

LANDSCAPE ISSUES

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'BURGLARIS DISEMBOWELIS'

Before the season had got too mellow and too fruitful I decided to attack the berberis. For some five years I had let it have its own way, but now it overhung the lawn on one side and rendered the path impassable on the other. There are some chores I detest in the garden — rose pruning and maintaining the hawthorn and plum hedges are bad enough with or without gloves — but I must admit I did not expect the stubborn resistance of the berberis to my secateurs. All of these plants, beautiful in their own way, have one thing in common: their barbed defences. They will impale, snag or inject you with their lethal prickles, thorns and spines; in other words, they are saying 'approach me at your peril...'

The berberis would not permit me to reshape its outline with well-chosen snips from close quarters nor would it allow me to thin its overall dense mass; it did finally succumb, however, to long-handled loppers and hedge shears, but not before it drew blood. So it came as no surprise when, at about the same time as my battle with the berberis, I read about a crime-prevention initiative in Essex, in which the Police Force had consulted with a local horticulturalist to draw up what they call 'your first line of defence', that is a selection of shrubs which if planted around your property will protect it and you from unwelcome visitors by dint of their offensive characteristics. In the evocatively-titled pamphlet 'Burglaris Disembowelis', twelve plants are specified as having the required armoury, providing a guaranteed deterrent, but in addition would visually enhance gardens, factory sites

and public open spaces by their colour, texture and fragrance. (These dozen plants are appended at the end of this piece).

Interestingly, the use by landscape architects of certain plants to restrain would-be vandals or trespassers is not new, but what is pleasing about this innovation is the realisation that more often than not Nature has a solution to certain problems that technology is rarely able to match. In the countryside, for example, there is a clear aesthetic appeal and a functionality of a well-laid hedge enclosing grazing animals and if it is a thorny species it thwarts access as well as any barbed wire fence. In towns, the ubiquitous larch-lap fencing typically tumbles in a strong gale, while I have found my privet hedge stands firm, looks good and offers a better kind of shelter.

A few weeks following the publication of the Essex Crime Prevention brochure, I noted that the horticulture industry was considering the introduction of a national labelling policy for poisonous plants. This followed a number of investigations by the Royal Horticultural Society, the National Poisons Unit, the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew and *Gardening Which?* In garden centres throughout the land, a red triangle warning label will identify toxic plants, such as the rhododendron, the laburnum, yew, hemlock, stinking iris and belladonna.

All this appears wholly sensible but I wonder whether the scheme should be extended to include that other category of dangerous plants: those capable of inflicting the more immediate physical pain on human beings, albeit not insidiously fatal, of the kind described in my introductory anecdote above? Taking this further, should we in effect be discouraging rather than, if one is to follow the Essex police recommendation, condoning their use in our gardens, or indeed anywhere where people, particularly vulnerable young children, might suffer unwanted accidents on their prickles and barbs?

It is a fact that property burglaries are increasing and, worse, that

current police deployment is incapable of stemming the tide. Neighbourhood Watch schemes are now *de rigueur*, security systems are big business, and automatic bright lights blaze unnaturally across the suburbs. Given a choice, I think I prefer to take the low-key but thorny route: switch off the lighting, add some extra pad-locks here and there and, grasping the nettle so to speak, plant some more berberis.

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Berberis julianae
Mahonia bealei Winter Sun
Ulex europaeus
Pyracantha orange
Pyracantha red
Pyracantha yellow
Hippaphae rhamnoides
Berberis ottawensis
Berberis stenophylla
Berberis verruculosa
Rosa fruhlings gold
Rosa rugosa rubra
Rosa blanc Double de Coubert
Crataegus monogyna

THE IMPACT OF THE MOUNTAIN BIKE

Alan R. Ruff and Olivia Mellors

The most recent recreational activity to cause management problems in the Peak District is the mountain bike. Problems have arisen from the cyclists' access to open land, as well as their presence on footpaths and bridleways causing conflicts with other user groups. In addition, the bikes cause physical damage to vegetation and to the rocks themselves. This situation has led, in some instances, to hasty management decisions, including the banning of cycles from certain heavily used areas. However, the case against the mountain bike is largely circumstantial, as little research has been undertaken on the nature and scope of the problem. This article attempts to review some of the problems and some of the measures taken to alleviate them. It is based on preliminary research undertaken in the Peak District.

The mountain bike first appeared in England in 1983 (Groome, 1991), having been developed in Marin County, California, in the mid-1970's. In Britain there are no figures available for sales of mountain

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bikes but the sale of all cycles is at a record level. As Department of Transport data indicates a static level of use by cycles, on both urban and rural roads, this suggests that many of the 2.8 million bikes sold each year are mountain bikes for off-road use (Groome, 1991).

Set against this enthusiasm for 'the machine which appears to offer the best of all worlds — solid, reliable, easy to use and fun' (McColm, 1987) are the problems caused by the mountain bike. These fall into three principle categories — access, erosion and social attitudes.

ACCESS

The legal position of any cyclists on off-road tracks is confusing and this, in itself, causes problems with other recreation groups and land managers. The cyclist, like other members of the public, has a statutory right of access to bridleways providing they give way to horse-riders and walkers. This right is, of course, subject to any orders or byelaws made by the local authority, which prohibit cycling on a particular bridleway. Failure to abide by such local byelaws is a criminal offence, providing suitable 'no cycling' notices have been displayed (Horton, 1987).

The situation with regard to greenlanes is more complicated because they have no definition or meaning in law. The term usually refers to an unsurfaced path or track bounded by hedges, walls or fences. Where a green lane is also a public right of way, it should be classified and included on the definitive footpath map. Where such rights exist, they refer only to the path itself and do not allow access to the surrounding countryside. Freedom of access to uncultivated land, negotiated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1947, was rarely extended to cyclists. This seems to have been the justification in some cases for excluding mountain bikes from access land which is considered to be the sole preserve of the walker. This problem is further complicated by the extent of 'de facto' access,

where the owner is unaware of the use taking place or turns a blind eye, not wanting to grant formal permission or often, wishing to minimise legal liability (Sidaway et al, 1986).

The extent of the problem caused by mountain bikes on footpaths is uncertain. It is claimed that the illegal use of footpaths by cyclists has caused annoyance to walkers: 'ramblers can be terrorised by groups of twenty bikers riding hard, fast and illegally' (O'Neil, 1990). A particular problem of the mountain bike is that having no bell, riders are unable to give warning of their approach. The Ramblers Association has expressed concern that 'on some of the more popular hills, walkers are being frightened away, fearful of being knocked down by some speed crazed biker' (Marlsan-Jones, 1990). But the Peak and Northern Footpath Preservation Society has received no complaints from its members, who in any case regard motor bikes as a greater problem.

The concern of land managers is for the stock and damage to fences, gates and walls. Representatives of the National Farmers Union in the Peak District complain of stock being scattered as mountain bikers ride through flocks of sheep, which is a particular problem at lambing time. Another problem has been the habit of mountain bikers to climb over walls or gates rather than use a stile, or to leave the gate open. This has prompted one N.F.U. representative to describe the mountain bikers as an 'arrogant user group'. On the other hand, National Trust managers regard conflicts over access as a microcosm of those occurring in the wider countryside. These arise because of a concentration of users at the same time, especially at weekends. The intensity of use is exacerbated by the accessibility of the Peak District and the spread of personal mobility, so that 'your typical mountain bike visitor is likely to live in Basildon, drive up here in his GTI, a bike strapped to the back' (O'Neil, 1990).

EROSION

Physical damage caused by mountain bikes is due to compression, scarifying, skidding and chipping of the rocks. Soil is compressed by the tyres, the heavier the bike and rider the greater the compaction. The effect of this is to reduce the amount of air space in the soil which makes the penetration of rain water difficult. As a result, the loss of air and water affects the vegetation and reduces its capacity for recovery, whilst surface run-off can lead to erosion. This can be heightened when ruts are formed, especially when these run down hill as this increases the chance of erosion away from the initial problem area. Similar compression and compaction is caused by walkers' boots. However, these cause a more concentrated impact on the soil, whereas cycle tyres spread the impact and scarify the surface leaving bare ground behind. On thinner soils in upland areas this is most likely to occur when bikers skid to a stop, 'such sheer forces tend to rip the surface vegetation and deform the soil ... this happens when cornering or skidding ... sheer forces reduce the vigour of the surface growth and disturb root systems' (Mable, 1989), and leave the soil vulnerable to erosion by wind and rain. As well as soil damage, bikes also cause damage to the rocks as chains and pedals chip the surface. This is not a serious problem at present but it could become so with increased use.

Very little research has been undertaken on the extent of the damage caused by mountain bikes, or how this compares to erosion caused by other user groups. The evidence at present tends to be circumstantial, occasionally biased and often contradictory. For example, one writer claims 'research has shown that tyres have little more impact on the flat than walking boots with vibram soles' (Gillman, 1991), whilst researchers at Aberdeen Univ. have suggested that 'on untrampled heather, mountain bikes cause greater damage than walkers' (Marlsan Jones, 1990). However, the Director of the Ramblers Association is of the opinion that 'far more complaints are received about the way horses churn up footpaths, than about mountain bikes' (Mattingly).

SOCIAL ATTITUDES

Mountain biking has attracted new sections of the community and these people have brought their own attitudes to the countryside. Some of these people are ignorant of the countryside and, as a result, many criticisms and conflicts have arisen. Surveys have indicated that one of the most commonly cited sources of hostility expressed against greater access to the countryside was 'the perceived ignorance of visitors' (Sidaway et al, 1986). The attitude of the mountain bikers is the most difficult to categorise, because of their newness and a lack of coherent identity. Some of the new users are attracted by the fun image, the appeal of a go-anywhere, please yourself activity, without responsibility for one's actions. Such irresponsibility has attracted the comment in the Rough Stuff Journal that 'there are an awful lot of idiots on these machines using them in areas where no self-respecting R.S.F. member would ever dream of going ... Nature reserves seem to be attracting all terrain bikes and it is noticeable that damage is being caused to the surface of part of the hillside' (Pockington, 1990). Though the response of the mountain bikers, as one might expect, is 'that apart from a small, reckless minority, who ride oblivious to the rights of way or countryside codes of conduct, mountain bikers and clubs are eager to co-operate with conservationists on land access problems' (Clifford, 1990).

Some of these problems can be resolved through education. The rapid growth in mountain bike ownership has occurred before any national association has been established, which might have set standards for the new sport. Organisations of this kind exist for other forms of cycling, for instance, the CTC (Cycle, Touring and Camping), R.S.F. (Rough Stuff Fellowship) and C.C. (Cyclo-Cross). These groups have helped to establish a responsible attitude towards cycling which is beginning to be extended to mountain biking. For instance, in the R.S.F. Journal, one writer noted that 'we should look seriously at educating our newer members in the art of cycling in the wilds ... our

potential new recruits are townies totally ignorant of the splendours and dangers in the countryside (Houlder, 1970). Whilst a writer in the C.T.C. magazine observed that 'we must be seen as leading by example and, if possible, influence the more irresponsible elements into more acceptable patterns of off-road behaviour, forcing ramblers off narrow footpaths and ploughing through groups of horse riders will not do us any good' (Harlow, 1989). Behind these comments, there is a very real concern for the consequences that might follow such behaviour, for 'having fought for the cyclists right to use bridleways, the last thing it (CTC) wishes to see is this right eroded by piecemeal byelaws prohibiting cycling, as is proposed in the Quantocks' (CTC Journal 1990).

The Countryside Commission and the Sports Council has prepared a mountain bike code that has gone some way towards providing guidance for new cyclists. It is intended that this code will hang on every new cycle prior to sale and it is to be seen whether this will influence the behaviour of the new owners. Those who sell or hire out cycles have clearly a major part to play in encouraging a responsible attitude amongst riders. Though many do, it is apparent that this is by no means universal but, here again, it is in the best interests of every bike shop or hire point to take such an attitude. 'A measure of co-ordination and exchange of information on a national scale is required. The American example, where some states have banned mountain bikes from certain areas, hangs like a shadow over the whole activity in Britain. No one wants to see similar restrictions imposed here. Bike manufacturers and distributors, who have profited from the boom in mountain biking, could be more actively involved on this front, if a backlash against this activity occurs, they will suffer too' (Clifford, 1990).

The attitude of other recreation groups is variable, but it is the walkers and horse-riders who have experienced greatest conflict. It has been suggested that part of the reason for the negative attitude expressed by

some is due to jealousy. The mountain bike enables the rider to enjoy the countryside with relative ease. The bike has few limitations and is fun to use, so the hardwork and dedication associated with other outdoor activities is unnecessary. Bike riders need not be in peak fitness and can 'jump the queue' to pleasure without the pain. This allows a wider cross-section of the public to enjoy the countryside than a more narrow élite.

Land managers are sometimes guilty of élitism in their attitude because mountain bikes do not fit their perception of an acceptable use of the countryside. As a result, the mountain biker is regarded by some as a nuisance, 'enjoying themselves by whooping down hills' (Wilson, 1991). In some places the problems of access have led to the banning of mountain bikes and this causes friction with riders. The National Trust, for example, 'does not help matters by first designating permissive bridleways across their land, then declaring them out of bounds to mountain bikers for no good reason they are able to explain'. The National Farmers Union also appears to take a negative view, reflecting perhaps the traditional, conservative attitude of farmers towards access in the countryside. Though again, it has been suggested that conflicts over access may 'symbolise other social tensions in the countryside, with newcomers and organised groups, like the Ramblers Association, placing the farmer on the defensive' (Sidaway et al, 1986).

The attitude of the Planning Authorities is variable. In Derbyshire, for example, the policy has been to encourage cycling in general rather than mountain bikes in particular. Moreover, it has only been in the past two years that a need for any specific policy has become apparent. The High Peak district council has concentrated on the Transpennine Trail which will accommodate mountain bikes, but little other consideration has been given to them. This may be an indication that mountain bikes are not a problem but the Peak District National Park planning board takes a conciliatory line, working with farmers, bikers

and other users to minimise conflict and provide information. An official guide to cycle routes has been prepared in consultation with the NFU and landowners.

CONCLUSION

The problems of the mountain bike are not simply due to the machine but to its presence in an already over used countryside where it does not always fit peoples' perception of how the countryside should be used. This sometimes élitist and biased view has led to conflict and, in some instances, hasty management decisions. It has also contributed to the lack of a clear picture of the extent and use of the mountain bike. Much of the work currently undertaken on erosion appears to have been subjective rather than objective and more research is required to identify the true scope of the problem. This would assist land managers in tackling the problems of erosion and access in general. More consideration and co-operation is also required between the various interest groups, so as to assimilate the needs of the mountain biker. This could include the development of way-marked trails to direct less adventurous bikers away from problem areas and avoid conflict with other recreation users. Underlying all these points is the need to accept the mountain bike as more than a fashionable trend, and to make provision for it, in the same way that other uses and activities are accommodated in the countryside.

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NATURAL BEAUTY

St J Bodfan Gruffydd

It is now nearly fifty years since the National Parks were established by Parliament; during that time the countryside has been subjected to revolutionary change through the application of machinery and chemical fertilisers in the farming revolution, before the movement for the conservation of nature and wild life had really got going and before the mass ownership of motor cars had brought millions of city dwellers within a day's jaunt of the attractions of the National Parks. The result is both chaotic and disastrous; for while we lose much natural landscape to economic factors, the multitudes are destroying the remaining solitudes they set out to enjoy.

There is a lack of inherent understanding of natural beauty — what it is composed of and what is needed for its protection. Section Five of Part Two of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949 is quoted:

"5 - (1) The provisions of the Part of this Act shall have effect for the purpose of preserving and enhancing the natural beauty of areas

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specified in the next following subsection, and for the purpose of promoting their enjoyment by the public.

(2) The said areas are those extensive tracts of country in England and Wales as to which it appears to the Commission that by reason of —

(a) their natural beauty, and

(b) the opportunities they afford for open-air recreation, having regard both to their character and to their position in relation to centres of population

it is especially desirable that the necessary measures shall be taken for the purpose mentioned in the last foregoing subsection."

But there is no satisfactory definition of natural beauty; this is a serious omission from an Act of Parliament passed to protect it. I have therefore formulated my own definitions, based on those worked out for the *Protecting Historic Landscapes*(1), which I am told form the basis of those adopted by the C.A.D.W. and English Heritage.

NATURAL BEAUTY

The natural beauty of an area is what the human eye can see, all round, when standing in a particular place. If one is standing in the middle of a bowl or on the rim, the surrounding horizon will determine what can be seen; if in a valley, the top of the valley sides, the head of the valley and, possibly, its open end; if in open country as far as can be seen all round. Ambient views change as the viewer moves about in the landscape. On maps and plans the ridge lines and surrounding high land forms — hills, cliffs, knolls — determine the general extent of views; these natural features are shown by contours on the map and the determination of intervening views can be assessed accordingly. When considering quality of landscape it is the beauty of topographical features within the visual ambience that determine the criteria for choice. There are many landscape types: mountains, moorlands, wolds, downs, dales, plains, river complexes, estuarine and wet-lands and sea coast. National Parks are areas chosen to safeguard their natural beauty.

WILDERNESS AREAS are the ideal where the natural features are unalloyed and disclose man's one time presence by no more than archaeological remains. These would be defined as areas of landscape within which no subsequent development could be discerned in ambient views. There are few such extensive areas in Great Britain: the Highlands of Scotland, Exmoor and Dartmoor, some wet-lands, some moorlands and stretches of dunes and sea coast, beyond view of man's habitation. In this country we have adopted the few wilderness areas for preservation in National Parks, to which we have added SEMI-WILDERNESS AREAS where man's occupation and activities have been limited by the use of hand tools, so as to be in scale with the intimate topography of the area concerned, and where his progress has been in tune with the biological development of the land. In such areas the farm buildings and the walls dividing the fields are constructed with indigenous materials, matching the rocks and earth from which they came and so developing a local vernacular style.

It will be appreciated that creating a National Park in a wilderness area is very much simpler than doing so in areas of semi-wilderness where people live and work and where details of the landscape change with new developments in farming and rural industries. It is where large developments like power stations or oil refineries invade areas of modest farming that real conflict arises to threaten the small scale topographical beauty of the land.

Then there are areas of TRADITIONAL FARM AND WOODLAND and also those where farming has been deliberately developed as an extension of the park aesthetic which in many instances are art forms in their own right.

In recognising these different areas of landscape and in assessing their varied quality rather different criteria must influence judgement of the ambience concerned. Within the visual boundaries it is first necessary to establish the overall quality and then to consider the dominance, if

any, of topographical features and the extent to which those may jar on or complement the overall scene. If villages, church towers, farm buildings and field boundaries are in harmonious scale, do not detract from the general beauty of the ambience and fit the form of the land, its woods and waters, then we may feel that the area has a right to be considered for preservation. So we question:

Is it a wilderness or semi-wilderness area?

Is it an area of traditional farm and woodland?

Is it an area of estate landscape deliberately developed for visual as well as functional effect? (see *Landscape Issues*, Vol 2(1), March 1985).

Acceptance of these criteria for protection of areas of landscape in National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, environmentally sensitive areas etc. suggests the need for suitable management policies, appropriately. The success of such policies will depend on adequate understanding of the forces which have influenced their development.

EVOLUTIONARY FACTORS

The vegetation of Britain has slowly and naturally evolved according to climate and soil type and the biological influences of accompanying fauna and, later, man — bare mountain tops, open heathland, forests and grassland and sea coasts. These are the categories of landscape we wish to protect for today and for the future not only for their aesthetic and recreational value but, also, for their influence in the evolutionary process. So we designate National Nature Reserves and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) for this special purpose. In doing so, however, wider visual, topographical ambiances are not commonly observed. Failure in this respect misses the opportunity to 'make the best of the site' in that the beauty and ecological importance of the landscape surrounding it are not coincidentally protected. This

is of critical importance to the health of the Nature Reserve concerned because its surroundings compose the immediate catchment area for the welfare of its denizens, which can be critically affected by changes in micro-climate which could result, for example, from the removal or planting of hedges, trees or shelter belts; while the visual ambience is a vital part of accompanying landscape character. This would be less likely to occur if topographical definition were included in the original assessment of site advantage, thus bringing in the visual element of excellence and ensuring continuity of the ecological/visual character of the ambience concerned.

AMBIENCE OR LANDSCAPE LOCALITY

The elements of landscape group themselves within the ambience of vision of the unaided human eye, within defined skylines as: *cwm*s (coombs), valleys, estuaries, lakes, lochs or more or less flat areas of seemingly infinite extent. Within these areas there would normally and naturally be vegetative congruity and coherence, a factor second only to topographic distinction in securing the unique beauty and appropriateness of the ambience concerned.

This unity, this genius of the place, this *genius loci*, of Uvedale Price and his 18th century friends as it was termed before biological factors, as such, were recognised, is of the essence of satisfactory landscape conservation. Ideally it should form the basis of definition of national parks, areas of outstanding natural beauty and conservation areas etc., just as it does for gardens, parks and urban conservation areas; in landscape terms, these would be areas where the biological balance would have the best opportunity to continue to evolve its natural, or as near natural, way as possible.

For example, in the Scottish Highlands deer, freed of natural predators, are over-multiplying to the extent of destroying vegetation, with its concomitant wild life, to the prejudice of natural beauty. Man must

step in to control deer numbers by culling and apply management methods to assist the natural re-generation of heather and the Caledonian Forest of Scots pine, for the return of wild life — golden eagles, pine martins, grouse — in the restoration of the natural biological balance in these areas. In Wales goats and in parts of Africa elephants are coming in for the same treatment; while Man, with his undisciplined dogs must also be controlled on downs and upland farms, where the visibility of sheep farming is now threatened, along with the loss of native flowers and wildlife. It must be clearly understood that it is because of man's past and present interference or over-exploitation of the natural resource that such conservation measures are now essential.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

Recent understanding of the inter-relationship of animals, plants and insects in their natural environment suggests the need for radical change in the choice, delineation and management of specific areas, needed for their healthy growth and continuation. Once the geomorphological/ecological syndrome is recognised the importance of linking the former with the latter becomes paramount — **natural beauty linked with biological health** becomes the watch-word. New meaning is attached to the consideration of national parks, areas of outstanding natural beauty, nature reserves, SSSIs, conservation areas and so on. No longer should the boundaries of these areas be decided subjectively and arbitrarily along local authority or constituency boundaries; but rather as the delineation of **areas of comprehensive merit**, according to specific biological advantage within ambiances of natural beauty.

In these areas the protection of natural beauty would go hand in hand with schemes for the conservation of wild life and the essential well being of the farming community, on whom successful management of the whole joint resource ultimately depends. Areas of specific

landscape beauty and historical significance, with supporting wild life, would be identified, within their own visual ambience, which would incorporate the economic farming element advised and grant-aided, to develop the same methods which have been traditionally employed to build up the local vernacular — the farmer and his craftsmen the vital tools in the management of his own area of outstanding landscape beauty.

Rationalisation of boundaries is essential for all these special areas of beauty and wild life conservation. This would not necessarily involve general interference with the whole land area of national parks; for example, it could mean the separate definition of areas for special attention. These would be areas within their defined visual ambience which would receive the benefit of the selected management policies mentioned — historic areas within the national parks.

It would be more satisfactory to have fewer limited areas of unique natural beauty (as defined in earlier paragraphs) carefully nursed for their individual merit, as budgets could allow, than to continue with the disastrous sporadic spread of 20th century suburban building through the national parks, which so utterly destroys their natural beauty. Obviously it is labour intensive and expensive to build in the local vernacular style; but this is essential in order to preserve the integrity of landscape beauty, especially when it can be done in ways to allow rural life and customs to continue in harmony, to the economic benefit of the country.

All the areas of natural beauty and those for the conservation of wild life should come under one authority, as national parks, national monuments, etc., do in North America. The land need not be owned by the State (as there); but it would be very much easier to co-ordinate management and food production in what are, almost without exception, areas of secondary agricultural importance; but also of great recreational value.

Moving from the wilder areas of the country to those more recently conditioned by man, we come to estate and farm-land influenced by the functional requirements of agriculture, almost wherever the land is cultivable, with the hedgerows and shelter belts referred to earlier and with woods clothing the steeper slopes. Geomorphological features have determined the basic character of the various localities, further influenced by differing local farming practice; but before the 17th century the vegetation would have been indigenous, with the exception of a few species introduced by the Romans or birds, and established so long ago as now to be accepted as native. This is an extremely important fact to regard in the choice of tree species in agricultural and estate landscapes, as well as in pre-19th century parkland; in fact, in any area stamped with the quality of good traditional and interesting landscape. It is the shape of the land and the native trees and bushes which clothe it that have determined the unique character of the rural landscape of Britain and it is the continuing use and re-use of the same indigenous species that form the chain linking the past with the present with the future.

New planting should always be sited to reflect and enhance the visual character of that particular ambience. Especially is this so in the case of motorways, which are extra large, continuous features in this country and usually out-of-scale with the landscape through which they pass. Motorways should not only be designed to match the changing topography but planted to complement the pattern of the adjoining land.

The natural beauty or scenic quality of landscapes refers principally to the visual ambience created by the shape, form, texture and colours of the various components making up the landscape. These aesthetic factors to a large extent are determined by topography and vegetation and it is essential in any analysis or evaluation to register their coherence in the determination of landscape character. This is the quality which makes visual sense and has logical integrity. It is

therefore doubly important to recognise and respect topographical features together with ecological relationships on any site being considered for protection or designed change.

(1) *Protecting Historic Landscapes — Gardens and Parks.* A research document carried out for the Leverhulme Trust obtainable from the Landscape Institute.

CAPITAL INVESTMENTS: NEW CITY LANDSCAPES OF PARIS

Mark Cowell

The recent visit to Paris by Cheltenham final year landscape architecture students enabled the group to consider and experience a variety of responses to urban development that the French state has made in the last 30 years and the role of the landscape architects and urban designers in those various interventions within the French capital.

A constructive comparison can be made with London's responses to similar development pressures over the same period, and the way that differing state institutions, the private sector and government policy, as well as cultural and social aspirations, have resulted in quite different approaches to the solutions of frequently similar problems.

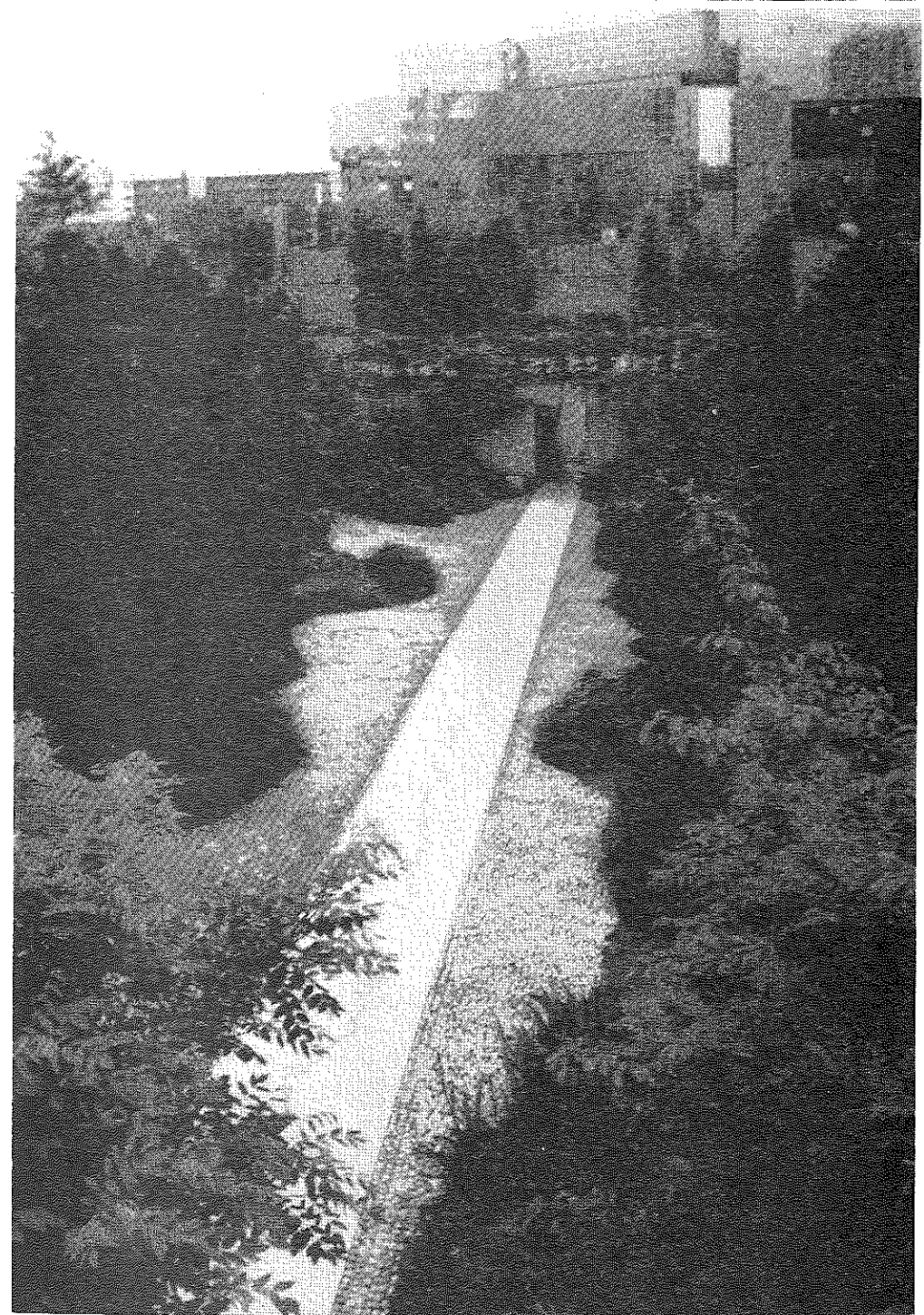
A clear distinction between Paris and London is the degree to which the state sees its role as the instigator and controller of these processes in terms of patronage, the creation of implementing bodies, the design competition system and a pro-active role for planning and design. Indeed the 'creative tension' between the State President and the Mayor of Paris that exists in the Fifth Republic has resulted in them vying with each other to promote new projects. This is in stark contrast to London which is the only capital city in the world that does not have a form of city government.

This approach, of course, is rooted in French history. The Bourbon reaction, starting with Richelieu, Mazarin and Louis XIV, to the Wars of Religion and the Frondes in the 16th century and early 17th century and the desire to maintain the political integrity of the nascent French state resulted in a strongly centralised absolute monarchy. This idea of state centralism survived the Revolution, itself highly centralised, with Napoleon and the subsequent restored monarchies. Napoleon III's Second Empire of circa 1850-1871 imposed, via Baron Haussmann, the layout of boulevards, axes and *ronde-points* that we associate with Paris onto the remaining mediaeval urban fabric. This was state planning used for specific political and economic purposes. Architecture, landscape architecture and urban design have been used as the tools and vehicles of these activities from Louis XIV through Napoleon III to François Mitterand and his *Grand Projets*. This again is in distinct contrast to the historic English phobia of anything stemming from a too-powerful executive arm of government.

Paris has always been the generator of centripetal forces in France and since World War II has had to cope with massive pressures in terms of population increase, associated moves to the suburbs, the creation of complex new transport systems as well as the relatively late (compared to the UK) transformation of France from an agricultural to an industrial country and waves of ex-colonial immigration. These pressures have had to be absorbed by a city already called 'the City of Light', where the idea of Modernism was effectively 'invented' and which has always represented a particular approach to urban living.

There are three areas in which we can look at the strategies the French have employed:

- i) Interventions in the existing historic urban fabric of Paris in both 'prestige' and 'derelict' locations.
- ii) The creation of new 'quarters' of the City.
- iii) Peripheral 'satellite' development linked to the urban core.



Parc Citroën: Orange garden

The desire to manage the growth of Paris goes back to the Prost Plan of 1935 but it is the regional planning initiatives dating from 1956-1965 which created specific growth axes and the six new towns such as Cergy-Pontoise, La Corneuve, Evry and Marne-La-Vallée. This regional strategy is founded on an integrated and improved transport network with particular emphasis on the public transport of the RER.

Whilst this 'new town' idea might seem analogous to the Abercrombie Plan for post World War II London, there are many differences. The new towns are generally much closer to central Paris and public access much better. Additionally, they seem to have a much better success rate in terms of employment and housing. Perhaps most striking of all to environmental designers from Britain is the dramatic, not to say *avant-garde*, architectural and urbanistic principles they have adopted which makes them seem very different from the rather folksy suburban miasma of our own new towns. Marne-La-Vallée is the most recent of the Parisian new towns with a likely final population of circa 280,000. The completion nearby of EuroDisneyland and the Descartes Research Centre are likely to ensure its future importance.

Paris, like London and other major cities, has come under tremendous pressure for office development since World War II and yet when one gazes out over the city from the Sacré Coeur one is struck by the general lack of any indication that this has affected the city such as one might see from, say, Westminster Bridge. The dome of les Invalides, unlike that of St Pauls is not hedged around with corporate tower blocks.

One of the strategies for avoiding this has been the creation of new business 'quarters' for Paris outside the historic core bounded by the Boulevard Périphérique. The most well-known of these is the area of la Défense which sits at the end of the axis of Paris that starts in the courtyard of the Louvre, passes via the Champs Elysées and the Arc de Triomphe to finish at the Jan-Otto Spreckelson's Grande Arche of

la Défense several kilometres distant.

The history of la Défense starts with the creation of a body (EPAD) in 1958 to oversee the transformation of around 770 hectares (1850 acres) in the existing areas of Courbevoie, Puteaux and Nanterre. Only about 25% of this is actually for business uses — housing, parks, a University and other elements were also included. It has adhered to certain principles of design:

- * a separation of vehicles and pedestrians
- * business buildings on a huge pedestrianised platform or podium
- * the promotion of dramatic, albeit commercial, architecture and
- * a strong commitment to open space provision, public art and cultural events.

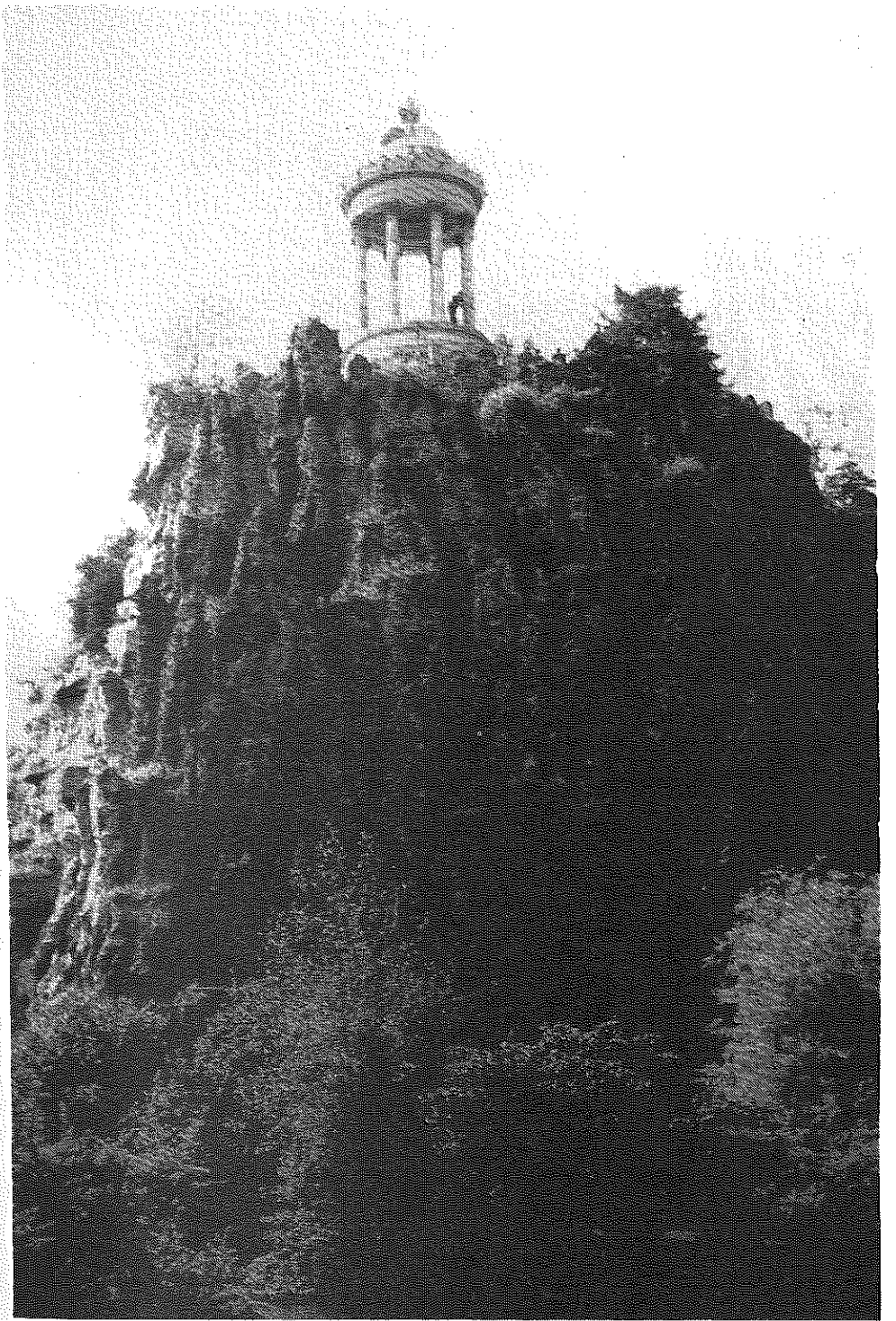
These have produced a highly artificial but in many ways quite impressive new business district for Paris. It should also be remembered that it has a significant residential population and a very different character in the adjoining Quartier du Parc. La Défense makes an interesting contrast with the Isle of Dogs and the 'Square Mile' of the City of London.

However, much as it may seem that the historic centre of Paris has not changed, this is not the case. It has suffered the same level of urban degeneration and depopulation as other cities. Jobs and people have left and industrial uses have been relocated. Although not faced with a task as enormous as the East End of London and the Docklands areas, the north and east areas of Paris have been particularly badly hit and there have been some notable own-goals such as the premature demolition of Balthard's historic market halls at les Halles. It must also be remembered that Paris suffered little or no wartime damage.

From the mid 1970s, when the position of Mayor was restored to Paris, there has been a concerted and energetic campaign to regenerate



Parc de Bercy: the Cascade



Parc des Buttes Chaumont: Temple of Sibyl

the urban centre going hand-in-hand with the regional strategies mentioned above. A key element in this has been the highly pro-active, centralised, even authoritarian role of the City Government and the State Government in these activities. Despite the fact that Jacques Chirac, the Mayor of Paris, is on the right of French politics and François Mitterand is to the centre, this has actually resulted via the President's *Grands Projets* and Chirac's establishment of ZACs (sort of small urban development corporations) in the use of architecture, landscape architecture and urban design initiatives as the catalysts for transforming run-down parts of the city, attracting new investment and improving the general quality of life. The key to all of these has been government promotion and funding and a realization that it is the proper role of planning to coordinate these things. Now that is not to say that it is anything like a perfect system nor that personal vanity and political success have not been major factors in what has been done. One might also question *who* has *really* benefited from these projects. However, if one compares them with the activities of the GLC and the Conservative government until the former's dismissal in 1986 and the *laissez-faire* development strategies of early parts of UDDC work which has become almost a byword of 'how-not-to-do-it' then the achievements of Paris look considerable.

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The main programme for the visit of the group of Cheltenham landscape students to Paris included some of the *Grand Projets* introduced above — the Pyramide du Louvre, the Arche de la Défense, Beaubourg, the Parc de la Villette (which is also in a ZAC), as well as les Halles, the rejuvenated Marais Quarter, and the moving Mémorial de la Déportation on the Ile de la Cité. In addition, new parks were visited: Citroën-Cévennes, Bercy, Belleville, all of which have been created in former derelict or run-down areas, as well as

famous Parisian parks and *espaces-verts* of the past — Parc des Buttes-Chaumont, Père Lachaise Cemetery and the Tuileries Gardens. The few short articles which follow this note are an expression of some student experiences and interpretations of the landscapes of Paris.

ARE WE BEING LEFT BEHIND?

Will Reed

A visitor to Paris today cannot fail to be struck by the amount of building work in progress. This is perhaps similar to the situation in British cities a few years ago before the effects of the recession were felt, but the difference seems to be that while such activity has largely ceased in Britain, or is at least a fraction of its former level, in Paris it is business as usual. This highlights a fundamental difference in the attitudes and approaches towards urban growth and regeneration between the two cities. The difference is expressed politically, but I believe has its roots much deeper in the psyche of the two nations.

France has had a long history of autocratic government which has continued ever since the revolution of 1789. Ten years after the revolution Napoleon Bonaparte seized power. After his defeat the monarchy was briefly restored before Napoleon III created the Second Republic. This trend has continued to the present day with Charles de Gaulle consolidating the power of the modern presidency in the 1960's and creating a post that exercises enormous power and influence. Almost as an antidote to this, the system of local government was reorganized in 1977 in order to provide the elected Mayor and local administration with increased powers. The creation of two centres of power in Paris has had the effect of creating an air of competition, particularly when, as has happened in recent years, the two leaders are from opposite sides of the political spectrum.

Combined with this sense of competition is the belief in the *gloire de France*, a belief that transcends political divisions, and fuels the drive for the 'grand statement' of which there is so much evidence today. If something is for the glory of France, then it stands a better chance of being realized than otherwise, a case in point being la Tour Sans Fin, a building that is seriously impractical in many ways, but that will dramatically complement the existing development at la Défense.

Given this political background, the difference between British and French attitudes to development begins to make sense. In Paris (the most obvious example, although similar processes occur in smaller measure in most French cities), the development is driven by public money, either from the central government under the patronage of the President, or by local government under the patronage of the Mayor. This is not to say that all new development is carried out with public funds, les Halles being an example of private funding; but the difference to the situation in Britain is apparent. Here very little public money is spent on urban development; there is a belief that investment should be market led rather than a market leader. An obvious comparison would be between Canary Wharf and la Défense, where even a small issue such as transport infrastructure shows enormous disparity. Canary Wharf has the Docklands Light Railway and plans for an underground link that may never be built because no investors are prepared to take the risk. On the other hand la Défense has links to the Metro, the RER, SNCF, motorways and Charles de Gaulle airport via helicopter services, all paid for by EPAD (Etablissement Public d'Aménagement de la Région de la Défense — a public body that takes care of the financial management of the entire site, and which has been publicly funded at such times as it could not finance itself by selling building rights).

Public funding can free development from the millstone of immediate profitability, and so allows the formulation of long term strategies that would not be possible otherwise. One result of this approach can be

seen in the development at la Villette, André Citroën and Bercy; each of these projects took as their starting point the creation of a public park. They also each included either commercial or cultural development, but on a smaller area than that reserved for the park, the aim being to stimulate private investment and the consequent regeneration of the surrounding areas. In this way public investment was (and is) seen as an essential seeding process to further private investment. This process allows a degree of central planning that is not possible in London — control is not through the planning process so much as through the prime mover of the projects.

All this is extremely good news for landscape architects, as there is a level of investment in public landscape that is unheard of in this country, and what is more this investment is seen to be for prestige projects that must reflect the spirit of the times. As Jacques Chirac said “each period must be allowed to leave its mark upon the city”, and the process of tender by competition ensures that the designs produced are of high quality, though not always without their detractors. Even given French nationalist chauvinism, these competitions are international (which makes the British Garden Festivals poor by comparison) and genuinely seek to find the best. Indeed many of the prestigious architectural works carried out in recent years have been designed by foreigners, and the same can be true for landscape works. While French landscape design can be admired for its breadth of vision, excellence of execution and its undoubted *panache*, there are areas where the British tradition has much to contribute.

Until recently the only French school of landscape architecture was based at Versailles, and these surroundings, steeped as they are in the French formal gardening tradition, have exerted enormous influence. Even contemporary designs show degrees of formality and symmetry that are unusual in British designs. There are exceptions but the ideas of bringing nature into the city that has informed much of British park design seems notably scarce. One exception is Parc des Buttes

Chaumont, which was laid out along the lines of an English ‘sublime landscape’ garden; but three modern parks — la Villette, Parc André Citroën and Parc Bercy (the latter judging from plans and drawings as it is yet to be completed) all show degrees of rigid formality and symmetry. This is the source of some (though not the only) criticism. The argument runs that they are fixed in time; that there is surprise and delight upon first acquaintance, but subsequently there is little left to discover. I do not altogether agree with this analysis, certainly la Villette was designed with change in mind, even if that change was seen as taking place on the edges of the park rather than within the park itself through evolution. There is however, a reliance in these three parks on form rather than content; the overall design strategies hold the individual parks together, but are not always expressed in the detail, particularly the planted detail. This is perhaps intentional in la Villette, where Bernard Tschumi was relying on the superimposition of planes, points and lines to create areas of conflict and hence interest, but it seems unintentional in Parc André Citroën. Here the situation is reversed; interest in the form of varied planting seems to create conflict in contrast with the unified design strategy, a criticism that could also be levelled at Parc de Belleville.

It is in the area of planting design that I think British practice has a huge contribution to make to French design. There is much planting in France that appears ‘blocky’, with too many species used in geometrical shapes, and little to unify the parts into a whole. Examples of this style are legion, from the parks already mentioned, to others such as Les Halles, and even motorway verges. The best examples of British design tend to use fewer species and to integrate planting design and strategic design in a way that seems rare in France.

In this age of European integration, there seems to be great scope for combining talents and traditions in ways that will produce truly innovative design solutions. But there is also a warning here: French landscape architecture has found its place and relevance in society to

a far greater extent than in Britain; it is seen as and supported as one of the arts, whereas in Britain it is all too often seen as a way of tidying up the remaining bits of ground if there is any money left over. The second warning concerns the emphasis on the grand statements referred to earlier; this can be dismissed as an expression of French nationalism or the result of the peculiar system of mayoral and presidential competition, but it may ensure (and is probably intended to ensure) that Paris becomes a European centre in a federated Europe, while London is relegated to the status of a regional centre. If this were to be the case we could well see a continually developing Paris and a stagnating London. In such a scenario much of which is innovatory and new in design could well be taking place in Europe, and it behoves us to be part of it.

PLAYTIME IN PARIS

Piers Simon

How 'playable' are the Parcs de la Villette and André Citroën? The term playability does not just refer to physical sports fields and playgrounds, but also involves the process of learning and exploring (1). Play is a biological need. Winnicott (2) believes 'It is only in playing that the individual child or adult is able to be creative and to use the whole personality'. One can play anywhere; however some environments are more playable than others. La Villette and Citroën were explored and have been viewed in terms of play opportunities. Both are located just inside the city limits, but are some 13 miles apart and are very different in character. A multitude of cultural, educational and leisure facilities are offered at la Villette; by contrast, Parc Citroën concentrates on landscape ranging from formal to the very nearly wild.

La Villette was designed as a park for the 21st century. The site for Villette had been a major cattle market. It had a large 19th century market hall near the south east corner and the broad Ourcq canal bisecting the site on an east-west axis. South of the east end of the canal was a big pop concert hall, the City of Music, and in the north section the recently built Museum of Science, a vast hi-tech structure in concrete and glass. In front of the Museum is a huge stainless steel sphere, the Géode, which is a cinema. Bernard Tschumi's design is a mixture of architecture and landscape. Architecture consists of 40 bright red follies, some functional — tea rooms, crèches, information

booths, markets, workshops, restaurants, open air cinema, dance, video, computer rooms, greenhouses, thermal baths, martial arts, library and exhibition, some are follies in the real sense, i.e. stairways to nowhere, 10 metre cubes with constructivist structural elements threaded through them. The follies differing uses and methods of construction provide a richness which invites children and adults to climb and explore, hide in and dramatise the structures, as well as experiencing different views of the site. The follies are laid on a 120 metre square grid over the whole site. There was a sense of serendipity when one discovered that follies appeared on intersection lines in the larger buildings, such as the Science Museum, and attached to some of the older existing buildings on the site, maintaining the grid pattern.

The second main linear element is a set of tree lined avenues, some in formal lines, some in broken circular arcs (in front of the museum) which is off-set to the west. These avenues avoid the formality of design logic seen in Parc Citroën and elsewhere in Paris, playing tricks with your design perception.

Through the network of buildings and avenues runs a serpentine path, the Path of Thematic Gardens. It links a series of recreational spaces, gardens, small bathing pools, picnic areas, allotments and educational areas. Tschumi likened the thematic gardens to the frames in a movie film where the sound track is the visitors' path and the continuity. This being so, the film provides a number of unexpected surprises and experiences. The opportunities for play are endless. Seeing the dragon was a thrill as it was the most imaginative play structure I've seen. The dragon's body is a huge climbing structure which provides children, young and old, a sense of adventure and a challenge with some risk and sense of fear when climbing it. At the top, on the dragon's neck, there is the choice to slide down the dragon's body or to adventure on through the dragon's head where a huge slide flows down over pedestrian pathways and finishes in a sandpit. The route back to the dragon is through tunnels and involves more climbing. The

exciting journey of climbing and sliding allows children to explore and show-off their capabilities, basic requirements of play.

Following the serpentine path, one discovered groups of stainless steel seats which could be twisted around to face any direction. These seats have a quality of inventiveness, of interaction and choice making new arrangements with components in the landscape. The serpentine path revealed more structures with moveable parts which encouraged one to make the parts move. One of these structures is a large spinning top which could be made to rotate by walking or running around on the top. A series of small circular boards, set on springs were placed in a curving line and when jumped on, propelled you upwards, sideways or forwards depending on where you landed. These play structures created a lot of fun, providing new challenges and with a certain amount of risk involved.

It was really quite amusing and exciting to discover a huge bicycle wheel, complete with spokes, emerging from the ground and then to discover a huge pedal and handlebar with a bell, at the same oversize scale. Here one started playing with the imagination.

The variety of surfaces seen in la Villette provided a choice of routes and choice of activities in which to participate. It made a change to be able to kick, throw and hit a ball around on the grass (a softball match was in progress while we were there) which is rare in Paris.

La Villette is directed at enabling people to do more than stroll and admire trees. It is designed for a multiplicity of events from playing educational games at the science museum, going to pop concerts, competing and spectating in the athletics arena and shopping in the old market hall. Yet the park's scheme is based on other design considerations. Tschumi's idea was to question the notion of order, investigating true concepts of disjunction in which apparently ordered systems of points, lines and surfaces are overlaid on the other without

any orderly relationship between them. This disjunctive strategy, in which parts never connect and relationships of conflict are carefully maintained, rejecting synthesis or totality, adds to the notion of playability, playing with the mind and world of ideas.

The design for Parc André Citroën has four principal themes. These concern artifice, architecture, movement (or metamorphosis) and nature. These themes are intended to follow a progression from the built city to the more natural setting of the river. The park's main focus is a vista from a raised podium, flanked by two large glass houses, to the river Seine. The podium is centred on an inclined plane where a large square grid of water jets are programmed to provide a show. This area was a magnet, drawing people in to watch the effects the waterjets were producing, and tempting you to run through — again a challenge with an element of risk and fear of getting wet, excellent aspects of play.

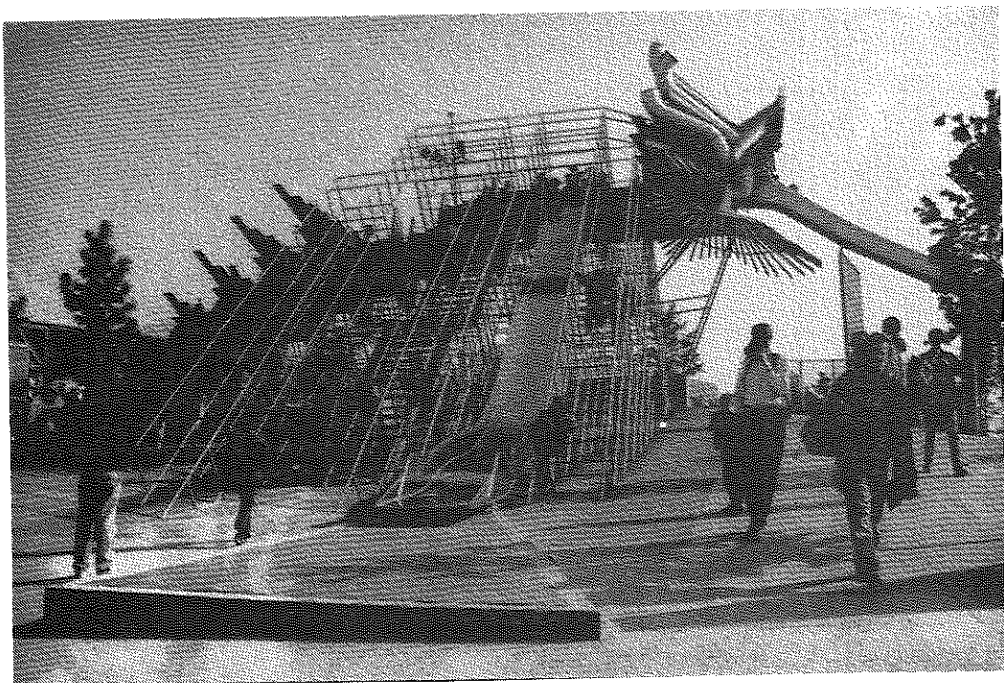
The podium overlooks a huge flat rectilinear lawn, which is sliced by a diagonal path and surrounded by a moat-like water. Walking on the grass is permitted yet no ball games are allowed. It seems a shame to have such a large area of grass with the soul purpose of just looking at it (although I did see some people throwing a Frisbee — the need for play was evident).

In the northern corner is the 'Jardin en Movement' where pampas grass sways in the wind, plants are left to seed and roses are unpruned. There are no proper paths and there is an absence of formal instruction of where to walk. This place was excellent for small children, who could explore and manipulate the wild plants and make places as their own in the naturalistic setting. Children's favourite places are often naturalistic, secret and manipulative. This notion of allowing weeds to flourish are unconventional by Parisian standards and by far the most courageous approach adopted in any part of the park.

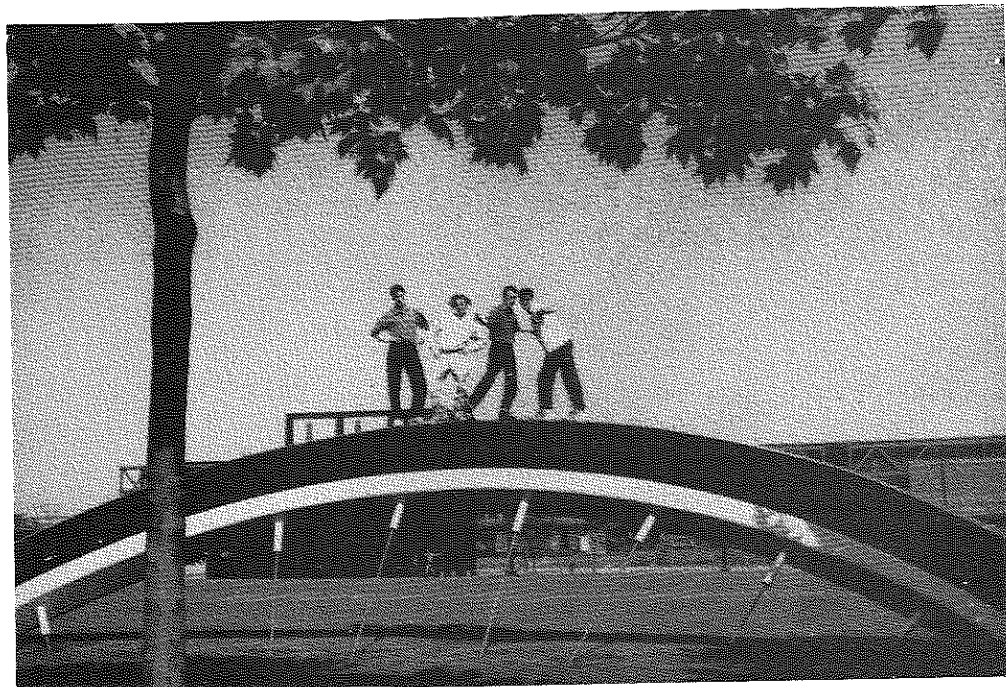
The six Serial Gardens each possessed a different quality associated with colour and were separated by cascading water courses. The gardens can be surveyed from the glass houses reached from a raised walkway. Although the serial gardens have many visual qualities, they contained few elements which made them playable. The people in these gardens were looking at the plants and some were sitting alone in the more hidden places reading.

Symmetrically placed on the opposite side of the park beyond the lawn is a corresponding series of structures which are made from polished black stone. These were described as *nymphées* and were all very similar, which didn't inspire one to explore, unlike the follies in la Villette. The *nymphées* punctuated a long straight path bound on both sides by water — the lawns, moat and a raised canal. Unfortunately the moat was too wide to jump. However, the challenge was there, probably because of the limited opportunities one had for getting to the other side of the park. Surely the moat and raised canal could have offered more opportunities to play, like the water jets.

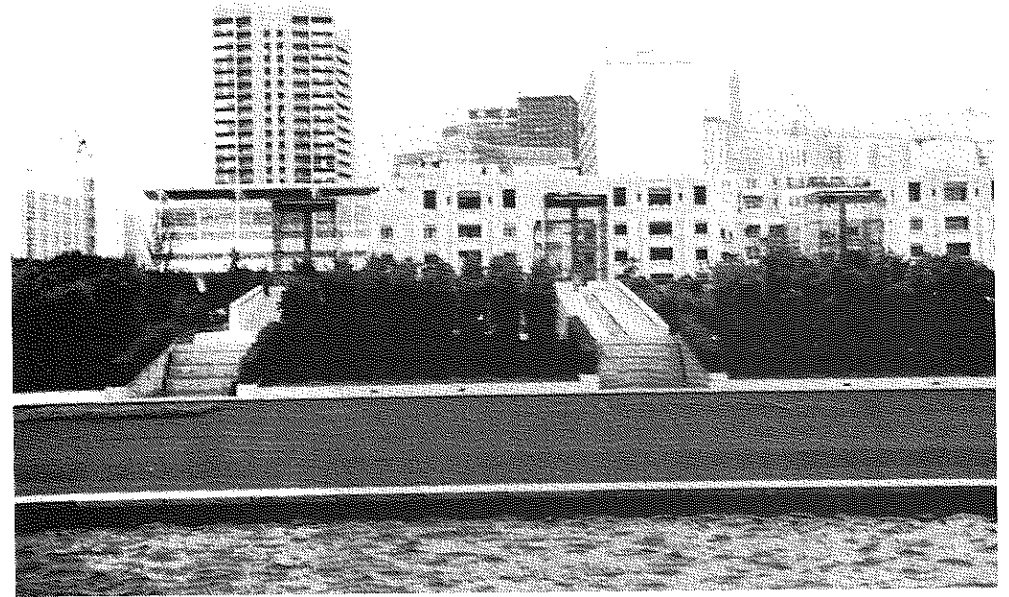
As an addition to the main park, two smaller gardens have been integrated into the surrounding neighbourhoods. One of them, the 2.5 acre 'White Garden' is set next to a small walled cemetery and resembles a traditional neighbourhood square. It has a small enclosed planted area at the centre and toddlers play at one end. The space is entirely surfaced with gravel on which bikes were ridden, balls kicked and dogs walked — the only area where such activities were permitted and the only area not closed at night. However the planned link to the main park was not yet in place and separated by a busy road. The space also had a strong sense of semi-privateness, which is understandable because of the surrounding neighbourhood. I felt it a shame that these activities couldn't overspill into the main park, which could cater for the whole of the surrounding area, after all the Parc Citroën is a centre-piece for a new neighbourhood and should cater for everyone's needs, playability being an essential need. Returning to D. W. Winnicott's



Parc de la Villette: the Dragon



Parc de la Villette: cycle sculpture



Parc Citroën: rectilinear lawn with no one on it.



Parc Citroën: paddling prohibited!

quote, "It is only in playing that the individual child or adult is able to be creative, and use the whole personality". La Villette was a park to interact with, developing one's creativity and personality; Citroën was a park to look at and sit in, suppressing playable creativity.

Notes

(1) Spray, M (1992) Ludicrous landscapes, *Landscape Design*, 215

(2) Winnicott, D W (1971) *Playing and reality*, Tavistock

JARDIN DU LUXEMBOURG

James Gillick

The sight which one is presented with when visiting the Jardin du Luxembourg is initially a large black and gold railing backed by shrubs and trees, and quite impenetrable to view. This fifteen foot high barrier is interspersed with relatively small gateways, and on passing from the busy street, the metro and the fast cars, through one of these one encounters an area of quite a different nature. It is full of the voices of a thousand people sitting beneath the trees, talking, reading, painting, competing and watching children at play.

The Palais de Luxembourg was erected for Marie de Medici by Salome de Brasse in 1615-24. Brasse was among the most able of French architects at the time, and his building in Paris is one of his most notable surviving works. The original plan consisted of a one-storeyed entrance screen with *porte-cochère*, two-storeyed side wings for service and what used to be stabling, and the three-storeyed *corps de logis*, forming a court 73m x 58m (240 x 190 ft) on a north-south axis. The east and west sides are linked by a new annex, and the whole is now used as the Senate house.

The gardens retain much of their original layout, which essentially consists of a single main axis, surrounded by a raised parterre, leading to the observatory. This axis opens and embraces the rear of the house on a broad hemisphere. Two further half circle parterres surround the

primary feature of the main axis — the pool and fountain.

The remainder of the grounds, the total area of which forms an uneven square of about sixty acres, is planted with mature horse chestnut, and more recent stands of paulownia in a geometrical grid and diagonal pattern reflecting the network of pathways, while the far south and west sides are of a quasi-informal nature with meandering paths. Each routeway leads to the series of gates at regular intervals, linking to the surrounding city.

Original engravings show the park in a rural setting with the gardens leading away to fields and small wooded hills in the distance. It is, however, well within the bounds of the city nowadays, and close to the city centre. The surrounding irregular network of roads and buildings is mainly laid to commercial and educational use. Within two minutes walk of the park are at least thirty major educational institutions: some museums and research centres, a number of colleges and, significantly, a great wealth of secondary-modern schools.

Tourist attractions close by are of course the Ile de la Cité to the north with its various features, and the Louvre; the Panthéon to the east and the Champ du Mars to the west. Despite the obvious attraction of this location to tourists, though, it remains essentially a Parisians' park, and the ratio of the one to the other is about 70% - 30% (judging by eye!). It is also worthy of note that no pets are allowed to enter the park.

The gardens are run in a very organized manner. The gates open at 7.45 a.m. and shut at 8.30 p.m., and the presence of numerous gendarmes ensures that activities in the grounds are restricted to the most civilised of sorts. But for a small rectangle, pedestrian use of the grassed areas is prohibited, which results in the maximum use of the large gravel areas and pathways beneath the trees. But for tennis courts, tables for chess, and some *boules* courts reserved for a local

club, no other facility exists for adult recreation. An abundance of parterre steps, seats and benches are seemingly used by office workers or students and lecturers from the surrounding schools and colleges, many of whom are immersed in academic books and novels. Every other provision within the park is for use by children. There is a hard play area, a large and tremendously well used playground, a broad pathway reserved for go-carts, a small rectangle of grass, and allowance for boating on the octagonal pool. All of these are provided with ample seating for parents and guardians.

Despite the obvious benefit these facilities provide, there are very few services which one normally associates with city parks. There is only one toilet, the house as a feature is inaccessible, there is an expensive restaurant for drinks and a small shop selling children's toys, sweets and cold drinks.

By the means described, whereby activities are tightly restricted to their designated areas, maintenance costs are kept to a minimum. One would imagine that this upkeep of the park is operated by the staff of the house who also run a large hothouse, the produce of which are brought out to adorn the park in the summer months.

Yet is it possible that the practical factors alone make these old, sixty acres of level ground attract about 2000 people on a sunny afternoon? When the new, stimulating, lavishly expensive and varied attractions of la Villette go scarcely noticed? One assumes that the only element missing mention in the equation of its success is its age. It has a well-walked, well-used atmosphere. There are traditions and customs that now form the backbone of its popularity. For example, the inclusion of the bowls club whose pitching lanes are private, and the tennis courts constitute permanent and guaranteed sources of activity, as does the restaurant. Though the schools close by render this familiar ground for parents and their school children, the restrictions upon the wild behaviour almost certifies a more academic clientèle that would

not frequent the busy square before the Cathedral of Notre Dame for example. There is a near perfect balance of privacy among the trees and openness — its opposite — which accommodates for both the local citizen and the relaxing passer-by. But perhaps the most sensitive user of all — who only comes into public and relaxes when the conditions are just so — the mother on her own and her child, are made most comfortable in these gardens by the sense of order which is imposed both in the style and by the watching eyes of half a dozen gendarmes, and also by the railing around the whole, and by the thoroughness with which they are provided for. Consequently these constitute the core of the park visitors.

The effect of such a successful park is really quite absorbing. While la Villette (at least at the present) relies upon innumerable brilliantly conceived, inanimate trinkets to capture the imagination, the Jardin du Luxembourg has almost a utility landscape of seats, paths and shady trees, but is heaving with people, the attitudes and actions of whom give it a genuine *joie de vivre*. As Cullen insinuates in the introduction to his 'Townscape', people live in large groups (towns and cities) because they are fascinated by their own kind and enjoy their company. Basically, the key to the Luxembourg Gardens success is that it offers the opportunity and ideal setting for just this.

DECONSTRUCTIVISM VERSUS CONSTRUCTIVISM AT LA VILLETTE AND VERSAILLES

Gayle Kember

The intentions of this comparative study are to take the three elements of deconstructive design and compare how successfully they have been applied to both parks.

La Villette was designed by Bernard Tschumi in 1983. The site in the north-east of Paris had been a major cattle market; it had a large nineteenth-century market hall near the south-east corner and the broad Ourcq canal more or less bisecting the site on an east-west axis. South of the east end of the canal is a big pop concert hall, the City of Music, and in the north section the recently built Museum of Science, a vast hi-tech structure in concrete and glass in front of which floats a giant stainless-steel sphere, the Géode.

The brief was to create an important public space. Tschumi's answer to the brief was a design incorporating a mixture of architecture and landscape. Tschumi's design was formed by deconstructing the basic elements of design i.e. lines, points and surfaces, and rearranging them individually. For example, the points on the site form a grid. At each point there is a red folly, of which there are forty. These follies do not relate in any way to the outside of the site or to the other two design principles, only to each other. By using this approach Tschumi has produced a random series of lines, points and surfaces which are disjointed and arbitrary to one another.

The formal grounds at the Palace of Versailles provide the antipathy to the deconstructed elements of la Villette. The scale and magnificence of French garden design during the reign of Louis XIV, represented by Versailles, became the model of Europe, if not the world. The estate had been acquired in 1632 by Louis XIII, who had enlarged the existing hunting lodge and enclosed a park.

Louis XIV, decided to make Versailles the royal seat from which he could rule, the palace and gardens were to be the symbol of his own conception of the role of the French monarchy, in which the nobility were to be reduced to a position of dependence on his own good favour.

The sun and all of its related iconography was used as the theme around which Andre le Nôtre laid out the Grand Design. Le Nôtre took the points of the compass for his main axes, making the long perspective from the windows of the Grande Galerie, a view extending as far as the eye can see, to the setting sun. He gave the land a new shape, making use of the natural declivity of the site to form a series of terraces, he also clothed the slopes with woods and hedges, within which were green enclosures, the *cabinets de verdure*.

Versailles represents a strong combination of lines, points and surfaces which form a whole.

POINTS: La Villette

The points are represented by the intersection of the grid-lines on which sit the follies. The follies are arranged on a precise 120m square grid laid arbitrarily over the whole site; for example, where the grid runs through the great science museum, follies are constructed on intersection points inside the building.

The regularity of the grid pattern can not be seen from the ground,

even when it is marked out by forty, large, bright red points; only in plan is it clearly seen. If this is so, why was it necessary to go to such lengths to follow this pattern through? None of the points link to any other feature on the site, except along the south side of the canal where all three elements join together to become a strongly constructed line.

Some of the follies have functions, cafés, toilets, shops, information booths, etc. The remaining follies provide viewing platforms and stairs to the elevated walkways.

POINTS: Versailles

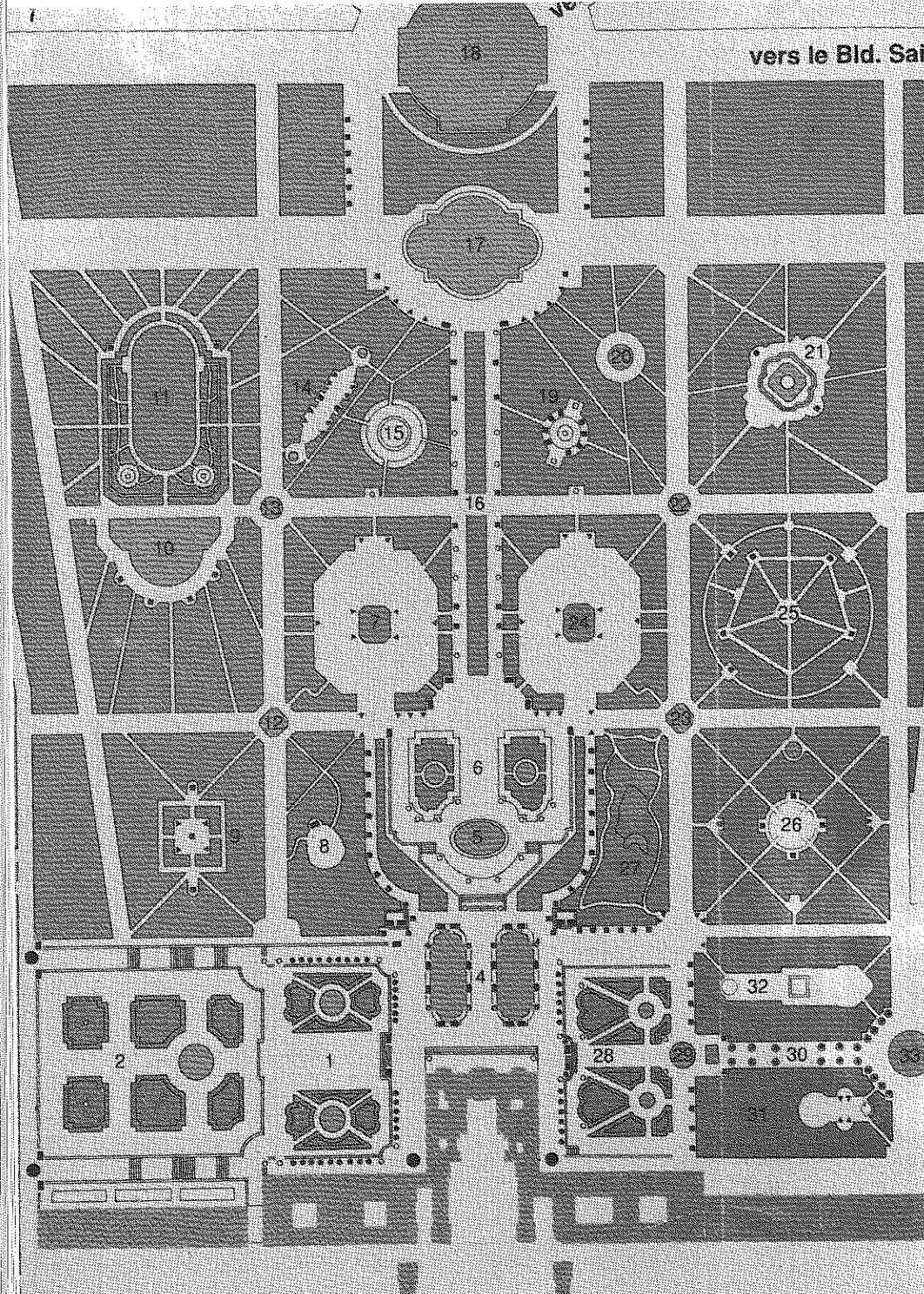
Here the points are focal points, made such by the interconnecting parts of the design: the lines which make vistas lead to the points. Some of the points are open spaces or gaps on the horizon; others take a more solid form, statues, water features, buildings etc. Each point is approached by a line or surface; one leads to another to form a whole.

None of the points are arbitrary. They are as obvious and easily perceived by the person on the ground as they are read on the plan. This provides a comfortable environment for the user as meaning, understanding and orientation are not lost in theory.

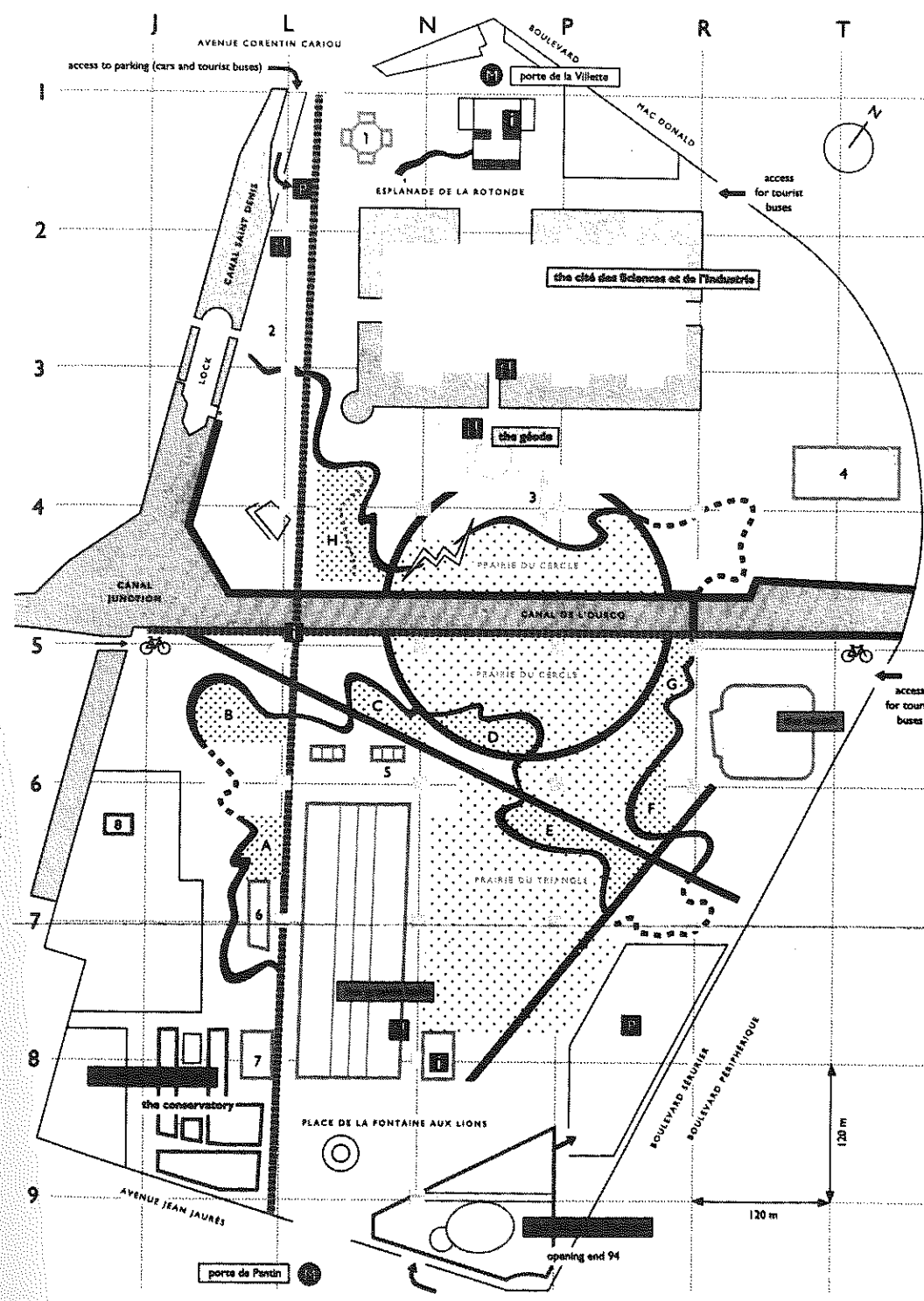
LINES: La Villette

The lines are represented by two major walkways and the system of treelined avenues with the serpentine path acting as a secondary, arbitrarily related sub-system. The other lines are dictated by surface materials, the two are completely unconnected.

The east-west line of the canal is the only place in the whole design where three of the theories seem to meet in a cohesive way: the path as a line, the canal as a surface and the follies as the points. No other



Chateau de Versailles: plan of the gardens



Parc de la Villette: plan of the park

feature relates to this obvious focal point and line of vision. The north-south line is slightly askew to the grid and the follies that run along it. This also is not noticeable from the ground. The separation of the two lines appears pointless as neither line runs to anything of importance either in or outside the site.

The two avenues are probably the most noticeable lines in the site. After the confusion of the array of paths, surfaces, textures and forms, the recognisable form of the formal avenue presents itself as a comfortable haven from the surrounding chaos. However on arrival at the far end it proved to be another fruitless exercise in deconstruction, as it led nowhere. I did not find this element of surprise delightful, merely frustrating.

LINES: Versailles

The lines at Versailles are predominantly straight, and form the most important part in the design as everything is aligned along these lines: all the views, paths, vistas and focal points are connected by them.

Key to plan labels: Versailles

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Parterre du Midi | 18. Grand Canal |
| 2. L'Orangerie | 19. Bosquet des Dômes |
| 3. Pièce d'eau des Suisses | 20. Fontaine d'Encelade |
| 4. Parterre d'eau | 21. L'Obélisque |
| 5. Bassin de Latone | 22. Bassin du Printemps |
| 6. Parterre de Latone | 23. Bassin de l'Été |
| 7. Quinconce du Midi | 24. Quinconce du Nord |
| 8. Bosquet des Rocailles | 25. Bosquet de l'Étoile |
| 9. Bosquet de la Reine | 26. L'Île des Enfants |
| 10. Bassin du Miroir | 27. Les Bains d'Apollon |
| 11. Jardin du Roi | 28. Parterre du Nord |
| 12. Bassin de l'Automne | 29. La Pyramide |
| 13. Bassin de l'Hiver | 30. L'Allée d'Eau |
| 14. Salle des Marronniers | 31. Bosquet de l'Arc |
| 15. La Colonnade | 32. Bosquet des Fontaines |
| 16. Tapis vert | 33. Bassin du Dragon |
| 17. Bassin d'Apollon | 34. Bassin de Neptune |

The huge scale of Versailles is impressed upon the mind by the length and width of the lines which make up the channels of vision such as the east-west perspective that runs from the Grande Galerie to the Grand Canal and as far as they eye can see. Through the use of the line, views can be produced from nowhere and a line of vision formed. The lines of the grand design at Versailles continually cross one another thus enhancing the element of surprise.

When Louis XIII first took over the existing hunting lodge the Duc de Saint-Simon described the site as "the woods". The introduction into the site of three principles of theory — points, surfaces and lines — has changed this landscape to such an extent that when it was completed it became the model for Europe in landscape design; such was the success of the line.

SURFACES: La Villette

The surfaces represent the basic ground-level materials, gravel, grass, water and planting. The predominant surface is the Parisian compacted earth and gravel.

Surfaces become associated with use: asphalt for roads and pavements, grass for walking or playing on, water as a reflective material for looking at, or for its sound and movement qualities, not for playing football on. In deconstruction, the relationship between use and surface is deliberately abandoned and confusion is encouraged. For example, a hard surface may appear to denote a route which you begin to follow, which within a few metres veers off into grass and disappears. Some areas are extensively covered with a hard surface of the same type, through which there is no particular route marked.

The surfaces have been laid down in a pattern that does not necessarily follow or lead to either the points or the lines. This is both confusing and frustrating.

SURFACES: Versailles

The materials used at Versailles are grass, gravel, water, paving and asphalt. The different surfaces make up the lines and indicate a change in use. Parterres are composed of different surface materials, gravel, grass and small hedges, which make up the patterns.

The lines or vistas are often made of several surfaces which change along the line, i.e. the main axis starts with gravel and water then changes to grass and finally to the water of the Grand Canal and the horizon. Vegetated surfaces such as those covered with trees give vertical scale and form the edges of the lines. The surfaces follow the lines that lead to the points, forming a cohesive whole.

At Versailles, where everything is on such a large scale, the patterns produced on the surface by the different materials add a smaller dimension of detail which strengthen the overall pattern of the layout. The surfaces at Versailles have a strong relationship with function which the user finds comfortable. When the surface and use contradict each other the user becomes unsure as to whether they are supposed to be there.

CONCLUSION

Having visited both parks I found the difference between them quite striking. Although Versailles covers a huge area and oozes with history and intrigue, the lines of its design are timeless and have been reproduced many times over, at smaller scales, throughout England and France.

However, I found la Villette confusing and incoherent, and I questioned whether this was through ignorance of a new theory or a bad design. Maybe la Villette appears confusing to the user because we are being forced to think and perceive; the 'natural' order that we have

finely tuned in our landscapes since the eighteenth century has been removed, the basic theory has been broken down and reconstructed to provide a park that makes us think. In many ways la Villette is exciting, interesting and stimulating. It opens up new areas for design theory.

However, there are reasons for our theories of spatial hierarchy and use relationships, i.e. orientation, perspective, aesthetic value and scale. We have inbuilt beliefs that all things lead to something when viewing landscapes: Versailles is a classic example of this, la Villette is not.

DESIGNING WITH COMPUTERS

Adrian Tofts

Whilst the role of computers, and their benefits, are clear in the fields of accountancy, word processing and many other mechanical tasks, their benefits for the more intuitive and dynamic discipline of landscape design are more debatable. If one regards the design process in terms of 'survey', 'analysis', 'concept', 'solution', 'evaluation', then the benefit of computers is obvious in most of these fields. The ability to transfer information directly from site, or from existing information, compatible with the program, is of an enormous benefit at the 'survey' stage of design. Large quantities of data can be dealt with at great speed and with the minimum of human labour. 'Analysis' too, can be dealt with in a fast and efficient way with the application of computers. Not only can information be identified and retrieved for consideration, but the very process of entering that information is a systematic way imposes a discipline on the mind of the designer that can be extremely valuable. 'Evaluation' is a process that has received much attention, especially in the form of 'Environmental Impact Assessment' which was one of the demands on the designer's time that first encouraged the consideration of computers in the landscape field. During the process of 'concept' and 'solution', however, the application of computers, and their benefits, can be seriously questioned by their detractors.

The use of computers during these stages in particular forces the

designer to adopt a more formal and rigid attitude to the whole design process. Computer-drawn concepts and their use in the drawing of solutions encourage the designer to regard design as a linear process leading to a definite destination. The ways in which each stage in the process affect not only those succeeding it, but also those preceding it, may be ignored, to the detriment of the final design. The human brain, served by the simple mechanical tools of the design profession can fit between these stages in a more dynamic and intuitive way than the brain served by computer, where each stage of the process may involve a different software package. In fact the design process may be more akin to a spider's web, with each stage linked to every other stage, rather than the simple chain of survey, analysis, concept, design and evaluation.

Although the logical breakdown of elements greatly aids the survey stage of design, the same breakdown into the 'layers' of the design solution, may obscure the relationship of one element to the next, and demand an intensive synthesis or evaluation stage to resolve any conflicts. Although the level of detail needed from the beginning forces the designer to resolve detailed issues from the outset, the relatively linear nature of the computer design process may by-pass any diversions that the simple process of pencil-on-paper encourages. Although complex geometrical shapes may be drawn with ease by the skilled computer operator, no line on a screen can duplicate drafting with graphite — the speed, energy, different pressures — the 'sculpting' nature of design this encourages. An analogy may be that of traditional newspapers to teletext news services: although the information available may be far greater on the television screen, it is doubtful whether this form of news will ever replace the broadsheet or tabloid for sheer convenience; a paper can be folded and carried anywhere; information may be highlighted or cut out for future reference; ideas it provides can be recorded simply and easily. In these ways, at present, the pencil and paper far outweigh the computer system for convenience of initial design. However, it must be said that

the traditional methods of design do encourage an exclusivity and 'mystique' about the design process that the layered approach of computer-aided-design dispels. Although the breakdown of design into layers may be of detriment to the design as a whole it at least encourages contributions from other more computer literate professions and interested persons, and thus frees the landscape designer from his isolation. This process may also aid the transfer of information to the contractor, and encourage him to contribute rather than receive a set of instructions to implement.

The computer's ability to generate perspectives quickly and accurately is of enormous value during the 'concept' and 'design' stages. All too often the designer considers the inter-relationship of areas on plan and designs accordingly, with results that are very different when viewed in perspective. The computer can thus free the designer from this fixation, by using perspectives as part of the design process rather than the final presentation.

As has been shown there are many ways in which the computer enormously benefits the design process, and a few ways in which it acts to its detriment. It would be of tremendous value if future packages could introduce a fast and simple method of recording symbolic, abstract and detailed representations of a design either separately or simultaneously, and if information entered into one of these representations could influence the information stored in others.

To conclude, the introduction of computer-aided-design to the landscape profession is a necessary and vital step, and no more than the continual evolving of the approach of designers to their work that is evident in every profession. What the designer must be aware of is the way in which the process he adopts affects the design he produces. How much were the anonymous architects of England's medieval cathedrals hindered or encouraged by the design tools at their disposal, and if these tools were exchanged for the parallel-motion boards

and technical pens of modern-movement architects how would the buildings of each be affected? These are the questions the landscape architect must be aware of when he first exchanges technical pen and T-square for mouse and light-pen.

PUBLIC PARKS IN BUDAPEST

Imré Jambor

The history of parks in Budapest — today a city with a population of two million — began at the end of the 18th century when, like other European cities, the Hungarian capital faced a growing demand for public gardens and open spaces. The Danube crosses the length of the city in a south-north direction and divides it: the western part is Buda, with its rolling and hilly relief, the eastern part is the plain of Pest, on flat, alluvial soil. Construction and open-space planning show basic differences on the two banks, according to the two different types of topography.

In the 18th century, of the 6,200 hectares allocated for the whole city, only 2.2 % was covered with buildings. Forty-one percent was used for viticulture, 16% was woodland, and the rest was arable land and meadows. As the city expanded, the hills and slopes were gradually used for housing. In the outskirts, where the urban-dwellers' grape and fruit gardens were planted, villas appeared with adjacent ornamental gardens. Spectacular natural areas began attracting vacationers, and these locations later became recreation centres.

Big open spaces were not planned on the Buda side of the city: because most of the buildings had their own gardens and woodlands surrounding them, there did not seem to be a reason for it. Construction on Buda's slopes increased between the two world wars and later

continued in waves, so that the slopes and hills surrounding the historical city are currently covered with adjacent residential and resort buildings. In 100 years, the city border moved westward approximately 8 kilometres with developed sections almost reaching the protected reserve of Buda's woodlands. Only areas that served as grounds for military manoeuvres in the 18th and 19th centuries could escape, as construction was not allowed there. Eventually, public gardens were planted in these places.

On the Pest side, town parks had a different history. In the 18th century this area was flat land with sandy soil, pastures, swampy reed banks and very little forest. Varosliget (the city park), the world's first communal park, was opened on property on Pest's swampy lowlands in 1817. In 1813 Nebbien Henrik won the competition conducted for the planning of the 150 hectare property, and implementation began with the public contributions. In 1896 during the festivals marking the 1000th anniversary of the formation of the Hungarian state, Varosliget was rebuilt in the fashion of those days.

The other large public park of Pest is Margaret Island, once the property of the Archduke Jozef. Thanks to the Danube, the island has a very favourable climate, and *Platanus occidentalis* dominates its park. The 100 hectare island situated in the middle of the city is perhaps the most beautiful park in Budapest.

The third large park in the city is Nepliget (the People's Grove), which was laid out on the flat sandy soil of Pest in 1868. The property was planted with locust trees and was made into an arboretum-public park. The First World War caused great damage to the park; the citizens were forced to cut down many of the trees when there was no other fuel supply. Nepliget's roads were regularly used for automobile races beginning in 1920. A special road network was part of a reconstruction project at that time to satisfy this need. The spatial structure and the road network of the park still show traces of this function.

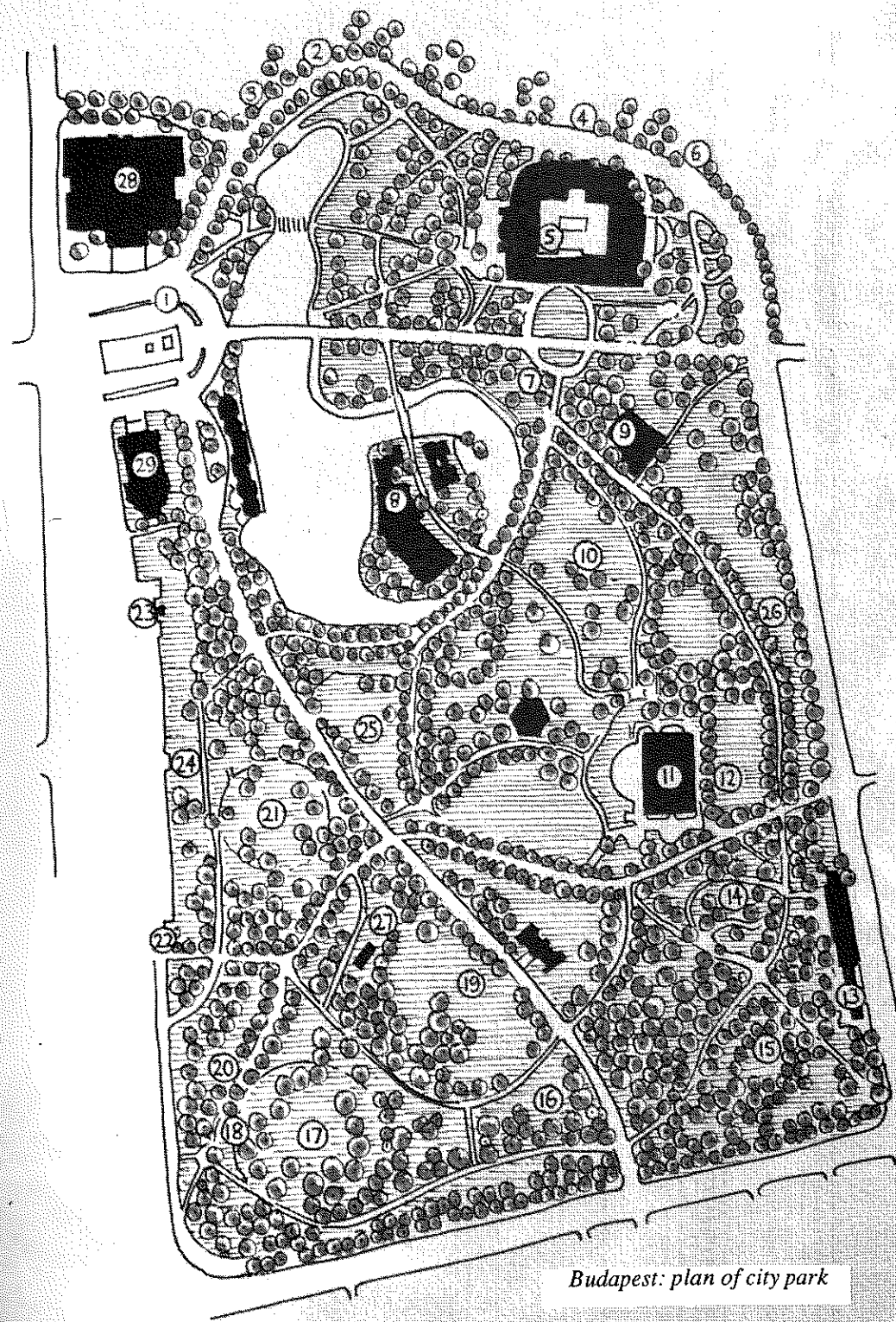
Pest's border moved 13 kilometres east while Varosliget and Nepliget were being developed. Due to the rapid town development of the 19th century these large public parks formerly at the outskirts of the city became islands in the expanding residential and industrial sections.

Further green open spaces on the Pest side were planned to fit in a circular-radial system. The above mentioned public parks and other open spaces (cemeteries, a racetrack for horses, protected woodland reserves) and some proposed gardens were intended to form the basis of a green ring of parks, which could have connected radically with the surrounding woodlands by three or four green surface zones or corridors. On the Buda side, the green surface ring would have continued with the forests of Buda, from where the forest-garden-park zones would have been formed as far as the Danube line.

The idea of forming the green ring on the Pest side and establishing the radial-ringed green surface system was proposed again during the rebuilding of the half-bombed city in the beginning of the 1950s. For a few years, developing this system was a long-term objective, but these plans were never realized.

Varosliget/City Park map: key to labels

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Millenium monument | 16. Small botanical garden |
| 2. Zoo | 17. School children's playground |
| 3. Restaurant | 18. Toy hire |
| 4. Circus | 19. Sledging hill |
| 5. Public baths | 20. Chess playing area |
| 6. Fun fair | 21. Kindergarten |
| 7. Kerényi well | 22. Monument to the Republic |
| 8. Vajdahunyad Castle | 23. Statue of Lenin |
| 9. Theatre | 24. 'Sió' fountain |
| 10. Sun meadow | 25. 'Hung-expo' office |
| 11. Youth centre | 26. Town Beautification Ass. Grove |
| 12. Sports grounds | 27. Maintenance |
| 13. Museum of traffic | 28. Museum of Fine Arts |
| 14. Playground-traffic | 29. Art Gallery |
| 15. Blind garden | |



Budapest: plan of city park

From the 1960s onward, several new public parks of substantial size were established in the vicinity of large scale apartment developments, but they were always linked to the construction of each residential area and offered no unified plan.

No doubt Budapest's new green spaces will mostly remain a system of isolated green islands, but suburban parks may have a more continuous structure formed by the expanding forests in the outskirts of Pest. Today the total area of the town is about 560 square kilometres. The 2 million inhabitants share 18 million square metres of public parks and gardens, and 5,300 hectares of forest area. According to city regulations, 21-30 square metres of public green space must be allocated per resident in new developments. Moreover, 30-50 square metres per capita park forest area must be provided. It can thus be assured that Budapest's proportion of surfaces covered by plants will not decrease below 50%, and that its supply of green spaces will not deteriorate in the foreseeable future.

KUBLA KHAN

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree:
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.

So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round:
And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills,
Where blossomed many an insense-bearing tree;
And here were forests ancient as the hills,
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

But oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!
A savage place! as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon-lover!
And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,
As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,
A mighty fountain momently was forced:
Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst
Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,
Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail;

And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and ever
It flung up momentarily the sacred river.
Five miles meandering with a mazy motion
Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,
Then reached the caverns measureless to man,
And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean:
And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far
Ancestral voices prophesying war!

The shadow of the dome of pleasure
Floated midway on the waves;
Where was heard the mingled measure
From the fountain and the caves.

It was a miracle of rare device,
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!

A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw:
It was an Abyssinian maid,
And on her dulcimer she played,
Singing of Mount Abora.
Could I revive within me
Her symphony and song,
To such a deep delight 'twould win me,

That with music loud and long,
I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
And all who heard should see them there,
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

THE POPLAR FIELD

William Cowper

The poplars are fell'd; farewell to the shade
And the whispering sound of the cool colonnade;
The winds play no longer and sing in the leaves,
Nor Ouse on his bosom their image receives.

Twelve years have elapsed since I first took a view
Of my favourite field and the bank where they grew:
And now in the grass behold they are laid,
And the tree is my seat that once lent me a shade.

The blackbird has fled to another retreat,
Where the hazels afford him a screen from the heat;
And the scene where his melody charm'd me before
Resounds with his sweet-flowing ditty no more.

My fugitive years are all hasting away,
And I must ere long lie as lowly as they,
With a turf on my breast and a stone at my head,
Ere another such grove shall arise in its stead.

'Tis a sight to engage me, if anything can,
To muse on the perishing pleasures of man;
Though his life be a dream, his enjoyments, I see,
Have a being less durable even than he.

1993 DISSERTATIONS: BA Hons (Landscape), Cheltenham

The following is a list of the successful degree dissertation submissions for 1993. These documents can be consulted in the College library at Francis Close Hall and abstracts may be obtained from the Librarian on receipt of a stamped addressed envelope. Titles and abstracts are also stored on a computer database in the Department of Countryside and Landscape enabling key-word searches to be undertaken.

- Beardshaw C *Ferns: this long forgotten tribe*
- Berry S *Dynamic golf courses: the way forward*
- Briggs P *Community woodlands in the urban landscape*
- Brock G *Soft vs hard defence in coastal erosion*
- Dalzell D *Local distinctiveness in environmental design*
- Duckett J *The appropriateness of landscapes within architecture*
- Gillick J *Sources of the English landscape style*
- Hardy S *An African perception: Kenya*
- Harper J *Secret gardens. The National Curriculum and the outdoor classroom*

- Jackson I *Ecological approaches, sustainability and the landscape architect*
- Jennings S *Should 'alternative theories' be considered in landscape design?*
- Jones S *Sustainable new settlements*
- Kember G *Grounds for restoration*
- Krawczyk N *The Cairngorms. Wilderness regained in a sustainable landscape*
- Lamkin G *The sensual garden. The origins, religious significance and future of the paradise garden*
- Lovelock I *Intuition. The dark side of creativity*
- Martin M *The landscape architects' role in the restoration of landfill*
- Owen N *The built environment: a case for community architecture*
- Petrie J *The manifestation of emerging paradigms in landscape design*
- Reed W *Urban playscapes*
- Richardson B *People as the essential focus of urban design*
- Rowe H *Birds in cities: the benefits and methods of attracting a more varied birdlife into our cities*

- Self L *Folly in the landscape: historical and modern follies in the development and design of the modern landscape*
- Simon P *An investigation into the design process of landscape designers*
- Stanyon I *The city as a sponge*
- Thomas G *The treatment of waste waters using aquatic plant ecosystems*
- Vessey S *Urban rooftop development*

OBITUARY

RONALD SIDWELL

Students of landscape architecture at Cheltenham for some two decades will remember with fondness the one day a week presence of Ron Sidwell as advisor on all matters horticulture when they were not attending the regular sessions at Pershore College. Ron was originally brought in as a bridge between the somewhat remote teaching at that college and the application of horticulture to planting design in the Landscape School. Indeed it soon became very clear that here was a genuine plantsman of the old school with profound knowledge of botany yet capable of interpreting the design thinking of would-be landscape architects into appropriate plant compositions. He developed a system of classifying plants according to their mainly visual characteristics (see *Landscape Issues*, 1 (2), 1984) which, although now modified, still figures centrally in the plant studies of current Cheltenham students.

Ron was the vice principal of Pershore College when it was first opened. He taught at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Kew. But he will be best remembered for the garden he created at Bredon Springs, on the eastern flanks of Bredon Hill. Starting with a neglected one and a half acres of ground in the early 1950s, he and his wife built up the garden largely as a spare time activity. They claimed it was a 'wild garden', in that they tried to produce natural looking groupings and plant associations. The underpinning principle was that understanding

plant competition was the essence of good planting design. The plant collection was large, with as many plant families represented as possible, from many parts of the world. The garden was opened to the public under the National Gardens' Scheme and continues to be so.

Ron was much respected by all his colleagues at Cheltenham. He was a largely self-taught man who had that rare talent of being able to translate technical horticultural statements easily into layman's language. His joyous enthusiasm for and deep love of the subject was passed on to all who met him, and it is with great sadness that we have lost such a charismatic teacher.

Peter Boswell

REVIEWS

NOT ALL CHILD-PLAY?

Two serials concerned with children have joined the Spon list. One is new: *International Play Journal*, supported by the International Association for the Child's Right to Play, is a refereed journal covering such areas as playwork and play provision practice, play in education, play-enabling environments, and the cultural, social, political and legal status of children and childhood. The first issue contains seven papers, including two Chinese contributions: one discusses play in preschool education in China; the other looks for legislation against firecrackers. A rather nebulous paper studies a children's garden at the University of British Columbia. A paper from Britain examines nursery experience, and concludes that there are "lasting benefits in terms of better employment, education and community participation" following nursery experience; and that where the children are guided in their play, rather than left at 'free play', subsequent schooling is more successful. The final paper, by Gordon Sturrock, delves to a deeper level, and makes a useful contribution to the debate about what play is. Sturrock contends (he is not alone) that there is an instinct to play, and that this drive, which he calls "the ludido ... is a premature form of the libido and during early childhood is its dominant form. It is superseded by the more mature and accepted 'adult' form at the onset of adolescence".

The second title, *Children's Environments*, is in its tenth volume, and its third (or fourth) manifestation. Supported by the Children's

Environments Research Group in New York, it was originally a fairly relaxed publication, *Childhood City/ Childhood City Quarterly/ Children's Environments Quarterly*. It is edited by Roger Hart, who has pioneered much of the serious investigation of children's use of their surroundings; and, although it seems to have adopted some of the gloss of the 'learned journal', looks like continuing the usefulness of earlier titles. The content ranges over "kids' dirt play" (in American English 'dirt' is, with sand and mud, a form of earth); the "non-auditory effects" of noise, a disturbing review of significance to us all; children's acquisition of concern for the "natural environment"; and conflicts over community space between youngsters, commercial enterprises, and authority, in Australia.

Landscape designers tend to pay substantial lip-service to the needs of children, and would do well to dip occasionally into such publications as these. Their significance is seen in the themes of some past issues of *Children's Environments* (in its previous guises): Neighbourhoods as Childhood Habitats, Schoolyards, Children and Water, Children and Vegetation. Unfortunately, I have found it very difficult to locate some of these in this country. Perhaps the new publishers could promote the back numbers — even though they are rather expensive.

International Play Journal Vol. 1. N. 1. January 1993. E&FN Spon, London. Three issues per year EU £70, North America \$112, rest of world £77. ISSN 0965-2531.

Children's Environments Vol. 10. N. 1. September 1993. E&FN Spon, London. Two issues per year £20/\$37 for individuals, £50/\$92 for institutions. ISSN 0886-0505.

THE STUDENT VIEW

Students of the landscape architecture schools in Britain have, over the past three years or so, become considerably better organised. The Landscape Students Group has arranged two successful Spring Schools; and a semi-autonomous magazine, *Freescape*, has now run through seven issues. How many more will appear is uncertain.

Since, in the seventies, student use of a reserved page in *Landscape Design* ceased, student views have seldom appeared in print. Tutors in several schools are disappointed that good ideas, and good writing, in dissertations seldom go public. There is little sign that *Freescape* is serving as a vehicle for them — but that is part of its potential. It has been used to present reports on events, such as IFLA conferences and the International Conference on Art and Landscape, and to display enthusiasms for such inspirations as permaculture, willow sculptures, and 'flow-forms'. Some articles have been contributed by landscape tutors, but most is students' material.

As such, it tends, understandably, to be a bit unpolished. Material in *Archetype*, intended to provide "a forum for all 36 schools of architecture in Britain as well as thousands of young professionals actively engaged in the building industry", is much more polished — but not a lot of it appears to be written by students. Its autumn 1993 preview issue is an A4 glossy, with articles on, for instance, five-year funding for education, 'ecodesign' of buildings, and a British Gas/RIBA ideas competition.

It is professionally prepared, and a sizeable readership must be assumed, as one off, four-colour, whole-page adverts are £1050. By (stark) contrast, *Freescape* is a single-ink A4 production that has kept to a word-processed homeliness — except for the largely handwritten, desperate, summer 1993 issue. Clearly, *Freescape*, which originated as a Manchester Poly student house mag, and which seems to have

been adhoced since, has quickly run into the common "cretinous impasse that only students are capable of", with "the only forum for landscape students in Britain" looking set to come "to an ugly end due to apathy", as the 1993 editors put it. This is sad, for two reasons: first, because a student voice for the profession — and for the academic discipline — is badly needed, and *Freescape* made a fair start; and second, because it is a mistake to feel that (landscape) students are different: "cretinous impassés" of apathy and indifference are the common lot of most publications. But students may be a little different, and certainly they feel the need for faculty support (not patronage). One senses that *Freescape* hasn't had much...

In some places this support — the *habit* of it — looks to be stronger. *Georgia Landscape* is published by second year graduate students: "a tradition passed from class to class... which allows each year's publication to reflect a new set of opinions and values". The 1993 issue had a staff of 13, who have prepared a well-illustrated imperial quarto magazine that has, in a widened distribution, been sent (free, I think) to landscape schools at home and abroad, and to all firms that are US members of ASLA.

This issue has the theme of "new visions/inherited traditions", and, besides fulsome school views, faculty interviews, and recent thesis topics, has articles on, for example, Jellicoe's Atlanta Historical Society Garden, new values in landscape design graphics, ecofeminism and landscape architecture, and "reembracing the garden" for children's play. The items are fairly brief, but somewhat more "academic" than most for *Freescape* — and certainly no more insubstantial than many an article in professional magazines from the State! I look forward to future issues.

I also look forward to the phoenixity of *Freescape*. There are sufficient schools and students here to support it. Provided with a keen staff ('committee', we used to call it), and with the help from interested

tutors if necessary, it could become a very useful magazine. It does not need the (typically architectural?) glossiness of *Archetype*, or the resources of Athens, to succeed.

Freescape. Intended to be one issue a term, for a subscription of £7.50. The current address is: 7 McDonald Road, Edinburgh, EH7 4LH (031-556-7336). British Landscape School reps to the Landscape Students Group may have up-to-date information.

Archetype. Monthly during academic year. Free to students (£25 overseas); others £30 (£55 overseas). From: 39-41 North Road, Islington, London N7 9DP. Published by Juke Joint Jimmy Communications Ltd.

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