

From The BEGINNING

Landscape architecture is an important aspect of every new site development and redevelopment project that should not be overlooked or merely considered as an afterthought. The early involvement of a qualified landscape architect is critical and directly impacts the construction process, the project's aesthetic or "curb" appeal and the property's future value. It will also determine how much time must be spent on the plan and how much money will ultimately be spent on the installation and maintenance.

Not considering a professional landscape plan at the outset may lead to a delayed project; cause unanticipated costs to redo landscaping or maintain the site; or result in a completed project that is marginally acceptable to the property owner, developer and end user. If landscaping is not incorporated in the early stages of a project, it may be difficult or even impossible to realize the maximum benefits that can be derived from the landscape architecture.

Early involvement of a qualified landscape architect brings efficient, positive results to the rest of the project team. The benefits are realized throughout all stages of site planning and analysis, development, competitive bidding, construction, and ongoing site and landscape maintenance.

A landscape architect who is brought on board during the initial stages of site planning is able to collaborate with other professionals on the design team to ensure

Landscape architecture and irrigation design: plan early to save time and money and please clients

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that the site plan, civil plan, grading, architecture, the site circulation, and the landscape all work together. A beautifully designed building and a functional site plan is quickly devalued by a poorly designed, executed and maintained landscape.

Communication lapses between design professionals are avoided by working as a team, rather than as individual consultants. A landscape architect offers a fresh, creative and defensible approach to the site design process. The architect identifies desirable and undesirable views, perceived and real connections to adjacent land uses, and soil and slope conditions; develops site entry sequences; reviews municipal requirements for approval; and analyzes and evaluates existing vegetation.

The landscape architect is an invaluable source to the general contractor

during bidding and construction. Landscape plans should be part of the original bid package. The landscape architect can assist the general contractor with evaluating bids from landscape contractors to help determine which bids meet the project's specific landscape requirements.

A landscape architect's continued involvement during construction helps diminish pressure on the general contractor. The landscape architect becomes an invaluable source to help solve site and landscape problems and answer questions during construction. The general contractor is free to focus on keeping the project moving and handling other areas of concern.

Avoid Delays

A landscape architect has the foresight to avoid potential delays related



A well-designed parking lot island can add aesthetic value to a project and still accommodate snow storage in winter.

to landscaping the site. An example is handling tree relocations at a logical point, at the appropriate time of the season, so that the trees survive while construction progresses without unnecessary interruption or delays.

Having the foresight to plan ahead for these types of provisions avoids the unnecessary time and expense of redoing some of the landscaping later. Retaining and/or relocating existing trees can also contribute to meeting municipal landscape requirements without adding considerable costs. The landscape architect's expertise is helpful in all of these areas and has a direct impact on the project's timely completion.

A landscape architect helps the owner determine the type of look and feel they want for the property and creates a plan that meets the client's short- and long-term objectives. The landscape architect works with the property owner initially to determine the theme, budget, expectations, and maintenance requirements. In some cases, mature, larger trees and shrubs may be preferential to help sell the development quicker by providing an instant impact, while other situations may warrant less mature, smaller trees and shrubs due to budget constraints.

If budget is an issue, the landscape architect may also recommend a logical phasing plan that meets the client's needs without compromising the intent of the project.

A qualified landscape architect serves as the liaison between what the municipality requires and what the client wants, and develops a mutually agreeable solution that keeps the project moving ahead in a timely manner.

The landscape architect also provides credibility to the municipal approval process by supplying requested information such as tree preservation and protection plans, plant material schedules, planting details, and plant quantity/density ratios which are now a standard requirement in many municipalities.

As part of the landscape plan, the landscape architect will evaluate the poten-

tial benefits of maintaining and protecting existing trees and vegetation to enhance the property and fulfill the landscape requirements. This adds to the site's overall aesthetics and reduces the costs of planting new trees and vegetation. The landscape architect will determine whether the species, time and expense of relocating trees and shrubs is worth it; what season the work should be done; and if any of the vegetation should be planted as new instead.

The landscape architect also recommends plants that will work well together based on site conditions, soil types and watering requirements. Plants with similar habitats and watering requirements are grouped to save time and money on landscape maintenance.

These are all things that will affect the overall site aesthetics, and ultimate-



A spruce tree was saved by carefully grading and berming around it to avoid damage to the root system.

ly, how pleased the client is with the final product.

The landscape irrigation system should be planned and designed by a qualified irrigation designer at the earliest stages of a project and in conjunction with the development of the landscape design. Planning the irrigation system at a project's onset is critical to preventing delays in construction.

A qualified irrigation designer is responsible for coordinating several important planning tasks.

- Coordinating plumbing.
- Knowing who is responsible for the plumbing taps and backflow prevention.
- Knowing if a booster pump is necessary and where it will be located.

- Making sure that the needed electric power is available.
- Knowing who will run the required electric power to the correct locations.
- Determining where the required sleeves need to be installed and being sure that the general contractor coordinates and phases this work in with other contractors' work.

With a qualified irrigation designer working with the landscape architect in developing the site landscape, these provisions will all be in place from the start. The general contractor or construction manager will be able to run their project more efficiently, saving money for all members of the project team.

Another important consideration on a redevelopment site is the possibility of an existing irrigation system. The landscape architect and irrigation designer should thoroughly evaluate the site to determine whether there is an existing irrigation system in place and if it should be saved in part or in whole or be abandoned for a new irrigation system.

The last thing an owner/developer wants to do is spend good money trying to save a poorly designed or non-functional irrigation system. Having the right information before the project gets started helps move the project along without unnecessary delays and expense.

Property owners and developers can save a significant amount of time and money and avoid unnecessary project delays by working closely with a qualified landscape architect and irrigation designer at a project's onset.

Having critical knowledge of the responsibilities these professionals should assume is vital to the short- and long-term objectives of every development and redevelopment project.

Early coordination of landscape architecture services directly impacts many aspects of the project including the site's overall curb appeal, level of client satisfaction, timely project completion, amount of future site maintenance upkeep and expense, and future value of the developed property. ■