



UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning 210 Olver Design Building 551 North Pleasant Street Amherst, MA 01003-2901

ASLA Board of Trustees American Society of Landscape Architects 636 Eye Street, NW Washington, DC 20001

Re: Nomination of STIMSON for Firm of the Year

Dear Trustees:

The ASLA Firm of the Year Award is the preeminent national distinction a landscape architecture office can receive, and so we are deeply honored to have the opportunity to nominate STIMSON for the Landscape Architecture Firm Award for 2021.

We know the Stimson office well. They have deep roots in our region, as does our landscape architecture program. Three of its principals are among our most distinguished alumni. The unique practice they have cultivated since 1992 captures the spirit, materials, and landscape forms of New England with distinctive sensibility and remarkably productive results. We benefit from their approach to landscape design every day. For over ten years Stimson has been reshaping our Amherst campus, an ongoing endeavor with a master planning vision and individual projects (all award-winning) including Crotty Hall, the Campus Chapel, the Southwest Concourse, and of course our own Olver Design Building—a living case study of sustainable and beautiful design for our students. The firm has transformed the perception and experience of a campus long considered poorly planned and neglected, and which is now a winner of national sustainability awards. Pulaski Park in nearby Northampton (2018 ASLA Honor award) has become not only an instructive example of neighborhood-based, sustainable landscape design, but is already a beloved and central public place in that notably demanding community.

But if nurtured in the soils of New England, Stimson's remarkable record of built work is hardly limited to our region. The recognized influence of their projects is national, a fact borne out by a simple review of this portfolio and a tally of their awards and publications: eleven ASLA design awards, over forty awards from the Boston Society of Landscape Architects, numerous other national awards and competition recognitions, and at least thirty articles in books and design periodicals. Both the profession and the public have affirmed the quality of the firm's work and their continuing creative leadership in the field.

The firm is a female/minority and male owned partnership (Lauren Stimson and Steve Stimson are the partners). The five principals—Lauren, Steve, Eddie Marshall, Glen Valentine, and Joe Wahler—have developed a distinctive design culture that engenders collaborative communication and non-hierarchal creative process. Having grown to a staff of thirty-five across an urban and rural studio, a horizontal organization chart and close relationships assure consistent design theory and process. The result is a unique working environment and culture. The rural studio at Charbrook Farm is also a native plant nursery—a laboratory of arboricultural and design research rooted in local ecology and agricultural practices. The farm studio houses the firm's innovation lab, where prototypes for site furnishings are built and materials and plants are tested in the working gardens. Everyone in the studio knows how to

dig a tree or shrub, lace a rootball, and plant bare-root stock. The Cambridge office maintains a strong urban dimension to the firm's work. The organizational structure assures that all members participate in the full range of activities, rotating on projects and duties. There is no production staff at Stimson; everyone is a designer.

The unique juxtaposition of the studios, and the collaborative, non-hierarchal structure of the working process also creates space and time for individuals and families—a meaningful contrast to many office environments and another way in which Stimson is leading the profession today. The collaborative environment of the office extends to fellow professionals in all areas, many of whom have long and rewarding histories of working with the studio. Ted Flato, FAIA, has worked alongside Stimson for over a decade and describes the firm's work as "a natural outgrowth of the place where they are working, leveraging the local craft and materials, working with native plants that flourish, and creating forms that are guided by science and sustainability. They listen to the land and the weather and the results are thoroughly inspirational, yet refreshingly simple. And they are a joy to collaborate with, seeking the best ideas regardless of the source." The firm operates as a studio in the truest sense: a place for design exploration and production, but also for teaching and learning. It is a natural extension of graduate school—a place to take risks, explore design, and mentor others in their processes of analysis, design, and construction.

Stimson has carved a niche for simple yet clever detailing with an informed attention to craftsmanship. They form strong relationships with masons, carpenters and landscape contractors, sometimes working alongside them. Their work exhibits some of the most memorable and durable detailing in the profession. A passion for craft permeates the firm's activities, from initial sketches through detailed construction and lush and diverse planting design. The principals share a love for hand drawing that has helped keep their practice legible and collaborative. Their sophisticated digital renderings and models are often overshadowed (or combined with) their drawings, from initial sketches to final designs. The deliberative process of drawing complements their deeply researched understanding of the historical and ecological components of landscape settings, and their rigorous craft in construction methods.

There is a remarkable consistency in the approach and quality of Stimson's work over the years in terms of site research, craftsmanship, and expertise in the selection and cultivation of creative planting schemes. Just as notable, however, is the consistent innovation and diversity evident in the projects. Consistency in theory and practice has never succumbed to formula. Stimson has always demonstrated that great landscape design is contingent—that design process first developed through an intensive local approach can lead to what they describe as an "evolution of creating," yielding unique design and material narratives for each project. These narratives are formed through a cultivated ability to recognize, interpret, and translate the natural conditions and cultural aspects of a project's region, context, and site.

The site always speaks first at Stimson. The process of deep consultation of natural systems and human associations may be (perhaps must be) learned locally; but the approach structures the firm's practice nationally. Rather than repetitive design form, there is instead a remarkable and now mature design process and constant innovation. They are regionalists in any region. The firm's work defies flashy "signature" design, yet they have shaped many institutions, gardens, and parks all over the country. Michael Van Valkenburgh aptly summarizes the recognition of professional colleagues: "Stimson does wonderful and innovative work that is grounded in a timeless landscape style and a strong connection to the distinctiveness of each place. The firm excels in all phases of design work from laying a conceptual foundation to delivering an excellent project through construction, and it engages the full realm of landscape practice, from urban infrastructural projects to private rural gardens."

The projects presented in this nomination confirm the firm's contention that landscape design inspired by deep regional understanding can be the foundation of a practice with broader application. Their ability to give beautiful form to sustainable landscapes is rooted in a fully developed sense of place—and that process has now succeeded in many different places. The origins of this practice can be seen in the early work on Cape Cod and the Islands: bold public and private landscapes that highlight and frame surrounding landscapes, complementing them with bold, sculptural features. The integrity of historic and properties is protected and enhanced in careful juxtapositions of old and new. Follow their trajectory to some firm's recent projects and a fruition of a decades-long dedication to this approach is evident. The Heritage Flume Gardens (ASLA Award of Excellence, 2019), represents the core values of the studio: exquisite craft and detail, environmental sensitivity, responsiveness to topography, technical innovation, durability of material, and a profound love for plants at their wildest. The Artist's Trail at the Florence Griswold Museum (2019 ASLA Honor award) is a transformative landscape master plan that expands the interpretation of the property as a farm, while simultaneously restoring ecologies for wildlife and birding habitat. Lush, diverse palettes of native plants and restored ecologies of forests and forest edges are a constant. The firm recently completed the first land bridge of substantial scale in the country in Hardberger Park in San Antonio. New public landscapes in Baltimore, St. Louis, New York, and San Antonio all attest to the success, productivity, and accomplishments of this office.

STIMSON has also maintained a deep commitment to furthering education in the field, and we are grateful for the time they have taken to teach in our programs, participate in our reviews, and advise us on our curriculum. They have also been generous, initiating and raising substantial funds for a minority scholarship fund, the Garden X Graphite Scholarship, a critical resource for us to achieve our goals of inclusivity and diversity in our program and the profession.

We can finally only express a deep conviction that Stimson has created a unique practice: one with a deeply local understanding of landscape beauty and sustainability that has proven—through extraordinary built work—to be revelatory and profoundly influential in the broader practice of landscape architecture everywhere. They have created new standards of excellence in design and will continue to quietly lead and contribute the profession for years to come. The structure and atmosphere of the studio is just as specific and unique, allowing for individual creativity and the needs of families in ways that indicate particularly desirable directions for the profession today. For many reasons, we nominate Stimson as the most influential and accomplished firm of 2021.

Sincerely,

Julius Gy. Fábos, PhD, FASLA

Jack F. Ahern, PhD, FASLA

Ethan Can

Ethan Carr, PhD, FASLA

FIRM HISTORY + PHILOSOPHY

STIMSON is based in Cambridge and Princeton, Massachusetts and is composed of an urban and rural landscape architecture studio, a working farm and a plant nursery. The studio was conceived in 1992 by Stephen Stimson, FASLA. Born and raised on a 10th generation dairy farm in New England, a simple, agrarian-minded approach to design is the mainstay of our work.

The studio has since evolved into a collective led by five Principals:

Edward Marshall, FASLA Lauren Stimson, ASLA Stephen Stimson, FASLA Glen Valentine, ASLA Joseph Wahler, ASLA

Each Principal brings a range of creative and technical talent to the whole. Together, with our team, we have amassed over three decades of built landscapes.

We share a mutual love for the land, craft and invention.



We design at all scales and every geography. Our work is a collection of intimate gardens, academic campuses, museums, parks and artful installations in the Northeast and around the country. Design expression comes from getting to know each site individually. Understanding context is essential. Long-term, curation of our landscapes is part of the design process.

STIMSON



Our studio is a diverse and intelligent team of designers, planners, and horticulturalists.

We appreciate an artisanal and bespoke approach to the craft of landscape architecture. A nod to regionalism, site histories and a respect for the environment are a given. Lifespan, no waste, education, and ecological fluency are at the heart of our values.

We think that the process of design is just as important as the finished product. Doing things as well as we can, rather than as fast as possible is fundamental. We believe in quality over quantity.

We still draw by hand. We embrace slowness.

We think the most important learning comes from being in the field. On a job site, at the nursery, in a garden. We are teachers, we learn from each other, and our studio is our classroom. Hands-on, experiential learning is at the core of our practice. We like getting our hands dirty.

We are passionate about our profession. Our collaborators and clients become friends and an essential part of our story. Our projects set our pace, but our families and loved ones mentor our success.

We believe in a work + life balance.

We design for longevity.

FARM + LAB

Charbrook Nursery is located on 100 acres of the historic Stimson Dairy Farm and successional hay fields in Princeton, Massachusetts. Situated at the foothills of Wachusett Mountain, the Nursery is a diverse mosaic of New England landscape typologies. In 2003, STIMSON began to think about this landscape in a new way: as a testing ground and a way to integrate in-the-field learning and research into our design practice.

The firm established Charbrook Nursery for native tree and shrub production. Low-lying wetlands, wet meadows, successional fields, glacial drumlins and dense woodland offer a rich template for siting selected species in response to the farm's micro-ecosystems.

The concept remains to focus on the cultivation of indigenous plant communities that are already thriving within the farm landscape. Our projects benefit from this unique knowledge of the research we are beginning to develop related to hybrids and cultivars, planted form, growth rates, and habitat value.



Charbrook Nursery provides a unique opportunity for our team to get out into the nursery field throughout the seasons. They experience the holisitic process of planting whips and bare root linestock, digging trees of various caliper sizes, the art of hand-lacing rootballs and the techniques of pruning for plant health. The Nursery encourages us to get out of the studio and into the field, and provides a living laboratory for on-going agricultural and horticultural experimentation.

STIMSON



Charbrook Farm is the modern homestead of Lauren and Stephen Stimson and their family in Princeton, Massachusetts. Located down the road from the historic Stimson Farm and Charbrook Nursery, this working farm has become a field station for the STIMSON landscape architecture practice. Seasonal events like lambing, plant walks, and studio retreats as well as working test gardens and landscape installations are all integrated into the culture and life of STIMSON.



ACHIEVEMENTS

American Society of Landscape Architects

Heritage Flume: Heritage Museums and Gardens, Sandwich, MA Award of Excellence in General Design 2019

The Artists' Trail: History, Ecology and Sense of Place Florence Griswold Museum, Old Lyme, CT Honor Award in Analysis and Planning 2019

Re-Envisioning Pulaski Park, Northampton, MA Honor Award in General Design 2018

A Restoration on Mount Desert Island, Northeast Harbor, ME Honor Award in Residential Design 2017

Chilmark: Embracing a Glacial Moraine, Martha's Vineyard, MA Honor Award in Residential Design 2016

Phil Hardberger Park, San Antonio, TX Honor Award in General Design 2015

Maple Hill, Westwood, MA Honor Award in Residential Design 2012

Greenwich Garden, Greenwich, CT Honor Award in Residential Design 2006

Stone Meadow, Martha's Vineyard, MA Residential Design Award of Excellence 2005

Thomas Prince School, Princeton, MA Merit Award in General Design 1999

Boldwater Farm, Edgardtown, MA Merit Award in Residential Design 1998

Boston Society of Landscape Architects

Boston College: Historic Campus Core, Chestnut Hill, MA Merit Award in Design 2019

Cider Ridge Farm, Wilton, CT Merit Award in Design 2019

Rockport Residence, Rockport, MA Merit Award in Design 2019

Williams College: North Campus Restoration, Williamstown, MA Merit Award in Design 2019

Pulaski Park, Northampton, MA Honor Award in Design 2018

Tower Hill Botanic Garden Master Plan, Boylston, MA Honor Award in Analysis and Planning 2018

University of Massachusetts Crotty Hall, Amherst, MA Merit Award in Analysis and Planning 2018 University of Massachusetts Design Building, Amherst, MA Merit Award in Analysis and Planning 2018

Concord Academy Athletic Fields, Concord, MA Merit Award in Design 2016

Forest Park, Lake Forest, IL Merit Award in Design 2016

Cove House, Quissett, MA Merit Award in Design 2015

Clyde Street Residence, Brookline, MA Merit Award in Design 2015

Flume Fountain, Sandwich, MA Honor Award in Design 2014

Northeast Harbor, Mount Desert Island, ME Honor Award in Design 2014

Woodland Residence, St. David's, PA Merit Award in Design 2014

Mary Soo Hoo Park, Boston, MA Merit Award in Design 2013

University of Connecticut Social Sciences, Storrs, CT Merit Award in Design 2013

Hardberger Park, San Antonio, TX Honor Award in Design 2012

University of Massachusetts Southwest Concourse, Amherst, MA Award of Excellence 2012

Buckingham Browne & Nichols, Cambridge, MA Merit Award in Design 2010

Chatham Residence, Chatham, MA Merit Award in Design 2010

Maple Hill, Westwood, MA Merit Award in Design 2010

Northeastern University International Village, Boston, MA Merit Award in Design 2010

Radcliffe Institute Sunken Garden, Cambridge, MA Merit Award in Historic Preservation, Restoration, or Rehabilitation 2010

Harvard Divinity School, Rockefeller Hall, Cambridge, MA Merit Award in Design 2009

International Fund for Animal Welfare, Yarmouth Port, MA Merit Award in Design 2009

Voelcker Park Master Plan, San Antonio, TX Honor Award for Analysis and Planning 2009

ACHIEVEMENTS

Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, Quissett, MA Merit Award in Design 2009

Bentley College Entry Quadrangle, Waltham, MA Merit Award in Design 2008

Turkey Hill Farm, North Salem, NY Honor Award in Design 2008

Chilmark Residence, Martha's Vineyard, MA Honor Award in Design 2007

Buzzards Bay Residence, Buzzards Bay, MA Honor Award in Design 2006

Greenwich Residence, Greenwich, CT Merit Award in Design 2006

Martha's Vineyard Residence, Chilmark, MA Honor Award in Design 2006

Canal Park, Washington, DC Merit Award in Unbuilt Works 2005

Harvard Science Center, Cambridge, MA Merit Award in Design 2005

Menomonee Park West, Milwaukee, WI Merit Award in Unbuilt Works 2005

Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution Master Plan, Quissett, MA Merit Award in Analysis and Planning 2002

Cape Cod Residence, Chatham, MA Merit Award in Design 2002

Hawk Rise, Nantucket, MA Honor Award in Design 2002

Additional Recognition

Forest Park, Lake Forest, IL Rehabilitation, Historic Preservation Award 2016

Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Studies Sunken Garden, Cambridge, MA Massachusetts Preservation Award 2011

Hardberger Park Master Plan, San Antonio, TX American Planning Association Award 2009

Society for College and University Planning

University of Massachusetts J. Olver Design Building, Amherst, MA Merit Award for Excellence in Landscape Architecture 2018

Boston College: Re-establishing Historic Identity, Chestnut Hill, MA Honor Award for Open Space Planning and Design 2016 University of Connecticut Social Sciences Buildings, Storrs, CT Merit Award for Open Space Planning and Design 2016

University of Massachusetts Southwest Concourse, Amherst, MA Honor Award of Excellence in Landscape Architecture 2014

Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution Master Plan, Quissett, MA Honor Award of Excellence in Landscape Architecture 2009

Select Publications

A Walk Through The Woods: The UMass Design Building Boston Society of Landscape Architects Fieldbook, Spring 2017

San Antonio Takes the Shot: Phil Hardberger Park Landscape Architecture Magazine, April 2017

Inside the Surprising Innovations of Sustainable Garden Design Architectural Digest, June 2017

Remnant to Whole: The University of Massachusetts Amherst Design Building Landscape Architecture Magazine, October 2017

The Inside Story of Pulaski Park Boston Society of Landscape Architects Fieldbook, Fall | Winter 2016

How Art Informs our Design Process Boston Society of Landscape Architects Fieldbook, Fall | Winter 2015

The Inspired Landscape: Twenty-One Leading Landscape Architects Explore the Creative Process by Susan Cohen, University of Massachusetts Southwest Concourse, 2015

Climate Control Dwell Magazine, April 2014

Yankee Ingenuity: Some Thoughts on a New England Practice Places Journal, Library of American Landscape History | Summer 2014

Private Edens: Beautiful Country Gardens by Jack Saub, Developing Interest, St. David's, PA, 2013

A Clearing in the Woods: Creating Contemporary Gardens by Roger Foley, Chilmark House Garden, 2009

Making the Modern Garden by Christopher Bradley-Hole, 2006

Ten Landscapes: Stephen Stimson Associates by James Grayson Trulove, 2002

The New American Swimming Pool, Cascade & Stone Meadow Pool Edited by James Grayson Trulove, 2001

Pocket Gardens Edited by James Grayson Trulove, Villa Pisano, Bungalow House, 2000

PRINCIPALS





EDWARD MARSHALL, FASLA

Edward Marshall has been the key design leader of many of the firm's landmark projects. Edward's craftsmanship and attention to detail at all stages of the design process reflect his belief that elegant and imaginative design infuses all levels of a project. His leadership and mentoring have inspired staff over the years, fostering a collaborative design environment.

Eddie's work is rooted in a minimalist typology where the elements of the composition: grading, sight lines, planting and context do not overwhelm, but are choreographed allowing each element to be understood in the design of the site. His designs feature an economy of materials and a frugal simplicity of forms by employing a limited number of elements, resulting in an uncluttered landscape allows users to take ownership of the site.

Eddie has been the Principal in charge for several projects such as Duke University Alumni Center, Case Western Reserve, Babson College Centennial Park, Sacred Heart University, Washington University Off-Campus Housing in St. Louis, MO, and Northeastern University International Village. Edward has lectured at the Landscape Design Symposium at Connecticut College and Morris Arboretum, the Centerbrook Architect Lecture Series and the UMass Zube Lecture series. Edward has also participated in design juries at the GSD and RISD throughout the years.

STEPHEN STIMSON, FASLA

Stephen has been practicing landscape architecture for over thirty years and is the founding Principal and Owner of STIMSON. Born and raised on a dairy farm, his agrarian heritage has inspired and shaped landscapes he has created across New England and the country. His work ranges from institutional campuses to public parks and residential gardens. He has an innate love for plants, materials and craftsmanship and has led his firm to explore new ways of using traditional materials to create site specific landscapes that span the urban and rural realm. Stephen remains passionately involved in design and projects at all levels throughout the studio and loves to draw by hand.

Over the past fifteen years, he has been cultivating Charbrook Nursery on his family's historic dairy farm for project use and field research related to native plant propagation, collected species, planted form and soil specifications. He oversees Charbrook Nursery and Farm alongside his wife, and believes in the significance of establishing a live+work model.

Over the years, he has taught at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, the University of Massachusetts Amherst and Roger Williams University, lectured widely across the northeast and abroad, and his work has been published in dozens of books and periodicals. He is a dedicated member of the American Farmland Trust and the Massachusetts Audubon Society. In 2004, Stephen was elected a Fellow by the American Society of Landscape Architects for his outstanding achievements in the field of Landscape Architecture.





LAUREN STIMSON, ASLA

Lauren holds a Master of Landscape Architecture and a Master of Regional Planning from the University of Massachusetts Amherst where she focused on the design and research of cultural landscapes. She received her B.A. from Bates College where she studied Theater and Geology. She is a licensed Landscape Architect in the state of Maine.

Lauren has focused on projects that integrate cultural landscape interpretation with ecological restoration. She firmly believes in landscape architecture's responsibility to be contextual. In the studio, Lauren has led the design on a variety of projects ranging from parks, museums, campus work and gardens and is passionate about modeling placebased design and regionalism. She believes in a sustainable integration of motherhood and practice and has established a progressive, flexible culture to support working parents and families in general at STIMSON.

Lauren has been a studio instructor and critic at the University of Massachusetts, lectured at schools such as Smith, Bowdoin, UMass, as well as with the Ecological Landscape Alliance and the Native Plant Trust. She currently serves on the Stewardship Council for the Cultural Landscape Foundation and the Town of Princeton's Agricultural Commission. She is dedicated to the preservation and education of agrarian landscapes in New England. Lauren is an avid painter and uses oil painting to document the character of regional landscapes and patterns that inform her design thinking as a landscape architect.

GLEN VALENTINE, ASLA

Glen is a landscape architect with more than twenty-five years of experience in the field. He started his career in Annapolis, Maryland, designing public spaces celebrating the history and ecology of the Chesapeake Bay region. After relocating to Boston, he has continued to explore the narrative and sculptural potential of landscape form in public spaces, including campuses, parks, arboreta, and memorials. Glen's design skill also extends to the community and civic engagement that is integral to design in the public realm. In recent years, he has led a vast majority of the studio's recent public park and community engagement projects.

Glen received his undergraduate degree from Haverford College where he studied urban planning, art history and sculpture and earned his Master's degree in landscape architecture from the University of Virginia. He continues to participate in the diverse academic life of the New England area by serving as a design critic, teaching studios, and lecturing at area universities including the Harvard Graduate School of Design, the Boston Architectural College, Northeastern University and Roger Williams University. Glen has also delivered lectures at conferences hosted by the BLSA, ASLA and SCUP in collaboration with engineers, soil scientists, architects, and his institutional partners. Glen is a licensed Landscape Architect and LEED Certified Professional.





JOE WAHLER, ASLA

Joe is a recognized leader in creative and progressive design detailing, material application, and execution of innovative and performative landscapes. Joe is a licensed landscape architect and has twenty years of experience and is recognized for his effective communication of concepts and details throughout the design, delivery, and establishment of projects. He has led a variety of projects including the new Science and Engineering Complex at Harvard University's Allston campus, the reconstruction of Forest Park in Lake Forest, IL and the Heritage Flume in Sandwich, MA.

Joe has lectured and presented extensively on the vital collaboration between client, designer, contractor, manufacturer, artisan, and caretaker. His appreciation for the contributions of his collaborators stems from his experiences growing up, beginning at age seven, on his father's golf course grounds crew gaining experience in horticulture and an appreciation for the execution of site management and preservation. This opportunity fostered an admiration for the minimalism of earthworks and an understanding of the primary materials of landscape; soil, water, and plants.

Joe received a Master in Landscape Architecture from The Ohio State University and a B.S. in Horticulture from the University of Illinois and was awarded the American Society of Landscape Architecture's Merit of Excellence in the Study of Landscape Architecture, the Walter L. Chambers '29 Scholarship in Landscape Architecture, and inducted in the Phi Alpha Xi Honorary Horticulture Society.

STONE MEADOW MARTHA'S VINEYARD, MA American Society of Landscape Architects Award of Excellence 2005

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HERITAGE FLUME SANDWICH, MA AMERICAN SOCIETY OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS AWARD OF EXCELLENCE 2019 N. 1

PULASKI PARK NORTHAMPTON, MA AMERICAN SOCIETY OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS HONOR AWARD 2018

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