

OCTOBER 2011

# SITELINES

Landscape Architecture in British Columbia



## LIVING ON THE EDGE

| Edible Parking Lot | Winning a Place at Chaumont-sur-Loire | Mount View Heights | Book Review  
| Left Coast Special | A Gabriola View | Morden Park | Centennial Square



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The purpose of Sitelines is to provide an open forum for the exchange of ideas and information pertaining to the profession of landscape architecture. Individual opinions expressed are those of the writers and not necessarily of those of the BCSLA.

# Living on the Edge

By Gerald Fleming, MBCSLA  
Vancouver Island Chapter  
Representative

Many years ago as a student in the LA program at the University of Guelph, I was reminded by a wise professor about the importance of edges and advised to not forget them when looking for a complete idea. That advice has stayed with me, and this issue of SITELINES (Vancouver Island Edition) brings together a number of people writing on a wide range of activities, linked here by a common thread of *edges*.



After all, we “Island folks” have chosen to live on the extreme western edge of Canada working in a profession that is both *edgy* and considered by some to be on the leading edge. Needless to say, we consider ourselves to be both innovators and educators of most trends or movements, whether it has to do with technology, the environment, inclusive processes, eye-popping public art, or...whatever. If you can name it, we’re there! That enthusiasm includes writing about our interests as the articles by our Island members in this issue, will attest.

In a piece about incomplete landscapes, Bev Windjack, MBCSLA and her staff looked at the parking edges of their own office site and wondered about “walking the talk” and decided to show what can be done with even those small, almost forgotten areas. Next spring, I’m giving it a try.

In 2010 Ruth Currey, BCSLA Intern and new MLA graduate, teamed up with a fellow graduate to enter an international landscape design competition in France. Little did she know what awaited—fun and adventure—and of course “challenges”. With boundless energy and determination, they successfully met the reality of working overseas where language, design, and costs were best described by comedian Steve Martin who said, “The French have a different word for everything.”

John Gauld, MBCSLA, MCIP in his role as landscape architect/planner, cites the need to work with neighbourhood groups and other organizations. Projects rarely exist on their own but rather gain momentum when the organizational edges are understood. The project LA was a key person in bringing together the different interests for a shared vision.

When I read Paul de Greeff, MBCSLA’s book review of Dr. William Marsh’s work, I wanted to go and find my old copy of the earlier edition and/or go and get the newer edition. Also, I was reminded how important it is for us as landscape architects to write. It is a seriously worthwhile endeavour and as the other writers in this issue have proven, this skill may be essential for a successful practice. ▶



Cover Image: The Atrium Project on Yates & Blanshard, Victoria, BC.  
Credit: Paul de Greeff, MBCSLA.

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Pat Harrison, MBCSLA has a special affinity for beaches and shoreline edge restoration, and even thinks about them during his vacations. In his article, he shares his recollections of a 2007 cycling trip down the west coast, where it's hard to separate one's recreational interests from one's working life...the edges are blurred aren't they?

Cameron Murray, MBCSLA happily lives and works on Gabriola Island located just east of Nanaimo, and he shares some local history while noting that we are influenced by our landscape as well as our own history. Perhaps for him, living on a small island just means having more time to contemplate, between meeting his project deadlines and taking ferry rides.

Landscape architects are often drawn to those special places that others might forget and in her work for the Morden Mine project, Jessica Gemella, MBCSLA outlines a different role that she had. Using her skills as a landscape architect she was able to help others achieve their goals. Sometimes we need to go beyond our known comfortable edges.

In 2008 Joe Daly, MBCSLA teamed up with (Bill) Pechet & Robb Studio Ltd. to tackle one of Victoria's key dysfunctional downtown places. To make changes to a very well-known Centennial Square in Victoria, they needed to have a "sympathetic integration" of old and new, without obvious edges. The use of the square

has increased dramatically illustrating the role of design in opening up the spaces to give them a new lease on life.

Lastly, this past summer during the Vancouver Island Golfing LA Assembly, we found that amongst our numbers, there are a surprising range of good golfers, would-be golfers, and "wanna-be" golfers. While your guest editor (and others) were exploring the outer edges and sedges of the fairways and waterways in pursuit of the illusive white "treasure," (and the real golfers were relaxing), I was again reminded how important it is to think about those *edges* and appreciate them—but also know about their hazards. I hope that you enjoy this issue of SITELINES. 51

## BCSLA Around the Island



Clockwise from top left: The Straights. Image courtesy of Frank Basciano, MBCSLA. Top right: Summer golf event, August 2011 – golfing not working is tough. Image courtesy of Stephen McLeish, MBCSLA. Middle right: Holiday Luncheon, December 2010. Image courtesy of Gerald Fleming, MBCSLA. Bottom right: Drawing on the Land Exhibit at the Gallery Café at Cedar Hill Recreation Centre, September, 2011. Image courtesy of Gerald Fleming, MBCSLA. Middle: Patrick Harrison, MBCSLA speaking at an Island workshop, at Earthspring Sanctuary - March 2011. Image courtesy of Gerald Fleming, MBCSLA. Bottom Left: Summer golf event, August 2011 - golfers on bridge over untroubled water. Image courtesy of Stephen McLeish, MBCSLA.

# The EDIBLE Parking Lot

By Bev Windjack, MBCSLA

Our studio is located between a storage facility parking lot and a metal fabricator in a three storey walk-up that straddles two municipalities in Greater Victoria. A heavy equipment repair shop is located below us and a residential suite above us. The building is “sort of” new—although construction on site began some twenty years ago, the developer of the time was unable to complete the work and the site was abandoned until six years ago when building construction was completed under new ownership. Unfortunately, or so we thought at the time, the landscape installation around the parking lot, also our front door, was never completed. This past spring, inspired by the Island’s increasing attention to urban agriculture, Darrin Nordahl’s enthusiastic session at the BCSLA 2011 Annual Conference, and a growing number of our own clients asking that we include edibles and food growing opportunities in our designs, we decided to pull the weeds and take our

chances with vegetables. Little did we know how satisfying the garden would be, both for us, and for all those who use the parking lot.

Using minimal resources—a bit of preparatory digging and weeding, a few purchased seedlings, and some seeds that staff kindly donated—we planted our garden at the end of May and began harvesting green beans in June, lettuce and zucchini in July, and Swiss chard and tomatoes in August. As I write this at the end of August the green beans, zucchini, Swiss chard, lettuce, and tomatoes, are still freely producing, the scarlet runner beans and cherry peppers have started to produce, and our sweet white corn, pumpkins, sunflowers, and ornamental gourds are developing well. Our only unsuccessful effort was with snow peas.

The taste of home grown vegetables is unbeatable but in some ways the greatest reward has come from the reaction of people who come and

go from the parking lot. The garden is clearly a surprise and draws a lot of positive attention. We’ve overheard numerous comments including, “so that’s what corn looks like,” and, “what a great idea,” and have noticed several regulars monitoring the garden’s progress, especially the size of the pumpkins and the ripening of the tomatoes. Children, too, seem enthralled, hunting for squash among the leaves and joyfully picking a bean or two when they think no one is looking. For our part, we’re now planning our winter garden and have asked our landlord to forget about the shrubs and grasses that he intended to plant this fall. [SL](#)



Top Row, left to right:  
Edible garden – late May,  
early July, late August.

Middle Row, left to right:  
Pumpkin – mid-August,  
Sunflower – mid-August,  
Sweet corn – early August.

Bottom Row, left to right:  
Zucchini – late August,  
Tomato – late August,  
Sweet corn – mid August.

Images courtesy of LADR  
Landscape Architects Inc.

# Winning a Place at Chaumont-sur-Loire

— or, How Internet Translation Sites Became a Landscape Designer's Best Tool

By Ruth Currey, BCSLA Intern

**Graduating from a master's program in Landscape Architecture** is a lovely experience: years of immersing oneself in design language and possibilities, sweating out the details, the sweet feeling of surviving yet another critique. In today's market, graduating can also mean months of preparing portfolios, interviews, short lists, editing presentations, and wondering if your degree is a marketable commodity. What better way to stay in tune than to take some time out from all the angst to enter a landscape design competition?

That was the thought that occurred to my fellow graduate Yekaterina Yushmanova and me as we faced the challenges of moving house and home, finding employment, and embarking on the intern track. So we agreed—to propose a design for the 2011 Garden Festival at the Domaine de Chaumont-sur-Loire in France. Although we were living in different cities, we set up a “Wiki” and started uploading images, text, flights of fancy, all the while parsing the design brief for hidden messages and deep meaning. While collaborative design from a distance can be tricky, it turned out to be the easy part: so we gleefully sent off our entry in early October of last fall.

Delight, shock, and anxiety—among other feelings—came when we received the news in early December that our design entry had won a place in the Festival. Along with the news came a multiple page contract in French—the word ‘bureaucratic’ takes on a whole new meaning when you are faced with a legal document in a language with which you have only a passing familiarity...oops, should have paid more attention in high school! Final design description, planting plans, detailed budget, construction documents, and yikes, proof of liability insurance, all due before, during, and right after the Christmas holidays: *Joyeux Noël*, indeed! While normally, shopping for building supplies when someone else is footing the bill is an unexpected pleasure, imagine trying to find lumber and lag bolts through French on-line sites, negotiating the complexities of Value Added Tax, different supply specifications, and dealing with fluctuating currencies as an added bonus.

In the New Year, both of us started jobs with landscape architecture firms in BC, and the time remaining until we were due to leave for France flew by. In March, the two of us and two intrepid volunteers boarded flights from various points in North America to meet up at the estate in the Loire Valley. Two weeks were allotted to hand-building our installation, starting with a flat, empty plot of gravel and clay soils. On paper, our design was the essence of simplicity. The reality? Sixteen massive planters, an 8-meter bench, a reflecting pool, a chaise



Top: Katya, her husband Ben Walsh, and our construction volunteer/guru, Jacob Werenko, survey the bare site. Image courtesy of Ruth Currey, MBCSLA Intern.

Middle: Planters underway and support masts installed. Image courtesy of Ruth Currey, BCSLA Intern.

Bottom: Visitors to the Domaine enjoying the mature garden with reflection pond. Image courtesy of Margaret Laxton, 2011.

longue big enough for a family of six, and 800 hand-assembled “pollen” balls required every hour of the two week allowance. With tons (tonnes!) of good humour, some student assistance, lots of scrambling, and a whirlwind clean-up at the end, we were able to complete the construction and celebrate with some great French wine on the final evening. (Well, drinking wine wasn't limited to the final celebration...but that's a whole other story!). **sl**

# Mount View Heights

## – Transforming a Former School Site

By John Gauld, MBCSLA, MCIP

CRD: Robert Lapham, General Manager, Planning and Protective Services  
CRHD: Rajat Sharma, Senior Manager, Health and Capital Planning Strategies  
CitySpace Consulting Ltd.: Gwyn Symmons, MCIP and John Gauld, MBCSLA, MCIP  
Architect: Jensen Group Architects:  
Transportation: Bunt & Associates Engineering  
Civil: 1st Team Engineering  
Arborists: Talbot Mackenzie Assoc.



Olympic Vista Apartments. Image courtesy of Destrube Photography.

**Mount View Heights is the redevelopment of the former Mount View school** property on Carey Road in Saanich. The project includes a new neighbourhood park, two public pedestrian walkways, and six buildings, totaling 40,880 square metres (427,000 square feet). In its role as developer, the Capital Regional Hospital District (CRHD) has dedicated neighbourhood parkland, connecting public pedestrian right-of-ways, and provided \$175,000 of park development funding to the District of Saanich. Saanich Parks and Recreation Department designs are approved and construction is slated for late 2011. One building project is now complete, two are under construction, another will start construction in the fall of 2011, and two projects remain for future uptake.

Development at Mount View Heights is exciting and gratifying as these accomplishments have been achieved in just 20 months since rezoning approval.

### Inspiration / Driving Forces:

Mount View School was constructed in 1932 and closed its doors in 1973. After a number of interim uses the building was demolished in 2006 and the site was remediated. CRHD purchased a portion of the site in 2002, the remainder in 2007, and soon after began the redevelopment process, with the early involvement of CitySpaces Consulting.

The vision for Mount View Heights evolved collaboratively with many contributors. At

the CRHD the driving force for implementation has been Robert Lapham, General Manager, Planning and Protective Services together with Rajat Sharma, Senior Manager, Health and Capital Planning Strategies (a position now held by Maurice Rachwalski). This is a significant opportunity to advance CRHD's mandate for health and housing facilities and their vision for Mount View Heights as a "campus of care" for seniors, housing for the homeless, and affordable family rental housing.



John Gauld, MBCSLA, MCIP. Image courtesy of Adam and Kev Photography.

The 2008 Saanich Official Community Plan also played a key role in the realization of the project. It identified Major Centres within Saanich, and introduced associated densification policies that promote growth within, and nearby, Major Centres. Mount View Heights is close to the Uptown Major Centre—Saanich's largest centre, currently under redevelopment.

### The Site:

The site is within an established neighbourhood of single dwelling units and several three-storey apartment buildings. Although located in a district that is statistically well served by parkland, the immediate community lacks readily accessible neighbourhood parkland. Prior to redevelopment, the former school yard had been informally adopted by the neighbourhood, primarily for dog walking and was criss-crossed by trodden pathways accessing local stores, cultural facilities, and the regional transit system.

Several clusters of existing Garry oaks are located along the boundaries of an otherwise open field that slopes gently to the south. The site enjoys southward distance views across the Strait of Juan de Fuca to the Olympic Mountains. ►



Mount View Heights illustrated from the north. Image courtesy of Patrick Cotter, Architect.



Mount View Heights viewed from the north. Image courtesy of Sandy Beaman. Please refer to Projects, Partners and Design Teams insert for more details.

### Planning Principles:

Early in the planning process, CitySpaces developed and obtained consensus on the principles that would guide discussions and the urban design decisions for Mount View Heights. These included:

- Mixed-use, residential densification adjacent to the Uptown Major Centre.
- High quality care facilities and housing.
- Strong connections to neighbourhood.
- Uptown and the regional transit exchange.
- Green Building Design.
- Encourage public transportation, Transportation Demand Management Plan.
- Campus, park-like setting with a strong sense of place.
- Financial viability.

### The Challenge:

CitySpaces was tasked to work with the newly formed Mount View Colquitz Community Association (MVCCA), Saanich Planning and Engineering staff and the design team to develop urban design concepts and a building program to achieve CRHD's vision for Mount View Heights. CitySpaces' role was to:

- Prepare, consult, respond, and refine the urban design concepts to create a plan that could be supported by the stakeholders and client.
- Coordinate communications, including plans, display panels, brochures, and presentations.
- Prepare design guidelines for the buildings and landscape.
- Negotiate neighbourhood park location, size, configuration, and pedestrian linkages.
- Coordinate and negotiate sequencing of off-site engineering works.

- Assist in the crafting and finalization of zoning regulations, pedestrian easements, and restrictive covenants to accurately implement the agreed upon plan.
- Coordinate development permit approvals.
- Subdivide parcels for phased development.
- Provide overall planning, urban design, and project management services.

### Key Concepts:

Some key urban design concepts that are evident in the final plan include:

- Building height and massing concentrated along the arterial (Carey) road and north quadrant of the site.
- Parkland located south of the buildings on a south facing slope.
- Building heights generally step down to the east and south for solar access, view potential and a complementary inter-face with existing buildings.
- North-south pedestrian connections are maintained through the development providing neighbourhood access to regional transit and the Uptown centre.
- A park-like campus setting with emphasis on underground parking, reduced parking facilities, and traffic demand management strategies.

### Partnerships:

Multi-party funding and financing partnerships are essential to the implementation of the Mount View Heights vision. The five projects successfully underway to date include a combination of eight partners, with the potential for more partnerships to complete the project.

Project 7, the office/residential building with ground floor neighbourhood commercial uses is planned to be a private sector partnership or sale that will help fund the CRHD's development costs and the off-site works required by the District of Saanich, valued at approximately \$2.0 million.

*The Mount View Heights redevelopment project was lead by Principal, Gwyn Symmons, MCIP together with John Gauld MBCSLA, MCIP.*

*John is a Registered Landscape Architect and Professional Planner who brings more than 35 years of private and public sector experience and enthusiasm to social housing projects. 51*





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# LANDSCAPE PLANNING: Environmental Applications

(Fifth Edition) 2010. By William M. Marsh. John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Book Review By Paul de Greeff, MBCSLA

Cover image courtesy of William M. Marsh.

**When we encounter people willing and able to invest in us personally**—who build our spirits and strengthen our minds—we are truly blessed. Professor William Marsh has been one of those people to me, and I suspect, to countless other students and colleagues who have had the good fortune of interacting with him. In addition to infectious enthusiasm, wisdom, and clear and fundamental perspectives on landscape that Will has shared with so many students over his 40-year teaching career, others have been encouraged to pursue new ways of approaching their craft through Will's writings.

Dr. Will Marsh, Professor Emeritus University of Michigan and current Adjunct Professor at the University of British Columbia began his teaching career at the University of Michigan in the 1970s. His first major piece of writing was a 1978 text entitled *Environmental Analysis for Site and Land Use Planning*, (Marsh, 1978). This book was funded by the American National Science Foundation through a program called Research Applied to National Needs (RANN). RANN was a funding program entirely focused on helping academics and researchers bring their findings closer to the average practitioner across the United States. Will spent part of his RANN research funding simply talking to local and regional (county and township) planners to explore how they used land-based information for community planning. Will's observation was that land use planners and designers were invariably using little or no site information to base their plans on. Planners and designers were laying out entire communities without even the most basic understanding of landscape form, or landscape processes and formative systems.

Will Marsh's motivation to help students and practitioners build an environmental knowledge base to reshape decision making launched Will on a remarkable teaching and writing career. His 1978 RANN-funded text sold over 7,000 copies in a matter of weeks,

and was hailed at the time as the practical companion guide to Ian McHarg's *Design with Nature* (McHarg, 1969). Will has since gone on to write several successful text books that are frequently used by University programs such as Geography, Land Use Planning, Landscape Architecture, and Applied Ecology. His most notable work, *Landscape Planning: Environmental Applications*, was first published in 1983. *Landscape Planning* is now in its Fifth Edition (2010), has been translated into 20 different languages including Mandarin, and has sold over 40,000 copies worldwide. *Landscape Planning* also remains one of the resource books on the American Society of Landscape Architects and BC Society of Landscape Architects' recommended reading guide for the Landscape Architectural Registration Exams.

Some of you will have a tattered 1998 Third Edition of *Landscape Planning* on the corner of the desk in the office, or even a 2005 Fourth Edition on a bookshelf near the favourite reading chair at home. Even with these copies in hand, The Fifth Edition is worth a look, as it has been revised and expanded significantly. *Landscape Planning* is arguably a fundamental resource text for landscape architects in that it provides both philosophical perspectives on dealing with landscape systems, as well as technical resource information on systems that we deal with as landscape architects every day—soil systems, vegetation systems, drainage systems, shoreline systems, etc. This unique marriage of well written philosophical perspectives with comprehensive technical information is reinforced in the Fifth Edition.

Notable improvements to the Fifth Edition of *Landscape Planning* include an expanded introduction chapter, an expanded chapter on Best Management Practices for local watersheds, additional case studies at the end of each chapter, and a new chapter on a systems approach to land-use planning.

The expanded introduction chapter is a wonderful piece of modern literature that provides a philosophical overview on how and why to apply technical knowledge of landscape systems to planning and design problems, and is the first clue that *Landscape Planning* provides so much more to the reader than a technical guide or design standards manual. So well written is the introduction chapter to *Landscape Planning* that it has shown up in stylistic writing texts for English Literature students.

Over the years, acclaim for *Landscape Planning* has centred on the text's comprehensiveness—its wealth of technical information on landscapes as diverse as coastal dune systems and permafrost soils to shoreline processes and watersheds. Having studied under Will Marsh a dozen years ago, and through continuing to work with him as a Teaching Assistant today, I have come to appreciate that a consistent theme in Will's thinking is to first study driving landscape systems—whether they are in rural settings or in a highly urbanized context—before venturing down the planning and design road. In fact, in his new chapter at the end of the Fifth Edition of *Landscape Planning*, Will makes the assertion that, “unless we address systems, there is little chance of achieving sustainability in the landscape,” –a strong statement on the importance of systems thinking in landscape architecture. In essence, when we re-engage with landscape and study systems in the comprehensive manner that Will encourages, we can develop a more mature sense of place and arguably stand a better chance of designing more sustainable or site adaptive landscapes.

Regardless of which of Will's texts or which Edition of *Landscape Planning* that you study, you are likely to encounter an enjoyable and worthwhile experience. For those of you that have shared my experience of studying and working with Will, he remains one of the most influential and inspiring teachers that I have had the pleasure of studying under—small tribute to a true master. Give *Landscape Planning: Environmental Application* (Fifth Edition) a look, or dust off that old copy and look at it afresh—you won't be disappointed. **sl**



# LEFT COAST Special

By Patrick Harrison, MBCSLA

**“I hate vacations. If you can build buildings, why sit on the beach?”** Architect, Philip Johnson (1906-2005)

Personally, I love vacations, and I love to sit on the beach. This article began as an exposition on soft shore protection, a professional passion of mine and one that requires spending quality time on the beach. I’ve had the good fortune of doing a lot of that over the past several years. But, it occurred to me that my journey to a landscape architectural career was as interesting as describing the minutia of beach restoration. I “build” beaches because of vacationing!

In 1984 I was working as a ranger in the Kananaskis Rockies and tiring of the perpetual springtime snow (spelled “slush”). Besides, lay-off had arrived with the economic downturn of that time and I unexpectedly had a month to kill before I was rehired in the Park as a “seasonal”.



Typical Pacific coast riding conditions with shoulder improvements along the southbound lane. Image is viewing north. Image courtesy of Patrick Harrison, MBCSLA.

On impulse I bought a bike and panniers, booked a flight to Portland, Oregon and began a life-changing journey along Hwy 101. Serendipitously, what started as a quest for warmth and trying a new way to “hike”—reawakened my coastal aesthetic, accelerated a career change, and planted the seed of my current professional (pre)occupation with beaches. Full circle...um...cycle!

## Bicycling the Left Coast

Of all of the variations on adventure travel—hiking, ski mountaineering, canoeing, even car-camping (ahem), cycle touring suits me

the best. With a daily travel distance of 40 to 80 miles you see lots of stuff. More stuff than you’d hike through in a day, and definitely more stuff than you’d see from behind the wheel of an automobile travelling at five or more times the speed. The Pacific Coast route follows US 101 and Pacific Coast Hwy 1 (PCH) along a coastline so fetching (pardon the beach pun) and popular that the state parks departments (Washington, Oregon, and California) have parks with camping, on average, every 50 miles or so. During the US bicentennial year 1976, with cycle touring gaining in popularity, “hiker-biker” campsites were introduced, the southbound shoulder was widened and marked, and the Pacific Coast route became an official cycle route, signed along the way and marked on the map.

An excellent day-by-day guide is *Bicycling the Pacific Coast*, now in its Fourth Edition. ▶



Dick Murphy Park beach restoration. Top image - as found condition, December 2004. Middle image - as constructed, March 2005. Bottom image - soft shore protection as of summer 2011. *More on JPH Consultants Inc.’s softshore protection work at: <http://greenshores.ca/sites/greenshores/documents/media/135.pdf>.* Images courtesy of Patrick Harrison, MBCSLA.

For an April ride (that year) I lucked out with the weather, however springtime weather can be dicey. Travel in August for the best odds of dry weather and a tailwind.

The scenery was, of course, spectacular and surprisingly varied. There are beaches (surprise), sea stack-studded coastlines, beautiful Art Deco bridges, redwood forests, Victorian townscapes, and the sand dunes of the Oregon central coast. I took rolls and rolls of Ektachrome (that's film) and several images made their way into the portfolio I presented at my interview for the Bachelor of Landscape Architecture program at the University of Guelph—and into various coastal geomorphology term papers.

## Some of the Things That Caught My Attention

Every day's ride ended with a hiker-biker campsite and each had its own charm. With three state park agencies, a few national parks, and a couple private facilities, there was lots of variation, innovation, and adaptation to "place". Despite its apparent niche appeal, cycle-touring has an international following. Imagine an international youth hostel without walls, in the redwoods or on a sea bluff and you've got the atmosphere. At that time I knew of no equivalent facility for human-powered touring in Canada, except perhaps alpine huts.

One thing we have lots of here in BC? No post barriers! It saddens me to see mile after mile of those philistine view-obstructing risk-averse-to-a-fault hunks of concrete here in BC. The primacy of views along the PCH in Northern California is refreshing. CalTrans shows obvious restraint (and likely, actuarial analysis) in not designing every mile of highway for the statistically insignificant idiot that might recklessly careen over a 300 foot cliff into the sea. In the main, people appear to adapt their driving styles accordingly.

The coastal dunes were a new phenomenon for me. The Coos dune sheet is an internationally significant dynamic dune system. Dependant on a steady robust littoral sand supply, (in this case from the Columbia River), a dynamic dune system can be miles wide, composed of multiple ridges—like mountain ranges. Except... they, en masse,



Coos dune sheet with crests oriented to the summer high pressure winds. Image courtesy of Patrick Harrison, MBCSLA.

change orientation twice a year with the shift in the prevailing winds from the winter pattern to the summer one. The concept of such an animated landscape fascinated me. I thought the Rockies were active! I was thinking of the Coos Dune Sheet when I selected coastal geomorphology courses as electives during my BLA years at Guelph.

On the second last night before reaching my destination, San Francisco, I camped at a regional park in Gualala. The headlands were glowing orange, coastal mule deer dotting the open bluff-top landscape, and it occurred to me how nicely the little park had been laid as I wandered along a footpath, taking it all in. The pathway continued through a cypress shelter belt and weathered grape-stake fence into what appeared to be a very upscale enclave—but with a difference. There were no lawns, no street lights, and no fences around the homes. The homes themselves, at once vernacular and modern, seemed to blend right in with the sheep grazed landscape. I can still remem-



ber my comment—to myself—"Nice..." (Solo travel can be monosyllabic).

Next morning, pedalling south along the PCH I realized that the "subdivision" occupied 10 miles (!) of the coastline. It turned out that the development was Sea Ranch (Charles Moore, Bill Turnbull, and Lawrence Halprin). I later learned that the park I was so impressed with was designed in Halprin's office.

Visual impressions reflect only the top surface to a much deeper wave. Virtually every night as I lay in my tent, the rhythm of the surf rolling in was the last thing I remembered—and the first thing I registered in the morning as I awoke to another day of "spinning". Talk about the ultimate creative life force...

To the aspiring Philip Johnsons out there, I highly recommend vacations! Spend some quality time on the beach. Incidentally, if we keep on assuming that we can continue building without contemplation of the beach we will lose both, the beach, and those hallowed buildings—to the sea.

*A touring blog from my 2007 trip down the left coast:*

[http://www.crazyguyonabike.com/doc/?o=1r4vFZo&doc\\_id=1085&v=Fs](http://www.crazyguyonabike.com/doc/?o=1r4vFZo&doc_id=1085&v=Fs) SL

Architecture to fit the landscape. Gualala Regional Park. Image courtesy of Patrick Harrison, MBCSLA.

# A GABRIOLA VIEW

## Reflections on a Small Island Practice

By Cameron Murray, MBCSLA



Malaspina Gallery - Engraving by Bartolome Maura, from a painting by Fernando Brambila, from an original sketch by Jose Cardero, 1792. Image reprinted with permission from SHALE No.10, Gabriola Historical & Museum Society, January 2005.

**Geoffrey Jellicoe has pointed out that the slow** apprenticeship involved in Landscape Architecture is due to the wide array of studies involved, as “the mother of all the arts”. At the University of Guelph, I signed up for the library tour only to discover that for Landscape Architecture, the tour would span the entire library of art, science, and government publications. Here we have a profession derived from a study of nature and civilization, based upon a careful interpretation of patterns in nature with all the branches of geomorphology, ecology, and botany; as well, the cultural interpretations of literature, sculpture, art, and design. The idea of design as a way of seeing and changing environments is a study in itself of creativity and alchemy, as we weave straw into gold.

As I look up from the drawing board, I recall hints, lightbulbs, and waves of ideas which have become part of my kit as a practicing landscape architect on a small island. I wish I was awake during Cameron Man, LMBCSLA, FCSLA’s lectures on professional practice. Call early to catch people, Randall Sharp, MBCSLA, FCSLA advised. Jane Durante, MBCSLA, FCSLA and Peter Kreuk, MBCSLA, FCSLA would host schedule meetings on Mondays with a panorama of diverse projects. Currently, schedule meetings take just as long, even though I am the only participant.

Gabriola Island has influenced a change in practice, quite different from Kitsilano. Clive Justice, LMBCSLA, FCSLA provided an introduction with his study of Archibald Menzies (Clive Justice, Mr. Menzies Garden Legacy, Cavendish, Delta, 2000). *Arbutus menziesii*, *Pseudotsuga menziesii* and *Quercus garryana* are special trees of the Gulf Islands; here, my favourite is *Acer macrophyllum*. Golden in Autumn, providing maple syrup in Spring, the bigleaf maple characterizes our Island with gracious upraised limbs. Our office is situated beneath one.

Galiano and Valdes Islands are named for famous Captains. Gabriola, meanwhile has been long considered a typo for *gaviota*, or seagull. Nick Doe of the Gabriola Museum has traced the Eighteenth Century sketch maps and journals and followed typos, as they appeared in later map transcriptions, “...why would experienced Spanish naval officers, thousands of miles from home, wish to record that they had seen a seagull?” Galiano and Valdes had actually recorded the name as *Punta de Gaviola* in 1792. Simon de Gaviola was a noble backer of the exploration, from the Basque region (Nick Doe, The Origin of Gabriola’s Name, SHALE, No.13, Gabriola Historical & Museum Society, June 2006).

Natural boundaries determine our work as landscape architects more than political ▶

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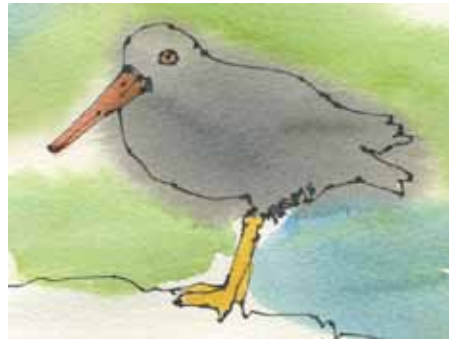
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boundaries. Islands and watersheds shape ecosystems more than survey lines. On Gabriola the sandstone dissolves into the sea on all sides, in some stylish formations. At the Malaspina Gallery the sandstone takes a curve, something like Hokusai's Great Wave. At Spring Beach the stone takes the form of a sculpture garden, as if Henry Moore had been at work for a hundred years.

An Island sensibility is also shaped by the shorelines. Community projects are afoot here like the Mennonite barn raisings of Waterloo County. Gabriola Commons is a creative initiative of community agriculture, community kitchen, a sustainability centre, poetry yurt, and labyrinth. The Clinic is a similar community initiative with a relay of volunteer initiatives. A Gabriola trail initiative connects walkways across the Island to join regional and provincial parks. Dr. Katherine Dunster, MBCSLA, R.P.Bio has recently prepared a new management plan for the 707 acre central park of the Island.



Oystercatcher, an inhabitant of the Flat Top Islands. Drawing by Cameron Murray, MBCSLA.

Gabriola has a direct relationship with Nanaimo, dating to the Snuneymuxw First Nation moveable villages from Departure Bay to the clam beds at El Verano. Currently the ferry runs hourly with commuters travelling in both directions. Vancouver Island University, the Port Theatre, and the walkable downtown are well within reach. Landscape architects have played an important role in

the cultural evolution of Nanaimo, with Archadia Landscape Architecture Ltd., HB Lanarc Consultants Ltd., Victoria Drakeford Landscape Architect, Gemella Design Inc., and JPH Consultants Inc. contributing to an enlivening urban centre. Library Square has now become Diana Krall Plaza, with the placement of an oversize tuning fork, made of corten steel. Planners have recently recognized Commercial Street as one of the more engaging walkable streets in Canada.

A study of alternative future environments with Peter Nash, at Waterloo, introduced "The Third Wave" (Alvin Toffler, *The Third Wave*, Bantam, New York, 1980). Alvin Toffler imagined we would live in "electronic cottages" and send in our work whenever necessary. What I then considered science fiction, has now become standard. On the drawing board meanwhile, we have a diversity of projects on Gabriola Island, Vancouver Island, and in the Lower Mainland. Visitors are welcome to pop by our small office beneath the bigleaf maples. **SL**

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Morden Mine circa 1917. Image courtesy of Ray Knight Collection, Ladysmith Archives.

# VANCOUVER ISLAND HERITAGE LANDSCAPE:

## *Morden Colliery Historic Provincial Park*

By Jessica Gemella, MBCSLA.

Today, Morden Park is a significant recreation destination within a network of trails and parks. The park includes a trail head for the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN). The adjacent 1 kilometre regional trail follows the former coal railway route that once linked this mine, and nearby mines of South Wellington, to Boat Harbour for shipping. As the RDN acquires the missing pieces to re-link Morden Park to Boat Harbour, the park will attract more visitors.

The Morden ruins are in an advanced state of deterioration and remedial measures to stabilize the structures are urgently needed. The Friends of Morden Mine Society (FOMM) is a nonprofit society dedicated to preserving the park's historic structures. FOMM is working to raise awareness, to fundraise, and to organize upgrades to secure the structures. In early 2010, FOMM engaged Gemella Design Inc. to develop a plan to guide the future development of the park as a heritage tourism destination and education centre for coal mining history. The project was supported by BC Parks, The City of Nanaimo, and The Regional District of Nanaimo.

Planning began with a public consultation through a series of open houses held in the nearby communities of Cedar and South Wellington. The vision for Morden Park's development (as interpreted through public consultation) is to restore historic landscape patterns as an example of Vancouver Island mining, while preserving the current natural park character. The plan priorities are to create an interpretation centre, community gathering space, and to enhance the regional trail head. More specifically, the vision is that the park ultimately serves to:

- Secure and protect the existing heritage values.
- Foster education about and appreciation of Vancouver Island's coal mining history.
- Provide links to other historical sites and trails.
- Provide rewarding outdoor recreational opportunities including a community gathering space.
- Conserve and restore the natural landscape and park character.
- Consider the needs of the surrounding neighbourhood, i.e. provide buffers and screening for protection from trespassers.
- Develop as an important component of Nanaimo (Central Vancouver Island) Tourism infrastructure.

Morden Colliery Historic Provincial Park is an important component of Vancouver Island's growing stock of heritage tourism opportunities. Morden Mine's significance as both an educational and a tourism resource will be greatly enhanced when the site plan is brought to fruition. The planning approach is an example of how organizations and community can work collaboratively in identifying cultural values, and how the heritage landscapes can be managed based on those values.

*To find out more about the Morden Mine, please visit [www.mordenmine.com](http://www.mordenmine.com). SL*



Morden Provincial Park contains the best surviving examples of surface coal mine structures in Canada. The intent of the Morden report is to stimulate fundraising initiatives to repair the deteriorating mine ruins, and to present a site plan to guide the future development of the park as a heritage tourism destination and education centre for coal mining history. Image courtesy of Gemella Design Inc.

# SUPPORTING PUBLIC USE of Centennial Square

By Joseph Daly, MBCSLA

## DESIGN TEAM:

Joe Daly, MBCSLA - *Daly Landscape Architecture*  
 Bill Pechet - *Pechet and Robb Studio Ltd.*  
 Tony Baur - *GENIVAR Civil*  
 Jim Galloway - *GENIVAR Structural*  
 Nick Alcock - *GENIVAR Electrical*  
 Francis Yong - *Advicas Cost Consultants*  
 Ken Bryant - *Accent Stainless Steel Manufacturers*

General Contractor: *Farmer Construction Ltd.*



In the summer of 2008, the City of Victoria retained Daly Landscape Architecture and Pechet and Robb Studio Ltd. to redesign the western edge of Centennial Square, the civic space surrounding Victoria City Hall. The intent of the renovation was to encourage more public use of the square. The program identified by the City included a new outdoor performance space, water play features, infrastructure to support events, and placement of First Nations artwork. Construction was completed in the summer of 2009.

Key elements of the design included providing maximum flexibility for use of the space and sympathetic integration of new elements into the existing square, which was designed, by Justice and Webb Landscape Architects in 1965.

A central component of the renovations included a new covered stage to support a range of small to medium sized performances. The stage canopy is a stand-alone structure adjacent to the rear of the ▶



Top: Lunch in the Square. Middle: Performance on the Stage. Bottom: the 'Big Dipper' and Ramp. Images courtesy of Joseph Daly, MBCSLA.



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Left: Bridge through the Garden. Right: Children at play. Images courtesy of Joseph Daly, MBCSLA.

McPherson Playhouse. A new pedestrian access route was established through this corner of the square and the height of existing masonry walls was lowered to improve visibility and provide informal seating opportunities around the new stage. Electrical and sound system infrastructure was installed to support a portable sound kiosk and electrical and storage rooms were built into the back of stage area.

The Big Dipper, a fountain in the form of a ladle, is a cross-cultural reference and link between the square and a new garden to display First Nations art. The fountain provides drinking water for people and pets and opportunities for play. Water from the fountain nourishes the garden.

Lighting in the plaza space was reconfigured to accommodate temporary stages for larger events and provide better overall illumination in the square. Multiple in-ground water and electrical services and foundations to support portable umbrellas were installed in the plaza to accommodate markets and other events. Portable chairs and tables support informal groupings and the ability to move to find sun or shade. New benches, walls, and other built elements provide a range of flexible seating options.

The total cost of the Centennial Square renovation project was \$1.6 million and was funded by the Province of BC Spirit Square program and the City of Victoria.

Two years post construction, the investment in thoughtfully designed amenities and infrastructure along with continued efforts by the City of Victoria to program and maintain the square appear to be having a positive influence on public use of the space. Programmed use of the square has increased from 53 days of programming in 2008 to 156 days of programming in 2011. Improvements to circulation through the square, lighting and visibility within the square, and provision of amenities such as an artful and playful drinking fountain and flexible seating arrangements appear to be supporting an increase in non-programmed use of the square, as well. 51

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# Mount View Heights

## – Transforming a Former School Site Projects, Partners and Design Teams

By John Gauld, MBCSLA, MCIP

### CitySpaces Consulting:

CitySpaces has played a key role from inception to building completion, demonstrating skills in project visioning, community planning, program development, urban design, public engagement, communications, municipal approvals, project management, and cost control.

### Projects, Partners and Design Teams

	Component Project	Project Partners	Project Design Team
1	<b>MVH Neighbourhood Park</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(fall 2011 construction start)</li> <li>0.54 ha (1.34 acre) local park with two connecting public walkways to Carey Road</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CRHD (land dedication and partial development funding)</li> <li>District of Saanich (ownership, design, funding and operation)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>District of Saanich Parks and Recreation Department</li> <li>CitySpaces Consulting (planning)</li> </ul>
2	<b>Olympic Vista Apartments</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(complete)</li> <li>3 storeys, 36 unit modular construction apartment building for homeless and homeless at risk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capital Regional Hospital District (land lease)</li> <li>BC Housing (funder, building owner)</li> <li>Vancouver Organizing Committee for the 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games (VANOC)</li> <li>Victoria Cool Aid Society</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planners &amp; Project Managers: CitySpaces Consulting</li> <li>Architect: Burrowes Huggins Architects</li> <li>Landscape Architect: Forth Land Planning</li> </ul>
3	<b>Vergo Affordable Family Townhouses</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(under construction)</li> <li>14 three storey townhouses with 4 additional accessory suites</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capital Regional Hospital District (land dedication)</li> <li>Capital Region Housing Corporation (developer /operator)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planners &amp; Project Managers: CitySpaces Consulting</li> <li>Architect: Chow Low Hammond Architects</li> <li>Landscape Architect: LADR Landscape Architects</li> </ul>
4	<b>Carey Place Affordable Seniors Rental</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(under construction)</li> <li>4 storey, 55 units plus one guest suite</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capital Regional Hospital District / Capital Regional District (land lease)</li> <li>Baptist Housing (developer / operator)</li> <li>BC Housing (funder)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planners: CitySpaces Consulting</li> <li>Architect: Patrick Cotter Architect</li> <li>Landscape Architect: van der Zalm + associates Inc.</li> </ul>
5	<b>Baptist Housing Residential Care</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(fall 2011 construction start)</li> <li>7 storey, 260 units</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capital Regional Hospital District / Capital Regional District (land lease)</li> <li>Baptist Housing (developer / operator)</li> <li>Vancouver Island Health Authority (funder)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planners: CitySpaces Consulting</li> <li>Architect: Patrick Cotter Architect</li> <li>Landscape Architect: van der Zalm + Associates Inc.</li> </ul>
6	<b>Congregate Care</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(future)</li> <li>6 storey, 112 units</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capital Regional Hospital District / Capital Regional District (land owner)</li> <li>Partner to be determined</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planners: CitySpaces Consulting</li> </ul>
7	<b>Office/Residential Building</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(future)</li> <li>7 storey, 6,805 sm (73,248 sf) office or residential building with ground floor commercial / coffee shop</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capital Regional Hospital District / Capital Regional District (land owner)</li> <li>Partner to be determined</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planners: CitySpaces Consulting</li> </ul>