



**CONNECTING LANDSCAPE
ARCHITECTURE ARCHIVES**

**TO ENHANCE EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE
PRACTICE, RESEARCH AND EDUCATION**

REPORT on the current situation of European landscape architecture research with respect to landscape architecture archives

Deliverable 5

April 2026

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This report was developed in collaboration with members of Working Group 2 (WG2) of the COST Action CA23128.

Editors

Alexandru Mexi
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April 2026



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Nitra Regional Archives, September 2025 (Photo by Anna Staniewska).

1. Foreword

This report presents a synthesis of the preliminary research conducted in 2025 and early 2026. It addresses the current situation of European landscape architecture research in relation to landscape architecture archives within the framework of COST Action CA23128, Connecting Landscape Architecture Archives to enhance European landscape practice, research and education (ConnectLAA). It has been prepared within Working Group 2, whose role is to enhance the use of landscape architecture archives for research and practice by deepening the network and identifying research gaps that can be addressed to further support scholarly output.

The report should be understood as an interim and exploratory document. As stated in the methodological description prepared for this deliverable, it does not claim to provide a final or statistically exhaustive account of the addressed subject matter. Rather, since it is based on a qualitative approach, it offers a structured overview of the research topics, archival conditions, and knowledge gaps that emerged through WG2 activities and that may serve as a basis for future research and collaborative outputs.

This orientation is consistent with the wider objectives of ConnectLAA. The Action aims to create a sustainable European knowledge and exchange platform for landscape architecture archival records, to bridge the gap between archival research and landscape practice, to improve archival and digital accessibility, and to support research, education, heritage practice, conservation, sustainable management and public understanding. It also responds to the fact that landscape architecture archives are unevenly established across Europe, especially in Inclusiveness Target Countries which is also connected to the uneven professional conditions and status of landscape architecture in the participating countries (IFLA Report 2021, Gkoltsiou and Forczek-Brataniec, 2024). This study confirms that many collections and fonds remain endangered by fragmentation, physical deterioration, unclear or contested ownership, and the absence of dedicated institutional custodianship, further compounded by insufficient archival processing and the vulnerabilities of born-digital collections.

References:

- European Region of the International Federation of Landscape Architects. (2021). 2021 IFLA Europe Yearbook. Landscape Here and Now Everyday Landscapes.
- Gkoltsiou, A., & Forczek-Brataniec, U. (2024). The Role of Landscape Architecture Profession Recognition in the Context of Facing Contemporary Challenges. *Sustainability*, 16(13), 5362. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su16135362>

2. Aim and scope of the deliverable

The formal aim of this **Report on the current situation of European landscape architecture research with respect to landscape architecture archives** is to produce a written report on the current situation of European landscape architecture research in relation to the use of landscape architecture archives in research and practice, identifying topics and research questions that can provide a basis for future research and professional practice. While it acknowledges the aspect of archival management, it does not focus on this issue, as this was the task of the WG1 of this action who explored this matter. This report also addresses how archives are mobilized in landscape history research, in design, heritage and planning practice, and in external perspectives on archives offered by donors, practitioners, and related actors.

Because the field is highly uneven, both geographically and institutionally, WG2 adopted a problem-oriented and thematic perspective. National and regional examples are included where they help illustrate broader tendencies, but the main purpose is to map recurring research areas, identify structural barriers, and highlight topics that remain insufficiently explored.

For this report, “landscape architecture archives” are understood in a broad sense, encompassing project-based design records (e.g. drawings, plans, physical and digital models, digital files), administrative and professional documentation (e.g. reports, correspondence, office records, publications, promotional material, teaching material, historic plant inventories), photographic and cartographic materials, as well as oral histories and born-digital data. This inclusive definition reflects the hybrid and interdisciplinary nature of landscape architecture, which intersects with planning, architecture, engineering, ecology, and heritage practices, and whose archival traces are often dispersed across multiple institutional and private contexts.



Budapest City Archives, March 2025 (Photo by Anna Staniewska).

3. Methodology

The report builds on several complementary sources developed within online and face-to-face WG2 activities. A detailed account of the results of particular activities is provided in the Appendices to this document, which remain internal working materials open for the CA23128 action members.

First, in spring 2025, working group participants were asked to complete an online survey and contribute country-based information intended to support a pan-European list of international resources. This stage aimed to map current research topics related to landscape architecture history and landscape architecture archives, while also making visible bodies of work that often remain hidden internationally because they are published in national languages and circulate mainly in local scholarly or professional contexts.

Second, online and onsite meetings were held to interpret and refine the results collectively. The notes prepared after the WG2 workshop at the General Meeting in Nitra in September 2025 (Figure 1) made it explicit that the group wished to move beyond a purely national overview and toward a thematic and problem-based structure, distinguishing between well-established themes, newly emerging areas, and gaps requiring further research.



Figure 1. Working sessions during the General Meeting in Nitra, 5 September 2025 (Photos by Peter Bednár).

Third, the process was complemented by two Short-Term Scientific Missions at the British Library in summer 2025, intended to deepen the comparative understanding of landscape architecture history research in Western and Eastern Europe.

Finally, the survey results themselves provided a substantial empirical basis. According to the survey summary, another questionnaire was open from 7 November to 10 December 2025 and received 40 responses from researchers, educators, practitioners, and archivists across Europe and the Middle East. Although the survey reached mainly the ConnectLAA members, the rate of 30% of respondents from outside the Action is relatively high. Most respondents were affiliated with universities and research institutions (90%) (Figure 2), and many also worked simultaneously in design practice and in heritage and conservation (altogether 25%).

3. Your professional/institutional background:

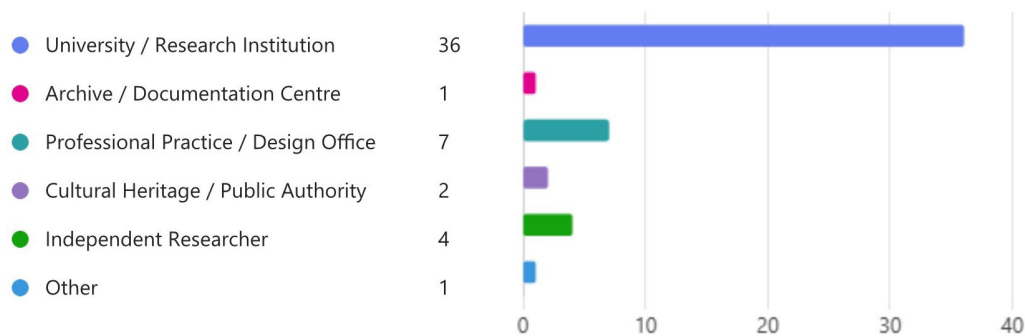


Figure 2. Survey Question 3 on Respondents' Professional and Institutional Background (Survey on Knowledge Gaps in LA History, Research, and Archives).

This had an impact on the indicated primary field of engagement related to landscape architecture (Figure 3), as indicated by the respondents; research and teaching were the most frequently selected fields (29 and 23 answers, respectively), with a considerable group of people involved in heritage and conservation and design practices (11 answers for each field).

4. Your primary field of engagement related to landscape architecture (multiple answers possible):

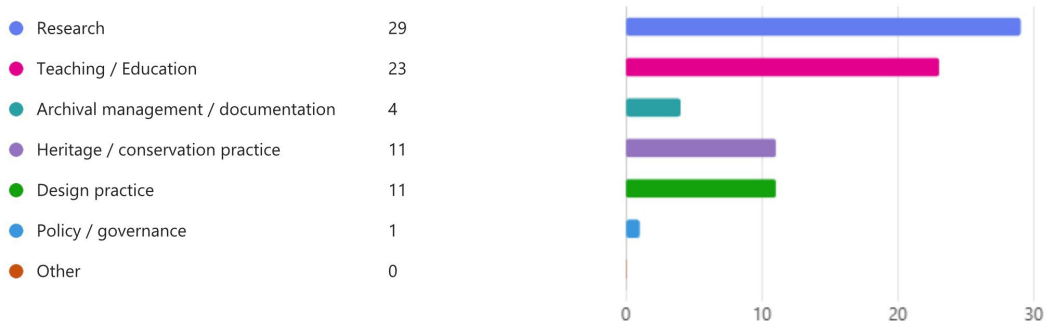


Figure 3. Survey Question 3 on Respondents' Professional and Institutional Background (Survey on Knowledge Gaps in LA History, Research, and Archives).

4. General profile of current research use of archives

The survey confirms that landscape architecture archives are currently used above all in academic and research-oriented contexts. Most respondents reported regular use of archives for research, teaching, and publishing, while a smaller but still important group used archival material in conservation, restoration, management, and design-related work. Academic research and publishing were by far the most frequently cited uses, followed by teaching and heritage-related professional applications. Contemporary design inspiration, policy development, and internal office documentation were much less frequently indicated.

A significant majority of survey participants use archival materials for academic research and publishing (36) and teaching (25) which is in line with their primary fields of professional activities. The important purpose of examining archival resources remains heritage assessment, conservation practice and restoration projects, indicated by 18 participants. Significantly smaller number of participants admitted the use of archival materials for contemporary design reference or inspiration (12) and management of landscapes (10), while only 10 participants used them for policy development or planning practice (6) and internal documentation in design practice (3).

Thematically, current research is strongest in the history and design of gardens and landscapes in the 20th and 21st centuries, but this focus is geographically uneven. This is followed by studies addressing earlier periods up to the end of the 19th century, the history of landscape architecture education and institutions, and biographical research focused on (female) designers, practitioners, and underrepresented actors. A further cluster of active themes concerns planning history, policy and management frameworks, and transnational professional influences and networks.

The respondents were asked to indicate themes related to landscape architecture history to which they relate in their current work. Most survey participants (32) indicated History of landscapes / landscape design - 20th and 21st centuries as their major research theme for their current work. Next most currently investigated issue was History of landscapes / landscape design until the end of the 19th century (23) followed by a History of landscape architecture education and institutions (19) and Biographical research (e.g. designers, practitioners, women, underrepresented actors) (18). Topics of History of planning, policy or management frameworks and Professional networks, influences, and transnational connections are in focus of the same number of participants (12).

The archival materials most frequently used are visual and project-based records, especially design drawings and project documentation (Figure 4a), maps and cartographic sources (Figure 4b), and photographic collections (Figure 4c). Written reports and correspondence also remain central (Figure 4d and 4e). Oral histories, interviews, and academic collections (Figure 4f and 4g) appear as relevant secondary categories. By contrast, born-digital materials such as CAD and GIS files, as well as competition archives, remain much less used. This may reflect the current predominance of historically oriented research, infrastructural gaps in the collection and accessibility of born-digital records, or a combination of both. Another reason for this is the fact that digital-born materials have only recently appeared in archival collections (as the common use of computer design processes began only in the mid-1990s).



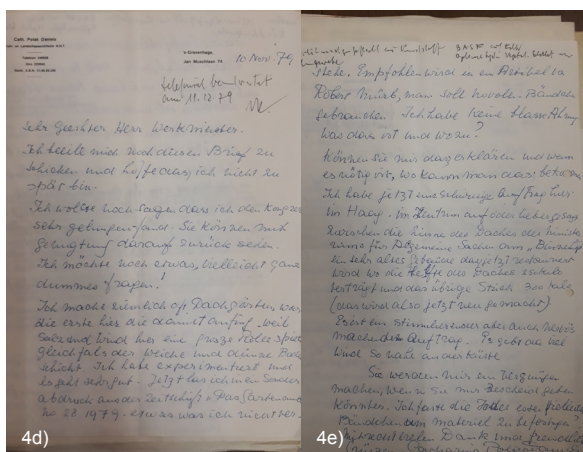
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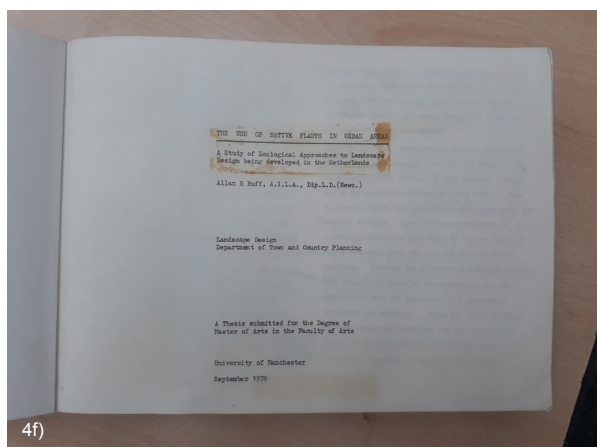
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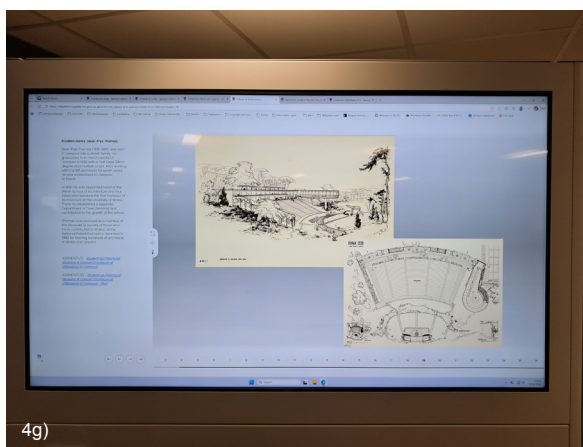
4c)



4d)



4f)



4g)

Figure 4. Examples of the most frequently used types of archival materials, as identified through survey responses: a) aerial view drawing from a LA project. Archival materials held in the newly established, in 2025, archive of the Faculty of Horticulture and Landscape Engineering of Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra (Photo by Anna Staniewska); b) cartographic archive example from the St. Pietersberg, the Netherlands. Landscape plan by Jan Vallen office, 1963. Archival materials held in private archive, Maastricht. (Photo by Imke van Hellemond); c) photographic archive: site orientation of the St. Pietersberg, Jan Vallen office, 1963. Archival materials held in private archive, Maastricht. (Photo by Imke van Hellemond); d) written archival materials correspondences (letter by Catharina Polak Daniels to Hans Friedrich Werkmeister, 10.11.1979. Archival materials held in fonds IFLA at CIVA (now Kanal Architecture), Brussels. (Photo by Imke van Hellemond); e) written academic archival materials, such as a master thesis (by Allan Ruff, 1978). Archival materials held at University of Manchester. (Photo by Imke van Hellemond); f) online catalogue of academic archival materials such as students' drawings. Archival materials held in the University of Liverpool archives (Photo by Mariana Veludo).

5. Main overarching themes in current European research

Following the conceptual direction discussed within WG2, the material can be grouped under three broad and partly overlapping umbrella areas/overarching themes.

5.1 History of designed landscapes

A first major strand concerns the history of designed landscapes. This includes studies on particular sites, design styles, gardens, parks, regions, and territorial formations, as well as broader reflections on how landscape history is written and interpreted. In this area, archives are used to uncover earlier spatial configurations, reveal tangible and intangible layers of change, reconstruct design intentions, and understand the social and cultural meanings attached to designed landscapes over time.

The survey material suggests that this remains the most established area of working with LA archives. Yet open-ended responses also point to several directions that deserve stronger attention, such as everyday and public utility landscapes, rural and peripheral regions, public parks viewed comparatively across different cultural environments, and the historical development of designed landscapes shaped by housing, infrastructure, and technical planning. These responses indicate the field is gradually moving beyond elite gardens and canonically designed parks toward broader cultural and 'operational' landscapes at a larger scale. While in several European countries this shift has already happened in the 1950s, both in design and historiography, it remains a relevant issue in many countries. The fact that this movement is not the same everywhere demonstrates the geographical differences described in the introduction. Unevenness is further explored in chapter 7.

5.2 History of the profession, education, and transnational exchange

A second umbrella theme concerns the history of landscape architecture as a profession, including biographies, office cultures, training traditions, academic institutions, and cross-border exchanges of ideas. The working outline explicitly identified biographies, women's histories, country traditions, missing and previously unrevealed/unrecognised connections, transnational collaboration and exchange, and educational traditions as central themes.

This area appears fertile because it connects archival work to broader questions of canon formation, visibility, and historical narrative. Survey responses repeatedly stressed the need to revise canonical histories, document women's and minorities' contributions (such as participatory processes), recover non-canonical actors, and analyze educational and academic networks. They also pointed to international exchange, post-war design dialogues, and post-colonial or alternative narratives as promising lines of inquiry. The latter issue might be central for further research and collaboration, as it reflects the rationale of this COST Action (Figure 5).

An additional dimension concerns the role of archives in landscape architecture education. Beyond their use as research sources, archives are increasingly recognised as pedagogical tools that support design studios, historical analysis, and critical reflection. However, their integration into curricula remains uneven across Europe, often depending on local access conditions and institutional traditions. This suggests a need for more systematic approaches to archive-based teaching and for the development of shared educational resources, as suggested by the activity of the WG3 within our Connect LAA action.

5.3 Historic and contemporary landscape management processes

A third umbrella area connects archives to the management of landscapes, both historic and contemporary. The WG2 outline explicitly refers here to restoration, the archaeology of designed landscapes, heritage protection and policy processes, planning documents, redesign projects, and the use of archives as inspiration in new projects.



Figure 5. Guided visit to the Budapest City Archives during the General Meeting in March 2025: example of document conservation works (Photo by Anna Staniewska).

This strand is especially important because it shows that archives are not only sources for retrospective and reflective scholarship. They are also operational tools in conservation practice, heritage assessment, planning, and design decision-making. The survey suggests that this practical use is still underdeveloped in some contexts. This might be possibly (probably) linked to the limited knowledge about and access to archival materials. Several respondents raised concrete questions about how archives can inform regular design practice, how professionals might adopt comparable archival methodologies, and how archival evidence can be better translated into restoration, redesign, and policy processes.

6. Structural barriers affecting research and archive use

The evidence gathered through the conducted surveys points to a recurring set of structural barriers. Nonetheless, it is worth stressing that the belief that archival materials related to landscape architecture are always preserved, and only need to be properly unlocked is false. The first problem is that landscape architecture materials often are not preserved, which is the biggest hindrance for any kind of use.

6.1 Dispersion, access, findability and digitisation

One of the most widespread barriers is the dispersion combined with limited digitization and weak (online) access. Respondents across multiple countries described the difficulty of accessing archival material remotely, locating digitized content, or even getting basic information on what collections exist (catalogues). Another aspect was the fact that usually the materials have no/ lack metadata related to LA, which makes research difficult. Limited access to institutional catalogues, the absence of collection-level finding aids, and the fragmentation of related materials across institutions were also repeatedly identified as significant obstacles.

This problem has broad methodological consequences. When records are dispersed, poorly catalogued, or invisible online, research becomes slower, less comparative, and more dependent on local knowledge or physical proximity to collections. Smaller or peripheral topics are especially disadvantaged because they rarely benefit from existing finding aids or dedicated archival expertise to guide researchers through relevant holdings.

6.2 Institutional and legal constraints

A second major barrier concerns institutional weakness, and legal constraints. Respondents pointed to the lack of awareness among institutions and professionals regarding existing archives and their potential value, the absence of long-term preservation policies, and legal or institutional restrictions that hinder consultation, reproduction, or reuse. In some cases, institutions are reluctant to share materials or provide copies, while in others there is little recognition that landscape architecture documentation, in its full range, has cultural value worth preserving.

This is particularly important in relation to design offices and professional practice. Several responses stressed that many practitioners still associate archival value mainly with flagship projects, while the wider body of office production, including routine documentation, implementation records, and design development material, remains overlooked.

6.3 Technical and methodological challenges

The survey also reveals important technical and methodological barriers. Materials relevant to landscape architecture are often catalogued under neighboring disciplines, which makes them difficult to identify. Respondents also referred/highlighted the lack of arrangement/ classification and description frameworks and a thesaurus adapted to landscape architecture research, as well as the lack of specific training in archival management and methodological guidance for users.

This issue is not simply technical. It affects the shape of scholarship itself. When archival systems do not reflect the specific logic of landscape architecture, certain kinds of projects, actors, and processes remain hard to trace, compare, and interpret (Figure 6).

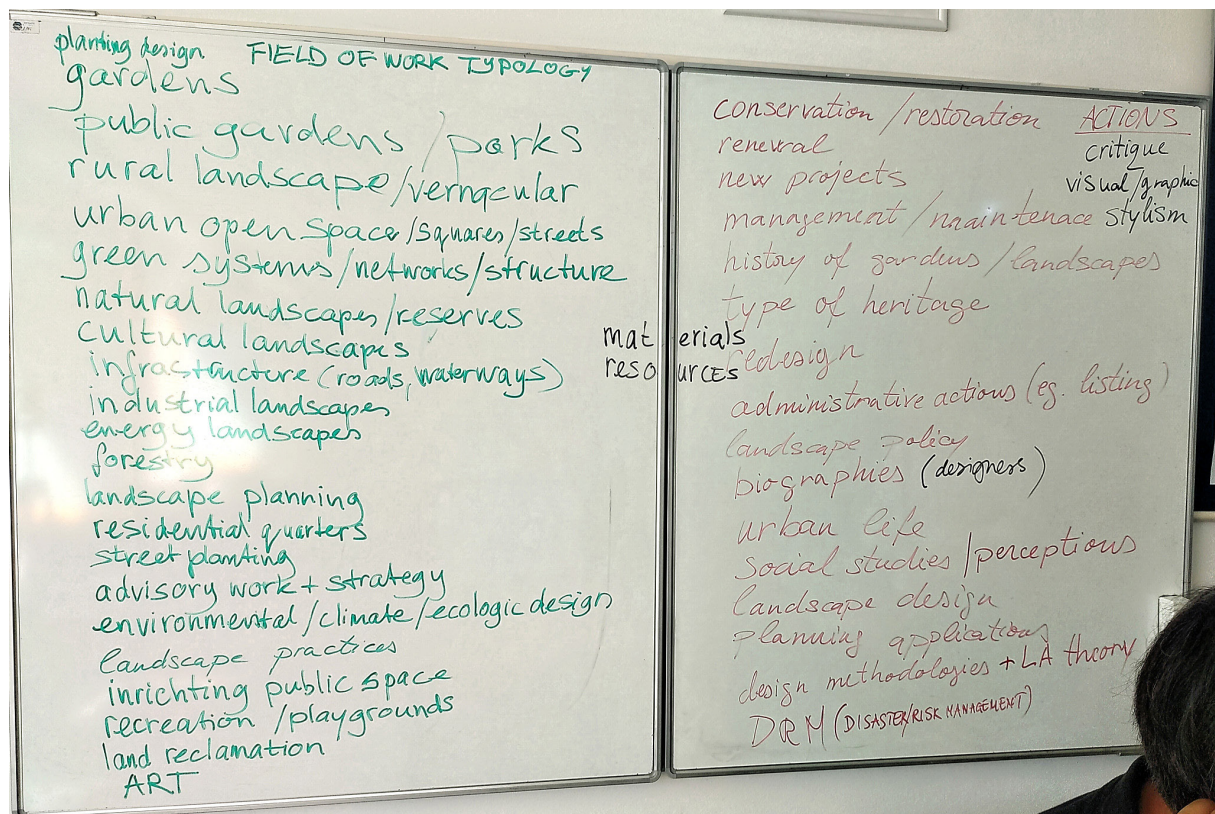


Figure 6. Results of the Brainstorming Session on Keywords and Research Themes, General Meeting, Nitra, 5 September 2025. (Photo by Anna Staniewska).

6.4 Physical and organisational limitations

Underlying many of the barriers described in this report is a more fundamental structural condition: unlike neighboring disciplines such as architecture or urban planning, landscape architecture lacks dedicated national archival institutions, statutory recognition, or public funding frameworks in most European countries. Its documentation is rarely designated as a cultural heritage in its own right, so the preservation of collections depends on ad hoc arrangements rather than systematic institutional support. This structural absence directly shapes receiving capacity, physical space, classification standards, and long-term preservation policies, and helps explain why landscape architecture archives remain especially vulnerable compared to those of related disciplines.

At the practical level, some archives lack the physical space necessary to accept new material (Figure 7), while in other contexts there are no institutions who are willing or prepared to receive landscape architecture collections from private practitioners. Particularly vulnerable materials include private design office archives, project implementation records such as planting lists and site files, and oral histories linked to older generations of practitioners.

Together, these conditions point to a deeper risk: recent and contemporary landscape architecture may become less well documented than earlier periods precisely because its records are dispersed, under-processed, born-digital, or still in private hands.

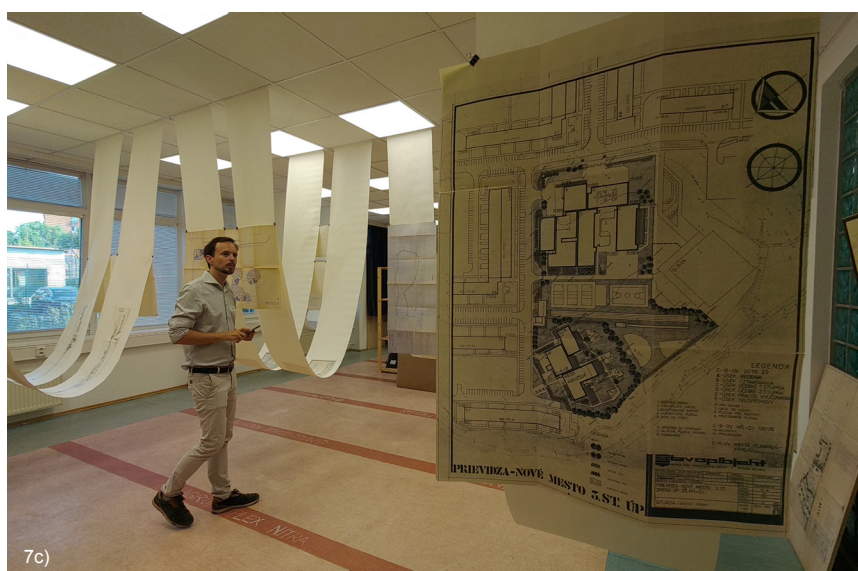


Figure 7. Examples of storage, work, and exhibition spaces in archives: a) storage area in the Budapest City Archives, illustrating the spatial requirements for proper preservation of materials (Photo by Anna Staniewska); b) workspace in the Budapest City Archives (Photo by Anna Staniewska); c) exhibition at the Institute of Landscape Architecture of the Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra archives (Photo by Anna Staniewska); d) display of archival materials at the Slovak University of Agriculture, Nitra (Photo by Anna Staniewska).

A cross-cutting issue emerging from the material is the growing impact of digital transformation on both archival practices and research methodologies. The increasing production of born-digital records, including CAD drawings, GIS datasets, emails, and project management platforms, raises questions about long-term preservation, standardisation, and access. The uneven digitisation of analogue collections continues to shape research possibilities and interests, often reinforcing topical, geographical and institutional asymmetries. Addressing digital continuity between analogue and born-digital archives should therefore be considered a central priority for future work.

7. Geographical unevenness across Europe

The survey makes clear that the state of landscape architecture archives varies significantly across countries and regions. Some contexts are described as relatively structured and accessible, while others are characterized by fragmentation, poor visibility, or the near absence of dedicated archival infrastructures. Austria and Italy were cited among the better-structured cases, though even their fragmentation persists. Portugal, the Netherlands, France, Finland, and Sweden were often described as only partially available and fragmented. Spain, Albania, Poland, Romania, Montenegro, and Serbia were more often characterized as limited and difficult to identify, while Kosovo and parts of Türkiye were described as almost non-existent in archival terms.

Regional patterns also emerged in open-ended responses. Eastern and Southeastern Europe were repeatedly associated with a significant research output gap in relation to Western Europe, as well as with fragmented local and regional archives and limited institutional visibility. In Romania, for example, respondents highlighted the need to map informal archives, including private collections, community archives, and documents held by local organizations. In Poland, institutional reluctance to share documentation was specifically mentioned. In Northern Europe, the lack of space and the gradual reduction/thinning out of collections were raised as distinctive concerns. In Southern Europe, respondents stressed the need for comparative Mediterranean perspectives. In Türkiye, interdisciplinary misclassification and the need to document rural-vernacular landscapes and Ottoman Garden traditions were particularly visible.

These differences do not simply describe archival conditions. They also help explain why certain historiographies are more developed than others and why some themes remain nationally visible but internationally marginal. This was also signalled/emphasised during WG3 regional workshop in Lisbon, where it was noted that many search portals are only accessible in the language of their respective country and that, particularly in Eastern Europe, historic documents may exist in different languages due to the political history of these countries.



Nitra Regional Archives, September 2025 (Photo by Anna Staniewska).

8. Main knowledge gaps in current research

The survey material points not only to gaps in archival infrastructure, but also to significant gaps in the current research into landscape architecture itself.

The material also points to emerging ethical questions related to archival ownership, authorship, and representation. These include the rights associated with private design office archives, the recognition of collaborative and often undocumented contributions (such as staff, technicians, gardeners, or community actors), and the responsible use of sensitive or unpublished materials. Addressing these issues will be important for developing more inclusive and critically reflective archival practices.

8.1 Marginalised actors and social histories

A major gap concerns the persistent dominance of canonical narratives centred on iconic projects and established figures. Respondents repeatedly called for more work on women's and minorities' contributions, non-canonical practitioners, labour and maintenance histories, and broader social histories of landscape use and production. In certain instances, forms of marginalisation may intersect, giving rise to a distorted representation of the profession's historical trajectory due to lacunae in archival documentation. In Austria, for instance, most female landscape architects of the interwar period were Jewish and were compelled to depart the country when the National Socialists ascended to power, resulting in the loss of all design records and the extinction of their professional impact. (Figure 8).

This is a crucial challenge because it would require archives to provide support a more diverse and nuanced account of the profession and its societal role.



Figure 8. The exiled Austrian garden architect Helena (Helene) Wolf in her California garden, 1949. (Credit: Lester Kent, photographer; permission of the Collection of the Hayward Area Historical Society.)

8.2 Everyday, rural, and non-monumental landscapes

Another major gap concerns everyday landscapes. However, it must be acknowledged that in several countries 'urban landscapes' have already been extensively researched for some time, as have regional planning, infrastructure, and forestry. Yet, there are still significant/visible differences in research/historiography focus in/across Europe. In many countries, research still privileges parks, prestigious estates, and heritage-recognised sites, while housing estates, playgrounds, streetscapes, urban commons, community gardens, rural regions, border areas, and minority landscapes remain underrepresented (Figure 9).

These responses suggest a need to broaden both the object of research and the concept of what counts as landscape heritage.

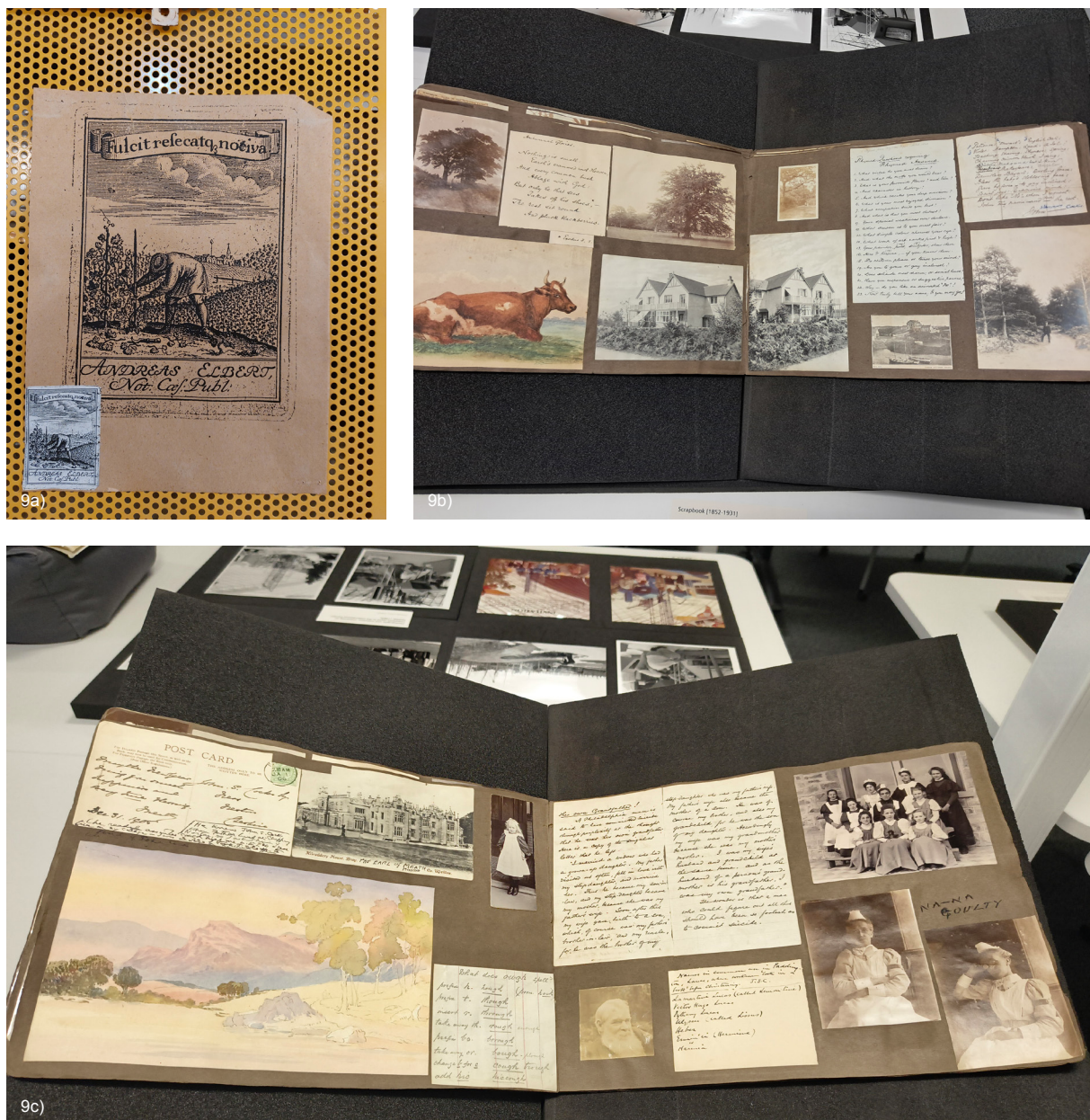


Figure 9. Examples of archival materials documenting everyday and rural landscapes: a) copy of an engraving showing a man working in a field ('He supports and removes what is harmful'). Budapest City Archives (Photo by Imke va Hellemmond); b) and c) Scrapbook materials, including drawings and correspondence, representing rural contexts such as agricultural and country landscapes, 1852–1931. Archival materials held at the University of Liverpool archives (photos by Mariana Veludo).

8.3 Infrastructural, public, and technical landscapes

A recurrent theme in the spreadsheet responses concerns the under-researched role of landscape architecture in public projects, housing, infrastructure, and technically driven landscapes, especially in the mid-20th century and post-war period. This includes not only design authorship, but also implementation processes, technical detailing, planning archives, and the profession's contribution to broader urban development.

This direction appears especially promising because it connects historical research with current concerns about public space, housing, sustainability, and infrastructure.

8.4 Policy, governance, and institutional history

Respondents also identified policy and governance history, educational history, and academic networks as under-researched. These topics are important because they help explain how the profession developed institutionally, how design ideas circulated, and how archives themselves were shaped by legal, academic, and administrative frameworks.

8.5 Ecological, process-based, and plant-related histories

Another emerging area concerns ecological and process-based histories. Responses pointed to the need for more work on environmental transformations, ecological design tendencies of the 1970s and 1980s and other periods, and even the history of planting and species use in private gardens. The awareness that they existed and that ideas emerge in waves through time is usually lacking.

These topics show that research on landscape architecture history can contribute directly to current debates on resilience, sustainability, and environmental design knowledge.

8.6 Methodological and archival gaps - the need for cross-country comparative research

Beyond thematic omissions, respondents frequently highlighted the lack of cross-country comparative research, the continuing focus on canonical case studies, the weak visibility of archives held by private practitioners, the vulnerability of unprocessed collections, and the difficulty of dealing with born-digital records and digital repositories.

This is a central finding for WG2, because it shows that research gaps and archival gaps are inseparable and intertwined. Certain histories remain unwritten not only because they are conceptually overlooked, but also because the records needed to write them are inaccessible, at risk, or not yet recognized as archives. This structural asymmetry - between well-documented and under-documented contexts, between canonical and marginalized histories, between accessible and at-risk collections - is something that ConnectLAA shall actively address so that a genuinely inclusive history of European landscape architecture history may emerge.

9. Emerging topics for future collaborative research

The survey and WG2 discussions suggest several potential directions for future collaborative articles and joint outputs (Figure 10).

A first direction is cross-country comparative research. This appeared repeatedly in both structured and open-ended responses, whether in relation to Mediterranean archives, Central and Northern European post-war dialogues, or broader comparisons of public parks, educational traditions, and professional networks.

A second direction concerns archives in relation to design practice. People suggested focusing on how archives can inspire new designs, practical ways to use archives, and good ways to incorporate archival material into projects involving heritage or redesign.

A third direction concerns contemporary archival practices in design offices, especially the preservation of born-digital material and the documentation of recent professional work. This topic is especially urgent because the Action itself identifies digital challenges and endangered living archives as reasons why intervention is needed now.

A fourth direction concerns oral history. Responses stressed the urgency of conducting and preserving oral history recordings with older generations of landscape architects while first-hand knowledge is still available. This is not only a matter of supplementing the written and/or analogue archive, but also of documenting tacit professional knowledge and institutional memory.

A fifth direction concerns the development and visibility of landscape architecture archives in underrepresented European contexts, particularly in Inclusiveness Target Countries where archival infrastructure remains fragmented or nearly absent. This includes mapping private and informal collections and fostering institutional recognition of landscape architecture documentation as cultural heritage — essential conditions for ensuring that future collaborative research reflects the full diversity of European landscape architecture practice and history.

A sixth direction could concern the archive materials in relation to the teaching practices in landscape architecture, across different countries. While archives are recognized as valuable pedagogical resources, their integration into teaching may depend on institutional traditions, accessibility, and availability of relevant collections. This may create disparities in how students are exposed to/engage with historical material, archival methods, and design processes across different geographical contexts, particularly when archives are dispersed, poorly catalogued, or difficult to access.



Figure 10. Diagram of topics for future collaborative research (Illustration by Kati Wolff).

10. Preliminary conclusions

Strengthening the connection between archives and contemporary practice has the potential to enhance design quality, support evidence-based decision-making, and foster continuity in landscape transformation processes, and contribute to more sustainable and climate-informed approaches by making accumulated ecological and material knowledge available to current practitioners. This requires a continuous strengthening and expansion of landscape architecture archives and improved access to archival materials, as well as the development of methods and tools that translate archival knowledge into formats usable for practitioners.

The report D5 shows that landscape architecture archives already support a broad and intellectually varied field of research, but one that remains structurally uneven and methodologically fragmented. Current work is strongest in studies of landscapes and design history from the 19th to the 21st centuries, in biographical research, and in institutional and educational history. At the same time, substantial gaps persist in relation to women and other minorities, non-canonical actors, everyday and infrastructural landscapes, governance and policy histories, ecological and process-based approaches, and born-digital archives.

The report also confirms that the archival question cannot be separated from the research question. Problems of digitisation, classification, institutional access, fragmentation, preservation, and receiving capacity (space, budget, staff, know-how, tools) directly shape which histories can be written and which remain obscured. In this sense, strengthening landscape architecture archives is not only a matter of safeguarding professional heritage, but also requires the statutory recognition and dedicated institutional frameworks that the discipline currently lacks in most European countries. It is also a precondition for broadening the scope, methods, and inclusiveness of future landscape architecture research across Europe.

Seen from this perspective, D5 should not be treated as a final mapping exercise, but as a working platform for future action. It identifies a set of shared concerns and emerging directions (Figure 11) that can inform joint articles, methodological guidance, and future WG2 activities throughout the remainder of the COST Action.

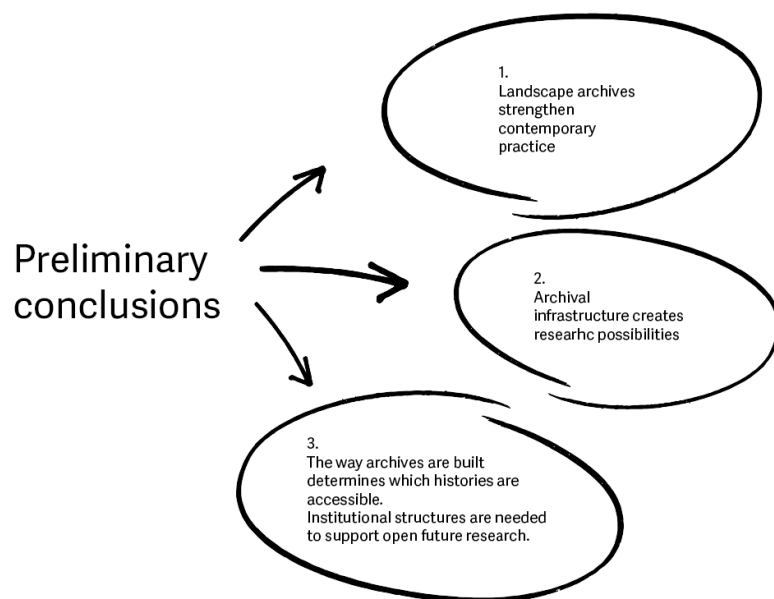


Figure 11. Diagram of preliminary conclusions (Illustration by Kati Wolff).



Colophon

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