



## Peter Schaudt

with Stanley Collyer

**COMPETITIONS:** Environment often plays a role in what we choose to do with our lives. What was the determining factor that led you to become a landscape architect?

PETER SCHAUDT: My first goal was to become an architect. As I studied architecture here (in Chicago) at UIC, I was exposed to the great park system legacy of Chicago. We had many studios in the parks here. What actually led me to become a landscape architect was the Vietnam Veterans War Memorial Competition. I needed an art credit in architecture school, so rather than taking color theory or painting, and after seeing the poster, I approached the dean. He told me I could do it; 'but you have to do it without an architect.' So I teamed up with Charles Wilson, a wonderful sculptor at UIC, and I looked at that park through the eyes of a sculptor as opposed to an architect. The site in Constitution Gardens was a rolling site — very difficult because the competition site was half of an amoeba shape. That's why Maya Lin's project is so amazing. It's because she was able to tie (her design) into the context.

I worked on it as an independent studio, made a couple of models and really elaborate

**What actually led me to become a landscape architect was the Vietnam Veterans War Memorial Competition.**

drawings, and it led me to really pursue landscape more closely. Then I started reading more about Dan Kiley and his work here in Chicago at the Art Institute. I did win a merit award for my Vietnam Memorial design: there were over 1,400 entries, and they selected 46 merit award winners which I assume might have been the last day of judging and were on exhibit at the Octagon Building in Washington. As a senior in undergraduate school, that gave me an incredible amount of confidence.

My hero as a student was Louis Kahn, and looking at his work he very much imbedded his work in landscape, especially his Salk Institute and the Kimball Museum. Added to that was becoming more familiar with Dan Kiley through a tour in Columbus, Indiana. I returned from Columbus becoming more familiar with the landscape work he did at the (Irwin) bank building and the North Christian church by Eero Saarinen, which had the most amazing parking lot I had ever seen.

When I got a degree in architecture after my fifth year, I then said to myself, 'I really want to become a landscape architect as an expert consultant where I could then work with all different types of architects, since I was actually more interested in the environ-

ABOVE  
Aerial view of  
Winning Shanghai  
Nature Museum  
and Plaza Compe-  
tition entry (2007)  
Architect  
Ralph Johnson  
Perkins and Will  
Landscape Architect  
Peter Lindsey  
Schaudt  
Rendering:  
Perkins + Will

OPPOSITE PAGE  
World Trade Center  
Design  
Competition,  
New York, NY (2003)  
Aerial Rendering  
Team entry with  
Sculptor, Joel  
Shapiro, Architect,  
Vinci-Hamp and  
Peter Lindsay  
Schaudt Landscape  
Architecture, Inc



ment and context than I was in the object. After my first year at Harvard in graduate school, I felt like I had a lot of making up to do going into a new profession; so we had to work for a landscape architect between our two years there. So I wrote Kiley a letter and actually went up to see him. It was 1983, and he said he had no work. So I told him I would work for free, just catalogue slides and drawings to absorb what he was all about. Fortunately, the first day I got there he got this big job, the National Sculpture Garden, and I got paid for every hour.

At the end of that summer he offered me a full-time job. During my final year at

Harvard, I was on a team with Michael Van Valkenburgh which won second place in the Copley Square competition.

**COMPETITIONS: You spent time at the American Academy in Rome. Was there any particular moment during this stay that made a lasting impression on you?**

PS: It was the luxury of being there for a year, whereas as a normal tourist you are there for a couple of weeks at most. What was most memorable was to be able to go to the same gardens through the seasons. Villa Lante (near Viterbo, Italy) was my favorite

fusion of Renaissance garden design. I went to it seven times in all different types of weather and cataloged everything on slides and measured drawings.

The other thing which resonated was not necessarily a moment in time, but the whole duration—being able to sketch. I did a lot of drawings, and, if I saw something I absolutely loved, I measured it — pretty much in the tradition of Norman Newton and other scholars who won the award when it was a two or three year fellowship — when they were actually required to do measured drawings. Being with other professionals is also very

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stimulating. But having time to sketch and read; the luxury of time, being in Rome, really seeing the fusion of urban design where there are no categories of what architecture or landscape is.

**COMPETITIONS: I assume you also traveled outside of Rome.**

PS: I went to Spain, Provence, northern and southern Italy. Another thing which attracted me was the layering of Rome—the millennium of layers. My current work is a lot about historic work in modern landscapes from other designers. I love the idea of revealing the site in its cultural history, having worked at IIT and redoing the Daley Plaza in Chicago. I have a love for history, and Dan Kiley taught me that history is great, but you shouldn't copy it, you should learn from it. He was inspired by André Le Notre and the gardens at Sceaux outside the Orly airport, Paris. Dan was frustrated while at Harvard during the Beaux Arts period where they were asked to replicate the style of the period. What Dan did was to extract historical ideas and then transform them. Every good modernist architect understands this. Every good landscape architect has a really good background on the history of their profession.

**They embrace contemporary interventions much more than we do here in America. We haven't matured yet where we can understand the juxtaposition of old and new. It almost has to be separated.**

**COMPETITIONS: My experience is that Europeans are more immersed in the history of their profession than we are. They seem to be more research-oriented.**

PS: Comparing our country to Europe is like comparing an infant to a grandfather. They embrace contemporary interventions much more than we do here in America. We haven't matured yet where we can understand the juxtaposition of old and new. It almost has to be separated.

**COMPETITIONS: Except for New York's Central Park competition won by Olmsted, landscape competitions were hardly commonplace until lately, especially when clients started asking for team participation in competitions and there were strong landscape components in the programs. What changed things? Was it the memorial competitions?**



PS: I think it goes back to both the Vietnam Memorial competition and La Vilette, won by Bernard Tschumi. In fact, Rem Koolhaas' second place entry has a legacy of starting a lot of his ideas, much like Robert Venturi's second-place entry to the Copley Square that Sasaki won. La Vilette was obviously dominated by architects; but it was a different kind of subject (for architects). Also, the post-modern era might have had an indirect impact in that it tied back the idea of the "house and garden" and really studying these together. I would argue that good modern architects were always doing that. For any

great building, there was always a quiet consultant in the background: I. M. Pei always hired Dan Kiley; and Sasaki was often prevalent.

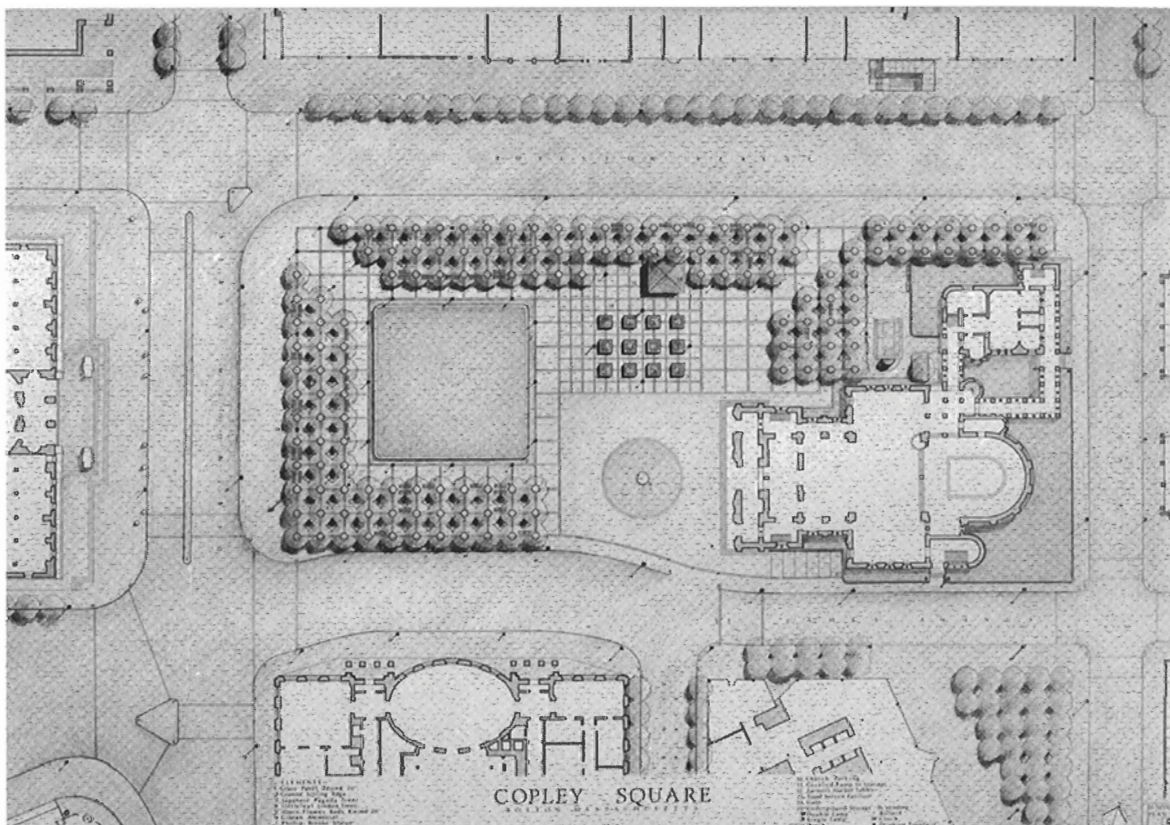
Another reason I chose landscape architecture over architecture: when I was a student during that period of high-Post Modernism—Philip Johnson AT&T on the front of TIME—was that it was a frustrating time as a student. I felt that it was stylistically all about facades, and half of my teachers were Post-Modernists, half Modernists. That's why I put all my effort in Landscape, for I felt that the elements and ideas of landscape transcended time. The Robert Smithson retro-

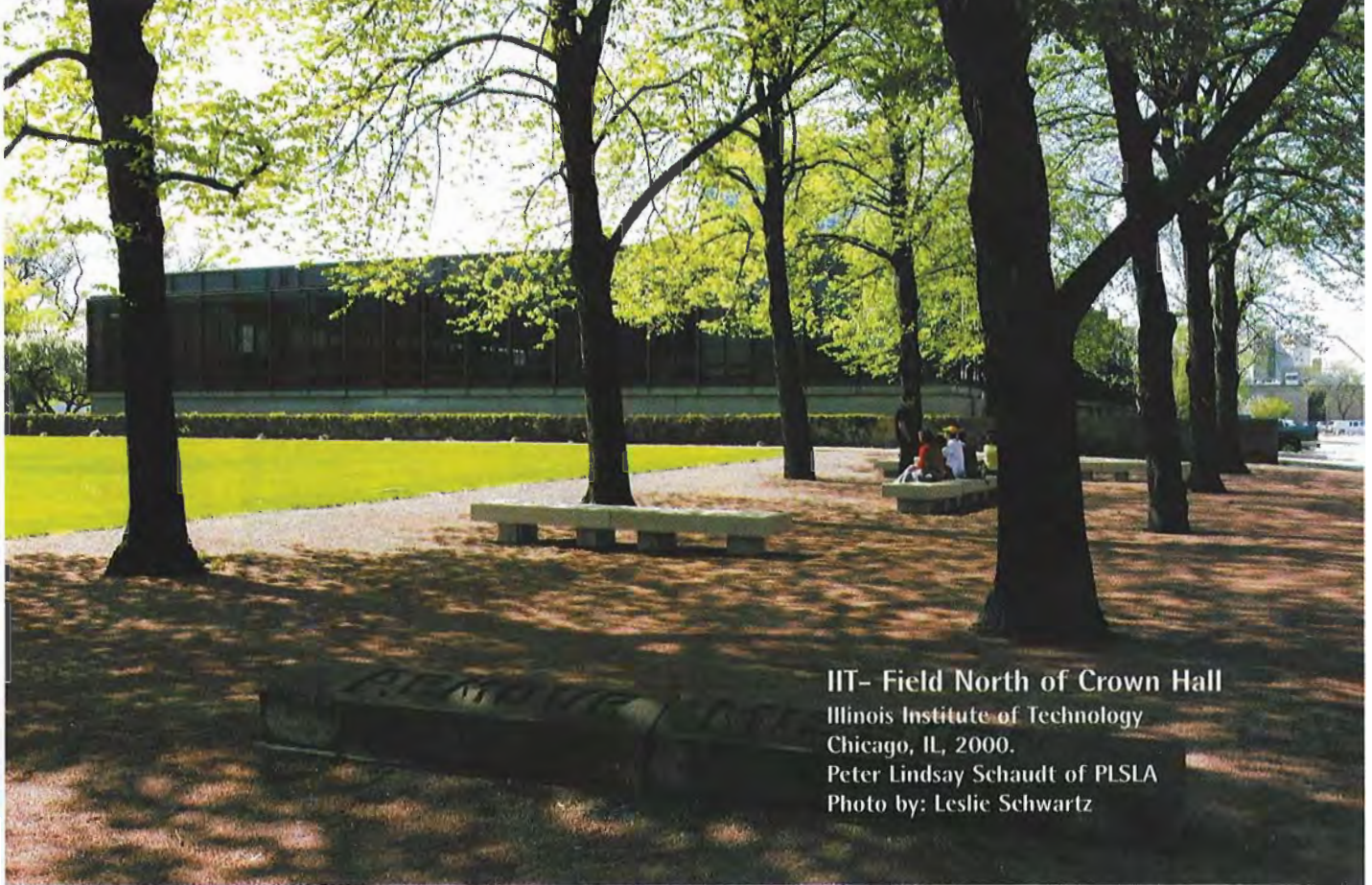


THIS PAGE  
 Second Place  
**Copley Square**  
**National Design**  
**Competition**  
 Copley Square Site  
 (1984)  
 Team entry with  
 Michael van  
 Valkenburgh  
 Boston, MA

LEFT  
 Pedestrian view of  
 square  
 BELOW  
 Site plan

OPPOSITE PAGE  
 Meritorious selection  
**Vietnam Memorial**  
**Competition**  
 Washington, DC  
 ABOVE  
 Night time rendering  
 by Peter L Schaudt  
 BELOW  
 Pencil Plan  
 Rendering by Peter L  
 Schaudt





**IIT- Field North of Crown Hall**  
 Illinois Institute of Technology  
 Chicago, IL, 2000.  
 Peter Lindsay Schaudt of PLSLA  
 Photo by: Leslie Schwartz

spective here at the Museum of Contemporary Art in 1978/79 had a big influence on me. I know a lot of landscape architects my age who say that Robert Smithson influenced them.

**COMPETITIONS:** Although this has changed during the past decade, I always wondered why architecture firms were winning a lot of landscape competitions, whether it was the Olympia Fields park near here, the Seattle Museum Sculpture garden, or Downsvew near Toronto. Were landscape architects weak in the planning components of these competitions? Or were the clients simply ignoring the landscape architects? How do you see that?

PS: Many architectural firms have been discovering landscape. Rem Koolhaas, in his writings over the past ten years has stated that landscape is going to make more of an impact on urban design than architecture—a horizontal type of design. Weiss Manfredi won Olympia Fields, and I think a lot of all winning schemes have to do with jury composition. The make-up of the jury to me is the most critical element of a competition. That gives a warning of what they are looking for—what their backgrounds are. I think juries tend to be dominated by one or two strong-minded people.

Although it's changing now, I think architects are able to conceptualize and communicate an idea much stronger than landscape



architects. There tends to be more rigor in the presentation of ideas and more risk-taking among architects.

I entered the Kent State Memorial competition in which I won 3rd Place. Originally I was honorable mention; then the first place ranked design was disqualified and I moved up (One of the rules was that one had to be

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 Illinois Institute of Technology  
 IIT Courtyard interior:  
 State Street Village Dormitories  
 Birch Courtyard.

Architect: Helmut, Jahn FAIA  
 Peter Lindsay Schaudt, FASLA of Peter Lindsay Schaudt Landscape Architecture, Inc.  
 Photo by: Leslie Schwartz



IIT Federal Street Plaza,  
Peter L. Schaudt of PLSLA, Inc.  
Photo by Leslie Schwartz

an American citizen to participate. The winner was disqualified once it was determined he was a Canadian.) Good design wins competitions; but design is design, and one shouldn't draw a line between professions.

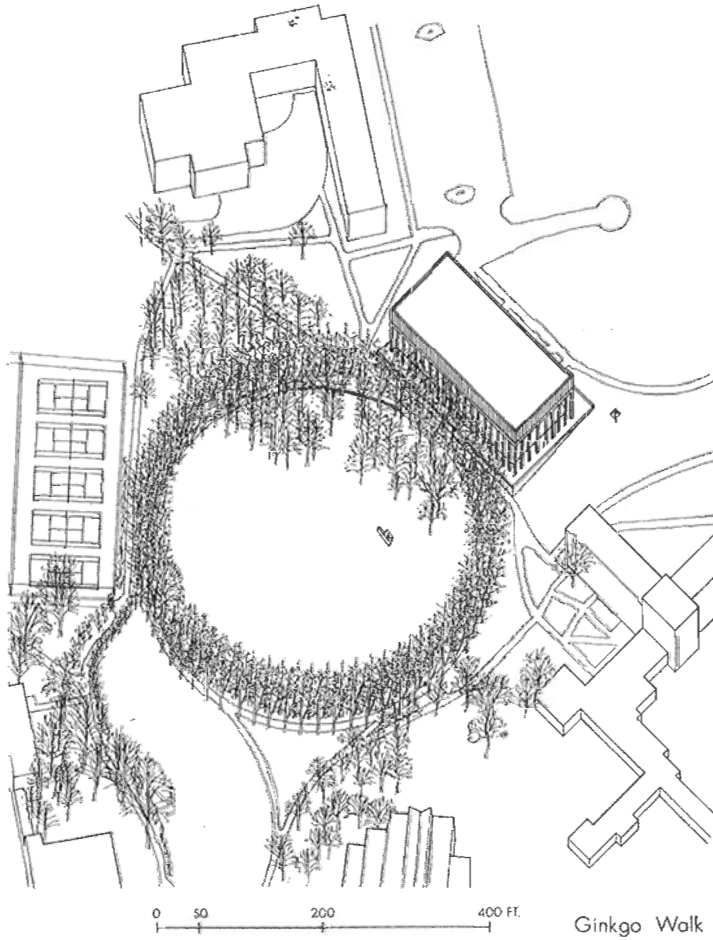
Image is now the big thing. Sometimes architects don't understand the idea of entropy and change, and they come up with ideas that are very static, very image-based. I would argue that landscape architects have a little more humility, that they understand their work involves changes over time, and sometimes their image of the place isn't as strong graphically.

**COMPETITIONS: Team participation on big projects has seemingly opened new doors for landscape architects.**

PS: Good design is good design. I am attracted to working on great architectural projects because I tell the architects we will all be part of the project. Good architects understand that.

**COMPETITIONS: You recently teamed up with PLANT Architecture of Toronto and others to win the Nathan Phillips Square competition in Toronto. This is a much revered space in front of Toronto City hall with an existing plaza. How did you decide to approach that challenge? Did the team come up with various scenarios before settling on one final plan?**

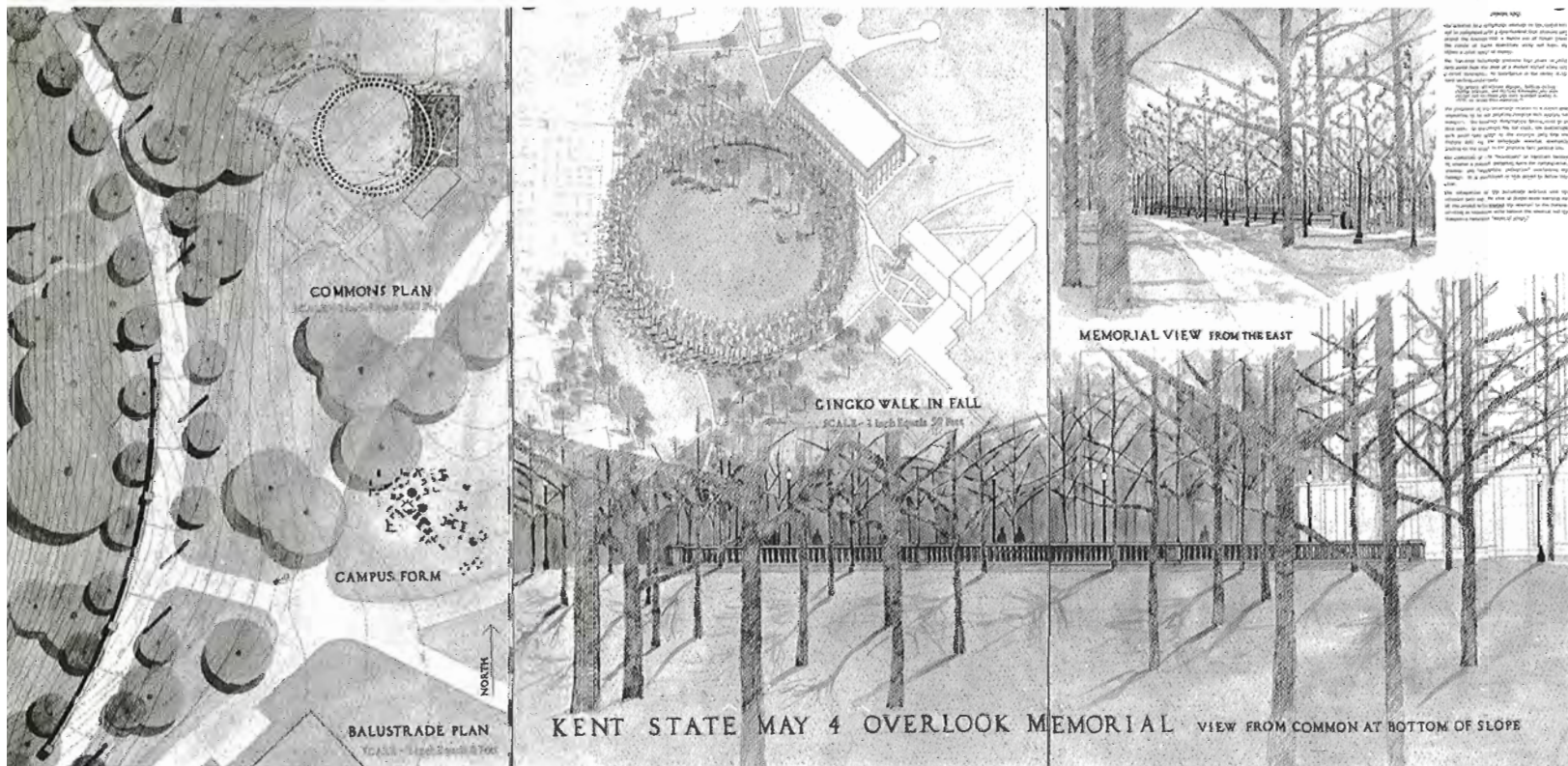
PS: Our team really had one approach in mind during the whole process. It was about bringing dignity back to this iconic space.



THIS PAGE  
**Third Place  
 Kent State  
 Memorial  
 Competition**  
 Kent State University  
 Kent, Ohio  
**(1986)**  
*Renderings:*  
**Peter L. Schaudt**

LEFT  
 Axonometric  
 BELOW  
 Competition board  
 (Watercolor)

OPPOSITE PAGE  
 First Prize  
 Nathan Phillips  
 Square Competition  
 Toronto  
 with  
 PLANT Architects,  
 Shore Irwin Tilbe  
 and  
 Adrian Blackwell



I had been there twice as a student back in the 70s and 80s; so I knew the site right away. Charles Waldheim, a friend of mine, actually introduced me to PLANT in Toronto (the lead firm) along with Shore Tilbe Irwin and Adrian Blackwell. With PLANT, we actually submitted an unsuccessful RfP for Trinity College at the University of Toronto prior to that competition. But PLANT was interested in calling me in on the competition because I had worked on other heritage projects, i.e., the work at IIT and Daley Plaza. They wanted somebody who had worked with historic, modern landscapes. They were the prime lead; we were just brought in as consultants.

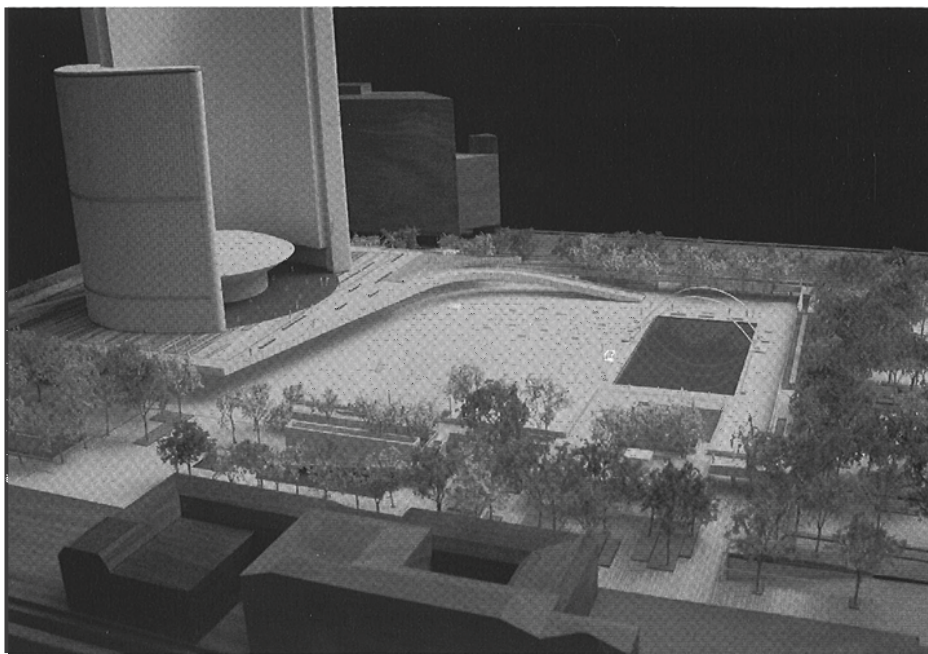
This was the first competition I've ever been associated with that won first place. Our team approached the project similarly to the work I did at IIT, where you immerse yourself with the inspiration of the original author. In other words, at IIT Caldwell was Mies' landscape architect. His concepts were never really fully implemented, nor was there any extensive archive of his drawings. So we had to step in, dream, and use our own ideas through the lens of others.

In Toronto, we were very serious in approaching this with a lot of respect for Revell's masterpiece and its basic symbolic quality. Technically, we approached it very light-handed, and kind of took some of the spirit from some of Revell's initial sketches that Sasaki's office completely changed. We wanted to make more of an environmental impact on the square, and Revell had done a sketch of very loose groves. We wanted to infuse

the whole block with a kind of urban forest edge, wrapping the site like a doughnut, then clearing up the center. The intention was to bring the square back to its beauty of being this wonderful open space. Revell died before the project was finished, and the funding for the square wasn't there—all the money went pretty much into the building.

We approached it from a very respectful modernist point of view. We wanted the final product to be the fitting tribute, but also looking to the future without detracting. Some of the other schemes were a little ego-driven, and I think our project was a bold, but a modest intervention.

The competition brief also placed emphasis on bringing it up to current technology standards, while honoring the original site. These types of renovation projects are often more challenging than are new sites. In the case of Nathan Phillips Square, we had enough confidence in our abilities to go at it in a modest way; and I think it takes experience and understanding to not do too much. I've always told students that it is not only



what you add to the landscape; it's what you don't add.

**COMPETITIONS: You did the landscape masterplan for the Illinois Institute of Technology with Michael Van Valkenburg's office several years ago. I visited that campus yesterday, and it is amazing what some plantings can do for a site. I can recall seeing that campus when it was really hard surface. I know that landscaping there is still a piecemeal operation, as money becomes available. Is this pretty much what you visualized when the master plan was being created?**

PS: Yes. As for the IIT site, it's relentless there—flat as a pancake. In one city block there might be less than six inches of grade change. There the intention was to give some sort of topographical relief to the flatness and create an intramural space next to State Street, where it creates an intimate space where people feel somewhat enclosed. Mies also planned a building there, about the same shape as the neighboring buildings. So it has some multiple readings to it. I placed the limestone benches directly in the slope to exaggerate it, thereby enhancing the slope.

**COMPETITIONS: You spent a lot of time in North Carolina, and still have projects going on there. Vegetation- and color-wise (the earth is red there), the area around the Research Triangle looks quite different than the Midwest. Is this a factor when you conceptualize a design for**

**this area? Isn't there always a temptation to somehow take advantage of that rich red earth color peculiar to that region?**

PS: Other than the red earth there, what is amazing is the rapid growth rate of plant material. I worked with Dan Kiley on the Carnegie Center in Charlotte where we unfortunately never anticipated the rapid growth and planted the trees very close together. My attitude when looking at a site is the same thing I bring to every project, and is what is "apt" or appropriate for that region. In North Carolina there is just much more plant palette to work with than in Chicago. Sometimes when an outsider comes into a region with eyes wide open, they sometimes reveal the condition of a site better than the locals, because the latter take it for granted.

**COMPETITIONS: At the recent memorial service for Walter Netsch, a lot was made of his tenure as Chicago Parks Commissioner and the reforms he brought about while he was there. Are you comfortable with the parks system as it now functions here?**

PS: Starting with my return to Chicago in 1991 after I returned from Rome, every project I touched here has been because of Mayor Daley. I give the Mayor more credit than the parks system, because the parks system reacted to his leadership. Since there is a current financial squeeze in Chicago, there is an effort underway to find ways to creatively finance projects. Chicago is actually in need of more park space per person. There is a desire to invest in poorer park areas on the South Sde. A lot of the Olympic strategy is

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LEFT  
**Denny's Corporate Headquarters**  
Spartanburg, SC, (1990)  
Standard Crate-Myrtle Allee  
Architect: Clark Tribble Harris & Li (CTHL)  
Charlotte, NC  
Landscape Architect: Peter Lindsay Schaudt  
Landscape Architects with CTHL  
Photo by Tim Buchman

BELOW  
**Daley Plaza 2**  
(Renovation, 1996)  
Chicago, IL  
Architects McDonough and DLK  
Peter Lindsay Schaudt  
Landscape Architecture  
Photo: Martin Konopacki





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to revive Olmsted's south parks—Washington, the Midway Plaisance and Jackson Park. If there is any city in the country now to practice landscape architecture, Chicago is a hotbed.

**COMPETITIONS: The greening of this city has now moved to the rooftops. Has this movement, pushed by the city fathers, really raised the level of consciousness; or is it just cosmetic? In other words, are developers following suit?**

PS: I think they have to. The Mayor has made this part of the permit process. I believe that Chicago has more green roof square footage than any other city, and it has had a major impact with storm water. But success sometimes tends to dilute the whole purpose of it. In some cases, there are examples of green roofs where there shouldn't be green roofs.

I'm hoping it's not a rubber-stamped policy, but carefully thought through. If we're not careful, it could be quite a cliché. There is a tendency to feel that green roofs are the only major environmental impact where, in fact, we need to spend more time on urban forestry work—the city still has a lot of hot spot areas which could use tree canopy cover.

But green roofs have now almost become part of a traditional (mindset). Only ten years ago, I had a hard time convincing an old-timer architect to do a green roof. In the last ten years the mindset has changed. Chicago's history in the modern movement is predominantly flat roofs. So what better place to do green roofs than in Chicago. ☒

## Time Line Peter Lindsay Schaudt, FASLA, FAAR

- 1959 Born, LaGrange, Illinois
- 1981 Vietnam Veterans Memorial National Design Competition, Meritorious Award as Undergraduate Architecture Student (Individual Entry)
- 1982 BArch, University of Illinois at Chicago (5-year professional degree)
- 1983 Office of Dan Kiley-Summer Intern
- 1984 MLA, Harvard University
- 1984-1987 Office of Dan Kiley Landscape Architect, Associate
- 1984 Copley Square National Design Competition- Second Place Team w/ Michael Van Valkenburgh
- 1986 Minneapolis Capital Grounds Competition, Second Place w/ Architect Harry Wolf and the office of Dan Kiley,  
Kent State May 4 Memorial National Design Competition, Third Place (Individual Entry)  
Innovations in Housing National Design Competition, Citation of Merit (Individual Entry)
- 1987-1990 Clark Tribble Harris & Li Architects in Charlotte, Landscape Architect  
Denny's Corporate Headquarters, Spartanburg, SC
- 1990-1991 American Academy in Rome Fellowship, Rome Prize Winner in Landscape Architecture
- 1996 Daley Plaza Renovation with McDonough and DLK Architects
- 1991-2007 Established Individual Practice-Peter Lindsay Schaudt Landscape Architecture, Inc.  
Adjunct Assistant Professor, University of Illinois at Chicago
- 1993 Design Critic in Landscape Architecture, Design Critic in Landscape Architecture
- 1994 Adjunct Assistant Professor, University of Illinois at Chicago, School of Architecture
- 2005 North Burnham Park-Soldier Field, Chicago, Illinois
- 2005 Hyatt International Corporate Headquarters, with architect Harry Cobb, Chicago, IL
- 2005/06 Erie Street Plaza Competition Finalist, Milwaukee, WI with Rogers Marvel Architects
- 2006 Fellow-American Society of Landscape Architects  
Chicago 2016 Olympic Stadium, Washington Park, Chicago  
Gary Comer Community Center "Vegetable Green Roof Garden", Chicago, IL, 2006  
Architect: John Ronan, AIA
- 2007 Nathan Phillips Square International Design Competition in Toronto, Winning Team with PLANT Architects, Shore Irwin Tilbe and Adrian Blackwell
- 2007 Shanghai Nature Museum and Plaza Competition, Winner with Architect Ralph Johnson, Perkins & Will  
Allegheny Square Competition, Finalist with Garofalo Architects
- 2008 The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Historic Landscape Framework Plan
- 2008-Present Firm Merger with Douglas Hoerr, FASLA- Hoerr Schaudt Landscape Architects