

ASLA In 1994, jurors ran contestants through an environmental and sociological gauntlet.

by Mac Griswold

the year of living responsibly

"We award the projects that are really beautiful and a little irresponsible, but never those that are environmentally responsible but a little bit ugly," said Randy Hester, ASLA, Research and Communications juror. His remark defined the ASLA jury conflicts this year—the old battles about beauty and use, made newly relevant by environmental and social concerns.

In an era where community groups have emerged as collaborators through exhaustive workshops, a hot connected topic was: How much should a designer's vocabulary be influenced by laypeople's understanding and desires? "Professional intervention requires a higher level of achievement, not an agreeable descent into vernacular," argued juror John T. Lyle, FASLA. He referred to one project, with lots of community input, whose "readable" built forms—steps and benches—looked amateurish.

The third topic was the awards process itself. A rebellious jury asserted that practice now has so many layers that the judging process will have to be enlarged or modified.

The first two subjects are deeply entwined. Landscape architects recognize that their collaborators on almost any significant project will not be only architects, but everyone from environmental psychologists to ornithologists—even entire communities. The scope of the work practitioners are expected to cover is much broader, and its impact is now at least hoped to be far more sweeping.

Because reclamation in all forms has come to the fore, the terms on which work is done are changing. Out of 24 prizewinners, only three—two corporate headquarters and a video on the Ice Age—address new sites or nonreclamation topics.

TH: [The report] forced the Park Service to think about and expand its mission to include stewardship of the germ plasma of rare early cultivars of apples. So it began to bubble out beyond the actual project and process that the Park Service was required and mandated by law to fulfill.



Moses H. Cone Memorial Park Cultural Landscape Report

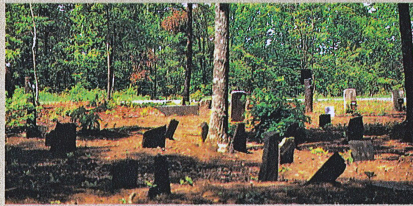
The Park Service has owned this 3,516-acre estate next to the Blue Ridge Parkway in North Carolina since 1949. Yet as historic landscape features slowly disappeared, NPS preservation efforts focused on the former manor house of textile magnate Moses H. Cone. The research contained in a 143-page Cultural Landscape Report (CLR), conducted by Ian J.W. Firth, ASLA, finally gives full weight to the landscape, including the remains of 24 miles of carriage roads and abandoned apple orchards.

The report takes into account the fact that Cone was an avid apple grower, and had three huge orchards on the estate, which had been allowed to go to seed and become overgrown during the past 47 years. This discovery encouraged Firth to extend the concept of historic landscape protection to include orchards, among other things. The CLR thus exemplifies the new “cultural landscape” approach to preservation (see “Vaulting the Garden Wall: Preservation Projects Raise New Contextual Questions,” May 1994), which attempts to express landscape evolution over generations.

Author: Ian J.W. Firth, ASLA, School of Environmental Design, University of Georgia
Editor: Karen G. Rehm, NPS
Publisher: National Park Service, Southeast Region, Cultural Resources Planning Division

Firth's report extends the concept of historic landscape protection to more than 24 miles of carriage roads (right) and three abandoned orchards (left) on an estate adjoining North Carolina's Blue Ridge Parkway.

TH: By preparing a National Register nomination for a small African-American cemetery, they not only turned up fascinating and useful historical information, but had an impact. The Virginia state DOT actually re-routed a highway, rather than obliterating the cemetery, because someone had found it worthy to be a continuing part of America.

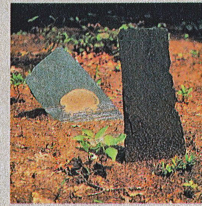
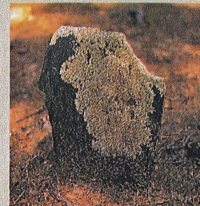


Stanton Family Cemetery National Register Nomination

This cemetery is a true rarity: an intact, antebellum family burial ground for free African-Americans. Located near the James River in Buckingham County, Virginia, the cemetery and its 21 grave-markers were forgotten for a generation. But when Stanton family descendants realized that a proposed road-widening threatened the cemetery, they cleared away a tangle of overgrowth and organized to save their own heritage.

Enter a team of landscape architects at Land & Commu-

nity Associates (LCA). Hired by Stanton descendants to prepare a National Register nomination, the LCA team visited other rural cemeteries and delved into U.S. Census records, deeds, death certificates, aerial photos from the 1930s and oral histories, as well as analyzing the building materials and plants on the 65-by-68-foot site. A pattern of lost family history emerged, including names and occupations of family members, details about the Stanton farm and links to local slate quarries, which produced then-famous Buckingham slate. LCA's documentation is also being put to work to prepare



a long-term management, planting and preservation plan.

Not only was the cemetery successfully listed in the National Register of Historic Places, but the project became a focus for the state's Black History Month celebration in 1993. Most important, state officials changed the road alignment to spare this historic gem.

Landscape architects: Land & Community Associates, Charlottesville, Virginia

Principal-in-charge: Genevieve P. Keller

Project team: Julie Gronlund, project manager; Ashley Neville; Liz Sargent, ASLA

Client/collaborator: E. Renee Ingram, Washington, D.C.

The Stanton family cemetery, an antebellum African-American burial ground with 21 historic grave-markers, was threatened by a road-widening project until family members organized. With LCA's help, descendants succeeded in getting the site on the National Register of Historic Places.