

Biltmore Mission Statement: The preservation of Biltmore Estate as a privately owned, profitable, working estate.

Horticulture Mission Statement: The stewardship of attractive historic and contemporary landscapes for pleasurable guest experience.

1862 – George Vanderbilt is born on Staten Island

1888 – Mr. Vanderbilt visits Asheville NC for the first time

1889 – Construction of Biltmore House begins

1885 – Mr. Vanderbilt officially opens Biltmore on Christmas Eve

1898 – Mr. Vanderbilt marries Edith Stuyvesant Dresser in Paris

1900 – Cornelia Stuyvesant Vanderbilt is born at Biltmore

1914 – George Vanderbilt passes away at the age of 51

1914 – Mrs. Vanderbilt sells 86,000 acres to form Pisgah National Forest

1924 – Cornelia marries the Honorable John Francis Amherst Cecil

1925 – Mr. Vanderbilt’s first grandson, George, is born

1928 – The Cecil’s welcome their second son William

1930 – Cornelia and John Cecil open Biltmore House to the public.

1942 – Biltmore stores art from the National Gallery of Art during WWII

1960 – William Amherst Vanderbilt Cecil return to Biltmore

1963 – Biltmore is officially nominated as a National Historic Landmark

1985 – Biltmore’s Winery opens to the public

1995 – William (Bill) A.V. Cecil Jr. is named President and CEO of the Biltmore Company

2001 – The Inn on Biltmore Estate opens

2010 – Antler Hill Village opens

2015 – Village Hotel on Biltmore Estate opens

2017 – William Amherst Vanderbilt Cecil passes away at the age of 89

2017 – Diana (Dini) Cecil Pickering is named Chair of the Board of Directors

**Seven ‘S’ of Olmsted’s Design**

*by Charles E. Beveridge, January 1986*

**Scenery:** Design of "passages of scenery" even in the small spaces and in areas intended for active use. Creation of designs that give an enhanced sense of space: indefinite boundaries, constant opening up of new views. Avoidance of hard-edge or specimen planting, creating instead designs that have either "considerable complexity of light and shadow near the eye" or "obscurity of detail further away."

**Suitability:** Creation of designs that are in keeping with the natural scenery and topography of the site: respect for, and full utilization of, the "genius of the place."

**Style:** Designing in specific styles, each for a particular effect. Primarily in the "Pastoral" style (open greensward with small bodies of water and scattered trees and groves) for a soothing, restorative atmosphere, or in the "Picturesque" style (profuse planting, especially with shrubs, creepers and ground cover, on steep and broken terrain), for a sense of the richness and bounteousness of nature, with chiaroscuro effects of light and shade to produce a sense of mystery.

**Subordination:** Subordination of all elements, all features and objects, to the overall design and the effect it is intended to achieve. The "Art to conceal Art."

**Separation:** Separation of areas designed in different styles, so that an "incongruous mixture of styles" will not dilute the intended effect of each: separation of ways, in order to insure safety of use and reduce distractions for those using the space; separation of conflicting or incompatible uses.

**Sanitation:** Provision for adequate drainage and other engineering considerations, not simply arranging of surface features. Planning or designs so that they promote both the physical and mental health of users.

**Service:** Planning of designs so that they will serve a "purpose of direct utility or service;" that is, will meet fundamental social and psychological needs: "So long as considerations of utility are neglected or overridden by considerations of ornament, there will be no true Art."

**The "Pastoral" Style:** Olmsted used the style of the Beautiful—or as he usually called it, the pastoral—to create a sense of the peacefulness of nature and to sooth and restore the spirit. The Pastoral style was the basic mode of his park designs, which he intended to serve as the setting for "unconscious or indirect recreation." The chief purpose of a park, he taught, was "an effect on the human organism by an action of what it presents to view, which action, like that of music, is of a kind that goes back of thought, and cannot be fully given the form of words."11 In such designs there were broad spaces of greensward, broken occasionally by groves of trees. The boundary was indistinct, due to the "obscurity of detail further away" produced by the uneven line and intricate foliage of the trees on the edge of the open space. In other parts the reflection of foliage by bodies of water introduced another element of intricacy and indistinctness. The effect was reminiscent of parks on estates that Olmsted had seen in England, and it was the image of the rich turf of that country, which he described as "green, dripping, glistening, gorgeous," when he first saw it, that remained for him the model of the Pastoral style.

**The "Picturesque" Style:** When employed the style of the Picturesque, Olmsted introduced "complexity of light and shadow near the eye" to heighten another aspect of nature—its mystery and bounteousness. To achieve a sense of mystery, he used a variety of tints and textures of foliage that made forms indistinct and created a constantly changing play of light and shadow. At the same time, he planted profusely to secure greater richness and lushness of growth than nature would produce unaided. He planted one layer upon another, beginning with ground cover, then shrubs, then trees above them. To complete the effect, he often added creepers that covered the trunks and branches of deciduous trees, keeping them green with foliage even in winter.

<https://www.olmsted.org/the-olmsted-legacy/olmsted-theory-and-design-principles/olmsted-his-essential-theory>