

Where Architecture and Landscape Entwine

The Lines are Clear. Or Are They?

Does architecture stop where landscape begins, or does landscape stop where architecture begins? When the nexus between them is given the appropriate attention the answer is a clear "Neither."

Just as the eye views architecture and landscape together, so must the landscape architect. The character of the land gives cues to the architect. Then the landscape architect takes cues from the architecture to complete the circle and link architecture to land. The technique to make this happen includes attention by the designer to the vocabulary found in the architecture, beginning with "the big idea" and including geometric principles, details, and materials.



The landscape architect works to understand the activities inside the house and to extend these functions outside. When this is accomplished, and the landscape architect uses details from the architecture, movement from inside to outside becomes seamless. Moving one step further out, earth shaping, planting, and the addition of exterior architectural features enhance the connection between building and land. When the architectural language is blended with the natural attributes of the site, a harmony results that brings the components into a cohesive unity.

On a physical level the suggestive continuity between house and garden is ensured by creating deliberate relationships between the house and various features on the site such as landscape structures, garden ornament, and plants used in an architectural way. On a psychological level the use of man-made elements interspersed with plants will establish a sense of comfort between the natural and man-made worlds. This phenomenon is seen in many botanical gardens- where the mission is the display of plants. The placement of sculpture, urns and planters, or garden furniture within a garden suggests human habitation. That clue makes nature seem more friendly and accessible. Nature is a vast concept. Designers need to find means to aid people to feel a part of rather than apart from the natural world. The thoughtful combination of manmade materials with plantings will coalesce the juncture between nature and humankind, between exterior and interior spaces.

The key to the unity of site and structure starts with a perceptive reading of the given natural site conditions and is completed by sensitively layering the human features, alternately, with the natural features.

