

Forum



Eden

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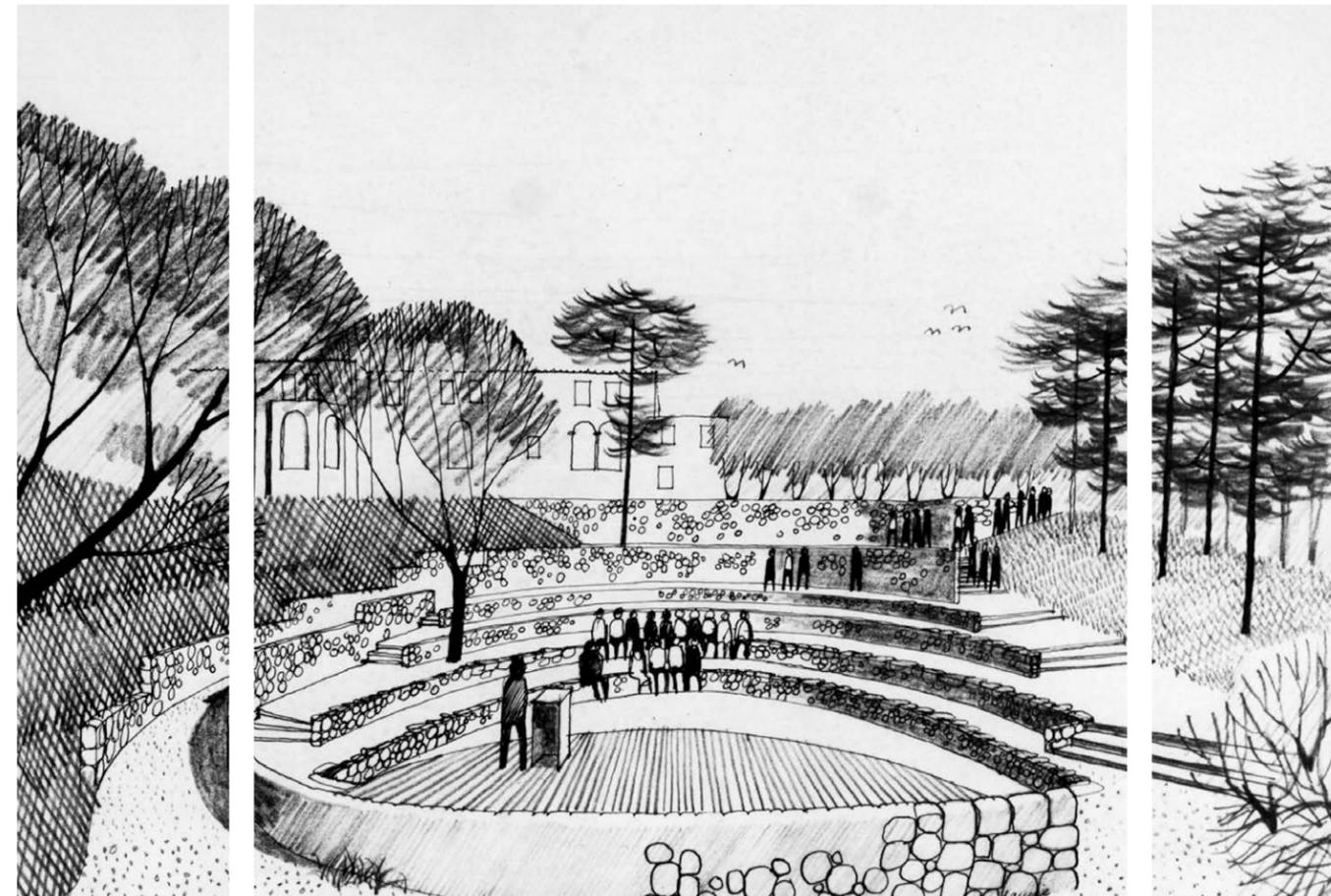
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Above: Blake Estate: Long Range Development Plan, amphitheater sketch, n.d., Geraldine Knight Scott, Blake Estate Collection, Environmental Design Archives, UC Berkeley.

With this issue CGLHS says goodbye to our old logo. It served us well. The shapes of the new logo are inspired in part by garden and landscape schematics, and the colors of the various versions of the logo are inspired by California native plants and flowers. We hope the new mark comes to symbolize our respect for garden and landscape history while inspiring us to continue planning and building our organization.



CALIFORNIA
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SOCIETY

Blake Garden

History
1922
to
1970



Blake Garden is located off the Arlington Road in Kensington, California. Down a quiet residential street, the garden is often described as a hidden treasure, a secret known only to a few near neighbors and garden enthusiasts. While it is owned and operated by the University of California - Berkeley Landscape Architecture Department, its location, four miles north of the main Berkeley campus, keeps casual university visitors away. Yet the garden, set in the East Bay Hills, has panoramic views, unusual geologic and hydrologic features, and retains much of its original garden design.

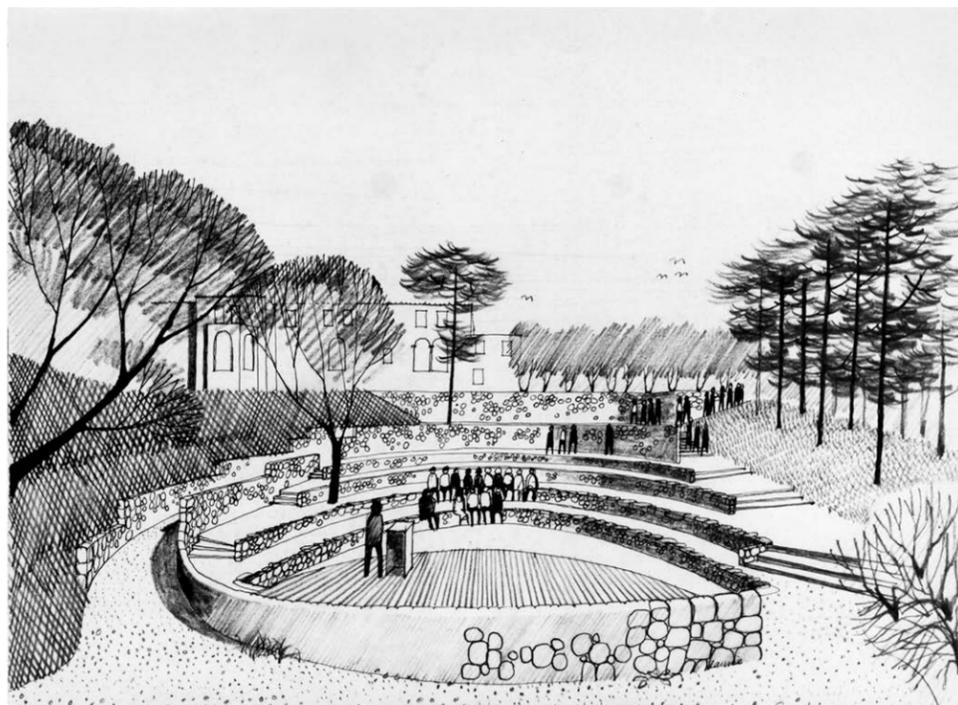


ORIGIN AND BEGINNINGS:

In 1921, the popularity of Cal football was soaring. Enthusiastic fans packed the 20,000-seat California Field (located at the current site of the Hearst Gymnasium) and university officials decided that a new, larger stadium was needed. From several potential sites, the Board of Regents eventually chose the land at the base of Strawberry Canyon. The university acquired the land for development of a 72,000-seat stadium that would honor alumni who served in WWI. Private donations of \$100 apiece raised almost a million dollars within weeks and the stadium opened in time for the 'Big Game' with Stanford in 1923.¹

This page: TOP: Blake Estate, House and Garden, c 1924, Blake Estate Collection, Environmental Design Archive, UC Berkeley. BOTTOM: Aerial View of Blake Estate and surrounding area, 1924, Blake Estate Collection, Environmental Design Archives, UC Berkeley.

Opposite: Blake Estate, Pool and Grotto, Meghan Ray, 2019



This page: TOP: Original Rose Garden (Square Garden), looking north, c. 1966, Blake Estate Collection, Environmental Design Archives, UC Berkeley. BOTTOM Blake Estate: Long Range Development Plan, amphitheater sketch, n.d., Geraldine Knight Scott, Blake Estate Collection, Environmental Design Archives, UC Berkeley.

Opposite: Square Garden Renovation, c. 1966, Blake Garden Collection, Environmental Design Archives, UC Berkeley.

But the decision was not without controversy. The land had been previously developed during the 1880s and 90s and many families had stately homes along Piedmont Way and Canyon Road, including the Blake family who owned three residential buildings and had cultivated an extensive garden on their property.

The Blakes were an established San Francisco Bay area family. Charles Thompson Blake had come to California as a Forty-Niner and had mining and real estate interests throughout the area. His father, Eli Whitney Blake, invented and patented a rock crushing machine that was to be widely used in making road base, and the Blake family continued to be active in quarrying and road building through their businesses: the Oakland Paving Company, Blake and Bilger Company, and finally Blake Brothers. Charles Thompson Blake married Harriet Waters Stiles in 1868. The Stiles family had moved to California from New England in the 1850s and Anson

Gale Stiles had been an original trustee of the College of California (which was to become University of California-Berkeley).²

Anson Stiles Blake and Anita Day Symmes were married in 1894. During the early years of their marriage, they lived in one of the Piedmont Avenue houses, next to Anson's mother, Harriet Stiles Blake and his brother Edwin. During that period, Anita and her sister, Mabel Symmes, who had been an early landscape architecture student at Berkeley, collaborated on a garden that spanned the three homes there. When forced to find a new site for the family home to make way for the Memorial Stadium, they considered properties that were available in Berkeley but could not find a site to suit their needs. Harriet Stiles Blake already owned a 45-acre parcel of land in the undeveloped area of Kensington and offered to divide the property into 10 plus-acre lots for each of her four children. Two of the siblings resided elsewhere and preferred to sell their

land but Anson and Edwin Blake decided to build family homes on the Kensington site. The Anson Blakes named their estate 'Adelante' since its remote location was "further out and higher up."³

Leaving the Piedmont Avenue garden was "a major catastrophe" for the Symmes sisters.⁴ Rather than abandon their choice specimens, they decided to bring as much of the garden to the new location as possible. Hiring an "expert baller" to help dig up valuable plants, over the next four months they brought thirty truckloads of trees and shrubs to the new property and heeled everything in while awaiting the completion of the house.⁵

The next order of business was to create some relief from the strong winds that are the downside of the site's spectacular views. First, they sought help from the architect of the house. Walter Bliss. Bliss, himself an avid gardener, designed a long, narrow house that runs north to south and provides a sheltered

strip of land on the building's east side. In addition to the protection from the house, the sisters selected fast growing tree species to further break the wind. They consulted noted San Francisco nurseryman Charles Abraham of Western Nursery who recommended *Laurus nobilis* as a fast growing screen. Some of these Bays can still be found planted at the ends of the residence. In addition, they planted *Hoheria* spp. (New Zealand Ribbonwood), *Pinus canariensis*, *Cryptocarya alba*, *Maytenus boaria*, *Sequoia sempervirens* (Coast Redwoods), and *Quillaja saponaria* (Soapbark), which can still be seen lining the main drive.

Creating a new garden on the property presented many challenges. First, the soil was a difficult mix, ranging from heavy clay to gravel, from dry to extremely boggy. Mabel Symmes described often hearing the whine of wayward workmen's trucks as they struggled to pull out of the wet clay on the construction site.⁶ The sisters decided to concentrate on improving the soil in the Formal and Rose Garden areas, leaving other sections as found, choosing instead to select plants that were adapted to the existing conditions. Further, the new garden teemed with wildlife. Anita Blake found rats, squirrels, mice, gophers, moles, rabbits, and the wood rats that she considered "the worst of all the things," as well as weasels, foxes, hawks, and lynx.⁷ She also noted coyotes would frequently follow the south creek through the property in order to hunt for scraps in the 'matanza' or slaughtering field in the ranch below. This abundant fauna ate, tore at, and otherwise destroyed her tender garden plants. Then one day someone brought a pregnant cat to the property and, as the offspring grew, they hunted the mice, rabbits, etc. (also, unfortunately, the ground nesting birds). Mrs. Blake found that the cats were a "tremendous help in civilizing the land."⁸ And she must have continued to appreciate their help, because in later years, groups of up to 24 cats would follow her around the garden and she kept her pockets full of stale bread to feed them.⁹

The north and south boundaries of Adelante are fixed by tributaries of Cerrito Creek. These water features flow year round, ranging from light trickles during the dry season to raging torrents when it rains. There are other springs on the site and the combination of surface water and the property's location on both the Hayward fault and in the Blakemont landslide area caused recurring problems both for the structural integrity of the house and for irrigation lines throughout the garden.

THE GARDEN DESIGN

The sheltered area east of the house became known as the Formal Garden. It is Italianate in design and was inspired, according to Mabel Symmes, by the Villa Tuscolana in Frascati.¹⁰ There is a reflecting pool, a grotto, and a series of symmetrical parterred beds. Italian stonemasons constructed the grotto and flanking stairs with stone drawn from the site. The reflecting pool and grotto were connected to a spring-fed basin located above the grotto. As this basin filled, water would spill down the grotto's rear wall, flow into the reflecting pool, turn north to a further pool, and then run down to the north tributary of the creek. This feature was both an elegant way to drain excess water from the area and a fine design element. Since its installation, the site's hydrology has shifted and the spring no longer fills the basin but the drainage system still works to bring overflow water to the creek during winter rains. The hedge-bordered beds on either side of the pool were designated as the Morning Garden and Evening Garden and were planted with yellow and pink color schemes respectively. To the north, a loose hedge of *Pittosporum undulatum* surrounds the Pagoda Pool, the last of the more formal features before paths lead down to the Redwood Canyon on Adelante's north border.

The Coast Redwoods in the canyon were planted with cuttings brought from the Piedmont Avenue garden and from the Blake ranch in St. Helena. Beneath the trees, Mrs. Blake and Miss Symmes planted shade-loving understory plants in a less formal, woodland setting. Paths flank the creek and meander almost to the northwestern corner before heading back to the south. On the steep slope west of the house, the sisters employed a more drought tolerant planting palette, organized in a series of diamond-shaped beds. These beds bring the visitor through a series of switchbacks across the steep terrain. They also create an axis that leads down to a lookout point at the garden's western border. While this part of the design does not appear in the 1920's layout, it is fully mature in a 1957 aerial photograph. The garden's location includes many unusual rock formations, including an enormous boulder veined with Lawsonite, a mineral found only on fault lines and serpentine outcroppings. These geologic features were incorporated into the plan in the wilder sections of the garden, and paths wind around, over, and under some of the finest formations.

Across the main drive to the south, the symmetrical beds of the Rose garden surrounded a square pool. Originally, perpendicular canals bounded this pool but they were removed in the 1960's to open up the circulation and improve accessibility. While



TOP: Original Rose Garden, c. 1958, Blake Garden Collection, Environmental Design Archives, UC Berkeley.
 BOTTOM: Blake Estate Grotto, 1924, Blake Estate Collection, Environmental Design Archives, UC Berkeley.

this garden no longer features roses, it retains its symmetrical layout and is now called the Square Garden after the pool. To the west of the Rose Garden, the land drops sharply to a marshy wetland. The sisters called this section Australian Hollow and planted its steeply sloped sides with Australian plants. The boggy bottom was intended as a water feature. Remnant acacias and eucalyptus still reflect the earlier planting scheme.

Anita Blake had a lifelong interest in growing unusual plants. She frequently received seeds from botanical and horticultural societies around the world and had great success in propagating them. She also delighted in showing these rare and unusual plants at the California Horticultural Society of which she was a charter member. Plant enthusiasts would come to tour the garden to see plants that couldn't be seen anywhere else in the area. She welcomed these interested visitors, although when nurserymen came for tours, she would have them turn out their pockets to ensure that no seeds or cuttings made their way into the greater horticultural community.¹¹ In addition to unusual plant material, throughout the garden there is evidence of Anita Blake's interest in Asian art. She collected many artworks both for the house and for the garden. The Moon and Sun God statues have been in the garden since at least 1930 along with several other garden sculptures and the glazed pagoda in the Pagoda Pool.

After Edwin Blake's death, his portion of the land passed to the Catholic Church and his house and some of the surrounding acreage was gifted to the Carmelites and dedicated as a monastery. The Carmelite Order, which is cloistered and silent, required an enclosing wall and the location of this wall became a point of discussion between Anita Blake and the Sisters. The two properties had been designed to be one garden and building a wall would cause significant changes in the circulation. As the contractor for the Carmelites surveyed the properties, he recommended the wall be built on the south side of the canyon (an area that was part of Anson and Anita Blake's garden). Two letters, written in 1950, concerning this issue show Sister Agnes of Jesus trying to persuade Anita Blake to allow the Carmelites to build their wall south of the Redwood Canyon and later, failing that, to let them purchase the land, leaving it in the Blakes' possession for their lifetime.¹² In the end, the Order built a wooden fence on the north side of the canyon, leaving the Redwood section part of the Adelante property along with a remnant stone bridge to nowhere.

TRANSITION TO THE UC LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE DEPARTMENT

Anita Blake had hosted UC Berkeley landscape architecture students since the garden's early days. Both Katherine Jones¹³ and Harry Shepherd¹⁴, professors of plant material at Berkeley, made frequent use of the garden, bringing students to study rare plants. In the 1950's, Harry Shepherd introduced Mrs. Blake to Mai Arbegast, a horticulturist and landscape architect.¹⁵ Professor Shepherd had had a stroke and realized that he needed an assistant to help with his classes. He was training Arbegast to fill this position and brought her up to meet with Mrs. Blake. Since both women had a passionate interest in plants, Anita Blake and Mai Arbegast spent many hours going through the garden, studying its rarities while Mrs. Blake tried to stump Arbegast with her unusual specimens.¹⁶ The Blakes had no children and, after years of development and care, the fate of the garden was among the chief concerns for their legacy. Gifting the property to the landscape architecture department began to seem like an ideal way to ensure its continued existence. So, in 1957, the Blakes formally deeded the property to the UC Berkeley Landscape Architecture Department with the provision that they retain a lifetime tenancy. Mai Arbegast was appointed acting director.

As part of the transition, the University hired a manager to care for the garden. Anson and Anita were in their eighties and they only had one handyman and one part-time gardener to help maintain the 10.5 acre estate, care of which included doing all the watering by hand since Anita Blake disapproved of automated irrigation systems. Walter Vodden was hired in 1958 to work with Mrs. Blake and with Mai Arbegast to establish some order in the now overgrown garden. As early as 1945, Mabel Symmes had described the difficulties managing the garden during WWII and the ways

the sisters were forced to simplify the garden due to labor shortages in the war years.¹⁷ The situation had not improved during the 1950s and by the time Walter Vodden was hired as garden manager, the garden was very wild, and it was difficult "to find the paths or even the main drive."¹⁸ While Mai Arbegast worked with students to document the existing conditions through an extensive survey and plant inventory, Vodden worked for the Blakes maintaining the aging garden. Mrs. Blake and Miss Symmes were very conservative regarding changes to the landscape and kept tight rein over any maintenance decisions. Thus, making any significant change was difficult to impossible during this period. Anson Blake passed away in August 1959, Mabel Symmes in January 1962, and Anita Blake in April of the same year.

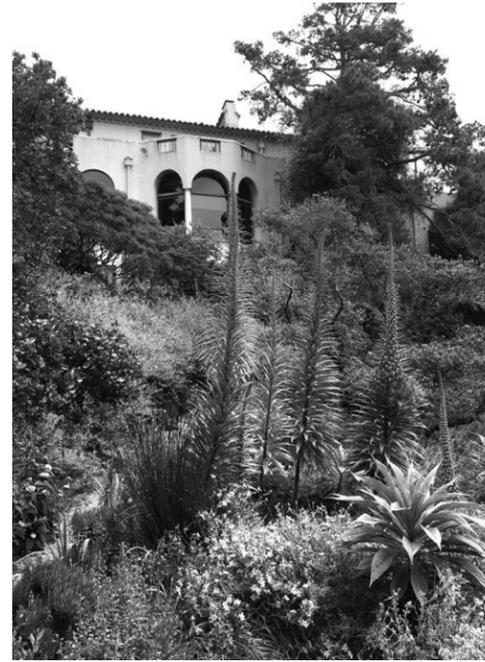
In 1961, plant pathologist Professor Robert Raabe had been appointed garden director. He oversaw installation of a "new" used greenhouse, a head house, and a paved work area. Following the death of Anita Blake in 1962, the landscape architecture department appointed Professor Geraldine Knight Scott as the garden's director and tasked her with renovating the garden for public use. Professor Scott was a practicing landscape architect and had been involved in the renovation of many historic gardens in the bay area.¹⁹ Her phased approach began with massive clearing and pruning of the overgrown plant material, improving circulation, and demolishing dilapidated structures. Professor Scott brought her students to the garden, using it as a place that provided "real examples of real problems."²⁰ Another aspect of her work was to develop a long-range management plan to find ways to make the best use of the property. In the end, although the development plan proposed several alternatives for creating an educational or conference center, there was insufficient interest in the department to implement the plan's long-term visions.

While the garden was intended for use as a teaching facility by the landscape architecture



This page: TOP: Blake Estate, Pagoda Pool, Meghan Ray, 2019. BOTTOM: Blake Estate, Chinese dancer statue, Formal Garden, Meghan Ray, 2019.

Opposite page: Blake Estate, West of House, Meghan Ray, 2019.



department, the best use for the house was less clear. For a short time the building was used as a dormitory for graduate women (1963-1965) but by the 1960s the house was in disrepair and it was considered too far from campus to be convenient for students. In 1967, the University regents decided that the house would be the official residence for the president of the University of California. The house underwent a major overhaul. The renovation became briefly controversial after the counter-culture newspaper, the *Berkeley Barb*, ran an article detailing the costs of the construction. There was a short-lived flurry of outrage as the story was picked up in the *San Francisco Chronicle* but the notoriety subsided after a few weeks. Professor Scott collaborated with architects Ron and Myra Brocchini and Norma Willer to find ways to make the residence more suitable for its new use. Among their priorities, the group worked to devise ways to separate the public and private spaces of the estate, creating privacy for the President's family while maintaining the public mission of the garden. They designed a gated entry for the Formal Garden, redesigned the house terraces and patios, added a carport for service parking, installed lighting, and built a parking area. At this time, Scott also designed retaining walls and steps leading down to a lawn area below the west side building, providing a sheltered gathering space at the base of the house. Still, living in the house could feel like living in a fish bowl. This problem is succinctly illustrated by a painting done by Nancy Hitch, wife of Charles Hitch, the first President to live in Blake House, in which she portrayed ghostly faces pressed against a window.²¹

The transition to University ownership infused new life into Blake Garden, motivating the rejuvenation and improvements that helped to preserve the character of the design while adapting it to its new uses. Since the 1960s the garden has evolved, changing to meet educational and operational needs as well as budget challenges.

The Blake Garden's enduring beauty is testament to the many talented landscape architects and horticulturists who have devoted their time and energy toward preserving its historic character while supporting its role as a teaching facility. ■

Blake Garden is open to the public Monday to Friday from 8-4:30.

Special thanks to the staff of the UC Berkeley College of Environmental Design Archives and the staff of Blake Garden.

RESOURCES:

Blake Estate Collection, Environmental Design Archives, University of California, Berkeley.

Blake Estate Oral History Project, 1986-1987, Oral History Center, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

Geraldine Knight Scott Collection, Environmental Design Archives, University of California, Berkeley.

Jewell, Linda, John Norcross, and UC Berkeley Department of Landscape Architecture. Blake Garden: A History of Landscape Change. Berkeley, CA: University of California, 2006.

Lowell, Waverly B., Carrie L. McDade, and Elizabeth D. Byrne, ed. Landscape at Berkeley: The First 100 Years. Berkeley, CA: College of Environmental Design, University of California, Berkeley, 2013.

Mai Kitazawa Arbegast Collection, Environmental Design Archives, University of California, Berkeley.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Meghan Ray has worked as a Museum Scientist at the University of California, Berkeley since 2006, first at the UC Botanical Garden and currently as the manager of Blake Garden. She has a Master's degree in Garden History and Landscape Studies from the Bard Graduate Center in NY and research interests that range from ancient agronomy to mid twentieth-century garden design.

Endnotes

1 For more on the history of the Memorial Stadium:

<https://www.californiagoldenblogs.com/2010/12/15/1865216/the-house-that-andy-built-the-making-of-memorial-stadium>

https://web.archive.org/web/20100617010737/http://www.cp.berkeley.edu/CP/PEP/History/HistoricReports/HLR/HLR_memorial_stadium_FINAL_March2006.pdf

2 The Blake Estate Oral History, "Notes on the Blakes in England and America," Igor Blake, pp. 397-400.

3 Mabel Symmes, "Adelante," in *The Journal of the California Horticultural Society*, vol. VI, p. 210.

4 Ibid.

5 Anita Blake, A Manuscript of History of Blake Garden, p. 1.

6 Mabel Symmes, "Adelante," in *The Journal of the California Horticultural Society*, v. VI, p. 210.

7 Blake, Anita, A Manuscript of History of Blake Garden, p. 2.

8 Ibid.

9 The Blake Estate Oral History, Walter Vodden, p. 245.

10 Mabel Symmes, "Adelante," in *The Journal of the California Horticultural Society*, vol. VI, p. 212.

11 The Blake Estate Oral History, Mai Arbegast, p. 283.

12 The Blake Estate Oral History, Appendix, pp. 494-497.

13 <https://archives.ced.berkeley.edu/collections/jones-katherine>

14 <https://archives.ced.berkeley.edu/collections/shepherd-harry>

15 <https://archives.ced.berkeley.edu/collections/arbegas-mai>

16 The Blake Estate Oral History, Mai Arbegast, p. 274.

17 Mabel Symmes, "Adelante," in *The Journal of the California Horticultural Society*, vol. VII, p. to follow.

18 The Blake Estate Oral History, Walter Vodden, p. 241.

19 The Blake Estate Oral History, Geraldine Knight Scott, p. 319.

20 The Blake Estate Oral History, Geraldine Knight Scott, p. 316.

21 The Blake Estate Oral History, Charles Hitch, p. 195.

When the phone rang just before dinner, Ernest Wertheim did not imagine how the course of his career as a landscape architect would change on that evening in 1953. The caller, Jack Schneider, was a trusted friend of Wertheim and the co-owner, with business partner Stewart Wade, of Orchard Nursery in Lafayette, California. Schneider asked Wertheim to design a new Orchard Nursery as he broke

BY KATE NOWELL

to him the news that half the site of the current nursery was soon to be lost to the construction of California State Route 24. Upon hearing Schneider's proposal, Wertheim had to hesitate before responding. He personally knew of no other architects with nursery design expertise. But, hoping to avoid a displeased wife (and an overcooked meal), Wertheim accepted the job and hung up the phone. Wertheim's design for Orchard Nursery would be the first of many projects designing nurseries in California, across the United States, and as far off as the United Kingdom and South Africa, making him an innovator in the post-war transformation of the plant nursery to the garden center we know today.

Ernest Wertheim





This page: Wertheim's 1946 business brochure featured this Ansel Adams photo of Wertheim's 1940 Walton Garden in Berkeley, from Ernest Wertheim's personal archives.

Previous page: A water feature invites Orchard Nursery customers to take a seat from Orchard Nursery's business archives - 1958 - photographer not known

EARLY LIFE AND EDUCATION

As a young man growing up in Germany, Wertheim had pursued his formal training in horticulture at the Israelitische Gartenbauschule Ahlem, a Jewish horticultural college. As the Nazis came to power, the school was authorized as an agricultural training center for Jewish youth intending to emigrate to Israel.¹ At age fourteen Wertheim entered the school, a place of hands-on education and relative safety where he would go on to complete his thesis on landscape architecture in relationship to contemporary architecture.

Upon his graduation in 1937, Wertheim and his family, in grave danger, sought a visa for him to leave for the United States. After immigrating to America, Wertheim made contact with a fellow alumnus of the Gartenbauschule in Ahlem who was working as a landscape architect in San Mateo, California. Learning of available employment in the landscape industry and with the opportunity to work and live in a mild climate, Wertheim traveled to the Bay Area where he would seek a living.

Stepping off the bus in San Francisco, nineteen-year-old Wertheim began inquiring about position vacancies. In a downtown flower shop, Wertheim met Harry Perlstein, owner of the Nursery Exchange in Half Moon Bay who pointed him to Eric Walther, director of the Strybing Arboretum.² Because he wasn't a San Francisco resident, Wertheim wasn't yet eligible to work for Walther in the park, but he was able to make connections through friends to gain employment as a gardener at the estate of Mrs. Sigmund Stern (donor of San Francisco's Stern Grove) in Atherton, California.³

Wertheim would go on to manage the Stern Estate landscape, meeting garden managers from other local estates and joining the California Horticulture Society. He later worked for the women-owned landscape maintenance company, Stebbins & Truax, gardening at the Mark Hopkins Flood Estates where he befriended Thomas Church.⁴ Over time, Wertheim was able to obtain his own clients and began to transition from garden maintenance work to design work. In the years prior to World War II, Wertheim lived in Los Angeles, where he met Margrit Odenheimer—they married in 1941. He established a small landscape contracting firm, designing a garden for the home of Cliff May, a designer and builder today considered the father of the California ranch house.⁵ Just a few days after Pearl Harbor, Wertheim received his draft notice and left his business behind to serve his adopted country in the United States military.

After the war, Wertheim returned to his wife in San Francisco and re-entered

the landscape design field. To promote the re-opening of his landscape design business, Wertheim created a brochure, hiring Ansel Adams to photograph a garden he had designed.⁶ After years away, Wertheim visited many local nurseries in different communities around the Bay Area to better understand the local microclimates and to re-educate himself in the Bay Area plant palette. It was during this period that Wertheim befriended Jack Schneider at Orchard Nursery.

Through a client, Wertheim was introduced to architect Jacob van der Ploeg who at the time was working for Bauhaus architect Erich Mendelsohn.⁷ Wertheim and van der Ploeg began collaborating, designing a home garden for Jack Schneider and an Orchard Nursery exhibit for the 1952 California Spring Garden Show in Oakland, which was featured on the June 1952 cover of *Sunset Magazine*. Wertheim and van der Ploeg formed a partnership in 1953 that would position the firm to take up the challenge of designing a new Orchard Nursery later that year.

ORCHARD NURSERY

When Jack Schneider and his partner Stewart Wade opened the original Orchard Nursery in 1945, they were already beginning to anticipate changes in the retail nursery trade. Striving to move away from the 'roadside stand days,' an early inspiration was Hallawell's Blue Glass Nursery in San Francisco, considered a forerunner in the "full line garden center concept." Serving an increasingly suburban middle-class customer, Hallawell's sold plants, seeds, and tools.⁸ As their small Orchard Nursery expanded, Schneider and Wade built various additions where they could and, like almost all nurseries of the era, the layout evolved over time and by need rather than by design. When the construction of State Route 24 brought about the opportunity for a fresh start, Schneider and Wade looked at Armstrong's Capitol Nursery in Sacramento and Siebenthaler's Garden Center in Dayton, OH as examples of the next wave of garden center development featuring checkstands, ample parking and the beginnings of product diversification.⁹ Schneider felt that Wertheim, as someone who understood Orchard Nursery's business and who could be trusted, was the architect they needed to design the innovative garden center that he imagined.

Wertheim embraced the challenge of designing the new Orchard Nursery garden center for Schneider and Wade by focusing first on how to provide the best customer experience possible. Wertheim surveyed customers and learned that fear of soiling their "church clothes" deterred families from making Sunday visits to the nursery.¹⁰ To



Fancy dress and plenty of socializing at a fashion show at Orchard Nursery in 1958 from Orchard Nursery's business archives - 1958 - photographer not known.

create a cleaner space where customers could shop whatever they were wearing, Wertheim designed paved and graded pathways and a drainage scheme to keep the facility clean and dry. Family-friendly features like a play area and a central seating patio surrounded by plants were designed to further encourage recreational family outings to the nursery. Wertheim paid special attention to the curb appeal of the nursery and designed landscaped areas around the nursery to make the business more inviting and encourage repeat visits.

Observing and predicting changes to the way plants were being grown and shipped, Wertheim designed the nursery for the future with containers in mind. While ball-and-burlap wrapped perennials and wooden flats of annuals were most common at the time, California growers like Monrovia were innovating the process of growing and shipping plants in pots.¹¹ Wertheim planned for racks that were designed to display containerized plants and met with display creators from Macy's and the Emporium in San Francisco to learn about multi-tiered display techniques. He also considered the effective movement of plants from receiving to display areas and defined a space for large truck deliveries that

would not interfere with customer traffic.

Wertheim interviewed the president of the Safeway supermarket chain as well as the company's architect, display manager, and merchandise expert to learn about rules of grocery retailing that he could apply in the garden center context. Wertheim interpreted ideas about the placement of bread and milk to plan the customer pathway through the garden center. Wertheim's goal was to draw the customer from one area to another including both outdoor spaces with plants and indoor display spaces where new lines of garden supplies such as pesticides and chemical fertilizers in modern packaging would be displayed.¹² Wertheim contemplated where the points of interaction with staff and customers should be and incorporated those considerations into the design in order to facilitate the sharing of information about the plants and products customers were purchasing for a positive customer service experience.¹³

When Orchard Nursery first opened, local members of the California Nursery Association were invited to a celebratory party. While some prominent nurserymen made remarks that they thought Wertheim had gone "too far," he soon was getting calls for advice and



This page: Wertheim with San Francisco plantsman, Victor Reiter, at Domoto Nursery with California Horticulture Society in 1983, from Ernest Wertheim's personal archives - photographer not known.

Opposite: Christine O'Hara with David Streatfield, Graduation day at University of Washington, June 2002. Photo courtesy Christine O'Hara.

nursery design work around the area.¹⁴ In 1958, because of the success of the firm's design for Orchard Nursery, Wertheim was invited to speak at the American Association of Nurserymen Conference in Dallas, TX. From that point on, the reputation of the firm and the scope and scale of their nursery projects continued to grow, as Wertheim and van der Ploeg became known nationally and internationally in the nursery trade for their garden-center designs.

A friend to nurserymen throughout his life, at 99 Wertheim enjoys the friendship and admiration of many for whom he helped to build a successful nursery business.¹⁵ Wertheim's belief in designing for the customer

and his insistence that garden centers continue to experiment, and change is a legacy that lives on in Wertheim-designed garden centers today. **E**

Kate Nowell is the Supervisor of Horticulture at Filoli, a 654 acre historic estate in Woodside, CA including 16 acres of formal gardens and 8 acres of historic orchards. Kate has a background in biology and fine gardening. She received a masters degree in Museum Studies from the University of Washington, focusing her studies on the preservation, management and interpretation of living plant collections. In 2017, Kate participated in the Historic Landscape Institute at Monticello and the University of Virginia.

Endnotes

1 Wertheim, Ernest, and Linda Hamilton. Chasing Spring. Lulu Publishing Services, 2014.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 "Cliff May," Los Angeles Conservancy, 2019. <https://www.laconservancy.org/architects/cliff-may>.

6 Wertheim, Chasing Spring.

7 Ibid.

8 Schneider, Jack. "Retailing Renaissance" American Nurseryman (June 15, 1990) v. 171 (12) p. 64-73

9 Ibid.

10 Interview with Ernest Wertheim, January 5, 2019.

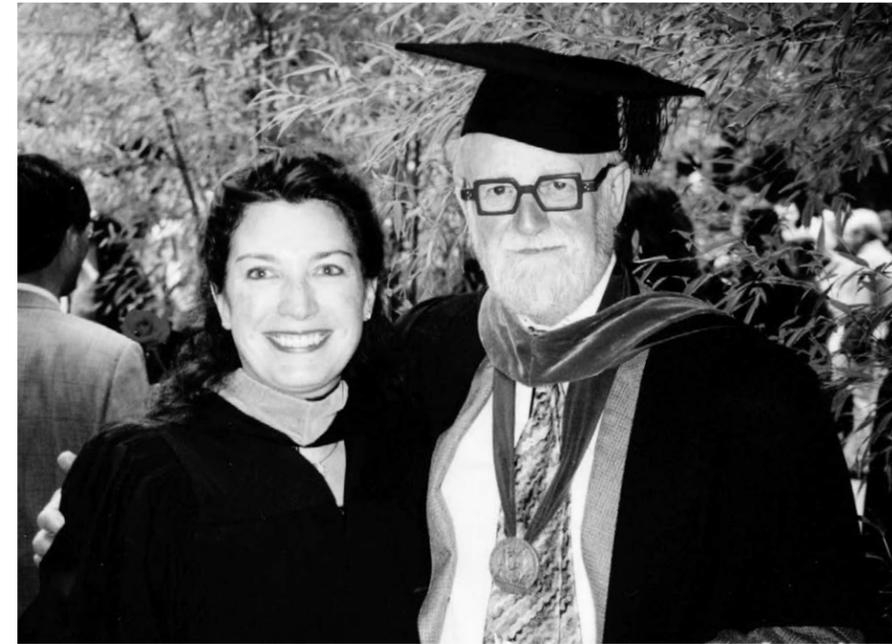
11 "History," Monrovia, 2019. <https://www.monrovia.com/about-us/history>.

12 Wertheim, Interview.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid.

15 "American Hort Recognizes Ernest Wertheim," Greenhouse Product News, (October 18, 2017).



David Streatfield Named Honorary Lifetime Member

Having been founded 24 years ago, until this year, CGLHS had only had four honorary life members: William Grant, Marlea Graham, Virginia Gardner, and Barbara Marinacci. When we consider honorary life time members, we look for extraordinary commitment to CGLHS. This year we are proud to add David Streatfield as the fifth honorary life member.

David is professor emeritus in Landscape Architecture at the University of Washington, where he taught from 1971-2013, serving as department head from 1992-1996. He was born and raised in England, receiving his Diploma in Architecture at Brighton College of the Arts and Crafts in 1956, and Master of Landscape Architecture at the University of Pennsylvania in 1966. He also is one of the founders of the California Garden & Landscape History Society, sharing his scholarly passion with an educational non-profit. In May 1996, *Eden*, Vol. 1, No. 1, David expounded on the need for such an organization. He

wrote, "Those who had done research in garden history well know the difficulty in finding where materials are stored. I spent a year looking for photographs, letters, and diaries of a famous hybridizer who died in 1943. Botanical libraries had little information. Only through a hunch did I find a goldmine in a university library that had no other botanical holdings. It was at that point that I knew we must found a group that would record the past, preserve the present, and educate others to carry on the work. The first job was to see if there were others who shared this idea. Indeed there were." In that same piece, he wrote of

the dearth of garden histories. He continued, "Much work needs to be done in documenting vernacular landscapes, such as bungalow gardens, farm gardens, the landscapes of large-scale irrigation, highways, parks and other public open spaces, cemeteries, amusement parks, resorts and hotels, and university and college campuses." CGLHS and *Eden* have provided a forum to address many of these gaps, promoting education and dissemination of information on historic California landscapes. In 1998, David's book *California Gardens* was selected by the American Horticultural Society as one of the 75 Great American Garden Books in the past 75 years. Now in retirement, his academic legacy lives on as he donated his papers to the University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections.

Being asked to write about my personal experience with David, I had the privilege of being one of his graduate students in 2000-2002. The first time I heard David's name was in 1994 with the publication of his book, *California Gardens: Creating A New Eden*. On the book tour, David spoke at the Nixon Library in Yorba Linda, California and I shyly had him sign a copy after the lecture. Through this book, I became aware of the large cache of writing David developed during the 1970s and 80s on the history of the California landscape. Clearly, he was the leading California landscape historian and I shared his scholarly interest. I moved to Seattle to study with him for a Master of Landscape Architecture as I was convinced that David could best direct my academic career. Normally the advisor-student relationship ends once one graduates, but David never stopped helping further my career. Our relationship is now one of friendship and just three summers ago we arranged to have lunch together along with his wife Madeleine Wilde while I was traveling through Seattle.

As a friend and former student, I know that David is an intellectual with an encyclopedic memory. Spend any amount of time with him and this will become abundantly clear. As a professor, he is a fascinating speaker (and who can't be charmed by his British accent?). In class and lectures, he carefully dissects designs, teasing apart the ideas to deftly explain each landscape project. Looking to him as a mentor, I've tried to emulate his approach in my own landscape history classes, but somehow, he can do it with so much more flair. He is a fearless world traveler with a special passion for Italy. And if I had to predict, I bet he is wearing a colorful necktie right now, his personal elegance exhibited in bright cravats and pocket-handkerchiefs. I hope all of you have the opportunity to meet this wonderful man someday. Congratulations, David!

—Christine O'Hara, CGLHS President

BOOK REVIEW

JUDITH B. TANKARD, *GARDENS OF THE ARTS & CRAFTS MOVEMENT*, REVISED EDITION. PORTLAND, OR: TIMBER PRESS, 2018. HARDCOVER, 298 PAGES, \$45. ISBN 9781604698206

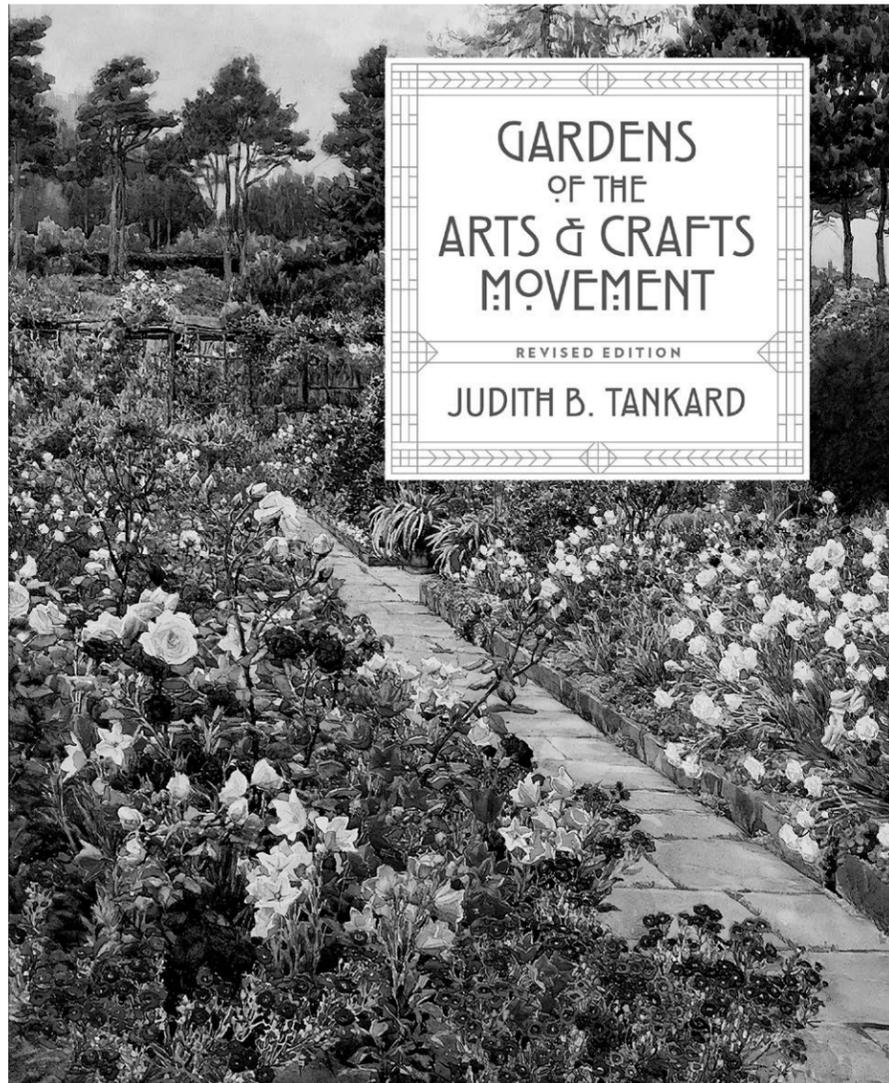
REVIEWED BY NANCY CAROL CARTER

As Americans were engaged in a civil war in the 1860s, the first stirrings of the Arts and Crafts Movement were felt in England. Arts and Crafts was flourishing by the 1880s and continued to dominate thinking about design until the movement faded during the First World War, 1914-18.

While the movement—which did not create a specific style, but rather a philosophical approach to design—was relatively short-lived, it continues to command attention. Topics for ongoing inquiry are abundant as Arts and Crafts spawned an engaging cast of characters on both sides of the Atlantic and filtered into every avenue of design. It intertwined with significant political, cultural and social changes and its influence is still discernable today.

The earliest writing about Arts and Crafts gardens was wrapped into architectural studies. As garden history came into its own as a distinct discipline, a few studies of Arts and Crafts in the garden appeared, but author Judith B. Tankard contends that scholarship in this field is lagging. She stepped up with a book-length study of the topic in 2004, *Gardens of the Arts & Crafts Movement: Reality and Imagination* (New York: Abrams, 2004). Tankard's new book, *Gardens of the Arts & Crafts Movement*, published by Timber Press, is a revision of her 2004 work and the newest treatment of the influence of Arts and Crafts on garden design.

Tankard's work builds on fifty years of literature exploring the Arts and Crafts Movement. A groundbreaking study put the topic back on the table in 1971. Gillian Naylor's *The Arts and Crafts Movement: A Study of its Sources, Ideals and Influence on Design Theory* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1971) aimed to "examine the nature of the handicraft aesthetic in England... and to outline its impact on design theory in the United States and Europe." Naylor looks to the ambiguities resulting from the movement's



underpinning of social criticism and argues that twentieth century designers remain deeply influenced by the reformers of the prior century.

Naylor's book does not deal with garden design in any way. The same is true for the book accompanying an exhibition at Princeton University Museum of Art (Robert Judson Clark, *The Arts and Crafts Movement in America, 1876-1916: An Exhibition*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972). Largely a display of decorative arts, the exhibition traveled to Chicago and Washington, D.C., introducing the Arts and Crafts Movement to many museum patrons.

An important survey of architecture came almost a decade later when Peter Davey published *Arts and Crafts Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1980). Davey addressed larger societal themes while tracing the work and individual design theories of a succession of architects. A lavish new edition of the book incorporated a more extensive discussion of gardens and was published in London by Phaidon in 1995.

In the same year that Davey published the first edition of his work, architectural historian Robert Winter produced *The California Bungalow* (Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, 1980), a book presaging the next decade's fascination with the bungalow and Arts and Crafts. The book was reprinted time and time again. Winter later authored *American Bungalow Style* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996).

In 1981, Gertrude Jekyll's *Gardens for Small Country Houses*, co-written with Lawrence Weaver, was re-published. Despite dating back to 1912, this practical manual of garden making continues to attract readers. It was subsequently reissued and revised in 1997, 1999 and 2005, but with the market-savvy new title: *Arts and Crafts Gardens: Gardens for Small Country Houses* (revised edition, Woodbridge, England: Garden Art Press, 2005). The book is described as capturing a time when the Arts and Crafts Movement evolved into country house architecture and found its way into the making of gardens.

Soon after the initial republication of the Jekyll-Weaver classic, garden historian Jane Brown compounded interest in Arts and Crafts with her book on the celebrated partnership of English architect Edwin Lutyens and gardener extraordinaire Gertrude Jekyll. In *Gardens of a Golden Afternoon* (London: Allen Lane, 1982) Brown delightfully describes her obsession in pursuit of Jekyll-Lutyens projects as she aimed to make her book as comprehensive as possible. In her research Brown found that the famed Arts and Crafts duo collaborated on more than 100 gardens.

In the next decade, popular interest in Arts and Crafts was fueled by journals and books. *American Bungalow* magazine began publication in 1990. Paul Duchscherer produced a

trifecta of best sellers: *The Bungalow: America's Arts and Crafts Home* (New York: Penguin Studio, 1995); *Inside the Bungalow* (New York: Penguin Studio, 1997) and most important to Arts and Crafts gardens, *Outside the Bungalow* (New York, Penguin Books, 1999).

Museum exhibitions reinforced popular interest. The Oakland Museum mounted "The Arts and Crafts Movement in California: Living the Good Life," in 1993. Landscape historian David Streatfield wrote an article on the Arts and Crafts garden in California for a book accompanying the exhibit: Kenneth R. Trapp and Leslie Greene Bowman. *The Arts and Crafts Movement in California: Living the Good Life* (Oakland: Oakland Museum, 1993). In Southern California, "The Arts & Crafts Movement in Europe & America, 1880-1920," debuted at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in 2004. The widespread influence of the movement underlaid curation of the "International Arts and Crafts Exhibition" at London's Victoria and Albert Museum in 2005.

Two notable scholarly efforts predated Tankard's 2004 book on Arts and Crafts gardens. In *The Gardens of Gertrude Jekyll* (London: Frances Lincoln, 1992) University of Reading landscape architect and garden historian Richard Bisgrove analyzes and interprets beautifully reproduced Jekyll landscape planting plans drawn from the "Gertrude Jekyll Collection, 1877-1931," housed at the Environmental Design Archive, University of California, Berkeley. Bisgrove's work was republished by the University of California Press in 2000.

University of Sussex art historian and Arts and Crafts scholar Wendy Hitchmough published *Arts and Crafts Gardens* (New York: Rizzoli, 1997). After describing the Victorian garden, she turns to William Morris' Red House as the starting point for a look at Arts and Crafts sensibilities in the design of more than 60 gardens. Jekyll receives a full chapter, but Hitchmough's narrative reaches beyond garden descriptions for larger artistic, social and cultural themes. She stresses the early Japanese influence on all areas of design and identifies a relationship between the women's suffrage movement and Arts and Crafts gardens. The Arts and Crafts garden, she concludes, "resolved the interface between architecture and nature." In 2005 Hitchmough's book was republished in London by V & A Publications and in New York by Abrams.

There was a place for Tankard's scholarship when she entered the conversation in 2004 with the first iteration of her current book. The work was well-received as a useful contribution to the field. Reviewers described it as beautiful and informative. Tankard had bona fides as a garden historian, having published dozens of articles and four books before 2004. She was a faculty member of

the Landscape Institute, Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University from 1987 until 2008 and continues to produce important work, including studies of Ellen Biddle Shipman, Beatrix Farrand, and Gertrude Jekyll.

Tankard's approach is to place Arts and Crafts gardens within a broader perspective, much as Wendy Hitchmough sought to do, but the authors looked to different backdrops for their analysis. Hitchmough focused on the influence of social movements and societal debates in the larger world; Tankard aims to present Arts and Crafts gardens in the "broad context of art, architecture, interior design, and decorative design." The Arts and Crafts Movement, she writes, "gave the garden a new definition as a harmonious component of the house." She believes that garden design of the Arts and Crafts era cannot be appreciated without understanding the house with which it is connected. By including several full garden and home plot plans in the book, she emphasizes the unity of the whole as a central feature of Arts and Crafts design.

Tankard takes pains to explain that Arts and Crafts is not a specific style of garden making or architecture, but rather a way of thinking about design and working with materials. Nothing could illustrate this point more effectively than the wide variety of gardens included in her book. The 2018 revision is substantially longer than the original edition. The first ten chapters of the two editions track closely, although all text has been edited for the revision. In the new edition, for example, the Cotswold chapter includes the important example of Hidcote Manor which was only briefly mentioned in the original book. The revision rearranges the final chapters and adds new chapters on contemporary gardens and the design inspiration of Arts and Crafts. American gardens are included, but Tankard disclaims any effort to produce a definitive study of Arts and Crafts gardens in the United States.

The scholarly and readable text Tankard presents is not to be missed, although this book is so handsomely and generously illustrated with color photographs, landscape plans, drawings and paintings that it also can be appreciated simply for its visuals. Many of the illustrations used in the 2004 book are repeated in the revised edition, but they are much brighter and often resized, a graphic decision particularly welcome in the reproduction of plot plans. The book's layout is clean and attractive, though captions for all the illustrations strain the eye due to an unfortunate choice of font color and size. This new publication has useful endnotes, a very rich bibliography and a more detailed index than the 2004 edition. An appendix suggests houses and gardens for Arts and Crafts aficionados to visit in Great Britain and the United States. ■

2018 Annual Report

Dear CGLHS Members,

Thanks to your support, the California Garden & Landscape History Society achieved a significant set of accomplishments in 2018. Here are some of the year's highlights.

Our quarterly journal *Eden* continues to flourish under the guidance of editor Steven Keylon and the *Eden* Editorial Board. *Eden* focuses on new and original scholarship and is one of only a few journals to spotlight California's gardens and landscape history. The addition of a greater number of color photographs this past year has enriched the written work and enhanced our understanding of these places.

Our mission is to create opportunities to bring members together and educate. To this end, we held four successful events, in addition to our annual conference. Our on-going partnership with the Huntington Library, the California Garden & Landscape History Lecture Series, included a talk by Ann Scheid on the design of Busch Gardens in Pasadena, with over 200 in attendance. A second talk by documentary and film maker Karyl Evans featured the screening of her new film, "The Life and Gardens of Beatrix Farrand," and included a reprint of Ann Scheid's essay on Farrand from *Eden*, Spring 2011. CGLHS also partnered with the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden for an additional film screening. The film was followed by a panel discussion with Ms. Evans, landscape architect Isabelle Greene, Santa Barbara Botanic Garden Director of Horticulture Betsy Collins, and me. For our fourth event, 47 CGLHS members and their guests visited the Winifred Starr Dobyns Estate and Mrs. Harry Gray Estate, two important private gardens located in Pasadena. These gardens offered us a rare view of two 1930s landscapes only previously seen by the public in historic photographs. Ann Scheid and Steven Keylon lectured on the design history of these gardens and we thank architectural historians Matt Berkley and Barbara Lamprecht of deasy penner podley for granting us this special access.

Board member and Executive Director of the Marin Art & Garden Center (MAGC), Antonia Adezio, convened our annual conference November 2nd – 4th. Titled, "Living with Nature: The Settlement and Protection of the Marin County Landscape," the conference began with a tour of Frank Lloyd Wright's County Civic Center, followed by a welcome reception and presentation on Friday night at MAGC. Saturday morning's lectures illuminated topics on the design history of the landscape at the Marin Art & Garden Center; women who played a key role in open space preservation in Marin County, such as Helen Dupuy Van Pelt; and the professional work of Marin resident and landscape architect Robert Royston. Over 70 attendees gathered for an evening dinner at the historic Lagunitas Country Club where we took the welcome opportunity to visit with one another and enjoy a presentation by Fran Cappelletti. Our conference also included privately-arranged visits to three historic Kentfield homes with gardens that were sympathetic to the architecture and updated for contemporary use.

Thanks to you, our membership grew by 50 new members in 2018! This is an all-time high of nearly 300 members. We have expanded our outreach through eblasts for events, written new blogs for our website and Facebook, and created outreach materials to introduce our organization and its mission to prospective members.

Thank you to the numerous volunteers who help with writing and editing *Eden*; host, speak, and organize events; and serve on the Board of Directors and *Eden* Editorial Board. And a special thanks to the many members who contribute above the basic membership level. I see a renewed energy in our group and am truly grateful for your support!

Best regards,
Christine O'Hara
CGLHS President

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Front Cover: Blake Estate, House and Pool, Meghan Ray, 2019.

Back Cover: A fashionable gathering around the pond at Orchard Nursery designed by Ernest Wertheim from Orchard Nursery's business archives - photographer not known.