PRINCIPLES OF LANDSCAPE DESIGN

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LANDSCAPE DESIGN PRINCIPLES

• Principles refer to the standards by which designs can be:
  • Created;
  • Measured;
  • Discussed; and
  • Evaluated (Ingels, 2009, p. 139)

PERSONAL PREFERENCE

- Designs may be difficult to evaluate objectively.
- Likes or dislikes do not necessarily credit or discredit the design (Ingels, 2009, p. 139).

LANDSCAPE DESIGN PRINCIPLES

- Designs can be discussed and judged based on established principles used in the fine arts and applied arts (Ingels, 2009, p. 140).

1. Simplicity
2. Focalization of interest
3. Balance
4. Proportion/Scale
5. Rhythm and Line
6. Unity

SIMPLICITY

• Often results in feeling **comfortable** in the landscape (Ingles, 2009, p. 142).
• Simplicity is not the opposite of complexity.
• Simplicity is achieved through the repetition of colors, textures, plants, shapes, curves, angles, and hardscape materials.

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Photo by Ellen Vincent
FOCALIZATION OF INTEREST

- The first thing that the eye is drawn to is the focal point (Ingles, 2009, p. 141).
- “Commands the attention of the viewer” (Ibid).

FOCALIZATION OF INTEREST

• Focal points may be plants, hardscape, color, movement, texture, or a combination of items/events (Ingels, 2009, p. 142).

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Covent Garden, England

Photo by Ellen Vincent
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Prato, Italy

FOCALIZATION OF INTEREST

- Too many focal points can create confusion and chaos, and viewer discomfort (Ingels, 2009, p. 142).

GROUP DISCUSSION

• Can you recall a place that has/had too many focal points? Your eye would have jumped around the view in an uncomfortable way.

Or

• What landscape can you visualize that has a clear and vibrant focal point that you instantly recall?
Balance is a state of being as well as seeing (Ingles, 2009, p. 140).

• We may be uncomfortable when we are physically off balance.

• Visual balance in the landscape is usually a comfortable experience.

Three types of balance (Ingels, 2009, p. 140).

- Symmetric
- Asymmetric
- Proximal/distal
SYMMETRIC BALANCE

• One side of the composition is identical (a mirror reflection) to the other (Ingles, 2009, p. 140).
• Typical of formal design.
• Visual discomfort may result if anything is out of place in the view.

Regents Park, London, England

Photo by Ellen Vincent

SYMMETRIC BALANCE

American Cemetery, Normandy, France

Photo by Ellen Vincent
SYMMETRIC BALANCE

• Requires high maintenance to keep in shape (Ingles, 2009, p. 140).

• Emphasis on visual left/right relationships.

SYMMETRIC BALANCE

• One side of the composition is identical (a mirror reflection) to the other (Ingles, 2009, p. 140).
• May be made of informal materials as well as formal.

Informal balance occurs when visual weight on opposite sides of the composition is the same, but the materials used and the placement vary (Ingles, 2009, p. 141).

Emphasis on visual left/right relationships.

ASYMMETRIC BALANCE

• May be more visually interesting than symmetry as there is usually more to observe.
• Considered more informal.

Regents Park London, England

Photo by Ellen Vincent

• Combing both symmetrical (often as a frame) and asymmetrical elements can be pleasing and/or sophisticated.
BOTH/AND

Castle garden, Angiers, France

Photo by Ellen Vincent
PROXIMAL/DISTAL BALANCE

• Asymmetric balance with emphasis on visual near/far relationships (Ingles, 2009, p. 141).

• Emphasis on depth in the field of view.

PROXIMAL/DISTAL BALANCE

Photo by Ellen Vincent
PROXIMAL/DISTAL BALANCE

• Balancing near and far aspects of the composition often means looking at features outside of the design area (Ingles, 2009, p. 141).

• Building height, distant mountains, depressions, etc. are considered in relation to the design.

PROPORTION/SCALE

- Size relationships determine proportion (Ingles, 2009, p. 143).
- Includes vertical and horizontal relationships as well as spatial (depth).
- People’s height or eye level influences their perception of vertical proportion. (Field of view is different for sitting, standing, reclining, children and adults).

PROPORTION

- Beds in the back of the composition are longer than the front beds to create the illusion for the viewer that all water beds are the same size.

Longwood Gardens, PA

Buildings and trees should be of similar or relative scale.

Plants can stair-step down from a structure for good scale.

Regents Park, London

Photo by Ellen Vincent
RHYTHM AND LINE

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• Rhythm may be evident by repetition of an angle, an arc, or shape, or object (Ingles, 2009, p. 142).

Park in Copenhagen, Denmark

RHYTHM AND LINE

- Line is evident by how the eye moves through the landscape and often created by bed edges, hardscape edges (Ingles, 2009, p. 142).

• Unity is evident if other principles are applied properly to design (Ingels, 2009, p. 143).

UNITY

• All separate parts contribute to the total design (Ingels, 2009, p. 143).

• Though individual components are valued and appreciated, they create a collective design and experience.

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http://sweetpeastacie.blogspot.com/p/travel-channel.html

Falls Park Greenville, SC
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Arnold Arboretum Boston, MA

Photo by Ellen Vincent

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GROUP EXERCISE

• Form groups to travel to a site on location
  (1) identify the principles of design in the view and
  (2) Subtly track the different preference perceptions
  of group members (likes/dislikes)
  - Simplicity
  - Focalization
  - Balance (symmetrical, asymmetrical, proximal distal)
  - Rhythm/line
  - Proportion/Scale
  - Unity