

planning and heritage. The symposium, in turn, produced the booklet, *Campus Heritage Preservation*. Coming at a time when the Getty was making its first round of Campus Heritage grants, it was useful to raise the broadest questions about how colleges should approach preservation issues on their campuses.² The conference brought together old lions of preservation, the Boston Globe's Pulitzer Prize winning architecture critic, Robert Campbell, and the chair of George Washington University's program in historic preservation, Richard Longstreth, to provide a cultural historical overview, as well as college presidents and other administrators to explain the impact of preservation on their institutions. College planners and outside consultants also spoke to an insider group of preservationists, college administrators, and foundation leaders. Notably there were no students on the list of attendees.

To meet the modest scale of the publication, papers were summarized to frame the larger arguments: Colleges have been major architectural patrons and their campuses therefore present significant architectural challenges; colleges are often multiple fiefdoms shaped to some extent by need as well as by opportunities donors present; modern planning incorporates outside forces ranging from alumni to community groups; buildings of the recent past are especially difficult problems that now risk demolition even as their significance is being re-evaluated; and finally, since the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the preservation movement has developed tools and processes that can be utilized to resolve the larger issues. Of particular interest is preservation on historically black college campuses—though the choices of architecture being preserved on many of these campuses warrants discussion.

Lyon's concluding text was written to summarize the conference and it gives a clearer account of the issues than the individual essays provide. The brevity of the booklet makes it unsatisfying, but as a means of whetting the appetite for more study, it

succeeds. Beyond the specific issues of college heritage there is a pressing need for a serious study of the cultural role of preservation. What better place than colleges with their intellectual and physical capital that can be applied to the task? The time has come to ask how preservation fits our contemporary world and how its role can evolve to meet the needs of the 21st century. This might become the basis for a broader Getty-led symposium with an appropriate publication.

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1. John Seabrook, *NoBrow: The Culture of Marketing—The Marketing of Culture* (New York, NY: Knopf, 2000).

2. This reviewer's consulting firm, CivicVisions, directed two of the first round of Getty's Campus Heritage grants.

Building San Francisco's Parks, 1850-1930

By Terence Young. Baltimore, MD and London, UK: John Hopkins University Press, 2004; 270 pp., photographs, illustrations, tables, notes, index; cloth \$45.00.

While horticultural history of the 1990s was comprised mostly of biographies of distinguished horticulturalists such as Andrew Jackson (A. J.) Downing (1815-1852) and Jens Jensen (1860-1951), more recent scholarship has focused on horticulture as a manifestation of values associated with the natural landscape. In *Building San Francisco's Parks, 1850-1930*, Terence Young takes advantage of his background as a horticulturist to interpret early undertakings in Golden Gate Park. Young demonstrates that a call for a park befitting a great city in 1865 implied certain types of plants and terrain, primarily determined by the precedent of Central Park and, more generally, the eastern landscape of the United States. The book emerged from Young's 1991 geography dissertation at the University of

California, Los Angeles, "Nature and Moral Order: The Cultural Significance of San Francisco's Parks, 1865-1925." In addition to the cultivation of non-native plants within parks, the book considers park design in terms of structural improvements within parks and the location of parks within the city.

Building San Francisco's Parks begins with an overview of park design in the United States during the mid-19th century. Young establishes the influential role Downing played in the creation of Central Park and how the park was subsequently viewed as epitomizing romanticist landscaping ideals in its large size, rustic design, and accessibility to an urban population. The introduction is appropriate for establishing how, while San Francisco was different from New York, Central Park served as a precedent to the extent that a dissimilar park proposal from Frederick Law Olmsted, one of Central Park's designers, was rejected.¹ Chapter 2 provides background on San Francisco's earlier private recreational parks and describes the events leading to the 1870 acquisition of the Outside Lands, a large, undeveloped area of shifting sand dunes west of the city, for Golden Gate Park. As the oldest and largest municipal park in San Francisco, Golden Gate Park suits Young's discussion of changing park design and is an appropriate focus for chapters 3 through 5. The chronological treatment of its development highlights the tenures of park superintendents William Hammond Hall (1871-1876) and John McLaren (1887-1943). Unfortunately, some 34 parks that were under municipal charge in 1910 receive only brief treatment in chapter 6, the final chapter.

Young frames his study as a shift in park design from a "romantic era" to a "rationalist era." The articulation of two distinct "eras" or "ideals" is not invoked to force a sequential transition or discrete break but is effectively used to demonstrate the motivation for changes in park design. Young describes the romantic attitude as based on a view of nature as an interrelated whole that includes people and God. An imbalance of nature and

human production disrupts society, leading to the idea that cities are places of degradation and nature is restorative. The rationalist attitude is based on seeing people as distinct from nature, with parks serving to provide space for leisure activities such as enjoying the spectacle of plants or playing sports. In addition, Young identifies four persistent "virtues" expressed within advocacy for parks during both eras: public health, prosperity, democratic equality, and social coherence.

Young states his study is not a social history but an intellectual one focusing "almost exclusively on the relatively small number of park advocates and ideas, because they had the greatest control over San Francisco's parks." While he does detail the ideas of Michael H. de Young (1849-1925) and various park officials, the book would be better described as an intellectual history relayed through institutions rather than individuals. Young relies upon reports of the Park Commission, correspondence of the park superintendents and board members, and articles in various newspapers to determine the ideals that shaped park design. For instance, he compares the stances of three periodicals on the development of Golden Gate Park: the *Daily Morning Call*, *Daily Evening Bulletin*, and *California Horticulturist and Floral Magazine*. The first two targeted a general audience, while the *California Horticulturist* was the organ of the area's skeptical nursery and landscape gardening community. The result is an incisively interpreted and well-crafted discussion that relays the disdain with which the Outside Lands were viewed, the optimism and doubt about the ability to transform the selected "sand waste site," and the subsequent satisfaction (if not pride) about the transformed park just a few years later.

While not a social history, *Building San Francisco's Parks* does broach social issues as they related to structural improvements within the park and park access. The introduction of physical activities within Golden Gate Park in the 1890s caused some visitors discomfort because of the lack of visual

distinctions among women of different classes as they engaged in bicycling. A more intentional effort toward democratic equality was the William Sharon Playground, built with funds bequeathed by the U.S. senator from Nevada. The following excerpt of a poem written for the opening of the Sharon building in 1888 pronounces the playground as a place for children of all backgrounds—

*Whether black or brown or yellow,
You are welcome, little fellow!
No policeman here to eye you as you pass,
Or to chase you with a club...*

Published in the Park Commission materials, the poem implies that the sentiment of inclusiveness did not represent prevailing attitudes in the rest of the city. Though he provides the reader with references, Young's study does not detail the demographics of early San Francisco or delve into how different populations were perceived by park advocates, whom he presents in contemporary terms as "a relatively small band of native-born, white, middle-class males."

While suggesting that Golden Gate Park introduced distinct social interactions into the city, the strength of Young's study comes from his perceptive analysis of what values motivated certain aspects of park design. Written in a clear and fluid style, the book contains helpful schematic maps and abundant reproductions of period photographs. Apart from offering a slice of San Francisco's history, the book contributes a cogent examination of how landscapes are altered, land use conflicts persist, and changing expectations of nature impact park management.

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1. Olmsted's rejected 1866 park proposal featured open grounds, gardens, and a promenade set adjacent to and extending into developed San Francisco.

Rock Creek Park

By Gail Spilsbury. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003; 83 pp., illustrations, notes; cloth \$24.95.

Gail Spilsbury aims to create a "visual commemoration" of Rock Creek Park by weaving in a brief contextual history to revive an appreciation of the legacy of Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.'s vision for this now famous urban park. The visual quality of *Rock Creek Park* is impressive and is a worthy companion to diplomat and historian James Bryce's *The Nation's Capital* (1913), an illustrated text that paid tribute to the park. Bryce noted, "I know of no great city in Europe (except Constantinople) that has quite close, in its very environs, such beautiful scenery as has Washington in Rock Creek Park."¹ *Rock Creek Park's* design and its layout of historic and contemporary photographs, paintings, maps, and measured drawings, all reproduced in black and white, evoke the sumptuous look and print quality of early 20th-century books. The illustrations in *Rock Creek Park* alone are a worthy homage to the Olmsted firm and their visionary plan for the Rock Creek valley, expressed generally in the 1902 McMillan Plan and later formalized in the 1918 Rock Creek Park master plan.

At its heart, this book is an unabashed tribute to the Olmsteds and a landscape philosophy that preserved and shaped Rock Creek Park. Three concise chapters highlight Rock Creek's evolution into a national park, the influence of the McMillan Plan of 1902, and the storied careers of the Olmsteds, renowned landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, son Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., and stepson John Charles Olmsted, and their contributions to park and urban planning in the United States. A fourth chapter describes and excerpts key passages from the Olmsted firm's 1918 report. Appendices cover a park administration timeline, principal flora, notable bridges, and visitor information.

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