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What Is Landscape Architecture?

By Kimberley Ennett, MLA, ASLA

Many times I have been asked what is the difference between a landscape architect and a landscape designer. Hopefully the following will answer this question.

The American Society of Landscape Architects, ASLA, provides the following:

"Landscape architecture encompasses the analysis, planning, design, management, and stewardship of the natural and built environments. Landscape architectural projects include design of public parks, site planning for commercial and residential properties, land reclamation, urban and community design, and historic preservation. Examples of landscape architecture include Central Park in New York City, TRW's headquarters outside Cleveland, the "Emerald Necklace" of green spaces and parks in Boston, Sursum Cordan Affordable Housing in Washington, D.C., preservation of Yosemite Park and Niagara Falls, and the landfill reclamation of Fresh Kills in New York. Landscape architects have advanced education, professional training, specialized skills, and are licensed in 47 states."

What is the difference between a Landscape Designer and a Landscape Architect?

The national professional association is the American Society of Landscape Architects, based in Washington. ASLA full members have graduated from an accredited landscape architecture program, have 7 years of education and/or professional experience and are state licensed. In Michigan, as well as all other States, a three (3) day LARE examination administered by the Council of Landscape Architectural Registration Boards is required to be passed for state licensure.

Landscape designers do not have these professional credentials. Many state and local governments require designs to be stamped with a state registered Landscape Architect's seal.

What can I expect the landscape architectural design process to be? Various architects may have different approaches, yet all are aimed at the same result. Make sure you're comfortable with the steps that the Landscape Architect defines. A typical process includes:

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- Pre-planning – As the client, you discuss your desires with the architect and provide background, priorities, and any basic design guidelines. You'll work together and define the overall scope and timeline. The result will be a proposed budget and statement of work. The landscape architect will then prepare a contract for you to sign.

- Project Planning – Further preliminary details are developed with you about the site and its function and usage. The site is analyzed and the Landscape Architect creates a list of development priorities, which you'll approve.

- Preliminary Design – A review of the site, usage requirements, and environmental conditions are undertaken to create preliminary drawings. The Landscape Architect will show you design and presentation drawings showing the overall site concept. Initial construction cost estimates are provided, which you review and approve.

- Final design – Further detail is added to the concept. Material is selected and initial construction

documentation is created. Where necessary, cost estimates are revised.

- Documentation – Additional detailed specifications and drawings are developed and provided to you for approval. The Landscape Architect may give you construction documents to assist you in soliciting bids from contractors and may help you review bids.

- Installation – Depending on your contract, the Landscape Architect may play an active role in representing you in your interaction with the contractor and provide on-site supervision. At the close of the project, the Landscape Architect will make a final inspection.

How do I find a good landscape contractor?

If you're going to need referrals to contractors and other service providers as part of your project, ask the Landscape Architect about these people. They will typically have an array of competent people in the industry for you to contact.

What's included in the landscape architecture contract?

Any reputable Landscape Architect will provide a written contract before beginning a project. This agreement will specify in detail the exact work to be done, the work schedule, the amount and payment terms of the landscape architect's fees, and the responsibilities of each party to the contract.

As a registered landscape architect in the State of Michigan and principle architect with Sexton Ennett Design, LC, a landscape architectural firm in southeast Michigan, I am particularly aware of the professional responsibilities related to landscape design. See:

<http://www.sexton-ennett.com>

If there are nay questions please feel free to contact the ASLA or me.

What Is Landscape Architecture?

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<http://www.markimfarms.com>

Brighten Your Path By Installing Decorative Landscape Lighting

By Mike Yeager

Landscape lighting can add a beautiful quality to any home. There are many choices available to someone who is considering it. Landscape lighting, and any outdoor lighting, can help protect a home as well as keep people from stumbling in the yard. Mainly, people purchase landscape lighting to enhance the appearance of their yard or landscaping.

There are many types of landscape lighting. You can purchase low voltage landscape lighting is recommended if you are interested in conserving energy. Another option to conserving energy is solar landscape lighting. Solar, or from the sun, is powered from the sun's rays. It stores energy during the day while the sun is out and then, at night, when it is dark, they are lit using this saved energy. They give off a faint glow that really can light up a little area or large area. These types of outdoor landscape lighting can be great ways to light your yard cost efficiently.

If you are considering doing work on your landscaping, consider landscape lighting design. Designing a beautifully light yard can be tough work, but there are professionals that can help you. For example, something that can be done is light a walkway to the front steps to your home or line the driveway with lights from the street to your garage. Maybe you would prefer to focus your lights on a single bush or tree that is special in some way or to shine on a flag.

When considering landscape lighting, ensure that you think of safety first. Consider speaking with a professional to help you design what you would like your yard to look like. Consider as well using energy efficient landscape lighting such as solar or low voltage. Landscape lighting can add beauty and charm to a home when it is done properly and safely.

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