



MISITES

VOLUME 13, NUMBER 1 **MICHIGAN** CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY
OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

32nd Annual Michigan ASLA Golf Classic

#golfclassic19

Tuesday, July 23rd 2019

9:00 am Shotgun Start

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South Lyon, MI



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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings Landscape Architects and Friends!

2019 is well underway. As construction season is ramping up, I hope all of your projects run smoothly. Our chapter board has been busy this first quarter with events and planning. We held our January and February Executive Committee meetings at MSU and U of M. We conducted portfolio reviews at both schools and interviewed students for chapter awards. It's always great to connect with our students and see their work.

When this issue arrives in your mailbox World Landscape Architecture Month is likely winding down. I hope you all took the opportunity to share spaces that show the world #ThisIsLandscapeArchitecture. We planned a number of events for World Landscape Architecture Month, such as an Instagram takeover, trivia night social and, most importantly, Lobby Day on April 24th.

If you were unable to attend Lobby Day, please reach out to your legislators either in Lansing or when they're in-district. It's very important to educate policy makers on our profession and the importance of licensure. While we do not currently face any threats to our profession in Michigan, history shows that could change quickly. Our profession is relatively unknown compared to other design professions. Advocacy is our best tool to inform others about who we are and what we do. If you'd like advocacy materials or guidance on how to talk to your legislators, reach out to the Chapter and we can help.

The first week of May chapter Trustee Chet Hill, ASLA, President-Elect Joane Slusky, ASLA and I will head to

Washington, DC for our spring meeting and national Advocacy Day. We will share our knowledge with other chapters and learn from their experiences. Our national advocacy efforts have been successful in the past with the Land and Water Conservation Fund being permanently authorized this spring! As in our own state, we need to continue advocating for the programs that help our profession. I ask everyone to ensure you have signed up for **ASLA's iAdvocate Network** at advocate.asla.org to keep up to date on these important issues.

This issue of MiSITES features a deeper dive into three projects that received MiASLA awards last fall. I'm always proud to see the great work taking place in our state. Keep your eyes out for the application for our 2019 chapter awards which will be released in the coming months.

We have a number of great events planned for the rest of the year, including a LARE study session, Golf Outing, and the Michigan Conference on Landscape Architecture. Our committees and volunteers are working hard to provide the best content for these events, and you won't want to miss them! The best way to stay up to date on all of our happenings is to check out our website, michiganasla.org, or follow us on social media (see handles to the right).

Ben Baker, PLA, ASLA
President, Michigan Chapter of ASLA

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ON THE COVER:

Monument Park in Grand Rapids, Michigan. (image credit: O'Boyle, Cowell, Blalock and Associates, Inc.)

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Visit michiganasla.org for more info or to register!

- 5/11 LARE Review and Prep, U of M
- 7/23 MiASLA Golf Classic - South Lyon
- 10/23-24 MiASLA Conference - Plymouth

STUDYING FOR THE LARE?

If you would like to sign up for LARE study groups, please email Dana at education@michiganasla.org.



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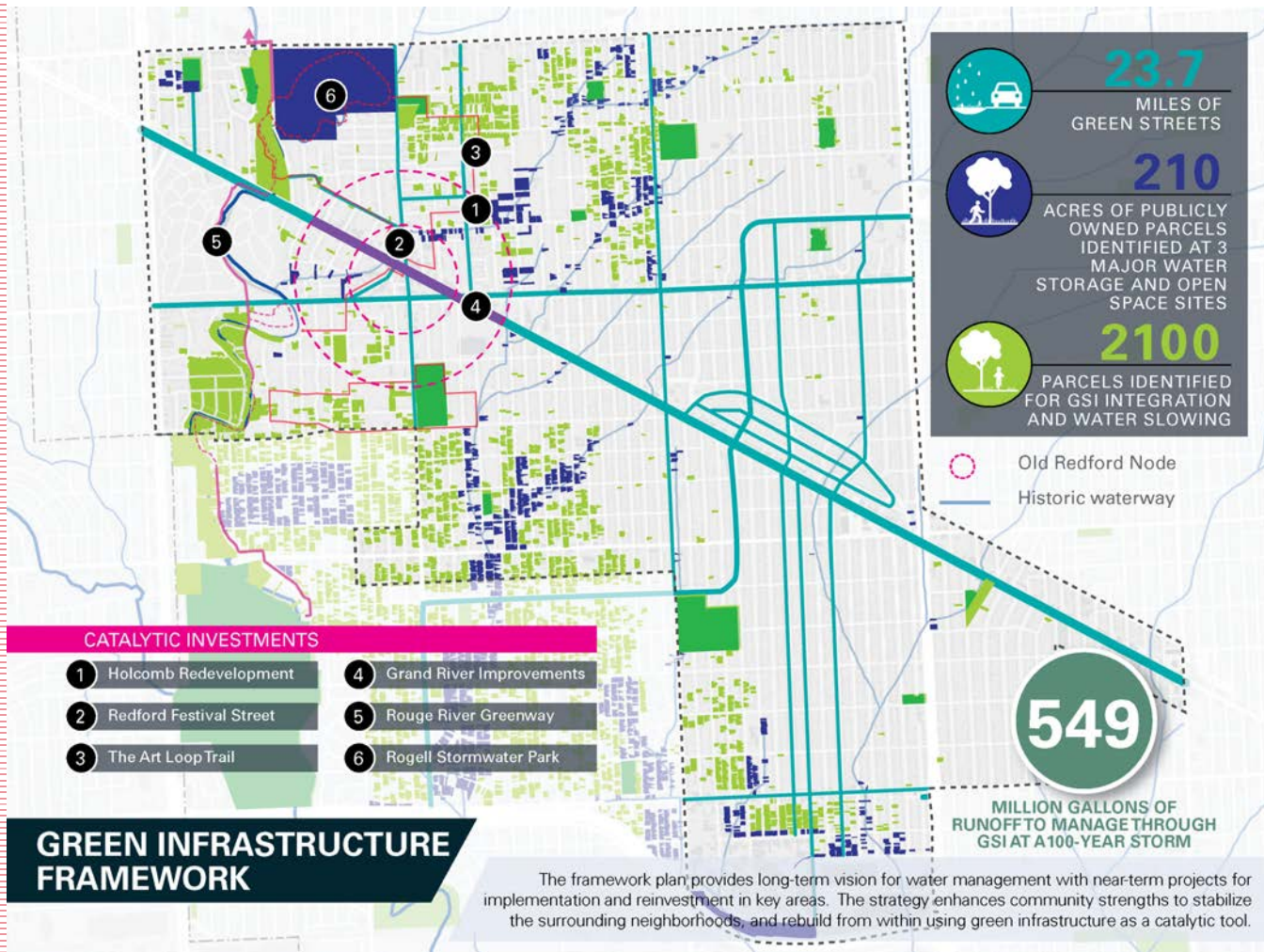
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US Patent D785,269 S.



NORTHWEST NEIGHBORHOOD FRAMEWORK PLAN

BRIAN CORRIE, ASSOC. ASLA, DESIGN WORKSHOP

Detroit is undergoing a significant transformation. Since the 1950's, the city has been in decline, losing more than 60% of its population. In recent years, a restructured city government and an emboldened private sector have created new momentum, bringing a renaissance to the downtown. Now, acknowledging the great strengths residing outside of the city center, the City is planning for strategic investments in its neighborhoods.

The Grand River - Northwest Detroit Neighborhood Framework Plan brings City officials and residents together to address two pressing City challenges large swaths of vacant land and flooding from large rain events. This plan gives residents a voice in transforming surplus lands into assets to manage stormwater and build vibrant, memorable places that provide new community amenities.

The framework tackles disinvestment through a process that prioritizes community engagement and develops a comprehensive strategy to manage more than 500 million gallons of runoff generated from a 100-year storm and combat flooding, combined sewer overflows and basement backups. Near-term initiatives ensure that strategies can be implemented within a short time frame to provide immediate support and revitalize the neighborhood.

The study area is diverse, encompassing more than 5,000 acres of residential and commercial properties in relation to the Grand River Avenue corridor just northwest of downtown Detroit. Eight percent of these lands—307 acres representing over 3,500 vacant parcels—are in public ownership, owned by the





STORMWATER PARK AT ROGELL

Projects like the redevelopment of the vacant Rogell Golf Course will manage stormwater from adjacent neighborhoods and provide a beautiful and active regional recreational amenity for the Northwest Detroit community.

Detroit Land Bank Authority and the City. In 2014, Northwest Detroit suffered from flooding caused by a 200-year storm event. Streets were under water and nearly 10 billion gallons of sewer overflows occurred across southeast Michigan. More than 5,000 homes in the study area reported flooding and backups. Combined sewer overflows are a serious problem resulting in the flow of untreated sewage into nearby waterways, decreasing the quality of the City's rivers and preventing their use for recreation. In response to this storm event, the City aims to prevent all overflows to local water bodies by 2037, a challenge the City plans to meet with a mix of green and grey infrastructure investments.

The planning team seized on the opportunity to turn vacant lands into assets and tackle the stormwater challenge by developing a framework that prioritized investments in green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) integrated with new open space amenities, redevelopment, placemaking and mobility opportunities. The magnitude of the stormwater challenge was too great to solve by using a lot-by-lot approach focused on individual rain gardens. As a result, the team created a first-of-its-kind stormwater budget to provide an accounting of how much water falls on the site, how much water could be stored within GSI and how much each of these interventions would cost to install and maintain. This budget helped create an overall framework and approach for locating investments. Additionally, these strategies can be used to develop a citywide stormwater plan and are applicable to other cities that are challenged by both vacant land and flooding.

Green stormwater infrastructure reprograms and revitalizes public lands to stabilize surrounding neighborhoods and enhance communities. To focus efforts, the Old Redford area was identified for near-term project implementation to fortify a major commercial and community node with thriving retail. Old Redford is a prominent neighborhood in Northwest Detroit and by locating public space investments in this area, the City is strengthening the burgeoning local business community and planning for its growth. With Old Redford as a foundation, future projects and investments were identified to strategically improve connectivity, safety, and well-being of residents while building upon the strong sense of community and place that has existed there for decades.



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OLD REDFORD FESTIVAL STREET

Recommendations take advantage of all public spaces, including the right-of-way. This festival street provides needed space for ongoing art programs and markets in the community and incorporates GSI strategies into its design.

Several projects were identified as potential improvement projects as a result of this framework plan including the following:

- **The Old Redford Neighborhood Greenway**
A nine-mile multi-use trail that will connect residents to the Rogell Stormwater Park while weaving through formerly vacant parcels that will be reprogrammed for green stormwater infrastructure, urban forestry, or agriculture.
- **Holcomb Area Redevelopment**
A series of planned land reuse strategies focused around the historic, former Holcomb School property that integrates green stormwater infrastructure with strategies for housing rehabilitation, job creation and neighborhood revitalization.
- **Grand River Avenue Street Improvements**
Streetscape improvements along and adjacent to Grand River Avenue will help in the overall framework's stormwater management goals using rain gardens and permeable paving. More importantly, the planned improvements will increase pedestrian safety and comfort along this major vehicular corridor.
- **Rogell Stormwater Park**
A former golf course located in the Northwest Detroit neighborhood is envisioned to be a new recreational space for residents while providing vital landscape services such as stormwater management and habitat creation while also educating locals on the importance of land stewardship.

The Grand River Northwest Neighborhood Framework Plan took a holistic approach in addressing complex social and environmental issues the many areas in the City face. The proposed investment projects gained strong support from residents for their positive impact regarding access to open space, safety, stormwater management, job creation, and placemaking. •

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A VISUAL / ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY MAP FOR MICHIGAN

DR. JON BRYAN BURLEY, FASLA

Since the late 1960s, investigators have been examining methods and approaches to quantitatively assess landscape visual quality. I began my interest in the subject in the late 1980s. It has been a long journey.

Michigan is comprised of many types of landscapes and cover types (Figures 1 and 2). Some of these areas are known for their scenic value and special landscape features. The perceived visual and environmental quality of these landscapes are of interest to citizens, government officials, practitioners, and academics.

Scholars studied visual quality by first considering primarily aesthetic landscape features with mixed success, being able to explain between 30% and 60% of the variance (Burley 1997). The investigators would have respondents view images and measure the properties of the image. For the most part investigators determined that respondents had a strong preference for nature. During this time period an index by Jones and Jones (1981 and 1979) earned the widest acceptance within the profession as it mimicked the reasonable thinking of planning and design professionals, but the index was not a statistical study, it was just a heuristic interpretation concerning how to assess visual quality.

By 2005, investigators had made progress and discovered that respondents were not only responding to aesthetic properties, but also respondents were influenced by cultural, economic, functional, and ecological properties of the image (Burley 2006a). Some scholars even say we are in the post post-modern age where aesthetics, cultural economics, function, and ecology are all



FIGURE 1. Silver Lake Sand Dunes by Lake Michigan. Copyright 2015 © Jon Bryan Burley, all rights reserved, used by permission.

FIGURE 2. Scenic lakeshore along Lake Superior in Michigan. Copyright 2016 © Rong Chen, all rights reserved, used by permission.



important to generate an acceptable design (Burley and Machemer 2016). Researchers were also discovering that Western Culture (Americans, Canadians, French, and Portuguese) had one set of preferences and Asians (Chinese) had another set (Mo *et al.* 2011). Investigators could also explain over 90% of the variance, meaning the equations were getting quite accurate (Jin *et al.* 2018 and Burley and Yilmaz 2014). In addition, it is interesting to note that the public sees the landscape in a more simplified manner than planners and designers, who see the landscape with a much more keen eye. A building is just a building; a tree is just a tree. Meanwhile designers evaluate the environment with a more discriminating and discerning eye.

Scholars also discovered that respondents were in concordance with real landscapes, color photographs, black and white photographs, and videos, but that people viewed drawings differently. Drawings were evaluated based upon the quality and execution of the technique and not on the features of the landscape. This is why the ability to draw and render was so important in the design professions, because a good drawing could compensate for limiting qualities in the actual design. Today, many projects are presented digitally. Partin (*et al.* 2012) demonstrated that respondents view digital representations as similar to real landscapes. This was useful information to know, because it appears that digital modeling is a fair representation to present the qualities of designs to the public, a much better arbitrator than perspective drawings with markers and pencils. With the new equations (metrics) and digital representations, the measured quality of design proposals could be assessed as illustrated by Burley (*et al.* 2011) and Burley (2006b). At Michigan State University, we stress drawing as a way of thinking, studying, observing, learning, and communicating. With advances in digital rendering, there is less emphasis upon massive hand-drawn perspective rendering.

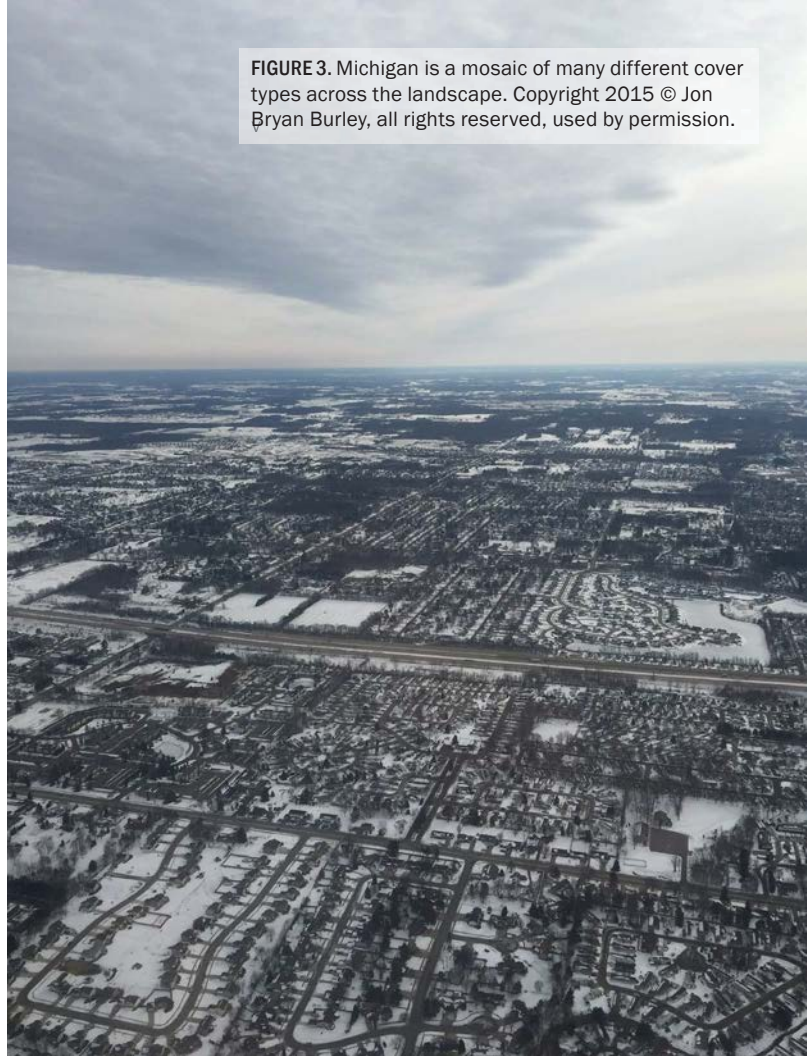
At the same time, methods were being pursued to assess the environmental quality of regions and areas. Lu (*et al.* 2012) presented a method whereby a watershed landscape could be statistically evaluated to assess environmental quality. The key concept that allowed for such a map was that land-cover and visual quality co-vary together (Figure 3). If one knows the land-cover, one can

reliably predict the visual quality. Lothian (2017) provides a good overview of these emerging concepts.

In 2014, I worked with a colleague Dr. Ruya Yilmaz from Turkey (Namk Kemal University, Tekirdag, Turkey) and Dr. Chong Ching Liu from China (Jiangxi Agricultural University, Nanchang, China), to see if we could produce a visual quality map for the State of Michigan. We published our results in 2018 (Yilmaz, Lui, and Burley 2018) (Figure 4). In our study of Michigan, we used a somewhat dated equation from 1997 with a variance of 0.67, containing an overall p-value less than 0.0001, and p-values less than or equal to 0.05 for each predictor. To interpret the map, measures ranging in the mid-40s and 50s indicate a moderate respondent preference level of environmental quality; while scores in the 80s through 110 indicate a very poor environmental quality. It is possible to obtain high levels of preference (scores in the 30s) with mountains in the background and animals and flowers in the foreground, but such conditions may not be fully prevalent in Michigan. Through the Kendall's coefficient of concordance statistical test, we determined that the map is significantly reliable ($p \leq 0.005$) and conclude that constructing such a large area (250,493 km²) is possible. We believe this type of landscape map can be employed to evaluate changes in measuring the environmental quality/land-use of extensive landscape areas.

I believe this is remarkable progress from the early work of investigators in the late 1960s. I have witnessed substantial progress in visual/environmental assessment in my lifetime. I am grateful to all of the curious students and visiting scholars who have worked with me. There is great interest by many in the subject area, but very little actual funding to support such work. Funding to conduct substantially supported planning and design research is often non-existent (it takes about \$120,000 to support one graduate student to do one study and over the career of a professor with his/her graduate students takes millions of dollars—there is no such money for landscape investigators). Still I have found a way to pursue my interests, publish my work, and continue to make progress. I wanted to be a professor since I was six years old and a landscape architecture professor by the time I became 17, so in college I began

FIGURE 3. Michigan is a mosaic of many different cover types across the landscape. Copyright 2015 © Jon Bryan Burley, all rights reserved, used by permission.



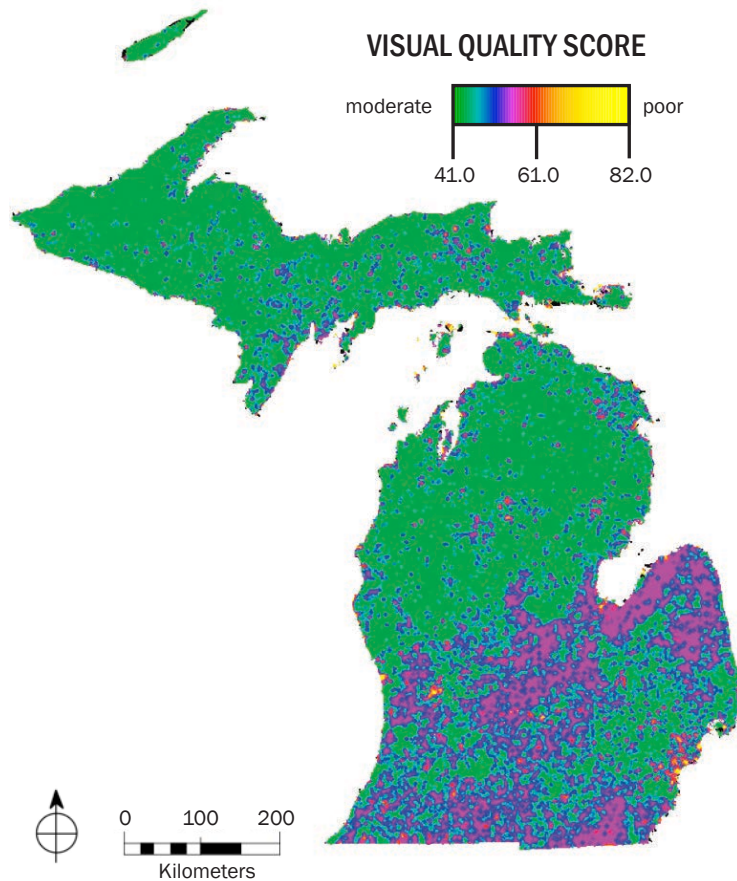


FIGURE 4. A visual/environmental quality map for the State of Michigan (Copyright 2016 © Ruya Yilmaz, Chong Qin Liu and Jon Bryan Burley, all rights reserved, used by permission)

pursuing my quest. I learned that I had a passion and skill in devising achievable research studies with meaningful results (something I observed from Dr. Rachel Kaplan at the University of Michigan), and this has facilitated over 50 graduate students working with me. Many of these students chose to examine questions in measuring visual quality. I will retire soon, knowing that a new generation of scholars will continue the journey in building new knowledge about planning and design. It has been a pleasure and honor to have been a professor at Michigan State University. When I came to Michigan State University, I only had hope and a dream, that I could work with scholars from around the world and produce publishable research. Much that I have hoped for came true. •

Note from Editor: Dr. Jon Burley received a Merit Award from Michigan ASLA for his landscape-based planning and design research in 2018.

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After OCBA's design, the historic Soldier's Monument now has much greater visibility from all sides of the triangular park.

MONUMENT PARK

Grand Rapids, Michigan

SANDY BLIESENER, ASLA

O'BOYLE, COWELL, BLALOCK AND ASSOCIATES, INC.

In 1843 a triangular piece of property was set aside and in 1884 the City of Grand Rapids designated it "Triangular Park" and proposed to erect a Civil War monument and fountain. It was the first park in the city, first Civil War monument in the nation to recognize both women and men, and the first monument to include a fountain. The park was renamed Monument Park in 1898.

By 2012 the fountain plumbing system was barely functional, the surrounding pavements and seat walls were in poor condition and construction work at an adjacent building required large excavations in the park for utility improvements. It was time to update Monument Park, and the city retained O'Boyle, Cowell, Blalock and Associates, Inc. (OCBA) to study its history and evolution and develop a plan to enhance public use while honoring the service and sacrifices of Veterans and their families.

Because of Monument Park's long history as a central feature in downtown Grand Rapids there was a great deal of interest in the project. Encouraged by the Grand Rapids Historical Society, the project was undertaken using a cultural landscape approach adhering to federal standards, which includes building a foundation of historical information as a basis for understanding the evolution of significant landscapes. Through this process, existing landscape characteristics are assessed across historic periods to aid in understanding their cultural importance. This information is then incorporated into the development of design and management recommendations for the park. OCBA retained Quinn Evans Architects (QEA), a firm with expertise in cultural landscape assessments, to assist with the process. Landscape characteristics

The historic Soldier's Monument now has much greater visibility from all sides of the triangular park.



Berms separate the monument plaza from the public spaces and the adjacent streets enclosing and defining spaces.



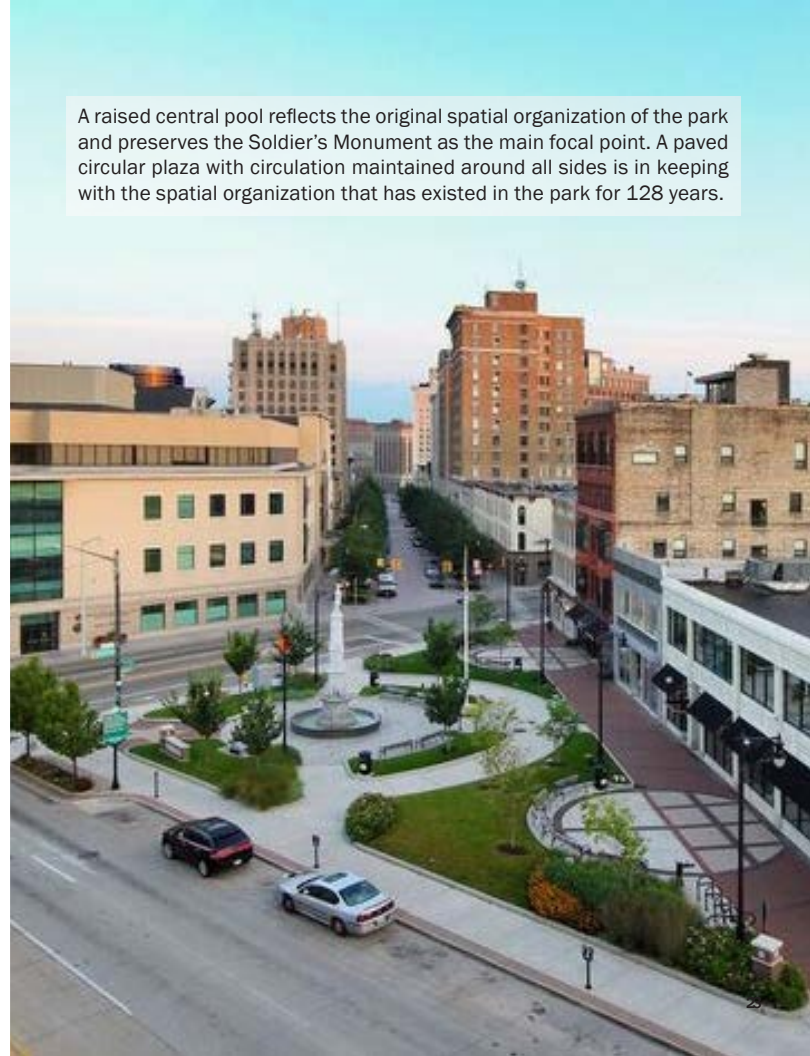
identified by QEA that were relevant to Monument Park included spatial organization, vegetation, patterns of circulation, views, topography, and land use.

Through the historic research conducted as part of the cultural landscape assessment, QEA learned that when the Soldier's Monument was constructed in 1885, Triangular Park was an island surrounded by streets. The park's focal point was the zinc Monument, which functioned as an ornamental fountain and monumental statue surrounded by a raised pool. Many small incremental changes took place during the ninety-two years that the monument stood in this location, including the addition of paved paths, benches, a flagpole, a commemorative plaque, a drinking fountain, a grade bench, and a weather station. The size of the park was reduced to expand the surrounding streets in 1898, canopy trees were present in the park at certain points, and in 1959, the triangular shaped lawn surrounding the Monument was raised and retaining walls were constructed between the lawn and the adjacent sidewalks. These minor changes did not affect the overall park substantially, and the park retained integrity of location, design, setting, feeling, and association throughout the period from 1885 through 1977.

A major change to the landscape occurred in 1977 when the park was redesigned as part of a larger project focused on improvements to Monroe Street. The Monroe Center project was an urban redevelopment project focused on streetscape improvements and enhancing pedestrian opportunities in downtown Grand Rapids. Although the park was redesigned and the Monument relocated, it continued to reflect the original spatial organization by preserving the Monument as the main focal point, presenting a triangular shape, and including circulation around all sides.

Through the cultural landscape assessment process, it was recommended that a rehabilitation approach be utilized to address design and management changes at Monument Park. The act or process of rehabilitation allows repairs, alterations, and additions necessary to enable a compatible use for a property as long as the portions or features which convey the historical, cultural, or

A raised central pool reflects the original spatial organization of the park and preserves the Soldier's Monument as the main focal point. A paved circular plaza with circulation maintained around all sides is in keeping with the spatial organization that has existed in the park for 128 years.





architectural values are preserved. This approach is appropriate when depiction at one particular period of time is not appropriate; repair or replacement of deteriorated features is necessary; and alterations or additions are needed for a new use.¹

The greatest design challenge was creating a space to respectfully honor the history and purpose of the Soldier's Monument, while encouraging active use of a wide streetscape corridor along the business storefronts. The result is a defined circular plaza with a raised pool in the center that reflects the original spatial organization of the park and maintains the Soldier's Monument as the main focal point. The paved circular plaza is defined by bermed lawn panels presenting a triangular shape, and circulation is maintained around all sides, in keeping with the spatial organization that has existed in the park for 128 years. Two half circle seating areas face the streetscape corridor creating space for active public use and events. Berms separate the monument plaza from the public spaces and the adjacent streets and enclose and define the spaces. Trees are planted on top of the berms for clear vision sight lines across the park and to the business facades.



View of Monument Park in ca. 1950s (above) and ca. 1900 (below).²

Vegetation at the park has consistently included a triangular shaped lawn and with a few exceptions a canopy of trees of even age and a single species. Visual access to the Monument has always been extensive, as the park has been surrounded by streets and sidewalks and therefore viewed from multiple vantage points. From the earliest days, the park was intended for reflection and as a monumental reminder of the services and sacrifices made by Grand Rapids Civil War soldiers and volunteers. The redesign of Monument Park completed by OCBA and guided by QEA's Cultural Landscape Assessment process retains the integrity of location, design, setting, feeling, and association that was originally established in 1885. •

¹ The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties – Rehabilitation

² Grand Rapids History and Special Collections, Archives, Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Monroe Center (Phase III) and Monument Park

Bid Package 2

Grand Rapids, Michigan

September 2013



Barrier-Free Curb Ramps at Crosswalks, Typ.

Masonry Column With Cast Stone Cap and Star Detail

Curbed Landscape Island, Typ.

Concrete Sidewalk, Typ.

Electrical Receptacle For Park Use And Holiday Lighting, Typ.

Litter Receptacle, Typ.

Relocated Soldier's Monument With New Fountain Pool And Granite-Clad Seat Wall

Relocated Granite GAR Bench

Park Sign With Masonry Column, Cast Stone Trim and Lettering

Star Brick Paver Design At Main Entrance

Civic Theater

Bike Loops

Streetscape Plaza With Electric And Water Service For Events

Kendall Building

Brick Pavers, Typ.

Ornamental Light Poles With Banner Arms And Receptacles For Holiday Lighting

Reynolds & Sons

15' Wide Business Corridor with Snowmelt

Relocated Flagpole & Boulder

Relocated Historic Register Sign and Park Interpretive Sign

Benches, Typ.

Grand Rapids Children's Museum

Streetscape Plaza With Electric And Water Service For Events

Drinking Fountain And Bike Loops

SHELDON AVE.

Masonry Column With Cast Stone Cap and Star Detail

Landscaping With Irrigation, Typ.



SCALE
PLAN 1"=10'

Decorative Concrete Pavers in Monument Plaza
New Granite Bench, Donated By The Michigan Commandery Of The Military Order Of The Loyal Legion Of The United States

Curbed Landscape Island, Typ.

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