

Landscape Preservation Education in the United States: Status in 2007

From the 1970s-1990s, landscape preservation became a popular sub-discipline of landscape architecture. This paper asks: Are landscape architecture and historic preservation programs teaching the basics of cultural landscape philosophy and methods? Who is teaching landscape preservation (institutions and people)? How is landscape preservation being taught today (format and content)? Has there been or is there a need to identify a formalized course of study?

A telephone survey of 141 landscape architecture and historic preservation graduate, undergraduate, and allied programs across the United States and Canada was conducted. Questions were asked concerning professional practice, landscape preservation, and landscape documentation courses; landscape architecture programs were further questioned about landscape architecture history, construction technology, and site analysis courses; and historic preservation programs were asked about historic preservation philosophy, preservation technology, cultural resource inventory, evaluation and treatment courses.

Nearly one hundred years after an interest in historic landscapes began, landscape preservation practitioners remain unprepared for government or private sector positions. This is a significant problem. Preservation professionals must engage in site design education to assist in guiding contextual solutions that involve historic resources integral to our future quality of life. Further, landscape architects need preservation education to develop contextual designs that respect historic resources. Yet, no comprehensive landscape preservation curriculum has been developed or implemented to address these issues.

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