Designing Our History: an international ideas competition

This competition seeks designs for a heritage-based public space that address the question:

How can the design of a public space celebrate the battles and triumphs of the community founders, offer homage to the region’s cultural history, and create a deeper shared understanding of Scanlonville?

Scanlonville, founded after the Civil War just outside Charleston, SC, was conceived from a vision of freedmen with the right to live in dignity and community on their own land. John Scanlon, who was once enslaved, purchased a 614-acre plantation in 1868 as the Charleston Land Company, which sold lots for residential and farming use.

The community, decried as “colored communism” in Charleston’s News & Courier Newspaper, created a thriving, close-knit neighborhood with opportunities to socialize, shop, learn, and do business. Home to Riverside Beach, one of the area’s few black beaches, Scanlonville hosted musicians such as Duke Ellington, Count Bassie, and James Brown. In the mid-20th century, many of Charleston’s leading educators were from Scanlonville, as the community produced dozens of teachers, principals, and administrators.

In contrast, today people often draw a blank at mention of Scanlonville. The area is better known to some by the slavery-era name of Remley, which was resurrected by developers and in the naming of the neighborhood’s public boat launch. John Scanlon’s name and history is fading.

This situation has been compounded by a series of losses to the community. Throughout the 20th century, competing land companies obtained various parcels of land in Scanlonville. Many of these actions were poorly documented yet went uncontested, or the residents’ protests were not given credence. Only fifteen years ago, the community thwarted an attempt to sell the community cemetery, exhume the bodies, and build homes with deep-water access.

Recently, Scanlonville lost ownership of a parcel at 5th Avenue and Mathis Ferry, but after protracted negotiations, the land was deeded back to the community in October 2018. The East Cooper Civic Club, which led the effort to regain the lost land, is now spearheading its conversion into a passive heritage park.
We strongly encourage proposals from diverse teams who can explain why this project speaks to them. International submissions are welcome as are student submissions. While diverse teams are encouraged, individuals may also register and submit.

Successful submissions will focus on the design of a heritage park for Scanlonville at the site indicated that include indications of memory, monument and nature.

Finalists will be selected by a jury of professional landscape architects, preservationists, architects and designers, and the elected leaders of the East Cooper Civic Club will choose first, second and third place submissions.

Competition submissions are due April 27, 2020. As you develop your ideas, we invite you to consider the following:

**Memory**

How can this park create a permanent record of Mr. Scanlon and the original families of the community? Forty-three people move to Charleston every day, usually with very little understanding of this place, its ever-present history, or how history connects to today’s exploding crisis in housing. Can the design bridge modern sentiment and our inescapable history?

**Monument**

In a neighborhood of ever-larger houses, in a city full of historical markers and memorials on all scales, how can a small park stand out? What would create a memorable visitor experience? How can its focal point become an icon in a city crowded with icons? What elements of structure or lighting could make the park something drivers notice as they commute over our ancestral land from new suburbs to downtown Charleston?

**Nature**

The Gullah Geechee culture is tied to the land, both to farming and native plants and wildlife. How can the planting palette and landscape design celebrate our history of curated but unconfined landscapes and shared or communal space in a city given over to the exclusive precision of gated formal gardens?

**JURY**

The Jury will be under the leadership of Charleston architect Ray Huff:

Mario Gooden, AIA.  Architect, Huff+Gooden Architects, New York. Professor of Practice at the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation of Columbia University.

Toni Griffin  Urban Planner, Urban Planning for the American City, New York. Professor in Practice of Urban Planning at the Harvard Graduate School of Design.

Ray Huff, FAIA  Architect, Charleston. Emeritus Associate Professor, School of Architecture, Clemson University. Director of Clemson Design Center, Charleston.

Paul Peters  Landscape Architect, Hood Design Studio, Oakland.
**SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

- One digital board; 24 x 36 inches; portrait orientation
- Only PDFs will be accepted; anything else will NOT be considered by the jury
- Digital Board is REQUIRED to have:
  - site plan with topo/trees/vegetation, memorial/cultural element, north arrow, scale
  - 3D rendering of design scheme
  - Clear articulation of flora/fauna being used
  - Clear articulation of materiality of built items
  - Any other graphics and annotations that make the design ideas for the heritage park clear
- Design must include design elements that reference/memorialize the cultural and natural Gullah Geechee heritage of Scanlonville.

**CALENDAR**

- Jan 10, 2020  Registration opens
- March 30, 2020 Reduced Fee Registration deadline
- April 27, 2020  Last day to register; Submissions due
- May 19, 2020  Finalists notified; asked to do a preliminary cost estimate
- June 5, 2020  Finalists’ preliminary cost estimates due
- June 19, 2020  Competition winners announced publicly on Juneteenth

Registration opens January 10, 2020. Competition submissions are due April 27, 2020. Winners and Honorable Mentions will be announced on Juneteenth 2020 and exhibited in Charleston.

The finalists will be provided a $200 stipend to produce a preliminary materials cost estimate. Total prize money to be split amongst the winners is $3000.

Registration for all student team submissions prior to 30 March 2020 is $25.

Registration for non-students or mixed student-professional team submissions prior to 30 March 2020 is $40.

Starting on 31 March 2020, registration for all is $60.
RESEARCH RESOURCES

See 2019 Scanlonville Competition Site for information including CAD and tree survey, maps and community data.


Slade, David. “A Planned Memorial Park in Mount Pleasant Leads to Acrimony with Racial Overtones.” Post and Courier, The Post and Courier, 21 June 2018


See Website for CORE DOCUMENTS (e.g. site plan, tree plan, etc.)

COMPETITION SPONSORS

East Cooper Civic Club, formed in 1969, has a mission to "promote racial harmony, health, education and civic improvements in Scanlonville.” They are the leaders of the Design competition.

Charleston Audubon has served as a partner to the East Cooper Civic Club since the park land was in dispute and is now a fiscal sponsor of the competition.

The Master of Resilient Urban Design Program is part of the Clemson Design Center, located in Charleston’s Cigar Factory. As competition sponsors, they offer technical advice in the administration of the competition.