

History of Landscape Architecture

History of Landscape Architecture – Quick Reference Notes

1. Foundations & Early Influences

Period	Region	Key Contributions	Representative Works
Pre-historic	Worldwide	Use of natural features for shelter, ritual, and food production; early garden enclosures	Stone circles, burial mounds, cultivated terraces
Ancient Egypt (?3000-30BC)	Nile Valley	Formal, axial layouts; integration of water, shade, and symbolic plantings	Gardens of the Pharaohs, temple precincts (e.g., Luxor)
Mesopotamia (?3500-539BC)	Fertile Crescent	Terraced irrigation, palace gardens with water channels	Hanging Gardens of Babylon (legendary)
Classical Greece & Rome (?800-500BC – 476AD)	Mediterranean	Symmetrical “peristyle” courts, formal axes, use of topiary and water features	Roman villas (Hadrian’s Villa), Greek sanctuaries
Islamic World (?7th-15thc.)	Middle East, Spain, Persia	Enclosed “paradise” gardens (chahar-bagh), water channels, fragrant plantings	Alhambra gardens, Persian gardens of Shiraz
East Asia (?3rdc.-BC – present)	China, Japan, Korea	Naturalistic composition, borrowed scenery (shakkei), rock gardens, tea gardens	Chinese scholar gardens (Suzhou), Japanese Zen gardens (Ryoan-ji)

2. The Birth of Modern Landscape Architecture (18th–19thc.)

Milestone	Figure(s)	Significance
English Landscape Garden	Lancelot “Capability” Brown (1716-1783)	Shift from formal parterres to sweeping, “natural” lawns, lakes, clumps of trees; created the prototype of the pastoral park.

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Milestone	Figure(s)	Significance
Picturesque Movement	<i>Uvedale Price, William Gilpin</i>	Emphasized irregular, scenic compositions; linked garden design to painting theory.
American Parks	<i>Frederick Law Olmsted (1822-1903)</i>	Designed Central Park (NYC) and many civic parks; introduced social reform, ecological stewardship, and the concept of “the democratic landscape.”
Professionalization	<i>American Society of Landscape Architects (1899)</i>	First formal organization; set standards for education and practice.
Academic Foundations	<i>Harvard Graduate School of Design (1900) – first dedicated landscape architecture program (B.S. in Landscape Architecture, 1900-1905).</i>	

3. Early 20th-Century Innovations

Theme	Practitioners	Notable Projects
City Beautiful	<i>Daniel Burnham, Charles Mulford Robinson</i>	1901 Chicago Plan, 1909 Plan of Washington, D.C.
Garden City Movement	<i>Ebenezer Howard (1898) – “Garden City of Tomorrow”</i>	Letchworth & Welwyn Garden Cities (UK)
Modernist Landscape	<i>Julius Schuster, Thomas Church (mid-1930s)</i>	“California Modern” residential gardens; integration of indoor/outdoor flow.
Ecological Design	<i>Ian McHarg (1960s)</i>	<i>Design with Nature</i> (1969) – introduced layered