

Shaping Urban Green

SIMON SWAFFIELD AND JACKY BOWRING

Opening his review of the *Landscape Urbanism Reader*, Gale Fulton cites a powerful insight from management theorist Peter Drucker, who suggests that much of the character of the next half-century has already been provided for us by the events of the last half-century – a ‘future that has already happened.’¹ This issue of the *Landscape Review* is focussed on the design, planning and management of urban green space. The contributions all deal with consequences of a significant shift in understanding that took place during the 1970s, when the Nature in Cities movement emerged and began to transform the ideals, science, and aesthetics of green space design, and the role of communities in the process.² The consequences of that shift in approach – a future that has already happened – can be seen playing out today in multiple ways, for example through the emerging science of urban ecology; the growing interest in ecological aesthetics; and through a reconceptualisation of urban form itself.

In the first article, Stephen Perry examines the role that an understanding of fractal geometry could play in developing a new ecological aesthetic, and presents a pilot study drawing on a range of Australian urban green spaces. Ian Spellerberg and the late David Given³ then argue for a greater role for ecology and conservation science in the selection of urban tree species in New Zealand. Yun-Geum Kim and Maggie Roe focus on the role of communities in urban green space management, reporting on a case study investigation into the activities of friends groups in an established park in the United Kingdom.

There are two book reviews. Gale Fulton offers a challenging critique of Charles Waldheim’s reader on landscape urbanism. He questions the extent to which the interdisciplinary ideals of landscape urbanism have been realised in either practice or education. Penny Allan reviews a collection of more empirical work produced by the OPENspace Research Centre in Edinburgh, edited by Catherine Ward Thompson and Penny Travlou. The combined work in these two collections represents a significant body of knowledge, and provides an interesting cross-section of contemporary thinking on green space and urbanism. Finally, Maria Ignatieva, Glenn Stewart and Colin Meurk report on progress in a New Zealand research programme on urban ecology. In addition to the range of topics, the issue therefore also offers diverse global perspectives on urban green space, from Australia and New Zealand to the United States and the United Kingdom – all advanced economies, but with very different ecologies.

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EDITORIAL

NOTES

- 1 Drucker, P (2003) *The New Realities*, New Brunswick: Transaction p ix.
- 2 Laurie, I (1979) *Nature in Cities: The natural environment in the design and development of urban greenspace*, Chichester, United Kingdom: Wiley.
- 3 David passed away in 2005, after the article had been prepared.