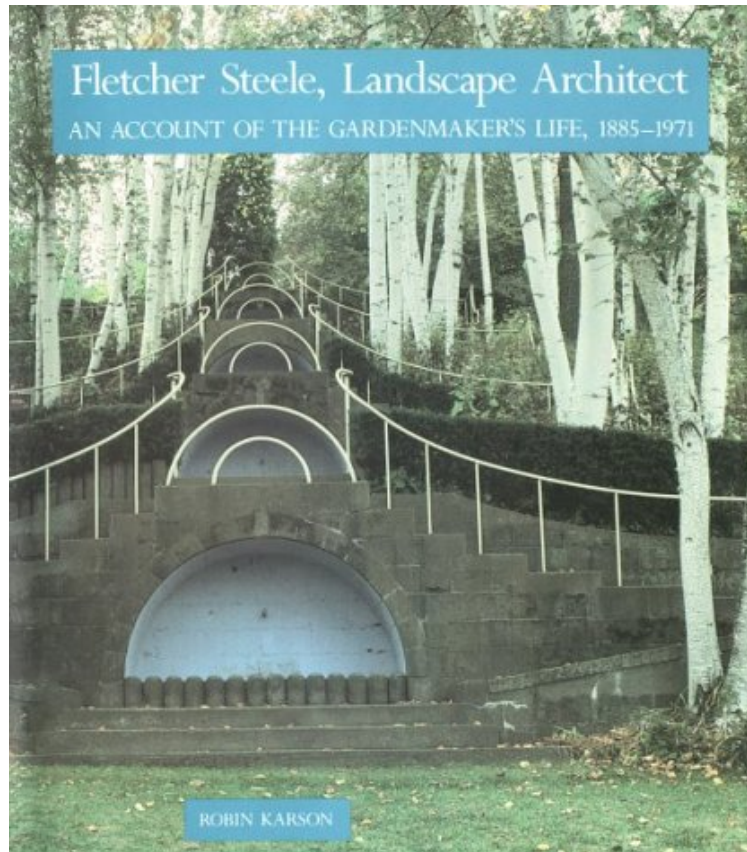


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Fletcher Steele, Landscape Architect: An Account of the Gardenmaker's Life, 1885-1971

Robin S. Karson

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For 60 years Steele practiced landscape architecture as a fine art, designing nearly 700 gardens that form an important link between 19th-century Beaux Arts formalism and modern landscape design.

From Publishers Weekly Born in Rochester, N.Y., in 1885, Steele--who called gardening "the ephemeral art"--was among the greatest American landscape architects of our century, bridging 19th-century Beaux-Arts formalism and modern landscape design in a career comprising almost 700 gardens. In the first critical biography of Steele, Karson, a contributing editor for *Garden Design and Landscape Architecture*, offers a gracefully written record of the master's extraordinary legacy, documenting the creation of 50 of his most important gardens, and revealing his uncanny ability to tap the imagination of clients while striking a balance between architectonic impact and lyrically sensual style. Blessed with charm and wit, Steele moved easily in a high society that provided a lifelong stream of clients; European, Asian and tropical sojourns provided additional esthetic inspiration. His career reached its peak in the 1930s, when moneyed patrons took advantage of cheap labor to indulge in elaborate fantasies. Fewer post-World War II projects were realized on such a grand scale, but Steele's productivity continued unabated until his death in 1971. Illustrated. Copyright 1989 Reed Business Information, Inc. "A book to give for Christmas, or as the grandest of house presents; it's a book to keep as well. . . . [Karson] has written a wonderful read and, in doing so, has revived an entire era in all its detail. Intelligent, theatrical, infuriating, amusing and loveable Steele struts off the page, giving life to his own work." *Garden Design* "A meticulously detailed, fascinating account of Steele's life and work. Woven from the diverse threads of voluminous correspondence, project documents, notebooks, photographs, diaries, interviews, and conversations, this richly textured history reads well no small accomplishment for so inclusive a study. . . . Karson's fluid narrative style, seamlessly punctuated by Steele's voice throughout, makes the considerable volume of material accessible and clear." *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* "Karson has done a magnificent job in integrating carefully chosen archival drawings and pictures with contemporary photographs of many gardens. Planting plans and plant lists are offered as additional information for many of the gardens with a comprehensive list of clients. We are given simultaneously a revealing account of one of America's greatest modern garden designers as well as an inspiring reference of garden-making as a fine art." *Public Garden* "This is a book to be savored, to be read and re-read for enjoyment and consulted repeatedly for inspiration. The text is uncommonly readable, the descriptions of the gardens and their maker consistently perceptive and insightful. [An] exceptional volume." *Pacific Horticulture* "Born in Rochester, N.Y., in 1885, Steele who called gardening "the ephemeral art" was among the greatest American landscape architects of our century, bridging 19th-century Beaux-Arts formalism and modern landscape design in a career comprising almost 700 gardens. In the first critical biography of Steele, Karson, a contributing editor for *Garden Design and Landscape Architecture*, offers a gracefully written record of the master's extraordinary legacy, documenting the creation of 50 of his most important gardens, and revealing his uncanny ability to tap the imagination of clients while striking a balance between architectonic impact and lyrically sensual style. Blessed with charm and wit, Steele moved easily in a high society that provided a lifelong stream of clients; European, Asian and tropical sojourns provided additional esthetic inspiration. His career reached its peak in the 1930s, when moneyed patrons took advantage of cheap labor to indulge in elaborate fantasies. Fewer post-World War II projects were realized on such a grand scale, but Steele's productivity continued unabated until his death in 1971. Illustrated." *Publishers Weekly* From the Publisher Winner of an Honor Award from the American Society of Landscape Architects Named one of the 75 Best Garden Books by the American Horticultural Society LALH Designers and Places series, distributed for Library of American Landscape History.