I am ashamed of my inability to read a landscape.

As current Director of the UBC School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture (SALA), I am grateful for a better-late-than-never exposure to landscape architecture. While no expert, I see this profession rapidly gaining in stature, with landscape architects now taking the lead on major projects. The ability of landscape architects to consider both large and small scales simultaneously, to understand parts-to-whole relationships, and to solve problems creatively and pragmatically, positions them perfectly for addressing many of today's most pressing challenges.

As our design professions change the way they practice, with evermore and ever-earlier exchange between project consultants, it is critical for students of architecture and landscape architecture to have more interaction in school. To that end, SALA is currently conducting a thorough review of the curriculum school-wide, identifying and developing courses where the students will mix. These courses include Design Media, Research Methods, Vertical Studios, Study Abroad, Design-Build, and even Professional Practice. We have named this effort Splice.

Landscape Architecture Chair Cynthia Girling, MBCSLA, FCSLA, FASLA, FCELA and Architecture Chair John Bass, in collaboration with the full SALA faculty, have developed a proposal for a dual degree between the two professional programs. As currently envisioned, a student could earn both a MARCH and MLA in 4 to 4.5 years without compromising the core classes required for accreditation. While several of the top architecture and landscape architecture schools in the United States have developed dual degree programs, we believe SALA's will be the first in Canada.

We anticipate launching this new program in Fall 2016 and fully expect this to be a popular option for a generation that grasps the interdependence of our disciplines. This could be the future for both professions. *SL*

Sherbourne Common, Toronto, ON. **Top:** Image courtesy of Tom Arban Photography Inc. **Bottom:** Image courtesy of PFS Studio.

and systems as a release valve to high density living. For example, all of the elements that make up good design need to be considered from multiple perspectives. The biotic effects of trees and vegetation: their abilities to sequester carbon; cool the urban heat island; absorb stormwater; provide food; shelter and travel corridors for wildlife; anchor erosive soils; and regenerate organic soils, need to be considered with their social and cultural function, and the bodily pleasures we receive from them—their scent, dappled light, the wind in their leaves, colour, their fruit, cultural associations, and spatial configurations that encourage diverse forms of social interaction. Run all materials, compositions, contours, and programs through these multiple lenses and perhaps we will create landscapes that are resilient—maybe even generative—under such conditions. Ours is a profession well-poised to effect change in the status quo of city-building. Only the future will tell if we are up to the responsibility. *SL*

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What NOW?

By Kim Perry, MBCSLA

When I arrived in Vancouver in 1977, most of the original founding members of the Society were still active in the profession either in private practice or as educators. It was a small but formidable group. Through their determination and tenacity, they had worked together to create a professional association, a Provincial Licensure Act and a program and curriculum at UBC. This was all accomplished while also carrying on with their own working careers and mentoring eager interns.

In the ensuing years, there would be storms to weather for this founding group and those of us who were joining them in an effort to expand the visibility of our profession. Many of us endured the severe economic downturns that would decimate our offices. These were challenging times, as many set off on their own to form small boutique offices. Many more moved away.

Gradually, as work opportunities expanded, people began to reconnect, but in new combinations. The shakeup had created an opportunity for people with varied backgrounds to share their experiences and build dynamic new firms. The program at UBC was strengthened by a talented, dedicated faculty and renewed support from the University administration. Opportunities within the public sector also began to expand.

So, it has now been 50 years. Our public sector members are in senior positions shaping policy and advocating for positive change. Landscape Architecture, as part of SALA, has become a valued part of UBC. Private firms are leading teams that are planning new communities and transforming the public spaces of our cities. I believe we are

all standing on the shoulders of those first members of the BCSLA who forged this path for us. It is our responsibility to carry forward their vision into the future.

Looking to that future, here are a few thoughts and observations:

The Broad Definition

I've often wondered if the broad definition of Landscape Architecture is a blessing or a curse, at times contributing to a lack of clarity and understanding about what we do. I've concluded that it's probably a good thing. Through my own career there have been many changes of direction. It has allowed me to explore different topics, keeping things fresh while learning new skills. I suspect there are many more opportunities that will reveal themselves in the coming years that we haven't yet imagined.

Landscape Architecture Credibility

The most gratifying part of practicing here has been to observe how far we've come and how much greater appreciation there is for what we do. This has resulted from the visibility of the excellent work of our members and from the efforts of those who have been advocating for responsible change. I see this process continuing through the determination of our enthusiastic new members who seem ready and able to build on the momentum that has been created.

How We Do What We Do

Having years of experience is helpful, but proficiency with the new technologies has become the great equalizer. It's breathtaking to see how quickly things are changing. The

door has been opened for greater collaboration between the generations as reliance on these new skills has increased. I am also finding, however, that there is still an appreciation for hand-drawn graphics. I suspect that the ability to draw makes us better designers. At the core of it all is creativity. Machines and pens are useful tools but the "big ideas" are found within each of us.

Who Does What? Blurring the Definitions

The most stimulating and rewarding part of my working life comes from collaborating with others. As with many other landscape architects, much of my time is spent participating in multi-disciplinary design events. My feeling is that landscape architects, through our training and education, are uniquely positioned to lead teams on projects that demand multi-faceted problem solving.

The Demands – Another Evening – Finding the Balance Point

It seems to me that landscape architectural practice is becoming more and more demanding. On top of the long hours that are part of any design-related career, approval processes are becoming more onerous. Committing to a meaningful working career requires dedication and a willingness to put in the time. I also believe, however, that the personal price can be high. But life is a balancing act and the expectations and demands can take a toll. My belief is that we may need to lighten up a little, making our contributions in whatever way we can.

The demands of our working lives as landscape architects are significant. Many hours are dedicated to developing our knowledge base and skill sets, and I see a trend toward ever expanding emphasis placed on certification, professional development, and enforcement. My wish for the future would be that we might spend less time putting up obstacles and policing our activities and more time supporting one another, encouraging and nurturing those entering our ranks, and celebrating our accomplishments. I suspect the founding members might agree. **sl**

What does **the Future Hold** Landscape Architects?

By Jane Durante, MBCSLA, FCSLA and Jennifer Stamp, MBCSLA



Left: Jennifer Stamp. Right: Jane Durante.
Image courtesy of Jane Durante.

A conversation about the future of the landscape architecture profession between Jane Durante, Jennifer Stamp, and Amber Paul of Durante Kreuk Ltd.

wall. That is the way to explore and expand knowledge and to affect reality, which is essential to finding unusual, creative, and imaginative solutions to design problems and life. This is particularly important in order to encourage new solutions to old and new problems.

JS Many landscape architects come from other disciplines and bring a diversity of backgrounds to a practice. Is this diversity being taken advantage of to move firms beyond the ordinary?

JD Yes, but probably not as much as is possible. Jennifer, what is your experience with this?

JD A lot of the interns who work with us come with previous degrees and or careers. They come with fine arts degrees, photography awards, video awards, science degrees, and on and on. Our role as landscape architects is evolving such that we are finding ourselves in the position of facilitator, particularly as projects become much more complex. We are becoming generalists bringing an overview to projects that can spark excitement, re-think the focus, move to a more sustainable solution, and more.

JD What new type of landscape architectural practice is evolving to address these issues?

JS We are embarking on an era of land use issues and collaboration. Multi-disciplinary teams are the only way to solve global issues. The focus for these teams will need to be far broader. Highly trained scientists as well as generalists are needed to bring all of the creative ideas together into a strategic whole.

JD What does the future hold? What will the world be like by 2050? What role will Landscape Architects play?

I asked Amber Paul, a Generation Xer, in our office to give me an answer. She is well travelled and thoughtful. You might be surprised at her answer.

AP First of all we have to think globally now and in the future, not just regionally or locally. National governments have to collaborate to pursue answers to issues such as adequate accessible drinking water and food security. Those countries with resources have to give to those who do not. We can no longer afford to act in isolation—we have to work together. Earth's systems don't acknowledge political lines—if we as Landscape Architects are really going to have an impact, we, the generalists, have to look beyond our borders. [sl](#)

JS Is there a component of the practice that addresses larger global problems?

JD Not so far. It is going to be up to the younger generation of landscape architects in our practice and others to find a way to contribute to the effects climate change. I have witnessed many of the affected areas of the world where the results of climate change are dramatically evident on the land and on people's lives.

JS Landscape Architecture schools teach the basics of history, design, and construction, but are they also fostering dreaming and following one's passion?

JD To a large degree the pursuit of dreams and passion is in our DNA. The trick for schools and practices is to allow room for the pursuit of ideas that may be far off the

Global Change, NEW ECOLOGIES, and the Field of Landscape Architecture

By Patrick Mooney, MBCSLA, FCSLA

You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete.” – Richard Buckminster Fuller

Left: The Highline meshes high-style design, infrastructure, people, and urban nature. Image courtesy of Lindsey Fryett.

Right: A coneflower growing from the pavement of New York City’s The Highline expresses biotic succession in a man-made ecosystem. Image courtesy of Dan Borslein.

We are now in a period of global population growth, urbanization, and ecosystem decline in which rapidly increasing demands for food, water, and energy must be met while responding to climate change.¹ By 2030, more than 60% of the world population is

expected to live in cities.² Consider that most of the major cities in the world are on sea coasts and it becomes apparent that major infrastructure works will be required to protect these cities from sea-level rise. As urbanization increases, the countryside will



experience depopulation, desertification, and shifting biomes. The themes of social and economic inequality within and between developed and developing countries are becoming ever more prominent. The high cost of the disconnect between people and nature is well-documented but not yet a priority of any government.

These are just some of the issues affecting people and landscapes. Our collective response can portend a vigorous and revitalized profession of landscape architecture. Well-designed, beautiful landscapes that the inhabitants cherish and steward are required. These same landscapes need to perform better in many ways. For example, they must foster psychological and physical well-being. This is not a new idea. It was not a new idea in 1865 when Fredrick Law Olmsted wrote:

It therefore results that the enjoyment of scenery employs the mind without fatigue and yet exercises it; tranquilizes it and yet enlivens it; and thus, through the influence of the mind over the body, gives the effect of refreshing rest and reinvigoration to the whole system.³

Perhaps it is time for our profession to once again embrace this idea.

The profession is currently re-visiting sustainability—a badly abused idea that has never inspired design. Rather than sustaining, landscape architects need to focus on creating self-renewing, regenerative landscapes that improve landscape performance and aesthetics.⁴ Current and potential developments in urban ecology and landscape urbanism offer new possibilities to restructure landscape architecture and urban design. Scientists and planners now understand landscapes as dynamic

Rather than sustaining, landscape architects need to focus on creating self-renewing, regenerative landscapes that improve landscape performance and aesthetics.

systems that deliver multiple cultural and natural ecosystem services. Multifunctionality has become the goal of landscape planning and ecosystem services are increasingly used and the metric of multifunctionality and sustainability.⁵ Although a relatively new concept with few realized works, Landscape Urbanism has the potential to meld, high-style design with ecology. James Corner, ASLA posits that it:

...appears to offer a way to consider the complex urban condition; one that is capable of tackling infrastructure, water management, biodiversity, and human activity; and one that asks and examines the implications of the city in the landscape and landscape in the city.⁶

Certainly his design for the Highline in New York City is a shining example of “tackling infrastructure and human activity”. Projects like Corner’s High Line and Fresh Kills Landfill are increasing public awareness of landscape architecture and ecology in

cities. The notion of using landscape design to connect people, urbanism, and nature offers the promise of new ethics and aesthetics to our profession.

The global changes I have noted will produce ecosystems that have never before existed. Met with outstanding design that merges new ecological understandings with an emphasis on landscape performance, they can be guided, productive landscapes of beauty and utility. ⁵¹

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Milestones OF OUR PROFESSION

By Cornelia Hahn Oberlander, LMBCSLA, FCSLA, FASLA, OC

A milestone occurred in 1987 with the publication of the Brundtland report “Our Common Future”. It recognized that environmental problems were global in nature and urged the UN General Assembly to establish policies for sustainable urban development. Pressing this book into my hands, my late husband Peter Oberlander said, “This will change your landscapes,” and so it did, as shown in many landscapes.

Today, climate change is upon us. The most recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s Fifth Assessment Report affirm that the warming of the climate system is unequivocal: the atmosphere and oceans have warmed and acidified, the amounts of snow and ice have diminished, sea levels have risen, and the concentrations of greenhouse gases have increased. Human influence on the climate system is clear.

The scale of these environmental challenges demands that we alter our designs and attitudes. The planet is finite and land is a resource—not a commodity. Achieving a fit between the built form and the land, while limiting our footprint, building with recycled materials and zero-carbon guidelines is of utmost importance.



We must also collaborate with multi-disciplinary professionals in order to achieve sustainable and environmental solutions. Today, more than ever, landscape architecture should be a leading-edge profession especially with the new generation, trained in our schools. We are concerned with the bigger picture of our built and natural environments.

This can only be achieved in practice if all of our design-related professions collaborate from the beginning of each project and have enlightened policy-makers on their side. If we want to keep the bio-diversity around us and keep the world green, with healthy cities and healthy people, there is no time to lose.

We need what I call “VIM”—namely Vision, Imagination, and Motivation in order to accomplish these goals.

The challenges of climate change, worldwide hyper-urbanized growth, resulting in the loss of open space, especially agricultural lands—essential for our food security, and

resource scarcity such as water, are expanding the scale, methods, and demands for our profession. We can no longer solve these problems alone but must collaborate with other professionals. While practicing what I call the three R’s: Research, shouldering Responsibility, and Risk-taking.

This knowledge of climate change will be our new milestone and change our work. As Buckminster Fuller challenges us, “You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete.”

Thus let us carefully proceed with patience, persistence, politeness, professionalism, and passion to help our planet celebrate Earth Day for many years to come. **SL**

Below left: Friedman Garden, 1953. Designed by Fred Lasserre, Cornelia Hahn Oberlander.

Below: Robson Square an oasis in the city, 1974-1979. Designed by Arthur Erickson Architects, Cornelia Hahn Oberlander with Raoul Robillard.

Opposite: Vancouver Public Library green roof, 1992-1995. Designed by Moshe Safdie, Cornelia Hahn Oberlander. All images courtesy of Cornelia Hahn Oberlander.





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► *The CHALLENGES and OPPORTUNITIES of*

By Randy Sharp, MBCSLA, FCSLA

Landscape Architecture FOR THE NEXT 50 YEARS

If we look into a clear water droplet, what might our profession look like in 50 years? Will we continue to see massive change in our climate, densification, mobility, demographics, and population? New directions and deeply rooted traditions suggest a strong and vibrant future for our profession in British Columbia. We research new technology, facilitate design, and monitor the results. Here are a few challenges and opportunities for our profession as we look forward to the next 50 years of collaboration in the BCSLA.

Leadership

How can we become leaders in a sustainable economy, adapt to climate change, and build diverse and thriving communities? The future starts with our youth. Environmental curriculum is already part of science, art, and outdoor programs in our schools. The University of British Columbia is recruiting candidates with leadership potential and communication skills. Cynthia Girling, MBCSLA, FCSLA, FASLA, FCELA, Landscape Architecture Program Chair expressed that the profession of landscape architecture needs big-system thinkers to elevate the knowledge, establish metrics, and make effective decisions.

Placemaking

From neighbourhood intersections to large civic plazas, we draw, visualize, and inspire. “Thoughtful city shaping must start by co-creating design responses at the neighbourhood scale that reinforce and enhance local, authentic identity”, says Scot Hein, former City of Vancouver Senior Urban

Designer.¹ “Artistic and ecologically oriented placemaking through projects honour the interconnection of human communities and the natural world,” says Mark Lakeland.

Healthy Communities

Our healthy cities are internationally recognized for walkable, transit-oriented communities. Living architecture, rooftop therapeutic gardens, green walls, and courtyards provide restorative care and connect people to nature. Biophilia is “an innate love for the natural world, supposed to be felt universally by humankind.”² We design healing gardens, looped therapeutic trails, living walls, and common gathering areas for Alzheimer’s and neurological disorders. These special places offer respite, socializing, sculpture, and water to inspire serenity. Clear lines of sight, bright gateways, and colour stimulate the senses. Active bodies equal active minds.

Metrics

“In architecture, we attach metrics to everything,” says David Yocca, GRP, AICP, FASLA, Conservation Design Forum. “We should be able to measure water retention, energy savings, a reduced heat island effect, and a healthier environment overall.”³ Significant savings in energy, water reduction and health costs can be measured. Third party verification under the Living Building Challenge, LEED®, and the Living Architecture Toolbox⁴ is essential to gain acceptance in the marketplace for green infrastructure and living architecture.

Water Management

Water dynamic urban landscapes celebrate rain and make sustainable methods visible. “People are realizing that green infrastructure, such as bioswales and vegetated roofs, can add more per dollar than a pipe in the ground.”⁵ In the City of North Vancouver, high canopy street trees in continuous tree trenches intercept the rain and cool the ambient temperature through evapotranspiration. At the Mountain Equipment Co-op building in North Vancouver, 100% of stormwater in a 10-year storm event is retained and infiltrated within 48 hours with no connections to the City storm sewer.

Productive and Artistic Rooftops

“Rooftops mean revenue... entrepreneurial farmers sell produce and organic flowers to restaurants and community supported agriculture.” Paul Kephart, renowned designer, biologist, and expert in land use planning says that, “building rooftop ecologies is a thrilling exploration of how to integrate architecture, engineering, and art.”⁶ The VanDusen Botanical Gardens Visitor’s Centre is an example of this integration. With the orchid flower as the form and the undulating green roof as the material, landscape architecture creates the identity of this building.

Champions

We have the visual and communication skills to organize communities, prepare diagrams, network through social media, and speak directly to the politicians. Saba Farmand,



BCSLA Intern and Paul Albi created Surroundings, a video series that tells the stories behind some of Metro Vancouver’s well-known public places from the perspectives of the landscape architects who designed them. The first episode features Don Vaughan, LMBCSLA, FCSLA, FASLA and focuses on bringing meaning to place through the use of public art, including ‘Marking High Tide’ at David Lam Park.⁷

“Landscape architects should be in the vanguard of the environmental movement,



discovering ways to help design environments that at the most fundamental level ‘do no harm’—and beyond that, in ways large and small, contribute to the renewal of the earth and of the human spirit,” says Catherine Howett, ASLA.⁸ As leaders and stewards of the land, we have a bright future, yet we face major challenges. It is time for all of us to be visible, get involved and make a difference. [SL](#)

Living Architecture – VanDusen Botanical Garden Visitor Centre green roof, designed by Sharp & Diamond Landscape Architecture with Cornelia Hahn Oberlander. Image courtesy of Nic Lehoux Architectural Photography.

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