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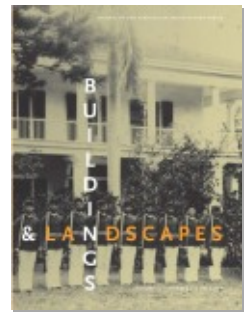
Editors' Introduction

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Editors' Introduction

Each volume in the *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture* book series, the predecessor of this journal, had a special title, for that volume only, that provided a thematic link to the various chapters in the book. If this issue of *Buildings & Landscapes* had such a thematic title, it might be "The Connected Landscape." The authors of this issue have dealt with ideas of regional connections, continuities and discontinuities over time, and how the meaning of buildings is connected to contexts and forces that are larger than themselves. This issue thereby continues the "reaching out" of the last several issues, in an attempt to broaden the scope of scholarship in vernacular architecture.

Although the articles in this issue cover a wide range of topics and places—ranging from Honolulu to Israel, churches to railroads, religious shrines to grand houses—they are together characterized by common themes and common conundrums of scholarship and practice. Two of them (Sprinkle and Chiarappa/Szylvian) deal explicitly with questions of preservation and public history, both from the point of view of top-down policy as well as bottom-up practice. Two of them (Lupkin and Chiarappa/Szylvian) deal with the particular urban place in the context of the larger region and its industrializing or postindustrial economy. Three of them (Sprinkle, Price, and Alon-Mozes/Shadar/Vardi) deal with the changing meaning of individual buildings over time, with the articles by Sprinkle and Alon-Mozes/Shadar/Vardi both showing how religious structures may have meanings that are not only fixed through religious ritual but also contingent on social practice and relationships with nonreligious cultural ideas. Together, the articles deal with buildings and landscapes as dynamic, changing phenomena, shaped by larger forces of culture, politics, and economics.

John Sprinkle's "Viewpoint" essay provides the background to the "religious property exception" regarding federal recognition of historic properties. Sprinkle shows that while this exception—which excludes properties that have only religious significance from inclusion on the National Register, but that allows religious properties that are significant in other ways—is based on the First Amendment to the Constitution, there is a more complex political story. This story is told largely through accounts of the designation of several religious buildings—the Church Tower Ruins at Jamestown Island, Virginia; Mission San Jose y San Miguel de Aguayo, San Antonio, Texas; Gloria Dei (Old Swedes'), Philadelphia; Saint Paul's Church, Eastchester, New York; and the Touro Synagogue, Newport, Rhode Island. These histories show both explicit reasons for their designation as well as political ones that in some cases smoothed the process—all in all, showing the not-always-clear considerations that go into the actual process of National Register designation.

How the regional context of industry was affected by, and affected, architecture is the topic of Paula Lupkin's article. Lupkin uses three influential city-builders—Adolphus Busch, "entrepreneur extraordinaire and inventor of America's favorite lager beer," George Kessler, landscape architect and planner, and Karl Oblitzelle, who built vaudeville and movie theaters throughout the Southwest. In a manner similar to that of William Cronon's work on Chicago, Lupkin describes how the railroads that connected St. Louis with Texas provided opportunities for development that eventually changed the character of the entire region. Lupkin weaves together the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair; hotel development; the park, boulevard, and open space system of St. Louis, including its private streets; and

the development of the idea of entertainment venues from what were informal shopfronts into major buildings. All of these things gave strong identity to places, and the railroads helped to disseminate them across the region. Lupkin helps to place local building into a much larger context of economics and the formation of regional identity, and helps us to see the role of strong individuals in forming the institutional context for subsequent vernacular building.

Virginia Price's contribution on Washington Place, an important house in Honolulu that was the home of a succession of territorial and then state governors, uses the history of a single building to demonstrate the evolution of the interaction between local Hawaiian and national American ideas. The house is a mix of Greek revival planning and local, indigenous materials and details, and was used at various times and in different ways to assert American claims while at the same time always harboring Hawaiian identity. The article raises important questions about the role of architecture in colonial and postcolonial situations, pointing up the idea that architecture is not neutral, and that power may be demonstrated in subtle architectural ways. Price points out similarities between this house and others in the Caribbean, adding increased complexity to the question of the meaning of indigenous forms. The history of the house is traced through to statehood and to the recent designation of the building as a National Historical Landmark.

A very different kind of building is described in the article by Tal Alon-Mozes, Hadas Shadar, and Liat Vardi. The grave estate of Baba Sali, Rabbi Israel Abu-Hatsera, has been a place of veneration and pilgrimage since the death of the rabbi in 1984. This article clearly describes a basic dichotomy in understanding sacred architecture: whether its sacredness is "essential," or inherent in the form and architecture itself, or whether its sacredness is contingent on changing social circumstances. The authors describe both as contributors: the setting of the modest building, but perhaps mostly the increasing, and now declining, importance of the site. The site's decline is connected to contemporary Israeli politics and changing demographics, as Russian immigration supplanted that from Morocco,

the home of Rabbi Abu-Hatsera. The article balances a description of the site with a theoretical discussion of the question "What makes a site sacred?" It works together with the "Viewpoint" article by John Sprinkle in laying out a series of questions about the importance of religious sites. It is, furthermore, a good example of why it is important for *Buildings & Landscapes* to take on international subjects.

Finally, questions of public history and interpretation are the focus of the article by Michael J. Chiarappa and Kristin M. Szylyan. Using the transformation and deindustrialization of the waterfronts in Benton Harbor and St. Joseph, Michigan, as case studies, the authors weave together history, public policy toward preservation, and efforts to bring history to light in meaningful ways. As in many places, what was once a working waterfront gradually fell into disuse along with physical evidence and human memory. Using documentary sources and interviews, the article strongly evokes the life of a working waterfront as it was—and thereby presents a challenge to public historians who would seek to interpret the site. The authors also point out the relationship of the waterfront to the regional economy that includes Chicago and transport on Lake Michigan. This presents another challenge for accurate interpretation—and also connects the article to that of Paula Lupkin, as both articles recognize the multiple scales through which any local place must be understood. Finally, the article shows how university programs in public history may play an active role in changing the perceptions of how history is interpreted.

This is the fourth and last issue of *Buildings & Landscapes* edited by Howard Davis and Louis Nelson. Beginning with the next issue, Marta Gutman will join Louis as coeditor and Andrew Sandoval-Strausz as book review editor. This team will provide both continuity and a new voice to the editorship. We have enjoyed working with each other and are very pleased with the direction that the journal has taken.