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Development of a Preliminary Landscape Narrative Design Method through a Documentary Case Study of "Forest Heart" at Beijing Forestry University

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Abstract

Landscape narrative theory explains how stories, places, material traces and human experience intersect, but its practical translation into a traceable design procedure remains an important methodological question. This study aims to develop a preliminary landscape narrative design method informed by landscape narrative theory through an analysis of Forest Heart at Beijing Forestry University, China. A qualitative single-case study was conducted using documentary analysis of a project statement and an existing published interview with designer Linghao Cai. Theory-informed thematic analysis examined narrative resources, modes of spatial and sensory translation, temporal relationships, and opportunities for user participation. Subsequent synthesis and abstraction produced a researcher-proposed method rather than reconstructing the designer's chronological process. Five case-grounded strategies were identified: reinterpretation of historical activities; embodied continuity of spatial memory; sensory mediation of ecological and distant nature; participatory formation of personal and collective memory; and experiential communication of institutional knowledge. On this basis, a preliminary five-stage method is proposed: (1) identify site narrative resources, (2) organise narrative themes and relationships, (3) select narrative translation strategies, (4) configure spatial and experiential media, and (5) plan participation and temporal continuity. An evidence-to-method matrix clarifies the task and expected output of each stage.The study contributes a transparent, theoretically informed pathway for translating site-based stories into landscape design decisions.

Keywords: Landscape Narrative Theory, Landscape Narrative Design Method, Campus Landscape Regeneration, Documentary Case Study, Narrative Translation, "Forest Heart"

Research Background

Landscape regeneration changes not only physical form but also the means through which the histories, practices and environmental processes of a place are encountered. An obsolete

building may disappear while the activities once associated with it survive in memory; ecological processes may continue but remain beyond everyday perception. Such conditions create a design challenge: how can stories embedded in a site be translated into spatial arrangements, sensory encounters and opportunities for future users to contribute meaning? Landscape narrative provides a theoretical perspective for connecting stories to landscape form and experience (Potteiger & Purinton, 1998; Spirn, 1998).

Potteiger and Purinton (1998) identify narrative design practices and demonstrate their use in particular landscapes. Alon-Mozes (2006) reports a three-phase narrative approach in a landscape design studio, while Hayden (1995) demonstrates how community histories can inform spatial public-memory projects. More recently, Davis (2022) examines open and plural readings of historic landscapes, and Fawzy et al. (2025) develop a case-informed framework of narrative cultural landscape design indicators.

Previous studies have proposed various approaches to landscape narrative design, including narrative design strategies, design processes, methods for expressing collective memory, and techniques for understanding spatial experience. However, these studies have paid relatively limited attention to how designers can systematically translate site stories into specific landscape design decisions. In particular, further guidance is needed on how to identify meaningful stories from a site, select appropriate narrative strategies, translate these stories into spatial and sensory design elements, and consider user participation and long-term continuity within a coherent design process (Alon-Mozes, 2006; Thwaites & Simkins, 2005; Fawzy et al., 2025). To address this gap, the present study analyses the Forest Heart project and proposes a preliminary five-stage landscape narrative design method that connects site narrative resources with practical design decisions.

Forest Heart is a campus landscape regeneration project in the central area of Beijing Forestry University, with a reported project area of approximately 13,500 m². Its western section formerly contained the university hospital, while its eastern section had been underused. The project description presents connection and healing as organising themes and describes a network of existing trees, water systems, teaching landscapes and interactive installations. A published interview with designer Linghao Cai links particular features to former buildings, ecological rhythms, bodily experiences and future memory. This unusually explicit documentary material makes the case appropriate for investigating narrative-to-design translation.

Purpose of the Study

This study aims to develop a preliminary landscape narrative design method informed by landscape narrative theory through the analysis of project documents and an existing designer interview concerning Forest Heart at Beijing Forestry University. The method is intended to provide structured guidance for translating site-based stories into landscape spaces, sensory experiences and opportunities for participation.

Two research questions guide the study:

RQ1. How is landscape narrative theory translated into specific design strategies in the Forest Heart project?

RQ2. How can these strategies be synthesised into a preliminary landscape narrative design method?

Literature Review

Landscape narrative theory: stories, setting and meaning

Potteiger and Purinton (1998) conceptualise landscape narrative through the interaction of stories, cultural meanings and landscape practices. Their earlier account distinguishes the story, its context or intertext, and the discourse through which narratives are authorised and interpreted (Potteiger & Purinton, 1997). These levels matter for methodological development. A designer must recognise what can be narrated, understand whose accounts are represented, and decide how encounters with the landscape allow users to interpret or contribute meanings. Narrative is thus more than attaching a verbal description to a visually completed landscape.

Spirn (1998) approaches landscape as a language that operates through its material and ecological processes as well as through human perception. In this view, water, topography, vegetation and changing conditions can act as expressive media. For a landscape narrative method, this suggests that a story resource and a design medium should be examined as related but distinct decisions: the former concerns the meaning to be communicated, while the latter concerns how that meaning may be encountered.

From narrative resources to design translation

Potteiger and Purinton's (1998) practices of naming, sequencing, revealing and concealing, gathering and opening can be used as sensitising concepts rather than a fixed checklist. They draw attention to how narratives may be made explicit through memorial signs, implicitly sustained through spatial relationships, or opened through the actions of visitors. A proposed design procedure therefore needs to ask not only "Which story?" but also "Which relationship between a story, a medium, an action and a time horizon is being designed?"

The same site reference can support multiple translations. A remembered hospital can be marked by a visible symbol, evoked through a bodily action linked to its former practice, or connected to new uses of water and public space. Theoretical descriptions of narrative practices support the interpretation of these choices, but the typology of case strategies developed below remains a researcher-derived reading of Forest Heart. It should not be mistaken for an established classification contained in the theoretical sources.

User authorship, temporal continuity and evaluative caution

Landscape narratives are produced across time and by multiple participants. Potteiger and Purinton (1997) highlight the importance of open narratives rather than entirely controlled scripts. More recent empirical studies show why user meaning-making deserves attention: Yuan et al. (2024) investigate visitors' narrative contributions to a historic urban landscape, while Hughes and Moscardo (2024) examine how different stories affect responses to natural landscape photographs. Their contexts and outcomes differ from a regenerated university campus, so they do not validate the impact of Forest Heart's installations.

For method development, the implication is to treat interpretation and participation as design considerations, not assumed effects. A recording device may offer a chance to create future

memories, but only continued access can enable a later return. Likewise, a sensor-controlled installation may express ecological rhythms but remain vulnerable to technical discontinuity. The present study therefore integrates participation and stewardship into its proposed method while distinguishing these researcher-recommended safeguards from activities demonstrably undertaken during the original design process.

Existing design-process approaches and the specific methodological gap

Narrative landscape scholarship has already moved beyond abstract definitions. Potteiger and Purinton (1998) organise practices such as naming, sequencing, revealing and opening, supported by project examples. Alon-Mozes (2006) takes a more explicitly procedural approach in a landscape architecture studio, describing three pedagogical phases that move from designing from a given text to theoretical examination and then a story/garden design. These works show that narrative interpretation can inform design action and that staged learning processes already exist. However, the practice typology and studio exercise serve different purposes from a documentary audit trail in which the origin of each site-specific story, the chosen translation mechanism and the resulting landscape medium are recorded together.

Other precedents provide essential components of a practice-oriented method. Hayden (1995) shows how research on community histories and collaborative public-history projects can translate otherwise overlooked memories into urban landscape interventions. Thwaites and Simkins (2005) present a framework and mapping method for identifying experiential potential through spatial components, supplying a practical precedent for place-based analysis rather than a narrative-specific source-to-medium procedure. Davis (2022) advocates open readings of culturally contested landscapes and highlights the limits of a single authorised story. These studies are especially important to the present proposal's attention to whose accounts are represented; they should not be dismissed as merely theoretical or lacking practical application.

The most directly comparable recent framework is that of Fawzy et al. (2025), who examine three memorial landscapes through indicators including spatial configuration, designed elements, narrative practices and sensory experience. Their study provides a case-informed set of narrative landscape design considerations. The distinction lies in analytical emphasis: whereas indicator frameworks characterise design features and relationships, the present study asks how a particular documented story can be traced through a justified translation strategy to a specified landscape medium, a proposed designer task and an expected output. General research-method scholarship in landscape architecture likewise stresses the relationship between inquiry and design (Deming & Swaffield, 2011), but does not by itself provide this narrative-specific evidence trail.

Methodology

Research design and case selection

This study adopts a qualitative, theory-informed, interpretive single-case study design. Forest Heart was purposively selected because available project and interview texts explicitly connect narrative references to named landscape nodes, materials, ecological processes and visitor actions. The case is the Forest Heart project as a whole. Its individual installations are embedded analytical examples, not separate cases. Other campus projects mentioned in the

interview are used only where they illuminate the designer's broader vocabulary; they are not analysed as additional cases.

Documentary corpus and source status

The core corpus contains two documentary sources. D1 is the project statement of IFLA Asia-Pacific Region(IFLA APR) 2023 award entry which comes from the official website of IFLA APR. D2 is a previously published Chinese interview with Linghao Cai, the designer of "Forest Heart". The interview was conducted on 3 November 2020, which is secondary documentary material. D1 records site conditions, named features, intended functions and design statements. D2 provides narrated explanations of memories and conceptual decisions. Other document analysis data include photos and videos of the project.

Theory-informed thematic analysis (RQ1)

Document analysis treats written accounts as situated evidence whose authorship, purpose and selectivity must be considered (Bowen, 2009). The analysis followed an iterative theory-informed thematic procedure drawing on Braun and Clarke (2006). Relevant passages were read and organised around narrative references (e.g., hospital, greenhouse, trees), proposed meanings, spatial or sensory media, intended user actions, temporal orientation, and source qualification. Concepts from landscape narrative theory sensitised the reading, while strategy labels were generated through comparison of case passages rather than copied from a predetermined theoretical list.

For example, the former hospital is documented as a site-historical reference; the pulse-sensitive fountain is the landscape medium; placing a hand on a sensor is the intended action; and the relation between care, bodily rhythm and water is the researcher-derived interpretation of the translation mechanism. Comparable reading of the gallery, light pillars, cloud lights, voice archive, specimen wall and plum-garden prisms yielded five related design strategies. Each claim was checked against its stated source and kept at the level of documented intention unless the source offered stronger evidence.

Synthesis and abstraction for method development (RQ2)

After identifying case strategies, the study performed a separate synthesis-and-abstraction step. First, repeated analytical decisions were identified across features: locating a meaningful resource, connecting resources into a theme, selecting a translation relationship, choosing an experiential medium, and specifying how users or future time participate. Second, these decisions were reorganised into five potentially reusable design stages. Third, each stage was formulated as a task with an expected design output and linked to one or more examples in the documentary matrix. Finally, limits and necessary conditions were added where the documentary evidence exposed ambiguities or where the method would otherwise be impractical, particularly concerning access, recording, maintenance and interpretation.

This procedure produces a structured methodological proposition. It is an abstraction from a single case informed by theory, not a reconstruction of an observed sequence of design meetings or a tested optimisation process. The five stages are presented in a logical order for design use, with iteration between stages allowed. Table 2 makes the bridge between case evidence and the proposed method explicit.

Results and Findings

Case-derived landscape narrative design strategies (RQ1)

The analysis identifies five interpretive design strategies. They represent recurring ways in which narrative resources are connected to landscape media and intended encounters. A strategy is not the same as a project node: a single node may enact more than one strategy, and different nodes may communicate related stories through different media.

Reinterpreting historical activities as present encounters

The former hospital supplies a narrative resource that is translated in both direct and experiential ways. A cross at the former entrance is a commemorative marker (Figure 5.1); the heartbeat fountain goes further by inviting visitors to activate water movement through a pulse sensor (Figure 5.1). As Cai explains, although the hospital is gone, "the spatial logic, narrative threads, and collective memory associated with it continue to grow here". The analytic strategy is to identify a meaningful activity historically associated with a site and reinterpret its relationship through a present-day action, without requiring a literal reconstruction of the former building. The claimed reciprocal "healing" is a design metaphor; no clinical benefit is established.



Figure 5.1 The cross-shaped memorial monument and "heartbeat" fountain installation

Recreating historical spatial relations through bodily experience

"The Gallery of Forest" is positioned in relation to a former semi-underground greenhouse. The documented approximately 45-centimetre level difference permits an outlook intended to recall viewing the ground from the earlier space (Figure 5.2). Cai notes that "the relationship between people and the ground becomes completely different". Here the historical trace becomes an embodied vantage point rather than a replica. The gallery's relationship with an earlier tree-grid plaza further supports attention to alignment and spatial rhythm. The analytic strategy is to extract experiential qualities—level, axis, sightline or atmospheric relation—from an earlier place and reorganise them as new spatial encounters.

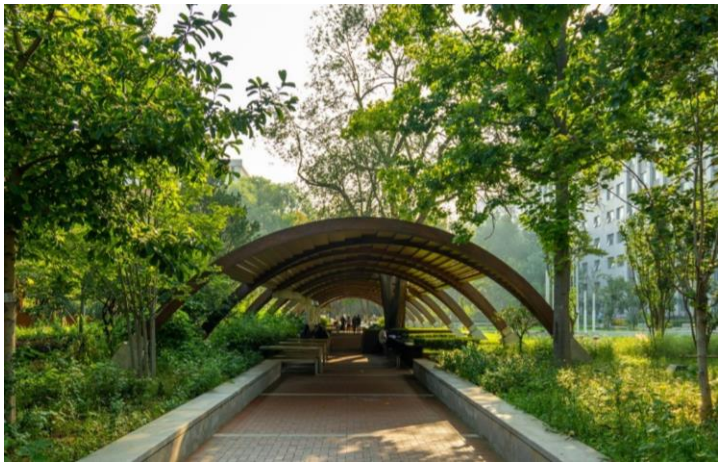

Figure 5.2 The semi-underground “Gallery of Forest”

Translating ecological and distant processes into sensory cues

The spiral light pillars are described as receiving data concerning tree moisture and translating it into changing colours (Figure 5.3). Cai states that the intention is to express “hidden, invisible natural rhythms through landscape language”. This is a metaphorical sensory encoding of a physical process, not a direct measurement of a literal forest heartbeat. The cloud lights, by contrast, use recorded birdsong and insect sounds from distant nature reserves to connect the campus to remote landscapes (Figure 5.4). These two operations suggest a strategy of selecting natural processes or environments that are not immediately perceptible and matching them with a sensory medium whose origin and meaning can be explained.



Figure 5.3 The spiral light pillars in the night



Figure 5.4 The cloud lights

Providing occasions for new and shared memories

"Whispers of the Forest" connects the existing site infrastructure to symbolic emotional release: a red-button sound effect represents the burning of a spoken concern (Figure 5.5). Another function permits visitors to record words for possible later retrieval. Cai calls the anticipated future recollection a "memory anchor". The rotating specimen wall offers a more public occasion to form expressions, while the spiral pillars invite a coordinated bodily gesture. These examples support a strategy of designing occasions in which users can generate new content or shared memories. The degree of authorship varies, however: visitors may choose what to record, but an installation may prescribe the action required to activate it.



Figure 5.5 "Whispers of the Forest"

Making institutional knowledge experiential

The rotating specimen wall and plum-garden prisms incorporate botanical material and disciplinary achievements into public encounters (Figure 5.6). D1 links the plum installation to the university's botanical research, while the broader project is described as an outdoor classroom and laboratory. This suggests a strategy of expressing institutional narratives through activities of seeing, handling, learning and ecological monitoring, rather than solely through mottos or commemorative inscriptions. Documented references to university volunteers and monitoring indicate an intended connection between the landscape and continuing academic practice; their current operation was not independently verified.

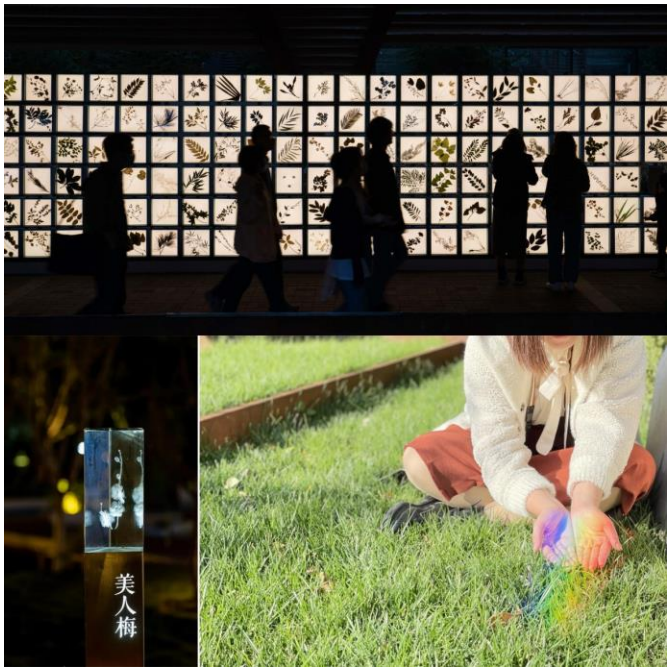

Figure 5.6 The rotating specimen wall and plum-garden prisms

Table 1 Aligns each strategy with landscape media and the limits of what the documents support. The fourth column records the researcher's proposed transferable operation.

Table 1
Design strategies matrix

Strategy	Documentary example	Narrative translation and encounter	Researcher-derived design operation
S1 Historical activity	Former hospital; cross and heartbeat fountain	Hospital care and pulse-taking → commemorative marker and pulse-responsive water	Reinterpret a historically meaningful activity as a present interaction.
S2 Embodied spatial memory	Gallery of Forest at former greenhouse	Past viewing relation and level difference → lowered outlook and axial continuity	Retain or recompose former spatial relations in bodily experience.
S3 Sensory ecological mediation	Tree-linked light pillars; cloud lights	Moisture data → colour; remote reserve recordings → sound	Translate selected ecological processes or remote environments into legible sensory cues.
S4 Participatory memory	Whispers of the Forest; specimen wall; collective light activation	Confession/voice recording, rearrangement and shared gesture → possible future or collective stories	Specify who can contribute, how and for how long; distinguish scripted from open authorship.
S5 Experiential institutional identity	Specimen wall; plum prisms; outdoor learning functions	Botanical research and institutional practice → exhibits, optical effects and learning activities	Connect institutional knowledge to materials and activities people can encounter.

Development of the preliminary landscape narrative design method (RQ2)
The five case-derived strategies in Section 5.1 describe modes of narrative translation (what a design can do); they do not themselves form a process (how a designer can reach and

document decisions). For RQ2, the analysis translated these strategies into an iterative sequence of questions, tasks and tangible outputs. Stage 1 records what narrative evidence exists and whose account it represents; Stage 2 relates that evidence to themes; Stage 3 justifies a translation strategy; Stage 4 specifies the chosen medium and intended encounter; and Stage 5 addresses authorship, access and long-term continuity. The resulting five-stage method is a researcher-proposed, case-informed framework

Stage 1. Identify site narrative resources

Task: prepare an inventory of stories and traces associated with the site, including historical functions, spatial remnants, ecological processes, personal or collective memories, and institutional knowledge. Record the source, whose perspective it represents, its physical location and whether the account is documented or inferred. Output: a narrative resource register or annotated site map. Forest Heart illustrates why this stage matters: the hospital, former greenhouse, existing trees and botanical teaching traditions provide distinct narrative resources. Avoid assuming that the most visible trace is necessarily the only story worth expressing.

Stage 2. Organise narrative themes and relationships

Task: group resources into coherent but non-exclusive themes and establish how they relate to people, nature and time. Ask which connections are central, which are contested or absent, and which allow more than one interpretation. Output: a narrative relationship diagram and a concise thematic statement. At Forest Heart, documented ideas of connection, healing, vitality and memory organise otherwise heterogeneous nodes. This stage is supported by the project's design statements, but the proposed diagram and formal thematic task are the researcher's additions.

Stage 3. Select narrative translation strategies

Task: choose one or more translation mechanisms for each story and justify the match between reference and intended encounter. Options derived from the case include functional reinterpretation (S1), embodied spatial continuity (S2), sensory mediation (S3), participatory memory production (S4), and experiential communication of knowledge (S5). Output: a story-to-strategy decision matrix identifying what will be represented, reenacted, sensed, learned or contributed. For example, "former hospital → pulse-taking → pulse-responsive fountain" is more explanatory than merely labelling a proposed fountain as meaningful.

Stage 4. Configure spatial and experiential media

Task: translate each selected strategy into specific landscape materials, spatial configurations, ecological systems and possible interactions. Document what the visitor may see, hear, touch or do, and whether interpretive support is needed to make the connection intelligible. Output: a spatial narrative plan or set of node design briefs specifying media, location, intended experience and alternatives. The gallery's lowered viewpoint, tree-data light response and recorded forest sounds exemplify different media choices. This stage does not require digital technology: a viewpoint, planting arrangement, material trace or written interpretation may be more appropriate in other contexts.

Stage 5. Plan participation and temporal continuity

Task: specify the opportunities and limits of visitor contribution, the duration of any archived memory, and the responsibilities required to keep the intended encounter available. Consider accessibility, consent, privacy, deletion, interpretive legibility, replacement parts and low-tech fallback. Output: a participation-and-stewardship protocol with review criteria. The voice archive and group-light activation exemplify why user involvement must be designed intentionally. Privacy, inclusive alternatives and long-term governance are proposed safeguards inferred by the researcher, not practices demonstrated to have been implemented at Forest Heart.

The stages describe an iterative workflow rather than a compulsory linear chronology. If a proposed medium cannot support the intended story under realistic maintenance conditions, the designer may return to Stage 3 or reconsider the thematic relationship in Stage 2. Table 2 provides a compact specification of the method and links each stage back to the case-derived strategies.

Table 2
Preliminary five-stage landscape narrative design method

Stage and guiding question	Core design task	Expected output	Case-grounded basis
1. Identify resources | What stories belong here?	Inventory historical, ecological, spatial, personal and institutional resources; record source and perspective.	Narrative resource register / site story map	Hospital, greenhouse, trees, botanical practices (S1–S5).
2. Organise relationships | What connects these stories?	Prioritise themes, temporal links and potential differences among narrative voices.	Theme-and-relationship diagram	Documented themes of connection, healing, vitality and memory.
3. Select translation | How should each story be experienced?	Match references to functional, embodied, sensory, participatory or educational strategies.	Story-to-strategy decision matrix	Five identified case strategies S1–S5 (Table 1).
4. Configure media | Through which forms and actions?	Choose spatial, material, ecological and interactive media; specify encounter and interpretation.	Spatial narrative plan and node design briefs	Pulse-responsive water, gallery viewpoint, light, sound, specimen wall.
5. Plan continuity | Who can participate, and how will meaning endure?	Define participation, access, stewardship, data and maintenance arrangements; iterate if needed.	Participation and stewardship protocol	Voice archive and collective activation; researcher-added safeguards.

In methodological terms, Table 1 answers RQ1 by showing traceable narrative-to-design translations, while Table 2 answers RQ2 by transforming those translations into a usable sequence of design tasks and outputs. The relationship is evidence → analytical strategy → proposed methodological stage. The last transition is an act of researcher synthesis and should remain transparent in any future application or evaluation.

Discussions

From landscape narrative theory to an operational design heuristic

The paper's principal contribution is a transparent link between site-based narrative evidence and a set of proposed landscape design decisions, rather than a claim to have invented narrative approaches. Potteiger and Purinton (1998) already present narrative practices; Alon-Mozes (2006) demonstrates sequencing in a design studio; and Fawzy et al. (2025) provide design indicators based on memorial landscapes. The present study differs in its more narrowly specified unit of analysis: each proposed design move can be related back to a documentary reference, an interpreted translation strategy, an intended landscape encounter and an explicit design output. This evidence-to-design chain is intended to make the justification for individual design choices reviewable, including those involving ecological processes and interactive installations.

The originality is therefore integrative rather than attributable to a five-step sequence alone. First, the method structures decisions from resource inventory through narrative relationship and translation to spatial configuration, without claiming a universally correct order. Second, it connects case evidence to deliverables—a narrative register, relationship diagram, story-to-strategy matrix, design briefs, and participation-and-stewardship protocol—so that alternatives and interpretive assumptions can be inspected. Third, it treats user authorship and temporal continuity as design responsibilities rather than automatically achieved outcomes. This last component draws on the concerns of open narrative and public memory (Potteiger & Purinton, 1997; Hayden, 1995; Davis, 2022), but the privacy and maintenance safeguards are researcher-proposed and not documented implementation outcomes at Forest Heart.

Embodied, sensory and participatory translation across time

Forest Heart demonstrates that narrative translation may be symbolic, spatial, sensory, operational or participatory. The hospital cross communicates through a direct marker; the gallery attempts continuity through a bodily viewing relation; the tree-linked lights turn environmental information into sensory cues; and the voice archive imagines the production of memories that can be revisited later. The preliminary method therefore avoids reducing narrative design to signage or artistic decoration. Instead, it asks what interaction between story, medium and user the project intends to enable.

The case also makes time methodologically important. Historical resources support retrospective narratives, ecological sensing expresses present processes, and participatory archives orient design towards future recollection. The proposed fifth stage follows from this range. However, a designed opportunity to make a memory is not evidence that a durable memory was actually formed. Likewise, interpretive openness should not be assumed simply because an installation is interactive. The analysis distinguishes choices about content from predefined participation scripts and recommends testing both in future research (Yuan et al., 2024).

Maintenance, authorship and evidential boundaries

Narrative continuity depends partly on the continuity of its medium. The experiential meaning of pulse-controlled water changes if the sensing system stops responding; a future-memory archive loses its promised function if recordings cannot be retrieved. Zhang's (2023)

independent study identifies maintenance and usability problems in some Forest Heart interactive installations, supporting the need to address stewardship early. These findings belong to Zhang's separate empirical study and are not observations collected by the present researcher.

Authorship also matters. Both primary documents predominantly communicate a designer-led narrative; alternative histories, dissenting memories and users' unprompted interpretations receive much less attention. A future method application should therefore document whose accounts were consulted and whose stories were excluded. The present corpus cannot determine whether visitors recognise the former greenhouse, experience symbolic healing, or use the interactive functions as intended today. The external studies by Hughes and Moscardo (2024) and Yuan et al. (2024) provide relevant context but do not supply direct validation of this method. Transferability is a hypothesis to be assessed, not an outcome of a single documentary case.

Recommendations and Suggestions

For design practice, the five stages may be used as a lightweight decision-support framework. A designer could maintain a narrative resource register with entries for story, source, location, stakeholder and level of confidence; a strategy matrix linking each story to a specific intended encounter; and a brief explaining materials, spatial relationships, sensory media, participation rules and interpretation. These artefacts would make decisions reviewable by clients and collaborators. They should be adapted rather than applied mechanically, as different sites offer different resources and constraints.

Narrative planning should incorporate inclusion and long-term stewardship. Community consultation can identify memories not represented in official project histories. Digital storytelling should provide clear explanations, accessible alternatives, privacy and consent arrangements, and realistic plans for maintenance and retrieval. Non-digital interpretations can preserve at least part of a narrative when technical features are unavailable. These are practice recommendations derived from the analysis, not outcomes demonstrated within Forest Heart.

Further research should proceed in stages. First, practitioners could review the clarity and completeness of the five-stage method and the feasibility of its proposed outputs. Second, the method could be applied to a contrasting campus or public-space regeneration project, with design decisions recorded to examine usability and adaptation. Third, walk-along interviews, observation and longer-term operational records could evaluate whether intended narratives are intelligible and sustained. Such work would provide the independent evidence needed before claims of wider applicability or effectiveness are warranted.

Conclusion

This documentary case study used landscape narrative theory and a close reading of Forest Heart to develop a preliminary landscape narrative design method. The analysis first identified five case-derived strategies: historical activity reinterpretation, embodied spatial continuity, sensory ecological mediation, participatory memory formation and experiential expression of institutional knowledge. These strategies were then synthesised into five linked design stages: identifying narrative resources, organising themes, selecting translation

strategies, configuring spatial and experiential media, and planning participation and temporal continuity.

The study's contribution is a traceable relationship between case evidence, analytic strategies and proposed design tasks. It moves beyond explaining what individual nodes symbolise by articulating how a designer might systematically translate site-based stories into landscape decisions.

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