

## Chapter News

### NEW YORK/TRI-STATE

DOCOMOMO New York/Tri-State is part of a working coalition including Preservation New Jersey, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, DOCOMOMO US, the Recent Past Preservation Network, the Cultural Landscape Foundation, and AIA-New Jersey that is currently exploring ways to preserve Eero Saarinen's 2,000,000 sq. ft. Bell Laboratories on a 472-acre site in Holmdel, New Jersey. The groups also aim to assist with a direction for the sites future preservation and reuse. The coalition sponsored a talk about Saarinen's career on October 30th in Holmdel, NJ by Donald Albrecht, co-curator of the traveling exhibition "Eero Saarinen: Shaping the Future."

—Kathleen Randall

New York/Tri-State Chapter Spotlights the O'Toole Building and its Architect, Albert Ledner

In February 2007, New York/Tri-State chapter members learned that St. Vincent Catholic Medical Centers planned to demolish the O'Toole Building, located on 7th Avenue between 12th and 13th Streets in Manhattan. Originally the Joseph Curran Building, the five-story structure was designed



Jay Shockley (right) confers with Albert Ledner (left) over a historic photo of the Joseph Curran Building showing original details.

(Photo courtesy of Jay Shockley)

## Landscapes of Industrial Archeology: Preservation Projects for Social Spaces

Surprisingly and equally unexpectedly a new situation has occurred in Europe regarding the future of disused industrial areas. Starting in the early 1990s the number of preservation projects for the transformation of sections of industrial landscapes, already in decay or abandoned have, by and large increased. These industrial activities had generated polluted landscapes in conditions of full hostility for human beings and nature. The huge industrial machineries have stood empty of users and materials in a desolated land of debris. Most of the new projects resulted in the creation of new open spaces for leisure facilities and collective public activities. The largest and most



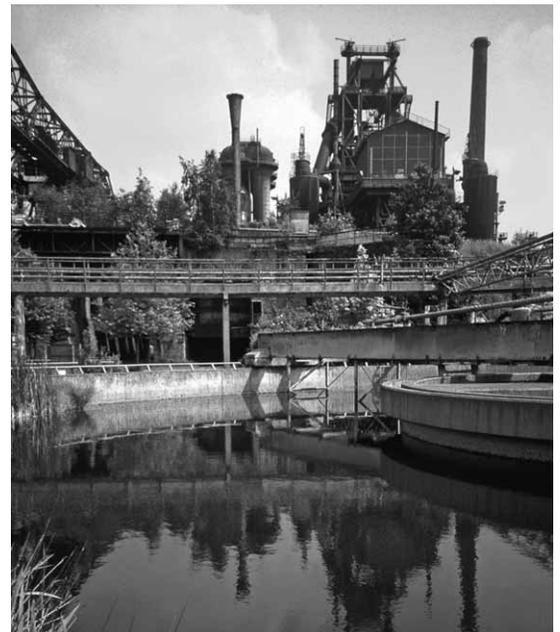
Site of Landschaftspark in North-Duisburg. Landschaftspark, North-Duisburg, Germany. (photo: Franco Panzini)

complex intervention that has become a standard of reference for the transformation of post-industrial landscapes elsewhere, has been achieved in the Ruhr area, located in North Rhine-Westphalia (Germany). This has been Europe's heart of industrialization. Remains of the period are the large population (the region, with 18 million people has the highest population density of all Germany) and a totally artificially transformed landscape.

During the middle of the 20th century as the industrial boom stopped, many heavy industries (predominantly coal and steel) moved away, leaving abandoned industrial plants and a large number of post-industrial sites, including many brown-fields. In 1989 the regional government of North Rhine-Westphalia started an integrated development strategy for the former industrial region. The major goal was the creation of a new "regional park" with a length of seventy kilometers along the Emscher River. More than 150 years of industrialization have left their mark on the region: mines, coking plants and winding towers are the impressive relics of the past industrial era.

The range of different arrangements has been broad, combining commercial with recreational spaces, as well as providing educational facilities and sites for urban forestry and urban agriculture that will aid in creating a more sustainable and functional future landscape. All of the new functions are based on the deliberate incorporation of the industrial heritage into the new landscape. The industrial plants remain as landmarks and architectural witnesses narrating the history of the region.

One of the fully completed sections of the new preserved landscape is the Landschaftspark in North Duisburg (1993-2001), designed by Peter



View of Latz's incorporation of thyssen Steelworks into the parks design. Landschaftspark, North-Duisburg, Germany. (photo: Franco Panzini)

Latz. An outstanding example of a park area shaped by its industrial history, the heart of the park is the decommissioned Thyssen Steelworks, converted into a site of industrial heritage and a venue for different leisure facilities. Based on the idea of calling for empirical solutions, Latz has interpreted the parts of the huge steel structures as bearer of a spontaneous naturalization process. A new landscape has emerged; the park is the manifesto of the re-appropriation of the obsolete industrial features by nature. A botanical garden, where plants suitable to grow among the ruins of steel industries are cultivated, represents a space for discovery and play at the same time.

Equally successful has been the preservation of the Zollverein coalmine industrial complex in the vicinity of Essen, where the main structure is Shaft XII, a technical and architectural masterpiece designed by the architects Fritz Schupp and Martin Kremmer and built in 1932. The design of the plant is based on pure modern aesthetics, with clear lines, reduced forms and an impressive symmetry.

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## Changes to Halprin's Freeway Park

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another vision for the park. Mr. Robertson understands the gravity of his position as a link between the past and future of the park, and it was his appreciation for this responsibility that sent him to Marin County in the early fall to speak with Mr. Halprin. In addition to speaking with Mr. Halprin, Mr. Robertson discussed his ideas with himself and two of Halprin's previous collaborators and employees: Stephen Koch and Dai Williams. Together, the four men discussed the various design and horticultural constraints of the current state of Freeway Park. Mr. Halprin confirmed that the plants were subservient to the other elements of the design, like the water features in the foreground and the city in the background, and also talked about how the revised planting palette—including larch, pine, oxydendron, japanese maple and hemlock—should be, as Robertson phrased it, “robust and masculine,” to reflect the original design intent.

While the future of Halprin and Danadjieva's design legacy continues to improve with increased awareness of the import of this design and urban planning landmark, permanent protections remain elusive. A Seattle landmarks nomination submitted in 2005 continues to remain in limbo despite the desire of the Landmarks Preservation Board to formally embrace this unique legacy. The central sticking point is also what makes Freeway Park so unique. The Washington State Department of Transportation and the City of Seattle have been trying to establish who has jurisdiction over landmarking property that is within the leased air rights over Interstate 5. With so many historic properties associated with the Interstate Highway system, the resolution of this cross-boundary dispute may prove fateful for the modernist objects, landscapes and buildings across the country.

—Brice Maryman

*Portions of this article were previously published on The Cultural Landscape Foundation's website written by Brice Maryman and Liz Birkholz.*

## Urban Renewal Renewed

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**Hopkins Plaza after renovation, April 2007. Charles Center, Baltimore, MD.** (photo: Olivia Klose)

several of the Charles Center office buildings offered subsidized cafeterias, thus keeping office workers inside for lunch. Ultimately, the sheer scale of Charles Center, the fact of separate building ownership, and the overall decline in downtown retail activity were major factors working against the visual and spatial cohesion of the entire site, and likely prevented the plazas from assuming the status of clearly defined destinations within the city, regardless of the aesthetic merit of their individual design schemes.

In many ways, the emphasis on movement and variety as a visual theme has stayed the same from the original design to the new one; it is perhaps only in the execution of this theme that Brown & Craig's design seeks to differentiate itself from the original and announce Center Plaza as a 21st century urban destination. Bryce Turner of Brown & Craig describes Center Plaza's intended transformation, saying that “As [designers] developed their version of plazas in the 1950s and 1960s, there was a ‘Jetsonian’ view that incorporated lots of hardscape. Now we have found it is important to have more soft spaces”. Their design incorporates the ten key principles that made Bryant Park a resounding success, most notably monumental sculpture as a focal point, movable seating and outdoor cafes, greenscaping (as opposed to hardscaping), and ambient nighttime lighting.

There is undoubtedly increased attention to the urban spaces of Charles Center, with the opening in 2001 of Johns Hopkins University's Downtown Center at the southeast corner of the site, and with the imminent redevelopment of the 1967 Morris Mechanic Theater, located on Hopkins Plaza. With enough retail investment—an important prescription in Brown & Craig's plan and the focus of the Mechanic's redevelopment—Center Plaza will benefit from the most important ingredient of any public space: people.

—Olivia Klose

## Landscapes of Industrial Archeology

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In 2001 UNESCO had inscribed the whole colliery and coking plant ensemble of Zollverein into the World Heritage List, because “it constitutes remarkable material evidence of the evolution and decline of the coal industry over the past 150 years.” The whole area has been converted into an anchor point along the European route of industrial heritage. The last completed conversion of an industrial plant is the transformation of the coal refinery building into a museum and visitors center, designed by the joint venture OMA/Heinrich Böll. The project was awarded the Deutscher Architekturpreis 2007.



**Utilization of recreational space. Landschaftspark, North-Duisburg, Germany.** (photo: Franco Panzini)

After the German results of creative conversion of decommissioned plants, brownfields and mine sites in order to establish new post-industrial landscapes, similar experiments have found a certain diffusion all around Europe. One of the most amazing new proposals comes from France. In 2003, the Louvre announced a competition to create a regional branch of the museum in Lens (northern region of Pas de Calais), on a site of over twenty hectares that was a former mine yard. The decision to build the new museum in the former mine yard is highly symbolic for a region that has suffered much in the past, from both war and from intensive coal-mining followed by the closing of the last pit in 1986. The international architecture competition to design the future Musée du Louvre-Lens was launched in early 2005. The winning team was the Japanese architectural practice Sanaa (Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa), together with the American museum architects Celia Imrey and Tim Culbert, and the French landscape designer Catherine Mosbach. The design of the museum and the new public spaces that will be opened in 2010 consists of nine pavilions in glass and steel, partly set into the ground with roof glazing. The group of buildings blends in with the surrounding post-industrial environment, creating a totally new perspective for a future based on the binomial culture-open spaces, without losing sight of the glorious industrial heritage.

—Maristella Casciato