

## JURY'S AWARD OF EXCELLENCE 2005

**Towers | Golde, LLC** New Haven

### *Benenson Ornamental Conifers — The New York Botanical Garden (Bronx, NY)*

The Ornamental Conifer Collection of the New York Botanical Garden consists of 14 acres of rocky, rolling terrain that showcase hundreds of rare, cultivated conifers from around the world. The centerpiece of this informal but dramatic landscape is a unique oval of mature specimens planted in 1947 according to the designs of Marian Coffin, the original landscape architect.

The conifer collection had long fallen into neglect when, during the late 1990s, with the financial support of a major donor, the Garden began the process of upgrading it into a major visitor destination. Towers | Golde was selected to design the renovations, restoration and expansion of this historic garden.

Two years of historic research, plant collection evaluation and design ensued. Towers | Golde created a new entry sequence and expanded the grounds for the collection, including the development of two dwarf conifer gardens connected by a crosswalk.

The historical appropriateness of

the landscape intervention was especially important to the designers. Architectural details, pavings and amenities were carefully selected to represent the historic era of the collection and traditional NYBG park details. Native stone outcrops and the stonework of nearby landmarks were models for the detailed design.

A year of painstaking site installation work followed the design phase, with two additional years allowed to acquire new plant material and give it the opportunity to acclimate and develop. After five years of thorough planning and immense effort, the Ornamental Conifer Collection reopened, a sparkling botanical and landscape jewel ready to receive thousands of visitors.

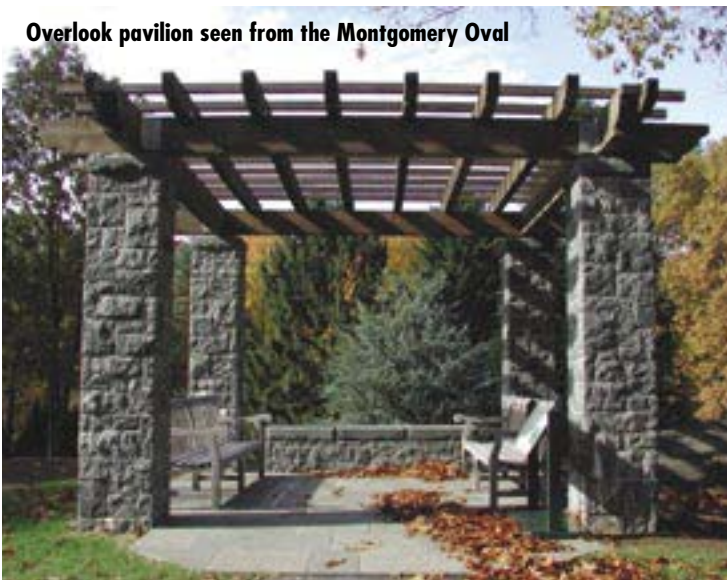


Plan view of the Ornamental Conifer Collection

Below: A grove of Dawn Redwoods (left) and group of Weeping Hemlocks (right) adjacent to the merging entrance and return walks



Overlook pavilion seen from the Montgomery Oval



**Benefactor:** Mr. & Mrs. James Benenson, Jr.  
**Lead designer:** Shavaun Towers, FASLA  
**Project landscape architect:** Anne Hartjen, ASLA  
**Project manager:** Joe Payne, ASLA  
**Historical landscape master planner:** Patrick Chasse, ASLA  
**Civil engineer:** Wohl & O'Mara, LLP, Staten Island, NY  
**Structural engineer:** Michael Horton & Associates, Hamden  
**Soils engineer:** Langan Engineering, New York, NY  
**Site development contractor:** Metrotech Contracting Corporation, Jamaica, NY  
**Irrigation:** R&R Irrigation Company, Greenbrook, NJ

## HONOR AWARD 2006

**Towers | Golde LLC** New Haven

### *Pierson & Davenport Colleges Courtyard Renovation, Yale University (New Haven)*

The Yale University residential colleges Pierson and Davenport underwent extensive remodeling, which resulted in the near destruction of the 1930s landscape designed by Beatrix Farrand (a founder of ASLA).

Thus, Towers | Golde was guided by Ms. Farrand's principles and spirit in their work, in some cases replicating what early photographs showed, and utilized her planting palette to replace several hundred trees and shrubs. The client opted for a Georgian Revival landscape, hinted at by Farrand, but not fully developed. The perimeter walkways of the colleges' main courtyards were thus modified to an oval and ellipse. These forms served the pedestrian "desire lines," driven by new programmatic uses.

Designing for accessibility was a challenge. Stairs and stoops were removed, and regrading eliminated over 25 former barriers to accessibility throughout the two complexes. The gardens for each master's house were renovated, with increased accessibility to each.

At Pierson College several walls and fences were removed from abandoned 'back alleys' to provide a con-



tinuous walkway through mews-like spaces, now punctuated with seating and plantings. Exposed aggregate concrete imparts a sense of age, alternating with bluestone bands in the pavement.

In response to a new residential building's structural grid, traditional bluestone was employed in new ways, cut and dressed in unique shapes as benches, lamp bases, paving bands and scuppers. A granite block band frames the lawn with its grove of columnar cherry trees.



The restored upper terrace at Davenport College now has added benches and dogwoods. White-blooming roses, not seen for generations, are sympathetic with the white

shutters and trim.

Special details included the recreation of the Yale wood-rail fence, with lead-coated copper caps. Historic paving pattern details were recreated, such as the Maltese Cross in bluestone at the now ADA-compliant drain inlets. At both colleges, special plaques and modern sculpture were recognized and in some cases restored and reinstalled.

The jurors complemented the design's thoughtful consideration of history and precedent, combined with appropriate uses of contemporary style. They found the grove of cherry trees particularly appealing, predicting that it will age "gracefully."

**Lead designer:** Takaya Kurimoto

**Project manager:** Channing Harris, ASLA

**Architect:** KieranTimberlake Associates, Philadelphia, PA

**Paving and planting:** PJ's Construction, Bridgeport

**Civil engineering:** BVH Integrated Services, Bloomfield

**Owner project managers:** David Yager, Architect, University Planning, Yale University Office of Facilities; Larry Regan, Architect, Construction Management, Yale University Office of Facilities