ERIC F. KRAMER
Cambridge, Massachusetts

The Walter Gropius House Landscape

A Collaboration of Modernism and the Vernacular

The Gropius house landscape is a potent physical manifestation of the design debates of its era. The landscape is an element of both mediation and integration forging a reciprocal and evenhanded relationship between architecture and site. Shaped by modern architectural sensibilities translated to the landscape and developed at a moment when landscape architecture was struggling to find a modernist inspiration and voice, it is an object lesson in the development of a modernist landscape architecture in America.

When Walter and Ise Gropius designed and built their house in Lincoln, Massachusetts, in 1938, it was seen as a manifesto of modernist architectural design. Melding the ideals of the German Bauhaus (which Gropius had directed until 1928) with the materials and typologies of traditional New England residential design, Walter and Ise set out to prove that modernism could adapt to any ground.[1] Treating their home as a showcase for Gropius's Harvard students and America at large, they made concrete a vision of modern architecture in America.[2]

Whereas the design ideals from which the house takes its form have been documented in the architectural literature,[3] the landscape associated with the house has remained almost invisible to casual observers, architects, landscape architects, and scholars alike. Moreover, in the past decade, while a burgeoning literature on the relationship between architecture and landscape has focused on the work of Gropius's contemporaries, his work, especially at his own home, has not been studied in these terms.

A careful reading of archival documentation and the site itself demonstrates that Walter and Ise Gropius undertook a deliberate integration of the house with the existing landscape through the intentional design of an intermediary space — the garden. They formed their garden, like the house Walter designed,[4] out of simple vernacular materials abstracted into crisp elemental forms, creating a series of relatively unornamented indoor-outdoor spaces designed to meet their family's needs and negotiate a thickly layered relationship between the house and its site. Understood as a whole, the garden suggests a clear, logical, and distinctly modern philosophy about the landscape. Three ideas underpin this philosophy: rooting design in the expression of functionality through the use of vernacular elements best suited to the site and the task, conceptualizing the landscape as an integrated living system, and recognizing the landscape as the sum of ecological and historical layering that includes contemporary acts. This philosophy, a natural outgrowth of his architectural philosophy, places Gropius in closer proximity to the landscape architects who in the late 1930s were just beginning to find a landscape architectural voice for modernism than to the modernist architects who were his own contemporaries.

A Landscape Intention

Walter Gropius was a prolific writer. Promoting his architectural principles of flexible spatial planning, design according to function, and reliance on the potentials of mass production, he focused little attention on landscape. Foreshadowing the garden in Lincoln, however, in the 1933 article "The House of New Lines," he did describe the interaction of architecture and landscape and the garden's placement at the nexus of the two:

> Of similar importance to the harmonic formulation of the building structure itself is the correct integration of the home into the landscape, into the garden. . . . The arrangement of the plant environment, the diversion of the green masses, the trees and shrubs in their relationship to the house and to its living functions require just as careful treatment as the grouping of the building mass itself. The interspersion of tree and plant growth between the building forms, which opens and closes the view, guarantees appropriate contrast, relaxes and enlivens the scheme, mediates between building and person, and creates tension and scale; for architecture does not exhaust itself in the fulfillment of its goals unless we observe as the purpose of a higher order the psychic needs according to harmonic space, according to the harmony and mass of the parts, which make the space truly living.[5]

As Gropius wrote, he and Ise practiced at their own home. The Gropius house is not simply a monument to itself set at the crest of a hill, nor is it a house and associated garden set in a larger unrelated landscape. Although certainly intended to serve as a focal point, the house was conceived as an organic part of the landscape — as one unit arranged by common principles determined by and interwoven with the underlying character and organization of the surrounding landscape.[6] (Figure 1.) The house does not cease at its thermal boundary but dissolves subtly into the space around it. The garden does not end at the exterior walls of the house, but clings to the architectural elements and

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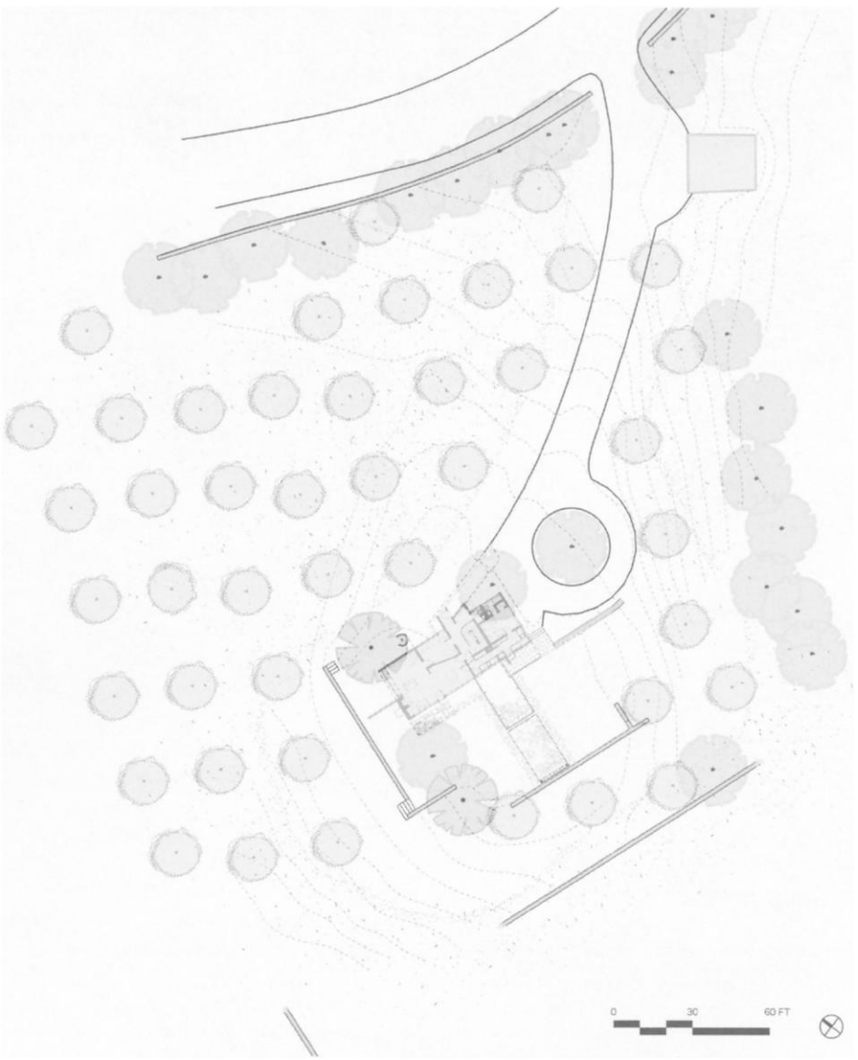
1. Only a small break was made in the existing stone wall along rural Baker Bridge Road to allow access through the orchard to the house. (Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities (SPNEA) library and archives, c. 1940.)

2. The unified horizon of grass allowed to grow rough between semi-annual mowings helped connect the horizontal lines of the house with those of the landscape. From the SPNEA collection of slides owned by Gropius and apparently taken by a member of the Gropius family. (SPNEA library and archives, undated.)

penetrates its spaces. A screened porch sits recessed into the mass of the building, a roof terrace is engulfed in bittersweet and overhung with Concord grape, and large planes of glass bring the constantly shifting light and shade of the landscape to the interior of the living quarters. In the same way, the garden does not end abruptly with a set of bounding walls; rather, it weaves itself with the fabric of its surroundings with zones of diminishing control and cultivation expanding from the house outward into the landscape. (Figure 2.)

The house, garden, and landscape developed from what Walter described as a common "higher order" into a "truly living" system of spaces that function in both mechanical and experiential terms. Recalling Bauhaus ideals of integration, architecture and landscape are envisioned as players in a "universal unity," one that linked the various art and design fields, the academy and craftsmanship, form and function, and design and ideas.[7] It is no surprise then that he would see architecture and landscape as expressing a unified concept, that he would think of the house as necessarily set in balance with its site, and that through design he would develop his own home as a component within a functioning and unified system.[8] The symbiotic relationship of architecture and landscape in Lincoln approximates the highest order of functionality, an ecological system in balance.[9]

For Walter and Ise, this process of integration began even before breaking ground for the house. They scrutinized the existing landscape of orchard, wetland, and mountain views for cues to its development. "Every evening we would wander to watch the sunset from our new property and we would plot which way the windows would have to face to take the best advantage of the light and views," remembered Ise in 1977.[10] Crafting a structure tuned to the specificity of site and local conditions, they chose forms and materials from the New England architectural vernacular, and the farmhouse in particular.[11] Its functional siting and design, its economical use of materials, and its adaptability dovetailed with their own ideology that called for



3. Conjectural site plan illustrating site at the end of the 1940s. Compiled from archival plans and contemporary site reconnaissance by author.

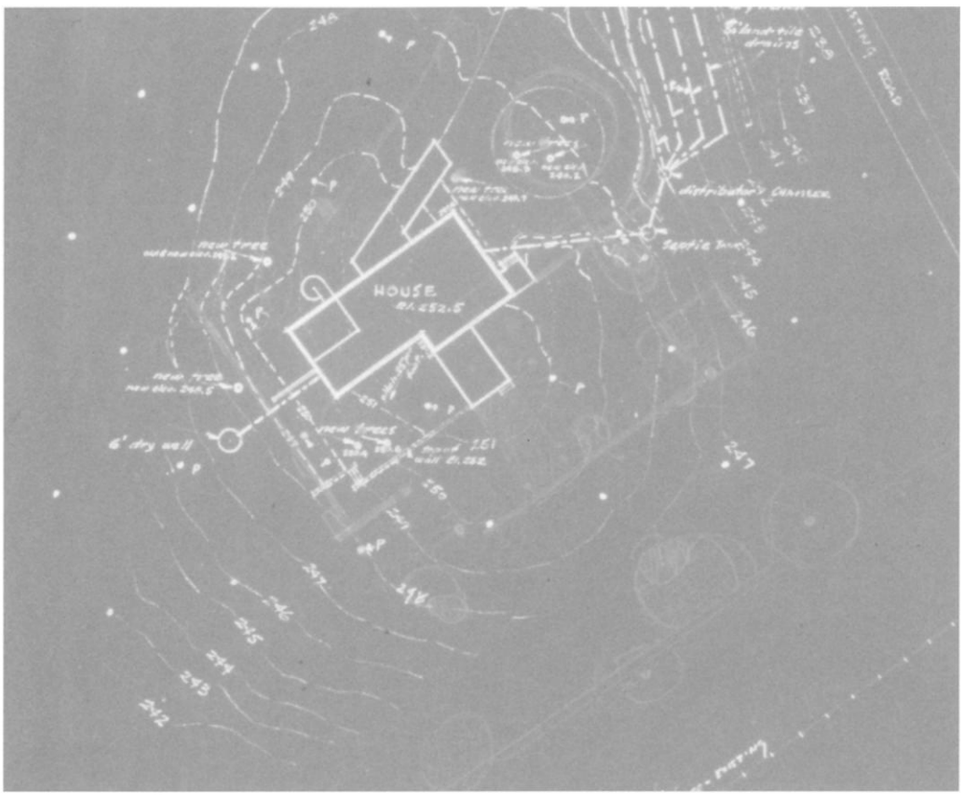
the design of unornamented structures uniquely suited to their tasks and settings.

The hilltop site they chose among others they were originally offered was one with a well-ordered apple orchard overlaying the land. Site development drawings reveal that the Gropiuses removed as few orchard trees as possible for the insertion of the house and that workers were directed to protect those remaining.[12] The facts that Walter carefully drew the orchard on each of his site plans, that they protected the trees, and that they selected this site among other adjacent sites suggest that they appreciated and even may have been drawn to the existing order of the site. Working within this structure, they directed a delicate insertion even before construction of the house began. Plans, photographs, and correspondence reveal that, in the fall of 1937, the family transplanted a half-dozen large trees to the site from neighboring land.[13] Closer to the house than any good farmer or gardener would recommend, the trees do more than offer the shade and protection of a farmer's windbreak. Their arching canopies frame and protect the crest of the hill, creating a sympathetic volume of space for the insertion of the house, anchoring it to the crest of the land before the slope falls away on all sides. (Figure 3.)

Plans recently uncovered in the archive of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities (SPNEA) reinforce the evidence that the Gropiuses were considering the design of the landscape as they were planning the house.[14] While a single low stone wall extending across the south (rear) façade of the house was drawn in both the plan and a perspective sketch of the same period, this configuration was not built during the initial construction phase in 1938. The blueprints, however, contain overlaid sketches in colored pencil for a number of other wall arrangements including the one that was ultimately built in 1941 or 1942 (Figure 4), suggesting that, in the intervening years, Walter was carefully planning the realization of these walls and the garden space they would define.

This set of low stone retaining walls is key in further connecting the house to its site. After defining a level plinth of fairly formal space behind the house, the walls split and shift, letting the land of the plinth slip smoothly at its edges into a meadow below and linking the two spaces together. Parallel to two existing fieldstone boundary walls that predate the house, these walls suggest a connection to the historic order of the site and, like the orchard, recall the site's agricultural past. The stone foundation walls of the house are in turn parallel to these landscape walls, setting the entire composition — house, garden, and existing landscape — in taut alignment. The New England stone wall — historically the refuse from clearing fields and used to delineate property boundaries — was a marriage of form and function. In Gropius's hands, that form was imbued with programmatic, experiential, and conceptual roles while being elevated to graphic simplicity. Breaking with the tradition of dry stacking, the walls were set with mortar and capped with a layer of flagstone set flush with the plinth of lawn to facilitate mowing.[15] This adds a level of graphic precision and refinement to the wall that echoes the pure lines and precise edges of the house.

The multiple iterations in the studied placement of the landscape walls likely correspond with changes in the design of the house and highlight



4. The appearance of the walls in this previously unpublished blueprint suggests the early importance of the landscape to Gropius. Note the light pencil sketches of alternative layouts for the walls. (SPNEA library and archives, undated but probably 1938–1942.)

how deliberately Walter and Ise worked on house and garden as a fully conceived and unified system. This relationship is also clearly articulated in the systematic linking of inside and outside through the use of consistent methods of spatial organization. Malleable yet proportionally interrelated spaces are formed both inside and out with furnishings, permeable walls, screens, and changes of ground surface. Defining outdoor spaces or "garden rooms," the screened porch and adjacent planting bed bisect the rear yard into two spaces, both measuring approximately 25 feet by 50 feet. To the east, the space is open, expansive, playful, and seems to flow outward to the wetlands and field. To the west, the space is introspectively shady and enclosed by a second-story arbor and the thick foliage of a red oak. Within this space is a 90-degree perceptual shift under the canopy of the oak out to views of Mount Wachuset to the north. The experience of the landscape here is one of unfolding and revealing. This is analogous to the experience of the house, in which logical but multiple connections between rooms with related functions create a natural sense of flow. As one slips through the walls of the house and out onto the garden plinth, the exterior rooms share a logic of connection with those of the interior and with each other — the shady and introspective lawn off of the living room, the screened porch that was often used for meals set between the dining room and the kitchen.

The structure and material of the house actively appear to reach outward, making further connections to the landscape. Overhanging arbors create dramatic shadows across the white siding and extend the roofline of the house over a small flagstone patio. Trellises extend like natural appendages off the end walls of the house, give a low center of gravity to the building, and connect it solidly to the sloping land. Carefully placed trees further extend the lines and volumes of the architecture out into the landscape. On the west wall, the brick chimney, a two-story corner column, and a transplanted oak tree form a sort of colonnade linking house and garden. (Figure 5.) As one inhabits and explores the garden rooms, the lines of planting that extend from the lines of the house, the dynamic outgrowths of the trellises, and the landform that slides between the retaining walls converge to forge a palpable connection between the individual, the architecture, and the living, changing landscape beyond.

The projecting screened porch serves as an explicitly transitional element within this system, one that fully expresses the overlapping of the house and garden, of interior and exterior space. Covered by the projecting roof and fully screened, surrounded on three sides by garden space, open to prevailing breezes, and with a view directed out into the landscape, the porch is a thickened physical threshold. The floor of the porch seems to slide out from that of the house, set between the grade of the first floor and the grade of the garden. The porch also establishes a visual axis connecting the house and garden with the larger landscape beyond. Two columns, aligned with and matching the tubular steel columns that line the edge of the porch and support the roof, were set apart from the porch over a small garden bed to create a framing device. (Figures 6 and 7.) The columns terminate the garden bed, frame the view out into the landscape, and insert the structured ordering system of the house into the vital ever-modulating system of the landscape. The columns enclosing the porch mark the foreground — the space of the viewer. The extruded lines of the planted bed and the stepping-stone paths on either side mark a middle ground, a space the viewer can easily occupy with a few farther steps. The columns at the end of the garden then frame the distant view, suggesting a canvas stretched over the plane of the stone walls, hung right against the garden's edge. This moment marks both a boundary — an enclosing backdrop to the living space — and a connection, as the surrounding landscape is pulled right into the garden.[16]

As Walter had written, it was the structure of the garden that would "mediate between the building and the person" and lead to the integration "of home into the landscape, into the garden." The site's most enduring landscape elements, the walls, are also the most potent illustration of this spatial

5. The rear yard adjacent to the living and dining room is a shady enclosed space. Note the alignment of the brick wall, the steel column, and the oak tree. (Photo by author, 2003.)

and conceptual construction. According to Ise, the walls "delineate the outdoor space without actually enclosing it."[17] They allude to an edge to the space of the garden without requiring one. Like the "ha-ha" of the eighteenth-century English landscape, these walls pull the surrounding landscape right up to their edges, allowing it to brush up against the cultivated garden space.[18] Here, however, the walls are visible, not hidden, as if to reciprocate the process by extending the orthogonal artifice of the architecture back out into the landscape as well. With the walls located based on the existing site structure, the house and garden both inform and are informed by the surrounding landscape. As such, the house and garden that the Gropiuses built and the landscape that they stewarded are consistent with a larger concept of unity and wholeness expressed in Walter's writings. For him it was critical that the architecture become part of an existing organic system, its formal expression derived from the development of the most efficient and harmonious overlay of design for, in this case, residential life. In turn, the elements of landscape design were to come from the materials most suited to their tasks, in this case, like the house, from the time-tested New England vernacular.

With this rich history, why then has the landscape of the Gropius house been neglected up to this point? It could be because it is a layered interior and exterior landscape without distinct edges or because it was formed of vernacular elements. It could be because it was not imageable within a single frame and because Walter and Ise worked the site themselves and allowed it to evolve over time. The garden did not attempt to stand out. It served its functions: the demarcation of habitable space and the integration of architecture within a larger living system of rural landscape. In the final analysis, Walter and Ise were not designers of a static sculptural expression but self-conscious stewards of a continuing ecological and cultural process of which they were a part. They were farmers on a small scale. They were, quite simply, gardeners.

6. Two steel columns mark the end of the garden bed, frame the view into the landscape, and repeat the architectural form and material of the screened porch. Also note the different character of the outdoor rooms on either side of the porch. (Photo by author, 1998.)

7. Walter and Ise Gropius enjoy a meal on the screened porch in 1948. (Photo by Robert Damora.)

Locating a Place in Landscape History

The Gropius house is monument enough to architecture's long struggle to reconcile interior and exterior space, yet it is also instructive as a landscape architectural model and should be situated within the literature. Indeed, Walter Gropius was applying modernist architectural ideals to the practice of landscape design at the same time that the discipline of landscape architecture was searching for its own expression of modernism. Relationships between these two parallel investigations can be drawn at formal and conceptual levels. Formally, the landscape elements used by the Gropiuses — the permeable screen, the underlying grid, the rarified plinth, the fractured yet ordered retaining walls — represent key typologies that would come to define a certain practice of American landscape modernism. Conceptually, the relationship of the Gropius house to its environment — as expressed in the relationships between form and function, between modernism and the vernacular, and between artifice and nature — suggests a distinctive resolution to the central polemics shaping the emerging modernist school of American landscape architecture.

In the years leading up to 1938, a few American landscape architects were struggling in their writings and projects to frame a modernist practice. What is striking, however, is that, although limited and varied, these investigations ultimately developed a fairly consistent design vocabulary.

Christopher Tunnard represents a central figure in this process, catalyzing the previously dispersed call for modernism in the garden with the publication of his polemical and influential *Gardens in the Modern Landscape* in 1938. Framing a response to the transformed social, cultural, and political ideals of the time, Tunnard proposed "three sources of inspiration the modern designer has at his disposal — those of 'functionalism,' the oriental influence and modern art."[19] Joseph Hudnut, the dean of the Graduate School of Design played another important role, bringing Gropius and then Tunnard to Harvard as part of his project to modernize the teaching of design. While Gropius transformed the

architecture department, Hudnut faced stronger opposition in a landscape faculty resistant to change.[20] Acting as a bridge between architecture and landscape, in a 1940 essay he proposed the dissolving of "the ancient boundary between architecture and landscape architecture." Writing in largely formal terms and using many of the modern catchphrases, he described the modern garden as one that "flows into and over the house, through loggias and courts and wide areas of clear glass, and over roofs and sun-rooms and canopied terraces" and the modern house as one that "reaches out into the garden with walls and terraced enclosures that continue its rhythms and share its grace. The concordant factor is the new quality given to space."[21]

Taken together, these early texts and their associated photographs present a consistent image of what would come to be called the modern landscape and succinctly describe its early practice. The now familiar vocabulary consisted of a breaking away from historical styles, the avoidance of the single axis, the spatially derived arrangement of the garden as opposed to by plan, the integration with architecture based on program and function, and the articulation of landscape elements as crisp abstract lines or shapes that resonated with the forms of modernist art or architecture. Working in parallel although often separate spheres, landscape designers interested in modernism were following through on the same investigations as Walter and Ise. Seeking a modern functional and engaged expression for the garden, it should not be surprising that the spatial and material vocabulary of the Gropius house landscape parallels that which was emerging among landscape architects at the time.

Early in the Gropius/Hudnut years at Harvard and in the years before Tunnard's arrival, the student trio of Dan Kiley, Garrett Eckbo, and James Rose began to seek out a modern landscape architecture from sources outside the conservative landscape architecture department. These early investigations and their practice over the coming decades represent the foundation stones for a modernist practice in America. Although a series of important essays Rose published in *Pencil Points* in 1938 are often cited in discussions of the rise of modernism in American landscape design, it is another series of essays written by all three students that transcend a formal discussion of landscape design and set the stage for a more complete and unified philosophy about the modern landscape, one that resonates with the philosophy underlying the landscape for Gropius in Lincoln.[22]

In *Architectural Record* in 1938 and 1939, Kiley, Eckbo, and Rose wrote of a landscape continuum spanning the urban, rural, and primeval environments. One essay described each environment, focusing on how the work of landscape architecture could be woven into the particularities of each system in the most efficient and effective ways to provide infrastructure for recreation, education, and transportation. Designed form developed from functional requirements "in organic relation to use, circulation, topography, and existing elements in the landscape."[23] To Kiley, Eckbo, and Rose, design and planning were part of a layered history of intervention within the landscape. Citing the farmer, lessons were to be found in the structure and function of the vernacular landscape, and to intervene in new ways was no offense. The text developed ideas of functionalism into almost ecological terms, integrating design with everyday life, positioning landscape architecture as a necessary and wide-ranging discipline, and expanding its role for modern times.[24]

Two things stand out about these essays in the context of a discussion of the Gropius house. First, the three landscape architects, like Gropius, were consciously investigating the landscape as a living, working system. Second, they recognized design as active and additive, not hidden, writing, "[w]e may as well accept the fact that man's activities change and dominate the landscape; it does not follow that they should spoil it."[25] Sounding similar themes in a 1942 joint studio problem for landscape and architecture, Walter wrote of the inspiration of the vernacular landscape and of integrating with existing systems: "Such a landscape invites the artist planner to observe and preserve its variety of aspects, and to invent a settlement pattern that fits into its natural beauty. Fortunately our forefathers have already traced out a settlement pattern that fits very well into the landscape."[26] In these studio problems, Gropius consistently encouraged students to find new form in the functional requirements of modern times and yet to integrate with existing systems through an understanding of their own functionally driven evolution.

This struggle to integrate design within existing systems while marking a new site for human habitation ordered to modern living would continue to drive modern landscape architecture for decades to come. In Kiley's well-known built work in particular, architectural elements weave with the existing dynamics of the landscape to frame a site for habitation making the garden both a part of and distinct within a larger landscape system. His gardens are never hidden in a naturalistic cloak and yet they do not stand in stark contrast to the existing landscape. Instead, like at the Gropius house, the gardens recognize, as Kiley has said, that "it is not man *and* nature. It's not man *with* nature. Man is nature, just like the trees. Both live and grow. I see man in his highest civilized, and hopefully cultured, way being evident in his imprint on the universe."[27] It is a sentiment that describes most simply the approach that Gropius first took in the design of his own landscape some thirty years earlier.

Although it may be impossible to parse historical influences from this complicated moment when the Gropiuses built their home and modern landscape architecture was finding its own voice, it is revealing simply to consider the penumbra of landscape-based design ideas that would have been cast over Harvard's Robinson Hall in those days. Working separately, but within a pervasive school of thought, Gropius, Hudnut, Tunnard, and these young landscape architects were arriving at a similar formal and ideological synthesis of landscape design

and modernist thought, one that would sustain and expand the practice of landscape architecture over the following half century.

Concluding by Way of Architecture

As landscape architecture's understanding of its own modern history has grown over the last decade, a growing volume of architectural literature has attempted to describe the practices of architects like Mies van der Rohe, Richard Neutra, Rudolf Schindler, and Frank Lloyd Wright within landscape architectural terms.[28] That Walter Gropius is markedly absent from the discourse is particularly significant given that the work at his house represents a strategy of relating architecture to landscape that is uncommon among the work of his contemporaries. One would not describe the house as "of the earth," built directly from or designed to merge with the materiality and geological structure of the landscape as are those of Frank Lloyd Wright. Nor would one immediately describe the house as transparent, dissolving visual boundaries between indoor and out through floor-to-ceiling glass as in many of the houses of Neutra, Mies, or Schindler. While in many ways these two strategies are different from each other, they share one important thing: they both derive their relationship with the environment from the romantic conception of nature as the "other," as something outside of the human realm.

By contrast, the Gropius house is rendered out of an appreciation of the sedimentary strata of humanity's attempt to frame its place within functioning natural systems. Through the garden it builds a functioning middle ground to interweave the two. From a foreground of architectural elements framed by foliage, across the lines of stone walls criss-crossing the open fields, to the wooded edge and then to distant views to the hills and mountains beyond, there is an incremental diminution in scale, detail, and refinement that mimics the scale of human intervention in relation to the landscape. Placed tautly within this framework, the house embodies its inhabitants' conception of their own place within the larger landscape. In the end, Gropius not only allowed his architecture to be defined by the existing order of the landscape, he used his architecture to abstract and amplify that order, giving the house and garden specificity to site and delineating a formative role for his architecture upon its context.

For Walter and Ise, landscape served not as a symbol of nature but represented a larger palimpsest of processes or systems in which the designer recognized the reality and value of humankind's historical role in the shaping of site.[29] The primary elements of landscape — those of geological and ecological process, climate, and even human intervention — were each engaged evenhandedly as formative influences on the house and garden. The architecture achieved a "historical thickness," a term that David Leatherbarrow uses to describe the work of Greek architect Aris Konstantinidis.[30] It fit into its location because its forms and materials were direct responses to site conditions, as the vernacular architecture has adapted over centuries to local conditions. At the Gropius house, the physical and pictorial layering of space in the landscape does not create distance between humans and nature. Instead, it is the metaphor by which we take measure of the layered histories and contexts of the site framing a powerful middle ground that bridges the dual roles of the garden, those of demarcation and integration.

Acknowledgments

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Notes

1. The history of the house and landscape in Lincoln points to an intimate collaboration between husband and wife. It is clear that Walter and Ise often collaborated on projects. In the house, a single long desk provided space for the two of them to work side by side, and Ise often assisted Walter in translating his writing into English. Although this paper will, throughout, recognize that both Walter and Ise played a significant role in the development and care of the garden, neither the form nor extent of the collaboration are explored here. Rather, the text explores the landscape/architecture relationship through its material expression, through writings and drawings, and through a discussion of contemporary developments at Harvard and beyond.
2. Gropius House guest book. Collection of Ati Johansen, photocopy in SPNEA library and archives.
3. Surprisingly, although much has been written about Gropius and his design ideals and a number of works consider his home in Lincoln in brief, there is little contemporary literature about the house itself. Standard references include Winfried Nerdinger, *Walter Gropius* (Cambridge, MA: Busch-Reisinger Museum, 1985), and Sigfried Giedion, *Walter Gropius* (New York: Reinhold, 1954). The numerous publications describing the house after its construction include "House at Lincoln, Mass," *Architectural Review* (Nov. 1939): 189–194, and Walter and Ise Gropius, "Time Mellows This Modern House," *House and Garden* 95 (Jan. 1949): 72–77.
4. Although Marcell Breuer's name appears on the drawings for the house, Ati Gropius Johansen, the daughter of Walter and Ise Gropius, claims that he did not have any substantive input on the design. His name was simply used out of courtesy for the fact that Gropius and Breuer had a professional practice together. Ati Gropius Johansen, conversation with author, March 30, 1998, Concord, MA.
5. Walter Gropius, "The House of New Lines," a published article dated 1933 but without further attribution from the Busch-Reisinger Gropius Archive, translated from the German by Sol Gittleman, Department of Modern Languages, Tufts University, cited in Peter Gittleman, *The Gropius House: Conception, Construction and Commentary,* unpublished master's thesis, Boston University, 1996.
6. The term *garden* is used in this essay to describe the outdoor space directly adjacent to the house. The garden space is characterized by a higher level of active cultivation than what this essay terms *landscape*, that refers to the larger scale of the property as a whole and its context.
7. Walter Gropius, "The Theory and Organization of the Bauhaus," in Herbert Bayer, ed., *Bauhaus: 1919–1928* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1938), p. 22.
8. Gropius was fascinated with the rationalization and systematization of production. For Gropius to think about the world in terms of systems both natural and designed is consistent with this history. For a more complete discussion of these issues, see Nerdinger, *Walter Gropius*.
9. Walter Gropius, "The Small House of To-Day," *The Architectural Forum* 54 (March 1931): 269.
10. Ise Gropius, *Gropius House: A History by Ise Gropius* (Boston: Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, 1977), p. 4.
11. Ibid., p. 3.
12. Site plan, 1938. Blueprint. SPNEA library and archives.
13. H.L. Frost & Higgins, 20 Mill Street, Arlington, MA, letter to Walter Gropius, dated August 24, 1938, in SPNEA library and archives.

14. These well-thumbed blueprints are undated. They show elements ultimately removed in the final construction of the house and show sketches of various alternative arrangements of interior furnishings. This suggests that either they were a preliminary set of construction drawings or that they represented Gropius's own working set in which he studied alternatives during construction and ultimately recorded as-built conditions. SPNEA has owned and maintained the house since the death of Ise in 1984.

15. Gropius, *Gropius House: A History by Ise Gropius*, p. 18.

16. The lally columns have an immediate precedent in Christopher Tunnard's work with Serge Chermaef at an estate in Halland, Sussex, one of the examples illustrating *Gardens in the Modern Landscape* (Guildford, England: Bulling and Sons Ltd., 1938).

17. Ise Gropius, *Gropius House*, p. 18.

18. A ha-ha is a shallow depression or ditch in the ground with a retaining wall on one side. Often used to keep livestock out of the garden or away from the pleasure grounds of eighteenth-century English landscape gardens, from the inside (above the wall) at a distance it is invisible, and the lawn appears to flow smoothly from inside to out.

19. Christopher Tunnard, *Gardens in the Modern Landscape*, p. 69.

20. As Melanie Simo has suggested, the conventional wisdom that there were no modernist influences in the department of landscape architecture before Gropius's and Tunnard's arrivals is not entirely true. Jean-Jacques Haffner, the chairman of architecture before Gropius, wrote *Compositions de Jardins* in 1931 in which he suggested modern forms for the garden. Interestingly, he explicitly recognized at this early date the formative role that the existing cultural overlay on the land could have on design and that "gentle rural 'nature' . . . was . . . not nature at all but rather the work of peasants, or farmers, over countless generations." Melanie Simo, *The Coalescing of Different Forces and Ideas: A History of Landscape Architecture at Harvard, 1900–1999* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Graduate School of Design, 2000), p. 26.

21. Joseph Hudnut, "Space and the Modern Garden," *Bulletin of the Garden Club of America* 7 (May 1940): 22.

22. A number of these influential articles are reprinted in Marc Treib, ed., *Modern Landscape Architecture: A Critical Review* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1993), pp. 68–91.

23. Garrett Eckbo, Daniel U. Kiley, and James C. Rose, "Landscape Design in the Urban Environment," *Architectural Record* 85 (May 1939): 77.

24. See Anita Berrizbeitia, "Early Housing Projects and Garden Prototypes, 1941–1952," in William S. Saunders, ed., *Daniel Urban Kiley: The Early Gardens* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999).

25. Garrett Eckbo, Daniel U. Kiley, and James C. Rose, "Landscape Design in the Rural Environment," *Architectural Record* 86 (Aug. 1939): 74.

26. Walter Gropius and Martin Wagner, "Housing as a Townbuilding Problem," Graduate School of Design, Harvard University (Feb.–March 1942): p. 42. Loeb Library Special Collections, Graduate School of Design, Harvard University, and Jill Pearlman, *Joseph Hudnut and the Gropius Years at Harvard*, unpublished manuscript courtesy of the author.

27. Daniel Urban Kiley, lecture reprinted in Warren T. Byrd, Jr., ed., *The Work of Dan Kiley: A Dialogue on Design Theory, Proceedings of the First Annual Symposium on Landscape Architecture* (The University of Virginia, Feb. 6, 1982).

28. See Barrry Bergdoll, "Schinkel and Mies: Nature's perspective," *A + U: Architecture and Urbanism* 388; Jan Birksted, ed., *Relating Architecture to Landscape* (London: E and FN Spoon, 1999); and David Leatherbarrow, *Uncommon Ground: Architecture, Technology, and Topography* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2000).

29. According to Heidi Kost-Gross, Bauhaus designers in Germany were drawn by necessity and design to landscapes already rife with cultural references and history. Buildings were rarely set in primeval forests that were legally protected. Instead, architects built in landscapes with long histories of cultural intervention and in fact used that history as formative in their design language. Heidi Kost-Gross, "Is There a Bauhaus Landscape Theory?," presented to the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, March 30, 1998.

30. Leatherbarrow, *Uncommon Ground*, pp. 194–195.