

Geddes, Zoos and the Valley Section

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The development of Edinburgh Zoological Garden was a pioneering example of the modern approach to animal display, placing animals in naturalistic settings that demanded innovative landscape design. The concept for Edinburgh Zoo, opened in 1913, was devised by Patrick Geddes and developed in collaboration with Frank C Mears and Geddes's daughter, Norah.

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THIS PAPER DRAWS on Welter's important study of Geddes's vision of the city (2002) and on Geddes biographies, as well as on original archive material, to explore aspects of Geddes's vision for landscape architecture in the early twentieth century. The paper discusses Geddes's contribution to contemporary design and planning theory through the concept of the valley section, which comes to an understanding of the global through the local and, in turn, inspires a vision of the universal.

Geddes was influenced by Hagenbeck's design for his zoo, near Hamburg, and by the New York Zoological Park, in developing displays for Edinburgh zoo that attempted to show animal behaviour as it would be in its natural habitat. The work of the German evolutionary biologist, Ernst Haeckel, further inspired Geddes to conceptualise the design as one where, just as ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny, so human civilisation might be recapitulated. He developed a three-dimensional expression of his hypothetical 'valley section' as a model for interaction between life and the environment. The zoo *within* a city becomes a model for the ideal city, a city *within* its region, reflecting the highest attainment of human development yet still linked to the most primitive of origins.

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