Historical Restoration of USU's Passive Recreation Garden

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HISTORICAL RESTORATION OF USU’S
PASSIVE RECREATION GARDEN

by

Jeremy Nelson

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

DEPARTMENTAL HONORS

in

Landscape Architecture & Environmental Planning
in the Department of Landscape Architecture & Environmental Planning

Approved:

Thesis/Project Advisor
Michael Timmons

Departmental Honors Advisor
Dr. Bo Yang

Director of Honors Program
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UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY
Logan, UT

Spring 2010
Laval Morris was the founder of the Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning department at USU. He is an important figure in the history of our university the state and intermountain region. One of the last remaining landscapes that he designed for the university is USU’s Passive Recreation Garden.

Over time the garden has become degraded, overrun by invasive plants and was almost completely destroyed in 2004. It is important to preserve and restore this garden because of its importance to Laval and to the history LAEP at Utah State University.

My thesis is a documentation of the gardens importance and its history, from conception to its current degraded state and everything in-between. I have re-discovered the original planting plan for the site, found old photographs, meeting minutes and other correspondences and conducted interviews of people who knew Laval and the garden and what it meant to him. As part of my thesis, I am also documenting and influencing the garden’s reconstruction and restoration plans for the future. From all this, I have put together as complete a story as I can.
DEDICATION

To my wife Jana, my sons Zachary, Micah and Jeremiah without whose love, sacrifice and dedication, my education would not have been possible.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful to all who have participated in any way to this work; Tony Bauer, Richard Toth, Wendell Morse and James Huppi, for allowing me to interview them and for their insights into the project and its history. Robert Parsons, in the Merrill-Cazier Library, Special Collections who spent many hours helping me find documentation and resources. Jeff Turley, for putting up with me while looking through maps and aerial photos. John Fitch Jim Huppi and Chris Rigby, for including me in the reconstruction/re-design efforts. Mike Timmons, for exposing me to landscape architecture history and helping me with the composition, content and resources to complete this work.

Jeremy Nelson
PREFACE

“They [places of past times] are not ours. They belong, partly to those who built them, and partly to all the generations of mankind who are to follow us. The dead have still their right in them: that which they laboured for, the praise of achievement or the expression of religious feeling, or whatsoever else it might be which in those buildings they intended to be permanent, we have no right to obliterate. What we have ourselves built, we are at liberty to throw down; but what other men gave their strength and wealth and life to accomplish, their right over does not pass away with their death; still less is the right to the use of what they have left vested in us only. It belongs to all their successors.”

John Ruskin

The Seven Lamps of Architecture [1890]
Authors Biography

Jeremy Nelson was born in Tooele, Utah, and raised there until age 5 when his family moved to Challis, Idaho, till age 7 at which time he moved to Grace, Idaho. He then moved to nearby Soda Springs, Idaho at age 9 where he spent most of his childhood. He moved again after his sophomore year in high school to Lava Hot Springs, Idaho where he graduated from Marsh Valley High School in Arimo, Idaho, in 1998. After spending a summer in Skagway, Alaska, He served an LDS mission in Cleveland, Ohio, for two years before moving to Salt Lake City, Utah, where he met his wife Jana Dabel. The two were married 1 August 2001 and lived in Bountiful, Utah, where they had 2 children, Zachary and Micah.

Jeremy found landscape architecture and in the fall semester, 2006 the family moved to Logan, Utah, to attend Utah State University where he majored in Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning and minored in Ornamental Horticulture. Jeremy won the student showcase poster awards in the social sciences category for his thesis on the historical restoration of the Passive Recreation Garden.

After he graduates in May 2010, he will be the first college graduate in his family. He plans on getting some real world experience working in a landscape architecture firm in a different part of the United States before applying to and attending graduate school.
1. Introduction

I first walked up a set of flagstone stairs in my freshman year of college. And without really knowing what they were or anything else about the surrounding area I thought that the stairs were really interesting could feel that they were old, but I was busy and gave them little thought again until my junior year.

In the spring of my junior year, I got a job with the USU Housing Facilities as a landscape designer. My first assignment was to finish the landscape design of the newly built Living Learning Community, just north of Old Main Hill on USU campus. It was while doing a site analysis and inventory of this area that I first really discovered the Passive Recreation Garden.

On the west side of the LLC (Living Learning Community) there is a green roof on top of a 4 story parking garage. At the north end of the rooftop I looked over the edge and noticed that there were the same flagstone stairs that I remembered from 3 years earlier. I observed from this vantage point that adjacent to the flagstone stairs, there was a large pool and a partially obscured waterfall. So like any good student of landscape architecture I went down to explore the area further. To my surprise, I found that there were paths and old broken light fixtures, dead trees and more levels and pools than I had previously thought. I felt like Indiana Jones discovering an ancient ruin. Some of the paths and stairs were so overgrown that they were completely impassible. It was at this point that I knew that there was more to this place than I had previously thought. This wasn’t just some random water feature, but it was a well designed garden that had been abandoned.

I had now become very interested in the garden and started asking around but it didn’t seem like anyone knew much about it. So I went to the historical archives in the Merrill Cazier
Library and in a relatively short amount of time, found two old black and white photographs of the garden shortly after it was completed; it was beautiful. From these photos it almost looked formal. There were people enjoying a well kept lawn with lots of seat-high boulders and a seat wall with the same beautiful waterfall as its central feature.

There was a gentleman who at one time did most of the scanning of the photographs and who had been at the university for many years. When he scanned the images he would also title and categorize them. He titled the photographs the “Presidents Garden” and he said that it was built for President Daryl Chase, but I could find very little further information about it. The only other thing that I found was that Laval Morris may have designed it. When I heard this, I realized what significance the garden could have.

2. **Laval Morris**

Laval Sidney Morris was born on 3 December 1899 to Koran Lemual and Louise Bissiger Morris. Laval grew up in East Millcreek Utah where he lived and attended school. In the summer of 1908 or 1909 he was out looking at some cherry trees and he later recalled in a 1973 interview:

“It seemed to me I looked at those cherries the day before and they were nothing but commonplace cherries—green. But on this occasion, they had turned color and they had put on a lot of growth. I recall they were a beautiful reddish-purple. And something struck me. I don’t know whether it had to do with instincts, where it was an intuitive impulse or what it was, but I was so charmed that I stood transfixed under that tree for perhaps thirty minutes, wondering how it all happened. They were so beautiful I would—well, not even now can I describe what they were really like. But I do remember they took on a new dimension. In fact, all trees and something about life in general took on a new dimension for me. And I was curious, tremendously curious (Morris 1973, p.1)

It was then that he began his lifetime of learning and education. After graduating from Granite High School in Salt Lake City Utah in 1918, Morris attended the Agricultural College of Utah in Logan Utah which suited his interests in plants and the natural world. The landscape
gardening course offered by the horticulture department sparked his interest and he wondered why it wasn’t expanded. (Crook 1989, p. 10)

“It contained a few principles of planning and designing of mostly home grounds. It required knowledge of some plant materials, and it did have some of the basic necessities of landscape architecture. In other words, it was a kind of forerunner, an indicator as to what should be done as far as I was concerned.” (Morris 1973 p.5)

Morris graduated from the Agricultural College of Utah in 1923 with a Bachelors of Science in both botany and horticulture. Courses in landscape architecture in the 20’s were sparse. Only nine schools offered degrees in landscape architecture in the entire United States so he went on to graduate school at Michigan State Agricultural College in East Lansing where his focus continued to be in Plant Science. While he was there the landscape design program was being transferred into the new department of landscape architecture and Morris would sit in on some of their lectures. (Crook 1989, p. 13)

In 1924 Morris received an offer to teach horticulture at Brigham Young University in Provo Utah where he taught until 1927. While he was teaching, he went back to Michigan State to finish his MS degree during the next two summers. After graduating from Michigan State, Morris continued to explore options for furthering his education. He decided to attend Cornell University where he took three courses in landscape architecture in the summer of 1928. He did very well at Cornell and one of his professors advised him to attend Harvard University where he would get the best training available. He took a leave of absence from his job at BYU and enrolled in the landscape architecture program at Harvard in the fall term of 1930. He described the workload of the program in these words:

“I thought I knew how to work after going through this university here [Utah State] and through Michigan State, and brought up on the farm where, in those days, the beginning of the day was about 4:30 in the morning and the end was an hour after sunset. At Harvard they had another angle, another dimension that I wasn’t used to. Our classes started at 9:00 in the morning, which wasn’t bad, but they ran to midnight every night. The class work stopped Saturday at noon, but we
didn’t. In order to get through, we were there until midnight on Saturday also; then we went back on Sunday and worked again.” (Morris 1973, pp. 11-12)

At Harvard, Morris was not only taught landscape architecture, but engineering, architecture, sculpture, painting and art history. He became captivated with wood sculpture and water color which he continued to create throughout his life. After a year and a half of study at Harvard, BYU offered Morris the head position in the department of botany. He turned them down. Morris saw what landscape architecture could do for the west and he devoted himself to his studies so that he could be the means of bringing it to them. (Crook 1989, p. 17)

Morris left Harvard University in 1933 because of the death of his father and the need for him to take care of things at home, so he went back to teach at BYU where he pioneered the first landscape architecture program in the intermountain west. While in Provo, Morris also served as the chairman of the Provo City Planning commission and did all he could to further the development of good landscape design. After a few years of teaching and planning in Provo, Morris was offered a position as landscape architect for the Utah State Highway Commission. Morris had this to say about his appointment: (Crook 1989, p. 23)

“They had a man, and he called himself a landscape architect, but he’d never had any training. If he had planted a bush, he was a landscape architect. This chap knew his weakness and he was becoming very self-conscious and embarrassed about his situation. He decided to go back to Syracuse, New York, and study landscape architecture. They wanted me to fill his job.” (Morris 1973, p.13)

Morris took the job, but instead of resigning his position at BYU, he suggested that his wife Rachel, who had completed her degree as a landscape architect, take over his teaching duties. Rachel Morris took over his job as professor at BYU, and he went on to the Utah State Highway Commission where his duties were “road reconnaissance and roadside planning” (Morris 1973, p. 13).
Morris worked for the Utah State Highway Commission for two years when he was approached by the administration of the Utah State Agricultural College, later known as Utah State University, to assist them in establishing a landscape architecture department in Logan. Morris felt strongly that landscape architecture should be taught at the land grant institution. He felt so strongly about it that he resigned his positions at both BYU and the Utah State Highway Commission very suddenly and left for Logan to start the program at the USAC. When he left BYU, he effectively took the program from BYU to USAC because almost all of the students at BYU followed him to USAC. The program at BYU continued for a few years, but was removed from the curriculum at BYU in 1941, and all interested students were referred to the program at the USAC. (Smeath 1988)

Morris had troubles getting the landscape architecture program going at USAC. The administration and Morris didn’t see eye to eye about what the program should become. Consequently he was terribly overworked, doing both extension work as well as keeping a full teaching schedule. Some of the other faculty thought the program was unnecessary and a bit of a joke as Morris recounts:

“The dean of the College of Engineering paid me a very cordial visit and informed me he didn’t know why I came at all because engineering could do anything we could in Landscape Architecture” (Morris 1973 p. 15)

He struggled through the first few years. Then the United States became involved in World War II and student registration dropped. Morris used the opportunity to go back to Harvard and finish his education that was interrupted when he returned to Utah following the death of his father. (Crook 1989, p. 31)

After graduating from Harvard, Morris came back to Logan where he was approached to join the army to do work along the west coast against the possible Japanese attacks. He accepted,
but his leave of absence was almost the end of the department at the USAC. While he was gone, without consulting him, they gave the landscape architecture department over to the agricultural program. Morris was so upset about it that he decided to leave the USAC and never come back. While he was still serving in the Army in California, he found a job in working for Fox studios as an artist, but while he was waiting to be discharged from the Army, he found out that the previous administration was replaced with a friend of Morris’ from BYU named Franklin S. Harris. With this change, he decided to go back to USAC and continue teaching.

(Crook 1989, p. 35)

When Morris returned to USAC, he approached President Harris to get some support. Morris recounts:

“I knew Harris would be sympathetic to what I had to say so I told him the whole story, and he was not only sympathetic but also helpful. He managed to get us new quarters, although they were not very good. They were in the basement of Old Main, but at least we could plan our space…F.S. Harris got me an assistant, and that helped. It was the first real boost I had.” (Morris 1973 p. 21)

In 1946, Morris decided to expand the landscape architecture program to include a graduate level course of study. Kenji Shiozawa joined Morris to head the graduate program. Shiozawa recalled:

“At that time there weren’t any graduate courses as such set up, but that’s when Morris decided maybe we better set up some kind of a graduate program. It was not in Landscape Architecture, but it was tied in with a Masters in the Agriculture School because we were tied to the School of Agriculture at the time…[Morris] Said, “When I went to Harvard, these were the things they required, and I’m going to require of you the very same things they required of a similar degree at Harvard'” (Shiozawa 1987, p. 13)

Even with a bachelor’s degree in landscape architecture, it took Shiozawa three years to complete the graduate program. Because of the graduate programs high standards, it has risen to become one of the top rated graduate schools in the field of landscape architecture in the country.
Laval Morris taught landscape architecture for 30 years and influenced many notable landscape architects around the country. I think more importantly than that, he influenced the profession as a whole in a way that isn’t emphasized enough. He has been named by some, “the father of landscape architecture in the intermountain area” (Ostergaard 1987) and it goes without question that our region would be a very different place if he had not been here. Here is an excerpt from a thesis by Susan Crook that helps us understand the impact he had.

“Morris was feared, respected and loved by the students who suffered through his classes. Those who persevered later acknowledged their gratitude for his leadership and for the demands he made on them. Some of Morris’ former students made the following comments when responding to the 1987 Alumni Survey.

“Professor Morris made a lifetime impression on his students and the desire to excel and settle for nothing but the best that he inspired [and] created work patterns for a lifetime.”(Thompson 1987)

“He cared very deeply about his students and their future. He quoted to me one time, ‘The profession is like the alphabet, I’ve given you the A, B, and C, now go learn the other 23 letters.’…I loved the man. He had a great impact on my life—both personal and professional.”(Robertson 1987)

“He was the master and we were the students. Deep down he had a great concern about all his students. He was really soft under that hard exterior. He would make an example of things students did well more often [than] did poorly. He enjoyed having the students to his home and was very kind to all in that environment. We all respected him and his great knowledge of landscape architecture. He is without question the father of landscape architecture in the intermountain area.”(Ostergaard 1987)” (Crook 1989 italics added)

Professor Morris retired from full time teaching after the 1963-1964 school year. But even in retirement, he continued to influence those around him. He had a passion for landscape architecture that could not be quelled. At an LAEP awards banquet in 1961 he was honored “as the individual who has contributed the most to landscape architecture in the State of Utah” (LA Club Newsletter Spring 1961)

Laval Morris died following a car crash on 15, July, 1983 as he was returning home after having coffee with some friends. This excerpt from his memorial statement expresses just how important he was as a professional and an educator. (Crook 1989, p. 78)
“…In his private practice, Laval had a wide range of activities. He provided consultation and design services for many federal, state and local levels of government. His design work included community planning, subdivisions, housing projects, parks, school, and private properties.

Laval became a member of ASLA ’43, Fellow ’65, [sic] and subsequently Emeritus Fellow—he was Utah’s first in each case. For more than half a century, Laval Morris worked tirelessly to promote landscape architecture. He helped to organize landscape architects in the Intermountain States; he served them in many official capacities...

He was a renown wood Sculptor; a Farmer; a Botanist; and a Painter. He was listed in Who’s Who in America: International Who’s Who of Intellectuals; and in the Dictionary of International Biography. As a writer and a speaker, he contributed to the media for over sixty years…

*But perhaps his greatest contribution was his role as an educator and a leader in the profession he loved and nurtured.* An inquisitive scholar and a leader among educators, he inspired his students to strive for the highest levels of professional excellence. He combined his knowledge and experience, his understanding of people, with his quick wit and keen mind, to stimulate those with whom he made contact. *He will be remembered as the father of landscape architecture education in the intermountain states.*” *(Italics added)*

(For the complete history of Laval Morris and the first 50 years of the LAEP department at Utah State University, please consult the special collections department in the Merrill-Cazier Library.)

3. **The garden**

In 1959 President Daryl Chase, university president from 1954 to 1968, commissioned Laval Morris to design a new garden adjacent to what was then the main vehicular entrance to campus from the west which at one time continued to the center of campus at the Ag Science Building.

Located on the north east corner of 700 E. and 600 N., across the street from what was the Boiler House and Forestry Building (now the Living Learning Community) is an approximately one acre plot of land. The property is situated on the edge of a very steep transition from the University and the development to the west. This would be the site of the proposed garden.
In response to President Chase’s request Laval Morris, with the help of at least one of his students, put together a very impressive design for a garden which included 3 terraced levels which are connected by a large waterfall and a series of pools of water. The top two levels are walking trails and the lowest level is much larger with a grassy lawn, a flagstone patio and lots of large stones to sit on as well as a few benches. (Merrill 1960)

After the planning of the garden was finished, the artisans from the facilities department on campus were commissioned to construct the project.
Rendering of Original Garden
Rendered from photo’s taken shortly after completion and original planting plan.
by: Jeremy Nelson
4. **Construction**

$4,000 was set aside for construction (Staff meeting minutes, 1960) which began in the spring of 1961 and continued throughout the summer. With a few finishing plants planted in the fall of 1962. (Merrill 1962)

During the construction process, the student newspaper, Student Life, interviewed Laval Morris about the garden. He told the reporter;

“…the area is inadequate for anything else, and is to be converted into a beautiful attraction”.

(Student Life, 1961)

Harold Wadsworth was the project manager in charge of the construction of the garden. In a memo dated June 28\textsuperscript{th} 1961 to Laval Morris from M. R. Merrill, Merrill asks:

“What is the status of the corner landscaping project as far as you are concerned? Does Harold Wadsworth have all the information he needs to finish up?”

To which Laval Morris Responds:

“If Harold will finish the landscape project to which you refer, I shall be able to help during the next 3 to 4 weeks…”

According to this correspondence, it is evident that Harold Wadsworth was the project manager over the construction of the garden and Laval Morris was overseeing the implementation of the design.
As landscape architects around the world can attest, budget is almost always an issue. The Passive Recreation Garden was no exception. Because Laval was an avid horticulturalist/plant biologist, he had an extensive collection of hard to find plants at his home in Providence, Utah. As noted by former student Don Ensign (BLA ’63) “…Val raided his own garden for a considerable amount of hard-to-get plant materials.” (Ensign, 2010)

The only construction document that I was able to find of the garden is the original planting plan for the site. When I found it, to my surprise it didn’t have Laval Morris’s name on it; it had Norman Waagen’s initials instead, N.E.W.
PLANTING LIST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUANTITY</th>
<th>BOTANICAL NAME</th>
<th>COMMON NAME</th>
<th>PLANTING SITE</th>
<th>SOIL TREATMENT</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>ACER GARDENIUM</td>
<td>ROYAL GARDEN</td>
<td>6 NORTH STREET</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>PINUS AUREA</td>
<td>COPPER PINE</td>
<td>6 NORTH STREET</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>PINUS RESINIFERA</td>
<td>RESIN PINE</td>
<td>6 NORTH STREET</td>
<td>0-0-20</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>POPULUS TREMULOIDES</td>
<td>QUAKING ASH</td>
<td>6 NORTH STREET</td>
<td>0-0-20</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>ARNHEMIA X GIBBESIA</td>
<td>WEEPING MANDARIN</td>
<td>6 NORTH STREET</td>
<td>0-0-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>CLEMATIS X EJESAN</td>
<td>MOUNTAIN CLEMATIS</td>
<td>6 NORTH STREET</td>
<td>0-0-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>LONICERA JAPONICA</td>
<td>ARBORESCENS</td>
<td>6 NORTH STREET</td>
<td>0-0-20</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>LUPINUS CATHARINUS</td>
<td>PRATERS LUPINE</td>
<td>6 NORTH STREET</td>
<td>0-0-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>JUNIPERUS UNIVOLOUS</td>
<td>HEMATOPHYLLUM JUNIPER</td>
<td>6 NORTH STREET</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>JUNIPERUS HEMATOPHYLLUS</td>
<td>HEMATOPHYLLUM JUNIPER</td>
<td>6 NORTH STREET</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>LAVANDULA X INTERMEDIA</td>
<td>CANDY LAVENDER</td>
<td>6 NORTH STREET</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>ROSA HIPPOTRAPS</td>
<td>MEMORIAL ROSE</td>
<td>6 NORTH STREET</td>
<td>0-0-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>SEDUM HISPIDUM</td>
<td>SEDUM HYSTS</td>
<td>6 NORTH STREET</td>
<td>0-0-20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LEGEND

- TREES IN PLACE
- PLANTS TO BE PLANTED
- ROCKS TO BE PLACED

SCALE: 1" = 20'

DATE: MARCH 6, 1961

USU PASSIVE RECREATION AREA

DELWICK
U.S.W.
Norman Waagen was born on January 2nd 1920 in Maddock, ND. After High School he married Helen Berrett and they had 2 children. As a young father of 26, Norman lost his wife Helen and their daughter Barbara who were killed in an auto accident. Then two years later, in 1948, he married a childhood friend, Ezma Waddoups Kimball, who had lost her husband in the Second World War. The two made their home in Bountiful, Utah, until he moved to Logan to attend the LAEP department at USU.

In 1958 at the age of 38 he began attending Utah State University, studying landscape architecture. As a junior in the landscape architecture program, he worked with Laval Morris on the design of the garden.

After college, he worked for the Bureau of Land Management as a landscape architect in Denver, Colorado, until he retired, when they moved to a small coastal town named Sequim, Washington, in the Seattle area. Then in 1995 they moved to Kaysville, Utah to be closer to family because of a heart attack and stroke that left him incapacitated. Norman passed away on September 14th 2001 of complications from a series of strokes and is buried in the Kaysville, Utah cemetery. (“Norman Waagen Obituary” 2001)

The planting plan was an important find for this project. It provides information about what the original plant materials were. The plan focused on woody plant materials. It specifies the types and locations of trees and shrubs but only designates areas for herbaceous plant materials without identifying specific species. It also tells of Mr. Morris’s desire to have student involvement in real world applications.
According to the planting plan, some of the plant materials that are original to the garden are:

- **Trees**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Scientific Name</th>
<th>Common Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Acer grandidentatium</td>
<td>Big-Toothed Maple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Pinus aristata</td>
<td>Bristle-Cone Pine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Pinus edulis</td>
<td>Pinion Pine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Pinus monophylla</td>
<td>One-Leaf Pinion Pine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Populus tremuloides</td>
<td>Quaking Aspen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Shrubs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Scientific Name</th>
<th>Common Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>Arctostaphylos plataphylla</td>
<td>Manzanita</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>Clematis ligusticifolia</td>
<td>Mountain Clematisfolia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>220</td>
<td>Lonicera japonica ‘Halliana’</td>
<td>Halls Honeysuckle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Juniperus chinensis ‘Pfitzer’</td>
<td>Pfitzer Juniper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Juniperus horizontalis ‘Douglasii’</td>
<td>Waukegan Juniper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82</td>
<td>Juniperus horizontalis ‘Plumosa’</td>
<td>Andorra Juniper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>103</td>
<td>Rhus trilobata</td>
<td>Staghorn Sumac</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98</td>
<td>Rosa wichuraiana</td>
<td>Memorial Rose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Shepherdia argentea</td>
<td>Buffalo Berry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Herbaceous materials were not noted on the plan, but were noted as, “areas noted will be planted with herbaceous materials” (Waagen 1961)

I also found a Campus Planting map from September 1983, and on it the trees that are identified for this area are:
No one can say how many of the plants in the garden are Laval’s because there was no record kept, but the donation of the plants also attest to how important this garden was to Laval. Everyone I talked to while researching the garden has referred to it as Laval’s Garden. It was a special place to him.

The Passive Recreation Garden was beautiful example of informal, naturalistic design and was built to high construction standards. Tony Bauer, a former student of Laval’s in the
graduating class of 1962, he described Laval Morris as having a “military disposition”, “he was
very tough, but very considerate”. When we talked about the current status of the garden and
how the pools and stone have done pretty well through the years, we spoke of Laval’s
expectations when it came to construction standards. He stated;

“…if anything Laval Morris was a stickler for detail. It was probably some of the best
construction out there.”(Bauer 2010)

When the garden was finished, it quickly became a popular attraction. Tony Bauer, who
watched the garden being built, recalled;

“I remember people walking over there and kids and people lying on the lawn because it was a
sunny, protected area. It was always one of the first places to warm up because of its orientation.
People were studying there just laying out on the lawn or sitting on, uh. There were some benches
there, benches or rocks around there because it was a secluded warm area.”(Bauer 2010)

Another reason it was so popular was because of the view of the valley that was offered.
It was a nice warm place to sit and enjoy great views of the valley which included an amazing
view of the Logan LDS Temple to the south west and views of the Wellsville Mountains in the
distance.

Not everyone was happy or excited about the garden being built. According to Bob
Parsons, historian for USU in the special collections department:

“When the garden was built, some in the forestry department were upset about it. Many in the
department used to use the area as a parking lot, and some were none too pleased that they lost it.”
(Bob Parsons, 2009)

Others thought the garden was unsafe. Richard Toth, former LAEP Department Head,
suggested that;

“And there were people who always thought that it was a little bit too dark down through there …
…because it was not well lit and sort of had a tendency to be unsafe by some people’s view of it.”
(Toth, 2010)

Despite these few objections, the garden was a success and many of the students and
faculty at USU enjoyed the garden for many years. Laval and the landscape architecture
department took the lead on the maintenance of the garden in its infancy. Following Laval’s retirement, the LAEP department ceased to maintain the garden. In an excerpt from an interview I had with Richard Toth, he explains;

“I don’t think Burt [Taylor, the new department head] was putting too much emphasis on the garden when he was department head. I think he kind of backed away from it. And for various personal reasons I think. He and Laval had a little falling out and I think he pulled back away from some of that work on maintaining the garden and things along that line. That’s when I first became aware of it. I didn’t even know it was there. There must have been 30+ students that went in and did a lot of pruning, grubbing, pulling out grass and doing stuff. But I don’t think it was ever touched after that.” (Toth 2010)

Burt Taylor took the reigns as department head of LAEP in the fall of 1964 and deprioritized maintaining the garden for reasons we can only speculate about. However the garden was still maintained by the Physical Plant for many years after. Wendell Morse, former USU Campus Planner and instructor for the plant materials courses in the LAEP department had this to say about maintenance of the garden over the years;

“Physical plant maintained that quite well for a long time and then the last 20 years, 30 years maybe even they just almost quit. And then about 20 years ago, the really did quit maintaining it and just let it go. The biggest change I think is when physical plant decided to just let that go. It was really too bad…I think about 1990 or something in there. I think the main thing is that it had sort of started going downhill even before that because as the waterfall needed maintenance, somebody at some time just decided they weren’t going to do that, so they turned the waterfall off and so there were some changes that occurred because it was easier to maintain without the water and so on.” (Morse, 2010)

And Richard Toth had this to say;

“And when the garden was still there, I don’t know if it’s still there or not, I haven’t been… There might be bits and pieces of it. But before they put in that parking garage and that whole new complex, it was there but it was very badly maintained. Stonework was falling apart, paths were in bad shape, the vegetation itself, the plant materials were, sort of, not kept up and replaced or put in as part of the original design that Laval had done. And then after they put in the parking garage, since I don’t get down on that side of campus anymore, I just actually thought that the whole thing had been pretty well bushwhacked.” (Toth, 2010)

The garden was not bushwhacked, but as of the summer of 2009, the garden had become severely deteriorated. The invasive species, Siberian Elm, had all but taken over the garden and
most of the plant materials donated by Laval Morris that were original to the garden have been lost.

5. The LLC

When ground was broken for the new housing project, the lines that fed the water to the garden were cut and never repaired. Subsequently, since the garden hasn’t been watered for the better part of the last decade, many of its original plant materials have died or become so weak and diseased that even some of the original Junipers that are now in the 30 foot tall range have had to be cut down. On some of the other trees, the dead limbs were so extensive that when they were cut off, it left the trees deformed. For these reasons, along with the infestation of weedy plants that have taken over, the garden had become an eye sore to the average passerby.

It is interesting to note that by building the LLC, the university made the garden a pedestrian corridor which brings more and more attention to the garden. So even though the building of the LLC almost destroyed the garden, it has also been instrumental in bringing attention to the garden and aiding in its restoration.

It is fortunate for this project that Google Earth has documented satellite photos of the site during this time that gives us almost exact dates of construction of the LLC. According to the photos ground was broken for the LLC in the month of July 2004. By November 1st the demolition of the old forestry building, heat plant and surrounding area was completed. Construction resumed the next spring and in the summer of 2007, three of the six buildings were finished and opened to students. Construction of the LLC and parking garage was finished and all six buildings were open to students the following summer. (Google 2010)
The LLC was designed by KCB Architecture out of Layton, Utah, Spectrum Engineers out of Salt Lake City Utah, Evergreen Construction out of Salt Lake City, Utah, and the planting and irrigation was designed by Design West out of Logan, Utah. The bid for construction of the LLC was won by Parsons Construction out of Salt Lake City, Utah. (Tippets 2004)

One of the most important parts of the construction was the water proofing membrane over the parking garage cost around two million dollars. The construction company installed the membrane and had it tested and after it was approved they damaged it while putting fill in on top. They didn’t catch this mistake until the construction of the two buildings over the garage was underway. After a while people started to notice water dripping through the garage roof. When this was found, the two buildings above the garage, the fill and the membrane had to be completely removed and the membrane replaced with a new one. This was a huge cost for the company, but it had to be done right. Because of events like this the company finished the project, but did a minimal job.

One of the most evident problems with the site work relates to the grading and drainage. The grading around many of the buildings has a slope that drains towards the buildings. Due to cost over-runs on the structure, much of the originally planned landscape design was sacrificed. Areas designed to accommodate a diversity of plantings were filled with more grass and gravel. The concrete also remained unfinished; many of the corner pieces of concrete were omitted leaving the site inconsistent and suffering from an overall unfinished appearance.

I was hired by Housing Facilities in March of 2009, to assess the site, make recommendations to fix the problems and develop an improved site plan. It was during this process that I discovered Laval’s Garden.
There is an important connection to the garden with my role at the LLC. In order to build the new parking structure, some of the original garden was destroyed. On the north side of the parking garage, the LLC was designed to tie into the existing flagstone staircase in the garden. Part of this connection between the LLC and the existing landscape falls under my jurisdiction with Housing Facilities. Basically everything to the south of the garden’s main sidewalk and staircase leading up to campus which is now part of the garden falls within Housing Facilities jurisdiction.

One of the reasons that Laval’s garden was so successful originally was its south-west orientation and the fact that it was one of the first places on campus to get sunny and warm. With construction of the parking garage and LLC, the garden became more shaded. A new lawn created as part of the parking garage project assumes the role of the turf area of the garden and makes a place that continues to be a sunny warm spot with a great view of the valley. The lawn at the LLC has a strong visual connection to the garden. You can look over the edge to the north and see the whole thing. It is only about 40 feet from the edge of the parking terrace to the waterfall and lower pond.

Laval’s works on campus were extensive, including, most notably, Old Main Hill. Most of Laval’s designs have over the years been seriously altered or completely destroyed and redesigned. The Passive Recreation Garden is a relatively unaltered treasure. Because it has been neglected it survives as a time capsule preserving the forms of the walks and many other original elements of the Morris design. However, due to the same neglect that has allowed it to endure, it is also in need of a serious work. It is important, to the history of the LAEP department especially, to retain one of the last designs of their founder whose significance extends beyond Utah State University to the entire intermountain west and that the garden is treated as a
restoration rather than a renovation project.

(Nelson 2009)
6. **Restoration**

   a. Campus planning role

   The building of the LLC has made the Passive Recreation Garden a focal point again on campus. Because of the gardens location, it has become a major pedestrian access to the western part of campus. What was once a meandering flagstone path and uneven stairs have become a major pedestrian thoroughfare that must handle traffic that is wasn’t designed to accommodate.

   Because it has become a pedestrian corridor, USU Facilities has taken notice of the area as a much-used access to campus. Their concerns include the usability, maintenance and safety of it as an access in the different seasons.

   John Fitch, Project Manager in charge of Facilities, Planning and Design and administrator of the garden re-design and restoration has organized a team of professionals and students for the project.

   Chris Rigby, a graduate of the Utah State University LAEP department, is the lead designer for the restoration of the garden.

   My role in the project has been to serve as historical expert and design consultant for the project because of my research for this thesis as well as my education at USU. I have spent many hours in the library and interviewing people who have had connection to the garden. Also as part of my role in the project, I have surveyed the site as well as directed the initial clearing and cleanup by student volunteers on October 21st, 2009.

7. **The Cleanup**

   Over the summer of 2009, USU Arborist, Ben Harris assisted by a small group of volunteers led by Joe Woodward, spent almost every Thursday cutting and every Saturday chipping up and
cleaning up the elm trees. The elm trees had overgrown the site so extensively that during the cleanup, Facilities was receiving complaints from individuals who believed the garden area was being completely cut down.

In September, 2009, I was contacted by Nate Robinson, a business student at USU, about doing a large-scale one-time cleanup of the garden. He and fellow classmate Scott DuHadway, were charged with finding and organizing a volunteer project of their choice as an end-of-semester project for a business class. Like others, they could see the potential of the garden, and could see that it was once a very beautiful place. They then contacted Facilities, who in turn contacted me to be the cleanup manager and plant/design expert for the event.

Student Clean-up volunteers came primarily from a large general education breadth class taught by Dr. Ballam, professor of music at USU. He agreed to offer his students 15 extra-credit points for every hour they spent on the cleanup. Sixty-five volunteers, most from his class, spent the morning of October 22\textsuperscript{nd} 2009 cleaning up the garden. Over a 4-hour period 11 truckloads of green waste and litter were removed from the garden. Because of my connection to USU Housing Facilities, we were lent tools and machinery from Housing Facilities. Because of all of the contributors, the cleanup project was a resounding success. As well as cleaning up the garden, the activity exposed more people to it and generated more interest from different departments across campus.
Sprouting seeds of service

STUDENT VOLUNTEERS participate in the revitalization project north of the Aggie Parking Terrace. Participants helped revamp the abandoned landscape. PETE P. SMITHSUTH photo

(USU Statesman, 2009)
8. **Inspiration & design**

“...the area will center around two pools of water on different levels connected by a waterfall. There will also be walks, stairs and seats. According to Professor Laval S. Morris, the area is inadequate for anything else, and is to be converted into a beautiful attraction.” (Student Life 1960)

The site is quite steep and noted, was unsuitable for any other use. Landform greatly influences design, it is clear that it played a major role on the site. In a memo dated August 4th 1960 from President Daryl Chase to Laval Morris, there is made mention of some native plant materials that may have influenced its design.

“This morning, several officers of the university accompanied me over to area across the road from the University heating plant. To my surprise, I discovered many native flowers, shrubs and trees in the area which cannot be seen from the road.

“When it is convenient for you, I would like to go over to the spot with you and reconsider what we might do to preserve the native plants and trees as we move forward in a general landscape project for the area.” (Chase 1960)

Together, these factors most likely inspired the design of the site to be an informal, native style terraced garden with a multi level water feature. Further evidence about the design helps us to get a more holistic picture of some of the circumstances behind the design and construction of the garden.

An email received from former student Don Ensign, BLA ’63, shares the following insights into the design of the garden;

“I assume Val campaigned with the administration for a site and budget for the garden which were both obviously influential - Some information on that may be reflected in university's budgets for the years immediately preceding construction - Also as I recall Val... ...raided his own garden for a considerable amount of hard-to-get plant materials - In conclusion, the site and budget influenced the design (like most all gardens) coupled with the need for a teaching/demonstration tool, as public relations for the young LA program and to portray the distinction between excellence and mediocrity.” (Ensign 2010)
In an official document to President Daryl Chase from Laval Morris, we can glean some good information about the gardens construction and use.

“26 Sep1960

MEMORANDUM TO: President Daryl Chase

SUBJECT: Status of Development for Passive Recreation

Dear President Chase:

The construction for the project north of the old Forestry Building is developing more slowly than we had anticipated.

Mr. Wadsworth assures me that you have given priorities to the completion of certain works which will affect the beginning of academic work.

I have been unable to secure carpenters as yet and the trucks are tied up the greater part of the time for various types of campus work.

However, we have been able to get approximately enough flat stone from our quarry east of Bear Lake for steps, paving areas, walls etc. We have also been able to accomplish other things which do not show very much on the ground.

I assure you that I shall do everything possible to push the work along as rapidly as possible under the circumstances.

Sincerely yours,

Laval S. Morris, Head
Dept. of Landscape Architecture
and Environmental Planning

LSM: kmk”

(Morris 1960)

From this communication, we can make certain assumptions about the use and construction of the garden.

1. This garden was to be used as a teaching garden as Prof. Morris pushed for the completion of works that would affect academic work deadline.

   “Mr. Wadsworth assures me that you have given priorities to the completion of certain works which will affect the beginning of academic work.”

2. From this correspondence we also find out where the flat stone came from.
In an interview with Wendell Morse, he suggested that the campus brick mason was most likely the one that did most of the stone-work.

“…I think the rockwork was probably done by Dural Kohler on the waterfall… he worked for the physical plant for a long, long time and he was a brick mason and I think he probably did that.”

(Morse, 2010)

This is significant because it is such an important element of the garden. The stone is what most people think of when they recall the garden. It is how I orient them to where the garden is when asked. The use of stone to create paths and stairs, patios and, seat walls, and the pools and waterfalls gives a distinctly unique face to the garden creating a sense of place unique to the campus. Morris used lava rock boulders throughout the ground level portion of the garden for most of the seating, as well as one large boulder adjacent to the largest flagstone staircase.

The waterfall and pool feature consists of two small pools between two large pools at either end and two falls that connect them. The first pool is on the upper most terrace of the garden. From there water flows under a peek-a-boo flagstone accent across the path to the first waterfall. This is a very small drop that empties into the smallest of the three pools. The water then descends down the largest waterfall, approximately 9 feet high and enclosed by moss covered boulders and flagstone. It falls into a pool where it takes another peek-a-boo flagstone path crossing to the largest of all the pools at the ground level where it is cycled up to the top pond to begin its cycle again.

This lowest pool features a large lava rock boulder, which was originally flanked by Quaking Aspen now marked only by stumps.
The garden feels natural; the stone looks and feels like it could have always been there. This I feel is an example of Laval’s attention to detail and demand for excellence.

a. **Use of garden after construction**

The garden has hosted many different events and activities throughout its lifetime. For many years it was used as a teaching garden by the Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning Department to teach plant materials to both LAEP students and horticulture students. (In those days, the horticulture department used to come to the LAEP department for training in plant materials. Today it’s the other way around.) This class was taught in the early years of the garden by Wendell Morse, who told me that he used the garden extensively because it contained some plants in that garden that weren’t found anywhere else on campus.

“There were a few other plants that weren’t found too many other areas like, native oak, and I think the landscape architecture department gave a lot of help in planting some of that at that time.” (Morse, 2010)

b. **Photographs & Receptions**

The beauty of the garden, with views of Cache Valley in the background, made it a popular setting for family, wedding and graduation photographs as evidenced by numerous existing photos. According to Morse and others, it may also have been used for receptions.

9. **Current Site Condition**

a. **Hardscape; paths & stairs**

Luckily, stone doesn’t break down or degrade very easily. The quality of the stone used throughout the garden is still in quite good condition. However the mortar that they used to hold it all together is quite degraded in places. The stone is still there, but a lot of it needs to be re-mortared around the pools and where the water crosses the paths as well as a few of the stairs.
The path material it is currently black asphalt and everyone that I have talked to can’t remember it being anything else. Wendell Morse recalls that it was in a serpentine style and you can see that even in its current state. However with time, the edges of the paths have fallen off as erosion has taken some of the earth out from under it. This is most evident in the middle terrace path of the garden where there has been the most erosion, but even here the paths are still in very usable condition.

The waterfall and sitting wall are in very good condition. With a little cleaning up they will easily be returned to their former glory.

b. Water

Water is central to the garden. It is my opinion that when the waterfall was turned off is when the garden lost its identity and people stopped coming around. This is also, in my opinion, what will be the first step on bringing it back to life. Once the waterfall is going again, people will come to enjoy it.

The current condition of the water pump is not good. The whole system is encased in a concrete vault hidden by boulders to the right of the large waterfall. In order to run again, the whole recirculation system will most likely need to be replaced. Despite the expense, I feel this repair should be considered first priority because of its importance to bringing people back and drawing attention and funding to fixing the rest.

c. Planting

The water for the irrigation has been turned off for years. Some of the original plants that still exist in the garden include; yucca, juniper, rose, pine, sumac, big toothed maple, silver buffaloberry, creeping mahonia, and mountain clematis among others. However many of the
plant materials have either dried up and are weak at best. In contrast the sedum ground cover has spread far beyond their original bounds and is in a large swath along the north west side.

Chris Rigby has drawn up the new planting plan for the garden (see appendices) including how the garden will be broken up into 5 different demonstration areas. With these plans, the garden will again become a teaching space to both students and the public.

d. **Hardscape proposals; the ideal vs. the reality**

It has been suggested that the beautiful flagstone should be replaced with a stamped, colored concrete. Both Chris and I think this a terrible idea. But for what is going to be the main pathway this, unfortunately, is close to what it will become. Four sets of stairs at the east end of the main walk, each comprised of four or five steps, will be replaced by an easier to maintain poured concrete with a groove next to them for ease of bicycle access. However the main set of 40+ stairs will remain the original flagstone. This is mainly because the cost of tearing them out and re-pouring them would be far too much of an investment. This is very desirable from my point of view because the stairs are a historically important part of the garden.

With the exception of the replaced stairs, the remainder of the hardscape will actually be improved. The existing asphalt paths will be torn out and replaced by Grass Pave® which is filled with an aggregate material such as decomposed granite and because of the structure of the cups/tiles it will not erode and will be hard enough for wheelchair access.
New Rendering of Garden
Rendered from concept designed by Chris Rigby.
by: Jeremy Nelson
10. Conclusion & Recommendations.

When I commenced this project, very little information about Laval’s Garden was readily accessible. Only three photos of the garden taken shortly after completion were available from Special Collections at the Merrill Cazier Library. With the help of many others who have become interested in this unique place, I have been able to collect information about the garden including planting plans, photographs, and details about its origin and construction. Additional research has shed information on its years of neglect and degradation. Recent efforts on the part of the University which I have been honored to be a part of point the way toward a successful restoration. It is my hope that the garden will again become a beautiful example of landscape architecture, that it will again be used, by various departments and the public, as a teaching tool. Through the restoration of the Passive Recreation Garden, the campus community will be able to rediscover the contributions of Laval Morris and his commitment to excellence in landscape architecture, community improvement and education.
It is my recommendation that:

1. The LAEP department at USU follows through with campus planning to make sure the garden is restored and preserved for future generations of students and the public.

2. The garden should become a focus of the LAEP department for reasons already stated.

3. The garden should be re-named the Laval S. Morris Teaching Garden in remembrance of a great educator that has influenced landscape architects and designers for generations.
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Interviews

Interview with Professor Richard Toth, Dept. of ENVS, USU, former LAEP Department Head

24 February 2010

Interviewer: Jeremy Nelson (J)
Interviewee: Richard Toth (R)

R: Tell me what it is that you’re doing.

J: Well, I’m an Honors student; I’m doing my honors thesis on the restoration of that garden down there.

R: Uh huh

J: I’ve done quite a bit of hunting around and I’m finding there’s not a lot of information available.

R: Ok

J: So, I found the original planting plan, signed by Norman Waagen. I’m not sure if you were around when he was here but, I’ve been working with Professor Timmons on it.

R: Good

J: And I’m also on the planning board headed by John Fitch that’s actually doing the restoration plan for it.

R: Ok

J: They expect to be working on that this upcoming year.

R: Ok

J: Making it better, so…

R: Alright, the only thing I’m really aware of with respect to the whole garden is its historical significance with respect to Laval Morris.

J: Uh huh

R: And when the garden was still there, I don’t know if it’s still there or not, I haven’t been… There might be bits and pieces of it. But before they put in that parking garage and that whole new complex, it was there but it was very badly maintained. Stonework was falling apart, paths were in bad shape, the vegetation itself, the plant materials were, sort of, not kept up and replaced or put in as part of the original design that Laval had done. And then after they put in the parking garage, since I don’t get down on that side of campus anymore, I just actually thought that the whole thing had been pretty well bushwhacked.
J: Yeah, you’re familiar with the large staircase?

R: Yeah, yeah

J: They put the main path just a straight shot out to the road, and everything to the north of that is preserved and it’s all still there.

R: Ok

J: And actually that path has become a main pedestrian access to campus because of its adjacency to the parking garage.

R: Sure. But have they done anything with the garden itself?

J: I, actually, have led a volunteer crew to clean up the garden. We took out 11 truckloads of green waste.

R: Wow

J: And so, it was a pretty significant clean up and around the waterfall, the flagstone patio area has been all cleared off and people have taken a pretty large interest in it, mostly because it’s become such a pedestrian access.

R: How about the lighting?

J: The lighting is, they have two lights that are the tall lights with the square head on them. The original lighting is all deteriorated.

R: Pretty well gone.

J: Yeah

R: Is there going to be any attempt to reinstate that?

J: Uh huh, the intent is that the paths have been paved with asphalt and so we’re going to get in, I can’t remember what they’re called, they’re little structure cups that will be filled with a decomposed granite type of material. And then keep most of the stonework as far as the stairs. There are a few at the top that are going to be replaced with concrete for maintenance issues.

R: Ok

J: But the main staircase is going to stay there.

R: Good

J: Yeah

R: Well the only person I know of, I’m not sure he’s still around. The person I think might also be able to be a little bit helpful would be Professor Vern Budge.

J: Ok
R: Vern went through the program basically when Laval was here as well as when Taylor took over and I don’t think Burt was putting too much enfaces on the garden when he was department head. I think he kind of backed away from it. And for various personal reasons I think. He and Laval had a little falling out and I think he pulled back away from some of that work on maintaining the garden and things along that line.

J: So was it, um, the landscape architect department, were we kind of heading up the maintenance and upkeep of that garden?

R: Yeah, I can remember one of the early years that I was here in about ’74 or somewhere right around there, ’74,’73, really early in my first or second year here we did a… I don’t know if you guys still do it or not, but we used to do projects all over the city.

J: Ok

R: All of the first dam park work, pretty much all of that.

J: Really

R: That was all designed and built by LAEP, ok. With both students and faculty, faculty went down and actually, you know… and that’s why I say, Vern was always involved with these things because he also taught construction and really knew how to put everything together. And I’m positive that one year we did kind of, had as one of our spring projects a cleanup on the Morris garden. That’s when I first became aware of it. I didn’t even know it was there.

J: Ok

R: There must have been 30+ students that went in and did a lot of pruning, grubbing, pulling out grass and doing stuff. But I don’t think it was ever touched after that. In the spring we always would end up doing couple of different projects around town. I don’t even think it’s there anymore, but we did the playground for the special Ed building down by the Spectrum.

J: Ok

R: A couple things like that, and we did up here also, you know a lot of the deck work and all the groins around third…

J: Second dam.

R: Yes, Second dam

J: Really

R: A lot of that was all designed by LAEP.

J: That’s really cool.

R: Yeah and I’m pretty sure Vern was in charge of supervising all of the construction and putting all of the rock groins out, and the decking and all that stuff.

J: Wow
R: Yeah, that in itself would be an interesting project.
J: Yeah,
R: To take a look at all the projects that the LAEP built around this town and this campus.
J: And document all of that.
R: Yeah
J: Because I don’t know if many people are aware of all that.
R: Yeah, there are all these stories about all of these little things that are very interesting. But that was about the earliest I knew about it and we went down and we looked at it and everything else, but it had some negative aspects to it even before the parking garage and everything because it was kind of isolated along that walk.
J: Uh huh
R: And there were people who always thought that it was a little bit too dark down through there and some of the old lamp posts were broken and the globes were knocked out and that’s why I asked about the lighting, because it was not well lit and sort of had a tendency to be unsafe by some peoples view of it. But to tell you the truth, I really did think that it was completely wiped out when they built the garage in there and everything else.
J: Yeah
R: I was kind of surprised the other day when you asked about it.
J: Yeah
R: It certainly is a nice thing to do. It’s a good thing to do. It’s one of the few legacies that we have of Laval’s contribution.
J: It’s actually one of the few relatively unaltered designs of his on campus.
R: Uh huh
J: There’s Old Main hill and that’s really about it besides the garden as far as I know.
R: Uh huh
J: Ok, so what did you say ’77 when you were down there?
R: Well I came here in ’72, became department head in ’73… say ’74, ’75.
J: So, were the waterfalls and all of that, were they still going?
R: Uh, Yes they were.
J: And, were they still using it as a teaching garden?
R: Not that I know of. I think it was Craig Johnson that was teaching planting design at that time. I don’t think that Craig was using it as a teaching garden at all. I could be wrong, but I don’t recall that.

J: Ok

R: Out where the parking lot is, sort of south of Old Main used to be the mechanical arts building and that was the first building that we were in.

J: Ok

R: And again it was one of the spring projects that we did, it was a little four court on the south side of that building as an entrance in.

J: Uh huh

R: Again that was another spring project for the department that had a little sitting area, pavers and things along that line but I don’t happen to recall anyone using it as a teaching model.

J: Ok. It may have been a little earlier, Wendell Morse used to teach the plant materials class and I guess for a while, I’m not sure what the dates were on it, but he used it to teach plant materials.

R: Ok, that I didn’t know.

J: Yeah

R: I don’t think that Dave Carter was using it for anything at the time; he was in the extension position at the time. I think there was a time when there were 3 different courses in plant materials in the BLA major for LAEP. And then eventually different courses were dropped down, we got down to just one course in plant materials which is kind of too bad.

J: Uh huh

R: But that’s about it, I wish I could help you out more. I don’t recall ever seeing a plan for it either, even though you think you have a planting plan for it.

J: Yeah, it was the one thing I was able to find for it. It took me a long time but I finally found it.

R: The interesting question about it would be, and I don’t know whether in an archival sense, whether or not there was anything in Laval Morris’ home, in his estate after he passed away prior to their putting their house up for sale and everything else, whether Laval would have had any drawings or plans at the time, and if anyone would have picked those up in an archival sense. That I don’t know. And again the people who would have been close enough for that would have been Professor Budge, or Wendell. Have you talked to an individual called Larry Wegkamp?

J: That’s a new name to me actually.

R: That’s a new name?

J: Yeah
R: Um, Larry, I think he’s still around the valley; Larry was in the extension position before Dave Bell.

J: Ok

R: And he did an awful lot of outreach work and main street work and small projects throughout Logan. It was also some of his part in the extension role as an extension landscape architect. And I don’t know, whether or not whether he would have any direct association with it; either with respect to drawings, or help that he would have picked up from Laval Morris when Laval was still alive.

J: Ok

R: The department was pretty well involved with both Laval and his wife Ray Morris from about ’77, ’78, for at least a 4 or 5 year period, I forget exactly when Laval and Ray decided to put the Morris traveling fellowship funds into that whole operation. I worked with him very carefully on that whole assemblage of paperwork on that. Laval was sort of a suspicious person with respect to the University administration. He was always afraid they would usurp his contribution to the fellowship and use the money somewhere else, so we had an agreement and contract which he and I signed off on with Ray also, with his wife. And I’m sure that’s still in effect some place over in Old Main. But Larry Wegkamp may have known, he was with us for quite a while, then when he retired we advertised and Dave Bell got the position. Has Dave said anything to you about it? Have you talked to him at all?

J: I’ve talked to him about it and he doesn’t recall anything about it.

R: Ok

J: Nothing more than that he knew it existed.

R: Ok, well that’s about true for most of us in a way. And like I said, the other thing was that, uh, because before Larry it was Dave Carter. And I think Dave Carter taught the plant materials course also. But then when Dave left, Larry came in and when Larry left Bell came in.

J: Ok

R: Now, Jerry Furriman purchased Laval Morris’ home.

J: Yeah, I went down and talked to his wife and she said there were some drawings left in the home, but they didn’t think they had anything.

R: Ok, I was hoping that Sue would have said “Oh, ok yes there were some of the drawings in the old dusty places and we’ve kept them and something else”

J: Yeah, she said that she would look through but she never got back to me.

R: Ok, you might double check that.

J: Yeah

R: I know that Furriman himself felt very close to Laval.
J: Ok

R: Furriman was very helpful in re-establishing a tie, after the situation with Burt Taylor after Burt finally did step down. Furriman was very helpful in re-establishing a relationship with Laval and Ray Morris, ok, and he was an important person in that relationship. And I think if he would have bumped into something that he certainly would have held onto anything that would have been Laval’s as archival material. So you can either check with to Sue, or go see if you can talk to Jerry.

J: Ok, now was Jerry a graduate of the program?

R: Yeah, yep

J: Ok

R: He was a graduate of the program and he also went to University of Illinois. He was at Illinois when Vern Budge was there.

J: Ok

R: He would have been there when Craig Johnson was there too, I think Vern and Craig were classmates and I think Jerry was maybe a year behind them or something like that. But he had his BLA from LAEP.

J: So since he was close to Laval, he might know something more about it.

R: He might.

J: He’d be a good person to talk to.

R: I assume that you still have, over in the department, at least that one large wood sculpture of his. There was a time when Furriman and I were trying hard to find a storage area for those wood sculptures because Laval had some of them just out in the back shed areas where they were exposed to moisture and the cold and everything else. And John Morris, Laval’s son, stepped into the picture and was trying to assist in that area, but I think John may have put them someplace to store them where it was reasonable to be protected, but I would see if you could talk to Furriman himself.

J: Ok

R: You can just tell Jerry that I recommended you talk to him because I know that he was very close to Laval, Ok. And Vern should be getting back from a mission pretty soon and when he does you could double check with him.

J: I can see if he’s back maybe.

R: He could be back already; I don’t think he is though. But that’s about the extent of my bits and pieces of people and history on that garden itself. I wish I could help more. I’m glad to see you’re doing this. Something like this would be nice for the 75th anniversary of the department to have a little commemorative thing, a plaque or something for Laval. We got the lecture hall, but
it would be nice to have a little something more for him. But, yeah, talk to Jerry and he might have something more for you.

J: No, actually you’ve been a big help, I’ve got some good new information.

R: Ok

J: If you get a chance to go down there, the new parking garage has a nice rooftop garden type of thing. It’s very, very plain. I’m working on a re-design for that area with my job, but you can look over and see the whole garden.

R: Very good, very good. I will, well you know I told my wife, I said to Dianne, I said “you know there was a fellow over in LAEP that was asking me about some of the work on Laval’s garden down the hill” and she said “Well, is it still there?” because we used to walk that way a lot, on the weekends or on a Sunday we’d take a walk on campus or something when our kids were smaller and we’d try to go down that way and go through the garden and the kids used to like to go because the fountain, you know, the pool and stuff used to go between the stones and out the other side.

J: Yeah, they still have that.

R: And so, the kids used to drop something in one end and watch it come out the other and all that nonsense.

J: I can see how that would be fun.

R: Yeah, and so we used to go down there a fair amount and the kids would go along with us and see it and everything else.

J: Yeah, I think that the big thing is that in 2004 when they broke ground for the parking garage, they cut the water line, and they never repaired it. So for the better part of the last decade it hasn’t been irrigated and it hasn’t been kept in check at all so the invasive elms and things have really taken over. They’ve been working on clearing out the elms. So it’s a lot better now, there’s the top terrace and then there’s the lower area, and then there’s that little middle area with a path and some stairs.

R: Uh huh

J: And when I first decided to take interest in it, um the stairs just went down into the vegetation. There’s a great big rose bush that just completely had taken over the whole thing and you couldn’t bet past it down the stairs and that’s all been cleaned up now, but it was a mess.

R: There’s one other person and I don’t know right now how to get in touch with them, who may have something to add to this.

J: Uh huh

R: And he was an Architect, he was the campus Architect, basically the campus Planning Architect, and his name is Paul Salisbury.

J: Paul Salisbury.
R: Yeah, Paul Salisbury and Paul was head of the campus planning group for, I don’t know, 8 or 10 years or so. And then lived here in town and eventually moved out to California. And that’s, really, the last I’ve heard of Paul. As a matter of fact, the last time I had heard of him he had sent 2 or 30 boxes of books that he donated to the LAEP department which we then took over to the library at the time.

J: I see

R: And, um, there were name plates, in his name as a donation on some of them. But they were primarily books on Architecture because that was Paul’s background. In fact Paul was very instrumental, and very helpful, when I was department head when we got the architect for the fine arts center. We went on a national search and we got Ed Barns to come in and do the building. And Paul was extremely helpful during that period.

J: Very good

R: But Paul, because of his campus planning, you don’t know, I mean sometimes he may have something or he may have another name that he could say, well “Double check with this person” or take a look at building and grounds or the engineering department and see what they’ve got.

J: Ok

R: Yeah, well he would certainly be someone that was aware of the garden and knew where it was ect… well good luck with it.

J: Thank you, I appreciate it.

R: I think it’s a good project and it’s a nice contribution from your end, particularly to the history of the campus and the history of the department.

J: Yeah, well thank you for your time.

R: Ok, good luck

Interview with Wendell Morse, former LAEP Professor at USU, former Landscape Architect in charge of Physical Facilities at USU-Retired

02 March 2010

Interviewer: Jeremy Nelson (J)

Interviewee: Wendell Morse (W)

J: I found the planting plan for the garden and the name Norman Waagen was the one who drew the plan.

W: Laval Morris probably had a big hand in the design; it might have been drawn by the students.
J: From what I understand it was kind of Laval’s baby, he really enjoyed the garden.

J: How long was the garden used as a teaching garden? How long did you teach the class?

W: I taught the class for, probably, 6 or 7 years.

J: And did it continue to be used as a teaching garden afterwards?

W: I would guess… that would have probably been about 1985 or so. I don’t think it was too long after that that the landscape architecture department decided to let horticulture teach it instead of the other way around.

J: Richard Toth was saying that the garden used to be maintained by the L.A. department. Are you …

W: You know, I’m not aware of that, but it could have been. I think the original construction of it was probably done by physical plant and the landscape architecture department.

J: Ok.

W: They may have helped with the maintenance of it too. I don’t know that I was ever aware of it when I was around. I was around from around 1968 to 2000.

J: Ok

W: As an employee on campus, and I was there as a student before that. I don’t remember as a student taking care of it. I do remember when I was there, when I was teaching, actually expanding that garden. The road 6th north went all the way up to the Ag building originally.

J: Wow

W: When I was here you could drive anywhere. It was terrible. There was nothing but asphalt parking lots and roadways. Anyway, we took that road out; it was very slick lots of times. We took out the road and made it into a landscaped area. I don’t know the area that your original plan was, but that whole ravine was landscaped with paths that were wide enough for bicycles and pedestrians. There were a few other plants that weren’t found too many other areas like, native oak, and I think the landscape architecture department gave a lot of help in planting some of that at that time.

J: Ok

W: I’m not aware of any other; I don’t know what happened with the other.

J: Ok, I have heard some rumors that there may have been receptions down there for dignitaries and stuff like that, have you…

W: I’m sure there was because at one time, or at least for quite a while it was very nice, there was a waterfall and a pond and some things. Anyway, physical plant maintained that quite well for a long time and then the last 20 years, 30 years maybe even they just almost quit.

J: Yeah
W: And then about 20 years ago, the really did quit maintaining it and just let it go. It was not very nice when most of it was ripped out for the gas.

J: yeah, that’s interesting, so it seems that [the original garden] was just like a first phase of the garden and the garden was actually pretty extensive it sounds like, it went up the hill and everything.

W: Yeah, it was the ravine and then the walk that went down and then went into the walk that was designed as part of that garden. The lower part of 6th north was still in because it actually was a service road to the heat plant.

J: Ok.

W: You know, physical plant has aerial photographs from different time,

J: Yeah

W: There are probably enough old aerial photographs that you could trace a little bit of the history of the expansion and maybe what was there even before they put that in.

J: Yeah

W: The biggest change I think is when physical plant decided to just let that go. It was really too bad. That was the physical plant director who doesn’t care anything about what the campus looks like.

J: So I might even be able to say that when he came in is an approximate date of when it stopped being maintained.

W: Yeah, I would guess he’s probably been there for about 20 years now, I think about 1990 or something in there.

J: Yeah

W: I think the main thing is that it had sort of started going downhill even before that because as the waterfall needed maintenance, somebody at some time just decided they weren’t going to do that, so they turned the waterfall off and so there were some changes that occurred because it was easier to maintain without the water and so on. And then, I think, um well is there anything left of it at all?

J: Actually because it has been neglected, it has sort of been preserved because nobody’s done anything to it.

W: So there is at least, um the parking terrace takes at least part of it out I think doesn’t it.

J: Yeah, it took up part of it. From the main stone staircase, everything south of that was demolished. But a big portion of the garden with the terracing and the waterfall and all that wasn’t touched. One of the adverse effects of the parking garage though is that they cut the water lines and so they stopped irrigating.
W: Some of those parts could not survive. One of the things that were there was a really nice limber pine, which is an unusual plant. It’s native to the mountains but hasn’t been used in the valley. There were quite a few other things that would have been worth preserving. I don’t know if any of them are there, I know some of them would be there, I guess, without any water but most of them probably aren’t.

J: Yeah, a lot of them aren’t, I know even some of the junipers that are down there, because there hasn’t been any water… maybe they’re just used to getting water, but they’re pretty much dead.

W: Yeah, they wouldn’t survive even though they might, and some of those were junipers that were down there as I recall, were not native junipers. They’re ones that might need a little bit more water than a native juniper would. But you’re right, if they were used to being watered, the plants aren’t going to have the root system that they would have developed they might have naturally had. Besides that, it’s a pretty harsh exposure, with the south west exposure, so a lot of those plants would never have gotten started without it.

J: Ok

W: I think I told you, I think the rock work was done by Dorrel Kohler. He worked in the physical plant or a long, long time as a brick mason.

J: Ok

W: I think he probably did that.

J: I did find the quarry they got the stone from,

W: Oh really, where did they get that?

J: From a quarry on the east side of bear lake. Yeah, I got an update from Laval to President Chase that said we got approximately enough stone from this quarry and this is how much it cost and so… that was kind of a cool find.

W: Yeah, that’s interesting because I had no idea where it was from.

J: Yeah

W: Yeah, because Laval lived in Providence and there was a quarry where they could have gotten it out of there.

J: Oh, yeah

W: I assume there might be some of that’s still left in the steps and that.

J: Yeah, quite a bit of it still is. Actually they’re doing the re-design and they’re going to take out some of the stairs up at the top. There are 3 or 4 flights of 5 stairs at the top and they’re going to make that a main path and so for maintenance issues, they’re going to replace with concrete but the large staircase is staying and it’s all still there. All the flagstone around the bottom of the waterfall, the whole waterfall and seat walls that are made out of the flagstone, they’re still all there.
W: I thought maybe all of that was gone when they built the parking terrace but I haven’t been down there since then and so...

J: Yeah

W: So are they going to start to maintain it then?

J: Um that’s kind of the idea. John Fitch is heading a group, Jim Huppi’s involved, I’m involved, they hired Chris Rigby to do a design. And because of the parking garage, it’s become a main access to campus and so there’s a lot more attention drawn to it. More people are going, “Oh what is this, it looks like a waterfall” and on and on, so there’s more of an interest now.

W: So are they going to actually restore some irrigation to it then?

J: Yeah, yeah that’s the idea is that in the next year or two they’re going to get the waterfall going and I’ve actually headed a crew of about 60 volunteers and we hauled out about 11 truckloads of green waste. Just old dead branches and, just nastiness and we pruned up all of the plants, all of the paths have been cut back and are accessible now and it’s pretty cool. It was a big cleanup. It was pretty fun so it’s actually quite a bit better now than it was.

W: There were probably a whole lot of Elms that have taken over.

J: Yeah, there was a lot of Elms. I noticed on a plant inventory from 1983 of that area and it had American Elm and Siberian Elm on it and I was curious, and maybe you know something about this is, did they plant those ones on purpose? Or is that something that were invaders?

W: Yeah, Siberian Elm was probably not planted on purpose, but I suppose it could have been. Maybe we would have planted one. But the American Elm we certainly would have planted on purpose but I don’t remember an American Elm.

J: It was in the expanded area up the hill a little bit.

W: Yeah, there may have been one up there, I don’t really recall. Somewhere I may still have the maps that we used when I taught Plant Materials.

J: Oh yeah? That would be pretty cool.

W: I don’t know that I still have them but…

J: Well if you run across them then let me know, that would be cool to put in my thesis.

W: Yeah, I guess there is a possibility of that. If I can find anything that would have maps of it with plant materials, then it would have only shown the plant materials that we taught. I think we had maps because, when I was teaching plant materials, it was about 80 kids because of the horticulture department having their students take it. So if I can find that, I’ll give you a call. What’s your number…

J: Well if you can find something that would be really cool, and if not then that’s ok. Thanks a lot for your time
Interview with Tony Bauer, Graduate of LAEP at USU, attended during garden construction

02 March 2010

Interviewer: Jeremy Nelson (J)
Interviewee: Tony Bauer (T)

J: So, I’m doing my Honors Thesis on the garden and, kind of, its history and they’re looking at restoring it now as a project with facilities.

T: Oh great!

J: So I am just trying to gather some information about, pretty much, anything anybody knows about it.

T: Well that was constructed I believe while I was there between 58 and 62.

J: Ok

T: And I’m going to say it was probably in around 60. Do you have any particular dates on that?

J: Yeah, I found a correspondence that said, um, September. It was either 60 or 61 I can’t remember, I think it was 61.

T: Ok, that fits my recollection.

J: Yeah.

T: Um, yeah I kind of watched it going in. There was a waterfall there,

J: Yeah

T: There was a really nice seating area with a view over the valley and there was a grassy area, uh, sort of a level area.

J: Uh huh

T: With a waterfall coming down the bank, I think it was on the North West side.

J: Yeah

T: And then there was a trail, sort of a path that went from that area on up the slope in back of the waterfall as I recall.

J: Ok

T: And I think there was, sort of, easy access from the east side, but I can’t remember that specifically.
J: Yeah

T: There were some nice large rock placements there that people sat on.

J: So you were here when it was being built, did you have any involvement with Laval when he was designing it or anything?

T: No, no I didn’t, um there was a young man. I think there was another student; I think he’s since passed away though.

J: Uh huh

T: A class mate of mine that was, um, and I can’t remember his name. He used to work for the LDS church

J: Ok

T: During this time and I think even until he passed away.

J: I did find a plan, and on the plan it had, Norman Waagen. Is that him?

T: Oh yeah, Norman he was an older gentleman, yes.

J: Yeah

T: No he’s not the guy I was thinking of, but yeah, he’s the guy I remember now working on it.

J: Ok

T: I don’t know, I’ve lost track of Norman.

J: Yeah, um, I think he’s passed. I tried to look him up and I couldn’t find him anywhere.

T: Yeah

J: Well interesting, so I’ve heard a couple of rumors, and maybe you could help tell me if they’re true or not. Um, the landscape architecture department, the student’s actually helped build it?

T: I think there was some involvement in that, yes.

J: Ok

T: Uh, I wasn’t involved, but I think there was some involvement on that, we had taken a, in 62 there was a teacher there by the name of Craig Tocher.

J: Ok

T: Now he might be a contact.

J: Craig Tocher

T: Tocher, yeah he uh, he’s actually, I don’t know if he’s still alive, but he was one of the instructors. And the reason I mentioned Craig, is because he used to have his students build little
projects. There was a little hotel courtyard down on main street coming up from downtown Logan that we did a little courtyard design. And he typically tried to get little designs that the class could do. I don’t know if he was directly involved with that design or not.

J: What class did he teach, do you remember?

T: No, it was some construction class.

J: Ok, and then also, I’ve heard rumor that the L.A. students, after the garden was built, that they used to help maintain the garden.

T: I don’t know that.

J: Ok

T: I wasn’t involved in that at all.

J: Ok, um did they use the garden for any kind of special gatherings or anything, or was it more of a come and hang out in this cool place?

T: Well, I don’t recall any particular event. There could have been. It was more or less just a hang out. As a matter of fact, the last time I was out there I was talking to Mike [Timmons] and I thought I had a picture of me and my wife out there at graduation.

J: Oh wow

T: But I can’t find it. And it was a picture of my wife and I standing with the valley in the background and the snow capped mountains. And that was in June. That was across the valley and that was the mountain range on the other side.

J: Uh huh

T: Mount Logan, so there was quite a bit of snow there that year.

J: Wow, that’s amazing.

T: Yeah, I remember people walking over there and kids and people laying on the lawn because it was a sunny, protected area.

J: Uh huh

T: It was always one of the first places to warm up because of its orientation.

J: Yeah

T: People were studying there just laying out on the lawn or sitting on, uh. There were some benches there, benches or rocks around there because it was a secluded warm area.

J: Yeah, I know the rocks are still there but I haven’t seen any benches. Were they down on the little flagstone area, down by the pond?

T: It could have been. Is the pond still there?
J: Yeah actually, um, you know the big staircase right?

T: Yeah

J: They built a new housing development just to the south, but they didn’t take out those stairs. So everything north of those stairs is all still there.

T: Oh

J: So because of the building being put in there, it’s become a real big pedestrian corridor and so there’s a big interest in it now because it’s not out of the way and kind of off on its own. It’s a real central kind of get up to campus thing.

T: Do you still have the view of the valley with the mountains on the other side?

J: Um, you do some; it’s kind of an interesting set up. Up on the highest tier of it you can still look out over the valley.

T: Not on that flat grass area huh?

J: Not as much.

T: Oh, shoot.

J: They put a parking garage right across from it, but on top of the parking garage they put a big grassy lawn, so, up high.

T: Oh!

J: And so they kind of replaced that area with another really nice grassy area, and you can see everything; the entire valley.

T: Oh yeah, if you’re higher up there that would be true.

J: Yeah, you’re probably another, oh I’d say another 40 feet, 50 feet higher. So it’s good and bad.

T: What’s the view that you get from the grassy area and those sitting rocks?

J: Um, it’s kind of more of a view across the valley still but it’s not as much of a panoramic, it’s more framed.

T: The reason I say that is, while you want to create it authentic as possible, you might want to think about doing some screening to block out some of the buildings.

J: Yeah

T: To frame what you have left of the valley view.

J: Yeah, definitely. You could probably do that with some nice tall columnar trees like a columnar oak or something.

T: Right
J: You could do that, I bet that would be nice.

J: It’s interesting because it has been neglected for a couple of decades.

T: Yeah, right

J: And so in a way it not being maintained has kind of maintained its character a little bit more. All the stone work is still there, the flagstone stairs are still there, the waterfall is still there and they haven’t been used, but they haven’t been destroyed either.

T: Yeah, yeah.

J: And so it’s a unique opportunity, and basically that one and Old Main are what’s left of Laval’s designs for campus. Everything else has pretty much been changed.

T: Yeah. Are the student’s going to build it?

J: I’m hoping to get some student involvement. Some of the students from other departments have already helped. There was a business class. They had to organize an activity and they approached me because they knew I was involved. And we had about 60 volunteers for about 4 hours and we hauled out 11 truckloads of green waste.

T: Oh, is that right?

J: Yeah, logs and… you couldn’t even walk on some of the paths anymore they were so overgrown you couldn’t even pass on them.

T: Yeah,

J: But it’s nicer now, we cleared out a lot of the undergrowth that was just dead fall and it’s a lot nicer now and hopefully they’re going to get the waterfall going again in the next year or two.

T: Good!

J: So, yeah, we’re hopeful.

T: Do you think it’s still sealed so it won’t drain out?

J: You know I’m not sure. I haven’t seen any major cracks, especially in that lower pond. It looks like it’s still pretty solid.

T: Does it still hold water?

J: You know, when the water from the runoff in the spring is there, it’s pretty full for a while and then it evaporates out so…

T: Right

J: So, as far as the water and the flagstone and the concrete goes, I mean, it’s really more a matter of that we probably need to get a new pump and check for leaks in the irrigation lines and then you could probably turn it right back on.
T: Well, you know if anything Laval Morris was a stickler for detail.
J: Yeah?
T: It was probably some of the best construction out there.
J: Yeah, actually that’s one of the things I’ve noticed. I’ve been pretty surprised that as old as it is and how little it’s been maintained, as far as the structure goes, it’s in good shape.
T: Right. Well good!
J: Yeah
T: Uh, do you know much about his home?
J: Um, yeah, Jay and Sue Fuhrman live there.
T: Yeah, are they still there?
J: Yeah, they bought it and I guess Jay was a big fan of Laval and he and his wife still live there.
T: Yeah, because that’s certainly a special place too; a very simple design with a view out over the valley.
J: You know I’ve actually never been there. I ought to go drive by.
T: Yeah, it’s really a rather impressive place.
J: Interesting, you know I’ve done a bit of research on Laval, I’ve read his book and things like that and he seems like a pretty cool guy.
T: Oh yeah, he had a military disposition.
J: Oh yeah?
T: Yeah, he was both very tough, but very considerate. And he really enjoyed teaching landscape architecture. And sincerely wanted the students to learn about it, and I would say he was one of my better teachers.
J: Very cool, and you think back to that era and the people who went to school here when he was teaching, some of them have gone on to be really successful and influential landscape architects.
T: Yeah, well in our class we had a pretty good group. We had Joe Porter and Don Ensign,
J: Uh huh
T: And then there was a guy, I think he worked for the core of engineers up in Oregon. And he moved up the ladder pretty well, so yeah, there were some pretty successful people there.
J: Yeah, that’s really cool.
T: Yeah, so is there anything else?
J: Um, not that I can think of right now, but is it ok if I give you a call if I find something else?
T: Sure, and in the mean time I’ll try to think through where this photograph might be and I’ll send it to you.
J: That’d be great; I’d love to have it for the thesis.
T: It’s a beautiful shot. I know it’s in a slide and I’ll have to see if I can dig into my archives.
J: Very cool, I’d appreciate it. It’d be really nice.
T: Ok
J: Ok, well thanks Tony.
T: What’s your name again?
J: My name’s Jeremy, Jeremy Nelson.
T: Yeah, very good. Say hello to Mike for me.
J: I will.
T: Ok, bye
J: Bye.

An e-mail from Don Ensign Graduate of LAEP at USU, Founding Member of Design Workshop

Dear Mr. Ensign,

First of all, thank you for taking the time to respond to my email. If you have a few minutes, and know the answer to any of these questions, I would be very appreciative of any insight you might be able to give.

1. I noticed that Norman Waagen helped with the planting plan (the only document I could find). Do you know if there were any other students or faculty that may have helped in the design? I didn't even know Norm worked on the plan - If your'e in contact with him pass on my regards - The only other person I can think of who may have helped Val with the plan is Craig Tosher who was on the faculty when I was a student - Craig was/is a great guy and an excellent teacher - I have lost contact with him but I believe he is in California - He grew up in Santa Rosa so he may be in that region - Worth contacting if you have not yet done so -

2. What about the garden do you think made it special to him?
Val consistently emphasized using the complete palette of tools available to LAs (grading, lighting, planting, paving, etc.) in garden building and informing the design process with all the graphic tools in our quiver (plans, sections, elevations, perspectives, etc.) as a means to enrich and elaborate design potential - The garden provided a demonstration of doing so -

Secondarily, the garden provided a venue for demonstrating the rich possibilities inherent in native plantings - He was not so concerned about water conservation but more about aesthetics and hardiness -

Third, a demonstration project to communicate to the university and the community what the hell landscape architecture is about - At that time the profession was pretty much a mystery in Cache Valley (it may still be) -

3. Do you know anything about what may have influenced the design?

I assume Val campaigned with the administration for a site and budget for the garden which were both obviously influential - Some information on that may be reflected in university's budgets for the years immediately preceding construction - Also as I recall Val had some newspaper articles about the garden which may be in the newspaper's archives - I also have vague memories of Val talking about harvesting the stone from campus construction sites and/or the river but that recollection is fuzzy at best - Also vague is the recollection that Val raided his own garden for a considerable amount of hard-to-get plant materials - In conclusion, the site and budget influenced the design (like most all gardens) coupled with the need for a teaching/demonstration tool, as public relations for the young LA program and to portray the distinction between excellence and mediocrity -

Again, if you have the time, thank you for your help. And if you don't know the answers or have the time, that's ok.

Jeremy - I much appreciate you taking this on - Our profession is lousy at documenting our history, both successes and failures, as a basis to avoid reinventing the wheel and repeating dumb stuff - Hats off! - Please share with me whatever documentation results from this and give my regards to messrs. Bell, Michael and Timmons - Regards - Don Ensign

Thank you,

Jeremy