

GREENING WASTELANDS: HISTORICAL LINEAGE AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

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1 ABSTRACT

Since the decline of heavy industrialization in the mid- to late-1900s, landscape architects have been working to remediate and revitalize waste landscapes, particularly brownfields. The development of the field toward working on these complex and challenging landscapes has greatly matured. To discuss this evolution, three iconic projects provide a cross-section of the profession's history in redesigning brownfields: Gas Works Park (1975) designed by Richard Haag, and Byxbee Park (1991) and Crissy Field (2001), both designed by Hargreaves Associates. With differing former uses, each project was selected as representative of a different era and paradigm in landscape architecture, while also having fallen short in achieving their original design intent over time. These three projects also represent a repeating pattern to approaching wastelands as a landscape type—they must be greened in order to be functional.

To argue for more nuanced approaches to waste landscapes that result in distinctively diverse outcomes and directly engage with waste conditions and former uses, Landschaftspark (2002) designed by Latz+Partners and Brick Works (2010) designed by DTAH and Claude Cormier+Associates illustrate the potentials for activating waste conditions, generating highly performative landscapes. These projects demonstrate the importance of integrating multiple uses and bringing visibility to processes of remediation and site histories as aesthetic and performative components of brownfield reclamation. They also reveal opportunities for expanding this lineage. In seeking future prospects to engaging with these sites, landscape lifecycles is proposed as a new design-research framework, which advocates for transforming underutilized spaces by reactivating waste materials.

1.1 Keywords

Brownfield reclamation, waste reuse, environmental injustice, lifecycles, landscape history