

Where History Guides the Future

Historic Homesteads Strike Contemporary Chords

Historic landscapes are to landscape architects what tonal scales are to composers -- exciting structures and foundations from which creative interpretations are cultivated.

Just as composers draw on theory, scales, and instruments to create musical compositions, landscape architects draw on historic principles, context, materials, and natural forces to create landscape compositions that celebrate heritage, enrich meaning, and accommodate contemporary lifestyles.



Suggestions inferred from the history of a landscape become preludes to its future direction. Throughout the process, the landscape architect sifts through the juxtaposed layers of design decisions made by the succession of property owners. Interpretation of these layers guides decisions regarding what to preserve, as is, and what to incorporate into new design features. A successful response

to the knowledge gleaned from the historic underpinnings yields greater design cohesiveness and strengthens the expression of a site's unique character.

When we weave the site's natural attributes with historical precedent, archaeology, local materials and appropriate scale, we achieve a sense of timelessness in the design. As the addition of new landscape layers and activities is explored, existing layers introduce constraints and considerations regarding the impact on historic character. New elements such as roadways, pools, pavilions, tennis courts, terraces, furnishings and art objects must be respectfully woven into the landscape fabric.

Just as a property's history speaks of the past, its newly interpreted design is a narrative of what is to come, telling a story of current land stewards and their relationships with their land. Whether we are transcending the century lines between an old house and modern amenities or creating garden elements suggesting graceful aging, as we return an estate to its rightful grandeur, history remains a melodic progression.

