

# LANDSCAPE DESIGN AND INSTALLATION

## Lesson 20: DESIGN PROCESS

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PowerPoint Slide 2: Title Slide, "The Landscape Design Process"

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PowerPoint Slide 3: Photograph of garden

Include credit: "Corel Corporation"

A total site landscape design is not a simple process. It entails understanding design principles, developing drawing skills, having the ability to work with other people and creativity. It requires knowledge of natural environmental conditions, such as soil, wind, sun and precipitation, plant material and landscape materials such as wood, stone, brick, and concrete. In terms of plant material, the landscape designer must be familiar with the needs of specific plants (sun, water, soil conditions, etc.), their aesthetic characteristics (size, form, color and texture), and how these characteristics can be used to fulfill a particular design function. Landscape design differs from other art forms because the completed results constantly change with each season and plant growth.

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PowerPoint Slide 4: Landscape Design Process

1. Interview the client
2. Analyze site and family activities
3. Prepare a Base Plan
4. Develop a functional Bubble Diagram
5. Prepare a Preliminary Design
6. Complete the Landscape Plan
7. Select plant materials

The process of landscape design begins with an analysis of the client requirements, site conditions, and family activities. Then the design evolves through the course of four documents: a Base Plan, Bubble Diagram, Preliminary Design, and final Landscape Plan. Last, the designer selects plant materials.

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PowerPoint Slide 5: 1. Interview the client

- Usage – recreation, gardening, entertainment, hobbies
- Preferences for style
- Preferences for plants
- Budget

A preliminary step that must occur before the designer can begin to formulate a design solution is to talk with the owner to learn about client needs; ideas and specific needs must be understood, so the resulting design will satisfy the client's needs. The designer, when meeting with the owner for the first time, should determine such things as how the client intends to use the site (is it to look at or will various parts of the property be used for recreation or gardening activities?), personal likes or dislikes (what style or theme should the design be? Are there favorite materials or plants that should be included in the design?), particular recreation or entertaining needs hobbies the owner enjoys outside, maintenance practices, and finally what amount of money the customer is willing to spend on the landscape development this year as well as in the future. The designer should make a list of all the items the owner wants in the design to serve as a checklist during development of a design solution.

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PowerPoint Slide 6: 2. Analyze the Site and Family Activities

- Public area
- Private or outdoor living area

The fundamental principle of landscape design is that each development should be based upon a specific program and that this program should in turn be based upon: (1) the people who will use it, their cultural needs, individual desires, and economic abilities; (2) the climate; (3) the site, its immediate surroundings, topographic and ecological conditions, and all objects, natural and man-made now existing on the site or planned for the future; (4) the available materials and methods of fabrication.

The landscaper must study the habits of people, and what they do; understand their desires and needs and determine what space and materials are available and how they may be used to accommodate these goals. The first step in landscape design is to divide available space into use areas. The public area is the section that a passerby views. It is generally in front of the house and should present an attractive public view. The living or private area is for the family and may contain a patio, deck or porch for outdoor sitting, entertaining or dining. A play area may be incorporated depending on the family's interest and/or the presence and ages of children. A service or storage and work area should provide a place for garbage, oil tank, garden tools, etc. that is convenient for use but screened from the other areas. Also included in this area may be a cut flower bed or vegetable garden if desired.

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PowerPoint Slide 7: 3. Prepare a Base Plan

Diagram: example of base plan

Prepare a scale map of the home grounds. Use graph paper and let one square equal so many feet or draw to scale using a ruler or an engineer's scale.

The drawing should include:

- Property lines.
- Undesirable features of home grounds or adjoining property.
- North point.
- Views - point arrows in direction of each good view.
- House, garage, other building.
- Doors, windows, porches, and location of rooms.
- Existing plants, rock outcroppings.
- Walks and driveways if already constructed.
- Contour of the land, use an arrow to show direction of surface water flow.
- Scale used.
- Location of septic tank or sewer lines, septic fields.
- Directions of prevailing wind.
- Underground utilities.

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Time Check: PowerPoint half-way mark.

You should be about 10 minutes into this presentation.

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PowerPoint Slide 8: 4. Develop a Functional Bubble or Balloon Diagram

Diagram: example of Bubble Diagram

The next step in the design process is to overlay a sheet of tracing paper on a copy of the base plan and begin to prepare a functional or bubble diagram of the entire site. This represents the first attempt at organizing the design on the site. At this stage, the designer locates all the major uses and elements of the design (lawn, patio, entrance walk, planting, screening, focal point, etc.) on the site as general outline bubbles.

Items listed below are most often included in the final development. Make a list that suits your individual needs.

- front lawn area or public area
- laundry area
- vegetable garden

- cooking and eating area
- garden pools
- walks
- flower beds
- outdoor living or private area children's play area
- small fruit
- driveway
- guest parking
- turnabouts
- garage

Place the use areas on the map. Fit them together with two considerations, traffic flow and use. How will people move from one area to another or from the house to an outside area? Will movements be comfortable? Will the outdoor area be functional in relation to the house? Will it make use of existing features such as views or changes in the terrain? Try different combinations in relation to rooms of the house, surrounding areas and potential views.

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PowerPoint Slide 9: 5. Prepare a Preliminary Design

Diagram: example of Preliminary Design, back yard only

Now we'll zoom in on the full property plan, and focus on the back yard. After the designer is satisfied that he/she has created the best possible overall arrangement of areas, he/she can proceed to study the solution in more detail. The designer should establish a theme and begin to study the exact shape and form of the different areas. The preliminary design should include the general detail of grade changes, correction of drainage problems, material selection and other pertinent information.

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PowerPoint Slide 10: 5. Prepare a Preliminary Design (continued)

Same as Slide 8, but add text:

- Height
- Form
- Purpose
- Type
- Maintenance
- Cultural needs

Draw plant symbols to scale to represent the actual amount of space at maturity that will be involved. Indicate on the map where paving, plants and structures will be.

For each tree or shrub mass on the plan, make a set of specifications. These specifications should include:

- Height - low, medium, tall
- Form - spreading, upright, arching or globe
- Purpose - shade, background, hedge, screen, accent or mass
- Type - evergreen, broadleaf evergreen, deciduous
- Maintenance - subject to insects or diseases
- Cultural needs - shade, sunlight, moisture requirements

Plants have been characterized by their characteristics, but the actual species that will be used haven't yet been selected.

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#### PowerPoint Slide 11: 6. Complete the Landscape Plan

Diagram of final landscape plan, back yard only

The final step of the design process is to produce the plan itself. This is apt to be very similar to the preliminary design, except that the landscape plan is typically drawn with more care and precision than the preliminary design. The plan should show all the elements and areas of design proposal in as exact, legible and graphic a manner as possible. In addition, it should specify all materials used. The plan should allow for the future needs, and changes in life style, which the customer may desire. A copy of the landscape plan is then presented to and discussed with the customer. The designer should never give the original landscape plan drawing to the customer, but should keep this for his/her own files.

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#### PowerPoint Slide 12: 7. Select Plant Materials

Diagram of landscape plan, entire property

Choosing the actual species that will be used is the last step. Well-chosen plants are necessary to achieve desired landscape effect. There are hundreds of varieties of trees, shrubs, vines, and perennials from which to choose. Do remember that plants are not merely ornamental accessories. They make up masses and define space in the yard and consequently, the silhouettes that produce the garden design. Therefore, when selecting plants consider both their cultural needs and aesthetic value.

Cultural Considerations in Selecting Plants:

- Hardiness - the plant's ability to withstand winter and summer climatic changes.
- Soil and moisture conditions - important parts of the plant's environment.
- Degree of sun or shade - depends on where the plant is to be located in the garden.

- Maintenance - should be considered when selecting plant materials. Try to choose trees and shrubs that tend to be disease and insect resistant.
- Aesthetic value - includes texture, color of foliage, flower, fruit and bark.

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PowerPoint Slide 13: 7. Select Plant Materials (continued)

Diagram of landscape plan, side yard only

Aesthetic Considerations in Selecting Plants:

- Plant Size - The size which a plant attains at maturity must be considered when selections are made for the landscape plan.
- Plant Form - Shrubs used in landscaping develop many distinct forms. Trees typically grow more than 15 feet tall and commonly have only one main stem or trunk. The head or leafy portion of the tree develops a form that may be: (1) round or oval, such as maple, oak and pine, (2) vase-shaped, such as elm, (3) pendulous or weeping, such as willow, (4) pyramidal, such as spruce, fir and hemlock, or (5) columnar, such as a juniper. Ground covers such as turf, low spreading shrubs, and creeping plants are essential materials in landscaping. Vines add interest as woody or semi-woody climbing or trailing plants.
- Plant Texture - The texture of plant materials is dependent on the size and disposition of the foliage. Plants with large leaves that are widely spaced have coarse texture. A plant with small closely spaced leaves has fine texture. Extremes in texture that prevent harmony in the composition should be avoided.
- Plant Color - Green is the basic color of most plant materials. Desirable variety may be secured by using plants with lighter or darker foliage tones. Accents may be introduced by the selection of flowering shrubs or those that produce colorful persistent fruit. Care should be exercised in the use of particularly showy plants such as hydrangeas and blue spruce. Such plants may so dominate the landscape as to destroy the balance and unity of the composition.

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PowerPoint Slide 14: Heading, "Exercise: Redesign the Front Yard"

Diagram on left is perspective view of design; diagram on right is overhead view of front yard only.

Include credit:

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