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LANDSCAPE PLANNING FOR RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES

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- Introduction -

Garrett Eckbo, in his book "Landscape for Living," stated:

"The modern house provides for the mechanics of civilized living -- sleeping, eating, entertaining, cleaning, studying, relaxing. But this does not mean that it provides a complete environment for life. An extension into outdoor space, and integration with its environment, a union with the processes of nature, are necessary to complete it. The garden must be something more than an "outdoor living room" if it is to be worthy of its name. It must do things to its possessor -- amuse him, stimulate him, delight him, relax him -- before its existence can be justified. It must provide him with that revitalizing contact with the growth of plants and the fecundity of the earth, without which man loses his strength and his inspiration. It must, like a bride, be perennially attractive, perennially gay, perennially delightful. Every visit to it must be an adventure and an experience. Gardens must be the homes of delight, of gaiety, of fantasy, of imagination, of adventure, as well as of relaxation and repose. Every resource of imagination and ingenuity must be called upon to make them not only livable, functional, and spatial; but delightful, entertaining, and amusing. Maximum delight, minimum maintenance; every detail right, every plant a specimen, every feature a thing of beauty and a joy forever."

Rewards of Proper Landscape Planning:

- \* More Enjoyment
- \* More Comfort
- \* More Beauty
- \* Greater efficiency in the use of space
- \* Greater economy in construction and planting
- \* Easier Maintenance
- \* Increased Property Values

- Guidelines for Successful Residential Property Development -

Factors Needed for Success:

- \* Detailed Planning (Landscape Plan)
- \* Proper Construction and Installation
- \* Continued Maintenance

"Use Areas" in the Residential Landscape:

- \* It is important to coordinate your indoor and outdoor "Use Areas."
- \* These "Use Areas" are:

Approach Area The street side of the property devoted to a good setting for the house and access to it by walk and driveway. There is no need for a large front yard. Usually simple lawns with limited plantings which continue from one property to the next contribute most to an attractive street -- hedges, flower beds, walls and fences on the property lines are seldom beneficial.

Living Area For outdoor rest, relaxation and entertaining in reasonable privacy -- includes terraces, patios, lanais, lawns, attractive planting, flower borders. Considerable privacy from neighboring lots is desirable and may be obtained through planting or the construction of fences and walls. This area should be directly accessible from the main living area of the house.

Work Area For children's play space, drying yard, vegetable garden and general service requirements -- may be small but should be adjacent to the kitchen portion of the house and the garage where many activities of a service nature are likely to be centered. Today people are doing more and more of their own work around their houses. It is important that they have good work space for these odd jobs.

Cost to Landscape a Residential Property:

- \* Allow 10-30% of the cost of the house for a complete outdoor development. This cost includes everything outside the house walls as drive, walks, fences, walls, terraces, patios, lawns, plants and professional services.
- \* Budget the money for outdoor use in the beginning and save it for that purpose. A bare house standing on a lot looks as though the owners ran out of money before the job was finished.

Landscape Plan Concept:

SITE ANALYSIS --

Begin with a SURVEY.

Before you can do much planning you will need an accurate and complete description of the area involved. The information you will need includes the location of existing items such as:

- Property lines
- Buildings of all types with entrances and windows indicated.
- Fences
- Walks
- Driveway
- Trees and shrubs
- Septic tank and disposal field
- Telephone poles
- Slope of the land
- Views from the property
- Location of structures on adjacent lots.

On large or complicated properties the survey should be made by a registered surveyor. On small properties you can obtain the data yourself.

Note local climatic conditions. Make climatic conditions work for you. It costs no more to build a house, or a fence, or a garden or to plant a tree in the right place than in the wrong place.

CLIENT INVENTORY --

Analyze your living requirements. In thinking of what you need, think first of the primary goals of landscaping:

- Privacy
- Convenience
- Beauty
- Function

Ask:

What is the make-up of the family -- age of the children, hobbies of the various members, activities of the parents and children?

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT --

You may need several kinds of plans:

\* The Preliminary Plan

Shows the plan of the house, garden design, contour lines, and proposed changes in grade, location of steps, walks and drives, terraces and porches, walls, fences, and plantings.

Sketches and elevations are helpful in visualizing the finished garden. Changes are made on this plan, resulting in:

\* The General Plan

A finalized preliminary plan which incorporates all corrections, all dimensions possible, materials to be used, references to construction notes, and detail sheets.

\* A Grading Plan

Shows the changes in grade -- required for an irregular site if there are more changes in grade than can be shown on the general plan. This plan is used to determine the depth of footings for the foundation of the house, the amount of excavating and filling needed to produce sufficiently level space for the house and outdoor living areas, the placement of retaining walls, terraces, and steps, the slope and location of walks and drives, curbs and gutters, storm and sanitary sewer systems, and water and gas lines. The exact locations of existing trees, large rocks, and ravines should also be shown.

\* Construction Details

Details may be drawn as a part of the General Plan if only a few are needed; otherwise, separate sheets are necessary. These sheets consist of enlarged drawings of structural details and may include plans, elevations, and sectional drawings. They should give complete instructions on the methods and materials to be used in construction.

\* Planting Plan and Planting List

Shows the scientific and common names, the numbers, the sizes, and forms of plants recommended, and the exact location of each in relation to the design. For a small garden, the planting plan may be a part of the General Plan.

\* An Irrigation Plan

Separate from the other, may be needed to show the system to be used for watering lawns and plantings. Complete data should be given on the plan so that the system can be installed by the homeowner or contractor.

\* Special Plans

Show a variety of information as required for certain conditions such as night lighting, topsoil depth, tree planting techniques, and fertilizer applications.

\* Sketches

Will be a big help in visualizing your proposed development.

\* Contracts and Specifications

These are desirable on all jobs when you have the work done by others.

Step-by-step Planning Procedure:

1. Obtain several sheets of 11 x 17" or larger that has 4 x 4 or 8 x 8 cross section ruling. Vellum or good quality tracing paper is best. This paper can be purchased at most stationery supply stores.
2. Select an easy scale so that your map may be drawn on one sheet of paper. If the property is not too large, it is convenient to use a proportional scale of 1 inch representing 20 feet on the ground.
3. Information gathered from the property survey should be located on the Preliminary Plan.
4. On the Preliminary Plan, show the following:
  - Orientation to the compass -- then indicate hot spots, shade areas.
  - Direction of prevailing wind, winter and summer.
  - Boundaries and dimensions of the lot.
  - Location of easements that may effect your planning -- underground telephone lines, trunk sewers. (See deed map)
  - Location of setback boundaries that may limit outdoor building.
  - Location of utilities.
  - Location of your house. Show all doors and windows and indicate whether they open to or from dining room, kitchen, living room, entrance hall, playroom.
  - Soil conditions. Show location of fills, cuts. If you want, make test borings to determine character of soil; show results on map. (Generally not necessary when remodeling an old garden.)

- Gradient. Show contour lines; locate high and low points. Indicate contours on neighboring property that will affect your planning by draining water or cold air into your garden; mark downspouts and indicate whether underground drains or sewer connections are included.
  - Map existing planting, particularly large, established trees; indicate names of plants if known.
  - Alongside plot plan, note the problems beyond the lot line, good or bad views of neighbors' property hills, trees, telephone poles.
5. Bring out the check list you have made up from your inventory and place it alongside this basic or Preliminary Plan. You now have in front of you all of the physical restrictions and requirements imposed by your lot, and a list of all your needs. You are now ready to proceed with your landscape design.
  6. Lay new sheet of tracing paper over the Preliminary Plan and start designating "Use Areas."
  7. Start your plan with "doodles." Establish patterns that set the theme of the landscape design.
  8. Arrange the elements in your design to fulfill your specific needs.
  9. Consider these major points:
    - To avoid confusion, to get simplicity and order in your design, plan with the recognizable shapes of the square, rectangle, and circle.
    - In the small garden with fixed limits, create the illusion of greater space by not allowing the eye to measure the complete space at a glance.
    - Design generously, and then count costs.
    - Design boldly so that later plant growth will not completely erase your design.
    - Design to direct the steps of people -- spread them out through the garden, bring them together, draw them to an entrance or an exit.
  10. Once your design is finalized, then make a detailed General Plan on another sheet of tracing paper.
  11. From the General Plan as final base layout, you can now develop the necessary grading, irrigation, and lighting plans.
  12. Develop and Planting Plan and Plant List on still another sheet.
  13. Write up the necessary specifications for construction and installation, if necessary.
  14. NOW FOLLOW YOUR PLANS!

- Planting Design -

Attributes of Landscape Plants:

An unplanted house is unfinished. Plants are required to give it a home-like character and to make it a pleasant place in which to live. Even the finest building can be enhanced by proper planting. Plants can do many practical and artistic things for you. They give shape to outdoor areas, provide shade, protection from the wind and food for birds, deaden sound, eliminate undesirable views and can offer colors, shapes and textures.

Plants, unlike almost everything else you buy, becomes more valuable as they get older and accordingly increase the value of your property. You are being extravagant when you don't plant your home.

Role of Landscape Plants in Landscape Composition:

- \* Background
- \* Enframement
- \* Accent
- \* Foreground

Physical Classification of Landscape Plants:

- \* The plan (design arrangement) for surfacing, enclosure, shelter, enrichment.
- \* Cultural requirements (maintenance).
- \* Ultimate size, rate of growth, and length of life.
- \* Natural form -- silhouette and structure.
- \* Texture -- size, form and arrangement of foliage and structural members.
- \* Color -- foliage, bark, stem, flowers, and fruit.
- \* Fragrance.

Horticultural Classification of Landscape Plants:

- \* Temperate requirements or tolerances.  
    Minimum, maximum, and duration of each.  
    Optimum.
- \* Water requirements or tolerances.  
    Drought tolerance or moisture preference  
    Sharp or slow subsurface drainage  
    Atmospheric humidity
- \* Light requirements or tolerances.  
    Full shade  
    Filtered light  
    Half-day sun and half-day shade (morning or afternoon)  
    Full sun

- \* Soil requirements or tolerances
  - Rich or deep soil
  - Sterile or shallow soil
  - Sandy or rocky soil
  - Clay or adobe soil
  - Acid soil
  - Alkaline soil
- \* Other characteristics
  - Wind tolerance
  - Special requirements for flowering and fruiting
  - Training and pruning requirements
  - Propagation methods
  - Susceptibility to pests and diseases
  - Tendency to become weedy in wrong location

Planting Suggestions:

- \* Use small growing plants.
- \* Avoid foundation planting.
- \* Avoid raised planters near house.
- \* Plant one large plant instead of many small ones.

Height of Landscape Plants:

Landscape plants may be divided into eight size groups determined by the average eye level of the person sitting or standing.

Eye level when standing = 5-6'; sitting = 3-4'.

Vines	Variable size
Groundcovers	0 - 12 inches
Dwarf Shrubs	1½ - 3 feet
Small Shrubs	4 - 5 feet
Medium Shrubs	6 - 8 feet
Large Shrubs or Dwarf Trees	9 - 25 feet
Small Trees	25 - 40 feet
Medium Trees	40 - 60 feet
Tall Trees	60 - 80 feet

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