

LE:NOTRE – THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE SCHOOLS AND BEYOND...

AZ EURÓPAI TÁJÉPÍTÉSZETI ISKOLÁK TANÁCSA ÉS A LE:NOTRE

SZERZŐ/BY:
RICHARD STILES

ABSTRACT

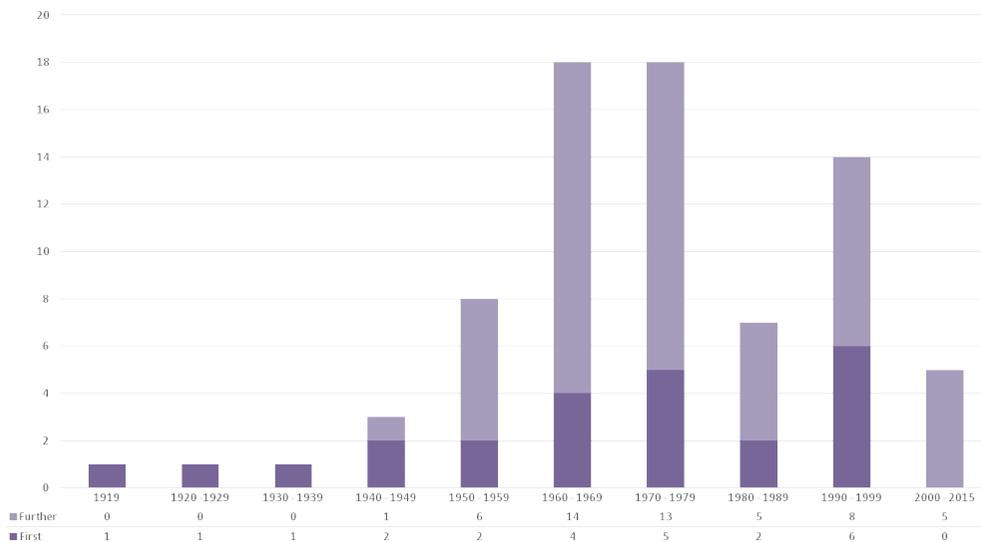
Although the profession of landscape architecture can look back to a long and illustrious history stretching back several centuries, only one hundred years ago there was no such thing as a university degree programme within the whole of Europe where the subject could be studied. Today, a century later, in almost every member country of the Council of Europe there is at least one university where the discipline can be studied. There is a total of more than 100 degree programmes at bachelor and master level, with many places where it is also possible to study of a doctorate. The main period of expansion took place in the decades following the Second World War and the associated wave of urban reconstruction, while the subsequent growth in environmental awareness was a further important contributing factor.

In some of the larger countries in Europe, where there was more than one degree programme, regular national meetings of landscape architecture schools began to take place during the 1970s, but it was not until 1989 that the first European higher education meeting of landscape architecture programmes

was organised by Berlin Technical University. This marked the beginning of formal European collaboration in landscape architecture education. Berlin in late 1989 was, by chance, also an historic time and place in geopolitical terms, although that was not yet clear at the time of the September meeting. Rather, the main motor for this first attempt to move closer at the European level came from another historic process: the development of the Common European Market amongst the, then, 12 states of the European Community.

Two years later in 1991, the first conference under the name of ECLAS - European Conference of Landscape Architecture Schools, took place in Wageningen, NL. Ten years later ECLAS resolved to apply for European Union funding under the then SOCRATES Programme in order to develop a 'Thematic Network' in landscape architecture, in other words to seek an opportunity to pursue in a more structured manner what it was already attempting to achieve informally.

The LE:NOTRE Thematic Network - Landscape Education: New Opportunities for Teaching and Research in Europe - which was co-funded by the European Union for 11 years and



involved over 150 schools, provided both the necessary resources and the momentum to advance the goals of ECLAS, now the European Council of Landscape Architecture Schools, and to take the establishment of a stable European academic infrastructure for landscape architecture to a new level. This paper will reflect on these developments in their wider context.

THE FIRST STEPS

During the last quarter of a century in which the Faculty of Landscape Architecture in Budapest has become established, important developments have also taken place in the field of landscape architecture education and scholarship in the broader European context. ECLAS, the European Council of Landscape Architecture Schools held its first meeting in 1991, only just pre-dating the Budapest Faculty. These two development processes have not occurred separately, but have been closely interwoven, and in the same way that the Faculty of Landscape Architecture in Budapest did not suddenly emerge from nowhere,¹ similarly the history of European cooperation in the discipline of

landscape architecture goes back considerably farther than ECLAS's 26 years. The purpose of this paper is to trace these wider European developments.

Although the profession of landscape design has a long history in Europe - stretching back to Classical times and reawakening with Mediaeval monastic gardens, through to the gardens of the Italian Renaissance, the French Baroque tradition and the English landscape garden - it was in the 'New World' and not the 'Old' that landscape architecture first entered the world of higher education. Frederick Olmstead Jnr, son of the planner and builder of New York's Central Park, was instrumental in founding the world's first degree programme at Harvard University in 1901.

In Europe the desire for higher education programmes in landscape architecture to was also strong in the early years of the 20th century, but it was not until 1919 that the first European landscape architecture programme opened its doors. Interestingly this was not in one of the countries with a recognised tradition of landscape architecture, but in the relatively young country of Norway, which had only been an independent nation since 1905.

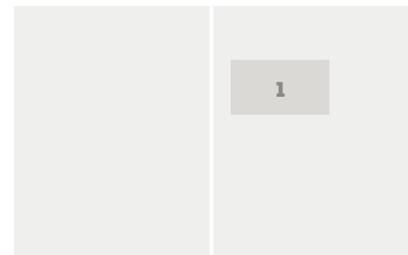


Fig. 1.: The establishment of new landscape architecture programmes in Europe (from Birli, 2016)²

¹ Landscape architecture education in Hungary has a long and illustrious history which can be traced back to the late 19th century at the interface between horticulture and architecture. The comparison with landscape architecture education in Austria is interesting. There too, some limited teaching at university level goes back until the early years of the 20th century, but the first full degree programme was not established until 1993 - thirty years after the start of the university degree programme in Hungary (Szilagy, K. 2013. *Hundred Years of Education and Research in Garden History and Garden Art - From the Institute for Horticultural Education to the Faculty of Landscape Architecture*, 4D 29, Budapest, pp.22-35).

² Birli, b. 2016: *From Professional Training to Academic Discipline: The Role of International Cooperation in the Development of Landscape Architecture Higher Education at Higher Education Institutions in Europe*, unpublished dissertation Vienna University of Technology

Since then, the number of degree programmes has grown steadily, slowly at first in the years leading up to the Second World War, and then more rapidly during the period of reconstruction and the following awakening of environmental awareness from the 1970s onwards. Figure 1 illustrates the broad trends, even if it does not paint the complete picture.

Until about 1950 there was only one programme in each country and the discipline was initially only established in a relatively small number of countries. However, in the decades following the Second World War, with the help of demand created by the accelerating post-war reconstruction boom in the 1960s and the burgeoning environmental awareness in the 1970s, the growth in the number of landscape architecture higher education programmes was rapid, with the majority of this expansion being in the form of further programmes opening in countries where the discipline had already been established.

This growth took place, not just in terms of the number of degree programmes and the number of countries in which they were located, there was also an expansion in the breadth of the discipline, with environmental and landscape planning subjects taking on a greater role. Another notable aspect of the growth of landscape architecture education was, and indeed still is, the wide range of types of higher education institution at which degree courses are offered. These range from 'general purpose' universities through agricultural or forestry universities and technical universities, to art and architecture schools as well as so-called universities of applied sciences.

In spite of this unusually wide and varied range of academic contexts in which landscape architecture programmes are to be found (something which might tend to suggest that the academic world does not really know what to do with such an interdisciplinary field), on closer investigation, the programmes themselves are much more consistent than might at first sight be expected. One possible reason for this was the relatively high level of, albeit informal, interchange between the schools which seems to have taken place from a relatively early stage. This can be seen as the beginning stages of the European cooperation, which was to develop more deeply in the last decades of the twentieth century.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ECLAS FROM THE HKL EUROPE IN 1989 TO THE MILLENNIUM 2001

The main driving force for the eventual emergence of ECLAS in 1991 can be traced back to the activities of the, then, European Community and the broader movement towards closer European integration. In particular it was the moves towards the establishment of the European Single Market at the end of 1992, with its plans for the free movement of professionals that was a key factor, but the beginnings of the ERASMUS Programme - aimed at supporting exchanges between universities in Europe - also played an important role.

An early programme of exchange activities between European landscape architecture school took place under the auspices of an organisation called *ELEE - European Landscape Education*

*Exchanges.*³ This first academic European landscape network, was established by Roger Seijo of the UK's then Thames Polytechnic (now University of Greenwich) in 1986. Although this was one year before the official starting date of the European Union's ERASMUS Programme, ELEE was able to make extensive use of the EU's pilot student exchange programmes which ran from 1981-86. ELEE comprised a group of twelve higher education institutions from 10 of the European Community countries and the main focus of its activities were intensive programmes, in which groups of students from a number of member universities worked together on-site on projects for period of one to two weeks.

But membership of ELEE was limited, and other landscape schools wanting to get involved in exchanges with their European counterparts needed to form their own networks. At the start of the 1990s, a second 'Inter-University Cooperation Programme' coordinated by Manchester University was established which grew from 12 eventually to some 20 member universities and was subsequently extended to include a 'Curriculum Development Programme'. This enabled regular annual meetings between staff members of the university departments involved, in order to exchange information on their programmes as a preparation to exchanging students. These meetings formed an important precursor to the much broader cooperation between university staff which eventually became ECLAS. However, it was an initially national development in Germany eventually that resulted in moves which, perhaps unexpectedly, led to the establishment of ECLAS.

As the second European country where landscape architecture was established as an academic discipline (since 1929 in Berlin) and one of those with the largest number of programmes and academics, as well as perhaps the best organised profession, Germany experienced the process of divergence between the professional and academic worlds relatively early on,

The relationship between the landscape architecture profession and the academic discipline is an important one, but one which is not without its tensions. The establishment of higher education programmes producing university graduates was seen by the nascent profession in Europe as a means to achieving broader recognition and higher status, not just within society in general, but also in relation to other related professions. Once established within the university system, however, the discipline has tended to become increasingly subject to the pressures of the academic system including research evaluation and publication and so has had increasingly to follow its own agenda which has tended to diverge from that of the profession.

After a long period during which members of the Federation of German Landscape Architects expressed growing dissatisfaction with the accomplishments of graduates from the main university programmes, in 1979 they published a paper with the provocative title 'Unlawful Education of Landscape Architects' in *Garten und Landschaft* (7/1979, p. 507) in which it was claimed that the universities were not carrying out their statutory duty to educate landscape architects in such a way that they were able to meet the needs of

³ ELEE has been defunct for several years and information about it is now hard to find. Its only significant mention on the internet is a page from the archive of the ELASA - the European Landscape Architecture Students Association website dating from 1994-95.

planning and design offices. Interestingly this confrontation coincided with the 50th anniversary of German landscape architecture higher education, but perhaps more importantly it followed some ten years after the 1968 'revolutions' when the social criticism within German universities became increasingly prevalent). The paper initially led to a lot of heated discussion, and so in an attempt to resolve the issue a new body - the 'HKL' or *Hochschulkonferenz Landschaft*' was set up to establish an ongoing dialogue between the universities and the various bodies representing the landscape profession and the respective industries.

The HKL met regularly throughout the 1980s and it seems that the air had been sufficiently cleared by the end of the decade because ten years later, against the background of the growing moves towards the establishment of the Single European Market, and on the occasion of the 200th anniversary of the birth of landscape architect and educator Peter Joseph Lenné, Berlin Technical University invited representatives from universities - unusually from both eastern and western Europe - to take part in the 'First European Landscape Higher Education Conference' (*1. Europäische Hochschulkonferenz Landschaft*) in late September 1989.⁴ Some 60 people took part in what proved to be an auspicious event in more ways than one, as six weeks later the Berlin Wall fell and the potential for future European cooperation was transformed.

Irrespective on these wider geopolitical developments, however, the 'HKL Europa' was a success and it was resolved to work towards mutual recognition of educational qualifications within the European Community and to support those countries in which there was not yet higher education in landscape architecture in their efforts to establish it. A university from one of those countries currently attempting to

establish their first regular programme - but not one which was yet a member of the European Community - the Agricultural University of Vienna (*BoKu*), offered to host the event in 1990.⁵ This too was clearly a success as the following year landscape schools were invited to the third European meeting hosted by Wageningen University in the Netherlands. This was the first held under the title of ECLAS - the *European Conference of Landscape Architecture Schools*.

It was at this meeting that an important decision was taken concerning the membership and future direction of ECLAS. As a result of the forthcoming establishment of the Single European Market, landscape architecture's professional bodies in the then 12 member states had begun to work more closely together and in 1989 had set up EFLA - the European Foundation for Landscape Architecture - to further the interests of the profession and to represent these to the European Community. Its structure was loosely modelled on that of the UK professional body, in that it comprised two main committees: a practice committee and an education committee. The chair of the education committee, was Michael Downing of Newcastle University in the UK, who was also closely involved in the HKL Europe meetings and in the first ECLAS Conference. At this conference in Wageningen, it was consequently suggested for the sake of convenience that ECLAS should become the education committee of EFLA. This proposal was, however, rejected by a majority of the delegates on the grounds that i) ECLAS should not, like EFLA, be limited just to universities from the 12 EC member states, something which would have ignored the geopolitical developments of the collapse of the division of Europe (even the first HKL Europe meeting had already included representatives from East Germany and Bulgaria) and ii) because it was felt that universities had their own distinct set

⁴ The meeting was reported on in the journal *Garten und Landschaft*, 11/89, p. 23-24

⁵ This was finally established in 1993, interestingly some 74 years after the first programme in Germany and 30 years after the programme in Hungary. The development of landscape architecture education in Hungary is outlined by Imre Jambor (*Jambor, I. 2012: Education from Garden Design to Landscape Architecture in Hungary*, 4D Special Edition, pp. 12-24 LE:NOTRE Institute Website: <http://ln-institute.org/about/about-events-meetings.php>)

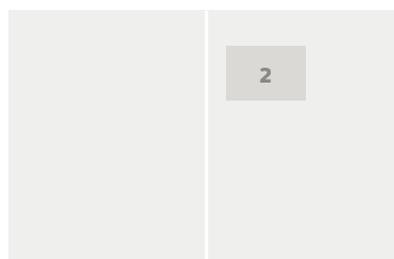


Fig. 2.: In 1998 the first annual ECLAS conference was held in Wien

of interests which were different from those of the professional bodies. ECLAS thus became an organisation both independent of the European Community professional bodies and with a much broader base of 'geographical' rather than 'political' Europe. Nevertheless, Michael Downing took on the role ECLAS President alongside his chairing of the EFLA Education Committee.

As if to confirm the validity of this decision, the second ECLAS Conference in 1992 was hosted in Ljubljana, just as Slovenia achieved its independence from former Yugoslavia, and focussed on definitions of landscape architecture, design and planning. By this time ECLAS had acquired its own small committee, but its structure remained very loose, members of the organisation being de facto those schools who turned up to the annual conferences. These followed in Sweden 1993, Edinburgh 1994 and Barcelona 1995. An offer to host the conference by the *Technion* at Haifa in Israel in the spring of 1997 provided further justification for the decision not to limit ECLAS to the 12 member countries of the European Community but meant that a formal business meeting was held in Brussels in 1996 rather than a full conference.

In 1998 the ECLAS conference was held in Vienna and in terms of the development of ECLAS the conference was notable in that Michael Downing unexpectedly announced that he was standing down as president with

immediate effect. as did the rest of the founding committee members, who had been responsible for hosting most of the previous conferences at their universities. In the absence of alternative candidates, the role of president was assumed at short notice by the author, Richard Stiles, who had been instigator and co-organiser of the Vienna conference. In retrospect this can be seen as marking a fundamental break in the history of the organisation and the start of a second phase in its development.

RE-THINKING ECLAS: THE PATH TO LE:NOTRE

In its initial form, the organisation could be described as a sort of 'ECLAS Lite' on account of its informal character. The main, if not only activity of ECLAS was the annual conference and this was organised from year to year on a more or less ad hoc basis. Ten years on from the first 'HKL Europe' there was an offer to host the 1999 conference from Berlin Technical University, thus providing the new president and the newly constituted committee⁶ a brief breathing space to think about what ECLAS might do in future.

An obvious first question to be considered was: 'what to the members want?'. This, led straight on to the next question: 'who are the members?' and it rapidly became clear that formally

⁶ The Budapest school was represented on the new ECLAS Committee from the start.

speaking there were none. The de facto members were those people who turned up to the conference, but there was no membership list or even an overview of landscape schools in Europe, simply an e-mail list of those persons who had attended the previous conferences, and because not all previous participants attended the event the following year, this list had the tendency to change and shrink from one year to the next.

Perhaps the main challenge faced by ECLAS in its 'second incarnation' was that of institution building. In its first iteration the committee was focussed around a small group of outstanding individuals who acted according to their experience and personal convictions to undertake the vital role of setting up ECLAS from nothing. However, the danger with relying on such an approach in the long term is that when these outstanding individuals cease to be involved, a vacuum results which may be filled if some other individuals come along, but it may not, leaving a long term void. The history of landscape architecture education in Brazil provides an illustration of this risk. The outstanding personality of Roberto Burle Marx put the discipline firmly on the map but it was so strongly identified with him as a 'self-taught artistic genius' that the idea that it was possible to become a landscape architect through a university education was undermined and the discipline there suffered for a long time from being in his overwhelming shadow.⁷

In September 1998, the same month as the Vienna ECLAS Conference, a so far little known company named Google was incorporated, but by then it was already clear that the internet was already becoming an important medium, and so ECLAS would need a website if it was to communicate - at least with its (potential) members and become established as a strong institution. But programming web sites cost money even then and ECLAS had

none. Nevertheless, a 'skeleton' web site was presented at the 2000 conference - see Figure 2. In order to create this, it was necessary to consider what should be included under menu items such as 'Schools' (there were no formal members) or 'Activities' (other than the annual conference there were none)!

Furthermore, it was difficult to ask for a membership fee in order to start to remedy this situation, not just because there were formally no members, but because it would first be necessary to write a constitution to let people know what they would be joining and how their membership fees were to be used. Thus the goals and objectives of the organisation needed to be clearly defined and agreed, and so the new committee set about to work out how to achieve this, something which, with the help of an additional spring meeting of the new committee, took until the following conference in September 2000 in Croatia.

The 2000 ECLAS Conference in Dubrovnik can be seen as an important milestone in that the new constitution was approved as was the introduction of modest membership fees in order to provide a basic income from which to continue the development of ECLAS - above all for the development of a proper website. In order to send a signal about the future ambitions of the new committee, it was also resolved to change the name of the organisations from the European Conference of Landscape Architecture Schools to the European Council of Landscape Architecture Schools, to signify the intention to expand the activities beyond those of an annual conference. Despite these ambitious initiatives, the amount of money likely to become available through the membership fees would remain very modest. It was therefore also decided at the conference to investigate the possibilities of applying for European Union funding for a Thematic

⁷ In Hungary too the discipline has had the benefit of an outstanding personality in the shape of Professor Mihály Mőcsényi but he had the foresight to institutionalise the discipline through the foundation of the Landscape Architecture Faculty which is now celebrating its first quarter century (Szilagy, K. 2012). *An Outstanding Contribution to 20.-21. Century Landscape Architecture - IFLA's Geoffrey Jellicoe Award to Professor Mihály Mőcsényi*, 4D Special Edition, pp. 3-11

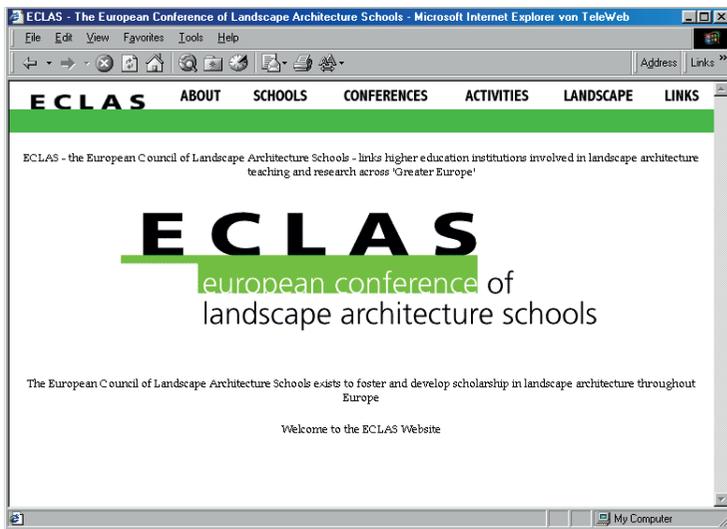


Fig. 3:
The homepage
of the first
ECLAS website⁸



Fig 4:
LE:NOTRE logo

Network Project under what was then the Socrates Programme, as the objectives of these conveniently seemed to closely mirror those of ECLAS.

The 2000 ECLAS Conference also happened to coincide with the opening for signature of the Council of Europe's *European Landscape Convention* – another significant step towards the institutionalisation of the issue of landscape at the level of European policy, although it was one in which the contribution of landscape architecture had been more or less non-existent. However, the goals set out in the new constitution of ECLAS provided an opportunity to write an official letter to those responsible for the Convention at the Council of Europe to offer the support and advice of ECLAS in its implementation, which subsequently resulted in a positive response and mutual invitations. First of all, however, it was necessary to focus on the preparation of an application to the European Union for funding for a Thematic Network.

THE LE:NOTRE PROJECT AND BEYOND – 2002- 2020

By the time the LE:NOTRE⁹ Project application was submitted and approved in 2002, the consortium consisted of more than 70 universities together with several additional associated schools from non-EU countries. This number can be compared with the 12 schools

which formed ELEE, the first European academic landscape network some 16 years previously. This relatively large network, which grew still further as the project progressed, was also large as compared to similar disciplinary networks funded by the Socrates Programme, however its size was fully in keeping with the aim of furthering collaboration with Europe's landscape architecture academic community as a whole.

The impact of the LE:NOTRE Project was immediate and significant as regards this wider goal of was concerned. One way to measure this is in terms of the financial possibilities it opened up. Following the 2000 conference in Dubrovnik, where it was agreed to institute a membership fee, the maximum realistic annual budget which could be expected was at most €5,000, whereas the grant for the first year of the LE:NOTRE Project¹⁰ alone was about €125,000. Although a large proportion of this was earmarked for travel and subsistence costs in relation to the annual 'Spring Workshop' (timed to as to complement rather than clash with the ECLAS Conference in the autumn), there would be still enough money to employ a project assistant and to begin to build a more sophisticated web site.

There is not the scope here to recount the full range of activities which were developed over the eleven years of the LE:NOTRE Project and to do so would perhaps give a false impression of the underlying intentions of the project. In

8 - presented at the Dubrovnik conference in September 2000. The ECLAS logo was a 'gift' of the City of Vienna following the 1998 conference in the city for which they sponsored the graphics

9 LE:NOTRE - Landscape Education: New Opportunities for Teaching and Research in Europe - the project acronym is always the first question to be answered on the project application form!

10 Although, it makes sense to refer to the LE:NOTRE Project as a single entity, there were in fact eight separate successful project applications, all of which had to have their own objectives and outputs which each had to be clearly differentiated from the previous ones. (Similarly there were also eight separate project proposals to be written and eight sets of final reports and accounts to be submitted to the funding agency.)



fact from the point of view of the project coordinator and, who at the start of the project was still the ECLAS President, LE:NOTRE was to be thought of more as a process than a project. The process was about exploiting the critical mass of the academic community as a whole to create added value for the discipline in the form of a series of institutions and collaboration tools which would outlive the limited contract period of the project(s) and remain available to ECLAS members in the long term. It was also about raising the profile of landscape architecture as a discipline within the European context. Nevertheless it was not easy to achieve these process goals directly, they had rather to be pursued obliquely within the context of the Thematic Network Project as defined by the European Union. This meant that it was necessary to think in terms of concrete outputs which could be ticked off and evaluated rather than less tangible outcomes, such as strengthening the academic community and exploiting a diffuse critical mass in order to add value to the efforts of individual schools.

This called for a creative approach: for example in order to exploit the 'new opportunities for research' referred to in the project title was not easy as the Socrates Programme was part of the EU's Directorate of Education and Culture and so the main focus of the project had to be on education and not on research, which could therefore

only officially be addressed, within an educational context. Thus, for example outputs within the first phase of the project included the collection of information on the research components of taught courses, papers were commissioned from representatives of related disciplines in which they were asked about research methods which landscape architects should be taught in order to collaborate on joint research projects with members of the discipline concerned, and approaches to the development of a European PhD course were investigated. A selection of the papers written by the academics from related disciplines subsequently were published in book form (see Bell et al, 2012). Later on in the project databases on European research projects were created and questions research-based teaching were addressed. Similarly the organisation of the project around a series of subject related working groups aimed to bring together staff members not just with similar teaching responsibilities but also research interests.

One of the highest profile project achievements was also one which has had an important bearing on the research potential of the discipline, namely the founding of a new peer-reviewed academic journal: JoLA - Journal of Landscape Architecture. Until the establishment of JoLA in the fourth year of the project, there was no clear platform for the publication of landscape architecture research. The establishment

of JoLA under the auspices of ECLAS was achieved with the help of funding from the LE:NOTRE Project (see Figure 3), but has been independent of this funding ever since. Journal of Landscape Architecture is now in its 11th year and has since become established as one of the leading journals in the field. It received an award of excellence from American Society of Landscape Architects in 2009 and expanded from two to three issues per year in 2016. JoLA is thus a good example of how a specific 'output' of the LE:NOTRE Project has contributed to the long-term raising of the profile of the discipline and to strengthening the landscape architecture academic community through providing an important publication platform to support discourse within the discipline.

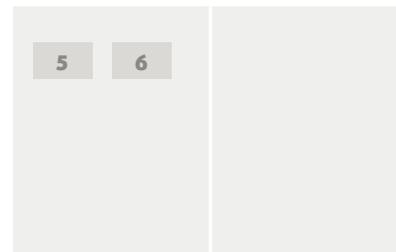
A further contribution to raising the profile of the discipline within the European research community that the LE:NOTRE Project made possible, was to be represented in the steering committee for the first ever joint project between the European Science Foundation and COST in preparing a Science Policy Briefing on landscape (ESF-COST, 2010). This was the first time the discipline of landscape architecture had been involved in the work of the European Science Foundation, and was perhaps another of the most important research-related outcomes of the project although it played no part whatsoever in the formal outputs as set out in the project application (Reference). In this way it was possible, through the project, to make several important contributions to raising the research potential of the discipline even though this was not actually foreseen as being a part of a project which was officially concerned only with higher education at the European level.

Despite these successes, higher education in landscape architecture nevertheless played the main part in the project. One important aspect of

this was participation of the Network in the European Union's so-called 'Tuning Project'. This was concerned with harmonising higher education across Europe both to support student exchange and to prepare for the European Higher Education Area. It involved the joint definition of both generic and subject specific competences for landscape architecture graduates, but purposely did not specify how there were to be taught in order to preserve the variety of approaches across Europe and to safeguard academic freedom. The resulting LE:NOTRE 'Tuning Report' was subsequently adopted as the ECLAS Guidance on Landscape Architecture Education.

In terms of raising the profile of the discipline, however, it was perhaps a development analogous to the involvement with the ESF-COST Science Policy Briefing which was most significant outcome of LE:NOTRE. This was the preparation of a report for the Council of Europe on the education of landscape architects in connection with the European Landscape Convention. This too was not an official output of the project, but were it not for LE:NOTRE and the regular involvement it and ECLAS had in the workshops for the implementation of the Convention, this report would not have been commissioned.

The project's goal of cementing and strengthening the landscape architecture academic community was further pursued through the development of the project web site. At the start of the project in 2002 the web site was seen as being a vital part of the process of building the academic community. It was also viewed as the key to extending the activities of ECLAS beyond the annual conference and throughout the whole year. From the beginning, the web site was also conceived as a communication platform and as a focus for the project consortium to collect information and thus to create meaningful content. This, it must be remembered,



5. kép/pict.:

The 2004 LE:NOTRE Conference and workshop at the Buda Campus

6. kép/pict.:

LE:NOTRE program: Site visit of the Gödöllő Royal Castle and the Upper Garden in 2004

was both before Facebook was created and before the term 'Web 2.0' was popularised.¹¹ The LE:NOTRE web site was therefore very much a forward looking vision which aimed to combine the role of an academic network with that of a simple social network.

Initially, the main organising feature of the web site was a series of twelve 'Working Groups' which were intended to reflect the main sub-disciplines within landscape architecture and were conceived as a means to bring together colleagues from the different member schools with similar teaching responsibilities and research interests - another aspect of the aim of strengthening the academic community. The Working Groups provided the structure within which data on individual course units could be collected as well as the basis for preparing a multi-lingual glossary of specialist landscape architecture terminology. This was one of the outputs for year two of the project, which was further developed at later stages into a crowd-sourced thesaurus. As with the other project outputs, these could all be read from the first public home page of the web site.

The web site also potentially gave the project an international reach, and with the initiation of a new part of the Socrates Programme - Erasmus Mundus - it was also possible for LE:NOTRE to successfully apply for an extension of the project to involve schools from outside Europe and through this it was possible to welcome new landscape architecture schools from all continents and including North and South America, China and Korea, Australia and New Zealand.

During the course of all these developments, the basic architecture as well of the project as the steering committee stayed largely the same. The activities of each project year were organised around the annual 'Spring Workshop' at which representatives from each of the consortium members were able to meet

and contribute to the development of the project outputs which had been agreed for the year in question. The final Spring Workshop in the first project cycle was organised and hosted in Budapest.

Project meetings were organised in the spring so as not to clash with but rather to complement the established ECLAS Conference, which already had a regular slot in September. Because there was little difference between the membership of ECLAS and that of LE:NOTRE these meetings effectively provided two opportunities for the schools to meet each year, to the mutual benefit of both organisations. This, in turn, also supported the main overarching goal of the project, namely to strengthen the landscape architecture academic community in Europe.

As the project progressed and its success became established, from the original three year cycle (2002-2005) through LE:NOTRE PLUS, LE:NOTRE TWO, LE:NOTRE Mundus and LE:NOTRE TWO+, it gradually began to become the victim of its own success. On the one hand it was important to continue to follow the successful formula which had been established through seven project applications, but at the same time it became increasingly difficult to develop new and distinctive 'outputs' for the following application, as it was these concrete outputs that were important to the funding agency, even though as far as ECLAS and the academic community were concerned, it was the less tangible outcomes that were central to the project. As it was clear that the European Union would not continue to fund the project for ever, it became necessary to consider an 'exit strategy' and it was decided to make this explicit in the application for LE:NOTRE III.¹²

At the start of the LE:NOTRE project in 2002, it was assumed that it would last for no more than one three-year cycle, after which it would end and ECLAS would inherit the outputs. As the project

¹¹ Wikipedia refers to Web 2.0 in relation to World Wide Web websites that emphasize user-generated content, usability (ease of use, even by non-experts), and interoperability (this means that a website can work well with other products, systems, and devices) for end users.

¹² In fact this turned out to be fortuitous as the following year the European Union announced that they would no longer be supporting academic networks such as LE:NOTRE as part of the new ERASMUS Programme.

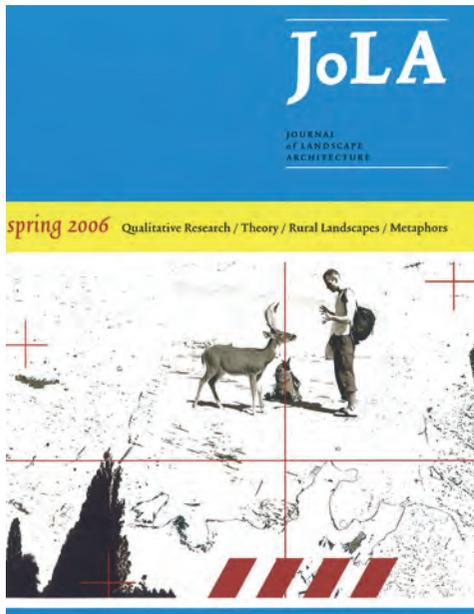


Fig. 7.: Front cover of the first edition of JoLA from 2006

progressed, however it became clear that its scope had expanded beyond that of ECLAS to include landscape schools from outside Europe, representatives from related disciplines as well as making efforts to involve landscape architecture practitioners in both the public and private sectors. For this reason a new independent 'legacy' organisation was proposed as part of the LE:NOTRE III application, which would in future continue to exist alongside its 'parent body' ECLAS and be complementary to it: the idea of the LE:NOTRE Institute was born. Another important new feature of LE:NOTRE III was the transformation of the established 'Spring Workshops' into a new kind of interdisciplinary event - the LE:NOTRE Landscape Forum.

The Forum was conceived as a contrast to the conventional academic conference¹³ and indeed as a kind of 'antidote' to it. Whereas conferences were usually characterised by presentations of papers about completed projects in darkened lecture theatres, with usually too little opportunity for discussion, the Forum was intended to provide an opportunity for members of different landscape-related disciplines to meet and collaborate by discussing approaches to concrete landscape issues relating to a particular area which would be the focus of excursions and workshops. The first two Forums were held within the context of LE:NOTRE III in Antalya and Rome and were successful in establishing a 'proof of concept'. At the

same time preparations for the establishment of the LE:NOTRE Institute proceeded as did the further development of the web site, including specific new features such as a thesaurus and in particular the strengthening the e-Learning aspects with the establishment of a series of internet lectures.

The LE:NOTRE Project finally came to an end in December 2013, more than 11 years after the original 'three-year' project started. When the dust had cleared and the 'final' final report had been submitted to Brussels, the new LE:NOTRE Institute was faced with the brave new world of having to survive without its European Union funding. It is not the right time to analyse the success of this difficult transition, but it can be said that more than three years later the LE:NOTRE Institute is still functioning, four successful Landscape Forums have been held in Sarajevo, Bucharest, Paphos and Munich and the following Forums are in preparation.

Much has been achieved in the field of European cooperation in landscape architecture education and scholarship over the last quarter century, from the development of the European Council of Landscape Architecture Schools and the LE:NOTRE Project and Institute. The pursuit of the goals of strengthening the academic community and creating added value through focussing the critical mass of an otherwise small and diffuse discipline, has been largely successful. While much of this was facilitated by the

13 It was also intended to complement and not compete with the ECLAS Conference which continued to be successful in its September slot as a conventional academic conference.



8. pict.:

The 2002 ECLAS Conference was organised in Budapest by the Faculty of Landscape Architecture

funding from the European Union, it was the activities and commitment of a relatively small group of individuals from landscape architecture schools across the continent which ensured the success of the project. Nevertheless, without the EU funding which made it possible to employ a project assistant it would also have been barely possible to coordinate the project alongside the normal day to day workload of an academic.

Thanks to the European funding for the LE:NOTRE Project and the commitment of the academic community, ECLAS has been able to achieve much over the last 25 years, although much still remains to be achieved, and even simply maintaining the achievements to date calls for the commitment of all concerned. Only through European cooperation was this possible in the past and will continue to be in the future.

A PERSONAL AFTERWORD - RICHARD STILES

The establishment of the European Council of Landscape Architecture Schools, together with the LE:NOTRE Project and its follow-up organisation, can be viewed as being all about taking the initial critical steps towards the institutionalisation of academic landscape architecture in Europe.

Institutions, such as ECLAS, are of great importance in the representation of professional and academic positions in the wider context of public life. They can be said to exist in order to multiply and add value and authority to the voices of their individual members. They are the proverbial 'whole which aims to be greater than the sum of its parts'.

As such, institutions need to be seen as the collective and essentially impersonal embodiments of a series of higher principles and goals, and must be invested with the necessary authority in order that their goals can be successfully pursued. In the absence of authority deriving from an established statutory role, how successful an institution is in achieving its goals is, to a large degree, in proportion to the standing it is able to achieve as a reflection of the societal respect it commands and a function of its and perceived importance and its integrity.

Looking back at the process of striving to establish ECLAS, one becomes retrospectively aware, not just of the way in which this theoretical background to the nature of institutions was a key factor in driving one's actions, but that it was not the only one, and that diametrically opposed forces were also at work. There was therefore a need to balance what were two competing realities. On the one hand, as outlined above, there was the necessity to manufacture what had to appear, to the outside world at least, as an impersonal and impartial institution, together with all its organisation and structures. On the other there, was the awareness that organisations of this nature, which need to operate on an honorary basis, especially in their initial stages, were anything but impersonal, as they depend almost entirely on the efforts and commitment of individuals giving their valuable and limited time and knowledge for free, usually alongside their other onerous duties.

From this, latter, point of view, the key to the success of establishing and developing ECLAS was to find a team

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of committed individuals who shared the necessary vision and commitment to the cause together with an ability to make things happen. This is where the Faculty of Landscape Architecture in Budapest enters the story.

Since its formation in 1992, the Faculty of Landscape Architecture in Budapest was clearly also looking to strengthen its international contacts, and shortly after I moved to Vienna in 1994, I was contacted from Budapest by Professor Imre Jambor, who established 'first contact' between our departments, although, of course, there had been a strong previous bilateral exchange between my predecessor Ralph Gälzer and Professor Mihály Möcsenyi. At the time, though I was not yet really aware of the long and illustrious history of landscape architecture education in Hungary, which formed the essential background to the establishment of the Budapest Faculty of Landscape Architecture.

Bilateral exchanges followed during the next years and after having brought the ECLAS Conference to Vienna in 1998, where Imre Jambor was also a speaker, as the new and unexpected ECLAS President, I started to put together a new ECLAS Committee which represented all corners of Europe. At the time there was no mechanism to have an open 'call for nominations' and thus the pragmatic approach taken was personally to invite key individuals to be part of the new committee based on the simple conviction that they could be relied upon to play a committed part in the new ECLAS. Thanks to the good contacts that had already been established between the two schools it was an obvious step to invite Dr. Kinga Szilágyi to become a member of the new ECLAS Committee.

In addition to the essential role of the contribution of committed individuals, such as Kinga Szilágyi, in the developing success of ECLAS, there is a further key factor, namely the role of their institutions. Without the institutional support of the Faculty and departments in Budapest for ECLAS and the European project it would have certainly been much harder to move forward in the way in which we did from the end of the 1990s, and as if to emphasise the broad and practical nature of the support for ECLAS within the Faculty in Budapest, they offered to host the annual ECLAS Conference in 2002, one of the first since ECLAS came under its 'new management'. It is not feasible to mention all the many individual members of the Faculty who have contributed to ECLAS in this way over the years, but they all deserve warm thanks!

The 2002 Budapest ECLAS Conference was a great success in its own right, but it also effectively marked the inauguration of the LE:NOTRE Project, which started officially only a few days later. It was also important in that it provided the first opportunity to invite Maguelonne Déjeant-Pons of the Council of Europe, the person responsible for the European Landscape Convention, as a keynote speaker, thereby establishing a strong link between ECLAS and the Convention.

The development of LE:NOTRE happened within the ECLAS Committee, and as the two were so closely related, the ECLAS committee merged seamlessly into the LE:NOTRE Steering Committee, and so the close involvement of the Budapest Faculty with the LE:NOTRE Project also continued in the

person of Kinga Szilágyi. And again this support was not just a matter of representative membership of the Steering Committee, but involved active contributions on the part of a significant cross-section of the academic staff to the preparation of the many project outputs. If this wasn't enough Budapest also volunteered as the venue and organisers of the third and final Spring Workshop in 2005 within the first LE:NOTRE Project, which repeated the success of the ECLAS Conference three years previously, and was again notable for, amongst other things, being the occasion when the foundations for the establishment of JoLA - ECLAS's new 'Journal of Landscape Architecture' - were laid.

As stressed above, one of the key factors in successfully establishing an organisation such as ECLAS is to ensure that it quickly gains the necessary societal standing and respect in order to be able to acquire the necessary influence in order to achieve its wider goals. A significant part of this standing and respect can also, in certain cases, be as it were, 'inherited' from its member organisations. This too is an important part of the role which the Budapest Faculty has played in the development of ECLAS and LE:NOTRE. By virtue of its long and illustrious history and the role played by those individuals who have contributed significantly to the Budapest school and the Faculty, a modest portion of this 'reflected glory' has shone back on ECLAS. It was therefore very fitting that in 2009 ECLAS had the opportunity to bestow its Lifetime Achievement Award on one of the central personalities of both Hungarian and European landscape architecture education: Professor Mihály Möcsenyi. And it was a great honour for me to be given the task of presenting this award.

The development of ECLAS has thus been closely bound up with the contributions, both direct and indirect of the Budapest Faculty of Landscape

Architecture and the many individuals behind it. To my knowledge the Faculty is unique in Europe in that it is the only landscape architecture faculty we have now, at least since the merger of the landscape faculty at the University of Hanover with the architecture faculty at that university. Certainly the Budapest Faculty has not been immune to the vagaries of academic politics and its outstanding contribution to the development of academic landscape architecture in Europe through ECLAS and LE:NOTRE has taken place against a somewhat turbulent university landscape in Hungary, for which its contribution is all the more impressive.

I have always felt that, possibly because of the strongly transdisciplinary character of landscape architecture, universities do not really know how best to deal with the discipline, nor where it belongs within the academic landscape. This suspicion on my part has been amply reinforced by the developments here in Budapest over the last quarter century. Since I first made my acquaintance with the Faculty, not long after moving to Vienna in 1994, it has changed its university base no less than three times. This is something which also has certainly represented an immense additional drain on the resources of the staff involved. Nevertheless, against this background the reassuring thing has been that despite these three changes of university, every time I have had the honour and the pleasure to visit the Faculty, I have been met by the same people at the same location, and so over this first 25 years of the Budapest Faculty of Landscape Architecture there has been some calm in these stormy times, and the discipline of landscape architecture in Europe has benefitted from this. It is to be hoped that calmer institutional times lie ahead and that this will still further strengthen the commitment and contribution of the Faculty to its European home! ©

AZ EURÓPAI TÁJÉPÍTÉSZETI ISKOLÁK TANÁCSA ÉS A LE:NOTRE

Bár a tájépítészeti szakma több évszázados, rangos múltra tekint vissza, az egyetemi szintű képzési program szerte Európában alig száz éves. Ma szinte minden európai uniós országban legalább egy olyan felsőoktatási intézmény van, ahol tájépítészeti lehet tanulni. Összességében több mint 100 okleveles alap- és mesterképzési szak van szerte Európában, és számos iskola doktori PhD képzést is kínál az érdeklődőknek. A dinamikus fejlődés és ugrásszerű számbeli gyarapodás a II. világháborút követő évtizedekben, a városrekonstrukciós programoknak köszönhetően következett be, míg utóbb a környezeti és ökológiai tudatosság erősödése adott újabb lendületet a tájépítészeti iskolák fejlődéséhez.

Azokban az európai országokban, ahol több felsőoktatási intézményben oktatnak tájépítészeti, már a 70-es években szerveződtek nemzeti tájépítészeti képzési fórumok. Európai szintű felsőoktatási találkozóra azonban csak 1989-ben került sor, amikor a Berlini Műszaki Egyetem megszervezte az első nemzetközi tájépítészeti fórumot. Ez jelentette az európai tájépítészeti oktatási együttműködés hivatalos intézményi formáját. 1989-ben maga a rendező város, Berlin is történelmi időket élt sajátos geopolitikai helyzetéből adódóan, jóllehet akkor, szeptemberben a politikai fordulat még nem igazán látszott. Ugyanakkor volt egy másik fontos hajtóerő is egy európai szintű együttműködés kiépítésére: ez pedig az Európai Közös Piac fejlődése, az akkor még csak 12 tagú Európai Közösség országai között.

Két évvel később, 1991-ben Hollandiában, Wageningenben volt az első konferencia, ahol az európai tájépítészeti iskolák találkoztak, s megalapították az ECLAS-t, az Európai Tájépítészeti Iskolák Konferenciáját (European Conference of Landscape Architecture Schools). Tíz évvel később az ECLAS eredményesen pályázott a SOCRATES Program támogatására egy Tájépítészeti Tematikus Hálózat (Thematic Network in Landscape Architecture) létrehozására. Az informálisan már jól működő európai szintű szakmai kommunikáció kapott ezzel lehetőséget egy új, erős szervezet és rendszeres együttműködési forma kidolgozására és fejlesztésére.

A LE:NOTRE Thematic Network – Landscape Education: New Opportunities for Teaching and Research (LE:NOTRE Tematikus Hálózat – Tájépítészeti Képzés: Új Lehetőségek az Oktatásban és Kutatásban) 11 éven át működött a Socrates támogatásával, és 150 tájépítészeti iskolát fogott egybe. A LE:NOTRE hatékonyan és eredményesen teljesítette be az ECLAS céljait az oktatási és kutatási együttműködések fejlesztésével, a széleskörű szakmai kommunikációs lehetőségek koordinálásával. Az ECLAS (ma már: European Council of Landscape Architecture Schools) szilárd alapot és továbblépési lehetőséget jelent az európai tájépítészeti akadémiai infrastruktúra terén. A cikk az ECLAS fejlődési útját mutatja be a legszélesebb összefüggésrendszerben. ©