

WHO'S BUILDING SAN DIEGO

# Rewilding the Minds

By Nabyl Miller, Senior Associate

**W**ith the 2019 American Society of Landscape Architecture (ASLA) National Conference in San Diego this month - let's focus on a topic of the profession.

In today's market we are seeing heightened focus around open space and the added benefits of reconnecting with nature. This movement seems to stem in part because of the increased need to disconnect and decompress from the work setting by fully submerging in environments that oppose that of structured office interiors. But perhaps nothing is more challenging than making a case for **REWILDING** - the notion of introducing interventions such as rambunctious planting arrangements, untamed natives, and formations that bring us closer to true nature.

Historically, landscape architecture has been the management of altering "nature" to forms easily categorized by the human brain. Prime examples range from topiary, artificial ageing through the art of bonsai, lawns, and rows of topped hedge. Today, research showing quantifiable benefits of immersing ourselves in nature are helping us move away from traditional landscape; especially as the tech companies explore more ways to improve employee health and wellbeing.

Prominent projects such as Tongva Park + Ken Genser Square in Santa Monica, and the Brooklyn Bridge Park

re-introduced visitors to the regions planting communities through an extensive native planting program. Locally, **McCullough Landscape Architecture's** collaborations with Alexandria Real Estate Equities, amongst other prominent owners in the industry, suggest a new wave of clients open to the idea.

In the life sciences campus at 3985 Sorrento Valley Boulevard, the user is enveloped in elements reminiscent of the adjacent Torrey Pines State Preserve and Los Penasquitos Lagoon. Outdoor meeting areas and circulation were designed to sit deep within rolling hills stippled with carefully curated native plants and materials to draw in local fauna (butterflies, hummingbirds, and bees). Soft plantings were selected to move in the ocean breeze and cast light and shadow.

As a firm, McCullough defines itself as rambunctious as the spaces it creates - truly embodying the human spirit engaged in nature. In San Diego they are helping to build a certain tolerance of nature's dormant browns and unruly forms in hand for the amazing seasonal display of fragrant blooms, low water usage, and low maintenance this approach has to offer.

McCullough views these built projects as instrumental in displaying benefits of rewilding the landscape and crucial in dispelling common concerns amongst client groups, tenants, and maintenance crews about the compromise of aesthetics.



But more importantly, they view these as avenues to reinforce reconnections with nature to ultimately impact people's wellbeing through the art of our profession.

- 1. Vertex Pharmaceuticals  
3215 Merryfield Row
- 2. Life Sciences Campus  
3985 Sorrento Valley Boulevard



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