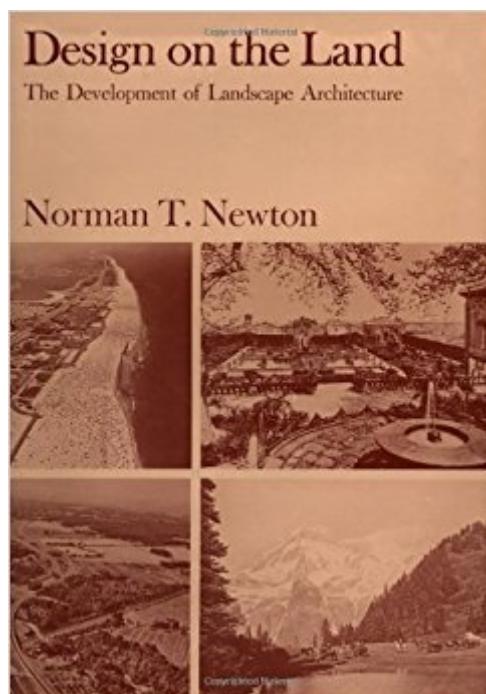


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Design On The Land: The Development Of Landscape Architecture



Synopsis

With the role of the landscape architect increasing as it is in importance, this first comprehensive survey of the art and practice of landscape architecture fills a great need. Norman T. Newton has included over 400 illustrations in his book, which conveys a basic understanding of the aims and scope of landscape architecture and offers visual analyses of major historic works, each in the context of its own time. The first third of the study is concerned with landscape architecture in the Western world, mainly Europe, from ancient times to the mid-nineteenth century. But the major part of the work is devoted to the development of landscape architecture in the century that has passed since it acquired the status of a profession and an independent discipline. Concentrating primarily on the United States, Mr. Newton reviews his subject from its beginnings in colonial days to the work of Olmsted, Vaux, Cleveland, Weidenmann, Eliot, Platt, and the founders of the American Society of Landscape Architects. He discusses the Columbian Exposition of 1893, the "City Beautiful" movement and the growth of city planning, the Country Place Era, town planning in England and America, American national and state parks, parkways, urban open spaces, and recent variations in professional practice. Mr. Newton concludes his book with a timely discussion of the vital role that landscape architecture plays in the conservation of natural resources and in protection of the environment.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

needed the book for class.

GOOD BOOK. GOOD DEAL

Pretty good book

Unwary student that I was, I bought this book to learn more about the history of Landscape Architecture than I had picked up in the two classes. Instead, it nearly turned me off the profession. I was never able to read more than a page or two before it literally put me to sleep. In a field as visually oriented as LA, you'd think it would be peppered with photos of examples, drawings, illustrations. You can leaf through it vainly looking for anything to break the monotony of the type laden pages. Nor is it a good reference; you can't find anything in it. If any book ever needed an editor, it is this one. Fortunately it really wasn't required reading, and other authors have done a better job.

Unfortunately, gentle reader, you're likely to have this book assigned to you as part of your landscape architecture curriculum. If you're not in this situation, run from this book. First, the book was published in 1971, with no noticeable updates in the past 33 years. Second, despite the relative modernity of the book, the author seems unaware of any advances in the social sciences and liberal arts after the Hoover administration. Thirdly the book rambles--no incision, no succinct observations, no underlying theme. Fourthly, Newton loads the book with indefensible positions. Fifthly, author weaves a cursory and grossly simplified (reduced) version of world history into an analysis of gardens and town plans. The result is horrid. Here is an example: From the chapter on Medieval gardens--"It is almost as though man's eyes were not yet wholly open to the wonders of the natural world, for he was too busy contemplating his soul and its tortuous future. Daylight was too bright to bear; these were truly the Dark Ages, and openness to worldly experience would have to wait." These types of generalizations, which don't stand up to even a cursory understanding of the gardens of the Middle Ages (herbalists, medicinal gardens, plurality of plant species growing in cloisters, flora in illuminated manuscripts, etc), that pepper the book. This doesn't even begin to address the ubiquitous invocations of "Mankind." No university worth its salt can put this in front of a student in good conscience.

I did not wish to read the book -- and did not -- so the stars thing is worth nothing from me. I DID wish to consult the book about a topic: street trees, or trees, or urban forest, or boulevard trees, or...and soon saw that the index is chock full of proper names (oh boy), but comes up real short on

conceptual or topical entries. It is unworkable. Sorry. I have expected more of Harvard University Press.

This is THE textbook for the history of landscape architecture. From early city planning in the cradle of civilization to recreating nature in the design work of our contemporaries, this book provides a chronology of land designs and theories, and outlines the formalizing of our profession by the father of landscape architecture, Frederick Law Olmstead. This book provides a framework for more intense study of both landscapes and the design theories associated with them, including the layout of ancient cities to New York's Central Park. This is one of those textbooks worth keeping well after graduation!

Unfortunately this purportedly comprehensive survey of landscape architecture fails to include even one woman in the entire history of the profession. It's as though the female gender never existed! It is inexcusable that this book is still in current use as a university text.

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