TOURISM AND LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

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1987 Ontario Association of Landscape Architects
Annual Conference
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, February 7, 1987

It is a genuine pleasure for me to respond to your request to come to Canada to share this conference with you. For several years I have enjoyed many personal and working experiences here and am regularly impressed by the professionalism and accomplishments of landscape architects here. The leaders and organizers of this conference are to be commended for the format, facilities and quality of presentations. Yours is certainly a progressive organization.

My discussion today is divided into three parts. First, I have been asked to react to the projects presented. Then, I shall comment briefly on tourism development from a community perspective and close with a challenge to you as landscape architects.

CRITIQUE OF PROJECTS

Let me preface my remarks with the caveat that it is unfair for me to evaluate these projects in depth because of my limited understanding of them. I base my critique primarily upon the presentations here at this conference, supplemented by a few documents, especially about Winterlude and Ceremonial Routes. My main criterion for evaluation is that of relationship to tourism development.
Goals and Objectives

No one can fault the direction of each project. All are directed toward increasing cohesiveness and pride in Canada and being Canadian. This goal was most eloquently expressed by Mrs. Pigot. The emphasis upon symbols and vision is certainly a direction all landscape architects can relate to. For creative land design, the vision must precede everything else. I am reminded of the lyrics in South Pacific, "If you ain't gotta dream, how you gonna have a dream come true?"

This vision is delineated clearly in the three-pronged mandate of the National Capital Commission. The capital region must serve as a neutral ground where all Canadians of all backgrounds and geographical regions can meet. Second, the capital region must serve an interpretive function—to interpret its history, culture and development. And, special treasures of the region must be safeguarded.

The intent of Ceremonial Routes is fourfold. By enhancing and clarifying the circle route through Ottawa and Hull, four kinds of ceremonies important to all Canada can be given stronger support. These are: opening and dissolution of Parliament, Changing of the Guard, official State visits and public events and special celebrations.

There appeared to be two major objectives for Winterlude: to stimulate in Ottawa a sense of community and to provide a more positive image of winter. For RC Place, the main objective was to provide a strong all-Canadian attraction event, Expo86, not just for outsiders but for all Canadians.
About Plans and Accomplishments

All projects demonstrated some admirable characteristics in their plans. These could be summarized as: establishing leadership, obtaining finance, forming competent management, developing detailed plans and especially the involvement of landscape architects.

For BC Place, the design and planning were directed toward easy movement of people, cleanliness, maximizing a sense of waterfront, and providing private spaces, bright colors and a place for fun and enjoyment. There was evidence that the potential markets for Expo86 were carefully researched by professionals. This insight into expected visitors was translated into the many areas and features of BC Place. But, two problems, especially important to tourism, appeared to be missing. While some long-range planning entered into the process, there seemed to be no identification of responsibility for post-Expo planning and marketing. Second, the lack of official involvement of the city of Vancouver, no matter the politics, seems inexcusable. No matter how successful Expo86 was otherwise, this was a mistake that may have considerable long-range consequences and social impact.

Winterlude has consistently shown good planning and execution, well evidenced by its continuing growth. The surveys of attendance and economic impact in the last few years were done thoroughly and in quality. Each report revealed pertinent guidance for the next event.

While there is no question about community participation and benefits, the beyond-community markets have not yet been tapped
to a very great degree. If one objective of Capital Region events is to stimulate greater meaning of the region for all Canadians, it would seem desirable to reach out to these other markets. Not only will the participants benefit but also Ottawa-Hull will benefit economically. Research has shown that the outsiders spend $140 per person during Winterlude whereas locals spend only $9. U. S. markets might respond if promotion were directed their way. For example, a market analysis prepared by Gordon Taylor, Tourism Canada, revealed that events were important to them. This survey showed the following "common product interests" of Americans when visiting big cities:

- Dining in elegant, sophisticated restaurants
- Sunbathing
- Staying in first class hotels
- Attending live theatre, concerts
- Dining in a variety of restaurants
- Shopping for arts and crafts of the area
- Going to bars and pubs
- Going to night clubs, discos
- Attending ethnic festivals and events
- Taking rides at amusement parks
- Taking guided tours

Regarding Ceremonial Routes, there may be functional and esthetic benefits from the proposed improvements of the designated routes but I doubt if the project will generate any additional tourism. In fact, if the routes stimulate a merry-go-round of increased traffic, this will exacerbate an already serious problem for tourists in the heart of Ottawa, and to some extent in Hull. This is the problem of pedestrian access to and around the capital treasures and features that are key to the NCC and route objectives. Already it is extremely difficult, and even threatening to older, infirm and handicapped populations of
travelers to cross Wellington. The physical setting, the rich historic architecture, the landscape beauty, the several national treasures and the marvelous vistas across the river are already very difficult for pedestrians to reach. Ideally, Wellington should be blocked off from the National Gallery to the Garden of the Provinces. Throughout North America we have allowed the traffic engineers to dominate physical planning in our cities which has ruined much of the quality of downtown. Such a threat to the very important French Quarter of New Orleans was averted only by an uprising of public pressure.

All the objectives for improving the Capital Region—enjoying the open space, gaining a feeling of pride in Canada, understanding the Capital, allowing interpretation of capital functions and understanding its history must be met on foot, not through a bus window. The so-called "nodes" will be of little value to anyone (the monuments and open spaces) because they will be inaccessible. I feel that this project, if it is to have tourism value, must be given much greater functional and creative thought.

While it is commendable to increase the activity in winter, there is danger that this single seasonal emphasis will not complement the development at the other seasons. The concern is over permanent structures and facilities. The more that all-season function can be considered for such items as snack bars and toilet facilities, the greater will be their utility. Consideration of spring, summer and fall as well as winter should be paramount in all planning.
Related to this issue is that of nodes of service in Ottawa. As the number of attractions in downtown increases and as they become more popular, so increases the need for service facilities for the visitors. The canal is an excellent case in point. After walking just so far and so long, one is likely to appreciate a node of facilities including restrooms, food service and even entertainment. Our research on the San Antonio River Walk indicated that an amalgam of a park-like setting and facilities made it the success it is, not just one or the other. Between Laurier and MacKenzie King bridges at Confederation Park and the canal is an excellent location for such a node of services.

Throughout all development of attractions for visitors, I sense a need for greater collaboration between public and private sectors. The study of Winterlude hinted at a problem of "overcommercialization." This pejorative term is a fog statement, suggesting that there is something evil about profit making. Private enterprise is very responsive to markets, is in demand by visitors, can provide clean and wholesome service and certainly can relieve public agencies from a great amount of costs. With the right planning and design there can be a highly desirable balance between resource protection and provision of service by the private sector.

Finally, all projects tended to minimize the attraction potential of the area surrounding Ottawa-Hull. A visit to the immediate Capital Region could be many times more attractive and interesting if supplemented by many attractions within the vicinity. Even my limited knowledge of the area suggests many
resources with interesting attraction potential. Short tours using Ottawa-Hull as a base for accommodations, food service and entertainment could be implemented if new outlying attractions were developed. For example, the Gatineau, Wakefield, Mt. Saint Marie, historic and scenic river tours, Manotick and even the St. Lawrence River have great potential but lack proper development for visitor enjoyment and enrichment. I am confident that many more could be discovered with study. The Ottawa-Hull linkage with "extended destination zones" also deserves much greater attention. Longer distance access to zones by air and by highway needs to be coordinated with the many features within the Ottawa-Hull destination zone.

These are my candid tourism planning reactions to the project presentations and are meant to be constructive.

COMMUNITY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Throughout both our countries there is increased interest in tourism development at the community level. States and provinces are being called upon to provide guidelines. In Texas we are in the process of preparing a tourism development manual. We have received constructive assistance from Alberta, also preparing such a manual. Landscape architects can perform a valuable role in such projects.

One of the best I have seen was prepared by the Western Australian Tourism Commission. It outlines four major steps:


3. Gap Analysis. Recommendations for development opportunities and presentation of strategies to resolve the gaps securing between supply and demand. Recommended development opportunities are taken to pre-feasibility level and presented as a project profile.


To these I am inclined to add one more very important step—evaluation. Regular monitoring of every development should be made to see how well it performed. This allows feedback of experience, very valuable in making new plans.

I encourage all of you to contact your tourism agency to see if you can make some contribution to the development of community guidelines, especially adapted to small and medium size cities.

THE TOURISM CHALLENGE BEFORE LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

Because landscape architecture is the profession of reshaping the environment for better human use, it is the field with the greatest potential for developing tourism. Yet, one sees so little tourism work done by landscape architects. Why? When I ask landscape architects why this is so they often reply, "I've never been asked."

Why aren't we asked? Is it because we have never told anyone we are interested and capable of doing good work in this field? At a time when tourism is booming throughout the world, the
evidence is clear that landscape architects are conspicuous by their absence. It shows. It shows in eroded landscapes; it shows in poor business; it shows in less than satisfactory experiences by visitors.

Perhaps you read the 1985/86 IFLA Yearbook where Dr. Werkmeister from the Federal Republic of Germany told of his disgust over tourism development in Egypt. Noisy and dirty diesel buses drive right up to antiquities over acres of asphalt. Natural rocky landscapes have been destroyed by hotel development. He laments that "obviously no landscape architect was consulted."

Many such stories could be told of thoughtless and wrong-headed tourism development the world over. And yet, we have many well-trained and talented designers who should be capable of avoiding these environmental catastrophies. Apparently there are some obstacles that need to be overcome if better tourism environments are to be developed.

I would like to put forward three challenges, all of which can be solved by landscape architects. And, for once, it is not more money that is needed—only greater understanding and motivation.

1. Politics of Urban Development

When one speaks of tourism, hotels and airlines immediately come to mind. Many landscape architects have been involved in site development for these uses. But, this is not tourism, not entirely.

Tourism demands, but seldom gets, the landscape architect's
input in urban decisions that affect tourism. Tourism depends upon attractions and attractiveness, especially in and around communities. And, these are attributes shared by citizens.

Tourism and community development are political. But, how politically savvy are landscape architects? Many design issues come to mind. Shopping is a major tourist activity. As new shopping centers are approved by zoning boards are the traveler's interests considered? As new streets are laid out are the visual interests of visitors considered? How often the travel route from the airport to downtown is the ugliest view a city can offer. One of the largest travel segments is visiting friends and relatives. Yet, when housing projects are developed, are the settings designed with visitors in mind? Can a resident be proud of his environmental setting as well as his home?

The location and siting of many publicly supported amenities such as churches, museums, parks and convention centers are as important for visitors as for residents. Historic sites and buildings are by neglect encased in shockingly contrasting modern construction. Whenever landscape architects have been involved, the entire setting is integrated, to the benefit of all. But, this requires involvement by design professionals in the political decision making.

Often the public decisions on infrastructure—water, waste, power, streets—set the pace for future development. To what extent are landscape architects with knowledge of tourism brought into decisions on location?

Design and planning in cities are political. Called for is much greater involvement of landscape architects in bureaucratic
decision making if the traveler and the resident are to be given a better environment, not only for esthetics but for sound economics from travel.

2. Understanding Markets

For too long, landscape architects have believed that their clients are the ones who commission their work. Yes, they pay the bills and for residential and office sites, they may be the users. But, for all projects relating to tourism, the true clients are the travelers, not the owners.

The design of places that visitors see and experience calls for knowledge of a discipline usually foreign to the landscape architects' vocabulary—consumer behavior, the basis of market analysis. While no one expects landscape architects to be specialists in everything, they must be able to have market understandings if their designs are to function.

Landscape architects can avail themselves of journals such as the Journal of Travel Research, the Annals of Tourism Research and Tourism Management. These regularly publish current data on traveler market characteristics and trends. The recently published Travel, Tourism and Hospitality Research Handbook contains forty-three chapters of valuable insight into the several kinds of travel users that are likely to visit sites designed by landscape architects. Your governmental agencies for tourism here in Canada have the best traveler market data anywhere in the world. Landscape architects would find it enlightening to attend tourism conferences such as those sponsored by the provinces and the Travel and Tourism Research
Association.

Earlier studies of travel markets were limited to demographics (age, sex, income, occupation). However it was found that studies of these characteristics did not necessarily reveal information of great value to developers and marketers of tourism. More recently, the fields of psychographics and life styles, when added to demographic data, seem to be more applicable. Studies of these characteristics are showing greater value in predicting behavior and in segmenting markets. The different market segments have different interests, attitudes, and seasons of travel, important for design.

When landscape architects have greater understanding of travel markets, their consulting work and designs are more likely to be rewarding to travelers.

3. Our Role as Catalysts

Traditionally, landscape architectural training includes two basic principles that now may need to be augmented. First, site design remains the basic fundamental of all landscape architecture. Second, the design process begins and ends with the design and construction contract. While these should continue as the backbone of landscape architectural training and practice, many landscape architects are discovering newer and broader opportunities.

Because landscape architects are the only professionals with sensitivity, experience, and creativity regarding land design, they can exercise a badly needed role as catalysts for better land development, particularly for tourism. By catalyst is meant
the function of bringing the action forces together for better design, especially in the urban setting. It does not mean that they must be specialists in a great many fields.

For example in establishing a hotel, the key actors are owners-investors, managers, architects, local land use regulators, politicians and local citizen groups, especially those impacted by the hotel site. If a landscape architect is engaged, the assumption is made that the program is in order. Seldom however is this the case. Early in negotiation, even before the site is selected, landscape architects can be effective in tactfully identifying the many objectives and refining function policies. Several landscape architectural firms have built reputations on this stage in design—meeting with and drawing from the several actors the guiding fundamentals of the project, long before sketch plans are made. Edward D. Stone, Jr., a Florida-based landscape architect is a prime example. In describing his hotel and resort projects a hotel magazine writer characterized him and other landscape architects as "those complex hybrids of artist, craftsman, psychologist, sociologist and down-to-earth bottom line wizards."

An excellent application of landscape architectural intervention is in visitor interpretation. Instead of polarized positions between developers and conservationists that lead only to conflict, a catalytic role can bring these forces together for constructive solution. The design and location of interpretive centers and tours can make a major contribution to better understanding and enrichment for visitors at the same time that
fragile resources can be protected.

Tourism is such a broad and complicated phenomenon that it needs a great amount of such catalytic action. Contrary to a single business building site, tourism involves virtually every facet of the community. It involves all of the urban features that attract visitors, the transportation and circulation systems, the many use areas, the lodging and food services and the residential and shopping areas.

Whenever landscape architects are involved in individual site projects related to tourism, they could perform a valuable role by calling attention to the dynamics of the site function and how it should be integrated with other tourism sites. An historic restoration, for example, has many implications beyond the site--parking, access, signage and relation to lodging and food service. The catalytic role may take a bit more energy and time but can be very rewarding from both a selfish interest for further engagements as well as public service for a better community.

Conclusions

No other field of development is so ripe for landscape architectural practice than tourism. It has become one of the most pervasive forms of economic land development in the world. Yet, its great growth has not been accompanied by major input from those who have the talent and capability to do so much for it. Environmental assets need their skilled and sensitive artistry for protection. Businesses need better design for higher profits from travelers. And, the visitors to a community
deserve the quality experiences that landscape architects can produce. Seldom has so great an opportunity come to this profession. How well it will respond is yet to be seen. Remember, tourism is like fire—it can cook your food or it can burn down your house. Let's be the leaders in making tourism work for society and the environment rather than against both.

February, 1987