Is Landscape...?

Essays on the Identity of Landscape

Edited by Gareth Doherty and Charles Waldheim

(but frequently not very green), infrastructure systems are often implemented without sufficient consideration of local knowledge and social context. The primary working hypothesis is that access to, the design of, and the performance of green infrastructure is shaped by social relations, environmental conditions, economic incentives and constraints, and political and regulatory systems.[24]

By identifying interventions like bioswales, rain gardens, green roofs, and living walls as infrastructure, new approaches towards urbanism arise to the scales of planning, management, and regulation. When reframed as infrastructure, these interventions now require more investment, monitoring, and coordination. Coordinated interventions can lead to multifunctional landscapes that include both built infrastructure and existing natural areas. In this context of developing functional ecological infrastructure, such landscapes can convey both stability and resilience.

HEALING URBAN WOUNDS

Aldo Leopold observed that "one of the penalties of an ecological education is that one lives alone in a world of wounds."[25] Our species certainly has inflicted considerable damage on the planet. In recent years, we have begun to mend those wounds and, in the process, we have created wonderful new urban places. Pioneering projects such as Richard Haag's Gas Works Park in Seattle and Latz + Partner's Duisburg-Nord Industrial Landscape Park in Germany set the stage in the late twentieth century. Porto's city park, the Cheonggyecheon project in Seoul, Madrid Rio, and the High Line in New York City have expanded the possibilities for larger-scale urban landscape restoration.

Each of the projects named above reclaimed urban wastelands. The city park of Porto, Parque da Cidade Porto, is an example of a long-term planning effort that transformed a largely degraded landscape (Figure 6.6). Its planning began when the city set aside the land near Porto's Atlantic beaches for the park in its 1961 City Master Plan. The 208-acre (84-hectare) site includes abandoned farms and a landfill.

Since 1982, the park's design has been led by Lisbon landscape architect Sidónio Pardal. Early on, he engaged Pennsylvania State University Professors E. Lynn Miller and James De Tuerk in research about park design and precedents. Pardal and his American colleagues posed questions like: What is a park? What is a landscape?

After considerable planning, construction on Parque da Cidade Porto began in 1991, and continues to the present day. Pardal's designs have transformed the degraded site into a much-used park.[26] He drew inspiration from the rural heritage of the area to create an urban amenity through large-scale earth movements, rustic stone works, and massive plantations. Special attention was paid to water management, both in terms of flows and improving its quality. The park's water management system catches and retains all the surface runoff across this relatively large area.

The Cheonggyecheon Project restored 5.2 miles (8.4 km) of a stream corridor of historical economic and social value (Figure 6.7). Following the Korean War, the stream was buried. Led by the mayor of Seoul and designed by SeoAnn Total Landscape, the Cheonggyecheon Park has proven popular since it opened in 2005. Likewise, Madrid Rio rejuvenates a six-mile (9.66 km) stretch of the Manzanareo River that had been blighted by a highway. Designed by West 8 and others between 2006 and 2011, Madrid Rio helped weave together parts of the city that had been divided socially and economically by the highway.