

MiSITES



2016: VOLUME 10, NUMBER 4 MICHIGAN CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY
OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS



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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

I hope you all are enjoying the holiday season, and have been able to pause for a moment to reflect on a productive 2016. I think I can speak for most of our profession, that the past year brought much exciting and rewarding work.

In this issue, we celebrate the best of the best of Michigan landscape architecture as we present our 2016 Annual Award winners. Thank you to the Iowa Chapter for their thoughtful deliberation and selection of this year's winners. The awards were presented during Michigan ASLA Annual Awards Gala on September 29th. Congratulations to each project, the design teams, and clients! Read all about them in the following pages.

Also, I was very proud to present four President's Awards to individuals who have gone above and beyond to serve the members of the chapter and the profession. Congratulations to: Monique Bassey, Emerging Professional of the Year Award recipient; SuLin Kotowicz, Distinguished Member Award recipient; Daniel Martin, Honor Award Recipient; and Viridis Design Group, Firm of the Year Award recipient. It was inspiring to me to know the stories behind these individuals and how each was well-deserving of this honor.

2016 was personally rewarding for me, as I was able to lead this chapter and provide guidance to a

fantastic Executive Committee. I truly appreciate the volunteerism that goes into all of the events and advocacy on behalf of Michigan landscape architects. Additionally, our executive director, Matt Solak and his team: Derek Dalling, Jason Wadaga, Denise Stone, Sara McCallum, Alyssa Hansen and Michelle Dishaw, have gone above and beyond for our chapter and help us with everything from accounting to event planning. Matt and his team are true advocates for our profession.

Our new board for 2017 welcomes Wesley Landon as President Elect, Monique Bassey as Secretary and Matt Levandoski as Member at Large. Ben Baker will be moving into the role of President for 2017. Congratulations to our new and returning board members!

I wish much success to all of our members and friends of the profession in 2017. I was glad and grateful to serve you this past year and have found this to be a very rewarding experience. Thank you to all of our members who dedicated time to chapter events and continued or renewed membership. ■

Clare Jagenow, PLA, ASLA
President, Michigan Chapter of ASLA

ON THE COVER: *Rob & Tregger Residence, MIASLA Honor Award recipient.*
Image courtesy of Michael J. Dul & Associates, Inc.

For more information, please visit our website at www.michiganasla.org, or find us on Facebook and LinkedIn.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

MSU LAAAB Speaker Series

February 9, 2017
East Lansing, MI

MSU SPDC Career Fair

February 9, 2017
East Lansing, MI

If you would like to contribute to MiSITES or have a topic of interest, please email:
SITESpublications@michiganasla.org

Honor Award [Design]

ROB & TREGER RESIDENCE

Firm: Michael J. Dul & Associates, Inc.

Project Location: Birmingham, Michigan

Rob & Treger are a well-traveled, creative and open minded couple. As COO of a national ad agency, and his spouse the founder of a 401(c) 3 nonprofit corporation that distributes furniture to needy Detroit families, they had a vision for a complete rear yard transformation to accommodate their family's lifestyle. Their travels exposed them to beautiful exterior spaces that were very usable but emphasized nature, tranquility, and site features that were meticulously designed with care and "out of the box" creativity. This is what they sought to bring to their Birmingham home.

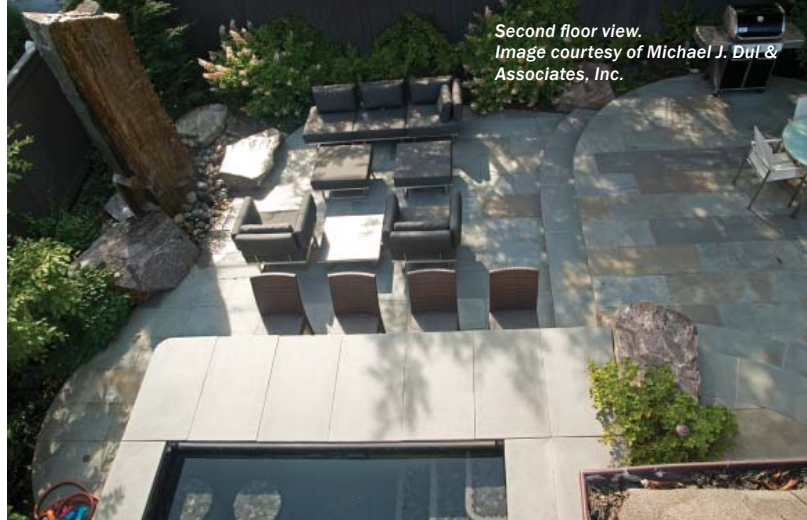
Their project takes an uninspired and constricted urban rear yard and revitalizes it into a creative, functional and playful space. As the Landscape Architect and Construction Manager, we transformed the rear yard into a memorable outdoor environment featuring an indoor/outdoor pool with an integral countertop bar, terraced entertainment patios, a water feature, and open lawn area for children's play. Patios, staircases and level changes purposely integrate free flowing forms that soften and contrast to its straight surroundings. Mass plantings and the skillful placement of massive granite rock outcroppings effectively facilitate the introduction of nature into this urban space. Fencing, plant material and elevation changes create a sense of privacy and relaxation as the surrounding neighborhood goes unnoticed.

Big or small the significance of this project to the profession of Landscape Architecture is in its exceptional design creativity and execution of detail. The project is successful from all aspects as each component is "part of the whole" and integrates "out of the box" ideas together into one small back yard. ■

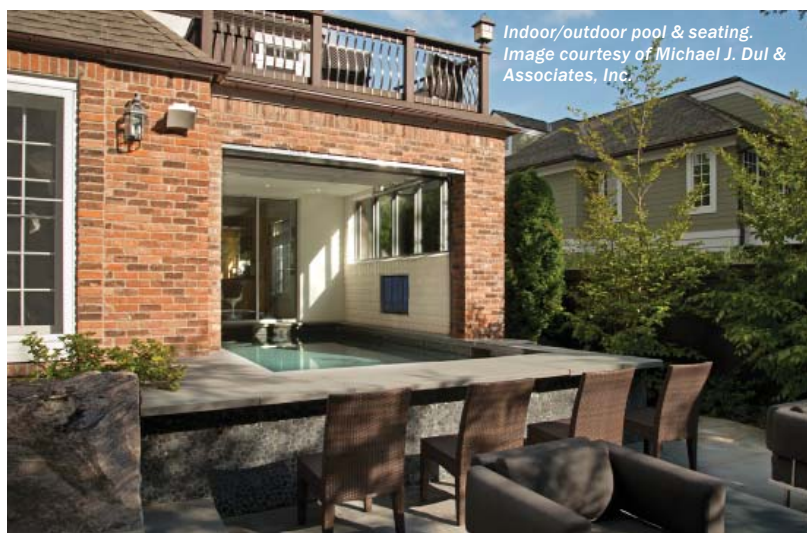
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Second floor view.
Image courtesy of Michael J. Dul & Associates, Inc.



Indoor/outdoor pool & seating.
Image courtesy of Michael J. Dul & Associates, Inc.

Honor Award [Design]

BUILDING 30 NATURE GARDEN MILFORD PROVING GROUNDS

Firm: PEA, Inc.

Project Location: Milford, Michigan



*Elevation through employee break area.
Image courtesy of PEA, Inc.*

The Building 30 Nature Garden at the Milford Proving Ground provides an opportunity for stress reduction for staff on a large engineering campus. It is cumbersome for employees to leave this secure campus during break time, therefore an on-site break destination was desired. A centrally located vacant area of land on the campus was available on the former site of what was known as Building 30. Conventional wisdom would be to design this site as a paved plaza with some tables and chairs. Instead of the obvious design solution, the landscape architect coordinated with the Client to develop an atypical employee break area. The design solution offers a therapeutic landscape in the form of a native plant garden that is mostly natural space and provides a dramatic departure from the world of cubicles, conference rooms and busy cafeterias.

The garden offers resources for stress reduction including opportunities for exercise, access to nature and natural beauty, pastoral views, quiet space, privacy, as well as opportunities to socialize in small groups. These are all common, evidenced-based, therapeutic program elements of a healing garden. The design is intentionally simple in its layout, but the beauty of the space and subtle details of the design effectively create a campus destination.

A thoughtful design with pleasing arrangements of native plants, intimate garden paths, quiet seating areas and a walking trail through a hardwood forest has proven to be highly effective in attracting campus employees and engaging them with the natural landscape in a way that provides tangible health benefits. ■

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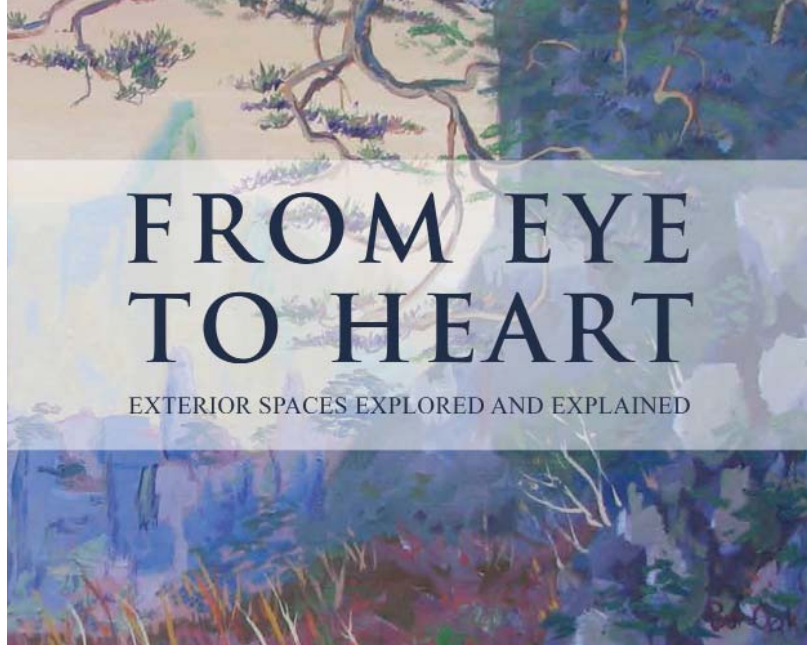
FROM EYE TO HEART

By Dr. John Bryan Burley, FASLA

At MSU, Dr. Machemer and I have taught a Landscape History course for over a decade. It is the only history course that landscape students take at MSU, plus most of the students enrolled in the course are non-majors. 140 students enroll in the course each time. The course has a diverse mission, to help each person to understand they have a role to play in planning and design decisions, to learn about the process that designers may take to create a design, and to explore the breadth of ideas around the world concerning the built environment, including environmental design, art, and architecture. It is difficult to find a textbook that can cover all of these topics. And to write one is a monumental task, because to be knowledgeable on so many subjects requires much travel and experience—in Dr. Burley's case, 40 years. In addition, such textbooks usually rely upon copyrighted pictures from others, greatly increasing the costs.

Students seem to really enjoy presentations when the lecturer has actually been to the site and can give insight into the design. It seems many history based landscape textbooks simply repeat the same non-insightful information. At MSU we teach "concept" as an important normative theory to generate quality designs. So in our lectures we carry that thread across history to explain concept in Chinese, Japanese, Cambodian, Indonesian, Indian, Incan, Italian, French, Portuguese, English, and American societies, plus in the built environment for many other cultures too. Plus we often tell stories about our experiences and observations. Many students indicate that such stories help them to remember the rest of the material. Often to have a successful lecture course for 15 weeks long with 30 two hour lectures means that one must know the materials (academic), but also be somewhat of an entertainer (talk show host), and be like a preacher (with passion and conviction). Most students are fairly open-minded, curious, and desire to learn.

The publisher, Cognella, was interested in our version of such a book because we had our own pictures and drawings, greatly reducing the potential price of



The cover of "From Eye to Heart" with a painting of Huang Shan (Yellow Mountain), Anhui Province, China.

Image courtesy of Dr. Burley.

the book for students. When the editors read the passionate text and saw the beautiful drawings, they suggested that title of the book be "From Eye to Heart."

The book is over 600 pages and contains about 500 images—3/5ths text and 2/5ths pictures. There is a lot that was not included in the book because the production was already 100 pages over the contractual limit. Many images and additional text had to be eliminated. Therefore the book does not cover as much of the American experience as other textbooks, and proportionally

A picture from Chapter 6 of the Bayon Temple, built by the Khmers in the late 12th century. Image courtesy of Dr. Burley.



gives more space for places American students may know less about such as Turkey, India, Cambodia, China, Egypt, Indonesia, Portugal, Malaysia, South Korea, Japan, Singapore, and First Nation people.

The book is often written in a first person voice, with many opinions, observations, laments, and comments, even original poetry. It is a very different style of textbook than most are accustomed to and pushes the boundaries of textbook genre. I feel really good about what Trisha and I have accomplished because it seems to make the less open-minded and slow adopters uncomfortable as though we are forging new territory, just like the innovative designs, paintings, and literature we talk about in the book did when they were created. When the Eiffel Tower was first being constructed in 1887, many cultural gate-keepers of Parisian values were offended by the structure and Van Gogh, an artist who lived in Paris for a time (1886-1890) only sold one painting in his lifetime. Today the Eiffel Tower is the most visited entry fee monument in the world with about 7 million visitors annually and Van Gogh's paintings in the Musée d'Orsay are some of the most valued paintings

in the world, averaging 3.5 million visitations a year. Actually, I feel great satisfaction when a struggling student indicates that the book and course positively influenced their life. We did not write this book to get any blessings or acknowledgements from our superiors—as a matter of fact the promise of praise would be a negative influencing factor for both of us—Trisha and I are similar that way. My co-author is very humble and modest, as she contributed to this book to help her students grow into the future. Nevertheless, it is a very kind honor to be recognized for our effort by our local ASLA Chapter. In our small way, I would like to believe we wrote a textbook because we are dedicated to our students and to environmental design around the globe, just as Gustav Eiffel had a passion for steel-frame structures and Van Gogh has a passion for painting. ■

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Honor Award [Sustainability]

MARSHBANK PARK

Firm: Beckett & Raeder, Inc.

Project Location: West Bloomfield, Michigan

All-Season Shelter building.
Image courtesy of Beckett &
Raeder, Inc.



The West Bloomfield Parks and Recreation Commission (WBPRC) commissioned a redesign of Marshbank Park located on Cass Lake. The overarching design philosophy was to employ sustainable planning and design principles to help preserve and restore sensitive natural areas, protect adjacent Cass Lake and its watershed, conserve energy, use renewable resources, utilize green building technology and design with universal accessibility for the enjoyment of future generations.

Extensive public input and educational sessions facilitated by the landscape architect (LA) were held for the community and its leaders to understand impacts the existing park development was having on the environment and how best management practices could enhance and restore native habitats and water quality while retaining and enhancing the recreational programs at the park. The master plan provided improved adjacencies, minimized pedestrian and vehicular conflicts, and provided multi-use areas resulting in less impact to the site. The LA led a multidisciplinary team of architectural, mechanical, electrical, structural, geotechnical, and environmental consultants through the exploration of green technology and worked collaboratively with the WBPRC environmentalist to integrate her environmental education programs into the park design. The LA established a palette of the materials for all disciplines, creating a harmonious park design utilizing local and recycled materials.

Recognizing that the orientation of buildings can play an important part in minimizing environmental impacts, the LA sited three new facilities within the park: a seasonal toilet building and screened in porch; an all-season building for community activities; and a new maintenance building. A key recommendation was to consolidate multiple WBPRC maintenance facilities on this central site to save on energy costs both through updated green building technology and from decreased travel between facilities.

Because a significant portion of the environmental footprint comes from the building systems and as multi-disciplinary team leaders, Landscape Architects must advocate for sustainable design. Therefore, the LA facilitated a comprehensive review of energy saving measures to be employed on the

project. Challenging conventional energy systems, the team proposed a geothermal process to heat and cool the All-Season Shelter building and the park system's central Maintenance Facility. Twenty-one wells (258' deep) transfer heat from below the earth's surface to in-floor radiant heat tubes which also extract cool air to air condition the buildings. The All Season Shelter, Maintenance Facility, and Seasonal Toilet Building employ a variety of green building technologies such as Structural Insulated Roof Panels (SIP), recycled structural steel framework, recycled glass countertops, solar panels for hot water heating, rainwater harvesting and storage, waterless urinals, composting toilets in the Seasonal Toilet Building, sun shading and skylights to minimize the need for artificial lighting, and use of energy efficient lighting. The composting toilets and waterless urinals have an estimated water savings of 45,000 gallons per year over conventional fixtures.

Significant native habitat had been lost over the course of the park's history, contributing to degradation of water quality in Cass Lake and adjacent wetlands. A stormwater management system was designed to redirect stormwater from piped discharge to the lake into a naturalized stormwater treatment system of bioswales, vegetated swales, and porous pavement, which filtered sediment and encouraged water infiltration and evaporation while restoring native habitat. Benches, a fishing pier, kayak launch and boardwalks are constructed with recycled aluminum and plastic lumber made from recycled milk jugs. The boardwalk/pier provides access to the waterfront while maintaining a buffer to filter sediments and other toxins along the riparian edges. Aggregate paths and bituminous walking trails allow the public access to natural habitats for education, recreation, and health benefits. Recreational fields double for overnight camping events, and a sledding hill doubles as an amphitheater for summer events. Universal playground areas were constructed with traditional and interpretive design elements. The resulting plan provides a first class, four-season facility for users of all ages, with 100% barrier free accessibility, enhancing community recreation opportunities while protecting valuable community natural resources. ■

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ReImagine Washtenaw
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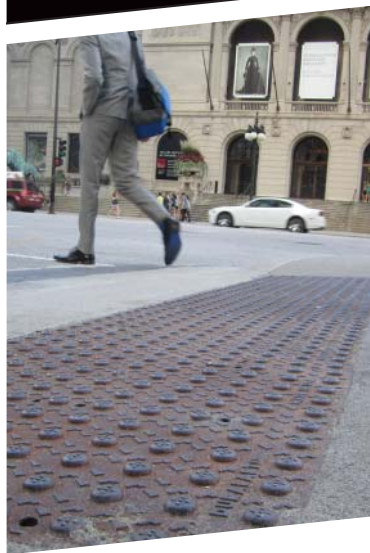


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REIMAGINE WASHTENAW

Firm: SmithGroupJJR

Project Location: Washtenaw County, Michigan

As the primary vehicular route between Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti, Michigan, Washtenaw Avenue links the region's largest employment and educational centers with the residential areas that serve them. Resulting from decades of auto-centric development, the current condition limits safe non-motorized use, hinders neighborhood connectivity, and creates a barrier to a healthy lifestyle.

Washtenaw Avenue is the busiest road in the county with average daily traffic counts over 40,000 vehicles in some locations. It has evolved into a noisy, congested corridor with multiple, oversized traffic lanes, high traffic volumes, and high speeds. Existing land use policies support automobile standards resulting in a 5 lane, nearly impassible route for pedestrians and cyclists.

Creating a more walkable environment was fundamental to the ReImagine Washtenaw vision. Modeling efforts were performed at five key intersections as part of an extensive traffic survey. Traffic simulation models were utilized to evaluate alternatives and inform the planning strategies which aimed to reduce vehicular traffic volumes, improve the area's walkability, and promote economic redevelopment. Incorporating these various strategies allowed for the street design to be tailored to each segment's needs — resulting in a variety of cross-sections throughout the entire project limits.

ReImagine Washtenaw reinvents the transportation corridor into a five-mile-long "complete street." It provides for safe and sustainable transportation options that meet diverse needs while focusing design guidelines on the pedestrian and creating mixed-use economic development opportunities. ■

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Above: Washtenaw corridor streetscape section.
Image courtesy of SmithGroupJJR.



Right: Washtenaw corridor bus stop
perspective drawing.
Image courtesy of SmithGroupJJR.

Merit Award [Design]

EVERGREEN ROAD CORRIDOR

Firm: City of Southfield

Project Location: Southfield, Michigan

Completed in October 2015, the overall \$12+ million investment included the total reconstruction of the roadway, reduction from 6 lanes to 4 lanes, correction of stormwater system inadequacies, installation of the City's first two round-a-bouts, and improved traffic flow and safety. Pedestrian amenities included: installation of a center landscaped median, mid-block crossings, decorative crosswalks, plazas, benches, trash receptacles, bus shelters, raised planters, hanging baskets, banners, flags, pedestrian (and vehicular) LED lighting, installation of a 10 ft. wide bike path and multi-use pathways, pedestrian way-finding signage, kiosk and historic interpretive panels, and art installations. Stormwater features included permeable pavers and bio-retention pond, which can handle 32,000 cubic feet of treated stormwater. The design also results in a venue for special events.

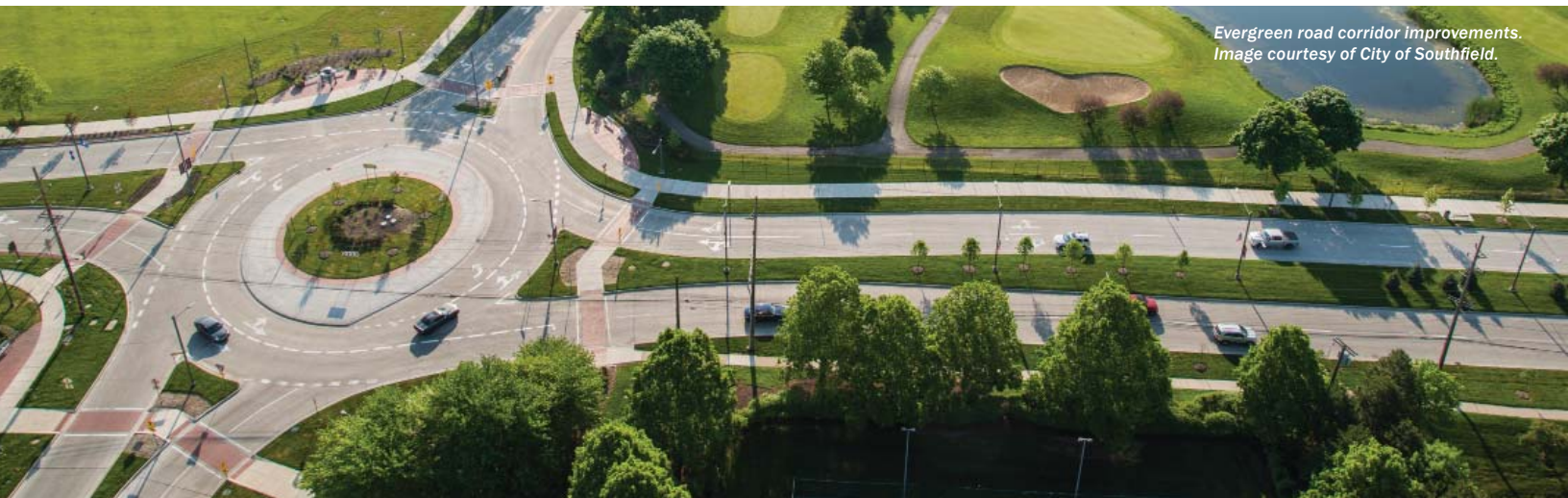
An emphasis of the project was to provide for a vibrant and pedestrian friendly environment in the City Centre business District in response to an existing 50+ year auto-dominated land use pattern. An additional purpose was to promote sustainability and heart healthy activity, while acting as a catalyst for future development.

On average, 21,500 motorists travel through this one mile corridor on a daily basis. In addition, 12,000-15,000 are employed within the ½ mile District and approximately 2,000-2,500 persons visit the library on a daily basis. One goal of the District is attraction and retention of young professionals, which leads to higher occupancy rates for the District's office towers and increases economic development. Placemaking is a vital component to this end. ■

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*Evergreen road corridor Improvements.
Image courtesy of City of Southfield.*

Merit Award [Design]

JACKSON BLACKMAN PARK EXPANSION

Firm: Beckett & Raeder, Inc.

Project Location: Jackson, Michigan

When Consumers Energy vacated its Albert Kahn building in downtown Jackson, the City acquired the property and determined that the building could not be re-used. The building was demolished, leaving a noticeable gap in the center of the downtown, but opening the site to possibilities for new use. The City's initial plan was to activate the space in an interim capacity while it sought a developer for a mixed-use redevelopment of the site. As such, the City executed a design competition for the interim use among three firms who were short-listed to prepare its Community Master Plan.

Beckett & Raeder's design plan envisioned an attractive, lively space with a food truck court radiating from a central gathering and café seating plaza with catenary lighting. The park is bookended by an open lawn that serves as an informal performance space and a pavilion meant to house a mosaic mural depicting the history of electricity (prepared by renowned pottery artist Glidden Parker in 1969) that was salvaged from the Consumers Building prior to demolition. The City Council and staff were so pleased with the design that they chose to invest more than double the planned amount and make the project a permanent addition to Downtown Jackson, with the Mayor remarking that it would become Jackson's version of Central Park.

Though the City initially envisioned a mixed use project on the site long-term, they were also aware that they have an abundance of vacant square footage Downtown. Thus, their positive reaction to the design resulted in a transformation in thinking: from envisioning the design as a temporary use to envisioning it as something that would help them market other properties, while providing an asset to the residents of Jackson and reason for them to come downtown. Just one year after the implementation of this project, the vacant and historic Hayes Hotel, located immediately west of the site, is now under a development agreement and in the early development stages. ■

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*Blackman Park from above.
Image courtesy of Beckett & Raeder, Inc..*



PALMER PARK MASTER PLAN

Firm: Gibbs Planning Group

Project Location: Detroit, Michigan



Palmer Park master plan. Image courtesy of Gibbs Planning Group.

The history of Palmer Park dates back to the 1890s when Senator Thomas Palmer, who had been farming the land and using it as a vacation retreat, hired Olmsted, Olmsted & Eliot to subdivide the land and create plans for an attractive and unrivaled park at its center. While the land was never subdivided, the Olmsted plan for the park was realized, and the parkland was unconditionally deeded to Detroit by Senator Palmer in 1893. The park includes the only remaining log cabin in Detroit, which was designed by the famous architects Mason & Rice under the direction of Senator Palmer's wife Lizzie, the Merrill Fountain, which was originally located in Detroit's Campus Martius, and the remnants of a virgin forest that in the early 1900s was deemed by a convention of park commissioners to have a "greater variety of trees indigenous to the soil than there is in the whole of Europe."

Following extensive research with the Olmsted Archives in Brookline, Massachusetts that uncovered the original plans (at the time it was called "Log Cabin Farm") and a trip to the Olmsted Papers at the Library of Congress to find correspondence between the firm and the Palmers, Gibbs Planning Group (project lead) recruited 12 firms and a small group of college students to participate in the master planning of Palmer Park. Seven alternative plans were created by the volunteer group of landscape architects, planners and architects to illustrate the potential for the park and to allow the community and city representatives to reach a consensus on the preferred design. Additional designs for road-diet, bike facilities, stormwater retention and community buildings and shelters were also presented to the community.

Two years and several public meetings later, the consensus master plan and supporting documentation is complete. The plan calls for thoughtfully restoring Olmsted's original design, improving entries and circulation, creating active and passive open space, a community-supported urban farm, a redesigned golf course, natural area restoration and sustainable stormwater management. It is estimated that the participating firms contributed a total of 2,500 volunteer hours during the plan's creation; a rewarding effort for the professionals who appreciated the history, cultural significance, natural beauty and community importance of the park. ■

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JACKSON BLACKMAN PARK EXPANSION

Firm: Beckett & Raeder, Inc.
Project Location: Jackson, Michigan

The University of Michigan retained Beckett & Raeder, Inc. to design and engineer site work for the Wall Street East Parking Structure, envisioning a facility significant for its sustainability and community benefits. To that end, providing needed parking while reducing its physical and environmental footprints became an overarching philosophy guiding design. Other important design goals for the project included being sensitive to adjacent residential neighbors; providing safe and easy access to University, local, and regional public transit; creating on-site stormwater management exceeding regulatory requirements to improve water and aquatic habitat quality of the adjacent Huron River; and providing community green space for the benefit of project neighbors and the larger community.

Previously, the project site was a paved surface parking lot with limited stormwater controls and partially within the Huron River 100-year floodplain. The design vision ultimately realized substantially increased parking counts while removing all parking from the Huron River floodplain. A green space was created in the portion of the site closest to residential neighbors and includes a sedge meadow rain garden, permeable paver walkways, a small public plaza, and site furnishings.

The sedge meadow rain garden is one component of a green infrastructure system developed to greatly reduce the volume and rate of stormwater release to the City's storm sewer system which, in turn, contributes to improve water quality and aquatic habitat of the adjacent Huron River. Other BMPs included within the project's stormwater management approach include significant impervious surface reductions on the site, use of porous materials for 96% of on-site pavements, infiltration pipes and storage chambers beneath pavements, mechanical water quality treatment systems, and native or adapted species landscape plantings that minimize the need for supplemental maintenance and irrigation. ■

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*Wall Street East Parking Structure, sedge meadow, and site landscaping.
Image courtesy of Beckett & Raeder, Inc.*





SULIN KOTOWICZ, ASLA



MONIQUE BASSEY, ASLA



DANIEL MARTIN

MICHIGAN ASLA 2016 PRESIDENT'S AWARD WINNERS

DISTINGUISHED MEMBER AWARD

SULIN KOTOWICZ, ASLA

SuLin Kotowicz has demonstrated a committed length of service to Michigan ASLA and its members for over 12 years. SuLin has served the Executive Committee as President, Treasurer, and Secretary, in addition to serving on the national finance and Audit Committee, and is currently the Audit Chair. Her contributions to the Michigan Chapter of ASLA, and the profession as a whole, are too numerous to count. Her selfless dedication to the profession and her colleagues stands out as a shining example to us all.

EMERGING PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR

MONIQUE BASSEY, ASLA

Monique Bassey was recently elected to the Executive Committee as Secretary and serves on the National ASLA Diversity Committee. Monique holds a passion to spread awareness about diversity in the design profession, and has participated in the AIA's Women's Diversity Summit. She currently works at SmithGroupJJR, where she founded a diversity sub-committee called "Diversity by Design", and has contributed to projects such as The District Detroit, Detroit's Event Center, and the Midland Discovery Master Plan.

OUTSTANDING FIRM OF THE YEAR

VRIDIS DESIGN GROUP

Viridis Design Group is an award-winning, regional firm with offices in Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids. They are celebrating their 10 year anniversary this year, and have demonstrated a strong trend of design excellence and commitment to the Michigan ASLA Chapter. They have received awards from the Michigan, Kentucky, and Illinois Chapters, as well as awards and recognition from many design-related associations throughout the Midwest.

HONOR AWARD

DANIEL MARTIN

Daniel Martin has found a specific niche in communicating with students and young professionals. His work on the National ASLA Emerging Professionals Committee has generated successful new initiatives such as the ASLA Leadership Visit Series and the ASLA Ask Me Anything Events. These programs help to build ASLA's relationship and meaningfulness with those that will be the future of our profession and the Society. Daniel is the director of Marketing with Permaloc and is also a partner and founder of the popular Land8 website and blog.



VRIDIS DESIGN GROUP

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT - 2016 ASLA STUDENT AWARDS



Nicholas Blok, Student ASLA

Honor Award Recipient
Michigan State University

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My childhood memories are dominated by traveling, and exploring as many corners of the country as the family vehicle could reach. These adventures drove my passion for the environment, and gave me a creative outlet. Initially considering structural engineering, I found landscape architecture to be a better fit for my combined problem-solving abilities and artistic tendencies.

While my artistic cravings are satisfied, the problem solving is still what draws me to landscape architecture. Every new project offers another chance to work towards a better future for every designer's common client: the earth. Designs that involve innovative stormwater management, increased habitat throughout the urban setting, and elements that lessen the impact of society's strain on the environment are what I find to be the most rewarding.

I am currently working on my master's thesis; my specific design interests inform my research focus: urban habitat. Using the knowledge gained from my childhood experiences, I am studying how the new implementation of green infrastructure can provide habitat for both migrant and resident birds in the urban setting. With proper planning, cities can become less of an obstacle to birds migrating through the area. I'm excited to play a role in the evolution of urban design throughout my career.



Cameron Robinson, Student ASLA

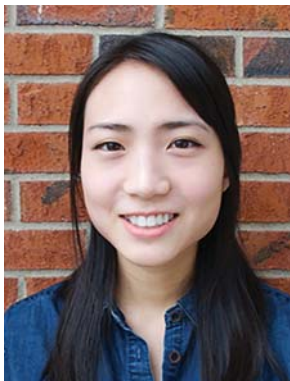
Honor Award Recipient
Michigan State University

Boyne City, MI
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My decision to work in landscape architecture was influenced by two major elements. The first is my love for nature and everything that deals with the outdoors. Second, I grew up working for my father's landscaping company, where I learned about the various aspects of landscape construction and design. Upon graduating high school, I decided to take my knowledge of landscaping to the next level by pursuing a degree in landscape architecture.

Within the vast field of landscape architecture, I am most interested in creating designs that incorporate plants as part of the design process instead of a last minute addition. Therefore, plants should enhance the space for users both aesthetically and purposely. I want to specialize in using native plants to help repair polluted sites, as well as, preventing future pollution issues that are present within cities and waterways.

If I could design a project, I would choose to design a public park in an urban environment within Michigan. My project would be centered on using modern ecological practices to create a sustainable design. It would incorporate unique elements that help to prevent issues existing in the cities, such as treating polluted runoff to create a better living environment for residents.



Cresha Wee, Student ASLA

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I have always been interested in using my creative abilities to produce designs that ranged from drawing landscapes to molding clay. This had initially led me to aspire to become a landscape architect; however, my interest of the environment grew as I experienced many different aspects of nature throughout Michigan. Experiencing Michigan's unique environment and being surrounded by fresh water growing up has led me to further investigate how nature can influence public health.

I am working towards a Master's of Environmental Design where I aim to analyze and compare the factors of campus green space and the mental health fatigue of students. My goal is to gather data on different naturalistic areas on campus during a stressful time or event. Through this research, I hope to further the importance of landscape architecture's involvement in health and the environment.

Landscape architecture is a field that is continuously growing and as a student and intern in the field, I am constantly learning new things. Although the field of landscape architecture requires dedication, the satisfaction of facing a challenge like finding a creative solution to maximize the potential for an outdoor space is rewarding. As I have come to learn, landscape architects are continuous problem solvers that use creativity when faced with constraints.



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The hardest question for me has always been "What is landscape architecture?" I feel like whenever I ask myself this question I have a different answer. In the beginning, I thought landscape architecture was about designing parks, gardens, and outdoor places for people, but then I realized I can't define the profession by what we do, it's about how we do it. It's about solving problems in the environment in a way that connects art and science. It's also about looking for the right problems to solve in the first place.

I get my inspiration from observing the environment. I am awed by the moving clouds, the fallen leaves, the blowing wind and all that we take for granted around us. Sometimes I stop, observe and experience, and that's like opening up a door to new destinations.

My research in my Master's program is about how people perceive their city through taking and sharing photos. Technologies such as the Internet, social media, and smartphones have changed our lives nowadays. But how does it influence the way we perceive and interact with the environment? I want to study how the images we see every day relate to our perception of a city.



Yoshihiko Kubota, Student ASLA

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Growing up in the suburbs of Tokyo and NYC, I developed a love of nature while observing and sometimes catching various insects and animals like crayfish, dragonflies, and deer. After majoring in environmental studies in college and working in an office building where the blinds were always shut, I realized how disconnected people were from the outdoor environment. At that time, I happened to learn of the profession of landscape architecture and began my journey to create spaces that can connect people to their environment.

I learned through my three years at the University of Michigan that there is not one correct answer to landscape architecture, and that even one small decision can completely change the way a design works. The result is a perpetual search for something better. The struggle can be very draining but the countless possibilities also makes the profession all the more interesting.

I like landscape architecture because it gives me a wider perspective on how the world around us functions. We understand and notice the small things that make a difference and can appreciate it. I believe landscape architecture can positively affect people's lives and we are privileged to have the chance to design them.

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