

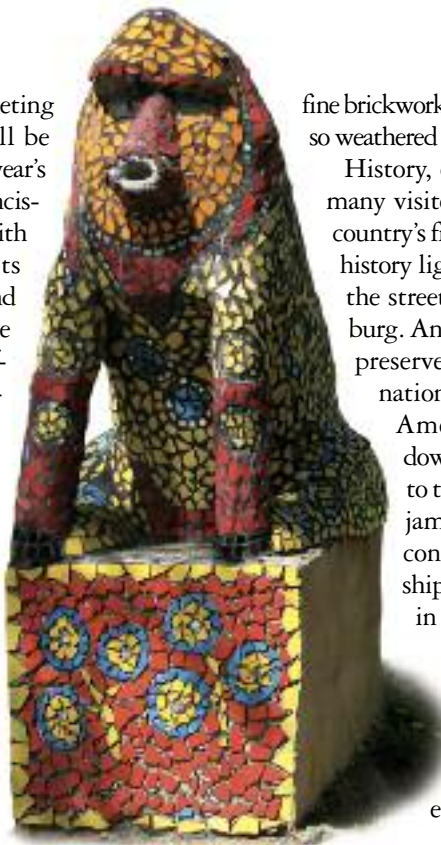


# THE PHILADELPHIA STORY

*Landscape architects attending the 2008 ASLA Annual Meeting  
will have plenty to see.* **BY LINDA MCINTYRE**

**I**F YOU THINK this year's annual meeting in Philadelphia October 3–7 will be something of a letdown after last year's record-breaking shindig in San Francisco, Philadelphia might well agree with you. Lacking both the glitz of its neighbor to the north (New York) and the self-importance of the one to the south (Washington, D.C.), the city is self-effacing almost to a fault. Despite bestowing on our country the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution as well as our first hospital, university, zoo, and newspaper, among many other "firsts," it's not a striving metropolis, and no chip sits on its (not notably broad) shoulder.

But don't let its lack of braggadocio fool you. Philadelphia is a wonderful place to explore, both on and off the beaten path. As you walk its streets it draws you in deeper and deeper: You turn a corner and see a mural, or a mosaic, or some



fine brickwork, or a church cemetery with gravestones so weathered they appear to be melting.

History, of course, is the main attraction for many visitors drawn almost out of duty to the country's first capital. But Philadelphia wears its history lightly—you won't see men wandering the streets in tricornered hats à la Williamsburg. And the city offers, in addition to a well-preserved window on the early days of the nation, insights into the evolution of the American urban landscape, from the downtown squares of William Penn's plan to the City Beautiful splendor of the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, Edmund Bacon's urban renewal, the Olin Partnership's refashioning of Independence Mall in the post-9/11 era, and the ambitious plans now on the boards to reclaim the city's waterfronts along the Delaware and Schuylkill rivers.

Philadelphia grapples with variations on the same problems as other cities—crime, the decline of the

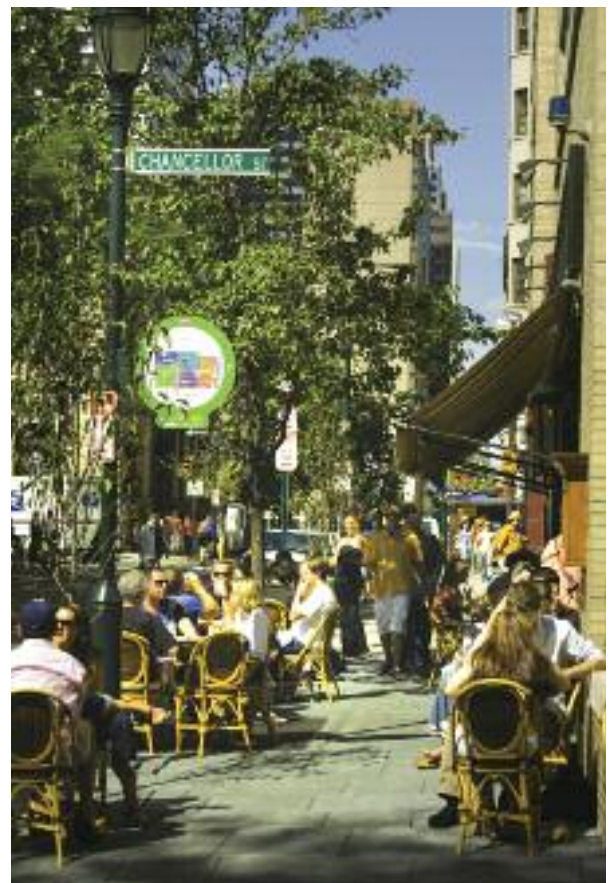
**Art is one of Philadelphia's main attractions, both on the beaten path at the Museum of Art, *opposite*, and off at North Philadelphia's Village of Arts and Humanities, *above*.**





manufacturing sector, economic competition with its suburbs, and the consequences of bad planning decisions such as dividing the historic area and the waterfront with I-95, to name a few. But business leaders, a city government led by the energetic new

**Tiny streets and unexpected art installations, above, delight pedestrians. Cemeteries and churchyards such as this one at St. Peter's, below, hark back to the city's early days. Center City, right, has many lively cafés and restaurants.**



LINDA MCINTYRE, TOP AND BOTTOM LEFT; COURTESY CENTER CITY DISTRICT, BOTTOM RIGHT

mayor Michael Nutter, and an unusually strong and cooperative array of civic groups including the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS), an energetic downtown business improvement district known as Center City District, and the city's many strong university design programs—at the University of Pennsylvania, Temple University, and Philadelphia University—have made a lot of headway in their ongoing efforts to make the downtown area attractive and, especially, clean and safe. And while gritty neighborhoods still exist in the city, they exhibit some of the quirky charm found in more upscale enclaves.

Philadelphia is huge—135 square miles—but its downtown core, known as Center City, is its heart and the focus of most visitors' attention. Center City is framed by the Delaware River on the east, the Schuylkill (pronounced "SKOO-kul") River on the west, South Street on the south, and Vine Street on the north. This compact, flat area comprises the city's most important historical sites and many of its most inviting residential neighborhoods and best restaurants and shops.

You can easily, over the course of a few days, explore the whole of Center City on foot—the distance between the rivers is only about two

## THERE IS MORE PUBLIC ART IN PHILADELPHIA THAN ANYWHERE ELSE IN THE UNITED STATES.

miles, drivers were not aggressive during our reporting visits, and wayfinding signs are plentiful and well designed. It's a rewarding trek, especially for history buffs and connoisseurs of the urban fabric. A stroll of even a few blocks is likely to turn up a landmark of some kind, and Center City's many Georgian, Federal, and Greek Revival buildings, weathered to a handsome patina, are an attraction in themselves, as are the tiny, narrow streets, some barely wide enough to accommodate a sedan, that survive in some neighborhoods.

### A Plan for All Seasons

At its founding, Center City *was* Philadelphia. William Penn, who was granted a charter for 45,000 square miles in the new world by King Charles II as settlement for a debt owed to his father, envisaged a "greene Countrie towne," distinct from the crowded and dirty London of his home country. The plan drawn up by Penn and his surveyor Thomas Holme in 1683 is largely intact in Center City today: a grid with major north-south (Broad Street) and east-west (Market Street, originally known as High Street) streets defining four quadrants, each with a green square (now known as Logan, Franklin, Washington, and Rittenhouse squares). A larger square sits at its center.

The four smaller squares are still public parks today, and they're a good way to orient yourself while walking Center City. Two of them have been spiffed up recently: In and around Logan Square to the northwest (sometimes called Logan Circle since the building of a traffic circle within the square as part of the Benjamin Franklin Parkway), lighting, signage, and pedestrian access have been improved, and Olin Partnership, working with the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, the Fairmount Park Commission, and the Pew Charitable Trust, has



## PARADISE OF PUBLIC ART

**A**CCORDING TO AN inventory of outdoor sculpture by the Smithsonian Institution, there is more public art in Philadelphia than anywhere else in the United States. Art is indeed everywhere in Philadelphia, in all

forms, from Rodin's *The Thinker* on the Ben Franklin Parkway to the *Rocky* statue, moved from the Museum of Art to a South Philadelphia sports arena and back again. Pop sculptures such as Claes Oldenburg's giant

clothespin liven up the streetscape near City Hall, and elaborate mosaics by local artist Isaiah Zagar make South Street sparkle.

As with other characteristics of the city, history is at work here. Monuments sprang up in Philadelphia's early years to commemorate the nation's founding and founders. The Fairmount Park Art Association was established in 1872 to beautify the park with sculpture, but its ambit quickly expanded beyond the park's boundaries. And in 1959, the city's pioneering "One Percent for Art" ordinance came into effect, requiring developers to allocate 1 percent of their construction costs for the purchase of public art. The program was the brainchild of Michael von Mosch-



LINDA MCINTYRE, TOP TWO AND BOTTOM CENTER; E. CLARK FOR GPTMC, BOTTOM RIGHT; B. KRIST FOR GPTMC, BOTTOM LEFT

zisker, then head of the city's redevelopment authority, who argued that "true functionalism in man-made edifices must include artistic expression.... [S]terility and her handmaiden, monotony, must be banished."

They certainly have been. In addition to Billy Penn, City Hall is bedecked with more than 200 other statues by Alexander Milne Calder (grandfather to a contemporary sculptor), and its grounds are home to a slew of likenesses of Philadelphia's great and good from (of course) Benjamin Franklin to Mayor Frank Rizzo. Sculptures line the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, and Logan Square features several striking memorials, the whimsical Swann fountain designed by Alexander Stirling Calder (son of the City Hall sculptor), and works by students of the Moore College of Art across 20th Street.

One of the most visible manifestations of the city's commitment to public art is the Mural Arts Program, which was established in 1984 as an antigraffiti initiative and which has generated about 2,700 mural projects throughout the city. The idea for a mural starts in the neighborhood, and after support reaches a critical mass and an artist (usually local) is chosen, the program subsidizes the creation and holds a dedication ceremony. Neighbors maintain and pre-



serve the finished works. "Unofficial" murals have come on the heels of the program's official ones, and some even grace hardscrabble businesses and boarded-up buildings in the city's toughest neighborhoods.

The Village of Arts and Humanities goes even further, making a desolate North Philadelphia urban landscape an artwork in itself. It started when Chinese-born artist Lily Yeh won a small grant to improve an

## THE VILLAGE OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES MAKES A DESOLATE NORTH PHILADELPHIA URBAN LANDSCAPE AN ARTWORK IN ITSELF.

abandoned lot. Now the village comprises parks, community gardens, and educational facilities over a 260-square-block area and runs workshops and programs that serve more than 10,000 low-income neighbors, most of them African American, every year.

The village's aesthetic is bright and vibrant, with lots of tile and mirror mosaics. Colorful stalagmite-like concrete "trees" kitted out in mosaic stood in for the real thing until soil improvements could be made and actual trees planted with the help of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's Philadelphia Green program, and mosaic furniture is available for climbing or resting. It's off the beaten path—this is still a rough neighborhood, it's best explored by car, and it's so spread out it's extremely helpful to

have a guide to get the full effect—but if you make one side trip during the annual meeting, consider this.





greened up much of the space, giving walkers incentive to stay awhile. At the north side of the square opposite the Franklin Institute, Center City District, working with the landscape architects at Lager Raabe Skafte and others, has transformed Aviator Park, adding green space that also showcases sculptures from students of the Moore College of Art, on the west side of the square. Logan Square is also home to the whimsical Swann Fountain.

Franklin Square on the northeast was for many years the least used and least inviting—Jane Jacobs described it in 1961 as a “skid row park.” But a renovation set in motion by the tercentenary of Benjamin Franklin cleaned up the park and added family-friendly attractions such as a carousel and a miniature golf course with replicas of iconic city sites. The project’s lead designers, Pennoni Associates, also restored the park’s marble fountain, installed in 1838. It hadn’t run since the mid-1970s.

Washington Square on the southeast, home of the Tomb of the Unknown Revolutionary Soldier, is a quieter, more reflective space. But Rittenhouse Square, on the southwest, is the

**Logan Square, with its whimsical fountain, sits on the Ben Franklin Parkway between City Hall (background in photo) and the Museum of Art.**

**THE GRID ESTABLISHED BY PENN AND HOLME GUIDED THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CITY FOR ITS FIRST COUPLE OF CENTURIES, BUT PHILADELPHIA WAS NOT IMMUNE TO THE CHARMS OF THE CITY BEAUTIFUL MOVEMENT.**

apotheosis of an urban square. Like Washington Square, it’s a simple green open space, lacking the bells and whistles of Franklin Square and the stately cultural institutions (including the Franklin Institute, the Moore College of Art, and the Academy of Natural Sciences) surrounding Logan Square. But there’s always something going on. The surrounding neighborhood is posh, but democracy reigns in this elegant yet consistently lively patch of urban green space, clearly beloved by Philadelphians of all ages as well as visitors drawn to the bustling scene. Keep walking west and you’ll end up at Schuylkill River Park, with trails, open green spaces, and an attractive community garden.

Penn planned for the larger center square to be the site of important public buildings such as a Quaker meeting house, schools, and government offices, but the city’s earliest residents insisted on staying close to the eastern waterfront. Eventually, however, City Hall was built on this site; construction began in 1871 and continued for 30 years. The exuberant Second Empire confection, topped

with a 37-foot bronze statue of William Penn, was in its earliest days the tallest building in the world and is still the world's tallest masonry building. The flamboyant edifice has at times been an embarrassment to the city and several proposals to tear it down have been floated, including in the high-profile 1963 Center City Plan, but they never came to fruition owing to the high costs of demolishing the thick masonry walls.

Recently cleaned and bedecked in bright lights at night, the building is a gorgeous centerpiece. Public tours are available, and you can take in sweeping views of the city from the tower. The public spaces outside, however, have some catching up to do if the center square is to fulfill its historical mission. Work is under way on a rehab, designed by Olin Partnership, of the harsh and unwelcoming 1960s-style Dilworth Plaza on the west side of the site. Instead of a bleak and underpopulated stretch of hard-



**Independence Mall, below, replaced a landscape that was lush, above, but largely ignored by tourists. One block of the earlier version was designed by Dan Kiley.**

scape, it will feature a glassy transparent entrance to the subway system, a lawn and shade trees, and a fountain that can be used for ice skating in the winter.

### History Lesson

If you've never been to Philadelphia before, you will want at least a cursory stroll past historical sites such as Independence Hall, Congress Hall, Carpenters' Hall, and Franklin Court, all part of the Independence National Historical Park between 3rd and 6th streets northeast of Washington Square, close to the Delaware riverfront (see [www.nps.gov/inde](http://www.nps.gov/inde)). Even the most jaded visitor will be moved by the sight of these dignified and classically beautiful buildings and

sites and, if you go inside, totems such as the chair George Washington sat on while presiding over the Constitutional Convention.

But there's a neat piece of landscape architectural history here, too. Independence Mall, north



of Independence Hall and host to the Liberty Bell and the National Constitution Center, is not historical (see “Slouching Toward Independence,” *Landscape Architecture*, June 2006). Plans for a mall to enhance Independence Hall first appeared in 1942, but the proposed mall lay dormant until the 1963 Center City Plan developed by Bacon, and that effort resulted in a hodgepodge of three blocks with no aesthetic continuity. A heavily planted Dan Kiley landscape on the northernmost block, built in 1963, provided shade and respite, but ultimately attracted more homeless people and drug users than tourists. Laurie Olin, FASLA, designed a new master plan for the mall in 1997, and the Kiley landscape was demolished as part of that long-running project; now, after a series of setbacks including a renewed focus on security following the 2001 terrorist attacks, Independence Mall is almost complete.

Need an infusion of hipness after all of that sobering history? Head to Old City, east of Independence Mall. Trendy bars, restaurants, art galleries, and clubs line Second Street between Market and Chestnut streets. As the name suggests, though, you’ll also find sights such as Christ Church, where many of our founding fathers worshiped and were buried, and Elfreth’s Alley, the oldest continuously inhabited street in the country, dating back to 1702.

## FAIRMOUNT PARK IS HUGE, EXTENDING FAR UP BOTH SIDES OF THE SCHUYLKILL, AND IT COMPRISES MORE THAN 200 MILES OF TRAILS, HISTORIC HOUSES, AND THE PHILADELPHIA ZOO.

**Cyclists and pedestrians can ride or walk along the water from Schuylkill River Park to the Valley Forge National Historical Park.**

architect Frank Furness, were destroyed, and no effort was made to revive retail outlets.

Still, Society Hill, where old and new Philadelphia sit comfortably side by side, is thriving today. The renovation created pedestrian walkways through rose and magnolia gardens and the popular Three Bears Park for young neighbors. Small neighborhood streets, the size of alleys in other cities and some still paved in cobbles, remain.

New construction during the urban renewal era was architecturally distinguished here and, to some degree at least, sensitive to context: I. M. Pei’s award-winning Society Hill Towers still loom large over the neighborhood and re-



COURTESY JOHN R. COLLINS



## LOVE PARK WAS A NATIONALLY KNOWN MECCA FOR SKATEBOARDERS UNTIL, AFTER A 2002 RENOVATION, THEN-MAYOR JOHN STREET ESTABLISHED A BAN.

main a popular condominium community. Pei's nearby Bingham Court, a cluster of modern town houses built after the towers, is clad in Flemish-bond brick and blends in more with the neighborhood. It has an attractive courtyard designed by John F. Collins, FASLA, the prominent modernist landscape architect. Keep walking west, past Washington Square, and you'll find a tribute to another modernist at Louis Kahn Park at Pine and 11th streets.

### Beautiful Boulevard

The grid established by Penn and Holme guided the development of the city for its first couple of centuries, but Philadelphia was not immune to the charms of the City Beautiful movement. Here a characteristic diagonal boulevard was seen as a way to link Fairmount Park, the huge park that had grown up along both sides of the Schuylkill, with Broad Street and the center square. While the idea of such a connection had been kicking around since the early 1870s, its de-

velopment was strongly influenced by the 1893 Columbian World's Exposition in Chicago, and progress was spurred by the decision to build a new art museum at Faire Mount, the city's highest point and the site of waterworks that could no longer adequately serve the growing metropolis.

The Benjamin Franklin Parkway runs just over a mile between the Philadelphia Museum of Art and City Hall, slicing through Logan Square. To take in the parkway from City Hall, cross kitty-corner to the northwest to JFK Plaza, popularly known as LOVE Park for the iconic red Robert Indiana sculpture there. This was a nationally known mecca for skateboarders until, after a 2002 renovation, then-Mayor John Street established a ban. While the city pledged to establish other skateparks, skateboarders are still smarting over the loss, and some residents feel the ban has significantly deactivated the park.

When one walks up the parkway toward Logan Square, the sidewalk has an urban feel similar

**JFK Plaza, kitty-corner from City Hall at the base of the Ben Franklin Parkway, is popularly known as LOVE Park for its iconic Robert Indiana sculpture.**

# TOP TEN LANDSCAPE SIGHTS IN PHILADELPHIA

to the rest of Center City—the buildings are close to the street—though the many sculptures on display, including a piece at the northeast intersection of the parkway and 17th Street by Henry Moore, enhance the experience. Between Logan Square and the art museum, however, the streetscape is more open. At rush hour, it can feel like walking along a freeway—Logan Square and the Eakins Oval in front of the museum carry high volumes of high-speed traffic at rush hour. At other times it can lack animation—attractions here, such as the Rodin Museum, are set back from the sidewalk, and the 86 surface parking spaces in the Eakins Oval further detract from the pedestrian experience.

But some changes made to and in store for the parkway hold promise. Center City District has improved lighting of walkways and the many sculptures along the parkway. Between Logan Square and the museum, ambitious plans are on the boards for an addition to the Free Library and a new home for the Barnes Foundation art museum, now in the suburbs.

The parkway is part of Fairmount Park, and in 1916 the Fairmount Park Commission adopted design controls, establishing setbacks and limiting building heights, for sites within 200 feet of the road. Still in effect today, the guidelines have helped to preserve the spectacular view of the city and its skyline looking down the parkway from the steps of the museum even as the city has grown, both literally and figuratively. An informal pact known as the “gentlemen’s agreement” kept the City Hall tower on which rests the Penn statue—known affectionately to locals as “Billy Penn”—the highest built spot in the city at 491 feet.

But in the mid-1980s, developer Willard Rouse proposed a 960-foot office tower, and after an emotional public debate the plan was approved by the city council. One Liberty Place opened in 1987; while other skyscrapers taller than City Hall were subsequently built, it remained the city’s tallest building for 20 years, until the construction of the recently completed Comcast Center, a slim glass tower that some local design mavens are calling “the memory stick” owing to its shape.

**M**ost of these are in Center City and will be easy for annual meeting visitors to see, but it’s worth venturing off the beaten path if you have time:

## INDEPENDENCE MALL/

### INDEPENDENCE NATIONAL PARK:

This is an obvious choice, but one not to be missed.

**SOCIETY HILL:** Old and modern Philadelphia peacefully coexist here.

**RITTENHOUSE SQUARE:** This is perhaps the perfect urban square.

**SOUTH STREET:** Immortalized by the Philadelphia group the Orlons in 1963 as the place where “all the hippies” (or, according to some, “all the hippest”) met, this lower boundary of Center City is still a magnet for those in search of interesting shops, cafés, and clubs.

**BEN FRANKLIN PARKWAY:** Enjoy the view from the steps of the art museum, looking toward the Center City skyline framing the “Billy Penn” statue on City Hall, or relax by the Swann Fountain in Logan Square.

**FAIRMOUNT PARK:** If you can’t take it all in, at least check out the park areas near the art museum, including the PHS Azalea Garden, planted for interest

in all seasons, and Boathouse Row, a magnet for rowers and nonrowers alike.

**ART:** This is a condition rather than a destination. Wherever you are, keep your head up—chances are good there is a mural or statue.

**MARKETS:** Reading Terminal Market is adjacent to the Convention Center, but other markets worth visiting include the Headhouse Market on 2nd and Lombard streets, dating back to 1745 (Sundays 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM), and the Italian Market on 9th Street in South Philadelphia (closed Mondays).

**CHESTNUT PARK:** A shady and inviting vest-pocket park designed by John F. Collins, FASLA, in the 1970s, this haven on Chestnut Street west of 17th Street features native plants and metal gates by sculptor Christopher Ray that pay tribute to the regional landscape.

**COMMUNITY GARDENS:** Philadelphia is home to more than 500 community gardens. There’s a nice one in Center City at Schuylkill River Park. The Spring Gardens in the Fairmount neighborhood north of Center City are set off with a beautiful iron fence, and Liberty Lands in the trendy Northern Liberties neighborhood is a gathering place for all ages.

COURTESY JOHN R. COLLINS, BOTTOM LEFT; COURTESY PENNSYLVANIA HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY, BOTTOM RIGHT





## SOME OF PHILADELPHIA’S BEST DAYS MIGHT YET BE AHEAD.... PLANS, DRIVEN BY THE DESIGN COMMUNITY, OTHER ADVOCACY GROUPS, AND THE UNIVERSITIES, ARE AFOOT TO REVIVE THE WATERFRONTS.

Looking down the parkway from the front entry to the art museum, the tower and Penn stand placidly at the center, unobstructed by—indeed, to the eyes of many, framed handsomely by—the skyline including the taller skyscrapers clustered on the west side.

### Art and the Park

Once you’re at the Museum of Art, take some time to look around the 25-acre landscape that surrounds the warm Kosota stone building. The once-scruffy grounds were renovated in the late 1990s by the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society working with city agencies and the landscape architects of WRT. More recently the museum has undertaken building a large underground parking facility near its west entrance that will be topped with a sculpture garden designed by Olin Partnership.

Now you’re in Fairmount Park (the appellation covers both the park proper and the name of the city’s whole public park system). The park itself is huge, extending far up both sides of

**Penn Praxis, a nonprofit arm of Penn’s School of Design, is spearheading a new vision, above, for the underused Delaware River waterfront, inset. Center City District uses lighting in novel ways, below, to jazz up downtown Philadelphia at night.**



the Schuylkill, and it comprises more than 200 miles of trails, historic houses from estates that were gradually absorbed into the park, and the Philadelphia Zoo. You might not have time to explore the whole thing, but you can enjoy the Azalea Garden north of the museum’s back entrance at Kelly Drive and Aquarium Drive, near the old Water Works. The garden was a gift to the city from PHS in honor of its 125th anniversary in 1952. More than just azaleas are on view here; other plants were added in an early 1990s renovation to provide interest in all seasons.

Boathouse Row to the west of the museum along the Schuylkill is a collection of Victorian boathouses used by Philadelphia’s many amateur rowers, known as “the Schuylkill Navy.” Many regattas are held here, but the inviting paths along the river are also very popular with walkers, joggers, cyclists, and fishermen. You can also get a glimpse of Boathouse Row by whizzing down the Schuylkill Expressway on the other (west) side of the river.



Modern Philadelphia is in many ways the brainchild of Edmund Bacon, head of the city's planning commission from 1949 until 1970, and the era of "urban renewal" in which he worked. Most unusual for a city planner, Bacon in his heyday had the kind of star power now enjoyed by his

**Current landscape architecture projects include the plaza in front of the new Comcast Center, above, and a new sculpture garden over a parking garage at the Museum of Art, below.**

actor son Kevin. He was an irascible and outspoken presence in the city until his death at 95 in 2005, railing against the fall of the gentlemen's agreement that limited the height of buildings downtown and taking to a skateboard in Love Park to protest the restrictions. A Philadelphia



COURTESY OLIN PARTNERSHIP

## SOCIETY HILL, WHERE OLD AND NEW PHILADELPHIA SIT COMFORTABLY SIDE BY SIDE, IS THRIVING TODAY.

native, Bacon, with fellow architects Louis Kahn and Oscar Stonorov, designed the well-received 1947 Better Philadelphia Exhibition, headlined by a room-sized model of Center City, parts of which could be flipped to show “before” and “after” views. More than 350,000 residents trooped over to Gimbel’s department store to see this and the other models, photos, dioramas, and other multimedia displays.

Bacon’s tenure coincided with federal legislation (the Housing Acts of 1949 and 1954) that enabled land acquisition and condemnation as well as local political leadership that was focused on comprehensive planning and improving Center City, much of which had descended into slum conditions. These circumstances begat the 1963 Center City Plan, which gathered together existing and new ideas, some of which were already under construction, under a unified umbrella.



**Landscape architect John F. Collins, FASLA, designed inviting walkways, *above*, through Society Hill. Boathouse Row along the Schuylkill River, *below*, is beautiful by day or night.**

The ambition of the plan—its major components included an expressway loop around Center City, a park along the Delaware River, rehabilitation of decrepit neighborhoods, shopping to compete with suburban malls, a park surrounding Independence Hall, and an arts district along South





Broad Street—and Bacon’s effectiveness at communicating its possibilities brought it nationwide attention and landed Bacon on the cover of *Time* magazine in November 1964. Later he wrote a well-received book, *Design of Cities*, that is still read today (see Resources).

Elements of the 1963 plan, some more successful than others, are visible all over the city. On Market Street east of City Hall in the area near the convention center is the Gallery at Market East, one of the first urban shopping malls, completed in two phases in the 1970s and 1980s. It’s far less appealing than the street-front shops farther west on Walnut and other streets.

Many older buildings were demolished as new projects were built; again here at Market East the demolition of a significant historic building, in this case the Reading Terminal, was part of the original plan but unrealized owing to prohibitive costs. Today, the revived Reading Terminal Market, preserved and restored as part of the convention center complex, is extremely popular

**Philadelphia’s Mural Arts Program has generated more than 2,400 murals throughout the city, including *Holding Grandmother’s Quilt* by artist Donald Gensler and University of Pennsylvania students.**

(on Market at 8th and 13th streets), pedestrian-unfriendly stretches of wall, and lifeless plazas—the unintended consequences of the 1963 plan’s shifting of focus from the street itself to below grade (at the nearby Penn Center transit link and office complex) and self-contained shopping (at Market East).

## MODERN PHILADELPHIA IS IN MANY WAYS THE BRAINCHILD OF EDMUND BACON AND THE ERA OF “URBAN RENEWAL” IN WHICH HE WORKED.

with locals and visitors (consider stopping in for lunch or a snack between education sessions). The historic tan brick-covered market building is a bright spot in a part of the city that can be dull or even a little bit grim, owing to some persistently undeveloped spots

**S**OME OF PHILADELPHIA’S BEST days might yet be ahead. While the real estate boom brought some development pressure, its peaks didn’t grow as high as in many other cities, and the current downturn could help new mayor Nutter build support for an ambitious planning and economic development agenda. Plans, driven by the design community, other advocacy groups, and the universities, are afoot to revive the waterfronts, extending the Penn

COURTESY MURAL ARTS PROGRAM

campus east to the western banks of the Schuylkill, and to reinvent the central Delaware riverfront, where Penn's Landing has never lived up to its potential, in large part because of the freeway running between it and the rest of Center City.

Philadelphia has been down before, but like one of its favorite fictional characters, Rocky, it will go on fighting. It will just be fighting in a low-key manner. *LAW*

### Resources

#### ◆ HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

■ *The Planning of Center City Philadelphia*, by John Andrew Gallery; Philadelphia: The Center for Architecture Inc., 2007.

■ *Design of Cities*, by Edmund Bacon; New York: Penguin Books, 1974.

#### ◆ GOOD GUIDEBOOKS

■ *Off the Beaten Path Philadelphia* (Insiders' Guide series), by Karen Ivory; Guilford, Connecticut: Globe Pequot Press, 2007 (third edition).

■ *The Philadelphia Inquirer's Walking Tours of Historic Philadelphia*, by Edward Colimore; Philadelphia: Camino Books, 2007.

■ *A Guide to the Great Gardens of the Philadelphia Region*, by Adam Levine; Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2007.

■ Find general tourist information about the city at [www.gophila.com](http://www.gophila.com).

**A** NNUAL MEETING attendees who, like this writer, are plant nerds will find much to engage them in the Philadelphia area, where the gardens of many fine old estates are now open to the public. Most of these will be covered in guided tours available to meeting participants, but if you can't make the tours and have some time to spare (access to a car would be helpful), excellent candidates for horticultural side trips include:

**MORRIS ARBORETUM:** Once the home of brother and sister John and Lydia Morris, this beautiful 92-acre garden in the grand Chestnut Hill neighborhood is now the arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania. It's home to a collection of large stately trees, many dating back to John Morris's collecting days, including a magnificent katsura tree (*Cercidiphyllum japonicum*) that is possibly the largest specimen in North America. The arboretum is one of the attractions in store on an annual meeting tour of the Wissahickon Valley. Address: 100 East Northwestern Avenue, Philadelphia, [www.morrisarboretum.org](http://www.morrisarboretum.org).

**BARTRAM'S GARDEN:** Self-taught botanist John Bartram

bought this land for his house and garden in 1728, and it's the oldest surviving botanical garden in North America. Bartram is perhaps best known for discovering and saving the Franklinia tree (*Franklinia alatamaha*), now extinct in the wild but still available owing to Bartram's propagation. A tour is available. Address: 54th Street and Lindbergh Boulevard, Philadelphia, [www.bartramsgarden.org](http://www.bartramsgarden.org).

#### LONGWOOD GARDENS:

Wealthy industrialist Pierre DuPont saved this land from clear-cutting early in the 20th century and then proceeded to build a series of gardens influenced by his travels in Europe. Anchoring them all is an enormous glass conservatory, where floral displays change with the seasons. An all-day tour is available for annual meeting participants. Address: U.S. 1, Kennett Square, Pennsylvania, [www.longwoodgardens.org](http://www.longwoodgardens.org).

**CHANTICLEER:** An estate garden that has been preserved without aesthetic or horticultural restrictions, this exuberant "pleasure garden" is a treat for plant people. Staff are happy to discuss plant culture and designs. A tour of Chanticleer is available as part of the

annual meeting. Address: 786 Church Road, Wayne, Pennsylvania, [www.chanticleer garden.org](http://www.chanticleer garden.org).

**BOWMAN'S HILL WILD-FLOWER PRESERVE:** An oasis of open space in fast-growing Bucks County is a natural preserve, not a designed garden. It features almost 1,000 species of plants native to the Delaware Valley, including rare and endangered varieties. Bowman's Hill has developed a plant stewardship index to assess the native character of sites in New Jersey and the Pennsylvania Piedmont. Address: 1635 River Road (U.S. 32), New Hope, Pennsylvania, [www.bhwp.org](http://www.bhwp.org).

**MT. CUBA CENTER:** This site began as another botanical wonderland made possible by the spoils of industry, but it evolved into a guardian and promoter of native plants of the Piedmont region. Wildflower gardens and a series of ponds are big draws here, though formal gardens from the site's period as a residence remain. Tours can be booked by appointment, and the center will be included on a tour of distinctive estate gardens in northern Delaware. Address: Barley Mill Road, Greenville, Delaware, [www.mtcuba center.org](http://www.mtcuba center.org).

## PUBLIC GARDENS IN AND AROUND PHILADELPHIA

