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## Landscape Change: The influence of external cultural forces

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# LANDSCAPE CHANGE: THE INFLUENCE OF EXTERNAL CULTURAL FORCES

**Elizabeth Brabec**

*In the cultural 'melting pot' of a world economy, traditional, culturally-defined landscapes are being modified under a myriad of international influences. In this context, it is often difficult to identify the landscape and design forms that are key to maintaining local identity and a sense of place. Identifying these forms is critical in the planning process, as local planners and decision-makers attempt to integrate new, globally-influenced development patterns in local communities and at the same time create spaces and places that will not destroy local values and associations. The landscapes, their vectors, and the changes they engendered, will be used to illuminate the design decisions made as a result of absorbing one culture's norms of land patterning into another.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the cultural 'melting pot' of a world economy, traditional, culturally-defined landscapes are being modified under a myriad of international influences. Billboards from China to Warsaw tout brand new "American style" residential developments as the appropriate living standard. Corporations such as McDonalds, Pizza Hut and Staples are bringing their branded merchandise as well as architectural design and development pattern to all areas of the globe. In this context, it is often difficult to identify the landscape and design forms that are key to maintaining local identity and a sense of place. Identifying these forms is critical in the planning process, as local planners and decision-makers attempt to integrate new, globally-influenced development patterns in local communities and at the same time create spaces and places that will not destroy local values and associations.

Landscape change is not new. It has been part of human settlements since the beginning of time, responding to cultural changes, outside influences and technology shifts. However, what is new is the speed with which landscapes are changing. Many commentators have described the resulting global loss of sense of place. In fact, it can be argued that the popularity of eco-tourism is, at least in part, the desire to find places that remain "authentic" and untouched by the trend towards global homogenization of landscapes. The field of historical and cultural landscape analysis has struggled with the issue of landscape change for the past two decades in an attempt to develop a theoretical construct for historical landscape analysis. The

anthropological and archaeological theories of material culture and settlement patterns provide a context for just such a theoretical construct, and a basis for evaluation of landscape development and assimilation between cultures (Trigger 1968; Leone 1988).

The form and expression of material culture migrates from one society to another through a variety of vectors: warfare and conquest; human migration; the secondary diffusion of travelers; and the movement of objects and ideas through trade. The process of landscape change enabled by these vectors, can then be identified as a series of design choices. Deetz (1968), in his investigation of material culture, states that 'any man-made object...is the end result of a series of decisions' (Deetz 1968, 32). These choices can be categorized in a framework of fundamental considerations that are often in opposition in the parent and adopting culture: 1. *symbolism*; 2. *environmental or physical features*; 3. *proxemics and functional considerations of cultural use of space*; 4. *economic decisions*; 5. *available technology* and 6. *social engineering*, where a design attribute is chosen to encourage or force a particular action or response from the user. By studying both the vectors of change, and the design choices made as a result of those vectors, we can begin to understand the creation and development of landscape pattern.

Two landscapes will be examined and compared within this theoretical framework. The landscapes, their vectors, and the changes they engendered, will be used to illuminate the design decisions made as a result of absorbing one culture's norms of land patterning into another. The first example, the landscape of an early 20<sup>th</sup> century neoclassical public park in the United States, illustrates landscape change engendered through the secondary diffusion of travelers and the movement of objects and ideas through trade. In this case, American landscape architects and designers traveled to Italy during the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, in order to study Italian Renaissance design. They returned with spatial concepts, design theory and specific objects and incorporated them into an ideal of the public park intended to uplift and civilize the working masses. The second landscape analyzed, is the landscape of the southern plantation. This landscape was formed by the immigration of two groups, one voluntary and one forced. The hierarchical social structure which developed as part of the plantation system, resulted the domination of the Euro-white plantation owners, over enslaved blacks of African origin that lead to a landscape dominated by the influence of the plantation owners.

This theoretical framework and its application to the two cases can provide insights into the modification of landscape forms and spatial organization, and can provide a basis for appropriate implementation of cross-cultural design efforts. By defining the basis and extent of change resulting from the interaction of cultures and the vectors of change, the degree to which the resulting landscape reflects the attitudes and values, and the environmental, social, economic and political conditions of the adopting society can be illuminated. The analysis provides a first step in understanding the forces at work in the current worldwide dissemination of landscape patterns, and the process by which historical meaning and sense of place can be retained in a changing landscape.

## 2. CASE 1: THE ADOPTION OF DESIGN

At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, neoclassical design was taking the United States by storm. From public buildings and grounds to private residences and sculptural arts, the most prominent style in the country was neo-classical. Spurred by the architecture and landscape epitomized

by the Chicago World=s Columbian Exposition of 1893, the desire for neoclassical design in cities and towns was dubbed the City Beautiful Movement. In fact, this design movement was so strong that its effects were apparent in the form and design of public parks for most of the first half of the 20th century (Pergill and Volkman 1993).

Of course support for the style was not unanimous, and it was variously decried as being imitative pastiche and a symbol of excessive wealth and prestige (Morgan 1995). However, its proponents promoted neoclassical style as the vehicle trumpeting America=s coming of age as a world power, moving America from the status of backwoods colony into the modern world (Pergill and Volkman 1993). For this reason, the style was the affirmation of being both modern and American. This analysis will focus on how the neoclassical style transcended pure imitation to become a truly American style by looking at the premier neoclassical public landscape in the country, Meridian Hill Park in Washington, D.C. Located approximately one and one-half miles north of the White House, Meridian Hill Park remains one of Washington, DC=s most significant public spaces. The park was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1994, as “an outstanding accomplishment of early 20th-century Neoclassicist park design in the United States” (Carr 1993).

## **2.1 Italian Renaissance Meets American Neoclassicism**

In the cultural >melting pot= of the United States, it is intuitively obvious that landscape preferences and styles develop from a myriad of influences. However, there is difficulty in clearly evaluating and clarifying those influences, in this case to understand the extent to which neoclassicism was purely imitative. Important to the understanding of the adoption of material culture between different societies is the mode of contact and introduction of the design ideas.

In terms of neoclassical design, some diffusion of the material culture was due to the importation of artifacts. The importation of artifacts took place in two forms: direct importation of artifacts such as statuary, urns and obelisks, or, more commonly, the representation of those artifacts in sketches or photographs. The vast majority of the movement of design ideas came through secondary diffusion, a process through which individuals visit and return with impressions that they publicize and implement at home (Deetz 1968). American designers gained an understanding of the gardens they were emulating through three methods of secondary diffusion: travel and direct viewing of the existing gardens and garden remnants, university courses devoted to the neoclassical style and popular books and published articles of the period.

Since landscape is not as portable as other material culture, influences are transferred through the importation of landscape ornaments, and/or through photographic representations. The limitations of these modes in presenting the full scope of the landscape form tends to create an iconographic or sceniographic representation of the parent landscapes. Icons in the form of specific features would be either directly imported or copied from sketches and photographs creating a landscape which contains specific ornaments but does not implement them in the same manner or in the same context as the parent landscape. Alternatively, scenes from photographs would be reproduced in whole or in part in the adopting landscape, reinforcing a sceniographic approach to landscape design.

Several published books were central to the neoclassical landscape movement and the development of sceniographic and iconographic tendencies: Charles A. Platt's *Italian Gardens* (1894), Edith Wharton's *Italian Villas and their Gardens* (1903), Charles Latham's *The Gardens of Italy* (1905) and a compilation of papers presented at the American Society of Architects conference in 1900 and subsequently published in a book of three essays, *European and Japanese Gardens* (1902). While Platt, Wharton and Latham brought their appreciation of Italian gardens to a wider American audience, Guy Lowell in *American Gardens* (1902) focused his arguments on the development of American style and the importance of its derivation from European precedents. Other books, such as Shepherd and Jellicoe's 1925 *Italian Gardens of the Renaissance* and Nichols 1928 *Italian Pleasure Gardens*, were later editions that answered the demand for additional literature on Italian gardens and helped to reinforce the predominance of the neoclassical style.



Figure 1: A perspective view of Burnap's original plan for Meridian Hill Park (Burnap, 1916)

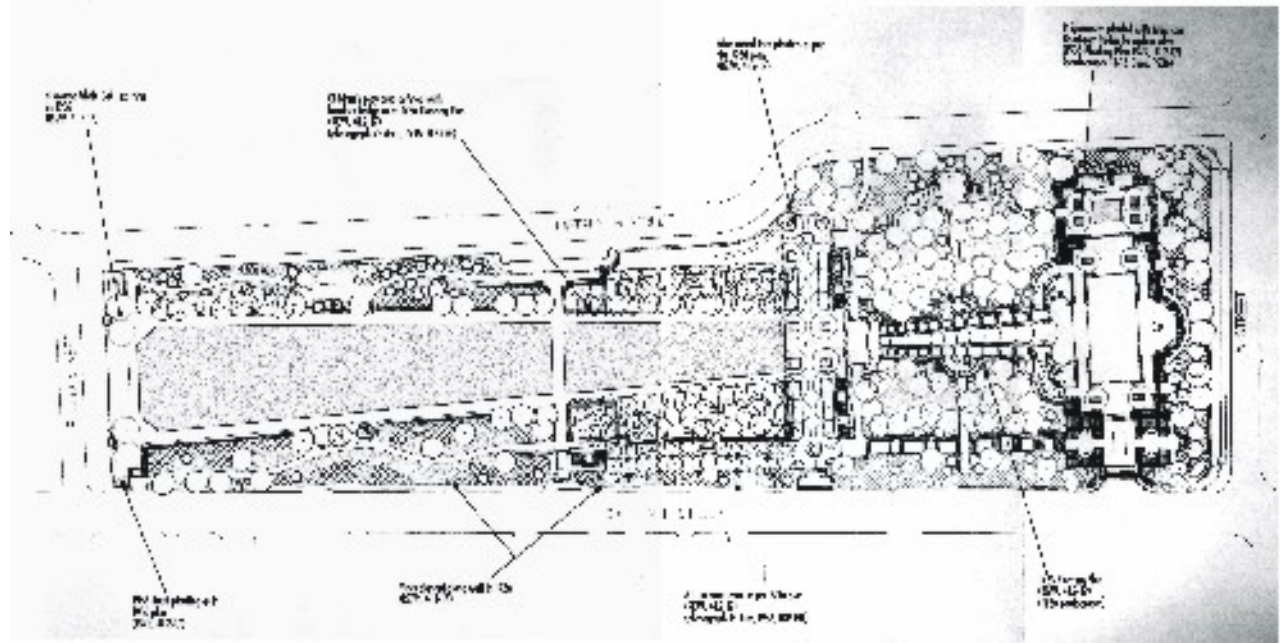
## 2.2 The agents of diffusion: designers and decision-makers

George Burnap, former professor at Cornell University and leading staff landscape architect for the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds in Washington (1910 to 1916), created the initial and enduring design concept for the park in 1913 (figure 1). Since he developed the design concept before his first visit to Italy in 1914, the influence of published writings and images on the design is underscored. Burnap was joined at Public Buildings and Grounds in 1911 by architect Horace Peaslee, a student of his at Cornell (Landscape Architecture 1959); (The National Cyclopedia of American Biography 1962), who succeeded Burnap as the primary designer of Meridian Hill in 1917 and worked to complete the design and its implementation in 1936. Peaslee traveled to Italy in 1914 with Burnap and again to Europe in 1929 to study precedents for Meridian Hill Park, so along with the importance of published sources, direct experience with Italian Renaissance gardens had a significant influence in his design of the park.

The original design features an upper area of Baroque and French Formal influence and a lower, Italian Renaissance-inspired garden. The dramatic slope of the southern portion of the park provided a natural setting for a Renaissance-inspired water feature and a classical Italianate garden. This design approach was clearly adopted in Burnap's initial plan of 1913, and continued

in simplified form through implementation in the 1930's. Below the great terrace and clearly visible in the perspective view, the 1914 plan featured sloping, hillside gardens incorporating both plantings and water features. Central to these lower gardens was a series of eight descending basins of water that formed a cascade. Paths subdivided the lower gardens to create four boscos, distinct areas planted with groves of trees although not in the requisite quincunx or grid of the Italian Renaissance style. Each of the four groves were naturalistically planted and could be traversed by a series of meandering paths, which contrasted with the straight, direct paths framing the hillside area. South of the hillside gardens was a level plaza, anchoring the lower park.

The final plan completed in 1936 (figure 2), illustrates the simplification of the original design, a trend that mirrored the movement of design ideals away from the more ostentatious display of the early Renaissance Revival details to cleaner, simpler, classically-inspired lines. This simplification of the park's design resulted in an overall improvement in the coherence and legibility of the spatial forms. For example, the upper area of the park was simplified from a mix of carriage drives, lawn, parking areas, fountain, boscos and concert grove to a simple, wide open mall with converging pedestrian paths leading to the Great Terrace.



**Figure 2: Plan of Meridian Hill Park as completed in 1936 (Land Ethics, Inc, 1997)**

Italian villa gardens were symbols of power during the Renaissance, and as an integrated architectural and landscape composition were “pretentious pleasure garden[s] expressing the magnificence and the power of a princely name” (Kenworthy 1990). As symbols of high social, economic and political position, the gardens were intended to dazzle - they looked expensive and were expensive to build and maintain, thus limiting their development to the very wealthy members of society (Kenworthy 1990). The use of extensive water features - bubbling, splashing, spraying and rushing through the garden - statuary, and detailed ornament on every exposed hard surface reinforced the expressions of opulence, beauty and pleasure in these garden spaces. Similarly, the gardens of the French Formal tradition at Versailles and Vaux-le-Vicomte were also symbolic of power and wealth.

In their desire to elevate the city of Washington to one of international prominence, the designers of the McMillan Commission naturally gravitated to the formal landscape tradition embodied in both the Italian Renaissance and French Formal traditions. By adopting landscapes symbolic of wealth, power and prestige, they insured that the city would attain the implied status.

The garden ornaments identified in the turn of the century writings, sketches and photographs, as Renaissance icons were balustrades, urns, statuary, and water features, particularly cascades and water chains (Hamlin 1902). These garden ornaments were used almost slavishly at Meridian Hill Park, each having its specific precedent. For example, the fountains at each end of the upper terrace are modeled on an illustration of a fountain at the Villa Medici in Rome found in the Park Commission report (Moore 1902). In fact the entire scene is replicated, from the enframing allee of trees, to the placement of the fountain on an overlook with a long view over the city. This provides some support for the contention that the neoclassical garden, and its incarnation at Meridian Hill Park, was at least partly scenographic.





**Figure 3: The cascades at Meridian Hill Park (Land Ethics, 1996)**

The most enduring feature of the original design for the park were the cascades, clearly the most significant feature in the park and the one most easily identified as Italian Renaissance in influence (figure 3). However the origins of the design are much more difficult to divine. There are no documentary references to specific precedents for the version of the cascade that appears in the initial design drawings of 1913 and 1914. Since Burnap had not traveled to Italy at the time he produced the original design drawings in 1913, we must turn to the published accounts of the Renaissance gardens to provide some possibilities for the origins of the design. The most probable precedent from published sources was the cascade at St. Cloud, France, designed by Thomas Francine circa 1625. Pictured in Howard's discussion of French gardens and attributed to Le Notre, the cascade is similar in scale and form to Burnap's early drawings, with a central circular feature and a vertical terminus (Howard 1902). However, as the cascade is simplified and achieves its final form in 1920, the design can only be seen as an interpretive one, transcending imitation to apply the spirit of a Renaissance cascade to the given site. By that time Peaslee had acquired the personal experience of studying the villas, and modified the scale and form of those precedents into a cascade both larger in scale and simpler in form than his Renaissance examples.

The planting design at Meridian Hill shows the greatest variation in treatment over the life of the design development, and also provides the clearest divergence of the park design from an imitative style. It is clear from Burnap's aerial perspective of the park that he intended the plantings to be architectonic in shape and form, imitative of the engravings of the Renaissance period such as those included in Platt's *Italian Gardens*. Both trees and hedges were designed to be pleached and sheared into wall-like masses, defining the edges of outdoor rooms. While the hedges lining the mall, cascades, and those forming the walls of the lower plaza were retained and implemented, the design of the planting plan by Vitale and Geiffert focused on softened tree masses echoing the images of the Renaissance gardens as they were seen in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. This softening of the landscape was also interpreted to be more American:

...American vegetation is very different from that of other countries. In spite of the fact that the same flowers sometimes grow in the American garden as in those abroad, they seem to grow differently, - less formally, perhaps, - and we, as a nation, prefer a freedom which to the English or the French gardener would almost seem like untidiness. (Lowell 1902).

With this change in planting design, came a related change in use of the bosco, from one of a shady and decorative feature lining strolling paths, to one of access and use for lounging and picnicking. In the original planting plan, Vitale had prescribed lawn for the



ground plan, but by the mid 1930's, in a curious change of program, Payne revised the planting to English Ivy, clearly chosen to exclude loungers and more in keeping with Renaissance uses. Although the Ivy was planted, it was soon replaced by lawn, resulting in a location enduringly popular with park visitors.

Access to public parks was of necessity open and democratic, requiring modifications for early 20<sup>th</sup> century park use such as opening the grassy ground plane of the boscos for picnicking and lounging. However there was a constant friction between active recreation use and the constraints of a controlled landscape. Active recreation was patently in conflict with the image of a park intended to awe and dazzle, to provide a respite from the city, but also in a setting that was defined as fine art.

The conflict in needs between the residents of the neighborhoods surrounding Meridian Hill Park and the vision of the park as a national treasure became severe. Although Burnap's design for the park did not include any specific play areas, by 1929 Peaslee had included three sand boxes, and by 1934 had added two hedge-enclosed areas in the central portion of the mall, clearly an adaptation of the villa garden model to public park use. Active recreation was never accommodated in the program for the park, and the conflict between user and program remained constant. The documentary record contains repeated references to inappropriate uses such as football practice and active games, all of which were discouraged by police patrols (Commission of Fine Arts 1939). The northern entrance off 16<sup>th</sup> Street is the most interesting example of the use of Renaissance design forms run amuck in their application to the functional needs of an American public park. The northern entrance was originally designed by Burnap and later detailed and refined by Peaslee to be the primary formal entrance into the park. The entrance begins on grade on 16<sup>th</sup> Street, rises a half flight of stairs into an enclosed vestibule and then takes a 90° turn to rise another two flights of stairs into a pleached linden allee which directs the visitor to the Grand Terrace. The detailing of the entrance vestibule was intended to be reminiscent of a Renaissance grotto complete with stalactites and stalagmites, planting pockets for ferns and hanging vines, and dripping water (Sherill 1922).

Peaslee chose the image of a grotto for the main entrance to the park for two main reasons. First, the entrance faced west and was heavily shaded, providing a cool, damp retreat during the heat of the day. Secondly, the entrance was largely underground, as were the majority of the Renaissance grottoes. While grottoes are typical features of Renaissance gardens, their translation into a park entrance was problematic. The use of a grotto as an entrance created a dark, indefensible space which today is seldom used and has become a shelter for the homeless and an area of swirling refuse.

### 2.3 Lasting Influence

The analysis of the design development of Meridian Hill Park tells a story of designers who have come into contact with the landscape design of another culture and time period - Italian Renaissance and French Formal. Those designers found certain forms and cultural ideas which appealed to and fulfilled current societal ideals, however, the full scope of the Renaissance form required modification to suit the cultural values and physical needs of society at that time. This reformulation created a new style of formal landscape, one that certainly shared a great deal with its antecedents, however was uniquely American in style. At Meridian Hill Park, American designers adopted the typical Renaissance spatial forms of enclosure of the garden and separation from the surrounding land uses, terracing and sequencing of the landscape with both vertical and horizontal progression, maintained a dominant central axis and strict symmetry to the composition, with an internal design based on geometric formalism. The critical features that became a Renaissance iconography were balustrades, urns, statuary, water features and replication of the forms of Italian flora, particularly the pencil-thin form of the Italian cypress.

The forms and detailing of Meridian Hill Park subtly changed the Renaissance mold. The higher level of use in a public park, economic considerations and issues of security drove a need for simplicity in the design, mirroring the changes in design taste in the 1920's

and 30's. Axes were invariably terminated with a major feature, dictated at least in part by the constraints of the surrounding urban landscape. Finally, ubiquitous Renaissance features such as the parterre were removed entirely from the scheme, and public access was provided to the grassy hillsides that replaced them.

The symbolic meaning behind the Renaissance villa gardens was certainly adopted by American designers, using these landscapes to convey the message of power, with high social, economic and political position. In the design of public spaces, the neoclassical landscape was intended to convey a level of dignity, importance and culture to the city and its environs. Particularly at Meridian Hill Park in Washington, D.C., the development of an American Renaissance Park was intended to show the world that the city was world-class, equal to any other power in the world.

From the forgoing analysis, it is clear that while the neoclassical style was based on an imitation of the Italian Renaissance and other formal European landscapes, it transcended pure imitation to become a formal American style. Although heavily influenced by published photographs and writings of the period which reinforced the retention of iconography and sceniography, the style evolved over the first half of the century to become a simplified homage to Renaissance landscapes. That style, although swept aside by modernism and successive periods, had considerable influence in the development of the American landscape.

### **3. CULTURAL INTETEGRATION OF THE SOUTHERN PLANTATION**

As a form of material culture, plantation landscapes impart a message of the political, social, cultural and economic realities of their time. In an analysis of the low country landscape of South Carolina, that message can be found in the specific interplay of architectural and landscape forms. The text of the forms describes power and control, and the placement of the plantation owner at the center of the microcosm. Providing explicit messages of domination and subjugation, the interplay of plantation architecture and landscape supported the social, cultural and political dictates of the institution of slavery.

Southern antebellum plantations have a dual position in American culture: they are understood by scholars and lay people alike as icons of wealth, power and prestige and also as the locus of enslavement and repression.<sup>i</sup> While the southern plantation produced a landscape of enduring design appeal, the reality of its form and development is much more complex than this focus on material wealth would indicate. Plantations functioned on the basis of power and control – the power of the plantation owner to control the actions of the slaves. Without the assertion of both, the plantation social structure would have weakened, and the functional basis of the plantation economy disintegrated. As such, the landscape contains both the opulent, favored view of the owner, along with the darker side of slavery.

Although the land owners of the low country came from a variety of cultural and religious backgrounds, English attitudes, values and social hierarchy wielded a tremendous influence among the plantation owner class, becoming the basis of the emerging low country society. In England, Georgian ideals and world view held sway during the late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, "with its striving for balance, order, symmetry, segmentation, and standardization." The Georgian style was intended to demonstrate understanding of the laws of nature. Those laws were rational, and as such, "the implications of these homes and landscapes were to convince people that a rational social order based on nature was possible and that those with such access to its laws were its natural leaders." The Georgian conceptual order "segregates, subdivides, stresses the intellect and the individual and focuses on order and control." This form, particularly that of order and control, was well suited to a plantation regime where the control of the planter (the minority) was exerted over the slave population (the vast majority). Architecturally, this order took the form of Georgian and Palladian styles, as it did in other areas of the southern United States. Planters in the low country and through the south maintained their status in the social and political order based on two commodities: slaves and arable land. Therefore, the message of wealth, power and status was conveyed by three distinct aspects of the plantation: the visible area of

cultivated land, the apparent size of the plantation owner's house and the display of the ownership of slaves. Although most of the show plantations, particularly along the Ashley, were relatively small, and were rarely the seat of major commodity production, they were the physical locus of the expression of wealth and power. Thus it was incumbent on the design of the landscape to enhance this message.

Size was key to the message of power, both the size of the plantation house and the size of the plantation grounds. As the center of the plantation composition, the planter's house was the focal point of the core area. Therefore, the house was, if at all possible, set on a knoll or rise to accentuate the architectural foil of raising the living spaces above the ground floor level. Setting the house above the ground floor level, which was used for storage and offices, required visitors to climb stairs - to move upward in space - to enter the house. It was very unusual for a low country house to be designed without this separation from the ground plane. The size of the house was further accentuated with flankers, which were either detached or architecturally linked to the main house by a walkway.

Many of the plantations were designed and built with all of the outbuildings in a bilateral spatial arrangement, emphasizing the ideals of symmetry and geometry. But the most consistent feature of the plantation landscape, whether show or lesser status plantation, was the use of the avenue to set the context for entry into the estate (see Figure 4). In very few instances were the avenues which linked the plantation house to the public road any form other than a straight line. The sense of arrival at the plantation domain was heightened through the use of gates. However, the demarcation was largely symbolic: plantation plats rarely show a fence extending out from the gates, and the gates marked the entrance to the plantation core area, not the edge of the entire plantation land holdings.

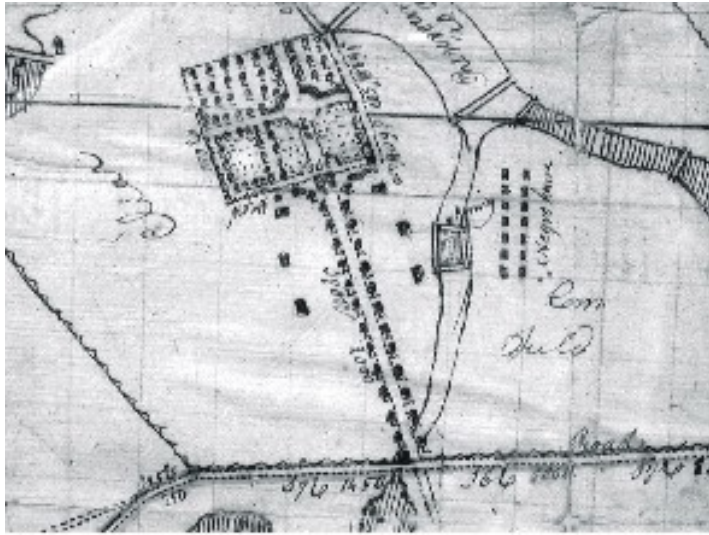
### 3.1 Plantation House and Slave Communities

A key measure of the wealth and power of the plantation owner was the number of human beings that he or she owned. Conversely, the concept of being owned and classed as property was extremely degrading for the members of the slave community. The term "power" in Orser's 1988 analysis of plantation structure refers to the ability of owners to control direct producers, with that control extending to the use of space. We could argue that this expression of control over space is the single most eloquent and enduring expression of power and social relations in the plantation landscape - in fact in any landscape.

The physical manifestation of the dominion of the plantation owner over the slave community took a number of forms. Architecturally the quarters were small in relation to the plantation house, emphasizing the disparity between slave and owner. However, it is the placement of the quarters in space and their relationship to the locus of power that was even more significant in the domination of the plantation world. Since the ownership of human beings was a defacto statement of power, it was a logical conclusion that these human beings would be displayed. This display took a number of forms that can be grouped and ranked into four general approaches to the placement of slave communities, from the most to least common:

1. located at a distance from the plantation house to prevent the noise, etc. from interfering with genteel living, but visually linked as part of the plantation complex (shown in figure 4);
2. located close to the main house to exert physical dominion over the slaves;
3. located in a row situated on either side of the avenue to showcase them; and
4. in a few cases located at the center of an active village, with the plantation house dominating the physical center.

In a few instances, the situation of the plantation house as the center of the plantation microcosm was reinforced by the use of a radial pattern for the avenue and supporting plantation roads, with the slave quarters located on one or more of the radial arms.



**Figure 4: A plantation in South Carolina circa 1790. Note the plantation house at the center of a large formal garden, with the slave houses set at a distance.**

These various approaches to physical design had significant effects on the function and defensibility of space in the slave communities. In most cases, the slave communities, the majority of which were in a street or grid pattern, did not have a plantation road leading through them. While the plantation owner was able to ride and visit anywhere in the plantation that he or she so desired, the fact that no major road ran through the quarters had the result of reserving some space that the slave community could identify as its own. Thus the settlement could function as a community with defensible space and a hierarchy of private, semi-private and community space. This hierarchy was in some instances reinforced by the use of fencing between and behind the quarters, and in rare instances the entire slave community was surrounded by a fence. This use of fencing defined the "street," or the area between the rows of quarters, as community space. It is in this space that most of the photographic records of the quarters reflect an active community life.

Conversely, the result of the placement of the slave quarters on either side of the avenue was a loss of community space. Instead of creating defensible space, with a perceptual community boundary, the street became public space, frequented by visitors to the plantation. Thus the sense of community domain, coherence and the freedom of the inhabitants to engage in social interaction was curtailed.

While the plantation owner exerted strict control over the landscape, the balance of power and control on the plantation was not held without resistance on the part of the slave community. The population of the low country was overwhelmingly composed of slaves of African origin or heredity - on any single plantation, for every owner and his or her family, there were tens to hundreds of slaves living in the communities dispersed throughout the plantation and associated holdings. This inequality of numbers was exacerbated by the fact that plantation owners did not remain on the plantations during the summer months, and many plantations were left without a white presence at all. A review of census records for the period between 1790 and 1840 indicates that up to 25% of the plantations were left only under the control of a driver, a trusted member of the slave community.

Many researchers have discussed and identified various forms of active resistance by slaves, generally in the form of actions that would impact the owner's profits. This included, anything from work slow downs to crop and equipment sabotage. As active, and in many cases as successful as this resistance was, the resistance and the consequent level of power held by the slave community, nor their cultural influence, is readily visible in the structure of the landscape. The plantation landscapes as a whole exhibit a high degree of

conformity and regimentation, indicative of the plantation owner's overwhelming control over the physical design and layout of the landscape.

#### 4. SUMMARY

These two cases illustrate two different vectors of landscape change and formation. In terms of the neoclassical landscape at Meridian Hill, design ideas migrated from Italy to the United States through the physical movement of objects, and the movement of ideas by the designers who visited and wrote about the Italian Renaissance landscapes. In the southern plantation, the landscape development is influenced by the migration to two different groups of cultural origin or the domination of one over the other. Although these cases are different in their vectors and expressions, they have one underlying commonality: when confronted with landscapes that did not support their cultural and social patterns, they resulted in either change or abandonment.

At Meridian Hill, this is scene in the conflict of use between active and passive recreation and the use of the grotto as an entrance to the park. Acceptance of user needs is scene in the modification of the design of boscos and partarres from the original Renaissance concept. In the southern plantations, the realities of cultural change is evident only after the end of slavery. After emancipation, former slaves formed new communities that transformed geometric settlements into irregular enclaves of homes occupied by family relatives.

The cases explored here identify an initial investigation into a conceptual theory for landscape change. They illustrate the power of cultural cognition and its effect on the adoption or rejection of forms from another culture. Outside design ideas can be imposed on a culture, however, those that are irrelevant will be rejected. The findings reinforce the primacy of local versus world culture. By identifying cultural relevance or irrelevance, local communities can adopt new design ideas.

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