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Professor Richard E. Toth Interview Transcription

Richard E. Toth
Utah State University

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Professor Richard E. Toth Interview Transcription

Interviewee: Richard E. Toth
Date of interview: October 10, 2013
Place of interview: Distance Education Building, Room 101, Utah State University Campus

Interviewer: Aaron Smith
Recorder: Aaron Smith
Recording Equipment: Tascam DR-05

Subject of interview: Richard E. Toth's personal and professional history; The Department of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning, Utah State University; the profession of landscape architecture

Transcriptionist: Aaron Smith
Date of transcription: 10/18/2013

Brief Description of Contents: This interview was conducted as research for part of *The History of the Department of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning* master's thesis by Aaron Smith. It contains information about Richard E. Toth, former professor in the Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning Department (LAEP) at Utah State University, discussing his education, professional practice and experience as an educator at the Department of LAEP.

References: AS = Aaron Smith (Interviewer)
RT = Richard E. Toth (Interviewee)

TAPE TRANSCRIPTION

AS: For the record, will you state your full name and where and when you were born?

RT: My name is Richard E. Toth. I was born in Trenton, New Jersey on the thirteenth of April, 1937.

AS: Did you grow up in Trenton, or did you move around?

RT: In New Jersey, part of it was in Trenton, and part of it was up near Princeton in a little town called Rocky Hill, where my grandparents lived. I did a lot of professional work in that part of New Jersey. I should mention this early to you, I spent a lot of summers there, up around that area around Princeton along the Millstone River. That is where I really had more of a sense to my connection with the landscape as a young person around eight to ten years old. We ended up living in a town in between Trenton and Princeton called

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Lawrenceville. It is just a little bit south of Princeton. That is where I grew up. As I always say to people I grew up in a foreign country - New Jersey. Most people don't know that there are some elegant, beautiful places in New Jersey, including the shore.

AS: You describe this connection to the environment, what led you down this path toward landscape architecture, or did that come later in life?

DT: A little bit later, past ten or twelve years old maybe. My parents were in a business, and they had different associates. My dad knew a landscape architect around the Princeton area, and I was talking to him one day, and he started telling me what he does, and it was all very interesting. It was much more project scale design, doing residential work in that area. He said, "Well I could use some help in the summer, if you wanted to do some work?" And I did, and I enjoyed it. It was a summer working outside doing planting design. Really very small project scale types of things, but it was interesting overall.

When I was looking at going to college, I was at a small junior college in New Jersey, I met an art teacher there. Art and design was always part of my life. My dad went to art school, and there were a lot of pen and ink drawing around the house. Art and design material was a part of my life. I became associated with an art faculty member in junior college, and we began talking about schools. I still had that interest in landscape architecture from those summers helping with landscape contracting. I said something about where are there some good schools in landscape architecture? He said that as far as he was concerned the best one that he knew of was in East Lansing, at Michigan State. You have to remember that this was a time period when there was only twelve or thirteen accredited programs in the country. He really felt that Michigan State was a good program, that they were doing good things. Eventually, when I finished my junior college degree in Natural Sciences, I went to Michigan State.

Interestingly enough I had my first Ecology course there, in junior college, in 1957. We did some quantitative analysis on the Delaware River floodplain in Pennsylvania. That was the time in which most people did not know what ecology was, period. That began a career along that line, which I really enjoyed. I ended up going to Michigan State after junior college. I was there for three years. I enjoyed that experience a great deal. I

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thought that I had a very fine faculty there. They were Faculty that were interested in the student, in what you were doing, and what you think you were going to be doing. I was applying myself pretty well during that period. There were two new young faculty there at the time, Peter Frasier and Larry Coffin. Frasier ended up practicing and had an office in Puerto Rico, in San Juan. Larry Coffin ended up in practice in Alexandria, Virginia, and I believe he is still there. Both of them were relatively young on staff, and had a lot of motivation and excitement about ideas and what we were doing. I can remember when it was time for me to graduate they said "can we go over and have a cup of coffee and talk about a few things?" I said sure. They said, "What are you going to do after you graduate?"

I said, "Well, I will probably find a job. I know a few different places, New Jersey Forest and Parks." I have worked for them in the summers and they asked me to come back, and maybe I could do this or maybe I could do that."

They said, "No, we have a different idea for you."

I said, "Really?"

And they said, "Yes, you are going to go to graduate school."

And I said, "Well, that's interesting."

They said, "you could use that extra effort at the end to sharpen certain skills in different areas."

I said, "Are you expecting me to stay here in East Lansing?"

They said, "No, you are going to go to Harvard." They were both Harvard GSD graduates.

I said, "I will never get into Harvard."

They said, "Well, you let us worry about that, but plan accordingly."

I applied and whatever happened, happened. I was accepted. I ended up in Cambridge at the Graduate School of Design. It was the time when Hideo Sasaki was Chair of the

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program, and Chuck Harris was a faculty member as well as Peter Hornbeck, Norman Newton, Don Olson, Dave Holleman. It was a very small class. I think there were six of us in that entering class. In the next year I think one or two more joined. As it is with graduate school you have a tendency to maintain more contact with colleagues out of graduate programs.

It was there at Harvard working on a number of things that my interest started moving, I wouldn't say away from design, but in a more comprehensive way, to put design in a better context. By that I mean looking at a larger scale type issues. Chuck Harris had us do a studio about the Quabbin Reservoir area in Western Massachusetts, which is a pretty large chunk of landscape. The watershed for the Quabbin was the water supply for Boston. A colleague, Brad Johnson from Canada, and I worked together on that project, and we came up with some interesting analyses on how we would begin to resolve some of the questions as to what should happen with that entire western landscape of Massachusetts. I remember we tried to use some quantitative stuff with numbers on scaling landscapes in different ways. It was very successful. I can remember Prof. Newton, said, "It is all very interesting what you guys are doing, what you have worked out, but be careful of numbers."

I think we took that to heart, and I think he was right, at least in the applied design disciplines, I think you need to be careful of numbers. Brad Johnson and I were very good friends and colleagues. [After graduation] he said, "What are you going to do now?"

I said, "I am not sure."

He said, "Why don't you come up to Toronto with me. There is a lot of work that needs to be done in Canada, and there are not many landscape architects."

So I said, "Sounds pretty good."

I went up and interviewed with them. Don Pettit was the head of the landscape division, in a firm called Project Planning Associated Limited, in Toronto. After the interview, Don said, "Why don't you come up, I think that we can use some of your skill sets and your interest in different scales in landscape architecture."

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I went up. I was still single so I had lots freedom so far as finding a rather nice apartment in a little apartment complex overlooking Rose Park Canyon. There were several projects that we worked on, some out in Banff, some on the Banff Jasper Highway, a number of them in the Toronto area, and one, which occurred in my second or third year, was being assigned to work on Expo '67 in Montreal, which I think that we did some rather interesting stuff there. Some of the other people who were professionals on the project were a bunch of young folks like me. One of them was Moshe Safdie, who has become fairly well recognized for his work. That was one of the first major projects that he did shortly after he left the University of Pennsylvania in Architecture. Adel Lauday was there, Jerry Miller was another architect out of the GSD. The four of us worked on a lot of the conceptual work on Expo '67.

What also occurred at the time that I graduated and left Harvard, I received the Weidenman Prize, which was basically for travel and extending ones education. So I kind of reminded the folks at the office that the University had graciously given me, at that time, a fairly large chunk of money, and they expected me to use it for travel and my education, and not to buy a new car. Brad Johnson had received another award from Harvard, and he and his family were travelling and coming back to Toronto. He was taking over where I was at that particular place and time. Long story cut short, Brad came back, and I had a colleague who was a year behind me, John Furlong, and John got some extra money when he graduated. Sasaki thought that it would be a good idea if we travelled together, because we could then share expenses and discuss the trip.

John and I put a trip together. It was about seven or eight months. We spent a long time. I had saved some money and bought a car, a little Volkswagen Square Back. We saw a lot of good things around Europe. While I was in Europe I had my itinerary with contact points at American Express offices. I remember I was in Venice and walked over to the American Express office, and there was an envelope that had the University of Pennsylvania return address on it. I sat down on the steps in the Piazza San Marco. I opened it up, and it was a letter from a fellow by the name Ian McHarg at the University of Pennsylvania. It was a rather nice little note saying that he had been talking to Hideo at Harvard, and had been asking about a few individuals who he might recommend who

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would be interested in joining the faculty at the University of Pennsylvania. I thought about that, and said that's nice. I don't really have anything to go back to right now, and Philadelphia is not that far from home, right around Trenton and Princeton. I wrote back to Ian and I said, "Thank you very much for the invitation." And told him when I would be coming back.

He sent a little note back, and he said "that is fine, and we will expect to see you around the first week of September."

I went down and interviewed and that is part of history. Bill Roberts, Tony Walmsaly, Ian, and Nick Muhlenberg were all on the faculty then. After the interview we went to lunch, and Ian said, "We talked about this a little bit, and we enjoyed your presentation and the way that you are looking at landscape, and your design background and your large scale interest. We would like you to have you join us here in Philadelphia."

I said, "Wonderful, when would you like me to start?"

Ian said, "School started a week ago, how about tomorrow?"

That is the beginning of the story of Penn and that was a marvelous experience. There were wonderful people there. Nick Muhlenberg graduated in forestry out of Yale. Jack McCormick, a terrestrial ecologist. Ruth Patrick, who I found out recently passed away, was a limnologist. Archie Reid another ecologist was there. We did several large scale planning studies, [including] one for the whole Delaware River basin.

While I was at Penn a note came through for a summer teaching job at a place called Utah State University. About this time, I met a very nice young woman up near where my parents live, and after a year or so of dating, we decided to get married. Diana and I took a trip and spent about six weeks traveling in the American West. I had spent a lot of time in the West before, travelling with my parents. But Diana had never been out west, but she really enjoyed the western landscape. When this opportunity came up at Utah State, we said, "That sounds like a pretty good deal." We could get a good paid vacation, and do a bit of teaching. We had no idea where Logan, Utah was, or what the landscape looked like. I wrote back to a great guy by the name of Burt Taylor, who was Department

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Head here at the time. This was about 1967. Burt said, "sounds great, why don't you come out. It will be a real simple type of thing, we would like you to do a studio with a couple of students, and also teach an intro course for the summer."

I said, "That sounds pretty good."

My wife and I came out and we really had no idea what this place looked like. We had gone earlier in that summer to go and visit my brother in California, and we were travelling out across Nevada and Bakersfield and that kind of stuff, and my wife and I were wondering what it would be like on the other side of the mountain. We kept driving, and were not sure. We came over Sardine Pass and dropped down into Cache Valley, and were very impressed. I think that the University was about 8000 students at the time. Cache Valley was still pretty small. We had a little two bedroom apartment in the Triads for the summer. I taught summer school and every weekend we took off and went to Yellowstone, Tetons, south to Moab, what have you. We had a marvelous and wonderful time. Things worked out fairly well. Burt Taylor was extremely helpful and generous with a lot of his time and activities. He was very much interested in the things that I was interested in professionally and academically at the same time. He indicated to me that he would like to also have a little bit more emphasis on the contextual aspects of landscape architecture (spatially), in other words larger scale, in a landscape sense.

We returned and went back to Philadelphia. After about three years at Penn I felt that it was about time to move. I had been there for three years; I was enjoying it a great deal, and was enjoying my associations with those faculty who were there, particularly with McCormick and Patrick. But we felt the need to move. Chuck Harris, who had taken over from Sasaki at Harvard, said, "Why don't you think about coming up and visiting with me, there are a few things that I may be able to help you out with."

I took the train up to Cambridge and talked to Chuck for a while, and met a couple of the people who were on the faculty at the time. Peter Hornbeck was there, Norman Newton, and I think Carl Steinitz was in his first year or was just coming on board. Chuck said to me, "Why don't you think seriously about coming back and joining us here."

I said, "I will talk to Diana and see what she thinks."

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These were also hard times in the country. This was 1966/67/68 when the country was going through very painful things in regard to civil rights and city riots. Parts of Philadelphia were burning, and the city was not a terribly friendly place. We were living in West Philadelphia near the University, where we had a little town house. It was kind of scary from time to time. We said let's try going to Harvard. We got a little tenant farm house near Framingham, Massachusetts. I commuted back and forth to school from there. In the meantime I kept in close contact with Burt Taylor. Burt said "Why don't you think about coming out for a longer period."

I said, "Sounds interesting."

Eventually it worked out. We went through a little scenario where we were all ready to come and they had some sort of financial crisis in the state and withdrew all open positions, so that closed down. Things worked out well enough where the position came up again two years later. This was in the days before you had to go through all these faculty searches. Burt called me back and said, "Do you want to come out? We have the position back."

I said, "yes."

He said, "be here July First." And that is where it started.

I came out here for the first year (1972), and Burt was having some physical problems and was taking extended medical leave. The Dean called me up and said, "I spoke with Taylor and a few other people, and I think it would be nice if you took over as Department Head."

I said, "That sounds OK." And that is where this whole thing started for me at USU.

AS: Looking back from Michigan, to Harvard, to Penn, and here, did you start to see the profession changing at the time?

RT: I would say that it was a period where Ian McHarg was very prominent in the discipline. He was lecturing extensively at the national scale advocating the whole concept of landscape ecological planning. Those were the things that we were focusing and working

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on at Penn. Ian was looking at his own definitions between design and planning. That was where the discipline was changing. You may not be aware that Phil Lewis, who was at the University of Wisconsin Madison, was also doing a lot of [similar] work, [such as] the whole upper Mississippi study that he did with his grad students, Tim Murray and Doug Way and a few other people. Phil and a fellow in Toronto by the name of Angus Hills, a geographer, and Ian were working on very large scale work at that time. The three of them were very much the advocates of looking at landscape level work.

There was a shift in education, being pushed hard by a few people, away from more project scale design over into the landscape level work. There was a lot of diversity of opinion from different schools at the time as to which way they wanted to go. A few schools were sliding more to getting the balance between those two. I am talking about places like Berkeley, Harvard, Penn, Washington, Oregon, and Cornell were also opening that scale of work. They were moving to try and find a balance between landscape level work and landscape design, or what I call project scale design. The discipline was also having some adjustment periods, both through practice, and also in research, and certainly in academia. The schools were moving a little bit more toward the landscape level work. Penn was one of the stronger programs in the area of landscape ecology planning. Lots of good people were at Penn. Nick Muhlenberg was a strong advocate of that policy, standing side by side with McHarg. Nick was pushing that well. Archie Reid was still there. Jack McCormick was there. Ruth was there. They were doing a good job of pulling that work through McHarg's office. The Green Spring Worthington Valley study was in the office at the time, The Potomac study was also done there. A recent graduate of Penn, a fellow by the name of Narendra Juneja who went with McHarg's office, did a lot of the conceptual development work. There was a language that was starting to develop at the same time, intrinsic suitability, suitability mapping, the specter of uncontrolled growth, and a bunch of things along that line. These were new pieces of language that were coming into the discipline from the large scale ecology side. I think that part of the work was developing very well. I think Penn was strong, Berkeley was strong, Harvard was getting stronger, Fred Smith, joined the faculty (P.A.E.S. program) and put a stronger foundation in landscape ecology at the GSD.

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Things were going well with respect to my overall interest. When I came out here it was an area I was more fully developed into looking at the landscape level work. Although I enjoyed design a great deal, don't get me wrong. As a matter of fact, I taught the design theory courses, both the two dimensional and three dimensional design, for eight to ten years. Also, at the graduate level I was doing the large scale landscape level work. Here at the time, I think Gere Smith had come on. Jerry Fuhrman, Vern Budge, and Craig Johnson were here. Eventually we hired a planner by the name of Kevin Stowers, he was here for a couple of years and then went back to Texas. We opened that position up again, and John Nicholson came on board. John was a fortunate find for us, and a very helpful colleague. John and I taught studios together quite a bit. When we were on the quarter system, I would do fall quarter, and John would come on in winter quarter and would take it further into some implementation strategies. For a short time we had Jim Webster teaching history here. I think Jim is still in Salt Lake in practice. Dave Kotter was here as an extension specialist. Dave sort of withdrew and that is when we brought Larry Wegkamp on board, and now that position is owned by Dave Bell, and Dave is doing very well in that area.

After eight years I said to myself that I have done enough administration. I never had a course in college on personnel management. You are always dealing with one thing or another with personnel. About half way through that period Gere Smith withdrew and went to San Louis Obispo to take over there. I think he did a good job at that institution. Several LAEP graduate students (Walter Bremer) went there and worked with Gere on the larger scale work at the same time.

Here I think that things were coming along very well during that first eight year period. It was a very close collegial feeling between the faculty. We redesigned the entire curriculum, both at the undergraduate and graduate level. I worked very hard to get a new building and we were able to have the art department join us in that endeavor. It helped to move our request ahead with the building board. We also did something then that was not done at the time. A fellow by the name of Paul Salisbury was campus architect and director of campus planning. Paul and I talked about getting a larger pool of architects for the building. We wanted to open it up nationally. We were able to get about four or five

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good national firms to submit proposals, [including] Venturi and Rauch, Caudill, Rowlett, and Scott, Ed Barnes, and Sasaki and Associates. They came out and interviewed. The building board finally selected Ed Barnes, and that is the building that you are now living in. That took a lot of my time at the end of that eight year period, trying to keep that all together.

When Larry Wegkamp came on we started a more full time effort in outreach for field service. I had been doing some field service work, and had some funding from the Ford Foundation when I was back at Harvard. It was called the New England Regional Field Service. I had a funding for about \$150,000 for about three years. When I came out here, I talked to the people back there and asked about investing in a Western Regional Field Service, and they wanted to hear more about it. About three or four months into it, they decided to drop the entire environmental section of the foundation, so we lost that potential funding, but we didn't lose our enthusiasm. We maintained it and kept working getting small grants and small moneys for quite a while. We did a lot of good outreach work, which is part of what a good land grant school is all about. You are paying back the society that is also paying your salary, and helping them with their environmental planning and design problems.

After about eight years I said, "Well, that is enough." Enough administration and dealing with personalities and the like. I am going to go back into the faculty. I talked to the Dean, Bill Lye, and I told Bill that I wanted to be a regular faculty member. I think it was Jerry Furhriman who took over. Jerry was in there for about two years, and I think he decided that maybe it was keeping him away from some of the things he wanted to do. He stepped aside and Craig Johnson took over for a three-year period. I was having a good time during this period. I enjoyed my classes. We were looking at the whole landscape level work with a lot of nice projects. Plus I was starting to get into a lot of research. Nicholson and I were doing some interesting things in the larger landscape planning level, and I think the department was coming together well at that time. A few new faculty had come in and gone. Some [faculty] coming in on a temporary position, others coming in but then deciding that there was maybe another place to go. John Billing

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was with us for a while, and ended up at Ohio State. [He was a] good colleague, and a hard worker.

I am trying to get a sense about that five year period. As I stated earlier, I was really having a good time. A couple of papers and grants came out of that period. I thought things were in very good shape, but Bob Hoover, who was then Dean, gave me a call and said, "Come over and I would like to go over some things with you."

I said, "Ok."

He said, "Are you having a good time; are you enjoying yourself?"

I said, "Yes, great."

And he said, "I want you to go back in."

I said "what are you talking about?"

He said, "I would really like you to go back in as Head of the Department."

I said, "I would really appreciate it if you wouldn't do that."

He said, "Well, that may be the case, but I am the Dean."

So I said, "OK." I certainly wasn't interested in going back to Philadelphia or Boston at that time, so I said that is kind of too bad, but what are you going to do.

I did go back in, and I must admit that that second nine year period was not nearly as productive as the first eight years overall. I think that the interim five year period changed somewhat in the makeup of the faculty. People were doing more of their own thing and several new faculty were not as interested in working together on a number of different kinds of ideas. I tried emphasizing the research so that each faculty member could develop a solid content area of emphasis that they could work on. That did help somewhat in several situations. But I think for some reason there were things that did occur, that I wasn't aware of when I was just with the faculty. The environment of the Department changed. Overall, I felt that it was much more difficult trying to maintain a positive sense of cohesiveness [in the Department]. Be that as it may, we still were doing

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a lot of interesting things and good things during that period. Later on, Jerry Furhriman had taken earlier retirement, and concentrated on things that he does very well, and that is his artwork and his painting. He is well respected regionally. That is what he wanted to do, and that is what he is still doing, and doing very well.

We had another [faculty] search, when I finally said to the Dean that I had enough, for the second time around. It was going to be twenty years total. I said that it was time for me to step aside again, and see if we could bring in someone else. We did a national search and we brought in an individual by the name of Karen Hannah. She sort of had different ideas as to the way that she wanted to move the Department. Some of her directions and attitudes didn't necessarily parallel or support my interests. So after about a year and a half or two years, I talked to a few people over in Natural Resources and they said, "Well, the scale of the work that you are doing is very appropriate for the types of things that we are interested in developing." Fee Busby, who was then Dean, Thad Box, and John Kadlek used to talk about the relationship of landscape level work in natural resources. Another colleague over there at the time was Terry Sharik, who was the Department Head in Forestry. Terry and I got to be very good friends. Plus in my studios I always had faculty out of Natural Resources coming in and lecturing and sitting in on juries and everything else. They said, "Why don't you come on over?"

I said, "That sounds pretty good." So that is what I did, I moved laterally across. I went from HASS over into the College of Natural Resources.

The College of Natural Resources was going through some major departmental rearrangements, and so there was a new department developing called Environment and Society. I felt that was a fit place for what my interests were, and Terry felt the same way, so we got into that. Part of that time, just before that, Terry and I talked an awful lot about the relationship between the content of natural resources and the interest in environmental planning in landscape architecture, and we petitioned some of the people here, the provost and a few other people in the offices, about the initiation of a new graduate degree in bioregional planning. The term bioregional was promoted by Charles Foster, a lecturer at the Harvard School of Government. I knew Charles from the New England Regional Commission when I was still teaching at Harvard. We kept talking

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about the whole idea of Bioregional work as an emphasis in landscape architecture and planning. At Penn we had two departments with separate degrees in regional planning. One was in the social sciences in the Department of City and Regional Planning. The other had an emphasis in natural sciences, and that was the one that we had in the Department of Landscape Architecture. There was always a little bit of a mixing and matching of some of those types of things. Terry Sharik had gone back and did a sabbatical at Harvard at the Arnold Arboretum . I told him to look up Charles Foster, and he did, and they got to be friends. When Terry came back he said, "I think that we ought to take a look at these things a bit further." And we did. We put together a few key faculty in LAEP (John Nicholson and myself) and a few faculty (Rob Lilieholm, Tom Edwards, and Neil West) that Terry felt might be helpful in Natural Resources, and we put that working group together. It took us about a year and a half to really develop the conceptual framework for the bioregional program, and the types of course work that would support the program. Then we did a little petitioning to go all the way through the board of regents, and what have you, to get it approved. It was because Natural Resources was revisiting the different departments, that we decided that we would move the LAEP portion of it forward. There would be two Departments, Landscape Architecture and Forestry (ENVS eventually), and two colleges (HASS and CNR). We felt this was good in bringing together the two colleges to discuss collaboration and interdisciplinary work at the same time. However, there were other units on campus that were associated with us. I think of Dr. James MacMahon, who is the Dean of Science right now, but he was Department Head and then became Director of the Ecology Center, and he participated in a number of my classes and studios. I always had Jim coming in and lecturing. There was a lot of nice connectivity that was occurring. It went through and was approved. It was approved by the regents. The LAEP portion of it was about one year ahead. We then had to reopen the file for Natural Resources and ENVS, and Terry and I did that. Then that was approved. So we now have what exists today, a joint degree program between two departments and two colleges. The only thing that has changed is that LAEP has moved from the College of HASS to the College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences.

There have been several Department Head changes over in LAEP. I think there were four in ten years right after Jerry and Craig. Karen Hannah was only there for about three

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years (1999-2002), and then Elizabeth Brabec came on in 2004 and she began pulling things together. A few years later she applied for a position at UMass, which was her home turf. She left, and Michael Timmons served as Interim D.H. for a year. The position was then reopened again nationally. Then Sean came on in '09. I think that he is doing a good job keeping things moving along, both in project scale design and landscape level work.

Most recently, a position was opened up in LAEP for a faculty position in Bioregional Planning. There was a pool of about thirty some odd people, which was a pretty good sized pool. It got down to three candidates. I don't recall what year it was, but there was an individual who had recently graduated from Cornell with a masters in landscape architecture, and we had an open temporary position in LAEP. I called around to a few people and they said that there was an interesting person coming out of Cornell. We announced the position and sort of let her know that it was available. She said yes, and we brought her out, and that was Barty Warren. Barty came out and spent two years ('81-82) with us. We introduced her to fly fishing. She eventually ended up going to Germany. Her husband was a physician in Germany. She settled in at the University at Hannover and was doing a lot of landscape level work in a very good department with a very good Department Head, Hans Keimstetd. That is where she had been for the last thirty years. When this position opened up again for LAEP, fortunately Barty applied for it and made the short list and made it through the interviews, and she was offered the position. She decided that it was maybe a good time to return back to the mountains. She is now with us. Anybody who knows her knows that she is a bright, articulate, charming person, and a pleasure to work with, and excited about what we are doing now. We are both team teaching the studio in Bioregional Planning. My guess is that the College of Natural Resources will be initiating another search in Bioregional Planning. I am in the process of trying to retire, fifty percent last year, and twenty-five percent this year. The strange thing is that we are only talking about salary here, not about time. The time seems to be the same. Dean Luecke tells me very nicely that I will be staying on as Emeritus and helping with mentoring of students and new faculty, and working on research grants. The idea of staying in touch with colleagues and working with people will be a lot of fun. In a capsule, that is pretty much how things developed.

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AS: I am going to go back to some directed questions about your time. Before you got that letter from Ian McHarg, back to your travels in Europe, did you see teaching as your direction?

RT: That is interesting. It was probably by default. Even when I was working in Canada, and particularly through part of the European experience, and looking at what was going on in Europe at the time with some of their larger scale planning effort along the Danube and along the Rhine, and all of the problems that they were having there, that the whole larger scale issue was becoming more and more dominant, especially from a research standpoint. Even when I was in practice, I was still putting occasional papers together, and sending them in for review with the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA), and the Council of Educators in Landscape Architecture (CELA). I failed to mention earlier that I was very active in CELA for a number of years ('70-'86). I initiated the Honor Society, and we put more emphasis on regional divisions, as opposed to one uniform national organization. It was a time when dues in CELA were \$15 a year. We didn't have any money to do anything, so we decided to double it, and there was almost a revolt in the schools, but it helped because we were able to do other things. What I am saying is that in regard to my academic career, I think that it transitioned by itself. I was interested more in the theoretical and conceptual work on regional planning that we were doing. Consequently, academic practice served those interests.

During my European experiences and travelling with John Furlong, we talked about these things a lot (John ended up teaching at Radcliff, and has been teaching there for the last thirty years in the landscape program) and he and I talked a great deal about what it was we wanted to do. We both were in practice and we knew the limits and frustrations of practice. You never have time in practice to think about the things that you would like to do, it is always trumping up with an office manager, getting on to the budget, time is money, move ahead, etc. John and I travelled and spent a lot of time together looking at a lot of great built and natural landscapes. The whole idea was that there are more important things than just doing what you know that you know you can do. What about doing things that area needed, new changes, and looking at societal needs that we have with respect to resources overall, whatever they may be? Water, agriculture, and energy

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are the three key attributes of our age, and if we don't get on the ball and address those issues seriously and vigorously in research, practice, and education then we, as a discipline (of landscape architecture) would not be helping society in trying to resolve some of the difficulties that we now have. Things are going to get more complex and probably worse. Water is a key issue.

Remember while I was teaching I was also in practice. I was a principal in two offices during my experience in Cambridge. I was in a firm called Steinitz, Rogers and Associates, where we did a number of large-scale research projects at that time. I was also in another firm with Dick Gardner, a colleague from a long time ago at Michigan State. We did several midlevel design projects. We did an interesting study with Bruce Tuschida for Machias, Maine, looking at where development could go if a World Port oil refinery became established there.

Those things kept coming up and coming to the surface, and they only helped to stabilize my interest in academic practice. Not just from the standpoint of being didactic and teaching, but also from the standpoint of looking at new ideas as to what we can do, and I think that we have done a lot of really good things. The study that we just finished two years ago could change a lot of things significantly in the American West. We did a study for SITLA and BLM, and it just received an APA award for its outstanding contribution to planning. So you do make contributions that way. A number of our studio projects also received APA and ASLA awards. Those projects dealt with new ideas and new ways of looking at things such as computer applications and landscape modeling.

When I was still teaching at Penn we were doing everything by hand with overlays on light tables, and looking through sheets of tracing paper. Eventually things started looking in different directions. Going back to Harvard to teach, Chuck Harris, Carl Steinitz, Tim Murray, Doug Way, Dave Sinton were there and we all began working with the computer and data at a completely different level. I think we did a number of very good things at the GSD. In the meantime, my wife and I decided that we wanted to make the West our home. Eventually we said goodbye to the guys at Harvard. They were very generous. Chuck Harris, who was Chair of the Department, said, "If you want to go, go,

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but you don't know what it might be like out there. If you don't like it we want you back here."

I said, "Well, that's nice."

And he said, "They may promise you things and they may not deliver, and you can say goodbye."

For three years after I took the appointment at USU, Chuck Harris gave me visiting professorships at Harvard with the corporation, just in case, as he put it, if it didn't work out I could go back. One of my colleagues back there is always giving me grief about leaving, although he has been here every year in the fall since I have been here. That is forty some odd years, and he hasn't missed a year. I missed one year when I was on sabbatical in Australia, and he even came out when I was on sabbatical.

I have enjoyed academic practice a great deal. I have been fortunate here that the University has given me a lot of flexibility to deal with the types of ideas that are important to this region and to this State overall. As I indicated, I think that our BLM/SITLA study is going to have a significant impact on public lands in the State as to their distribution between those two organizations. I am happy that it was one of the factors that opened that discussion two years ago when we did that work. It is now developing further along, and more things are happening in that area with the development of those ideas of how to make those transitions legally, policy wise, financially, etc.

AS: You mentioned that in the first eight years the maturing process of the program. When you came was there any environmental planning? You mentioned that Burt Taylor was interested in what you were doing. Were there any kernels of that?

RT: I think Gere Smith was marginally interested in it. While at Harvard we would travel several times a year to different schools and do a four-day workshop on landscape-level computer applications in planning. We would also hold them at Harvard, where we would have one or two a summer. Gere came out one of those summers. I think that got him interested about that level of work, and he came back here and was trying to do something back here at that time. After I came out in '72 we kind of worked things out

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together. He was teaching History and Open Space, and he went off in that direction, and I took off in taking more of the larger scale work. But I think that it was my emphasis and the work that I had done in research at Harvard and Penn that carried that work forward here in a more theoretical and vigorous way.

We tried to do something similar at the undergraduate level in that first eight-year period when there was a more collegial environment in the Department. We developed a whole sequence in site analysis, which I put together. We would do 4 sq. mile transects across the valley. We went through that whole studio sequence in the sophomore year in Site Analysis. Dave Anderson also taught it, when I moved further towards the graduate level. Dave did a fantastic job in that studio. As a temporary faculty he received course evaluations that were absolutely outstanding. He is a good teacher.

We slowly developed more of the larger scale work through research and various other foundation support, such as the Marriner S. Eccles Foundation, George S. Eccles foundation, the Quinney College of Natural Resources, and the National Science Foundation. I think those things began to mature and really form a substantive base of course work and research material in the Department.

What I failed to mention was that either at the end or beginning of my second term as Department Head, there was a program, at the undergraduate level, called Liberal Arts and Sciences. Unfortunately I think it is not here anymore. I thought it was one of the finest programs that we had here at the undergraduate level. It was University-wide, and it was extremely well organized overall. We put together our own LAEP component of the Liberal Arts and Sciences Program as an emphasis in environmental studies. One of the things we did was to introduce specific courses on philosophy, ecology, history, sociology, and natural resources as part of the program. Before that we had a general education program in landscape architecture that had something like four hundred elective courses(or seemed so) that students could take. It had no focus to it, and had nothing that would help the student to get a sense of who they are as a person, and what their education is all about. A number of us on the faculty really felt strongly about the Liberal Arts and Sciences Program, so I went over and petitioned our College that we could substitute the Environmental Liberal Arts and Sciences component of the program

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that we had for the general education requirements. That was a big step forward. They said, "Yes, go ahead, it gives us the balance that we are looking for."

It had courses in Philosophy, sociology, political science, as well as design and planning courses. They gave us permission to do it. We had that in place for about six or eight years. When I stepped down in '82 a few of the faculty who weren't so enthusiastic about it somehow convinced a majority to vote it out. That was a tragedy in my second time around. I started to see things not going well at that particular point.

AS: The curriculum overhaul that you started when you moved into the leadership role. What was your vision for the curriculum and how did it evolve?

RT: I think that I had brought in the need to maintain a balance between project scale design and landscape level work. You couldn't do one well without the support of the other. Both of them formed the context for decisions at either scale. We were always trying to find our way in-between, to maintain a balance. If you start to go too far to one end or another the more dangerous the programs become. You can start to lose what the discipline can contribute overall. What we looked at very hard during that first period was maintaining that balance. One of the important things in the curriculum discussion was what portions of the program will be working knowledge, and what portions of the program will be talking knowledge? We are not interested in landscape architecture in making people into ecologists at the undergraduate level, or even at the graduate level for that matter. We are interested, though, in their having talking knowledge of ecology, its general theories, language and concepts that are there, not the practice necessarily of field ecology. The same thing would be true for sociology, political science or anything else. We wanted our graduates to have some idea about public policy and laws through political science, some attributes of the social and cultural consequences of society, what they are, what they do, and how they work, and some attributes of economics. We need practitioners who go out and practice, and we want them to be able to go and practice anywhere. I don't care if it is South America, or in Germany, or wherever it may be, we want them to have certain skills and a scope of conceptual foundations of how to look at the discipline in practice. No matter where they would go they would not be constrained by technology or something else. That was important to us, and we went through that

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rather carefully and articulated a curriculum that represented those major points of concern for us.

Even now, talking with one of my graduate students the last couple weeks, we were discussing differences in design with respect to macro, meso, and micro scale. I think that at that time we were trying to get a balance between those three scales. We can move the meso back and forth between those two ends. When a new faculty or visiting faculty member came in I could push the scale to one side a little bit from time to time. There had to be a structure that was not constraining to ideas coming in, but one that could build on those ideas with respect to working and talking knowledge. That took us a couple of years. It wasn't so easy. We all talk about ideas, but who is going to do it? That articulation we did for the undergraduates and, I think it came out very well. A lot a good people went through it. Most recently I have talked with Todd Johnson and Terrell Budge who were undergraduates here. Those two were good, strong designers when they left here. They had a good sense about how to research and define a problem and look at ways to solve it.

AS: You just started to mention the student body. Was there certain groups that came through, did you see changes in the student body over your tenure at the Department?

RT: When I first got here fulltime in '72, we were in the process of putting together an accreditation visit, and I was looking at the student composition for the accreditation team as to resident or nonresident. As I recall, in that early period it was roughly sixty percent nonresident students, and forty percent Utah students. There was a lot of student diversity in the program. They were coming from Illinois, Michigan, California, and etcetera. And I think they provided more cultural dynamics for looking at problems that we were trying to deal with in the program. Whether it was urban design or housing, I think there was a little bit better perspective of different ways to look at the issue... their cultural backgrounds.

We got a new President shortly thereafter, and within that five-year period, through changes in tuition structure at the University, literally within five years, that ratio flipped, sixty percent residents, forty percent non residents students. I think that has taken

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something away from the richness of the environment from the student population side. That is my personal view. I could sense it and feel it in some of the class work. You would ask students to deal with certain kinds of issues, and in some cases they would not know what the situations were. They would have very little information and knowledge on those issues and in some cases didn't care about a particular kind of environmental issue that may be out there. I am not sure what the makeup is today, given that fact that then the University had between 9,000 and 12,000 students, and now we are 24,000. I did see that change, overall.

I also saw a change in the curriculum going more toward micro (project) scale design. It is something that I would not necessarily put on the table with Sean [Michael], but it is something that has been going on for the last ten or twelve years. But my observations are, from what I can see happening, particularly with Barty's appointment coming through in Bioregional, that there is going to be more balance in the curriculum, and more balance in both the undergraduate and graduate programs. This is not to say that project scale is not an important component of the discipline, but there are real issues that are confronting society today that need landscape architects as thinkers about those problems. We need more right-brain people. We need people who can synthesize data into new and creative solutions. That is where I would like to see the department build, overall. Parts of those problems are at the landscape scale. Food production is important. The energy question is unbelievably complex and important, not only for the West with respect to solar, wind, coal, hydro, etc., but what you do with that energy and how you use it. What are the costs, can society afford to keep moving in that direction? You hear about the fracking issues back East. Are there going to continue being problems? Do they think they have it down, scientifically, as to how to maintain it and control it in respect to ground water pollution? Those are important questions. There is only so much precipitation hitting this globe and you had better use it carefully, and not mess it up. What happens when Vail and these places can't run anymore, because they are not getting the precipitation they need? They are not going to be able to make snow all the time, because to make snow you need water. Who will they take it from?

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It is complex, but it is a web, and you just can't go in and do a bunch of ad hoc things here and there thinking that you are solving problems. You are not; you are only making things worse, actually, by doing that kind of ad hoc design. You need students who are more willing to think holistically, more creatively, and who are not afraid to make suggestions as to what they think should be. You've got to stick your neck out there now and then, and let the world know what you are thinking about.

AS: You mentioned the scale, and the issue between the two extremes of site level design and landscape emphasis. What do you feel is the driver of shifts in that scale?

RT: Clearly it is going to be represented by the faculty in the Department. Let me put it this way: institutions are like wines, they have good years and bad years, good decades and bad decades. They don't stay where you might think they are. Just because you are high on the list one time, you can come off that list so fast it can make your head spin. All I am saying is that the resident faculty and their attitudes toward different scales of design will be a motivating factor for where the department will be in the future. There are some schools now, here in the country, that are moving more toward landscape level work, which I am glad to see it happen. I think Penn State and Oregon are doing some really good things. A fellow who is going to be here in a couple of days, Dave Hulse who was chair at Oregon, is going to explain some of the recent work that they have been doing in the Willamette Valley. I think Ryan Perkl at Tucson is starting to do some good things in the landscape program there. Those programs are dependent upon individuals on those faculties to make the investment of time and energy into a particular area. If you don't have them it doesn't get made. You can't force someone to do it. You can't turn around and tell a faculty member that you think tomorrow they should start to work on project scale design. They will tell you to take a walk, or they are going to walk. Whatever you want to do, go and do it.

You have to have faculty decide what kind of balance in scale they want, then to support each other. If I have a faculty member that is interested in landscape level work, my other faculty have to have faith in that person's ability to carry out that assignment well, and do something with it in research, as well as scholarly work and practice. If they don't have that support, and if that faculty is always biting at the heels of these people and causing a

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lot of nonsense, overall, that is going to take away from the Department's ability and energy to develop that area in a strong way. The landscape-scale faculty also have to be able to support the project scale faculty; to make sure that they understand what they are doing. It doesn't do any good what Ian was doing in 1965, 1964, 1963 when he would make distinctions between design as Christmas cards compared to ecological planners. That is not it. It is fun for a while, but you have to be careful, because it can blow up in your face. In some cases it did, not necessarily with Ian, but with other institutions.

As I said, you have to have that support, which means you have to have the kind of administration leadership that can help maintain that balance. That support has to be at the Department level, and at the College level, and eventually at the Provost level. If that is not coming down in support, no matter what the Department Head may wish to suggest to the faculty member. If the Department does not have the Dean's support, then things will just get worse. As things stand right now, I think the Department is in good shape. Sean had the support with Noelle, who is now our Provost, which is nice to know, but I think the new Dean has also been helpful on the things that the Department wants to do. You need that. However, if you don't have the support at the faculty level, and if they are not working together, but doing their own thing, so to speak, it is not going to go anywhere. It is not how the world really operates. We have seen enough of that in today's society with what is happening in this country right now. With individuals who don't want to hear anything, I don't want to talk to anybody, I am just going to go and do my thing. I would say to those people, "Why don't you go and do your thing, someplace else." Because that attitude is not going to build anything of value for the department. Just let them go.

AS: Were there times that you felt that the Department was leading in innovation, and were there areas that you felt the Department wasn't leading?"

RT: Clearly I do. I think that we were very strong in that first eight-year period. We were well known and well respected nationally, and we were doing a lot of work with CELA at the same time. I think we had the respect of our colleagues in other institutions and other Department Heads throughout the country. They knew who we were and respected what we were doing. I think part of that reason was that we had developed a good balance in

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scale and content. It wasn't either/or, it wasn't this or that, there was a good balance. [The question was], could we accommodate a student who was interested in the landscape level issues at the undergraduate level, and could we also accommodate a graduate student that was interested in project scale work, could we do those things well, together? I think we were doing those things well at that time. There are lots of graduates out there doing some very good work, both at the project and landscape level. It doesn't have to be either/or, because they are versatile enough that they can work at either scale. You give them the skills and theory to operate at the regional level, and also to operate at the project scale level. I think to be able to do projects at the regional level and bring it down to project scale design, is critical.

AS: As the Department turns 75, what do you see as the hopes, and some of the problems that you see for the Department as it heads towards 100 years?

RT: Let me go back to the three drivers that I talked about for a little bit. The subject areas are there, and they are staring right in your face. If we don't do something about the attributes of water (quality and quantity), and its design, planning and management we will be in serious trouble. If we don't do something about agriculture, and the protection of prime agriculture lands we will have future food production problems. One of the projects that we are now looking at in studio is down on the San Rafael basin where the power companies use a large amount of surface water. They cannot use ground water because it is too saline. Coal production is slowing down. What happens when half of the water being consumed by them is given back to that society? What do you do with that surplus? Does the stream and the river deserve its share as well as agriculture? Of course it does. How do you make that trade off? (What are we doing using water to turn corn into fuel for the automobile?)

I don't care if you are at project scale or regional scale, water is going to be critical, food production is going to be critical, energy consumption is going to be critical. The cost of those things will begin to erode into society if we don't start taking care of them. At some point you cannot afford to keep bringing tomatoes in from Central or South America, the Energy cost is too high. Those are real problems and serious issues. There are those that are serious enough that they can place us into an unfortunate position of discontent and

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inequities within society. These problems have to be addressed and must be looked at very carefully. My own sense is that landscape architecture has a large role to play here, across all scales, with those three subject areas. This is where we need future research and studies. Not just lip service about interdisciplinary work, which is very easy to say. When people tell me that they are doing a lot of interdisciplinary work, I say, "Show me." I don't need the words, I know the words, show me what you are doing and thinking about, and how are you thinking about it?

As an example, the South end of Cache Valley needs a lot of serious planning attention, and we (LAEP) are not providing it. When that rail head arrives in Brigham City and you can take a shuttle bus from here to Brigham and rail to Salt Lake, the south end of this valley will explode in growth. I have been told that it is already being assembled by development interests that will be taking advantage of that increase in population to come. It would be to our benefit if we had better ideas about how to do that: a couple of good studios about new community development in the South end of the Valley. Give people who are now looking at that area of development some ideas about what they can do, and should be doing. The work that we did a number of years ago on Cache Valley 2030, I thought, was some stimulating work, and it led to the Envision Cache Valley study. We put something on the map there, but you have to be out there doing it. When someone says they do a lot of collaboration, I would say, "Show me exactly what you are talking about." I am not talking about a list of names on a project. How will they collaborate, what are the mechanisms that took the benefits of each one into a new dimension of planning and design. You have to be careful that language isn't a substitute for substance. Far too often it is. If we are going to do transdisciplinary work, then get on with it.

AS: Is there anything else that you wanted to cover today?

RT: I can't think of anything. That is a long ride.

AS: I appreciate you taking time to speak with me and I hope to chat some more.

RT: We will do that, you let me know.