

A response to Architecture Education Declares

Designing Landscapes and the Green New Deal (GND)

Given the climate and ecological emergency the world is facing, this is a necessary and welcome initiative. It opens a remarkable opportunity to be part of a socially just reimagining and remaking of the world we inhabit, intrinsically dependent on the health of earth systems, (climate change, biodiversity, ocean acidification, pollution, etc.). It can trigger, along the way, a radical transformation of the role designers play in developing design proposals, mitigation strategies, advocacy initiatives and activism.

One way to achieve this is by supporting a Green New Deal (GND) in the UK from those involved in designing landscapes (whether architects, landscape architects, artists, planners or engineers) and creative practices that critically engage with relations between people and the environments with which they interact (from green infrastructures to coastlines to cities).

The design of landscapes, from the immediately local to the immensely global, has the potential to engage much more with the challenges of the current climate emergency. Landscapes are a relationship between people and places, and they foreground relationships between nature and society that traditionally have tended to represent privileged groups of society and segregate and subjugate others based on class, gender, race and geography. With this in mind, how do we re-imagine the limits and potentials of the design of landscapes? How do we make sure these visions are just and inclusive?

The current condition of the design profession, mainly organised as an unregulated service provider for private capital, must end and give rise to a new design culture that places environmental and social justice and human and more-than-human flourishing at the heart of its activities. Because of this, we are excited to join existing calls to transform the profession such as [this initiative](#), and to acknowledge the urgency of the situation by advocating for a radical change in the priorities of the design professions.

However, to coordinate these efforts, we need to get behind a project with the capacity to unite all the best intentions, preoccupations and existing proposals from the design community. This project must be a Green New Deal and designers should contribute to shape it. This is important, as we think landscape/environmental designers' expertise on visualization, mapping and spatial understanding of socioecological systems are crucial to the project and the challenges it will bring. This commitment towards a GND can reshape and unite the profession as current calls to align to a [Green New Deal in US](#) (from the [Director for The Ian L. McHarg Center](#) and the [Architectural Lobby](#)) are suggesting.

To achieve this and in support to the momentum established, among others, by Youth for Climate and Extinction Rebellion, we encourage this initiative and designers to build alliances with other disciplines that shape, in many other ways, our social, cultural, and political engagement with nature and link ourselves to organisations such as the [New Economics Foundation](#), (original and co- designers of a GND in UK), and similar initiatives like a [GND for Europe](#) to voice the ways the profession can and should contribute to this project.

As a necessary step to support a Green New Deal we propose the restructuring of methodologies for the design of landscapes from academic, research and professional perspectives so we can help imagine, design and implement a potential GND:

Academic

To explore and switch to new design methodologies that place environmental and social justice (human and more-than-human) at its core and develop design briefs that correspond to the contemporary climatic and ecological emergency through which we are living.

Research

To direct and focus the investigative efforts to place design agency within the limits of earth systems and to establish ways to define and redefine concepts (social, cultural, political, and ecological) and develop practices (technologies) necessary to achieve a GND

Profession

Given the professions' reliance on the private sector, we propose both:

Mechanisms attached to a GND to re-engage designers with the public sector as part of local governments, institutions and organizations to design and promote the necessary policies that will make reality a GND at local, regional, national and even planetary scale.

And designers' direct engagement with citizens to democratize design and to ensure designers are involved and engaged in the empowerment of both, so they can make the best and most necessary decisions to shape the future of people and places.

We look forward to support, collaborate and engage in the activities and conversations towards this initiative in the months ahead.

Jose Alfredo Ramirez, Co-Director Landscape Urbanism Programme, Architectural Association

Lindsay Bremner, Monsoon Assemblages, University of Westminster

Ed Wall, Academic Leader, Landscape Department, University of Greenwich

Tim Waterman, Senior Lecturer, Landscape Architecture History and Theory, Bartlett School of Architecture