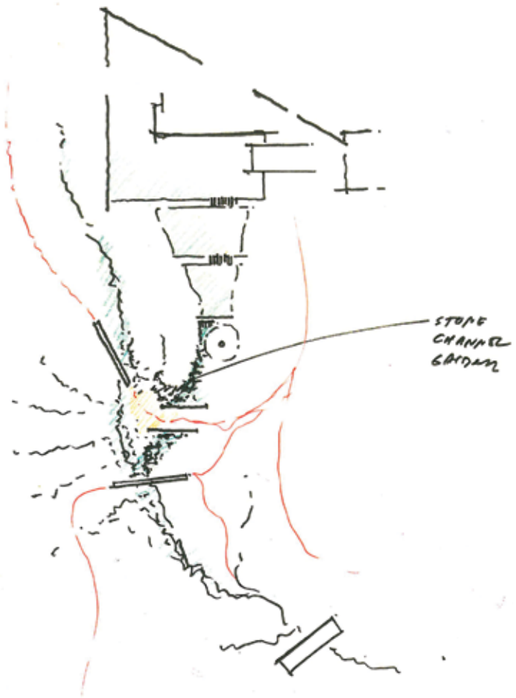
CALL AND RESPONSE

REED HILDERBRAND'S LONG GAME IN THE BERKSHIRES PAYS OFF.

BY JENNIFER REUT

SOUTH TERRACE
Reed Hilderbrand's new landscape for the Clark Art Institute was many years in the making.



ABOVE LEFT
Concept sketch of the water feature and surrounding planting and circulation by Gary Hilderbrand, FASLA.

ABOVE RIGHT
The low profile and stepped pools of the Clark Center unfold against the Berkshires' ridgeline.

GARY HILDERBRAND, FASLA, remembers the interview with Tadao Ando. "We had just moved into our new office in Watertown, and we were going to have this interview and we didn't even have a door on the building yet. We had plywood with a padlock," he says. "Ando, who just doesn't speak English in front of people, said only one thing and he said it twice: 'We don't usually work with landscape architects. We usually do it ourselves.'"

The interview, in 2001, was the beginning of a relationship that would span more than a decade, and result in the redesign of the landscape of the Clark Art Institute in Williamstown, Massachusetts (pop. 7,754), an art museum and research center in the heart of the rural Berkshires. Ando had been hired to design the new visitor center building by Michael Conforti, then the ambitious director of the Clark (he retired in 2015), as part of a building program that would overhaul the institution's program and profile. Ando made it clear that the client, not he, was requiring a landscape architect on the project, but that his associate knew and admired Reed Hilderbrand, the firm Hilderbrand cofounded with Doug Reed, FASLA. There were correspondences on the approach to architecture and landscape. They were hired.

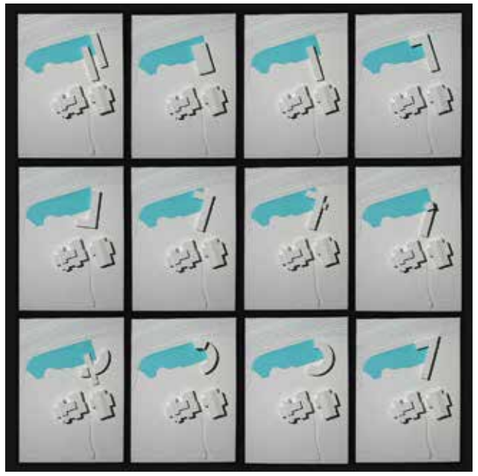
The Sterling and Francine Clark Museum building is a white, marble-clad neoclassical box, a bit of a retrograde oddity for 1955, but less so when you recall that the enthusiasm for colonial revival was really peaking in the mid-1950s. In the 1970s, the institution affixed a large Dakota Mahogany granite building by Pietro Belluschi and the Architects Collaborative to its side, now called the Manton Research Center. It's an odd juxtaposition, and one that the Clark Museum always seemed uneasy with, but it is very solidly there, a massive red block to be reckoned with.

The landscape setting, 140 acres, was primarily that—a setting seen through a window—though that wasn't inappropriate for a collection that was heavy in 18th and 19th century painting that was itself embedded in a way of representing landscape. The museum building itself was domestic in scale, fronting South Street, the main road into Williamstown, like a crisp white doily, and hid its ugly bits—the parking lot and plant building—in the back. The landscape was the backyard, a rolling set of hills, meadow, and woodland that stretched out toward the mountain ranges.

The Berkshires is a storied place, particularly if you happened to be of a certain age and class or went to college somewhere in New England, or just listened to James Taylor in the backseat of your parents' car. It has a power to evoke something that people want to hold onto and take care of, and that power extends far outside its geographic boundaries in western Massachusetts. There are dozens of charismatic towns, and the region enjoys a baked-in relationship between nature and art, inherited from its long history of second homes for wealthy art lovers, some of whom established art and performance venues in the area. It still gets a lot of intellectual and cultural runoff from Boston and New York City, tourists and transplants who come to see the foliage and visit the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, Jacob's Pillow, and the dozens of thriving performance and fine arts companies that thrive in the valleys around the Taconic Range. Its reach as an idea extends far outside the northeast corner of the country.

BELOW
Beka Sturges, ASLA, and Gary Hilderbrand, FASLA, in 2007.

"It became very clear to Doug and me that the Clark, essentially, is a part of a very sophisticated community that really loves its place in the world. In some ways, they see their world as



ABOVE LEFT
The Clark's parking lot and plant blocked access to and interest in Stone Hill.

ABOVE RIGHT
Early iterations of the Clark Center reference a large body of water.

OPPOSITE
A long process of design calculation achieved the desired rapport between the architecture and the water feature.

ALEX MACLEAN, LEFT; TADAO ANDO ARCHITECT & ASSOCIATES, RIGHT

JAMES EWING/OTTO

inviolate and they all see themselves as stewards of it," Hilderbrand says.

Conforti, who ran the Clark Art Institute for 20 years, understood the way the idea of the Berkshires thrived in the greater world when he raised money for the building campaign that would reinvigorate the Clark and take it from a cozy institution with reputable holdings in European and American art to something that played on a global stage. The vision for the new Clark Art Institute included programming that would require a new visitor center and conservation laboratory, and then there were the two existing buildings that needed extensive renovating—the original Clark Museum and the Manton Research Center—as well as a new landscape design for the museum's 140-acre site. The capital campaign driven by Conforti ultimately raised $145 million (the expansion project's total cost was $170 million), most of which was raised from outside the Berkshires, though half of the donors had ties to the area. Before he retired, Conforti had increased the Clark's endowment from $128 million to $357 million. It's a telling figure that speaks as much to the region's star quality as it does to Conforti's persuasive powers, but the attention also attracted expectations.

Williamstown locals, who live with the ebb and flow of student life from Williams College, had strong feelings, which they were eager to share, about their town and the land that the Clark Art Institute occupies, particularly the Stone Hill meadow, which had always been seen as a part of the town common. And then there are the scholars, short- and long-term beneficiaries of the programs that Conforti has built up over his tenure at the Clark, who have helped establish the institute's reputation as a serious center for art history scholarship. The new building program would have to take these users into account, along with thinking about the new programmatic areas, research, conservation, library space, and exhibitions and storage for the collection.

Eric Kramer, ASLA, a principal at Reed Hilderbrand, came onto the project a few years after Reed Hilderbrand was hired. Kramer says the investment from multiple audiences was always present. "We thought about the visitors who are here for an hour or two, the staff who are here every day, and the neighbors who are here all the time. They use it differently, at different intensities in different ways, but we try to respond to each of those."

Begun in 2001, the redesign of the Clark has unspooled, off and on, over 16 years, and has required the collaboration of no fewer than five design firms: Tadao Ando Architect & Associates, Selldorf Architects, Gensler, wHY, and Reed Hilderbrand Landscape Architecture. A 2001 master plan by Cooper Robertson identified opportunities, though not the specifics for new buildings, and Conforti assembled the design team, hiring first the nearly mythic Japanese architect Tadao Ando for the Clark's new buildings. Gensler then came on as the project's U.S. architect. The landscape architecture firm was next. For Reed Hilderbrand, the scope of the project expanded and changed significantly over the years since that first interview, eventually comprising the landscape architecture master plan for all 140 acres, which included a redesigned vehicular and pedestrian circulation system, site design for buildings and circulation, a comprehensive water system, and a sustainable landscape management plan.

The master plan called for the removal of the parking pad and plant behind the museum that blocked the access to the landscape. In its place there would be a new building designed by Ando, which would house the visitor center and restaurant, exhibition space, art conservation lab, and conference facilities. That building is the Clark Center, opened in 2014, but without part of its program—the conservation lab, which was split off into a separate building, also designed by Ando.

Ando's Clark Center building is long and low, with a walkway that extends east to the Clark Museum, attaching to it like a benevolent glass and concrete tentacle. In plan, it is two linked pavilions intersected by a low red granite wall, called the "7 wall" for its slicing form. Set on a cross axis from the older buildings, it sets up an enclosure around a body of water. The Clark Center building is the portal through which visitors come into the museum complex, and it brings them in through an entrance sequence that is both self-effacing and monumental. It is one of the places where landscape design and architecture are most intimately intertwined.

Visitors approach the building from the main road or the new parking lot, following a path along the 7 wall, and they slip, rather than arrive, into the main visitor reception areas. It's almost disorientingly subtle, and it's an experience that's a million miles away from the interminable stairs and dwarfing neoclassical portals that were favored by 19th century museums, or the two-dimensional selfie sets constructed to lure 21st century museumgoers. It's also a move used in other Ando buildings, and the most controversial part of the design that has, on the whole, been rapturously received. Roberta Smith, in the *New York Times*, held up the new Clark as an example for

SITE PLAN

1 MUSEUM BUILDING (1955)

2 MANTON RESEARCH CENTER (1973)

3 CLARK CENTER (2014)

4 TICKET BOOTH

5 LUNDER CENTER AT STONE HILL (2008)

6 ENTRY DRIVE

7 PARKING

8 ENTRY COURT

9 SOUTH TERRACE

10 TERRACED POOLS

11 SCHOW POND

12 TERRACED LAWN

13 SOUTH LAWN

14 TRAILHEAD

15 LOWER MEADOW AND WETLAND

16 STONE HILL MEADOW

17 TERRACED MEADOW

18 STONE BENCH TRAIL

19 WOODLAND PERIMETER TRAIL

COURTESY REED HILDERBRAND

LEFT
Entry to the Clark Center is understated, an Ando signature.

BOTTOM
A line of willows punctuates the design's multiple overlapping horizontal planes.

OPPOSITE
A vibrant maple at the end of the stepped pools draws attention in the late fall.

MILLICENT HARVEY, TOP; © JEFF GOLDBERG/ESTO, BOTTOM

TUCKER BLAIR/THE CLARK

other institutions, stating that museum directors and trustees "should schedule a visit to the Clark sooner rather than later," but noted that the approach to the complex "can feel a bit daunting." Other critics have been less guarded, referring to the entrance, as Alexandra Lange did, as "minimalist pinball flippers."

Entry through the Clark Center affords the closest the architecture comes to a heart-stopping moment. As the building opens up through a curtain of glass walls that carry light to the subterranean level below, visitors see for the first time the pristine, inky planes of a tripartite pool stepping almost imperceptibly down the landscape. This first view is framed by two meticulously detailed vertical concrete slabs, and it's hard not to appreciate the architect's facility with scale and materials as planes meet at pleasing right angles everywhere you look, describing and dismantling your sight lines. At this pause in the passage through the building, the architecture presents the landscape in a frame, taking the idea of the window and disassembling and re-forming it.

Beka Sturges, ASLA, an associate principal at Reed Hilderbrand who has made a study of Japanese architecture and culture, likens it to the "hide and reveal" of traditional Japanese design, which is incorporated into the site

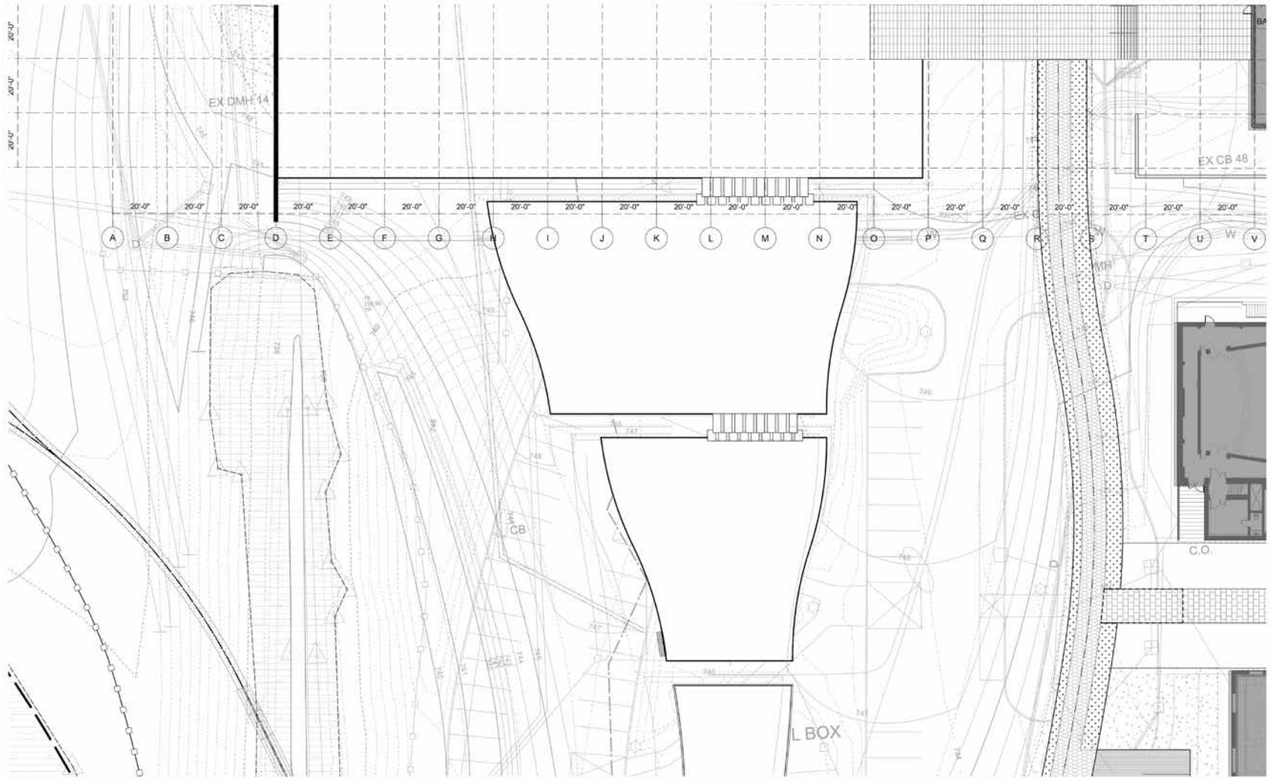
"THE POOLS WERE REALLY DECORATIVE, AND NOW THEY'RE ABSOLUTELY INTEGRATED INTO THE WAY WATER ON CAMPUS WORKS."

—ERIC KRAMER, ASLA

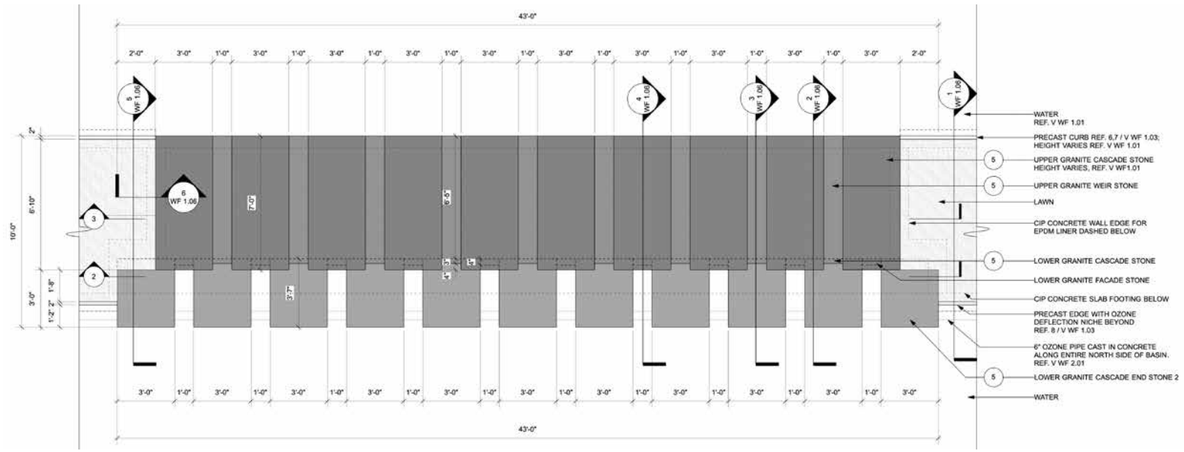
MILLICENT HARVEY

MILLICENT HARVEY; TOP: JAMES EVINS/OTTO; BOTTOM

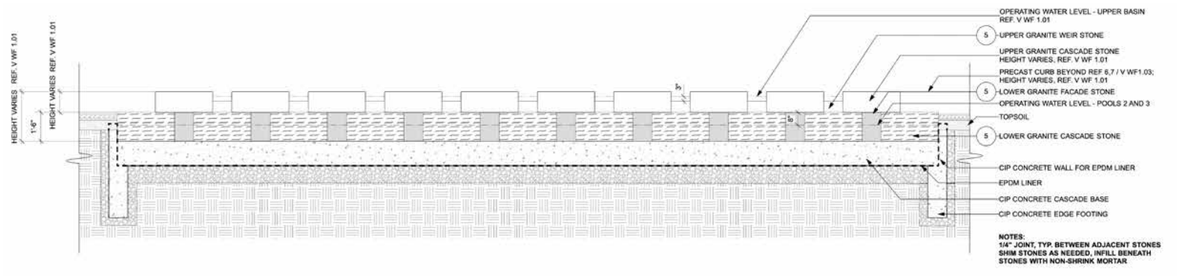
GRANITE CASCADE WEIR PLAN



GRANITE CASCADE WEIR PLAN DETAIL



GRANITE CASCADE WEIR SECTION

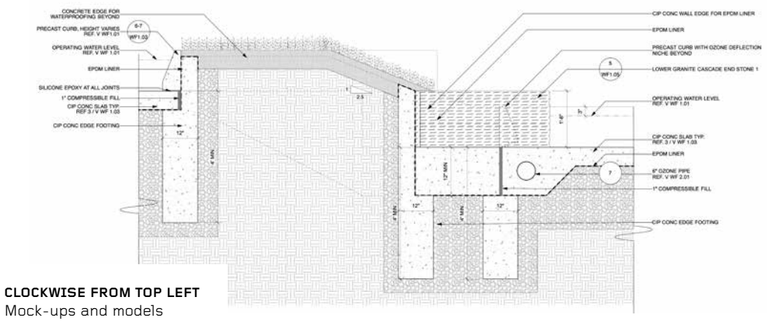


3–D GRADING MODEL

COURTESY REED HILDERBRAND

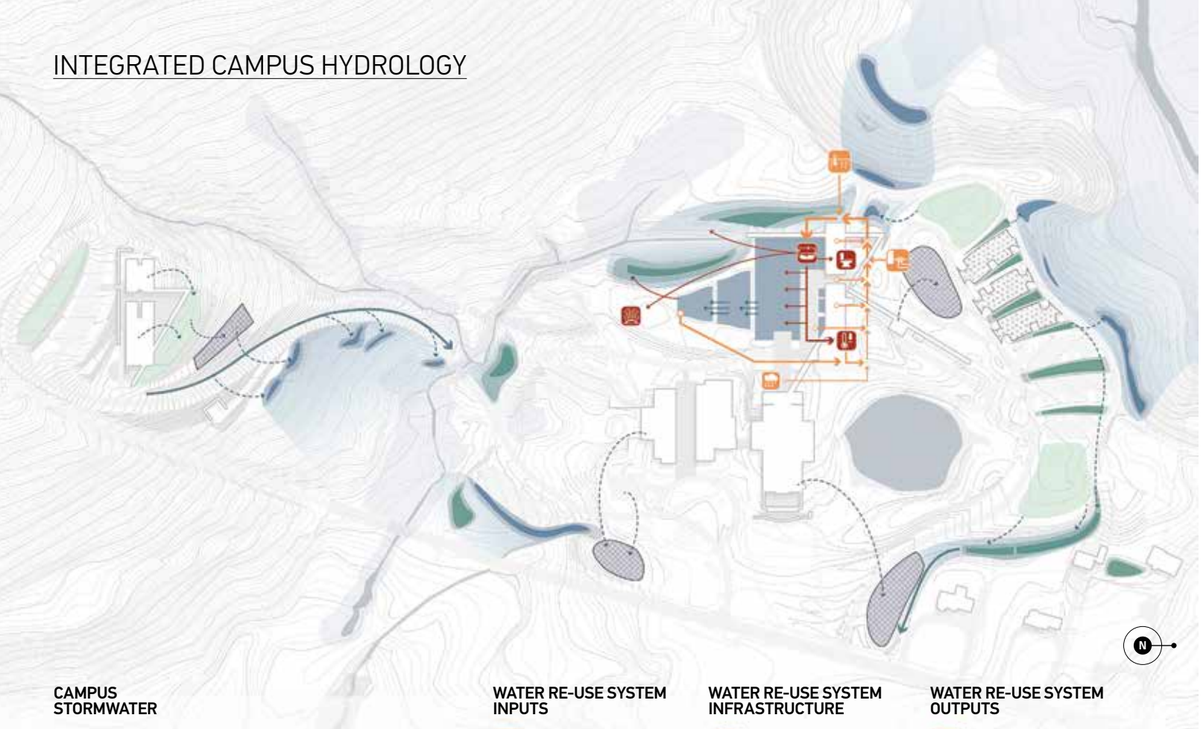
COURTESY REED HILDERBRAND

LANDFORM DAM SECTION



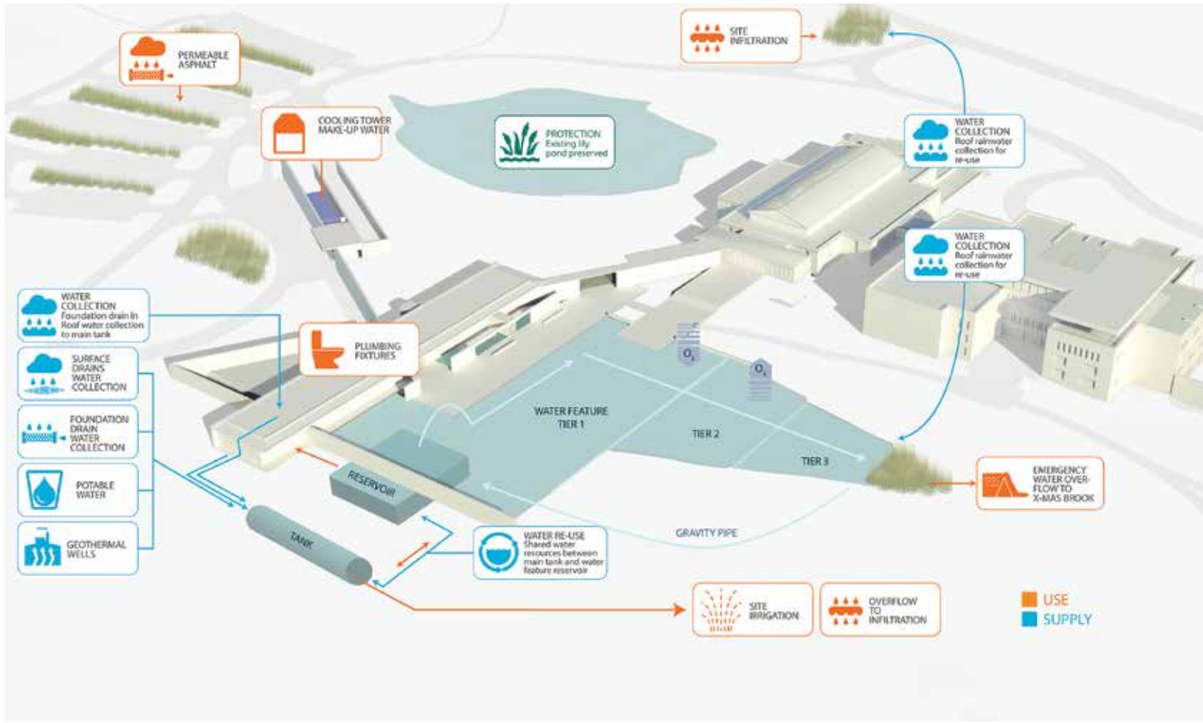
CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT
Mock-ups and models helped refine the function; Dan Euser of Dan Euser Waterarchitecture Inc. atop a plywood mock-up of the cascades.

INTEGRATED CAMPUS HYDROLOGY



COURTESY REED HILDERBRAND, TOP

COMPREHENSIVE WATER SYSTEM



COURTESY REED HILDERBRAND, TOP; JAMES EWING/OTTO, BOTTOM

design and architecture at the Clark. "It's much more about rewarding discovery and delaying gratification. You want to be opening up the view or the expanse, you want to create a new understanding of the place, but you don't want it to be immediate, so in some ways, what is a little bit weird about the wall at the Clark Center when you enter, is the denial. It's literally an assertion of 'no,' which a lot of people don't like, actually, but it's very intentional."

Once you step out of the building, the balance shifts again. There is a broad deck of gridded Wausau custom precast concrete pavers that runs wide along the length of the building. To the right, the red granite of the 7 wall wraps low around the building, walking the eye out and up onto Stone Hill. To the left, the Clark Museum building and the Manton Research Center appear, if not more harmonious, then at least collegial, an arranged marriage that somehow worked out. Drawing it all together is the wide set of descending pools separated by granite weirs that come to an end like an exclamation point before a maple tree, most likely a legacy from Francine and Sterling's day. The deck is a platform for taking in what might only have come from a decade of give and take between the design teams—a composition that invites disparate architectures into dialogue with the landscape.

For their part, the long process allowed Reed Hilderbrand to see the architect's talent unfolding in real time. "There's a very big body of work built around a limited vocabulary, but a vocabulary that's beautifully exploited time and again and specific to each situation by and large," Hilderbrand says.

The sequence through the visitor center is dramatic, but Hilderbrand says the experience of stepping out of what was once the back of the museum building is more essential to the project's success. "When you go through the museum sequence and you come back out, and then you go through

the glass doors and you're standing on this new terrace, which used to be the loading dock of the building, and you're given another whole view of this amazing landscape, I think that's where the relationship between seeing a body of landscape painting and being in a great landscape comes together for practically every visitor."

Such a successful design necessarily conceals the protracted negotiation that was required to arrive there. The relationship between the Clark's strong-minded client and the Pritzker Prize-winning Japanese architect involved a good deal of give and take, something it seems neither party was predisposed to. If you are interested in understanding how this played out, there's a documentary, *The New Clark: Bringing the Ando Experience to the Berkshires,* that chronicles the long design process. The design team from Reed Hilderbrand is there, and you can witness several

LEFT
Plantings around Schow Pond, a protected part of the wetlands around the Clark property.

TOP
The proposal for the new landscape included pedestrian circulation and trails (yellow) that connected the site (green dotted line) to the town and region.

RIGHT
Trails cross the streambeds around the site, providing opportunities rather than obstacles.

OPPOSITE
New pedestrian bridges allow visitors into the landscape while protecting the understory.

scenes of delicious tension between Ando and Conforti and a particularly charged scene between a dismissive Ando and the unflappable Annabelle Selldorf, who was hired to redesign the museum and research center interiors. There are frequent scenes of Ando grumbling at length about the amount of "discussion" that is expected. Oddly, for all its design drama, the most significant design conflict—the insistence by Conforti that the 7 wall be of the same red-toned granite as the Manton rather than Ando's preferred concrete (a decision most of the design team disagreed with at the time)—doesn't get mentioned. Conforti won that round.

The project's fitful progress over 12-plus years allowed a number of changes to the design's original conception that resulted in a deeper, more textured approach to the landscape design as well as to the architecture. The original program for the Clark Center included a conservation lab, and when this idea proved unworkable, an off-site location was pursued. When that fell through, the Lunder Center at Stone Hill, as it is now called, was sited in a woodland south of the main complex, a lighthouse that draws people up into the landscape.

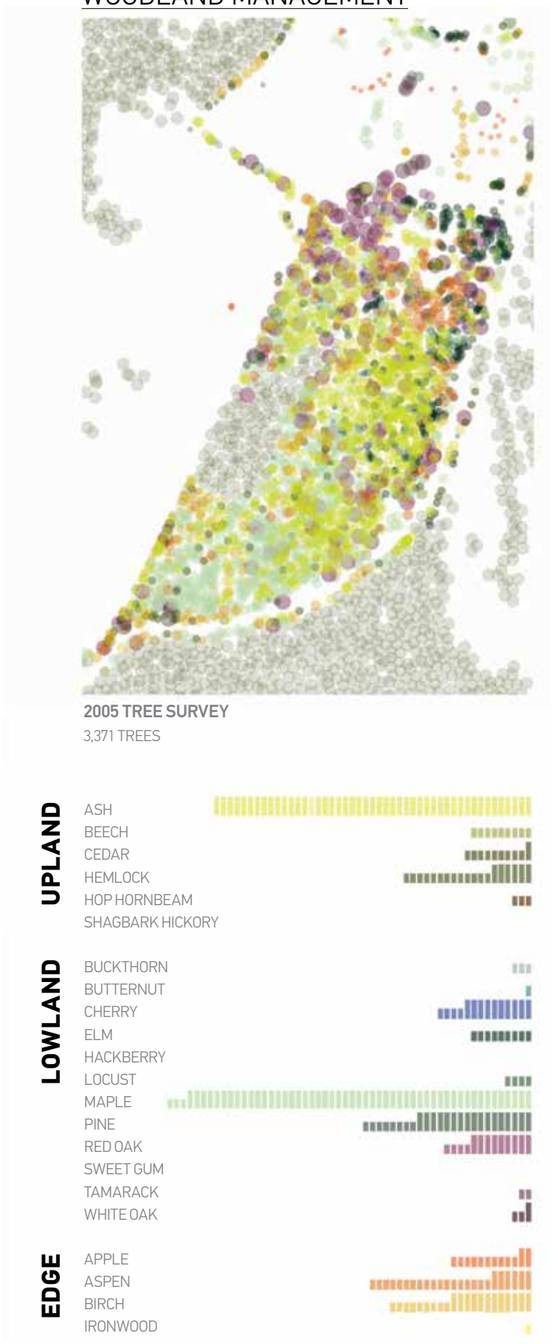
COURTESY REED HILDERBRAND, TOP; ALAN WARD, BOTTOM

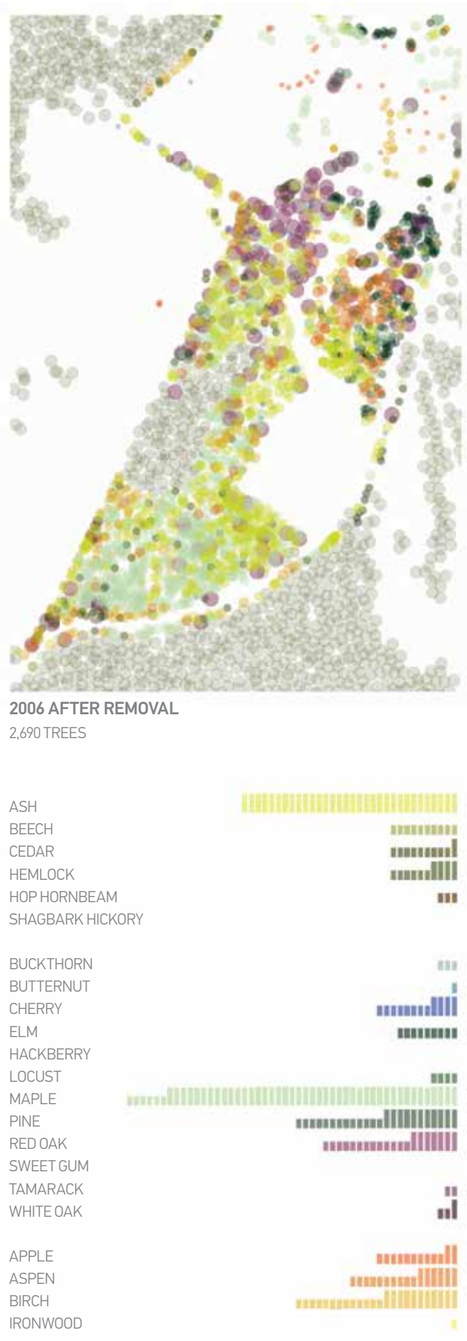
MILLICENT HARVEY

The recession in 2008 slowed Reed Hilderband's work for a time, and when it started up again in 2009, there was an increased imperative to include sustainable practices in the landscape design, precepts that are now integral to the management of water and the stewardship of the site. All along the years, through the exchange of designs, the construction obstacles and language barriers, the meetings and winter site visits, trudging through the frosty New England crust, molded the relationship between the design teams. "By that time we'd worked long enough with Ando's office that they really trusted us," Sturges says. "That's one of the positives of working with a team for that long." The key moment was the pool.

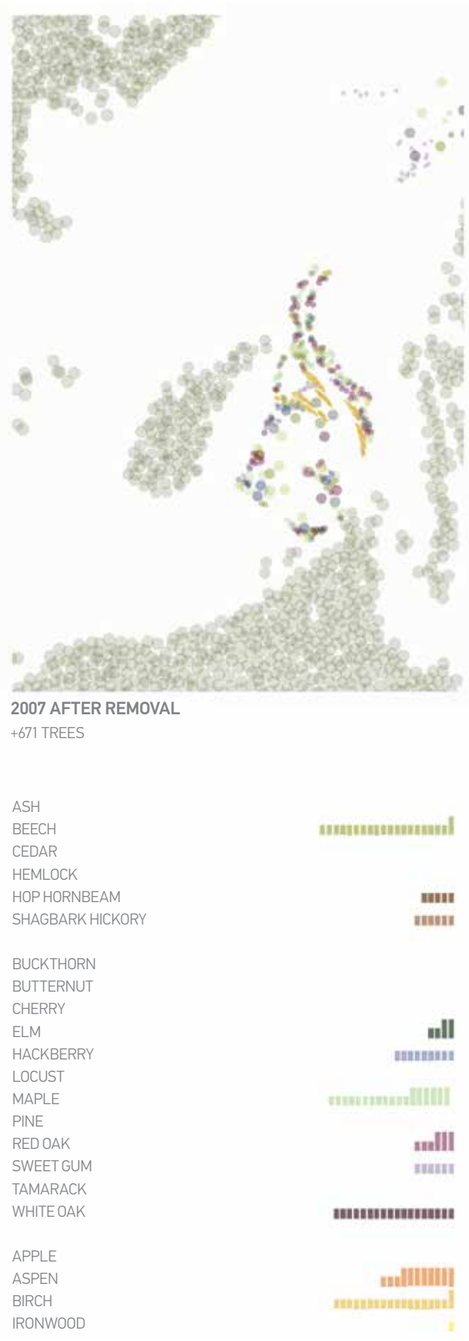
The pool was a signal element that appeared in Ando's early designs, and it accomplished several things immediately. It reoriented the museum complex toward the Berkshire landscape that had been little more than a backdrop, organized the buildings around a central feature, and provided a kind of dramatic contrast with concrete, his favored material, that was familiar from his design of the Modern Art Museum in Fort Worth, Texas, but also evoked Louis Kahn's National Assembly Building of Bangladesh in Dhaka. It was a big statement. But in its early conception it was overly large and inert. In addition, the flat plane of water was mostly ornamental and reflective, and worse, the single pool also didn't fit the topography of the site and would require an enormous wall for support. The pool had to change, both in form and purpose, to fit the landscape form and satisfy imperatives about sustainability and environmental responsibility that had intensified significantly between 2001 and 2014. "I think when he realized that we could understand his intentions and maybe elaborate them and fit them to the site, he got very comfortable with us. Then there was just a long process of trust," Hilderbrand says.

WOODLAND MANAGEMENT





COURTESY REED HILDERBRAND



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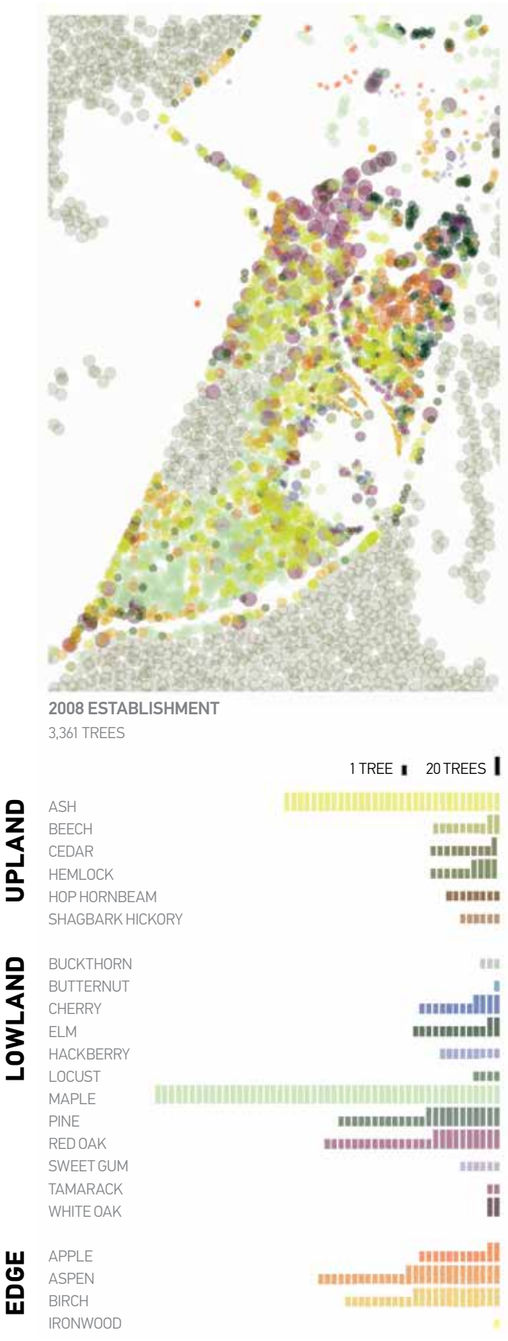

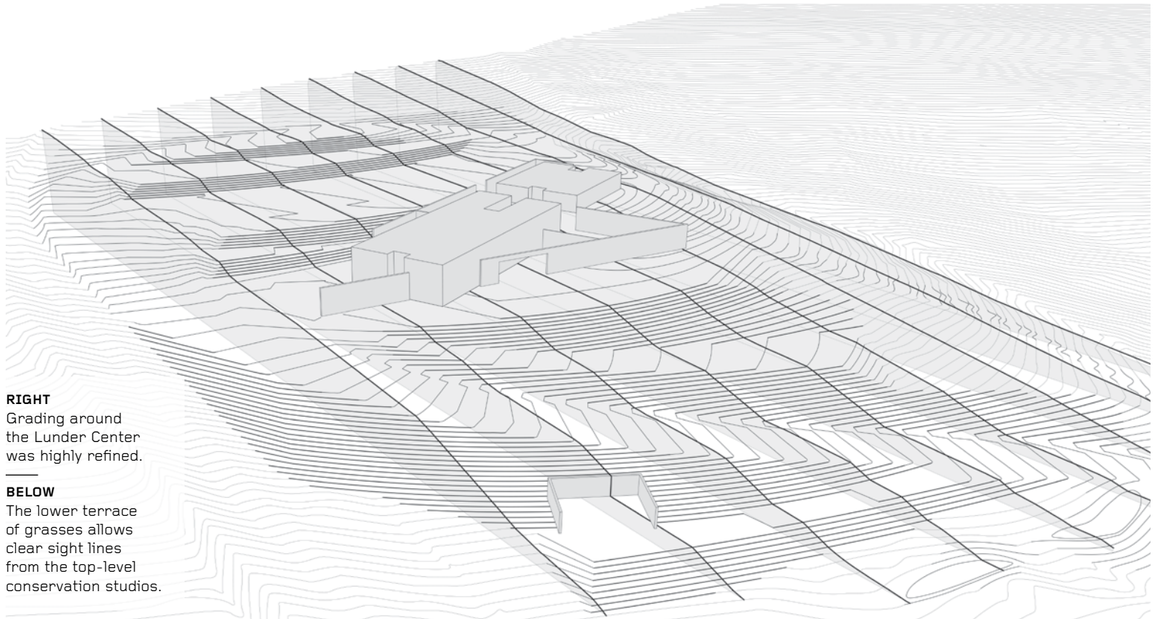

RIGHT
Grading around the Lunder Center was highly refined.

BELOW
The lower terrace of grasses allows clear sight lines from the top-level conservation studios.

The design of the pools and the weirs had to be precisely calibrated in terms of volume, depth, and the power required to keep the water moving and assure water quality. "One of the other really awesome things in terms of the hide and reveal thing is that you don't hear the water until you get there," Sturges says. "We had to bring out a way to keep the power and the scale and minimize the amount of energy required to send water and make it cascade. At this scale, if you don't have some visible water and sound, why are you bothering?" she says. Reed Hilderbrand built models and simulators with the firm Dan Euser Waterarchitecture until they figured out the right combination of scale, temperature, and force. "Significant amounts of water are required to operate this, and actually the cost of paying for water is really not sustainable. If you're going to do something like this, you should try and figure out how to make it self-regulating," Sturges says.

The valley where the buildings sit is low, and the groundwater is high, and the displacement that the building was going to generate, along with the local conservation commission's urging to care for the ecological systems, put pressure on the design team to focus on the water. When the Clark Center evolved from two pavilions to a single two-story building with 63 percent of its mass belowground, the high water table required a significant engineering adjustment to pump the groundwater out through a foundation drain. But where would it go? The management of stormwater around the building, trails, and the new parking areas, and the protection and restoration of the wetland areas of the site, could all potentially be affected by the displacement of groundwater from the Clark Center, and Reed Hilderbrand saw an opportunity to tie everything together in one system. "Could you start to connect irrigation and the cooling tower and the water feature, the toilets, custodial, and make it all work together with the groundwater, the rain, and with only potable water as a backup?" Sturges says.

They began to run simulations, trying to understand what the inputs might be, how the rainfall might affect them, and when and how they might be used. There were more models, more simulations, more analysis, and more tests before the Clark gave Reed Hilderbrand the go-ahead to design the system. The pools are now one feature in a comprehensive geothermal water management system that includes stormwater, displaced groundwater, irrigation, and graywater. A large underground reservoir sits between the terrace and the wall next to the pools, where the collected water is stored for use in the irrigation and graywater systems.

Removing the old plant and the parking brought the adjacent wetlands into play. Preserving and enhancing the stream that runs through the site near what was once the parking lot, and moving the stormwater infrastructure out of the ground and in sight allowed the connection to be made between the building complex and the landscape. "The wetland system was seen as sort of a constraint, and not something they could interpret or understand," Kramer says. But that changed after the Lunder Center was built, and the two trails and bridges over the streambeds opened up the possibility of extending the ideas of the museum complex into the landscape.

There are echoes of the Clark Center in the Lunder Center. "It's the same parti of a bar and two pavilions and a 7 with a pass-through," Kramer observes, but it is smaller and has a lightness on the land, despite being built into a hill. Meticulous board-formed concrete and cedar planks clad the puzzle box of porches and south-lit conservation studios. There are terraces above and below the building for parking and fire access, and the lower terrace conceals the stormwater management.

ABOVE
The Lunder Center was the first building to be completed, but was not part of the project's original scope.

COURTESY REED HILDERBRAND. TOP: © JEFF GOLDBERG/ESTO. BOTTOM ALEX MACLEAN

CLOCKWISE FROM BELOW
New trail and vehicle circulation relies on hide and reveal; viewing platforms float over the pools; use of the meadow and trails in winter is very active.

TUCKER BLAIR/THE CLARK, TOP AND BOTTOM LEFT; CHARLES MAYER PHOTOGRAPHY, BOTTOM RIGHT

CHARLES MAYER PHOTOGRAPHY

After clearing the trees from the site, mixed groves of birch and aspen were planted in carefully articulated sweeps along the cusp of woodland to suggest a meadow's edge. The suggestion of Vogt's design for the Tate Modern in London informed the design. It feels very happened upon, but it's one of the places where Hilderbrand's design philosophy—restraint, editing, and amplification—is most artfully on display. The long, shaggy grasses and young trees are evocative, but it's the grading and molding of the landforms up to and around the site that catch your attention. Shaping the topography is something of a marquee talent of Reed Hilderbrand, and Kramer likens the play of ground forms to those below at the Clark Center. "They're quite crisp. They're precise and almost architectural in a place which is otherwise sort of like a rolling woodland, and to us, in a little bit of the way the pools do down below, they negotiate an architectural expression of the 7 wall, which is a projection, and a terracing, and the slope of the hill."

Hilderbrand acknowledges that grading has become something of a Reed Hilderbrand signature, perhaps nowhere better on display than at the Clark, where he says they had a particularly adept grading operator, but it figures into both the practical functioning of the site and the design experience. "It's always been such a crucial part of what we do because, above all, we shape the ground," Hilderbrand says. "We do it right up to buildings, we do it in streets, we do it on campus, we do it at art museums, and we do it with real care. There's a whole set of functional aspects to shaping the ground, including making sure water runs downhill and it runs to a good place and it drains well and it recharges and all of that. A lot of what you're seeing is driven by a hyperconscious effort to control all of the rainfall and to make sure that it gets back where it should go: treated into the streams or infiltrated into the aquifer.

"The second part of that is something that we take equally as seriously, which is that the visual aspects of a singular gradient over a long visual run, or the visual aspects of a steep slope rising up to a level plane, are just as important for us," he says. "I would say we're maniacal about earthwork and about grading. No matter how big the project, I think we always do 100 grading studies. Then we're very conscious of how important it is to be in the field with an eye on the grading in order to achieve it."

With so much highly finished design happening around the buildings, it is easy to overlook the rest of the site, which has had its trail systems enhanced significantly, redesigned, and extended to provide connectivity to the town and the region. Hilderbrand says the Clark grounds were always seen as a kind of semipublic space, and people followed informal paths to the top of the Stone Hill meadow for the view or skied through them. Because of that, he says, "It was an easy idea to propose extending the trail network and to start thinking about the Clark not only as a common, but as a trailhead." Community handwringing—over the removal of trees, the ecology of the site, the press of new visitors, and the loss of the landscape as a public amenity—was one of the things that slowed the construction down, so the improvements in connectivity and access for the local community were not afterthoughts.

With the new design, the museum has chosen to embrace an always-open ethos that has turned it into a public park. "That very public nature of the place comes, in a way, to define it. The real

PLANT LIST

CANOPY TREES
Acer rubrum (Red maple)
Acer saccharum (Sugar maple)
Carya ovata (Shagbark hickory)
Celtis occidentalis (Common hackberry)
Fagus grandifolia (American beech)
Liquidambar styraciflua (Sweet gum)
Nyssa sylvatica (Black gum)
Ostrya virginiana (Hop hornbeam)
Quercus alba (White oak)
Quercus bicolor (Swamp white oak)
Salix alba (White willow)
***Ulmus americana* 'Princeton'** (Princeton elm)

UNDERSTORY TREES
Amelanchier canadensis (Canadian serviceberry)
Carpinus caroliniana (American hornbeam)
Cornus alterniflora (Alternateleaf dogwood)
Cornus florida (Flowering dogwood)
Halesia tetraptera (Mountain silverbell)
Ilex opaca (American holly)
Sassafras albidum (Sassafras)

THICKET TREES
Betula papyrifera (Paper birch)
Betula populifolia (Gray birch)
Populus tremuloides (Quaking aspen)

GROUND COVER, GRASSES, AND MEADOW PLANTINGS
Agrostis alba (Redtop)
Agrostis perennans (Upland bentgrass)
Agrostis stolonifera (Creeping bentgrass)
Andropogon virginicus (Broomsedge bluestem)
Bouteloua curtipendula (Sideoats grama)
Bouteloua gracilis (Blue grama)
Calamagrostis canadensis (Bluejoint)
Cyperus esculentus (Yellow nutsedge)
Elymus hystrix (Eastern bottlebrush grass)
Elymus riparius (Riverbank wild rye)
Elymus virginicus (Virginia wild rye)
Festuca ovina (Sheep fescue)
Festuca rubra (Red fescue)
Gillenia trifoliata (Bowman's root)
Lolium perenne (Perennial ryegrass)
Lolium perenne* ssp. *multiflorum (Italian ryegrass)
Lotus corniculatus (Bird's-foot trefoil)
Poa pratensis (Kentucky bluegrass)
Schedonorus arundinaceus (Tall fescue)
Schizachyrium scoparium (Little bluestem)
Trifolium repens (White clover)
Tripsacum dactyloides (Eastern gama grass)

TUCKER BLAIR/THE CLARK

capstone on that is that the doors at the museum entry and at the link to the museum are operating 24 hours a day. You can actually pass through the building at night and go out and sit on the terrace over the pools," Hilderbrand says. This eliminated the problem of the new building's creating a barrier traversing the north–south access and made a statement that the new Clark was not just about attracting visitors to the Berkshires but about knitting the institution into the town as part of its public sphere.

The steep open meadow on Stone Hill that overlooks the museum complex is popular for the prospect it provides, and for the semiregular appearance of an amiable herd of cows that snuffle and switch indifferently around Thomas Schütte's *Crystal,* an installation outside the museum on loan from the artist. The redesign has opened up the meadow as new possible exhibition space for art, and the cows are no accident. The Clark allows a local farmer to herd them on the land in the late afternoon. They draw attention upward as well as any neon sign. There are still traces of the old field boundaries—a line of oaks references the old hedgerow, and the cow fences were moved back and set below a berm mostly out of sight. At the bottom, in a swale between the buildings and the beginning of the rise, there are new plantings that are coming along. At the old Clark, there had been a fence around this area that recalled a wetland petting zoo and spoke volumes about the anxiety that landscape can provoke.

TUCKER BLAIR/THE CLARK, LEFT; HELEN HAN, RIGHT

Hilderbrand sees this as one of the biggest changes they've overseen at the Clark. "When we arrived there, they were mowing vast amounts of lawn and they were managing their trees the way traditional arborist companies do, which is to sell commercial fertilizers and lots of herbicides and pesticides," he says. A young grounds manager, Matt Noyes, was instrumental in taking on the approach Reed Hilderbrand advocated—building the soil using organic practices, and capturing the right moisture regimen for the site's different requirements. They planted more than 1,000 trees, by Hilderbrand's count.

"The look and feel of the Clark now with tall grasses, and wet swells in the parking lot, and pervious paving, and a water system that's so gigantic, but which is so multifunctional—I think the project could be seen in some ways as a big set of practice reforms for how an institution manages its assets, manages its property," he says.

That can be hard in a place that doesn't like change, and can take a back and forth over several years. "It became very clear to us in our first meetings that we were going to be managing change in a community that liked things the way they were," Hilderbrand says. "We had to basically educate people around the idea that landscape is constant change and that what they think they are holding onto isn't always what they really see or what they really have in their midst." ●

Project Credits

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ABOVE
Cows graze and linger near Thomas Schutte's *Crystal* on Stone Hill meadow.

OPPOSITE
The prospect from Stone Hill meadow affords a view of the Taconic Range and Williamstown.