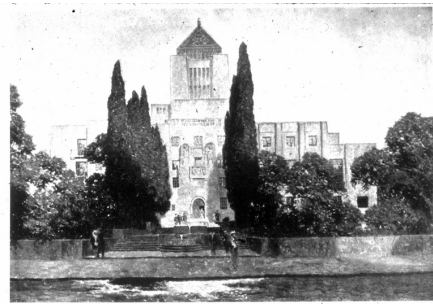


MAGUIRE GARDENS

The Los Angeles Central Library West Lawn (Maguire Gardens) has been recognized since its completion as a place significant to the civic and cultural life of Los Angeles and as part of a restoration of a nationally important landmark. Since 1993, as in 1926, today's Maguire Gardens exemplifies the conception of the Central Library as building AND garden – a vibrant gathering place and powerful symbol of the value of commitment to the public realm.

The Los Angeles Central Library's original unified conception, in 1926, was as a work of art, architecture, and landscape. It was intended by its patrons, the cultural and civic leaders of Los Angeles, and architects Bertrand Grosvenor Goodhue and Carlton M. Winslow, to be "a building in a park."

The guiding architectural theme of "the light of learning" originated with philosopher Hartley B. Alexander and artists including Sculptor Lee Lawrie and muralists Albert Herter and Dean Cornwall. It was expressed throughout the composition from interior murals and frescoes to exterior decorative building sculpture, inscriptions, and finishes, extending out to the landscape design of both the Library's East and West Lawns.



The original design of the West Lawn was organized on an axis from the Library's central west portal extending in a series of descending pools – culminating on Flower Street in the "Well of the Scribes" – flanked by stepped terraces, rows of Italian cypresses and other plantings in the manner of Mediterranean and Middle Eastern gardens. During World War II, a corner of the original West Lawn was used for trailers for War Bond sales. Library staff's subsequent demands for convenient automobile parking led to that corner staying asphalt, not grass. By the late 1960s, the replacement of virtually the entire West Lawn landscape by asphalt for staff parking was complete.

In the 1970s and early 1980s, real estate developers and their City allies sought to redevelop the strategically located Central Library property as high-rise commercial office buildings and to relocate the library books to a new facility elsewhere. These attempts were met, first, with the naming of the building to the National Register of Historic Places (1970) and, then, with a successful campaign -- of historic preservationists and others that included the community's newly formed local preservation organization and a local chapter of a design professionals' organization -- to actually save the historic Library.

In this era before there even was an "11 Most Endangered" list, the proposal to demolish Central Library and its gardens generated national controversy, including the following August 16, 1981, Letter to the Editor of the *Los Angeles Times* [italics are from the original]: "Downtown Los Angeles has a paucity of public monuments always attractive to us East Coasters. . . . But you do have your Central Library, which is one of the finest works by America's leading architect of his day -- Bertram Goodhue.

The Library and *its garden* is an oasis that gives point to your downtown . . . The whole unit must be preserved, the Library *and* its garden! . . . Please, even if just for us New Yorkers, save the Library! - PHILIP JOHNSON, New York."



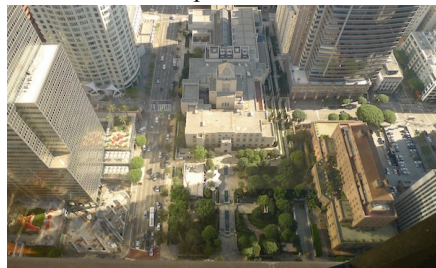
The nation-wide cry for the Central Library's preservation was heard in Los Angeles, and under the banner of a new, *ad hoc* preservation group organized for that purpose, Los Angeles community leaders rallied local officials to save the historic property in the context of a restoration and expansion plan that involved complicated financing, including a sale of land and a transfer of development rights to local developer Maguire Thomas Partners ("Maguire").

The new proposal did save most of the historic Central Library building, in a rehabilitation and expansion plan designed by an architectural team. However, the original East Lawn landscaped space on Grand Avenue had to be replaced by the added library square footage, largely underground and with a three-story atrium above. An associated proposal was to allow Maguire to create a 100,000 square-foot, semi-submerged retail mall in the West Lawn space (the space completely paved for parking by the late 1960s). The community opposed this proposal. Consequently, many of the entities comprising the *ad hoc* preservation group that had stopped the Central Library demolition evolved themselves into a new community association whose goal was specifically to eliminate the shopping mall idea and, instead, see a restoration of the Central Library's original, 1926, West Lawn gardens, terraces, and pools.

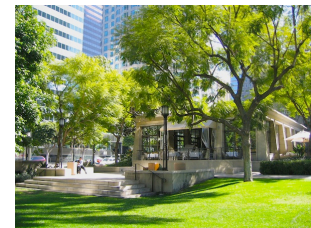
The West Lawn portion of the Library project site was sold to Maguire in 1987 for construction of a new, four-story underground parking structure, with new landscaped public open space to be at street level. Maguire both financed and served as the client for the design and development of the rehabilitated West Lawn gardens. Because of the involvement of a local government agency in the site's sale and the transfer of development rights and other aspects of the Central Library's complicated rehabilitation and expansion, there was a much greater public participation process than an owner like Maguire (or its design consultants) might usually encounter. As a result, the new community association that advocated the historic gardens' restoration became a *de facto* second client overseeing the design of the new West Lawn.



In 1986, Maguire had retained Lawrence Halprin as landscape architect and Campbell & Campbell as associate landscape architects to create the new design for the West Lawn parcel. Early in the process, differences arose in the landscape design team as to the extent to which the original, 1926, concept would be carried forward, with the Campbell & Campbell favoring a stronger reference to the Goodhue design and the Halprin favoring a more contemporary and expressionistic approach. The new community association preferred the historic approach of the Campbell & Campbell.



The ultimate outcome of this collaboration reflects a blending of ideas, with Campbell & Campbell's influence being seen in the carrying forward of the original geometries of the main terraces and pools and the character of the planting design, and Halprin's signature being evident in an added north-south axis and a large, contemporary fountain.



In addition to these features resulting from the resolution of conflicting philosophies, an array of design challenges was met in actually renewing the original design to address new programmatic and physical factors including: changes in the physical environment of the site, primarily that the new garden would be built over an underground parking structure; social concerns such as the introduction of a café as a generator of desirable activity; and meeting new standards in providing unobtrusive universal access.

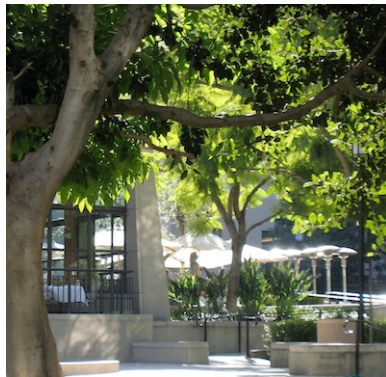
To honor the financier and developer, a city entity in 1993 renamed the West Lawn as the “Robert F. Maguire III Gardens.” Since 1993, Maguire Gardens has been enjoyed as a vibrant gathering place in the city and a complement to the restored Central Library.

Maguire Gardens is appreciated as a living expression of city culture and as an argument for a sustained commitment to a vibrant public realm. Its success in many ways results from its being a “conversation between the generations” as is Goodhue’s Central Library building.

As Dickens would have it, the Maguire Gardens, like all gardens, speaks to us:

“I will live in . . . the Past, the Present and the Future. The spirits of all Three shall strive within me.”

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Credits:

Lead Designers: Lawrence Halprin, FASLA Douglas Campbell, ASLA; Regula Campbell, AIA

Landscape Architect of Record: Lawrence Halprin, FASLA

Client/Owner: MPG Office Trust – to 12/ 2014;
O.U.E. 12/2014 – present

West Lawn Coalition (John H. Welborne, Coordinator, and: American Institute of Architects Los Angeles Chapter Cultural Heritage Committee, Scott Carde, AIA; Los Angeles Conservancy, Ruthann Lehrer; Los Angeles Beautiful, Inc., Virginia M. Baldwin; Bernard Judge, AIA, Member, City of Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Commission; Friends of the East and West Lawns, Phoebe T. Wall, AIA, and William D. Ross, Esq.; Janet Marie Smith, Pershing Square Management Association; Albert C. Martin, FAIA; and Emmet L. Wemple, FASLA)

Maguire Thomas Partners – owner, developer, and manager of the West Lawn (Robert F. Maguire III; James A. Thomas; Nelson C. Rising; Richard I. Gilchrist; Timothy H. Walker; James R. Anderson; Robert P. Goodwin; Stephen Achorn) - to 12/2014

Hines – property managers, (Leia Jensen)

Gilchrist & Rutter – owner’s legal counsel for West Lawn management (Jonathan S. Gross, Esq.)

Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer Associates – architect for the rehabilitation and expansion of the Central Library and the West Lawn owner’s architectural consultant for the West Lawn (Norman Pfeiffer, FAIA, and Stephen Johnson, FAIA)

Backen, Arrigoni and Ross – architects for the West Lawn restaurant building (Howard J. Backen, FAIA)

Jud Fine – sculptor, *Spine* central axis sculptural elements steps and pools

Jud Fine and Lawrence Halprin, FASLA – *Grotto Fountain of Democratic Principles*

Laddie John Dill and Mineo Mizuno – sculptors, *Nature’s Analogy* fountain

City of Los Angeles: Board of Library Commissioners (Douglas R. Ring, Chairman); Department of Public Works, Bureau of Engineering (William A. Holland and Stan Y. Morimoto, Sr.); Community Redevelopment Agency (Edward Helfeld; Donald W. Cosgrove; A. Jeffrey Skorneck; Mickey Gustin)

