

Interventions, Challenges and Opportunities

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PART ONE: INTERVENTIONS

Landscape architecture is heralded as a complex discipline, positioned at the intersection of a vast array of fields of enquiry. Geoffrey Jellicoe described landscape design as ‘the most comprehensive of all the arts ... the art of the whole of man’s environment’ (in Spens, 1992, p 15), and the articles and reviews in this issue demonstrate this breadth and potency. Ranging across social and ecological spheres, the articles illustrate the ways in which landscape can contribute to this interface. Each article explores possible interventions into existing conditions, in order to enhance function, wellbeing and identity.

In the first article, Margaret Grose focuses her attention on the South-west Australian Floristic Region, which includes the city of Perth, exploring the possible scenarios for public open space. Grose makes a useful distinction between the issues facing Perth as opposed to those in Sheffield, which coincidentally is the location of one of the study areas for the second article in this issue. She points out that, in Sheffield, which is not under biological pressure, ‘the relationships between green space and urban form are focused more on quality of life and housing prices than biota’, while in Perth it is ecological issues that are the most pressing forces on public open space. The outcomes, however, are not purely directed at enhancing ecological health but also focus on the broader issue of the social dimension of landscape. Relationships with nature are well documented as a significant dimension for health and wellbeing. An integrated and thorough understanding of landscape ecology is critical for areas facing the pressures of urban expansion, and this is more so under the exacerbating conditions of the water shortages faced by many Australian cities.

From the dynamics of public open spaces in designed suburban environments, the next article turns to the evolution of social places. Kevin Thwaites, Ian Simkins and Alice Mathers investigate the notion of socially restorative environments. Places, they argue, are evolutionary. Interventions are organic, constantly adjusting to human habitation, as in the work of Michael Martin on community alleys. In these landscapes, there is a ‘fine-grain tuning of features’ that sees the places become spatially balanced – exhibiting conditions of both hidden-ness and revealing-ness. The quality of the urban setting is, therefore, about process and not simply product. It is also about enabling the residents, placing them within environments that they can modify, to find an ‘ours’ between the ‘mine’ and the ‘theirs’. The top-down approach to intervening in urban environments can, by

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contrast, impose a strict polarity between internal space and the public realm, such that there is no opportunity for individuals to engage in their setting. This can produce what the authors call a sterile ‘designer neatness’ where there is no opportunity for fine-tuning and no sense of an ‘ours’. There is perhaps a parallel between this and the broader city fabric and the notion of a ‘third space’ – that place that challenges the binary of work and home, and exists within community facilities like local cafes and squares.

Landscape architecture’s comprehensiveness is highlighted further in the two books reviewed in this issue. The first is a book edited by Marc Treib, *Meaning in Landscape Architecture and Gardens: Four Essays, Four Commentaries*, which gathers together a series of essays that were published over two decades in *Landscape Journal*. Each essay tackled the topic of meaning in landscape architecture, and the resonances between the works crackle with energy despite the long intervals between them. Treib’s vision of assembling the essays, as well as bringing the authors together at a conference of the Council of Educators in Landscape Architecture, and expanding the commentary as a result, has produced a valuable book that refreshes the philosophical underpinnings of the discipline. While Treib’s book reminds us of landscape architecture’s intellectual terrain and philosophical tensions, the second review in this issue embraces the poetics of our discipline in a remarkable book of watercolours and words by Jala Makhzoumi. The title, *Horizon 101*, refers to a sustained viewing of the horizon from Makhzoumi’s apartment 101 at the American University of Beirut. Over a one-year period she repeatedly painted the view from her window, producing a series of luminous limned images and lyrical text. As reviewer Shelley Egoz observes, Makhzoumi’s work amplifies how ‘Landscape is never static, and the framing of the vignettes in this book in accordance with a calendar diary is a straightforward way of depicting the sense of time and the dynamics of landscape change’.

PART TWO: THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF PUBLISHING IN LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

The publication of this issue is one of some consequence, not the least of which is that it has suffered a series of delays owing to the devastating earthquakes to hit Christchurch in 2010/11. Major earthquakes on 4 September 2010, 22 February and 13 June 2011, as well as numerous aftershocks (7,700 at the time of writing), have had a significant impact on the city, with the February earthquake causing 182 fatalities. The peak ground acceleration (ground shaking) experienced in that quake was amongst the highest ever recorded in the world, and the September quake had ‘the highest ratio of movement for its length of any recorded quake’ (Williams, 2011). The city suffered extensive damage, and current estimates are that over 1,000 buildings have collapsed or will be demolished for safety reasons. The very things that defined the city’s sense of place have become elements of danger and fear as a consequence of the quakes. Many heritage buildings collapsed, and lives were lost in some of them. The scenic cliffs sent boulders crashing through houses, taking

lives and leaving homes on the clifftops uninhabitable. Five thousand homes along the river margins in the residential 'red zone' are being bought by the government and will be demolished. Residents will need to leave this area where the ground has been so severely compromised by liquefaction (eruption of silt onto the ground surface) and lateral spread resulting from ground shaking.

Further factors adding to the delays in publication involve the perennial challenges of academic publishing, a process that involves the goodwill of authors and reviewers. A debt of thanks goes to all of the authors and reviewers for their contributions to this issue and previous issues, as well as to the subscribers for their patience as we negotiated the various hurdles of recent months.

This is the final hardcopy issue of *Landscape Review*. Volume 14 will see a new beginning for the journal, which will be relaunched on the Open Journal System (OJS) platform, embracing the opportunities of the new era of digital publication. While hardcopy offers the aesthetic appeal of a printed page – the tactility of the paper, even the smell of the ink – it has also meant major limitations for *Landscape Review*. As an independently published journal, the aspects of distribution and indexing have been restricted. Moving to the digital platform will dramatically increase the visibility of the journal, serving also to raise the profile of publishing in landscape architecture.

The move to digital publishing will allow for the publication of an open access and free journal. While maintaining the rigour of double-blind peer review, *Landscape Review* will be widely available, raising the international profile as OJS is harvested by Google and all other major search engines. This will not only enhance readership, but we anticipate that it will also encourage further contributions, enriching the breadth and depth of material related to the discipline. The digital publishing system provides a means of managing submissions and reviews. Although this can seem somewhat impersonal, it enables the timelines and deadlines to be handled more effectively. As part of the migration to the digital format, all back issues of *Landscape Review* have been scanned using word recognition software. This means articles will be fully searchable, and it will considerably enhance the dissemination of the wealth of the material published to date. All authors are being contacted to obtain their permission for their work to be uploaded onto the digital site, providing them with the opportunity to gain further exposure for their articles.

The relaunch also sees a reorientation for the journal. While the early issues of *Landscape Review* had the subtitle of 'An Asia-Pacific Journal of Landscape Architecture', the shift to digital will be accompanied by an identification with the Southern Hemisphere. The two other main journals of landscape architecture, *Landscape Journal* and *JoLA (Journal of Landscape Architecture)*, are aligned with the United States of America and Europe respectively. Asia has also, in the past decade, become well served with landscape architecture publications. The Southern Hemisphere, however, remains largely off the map in terms of landscape architecture publishing. Aside from professional magazines, academic publishing is relatively limited in the countries of the Southern Hemisphere. As well as being

a geographic region, the alignment of the Southern Hemisphere with the 'south' also signals an association with the so-called 'Global South', the nations that are predominantly from this hemisphere and facing economic, political and social challenges. Recognising the Southern Hemisphere as a 'home' for *Landscape Review* will allow for the development of a particular character, while at the same time welcoming contributions from around the globe.

The shift to digital also heralds a new editorial approach. An editorial advisory board will be formed for the journal, providing a strong backbone that will guide and support publication. I will take on the role of editor in chief, with a view to regaining the journal's momentum following the challenges of the past year. As we look to the future of *Landscape Review*, I would like to very gratefully acknowledge the vision of the founding editor, Professor Simon Swaffield. Simon's idea to begin a journal of landscape architecture based at Lincoln University undoubtedly helped to raise the profile of the discipline in this part of the world and internationally. As sole editor for the first five years, and joint editor in recent years, Simon has made a significant contribution to the intellectual health of the discipline, and he will remain influential as a key member of the Editorial Advisory Board.

In addition to Simon's contribution, there are several vital behind-the-scenes roles that have ensured the high quality of publication. The article reviewers are the necessarily anonymous but critical components of any good-quality academic publication. *Landscape Review* has been fortunate to have the input of high-quality reviewers from around the world, with the feedback to authors assisting in raising the standard of research and writing. The authors too are essential, and looking back over the 13 volumes reveals several important articles that have been published by the journal.

The standard of publication has always been high for *Landscape Review*, reflecting the dedicated work of the copy editors. The journal was originally published by Lincoln University Press and, following its dissolution, transferred to Daphne Brasell Associates, then to EDIT and, subsequently, to Whitireia Publishing. Jenny Heine has a long history of editing and production of *Landscape Review*, and we are pleased she will continue working with us on the digital journal. The work of an editor is at its best when readers are not aware of it, and I am always impressed with how Jenny's subtle tweaking and diligent checking moves an article into a refined and polished final product. The move to digital has also benefited considerably from the skills of Lincoln University's Information Technology Services (especially Online Services Manager Dorje McKinnon) and Library, Teaching and Learning staff, particularly Research Collections Librarian Roger Dawson.

The new digital home for *Landscape Review* will be located at <http://journals.lincoln.ac.nz/index.php/lr/index>, and the next issue will introduce members of the Editorial Advisory Board through their perspectives on the key questions facing landscape architecture today. Following this, there will be a thematic issue on landscape architecture and post-disaster recovery. Guidelines for submissions and a full call for papers will be posted on the site.

This is an exciting new phase for research and publication in landscape architecture, signalled also by the introduction of a new journal to be published by the Stuckeman School of Pennsylvania State University. *As Built: A Journal of Design Critique* will be a biannual, peer-reviewed publication of critical analysis from students, scholars and professionals across a range of disciplines, including landscape architecture, architecture, planning, environmental art and engineering. We wish *As Built* all the best and look forward to the maturing of design critique in landscape architecture. In addition, the recently published text by Elen Deming and Simon Swaffield further emphasises a coming of age for landscape architectural research and publication. *Landscape Architecture Research: Inquiry, Strategy, Design* is set to become a standard text for research students in the discipline, providing a useful guide to the variety of methods relevant to research in our field.

The embracing of opportunities and negotiation of the challenges of publication are the elements that drive the engine of disciplinary development for landscape architecture. Poised for its relaunch as a solely digital publication, *Landscape Review* draws upon the comprehensive nature of the discipline, as well as the changing environment for scholarly publishing. We are optimistic that this new chapter in the journal's history will assist in keeping research relevant, current and innovative, and we look forward to receiving submissions that both consolidate and test the discipline of landscape architecture.

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