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International Committee for the  
**documentation and conservation**  
of buildings, sites and neighbourhoods of the  
**modern movement**

DOCOMOMO E-proceedings April 2011

**LANDSCAPES OF THE  
RECENT FUTURE:**  
Conserving the 20th Century's  
Landscape Design Legacy

INTERNATIONAL SPECIALIST COMMITTEE  
ON URBANISM AND LANDSCAPE



International Day Conference, April 21, 2011  
Edinburgh College of Art

## SUMMARY

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Status of the conservation and protection of landscapes of the mid and late 20th century; Raising awareness of issues; Approaches and practical challenges to conservation; Stimulating action.

Dr Jan Haenraets

Proceedings under the scientific direction of Dr. Jan Haenraets

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The conference on 'Landscapes of the Recent Future: Conserving the Twentieth Century's Landscape Design Legacy' was organised with the objective to share recent findings and experiences in relation to the status of the conservation and protection of landscapes of the mid and late Twentieth Century. In doing so it was the intention to assist with raising awareness of key issues and make expertise available about practical approaches and challenges for the conservation of such sites, this with the objective that the conference can contribute towards stimulating action to protect and conserve the sites of the recent future.

The starting point is that more of such action and awareness is needed. This conclusion is based on various findings, but as a simplified example, we notice from publications from the recent years on the subject of architecture and landscapes of the recent past (or recent future, as used in the title of the conference) that designed landscapes from the recent past appear to have gained recognition as significant heritage. However, at the same time we see that significant sites from the mid and late Twentieth Century are being demolished, are condemned or endangered. Such as for example of Gibberd's Water Gardens in Harlow New Town, which was relocated even though it was listed by English Heritage.

To achieve these objectives the conference started with an introduction to the conference theme by Dr Jan Haenraets about the need for nurturing greater support, understanding and stewardship for landscapes of the recent future. The theme of threats to sites and the status of protection was further illustrated by Catherine Croft who spoke about the challenges regarding the continuing destruction of sites, sites at risk and campaigns to save landscapes of the recent past.

Various papers provided views about the designer's perspective and designers' philosophies and legacies. Under this theme Chloe Bennett provided insight into Frank

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**cover photo: The Commonwealth Institute in London with landscaping by Dame Sylvia Crowe, image by Jan Haenraets**

## SUMMARY

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Various papers provided views about the designer's perspective and designers' philosophies and legacies. Under this theme Chloe Bennett provided insight into Frank Clark's legacy and some of the conservation needs at sites designed by Clark. Dr John Byrom reflected on the subject of philosophies, legacies and challenges in the Modern Movement in Landscape Design. Dr Andrew Saniga looked at the subject from an international perspective by exploring landscape and infrastructure through defining and interpreting modernist landscapes of post war Australia.

A number of papers focussed on experiences in tackling conservation at sites of the recent future. John Watkins provided insight in the conservation management process by illustrating the case of Great Dixter. Ed Bennis' paper highlighted the challenges in making these invisible landscape visible, while Dr Barbara Simms discussed the background of Span Estates and the importance of landscape conservation at these estates. Ian Appleton's paper with useful thoughts on the Span Estates was not presented at the event, but was inspired by the conference and is added to the proceedings as it makes a valuable contribution to the subject area. Chris Rankin looked at the legacy of landscapes of the recent future from a contemporary designer's perspective by asking what the 20th century landscape design legacy might mean for today's landscape practitioner. A concluding discussion allowed for questions from the attendees to the panel of speakers and further reflections on the subject.

The conference concluded with an evening masterclass by Dr Jan Haenraets which provided an overview of the findings from an international survey into the key problems and challenges regarding the conservation of the landscape design legacy of the post-1945 period. This included a review of the status of inventory work and conservation initiatives, and lessons learned from UK case studies at significant landscapes. In conclusion recommendations for strengthening action at an international level were given and the objectives of the DOCOMOMO ISC/U+L Landscape Action Plan were illustrated.

## Acknowledgements

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Sincere thanks to the DOCOMOMO International Committee on Urbanism and Landscape (ISC/U+L) for organising the conference, and to the Edinburgh College of Art (ECA) for hosting the conference and masterclass and providing the venue. Special thanks to DOCOMOMO Scotland for their support.

Kind thanks to Dr Jan Haenraets, Dr Miles Glendinning and Melissa Hollingsworth for the development of the conference programme, the proceedings and coordination of the event. Special acknowledgements to Melissa Hollingsworth for the design layout of the conference poster, leaflet and proceedings. Amy Hickman, Joanna Wemyss and Melissa Hollingsworth facilitated the online publication of the proceedings. Thank you to Moira Seftor at the Edinburgh College of Art for assistance with the event bookings.

Thank you to Dr Ola Uduku, Dr Jan Haenraets and Dr Miles Glendinning for chairing of the conference sessions and introducing the event sessions. We are most grateful to all speakers for sharing their insights and experiences, and enthusiasm for the subject area.

Kind thanks to attendees of the conference and their engagement in the question and answering sessions and concluding discussions. Thank you to the students of the Scottish Centre for Conservation Studies, Edinburgh College of Art, who volunteered their time to assist with hosting the conference.

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Ed Bennis (Landscape Consultant/Member, Awards Committee European Garden Heritage Network / Former Head of Landscape Architecture and Research, Manchester Metropolitan University / Chairman, Cheshire Gardens Trust)