

The Way it Was: a Landscape Architect in Post War America

M.Paul Friedberg

abstract:

The second half of the 20th century was a dramatic and fertile period from the oppressive work week and the degrading urban population of young professional and empty nesters was a population that cherished vitality and cosmopolitan character. Possessing time, affluence, and mobility

play, shop, and see and be seen. coveted places to live,

During this time, the profession experienced significant change, matured, returning from its Arcadian, anti urban era to favor social relevance. Pressures of change presented designers with new materials and new sensibilities, compelling the profession to recognize that the city must be approached on its own terms as a center of social and cultural interaction. Without precedent or experience, a few adventurous professionals ventured into this unknown territory, blending new urban spaces, new architectonic forms, and industrial materials. In recent decades, materialism and market place considerations slowly trumped the social concerns valued in the 1960s. Though we may remain committed to our social role in the city, clients in the private sector seek the landscape architect purely to call attention

to themselves. This commercial sector led shift has a reductive impact on the quality and content of much of today's design. Professionals are being chosen on the basis of how well their designs sell.

Our profession has always responded to the values of the era. Due to the economic downturn