

## Contracted Scope

### Project Description/Type of Construction

Lost Hollow: The Kimbrell Children's Garden winds and weaves for over three acres throughout the heart of the existing 380-acre Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden. Designed to offer visitors a memorable and imaginative experience, the paths inspire exploration and lead to eight different and cleverly detailed destinations.

Treasures from the Daniel Stowe estate, creative centerpieces, castle concepts and medieval elements are planted throughout the Garden, inviting interpretation and encouraging guests to play, learn and appreciate beauty.

### Size of Project

The 3 1/2-acre space features eight unique destinations that have been built into the existing landscape. Destinations include: The Commons, The Aviary, Moon Keep, Sunken Pond, Hillside Theatre, Fireplace Cave, The Mantlet, and The Balconette.

### Schedule

**Start Date:** November, 2013

**Completion Date:** October, 2014

The total project duration was 11 months.

### Self-Performed Labor

Rodgers self-performed 20% of labor on the project.

### Merit Shop / ABC Members

Rodgers worked with a total of six ABC members on this project.



• Aerial view of Lost Hollow: The Kimbrell Children's Garden in Belmont, NC

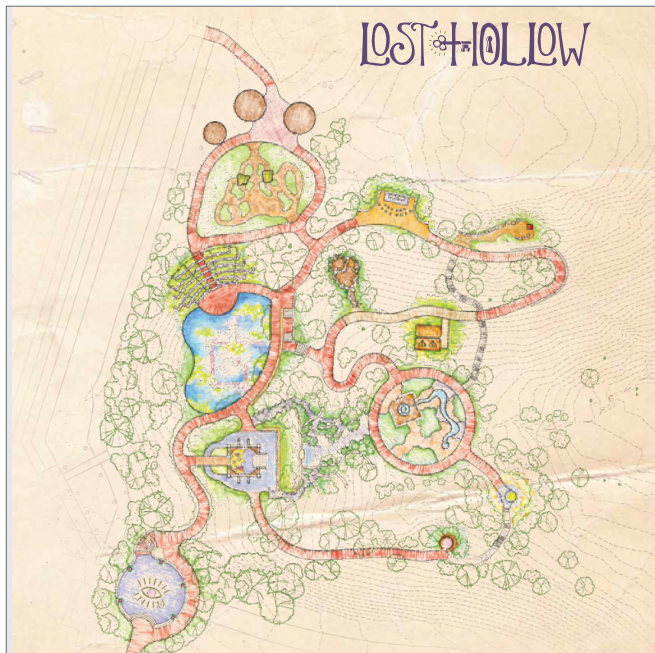
## Project Narrative

### Why is this project special?

Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden's newest attraction, Lost Hollow: The Kimbrell Children's Garden, is a medieval fantasyland designed to offer visitors a memorable and imaginative experience.

"The hollow is based on every story you've ever read about old European forests," says DSBG's executive director Kara Newport. "We wanted the hollow to be a story tale, but not a specific one because we want kids to make up their own stories."

In collaboration with Sitework Studios, Lost Hollow was designed by New York Landscape designer W. Gary Smith who is credited with immensely creative gardens all over the country, including the new children's garden at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in Texas and Enchanted Woods at Delaware's Winterthur Garden.



• Design sketches by W. Gary Smith Design in collaboration with Sitework Studios

- *"Gary works with what's there," says Newport. "He's happy to keep some of the space undefined and let visitors make up their own stories." Smith says his goal is always to "inspire imagination."*

Lost Hollow challenges conventional approaches to design with journeys to destinations. The Garden includes interactive play spaces that engage children in nature. Each area within the garden is a custom designed space for children to explore and interact. Historic artifacts from the home of the Garden's founder Daniel Stowe are incorporated into the design to bring additional unique character to the space. The late Daniel Stowe, a textile executive, set aside 400 acres for the botanical garden.

Interesting pieces such as the terra cotta chimney stacks that circle the "All Seeing Eye" in The Commons, 20th century European lamp posts along the pathways, and a mature Japanese maple that sits at the base of Moon Keep were all items that belonged to the Garden's founder.

Fireplace Cave and a 12-foot-tall aviary are also both tributes to Stowe. The aviary, which once housed exotic birds in Stowe's garden, is now a rotating play space for children.

The cave's entrance is a giant, Italian-carved limestone fireplace surround from the lakefront estate Stowe built in the late 1960s. Inside the five-foot high space is a disco ball he used for parties and gold medallions that were on his living room ceiling. The cave's blue ceiling contains 400 strands of fiber-optic lights.

Heavy coordination was required to incorporate the heavy, limestone fireplace into Fireplace Cave. Divided into six sections and transported by pallets, the surround was fastened in pieces to the retaining wall.



- **12-foot aviary salvaged from Stowe's estate and placed on a rotating turntable**

Ironwork artist Lynda Metcalfe literally hammered out the details in the railings found on the Balconette and Moon Keep, two destinations in the garden. These complex creations came from the mind of Smith who wanted to incorporate medieval symbols like crowns, keys, escutcheons, leaves and flowers into the railing. But it's Metcalfe who brought the concept to reality through the combination of heavy angle iron and stabilizing bars with the gentle touch of a jeweler.

The Balconette, which acts as a retaining wall for the pond, is an elaborate railing that overlooks much of this garden in the hollow. Metcalfe created the custom radius ironwork, including 64 leaves, of which only two are alike.

Guests can stop and gaze into Sunken Pond to find a secret castle. The outline of this living pond, lined with stones Smith hand-selected, appear as if a castle over centuries has fallen into rubble.

Special performances are offered at the Hillside Theatre, a colorful outdoor performance venue alongside Sunken Pond. The multi-functional space features decorative, tiered steel columns and a metal, tapered standing seam roof.

The pathways are made of recycled asphalt, so it feels like it's been worn down over hundreds of years. Custom handrails were created by forging bar stock steel along the curves of each pathway. A new boardwalk, created with black locust wood, connects the pathways through the "Old Woods" without disturbing the existing oak trees.

These one-of-a-kind features make Lost Hollow a truly unique experience for children and adults alike.

### **Value to the community**

October 2014, the month Lost Hollow opened, was also the highest-attended October in the Garden's history—12,246 guests, a 125% increase over the prior October. Following the opening celebration, a record number of people have become annual members of the Garden and for the six months that followed, the Garden saw double or triple-digit monthly increases over the prior year. Visitors from all 50 states have explored Lost Hollow.

The Garden also received a grant from PNC Bank to develop a program for the local public school system's pre-K students from underserved neighborhoods.

Although the positive effect of increased school groups is still growing, the Garden now hosts more than 10,000 school students each year, making it a leader among gardens nationally.

- *"Thousands of people joined us for the opening celebration of Lost Hollow this past weekend and by the time they left many had decided to join us for the entire year," said Executive Director Kara Newport. "I think that says a lot about the kind of remarkable experience guests at the Garden have. Now with the opening of Lost Hollow, families throughout the region have reason to visit again and again."*

### Innovative Programs - Schedule

Lost Hollow's 11-month schedule was divided into seven phases. With only one access point to the site, each destination had its own schedule based on its location on the property.

This phasing plan allowed the project team to coordinate with DSBG and the landscape subcontractors in order to communicate areas that would no longer be disturbed and keep the project on track.

Using weekly progress reports, team members were able to document and monitor progress and see if there were any areas that needed more attention.

Although changes occurred as construction was well underway, the project was completed on time and in budget.

### Innovative Programs - Quality Control

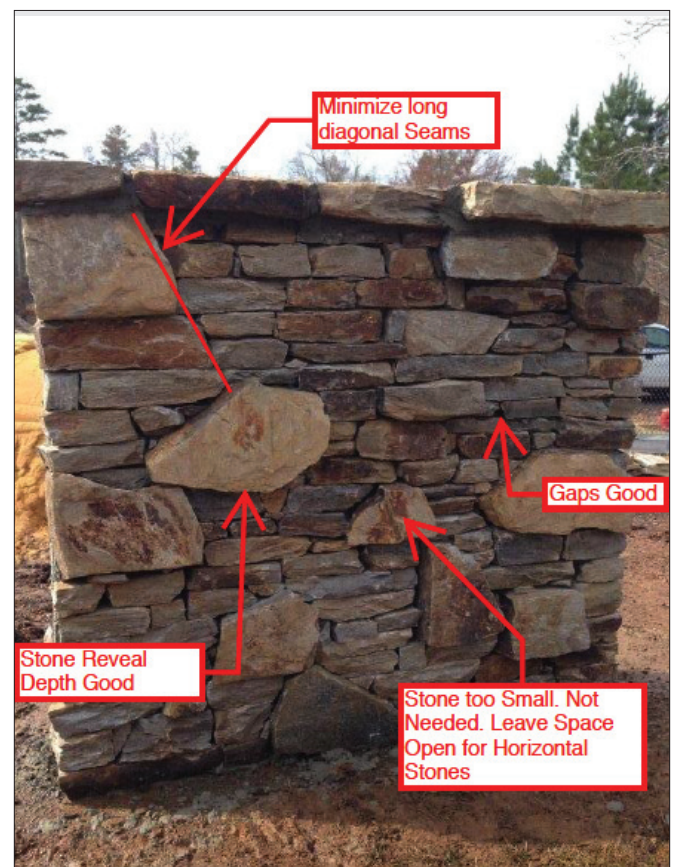
Each destination has an old-world feel, intended to look as if it's been there for centuries. To guarantee Smith's vision was implemented for each designation, multiple mock-ups were used throughout the project.

Four different mock-ups were created to ensure the pattern in the stone looked like it had been there for centuries. The stone veneer mock-ups followed two patterns, the flagstone pattern

and a running bond pattern. Mock-ups were also created for the stacked stone columns and slate roof at the Moon Keep, the cave ceiling at Fireplace Cave and the milled asphalt for the pathways.

Smith centered the garden around the mystically named "Moon Keep" (a nod to fortified structures of the Middle Ages) complete with flying buttresses. After the buttresses were installed, stone masons pitted and rounded the faces of the stone with a sandblaster to ensure the edges appeared worn down for centuries.

To coordinate and install the custom panels by local artist Lynda Metcalfe into the railings found on the Balconette and Moon Keep, templates were created to hold the exact dimensions between the stone work.



• Cave wall and wall cap mock-ups

- *“Many of the project components such as hand-built flying buttresses and a restored giant aviary were unique expectations. Rodgers served perfectly as the translator between the artistic vision and the construction implementation. This resulted in a beautiful, high quality project that will stand the test of time.” - DSGB Executive Director Kara Newport*

### Difficulties or Extenuating Circumstances

The space/site of Lost Hollow, in its existing form, was an actual hollow. The contours of the project site, originally planned for a flat space across the street, allowed the design team to incorporate the existing landscape into the design.



#### • Site of Lost Hollow - Before

Due to the drastic elevation change at the site, a majority of the dirt was pushed to the top of the hill after grading and backfilled after concrete work was completed.

Throughout the project the ground was exposed due to the hardscape/landscape nature of the project design. The elevation change caused significant run off any time it rained. Despite the fact the Carolinas experienced the worst winter storm in over a decade three months into the project, the project was completed on time.

Weather also affected the Garden's planting schedule. Since a majority of the project was late in the summer, many trees needed to be planted as soon as concrete work was complete.

The landscape architect worked on site for six months out of the 11-month schedule, requiring heavy coordination. The trees, some as large as six inches in diameter, made the site very sensitive to equipment and construction traffic.

The project site location and position of underground utilities only allowed for one access point through the Commons area throughout the duration of the project.

Originally the schedule was built around having access to the asphalt pathways early in the project. It was soon realized the pathways would need to be installed later and the logistic plan changed.

The site restrictions also required a 200-ton crane to lower the 12-foot Aviary into place.

To construct the new boardwalk that connects the pathways through the “Old Woods,” an Air Spade was used during excavation in order to not disturb the mature oak trees.



#### • 200-ton crane lowering the 12-foot Aviary into place

- *“Every project has its challenges. Our design team was extremely demanding and we made changes. Often. These changes occurred as construction was well underway. Rodgers staff were true “members of the team” and did what it took to create the best possible project. It was clearly apparent that the design team and Rodgers had a true partnership for success.”*

*Steven Lee Johnson, Principal, Sitework Studios*

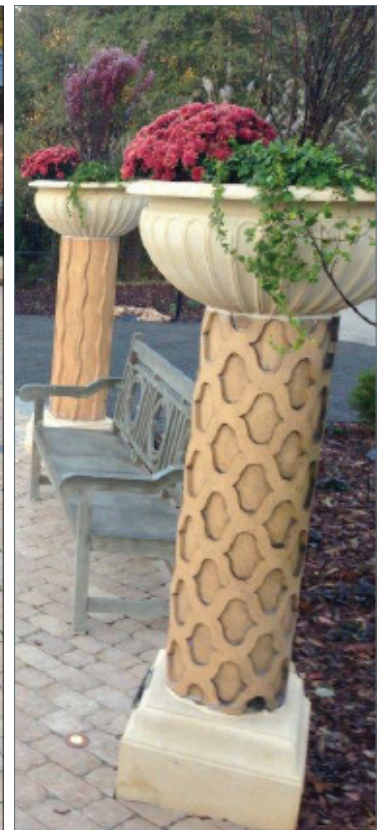
## Quality of Finished Project

Designed with the Garden's founder in mind, Lost Hollow includes three acres developed and a host of places to explore. Each destination has an old-world feel, intended to look as if it's been there for centuries.

Visitors pass over the all-seeing eye of protection to enter the kingdom of Lost Hollow. The custom-installed paver design features reclaimed red clay pavers from the Garden in Victorian colors, including Hanover and Bergerac.

The circular Commons entry is surrounded by seven terra cotta chimney stacks, resembling ancient ruins, salvaged from Stowe's roof. To integrate the fragile chimney pots, planters and bases were purchased and a column was inserted in the middle for support.

- *"This is the kind of garden you come back to repeatedly and find there's always something new to discover."*  
DSGB Executive Director Kara Newport



• The Commons featuring the "All-Seeing Eye" and terra cotta chimney stacks from Stowe's estate

Smith centered the garden around the mystically named "Moon Keep" (a nod to fortified structures of the Middle Ages) complete with flying buttresses and what could be perceived as a dried moat.

Stone columns look like stacked paving stones, barely able to hold up the roof. The columns are made of stones threaded onto structural steel posts. Stonework includes Virginia Field Stone, Mountain Tan Stone (TN & VA), and Pennsylvania Bluestone.

A mature Japanese maple was transplanted from Daniel Stowe's personal garden to the base of the Moon Keep. A slate roof, made from hand-assembled and hand-drilled rough cut lumber, and weather vane add to its authenticity.

The railings were fabricated in collaboration with Brasstown, N.C. ironwork artist Lynda Metcalfe. The floor also features a custom paving pattern, completing Smith's vision for the Moon Keep.



• Details from the Moon Keep

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Guests can stop and gaze into Sunken Pond to find a secret castle. The outline of this living pond, lined with stones Smith hand-selected, appear as if a castle over centuries has fallen into rubble. Water circulates through two vaults, installed behind a retaining wall.

Special performances are offered at the Hillside Theatre, a colorful outdoor performance venue alongside Sunken Pond. The multi-functional space features decorative, tiered steel columns and a metal, tapered standing seam roof.



• Sunken Pond in progress



• The Balconette



• Hillside Theatre alongside Sunken Pond





• **Italian limestone fireplace surround from Stowe's lakefront estate**



• **Details from Fireplace Cave**

Fireplace Cave and a 12-foot-tall aviary are both tributes to Stowe. The aviary, which once housed birds in Stowe's garden, is now refurbished and a rotating play space for children.

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• **Milled asphalt pathways featuring custom handrails created by forging bar stock steel along the curves**

The plants of Lost Hollow range from sweeps of Sporobolus, a fine-textured ornamental grass, to more familiar black-eyed Susan. Japanese maple, eastern red cedar and the native big leaf magnolia accentuate the landscape and blend with formal gardens on one side and a successional forest on the other.