

Professor Gregory M. Pierceall

Landscape Architect Illinois and Indiana

Professor of Urban Ecosystem Design, pierceal@illinois.edu

University of Illinois

Professor Emeritus Purdue University, pierceal@purdue.edu

Landscape Architecture

Other contacts: www.gregpierceall.com and gmpierceall@gmail.com

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Landscape Design Track

GREEN + DESIGN + BASICS

BASIC + GREEN + DESIGN

DESIGN + BASIC + GREEN

What is Design?

What is Basic?

What is Green?

Landscape Design: the Foundations of Design and Basic

Questions are a great departure point in the start of any landscape or design problem using the design process. Clients have questions, thus they make professional inquiries and research contacts to find answers. The client starts the “design process”. We as green industry professional are sources and resources.

Design Process is an accepted protocol in the design realm that is used to identify, define, record, and evaluate problems and issues to be solved.

As a designer, we are individuals that work to resolve and solve problems/issues for clients.

Designers work with a client or client’s and develop solutions that service the client and situation.

Within our industry and profession, we too have artists and planners. These also are aspects of our practice that should be included to provide the most appropriate solutions and recommendations to clients for the specific problems.

Artists are creative, and work to be creative with or without a client. Often art and artist project the emotion and feelings to a project and products.

Planners by definition have a process, procedures and products that are defined and timely. Organization, structure and outcomes are part of planning and the planning process.

Collectively you utilize these **P.A.D.** skills to be a **professional** in the green industry you need all these skill sets. While these are key application sets, you too need to be an **Entrepreneur, Manager and Technician** the **E.M.T.** aspects of business.

Landscape Design Questions....

Questions are the best way to start thought and thinking, research and finding what information you need.

Questions are part of the design process and client dialog.

Questions are the key to the solutions we define and the success of your projects. Keep your question broad and follow laterally with parallel questions. Success can be easy if you keep your target large to start with. The larger the target the easier it is to be successful and feel great about yourself. With experience being not getting what you want, soon you will be great and build your design self esteem.

As site and landscape designers, what makes us professional is the **quality and character of our practices and processes**. As designer's we are problem solvers. A key to being a great designer is not in knowing what can be right but knowing what can go wrong. Another aspect of being a designer is are you a consumer of design? If we are professional at design we need to be informed as to design, practices and trends in design. Design is all around us in fashion, art, architecture, objects, museums and books. Always be aware and open to design relate information. An easy source is the NYC on line which you define article interests and emphasis and the articles are delivered to you computer for review.

Information/knowledge is strength.

As designers we work to **enhance limits and constraints**. Great design comes from a site and or client that have limits, an imperfect situation and circumstances that are not working. With situational limits, only then can we be faced and figure out what's really important and invent a better solution. **Good design** whether a area, site or commercial site **finds success is the big picture ordering of specific elements to create a functional and then aesthetic solution**. The details follow the big picture thinking/design.

As designers **don't major in minor things**. In the design problem solving process, **spend 20% of you time on the problems/fixd items and 80% on the solutions the options**, variations and details that define the success. This is the possibility thinking that makes design and designers successful.

Define and develop your design understanding and process for yourself, your client's and career/practice situation.

Clients need to know your design process, your design philosophy, your design delivery and your design sequences. Not any one design process is the best process. Just as in design, by using multiple sources for products your design has more depth.

Design processes may vary, and utilize a variety of problem solving options. In the book, Whack on the right side of the head, the author helps convey and communicate numerous problem solving opportunities for any sort of design. The key in the utilization of problem solving is to find options that fit your individual clients, practice and design base.

One size does not fit all. If your not comfortable working through new problem solving alternatives solo, work with a design coach and or dialog with friends as to their processes, and procedures that have worked.

Be a life long learner and open to opportunity.

Selling design, as a designers the basic thing we all sell is ourselves first, **sell yourself** then the services and products we provide. First impressions, communications and competency are keys to short and long term design success. Work to make the complex issues of site and landscape design simple to understand.

As designers we are educators, in that we identify were the client and site is and where do they want and need to be.

Choices Part of the design process is the questions you ask and then what choices and options are to be associated with the answers.

If you make **decisions with less than 30% of any possible base information you may be reckless.**

If you wait to have 70% or more of any base information you have missed the opportunity (A. Ball, Ball Seed)

Choices are the options and alternatives we seek as designers to develop.

In school we learn the answers are often T or F or multiple choices or fill in the blank. In life and **design problem solving there is a first, second, and third right answer.** Any answer in the right time and place can be correct.

Start with the BIG Picture. On a popular, CNBC nightly, 9pm CST program

The Big Idea, Donny Deustch presents the Big Ideas for businesses and life. Our world is full of opportunity, thinking and realizing **there must be a better way** is the first step in making progresses and identifying new success. After the overview have the structure and details covered as these are often referred to as

Success is in the details.

Show your clients your big picture

In the presentation and marketing of yourself and organization, identify to clients your core values, philosophy, vision and history. Identify who you are and the staff organization. Include completed client and project references, awards, community contributions, news and your contact information. Be clear, simple and organized so individually clients can select and research items most important to them.

Be a possibility thinker/designer,

not in the collection of base materials and limits but the solutions to the limits and problems. This spark and imagination is what makes us Designers. If clients knew what they the options were they would not need us as designers. Designers provide a problem solving process to collect, evaluate and propose options and solutions to specific and identified problems for individuals.

Landscapes 360 degrees

change is the only consistent thing we have today. Be open and embrace change. Look at landscape and design as an evolving career and opportunity. While the landscape elements and principles may be the same, our clients, culture and global understandings have changed.

Our business and landscape culture today has different expectations. Clients are more informed and educated. Clients and our culture have identified current (Green and Sustainable) and timely solutions to their sites and landscapes. While traditional solutions work, the adaptation of new views and information to traditional options are needed. From a personal and professional departure build on your strengths and balance your weaknesses.

In the book, **Strengths Finder 2**, Rath the author conveys none of us are perfect and should not be, build on your strengths and the books survey helps define your top five strengths to then balance you limits.

While clients have changed so have employees and our industries. Today's staff have increasingly varied experiences, education, motivations and expectations from employment. Work schedules are changing for clients with more at home/work time. Employment has increasingly more non-traditional time and place arrangements for employment. Today, talent is critical and employment may not be as traditional as in the past. Remember even with chance that the communal benefits of "the group" for the synergy of partnered business design solutions.

Our digital world is here to stay and embrace it. Use technology and learn from it. Don't become a slave to technology.

A good life and business reference is **Basic Black** by Cathie Black 2007. She traces her journey through business and life successes and directions.

Design communications, Graphics

In a recent ALSA Landscape Architecture Magazine 11/07, Freehand Renaissance the editors choice article pp 22-31 by James Richards, jim@townscape.info Richards has written a compelling article on the "Freehand Renaissance".

Why Draw? Is the question. I find this article right on and appropriate for the practice of landscape architecture and landscape design. Visual thinking and quick ideas are the keys in hand drawing. In today's world, quick design is a means to meet the economic challenges of our design practices and careers.

Free hand drawing beyond illustration is an engagement of our eyes, mind, ideas, hands and paper to communicate information. Today's digital technology has reduced the time intensive drafting of the past. Digital technology is great for the ordering, composing, and presentation of proposals and data. Just as photography did not eliminate painting as per James Richards, digital design does not eliminate free hand drawing and communications.

Free hand drawing has its benefits early in the design process. Free hand drawing conveys the conceptual information about design. These concepts are the structure, organization and alternatives that are options in the design processes. Free hand drawing is the rapid visualization of information (I remember the old design book Rapid Visualization by)

Today we need to have both digital and free hand skill included in project design. While not every person may have these skills the appreciation of the benefits of both are critical. Digital drawings have taken the labor out of defined and specific design work. With this freedom comes the opportunity to utilize free hand graphics to conceptualize ideas, get quick feedback and then utilize digital technology for the production of design documents.

Drawing as writing with pen and paper provides a connection between our eyes, minds and our surroundings. This connection between the designer's mind's eye and the client and colleagues is part of the creative design process. We need to rethink how and what we do as designers, through design processes to convey solutions to design problems. In our ever increasingly complex world, people often want complex answers to simple questions.

Reconnect your eyes, minds and hands though drawing and thinking as part of your design process.

Outline the Big Picture before the Details the small picture

Questions To Ask

- Questions fall into two categories
Target questions are specific and direct and have a destination. They are yes and no responses.... like do you like Red Flowers?
Do you want a cutting garden?
These are the specific and micro questions

- **Open questions** are fishing type inquiries that help you and the client imagine what if, what is what can be. What is your favorite vacation spot? The direction is what setting makes the client comfortable? What is your favorite party event? Etc These are general and directed feelings, emotions, etc. These help define the character and styles to explore in the design proposals.
- These are the macro and general and global questions
- Questions help define the general character and specifics for the designer and the design.

Landscapes 360

- Landscape design is a process and products with service.
- The consistent underlying aspect in site design is design and process.
- **Design is often viewed as a more rigorous form of art, or art that has a clearly defined purpose.**
- The distinction between art and design is made when someone other than the “artist” now becoming the designer is defining the purpose.
- **Design is often perceived as “invisible” until it does not work.**

Design Process

- Landscapes are both art and design. When we work on “design” we are working first for the functional aspect, the purpose of the situation and client. The “art” of landscape and site design is the “aesthetics” the fashion and or style of the client, site and context.

Purposeful/Functional Design

- **“Form follows function”** is a concept we have all hear.
- **Function** in site design is the considerations of **circulation, open space and bed mass, the C.O.B. of design.**
- **The client starts the design process** with a request for design
- The **designer brings educated design process, products and services** to the client.
- **Starting** with a site inventory and then site analysis, we as designers look at the given and functional aspects of the design.
- In parallel to this **site/client program information** is collected as to users, uses, needs, preferences and the like.

- **Synthesis** is the combination of the site and client data that defines the functional and aesthetic aspect of the design.
- **Design concepts** should be presented first.
- These are specific design organizations that present the basics of site, the COB circulation, open space and bed mass.

Vocabulary:

Landscape Design Vocabulary for a New Economy

With our time and place of today, we need to be more sensitive to the needs and wants and wants of clients. The fundamentals should be the basics of Planning and design. These skills are more important in a limited economy. In the greening of our landscapes and environment, work to identify and define the value of planning and design skills and their applications.

Design is problem solving and art with a purpose. Design should provide added value to the client, site and surroundings as well as the overall environment. In the 1972 publication, Plants/People/and Environmental Quality by the Department of Interior and National Park Service, the functional and aesthetic purposes of plants in the environment are highlighted.

Attitudes about plants had changed in the 70's as well as today. We are past the "gardenesque" periods and increasingly aware of the environmental qualities of plants and a "green" environment. Plants can be both aesthetic and functional. While feelings about plants, planting and landscapes can be subjective, the objective qualities include the architectural, engineering and climate control aspects in design. Plants and trees server as a symbols, have substance and function in out living environments.

Architectural uses include plants as ceilings, walls and floors that define spaces. **Engineering** uses include atmospheric purification of air and water, screening and privacy in the forms of acoustical control of noises, glare control, erosion control. Traffic control too can be an engineering function of plantings within our living environments. **Climate control** aspects of plants focus on shade, windbreaks, and daily, seasonal and annual temperature modifications. Sun and wind modification are key aspects to plants in the landscape. Plants can manage winds and snow while allowing for sun or shade to outdoor settings. Temperature control is a seasonal and regional need for outdoor living. **Aesthetics** of plants utilize their three dimensional aspects within a garden or landscape setting. Plants can provide pattern and silhouettes, enhance and complement architecture, framing and staging of a view, unification of settings. Plants inherent line, form, texture and colors add beauty to our environments. Plant groupings can articulate spaces and indicators of places within a landscape. Plants influence our personal senses with their sights, sounds, odor's, touches and tastes.

The vocabularies are the foundations of the purposes and value of plant in our landscapes with planning and design.

Transparent Design in landscape design is illustrating and communicating the design process and helping clients to understanding the vocabulary behind DESIGN. Design problem, design processes, communications, design solutions, design products and design choices are part of the communications and transparent designs we suggest.

Design partnerships potentially may be part of our futures in that we may be working with the client not just for the client.

Design understanding, make sure to identify and communicate the vocabulary, the industry and your firm uses. Make sure to listening, recording discussions, information; outline expectations, note direct and indirect communications, focus/directions, evolution, changes, delivery, timing, concerns, and feedback. Keeping records and notes are part of being responsible and adding value to the services provided.

Design story as part of the design process is making the clients needs the fabric behind the design concepts, site design, site materials, design timing, surfaces and details selected. Remember as a designer you have a client and purpose beyond being creative and inventive.

Design choices A-Z for functional, attractive and manageable landscapes consider how your design, design process and design delivery helps the bottom line and is green and sustainable. A few selected ideas are summarized not in any particular ordering.

- A) plant selections influence design costs. Look at species, spacing, sizes, placement and sources as an opportunity to have a low impact and long term success in establishment and management of the planted landscape.
- B) budget should influence phasing not overall design
- C) phasing is an option and alternative within the big picture and overall plan so, think big first and then small details second.
- D) site, context, environment, users, season and client priorities influence phasing
- E) materials/finishing selections and patterns influence costs. Think about “the look” and the cost benefit ratio. Construction sizes with lumber and hardscapes shapes influence design and costs. If you use “cuts” these cost money.
Designing for the form of materials can help save resources, time and funds
- F) design changes into the implementation process cost time and money
- G) local sources verses shipping saves money
- H) stock items verses custom saves money, choose your details and materials to maximize the benefits with the expense
- I) seasonal demand and timing influences costs, deliveries and scheduled delivery

- J) economy of scale, the volume/size of an area influences the price look to be effective with design areas, varieties and repetition of materials

- K) supply and demand influences costs and availability
- L) reuse, repurpose, recycle, redefine helps save funds and resources....rethink and reuse existing elements, features and aspects of the site and the existing conditions if it works for the site and client
- M) project partnerships may include the client, company and others shared skills which may save resources as an options to materials sources, labor and installations establishment
- N) know the expected management goals of the clients for their landscape with their existing landscape skill set of the (client) in the recommendations for design elements, scale and sizes, installations sizes, and establishment needs. Consider both short and long term care needs with client time and skills.
- O) design trade offs, offer and convey the understanding of design options with the cost benefit opportunities. Example, screening as a fence and plants, fence only, plants only. Shade with shade trees, or a pergola, arbors each with short and long term benefits and costs at installation. Also define client longevity or duration to be on the site five years or longer?
- P) existing verses new (recycle and reuse) capturing site value and assets. Look at what can be kept verses removal and or transplanting valuable resources on site.
- Q) planning and design provides a savings in time, resources and money “plan before you plant” not planning too has a cost.
Design services while having a cost and has benefits. Sell/ buy the most experience you can.
- R) define client needs verses wants. Priorities then should be based on the site, client needs and surroundings. Have a vision; yet implement what you can afford with a plan to the future.
- S) design, budget, timing, needs and demands, do they match?
- T) focus on site areas/zones for design and care i.e.: low medium and high relative to needs, demands and priorities. Design the Big picture then detail immediate priorities for implementation.
- U) landscape materials should appreciate in value, as they grow they gain in value and utility, your green investment. Hardscape while having a high install cost has low to no management costs
- V) design and phasing are options to get what you want so design and phase for lifecycle and lifestyle
- W) less can be more, any change can be better than none, design is vision
- X) design is organization in an attractive form, seeing potential and opportunity, visualization for the client to then helping them to make a decision(s).
decisions with less than 30% of given information can be reckless and if you need to get 70% or more data, you’ve missed the opportunity.

- Y) research/investigate the client, the site and context to attempt to find its basic elements and use the “given” parts as the “roots” to any proposal. spend 20% of your time on the problem and 80% on the solution.
- Z) designers should simplify the process and product to make it understandable and manageable for the clients. Professionals should be able to crystallize the problem and solution in its simplest forms.

Landscapes for Outdoor Living

With the change of the seasons and the opportunity to be outdoors, outdoor living is the focus of most landscapes today. Thirty years ago, students were “advised” that landscapes were only public and private and the two areas never meet. Today our landscapes are integrated and have outdoor living all around.

Outdoor living has expanded the utility and function of today’s landscapes and the opportunity for designers. Today increasingly, hardscape elements are a major portion of landscape proposals. While plants are a major component there are landforms, pavements and surface, constructed feature and water also to be considered.

A complete landscape proposal should include the five basic elements of landscape design. Landform, pavements/surfaces, plants, constructed features (steps, walls and fences) and water are the elements included in the various scales of design.

With increased outdoor living landscape design should look to focus on circulation and use areas first in the planning and development process. With the skeleton and structure of the property outlined as to use then the open space the lawn areas are defined followed by the planting beds. I simplify this process and call it COB, circulation, open space and bed mass. If you design with these three big pieces first you then can detail.

From a design standpoint include the big pieces first then the small pieces, similar to time management. If you spend all your time doing small things you have no time for the big stuff....

Once the landscape proposal has the three big pieces developed into an attractive and functional composition the details and materials selection can occur.

Surfacing’s and hardscape materials are numerous and available.

Each site, client and designer has preferences of materials due to experience and applications. Hardscape element have a high installation cost but low management once installed. Hardscapes and surfacings are investments of time and materials in the spaces of the landscape.

Hardscapes can range from stone, to concrete, patterned concrete, pavers, clay brick, bricks, gravel, and the like. Each material has a cost and benefit. In talking about pavements and surfacings to clients it's similar to selection of rugs. Plan for flexibility and durability as the installation has a long life on the site.

In the class room I find the increasingly interesting cross over between landscape and interior design. I often take students to furniture design stores like Room and Board. Upon the walk inside the room vignettes present compositions and patterns of inspiration for landscape design. The rugs typically inspire student with ideas as to new paving patterns and design ideas.

In the development of hardscapes within a landscape look to the architecture and materials of the residence for inspiration. Historic homes may require different materials than a newly built home.

The forms of hardscapes should work from geometry. The more complex the design the more the expense so look carefully to the sizing and details. The more cuts you have the more the expense so is the size matching the installation module of the paver?

Pattern is great within pavements. Remember that pavements have to last and it may be best to keep it simple. Solider courses at the edge of a patio define and finish the edge. If the client wants a central defined space and can't afford the extra costs, include the new indoor outdoor rugs as an accent. As a designer work for success and be flexible to the approach.

With the alfresco living outdoor entertaining and cooking too has become part of the landscape. The focus now is the pavements and surfacings but these added value elements can be a future discussion. In your design anticipate the future and suggest and outline these added elements for future phasing and installations.

Collectively hardscapes are the transition between the inside and out of the home and its site. In design of outdoor living look to the architecture, construction materials and the design of the house for clues. The collective site should be a complete composition.

Included are a few images that reinforce the concepts and ideas for hardscape and outdoor living. While decks were the old outdoor zone, combinations of decks, new deck surfacings and hardscapes are the skeletons of our landscape forms today.

Landscape Design Process

Landscape Design + Site Design

While landscape design can become routine often via the designer one point of view always keep in mind the clients view, they start and finish the process.

Landscapes root from the client, through design process translated into plans by the designer a problem solver, knowledgeable of.....experienced in....a collaboration of client and designer, a developing a shared vision

Outdoor space and spaces, it starts with the client their view and your understanding of how they will use the spaces short and long term...their lifecycle and lifestyle. Review and record the site information, site surroundings, site context and environmental conditions with a client program the short and long term goals, needs and wants.

The starting point, the client starts the design process
If built start with the house, its character, architectural style, details then move to the inside out, doors windows, walks, drives etc the C of COB circulation both physical and visual what works, areas for improvement and then revisions/edits

What are the surroundings at the edges of the property, the environment sun and wind then drainage on and off the site?

Extended views beyond the site and or needs for screening and privacy

What is good site design? It should employ the basic five design elements of landscape design LPPCW

Landform, pavements/surfaces, plants (canopy,understory,groundplane) constructed features and water.

The combination of these elements reflect the COB (circulation,open space, bed mass) summary into a functional composition of one of the six design options R,D,C,A/T,I,R (**rectangular, diagonal, curvilinear, arc/tangent, irregular, radial**) this is the organizational aspect of site design the ordering and organization of spaces for the site, client and needs within the parameters of the site and surroundings

Design for function first then of a form that is attractive and economical, this is the green and sustainable aspect of site design. Define client needs and needs/wants and outline the basics. The client program is a defined listing of project needs short and long term. These are collected and ordered at first as independent aspects of the design process. After and only after a ss and sa can you merge the client program and the site together in the synthesis stage of design. From synthesis come the varied design options. Varied design forms that solves the same issues for the client. The details and materials are defined. Start with the end goals and results and work to the start of the design.

Design with standards to start with and use stock aspects. After you get the design to work, dress it up with the finishes and details that make it work for the clients and their budget. If budget defines a staging or phasing, remember that budget defines the phase and materials chosen not design.

In design, look at **line, form, texture and color** as these are the four **basic elements of design** that should be part of the overall site/house and landscape composition. These too are the building blocks of all other design professions as well. Arch, interiors, art, floral design, sculpture, painting, fashion, etc.

The four **elements of design** are managed and ordered/composed by the utility of the eight principles of design. **Scale, order, dominance, rhythm, proportion, balance, repetition and unity.** The principles of design are varied as to the focus and application of the practice and profession. Not all individuals agree on the listing and or application of said design principles, these are my perceptions.

Within a practiced design profession as landscape design and landscape architecture the traits needed are those of a **planner, artist and designer.** The planner has a plan, be committed to your goal and flexible in your approach. The **artist** within is expressive yet respect and reflect the client and situations not just yourself as the artist. Fine artists reflect their emotion and expression not that of a client, a big difference between this and a designer. A **designer** has a client, situation and process through a design process. While the solution is planned and artistic, it solves the client's problem.

Designers evaluate given situations, define client needs and wants and outlines the given situation. Designers should find the bottom line needed to solve a problem and offer options surrounding and beyond the problem. Design Big and Detail Small. Always look at the big picture and surroundings in offering a solution. Answer more than is requested. The client decides the solutions and final or staged phase of the design.

The surroundings, environment and program:

With the design program a listing of client goals, define how what when where and why questions regarding the listing. Define in specifics how much space does that take? Know your dimensions and standards such as a table and four chairs needs at least 144 square feet to be functional. A parking space is 10x20' and a vegetable garden needs rows going N-S not east/west. Know little facts and figures come with practice and applications. Experience is the best teacher, doing it is better than talking about it.

Help the client and help the design process by defining needs and goals, what is the overall feeling, style, etc. Privacy, storage, gardening, play, recreation, lighting, lawn, plants, wildlife, maintenance, parking, colors, shade/sun, views/vistas, ornaments, native/naturalized, ornamental/exotic, local/regional, green/sustainable.

After you define the setting and character with details how about care. Landscapes are growing compositions. Who will install, establish, care and manage the landscape. What

are the client gardening and landscape skills and interests? Management is a critical aspect of a landscape just as maintenance is part of an automobiles success.

As a designer site and landscape design is a comprehensive process. While thirty years ago landscape designers did exclusively planting design, today's landscape designers work with landforms, pavements/surfaces, plants, constructed features and water. While landscape architects have been practicing in site design for 100 years, not all training in LA is consistent and includes the same body of knowledge as a base.

Site design and landscape design are similar, understand the process and products that define the practice's . The marketplace is the determinate to what and where you are successful as a professional. Take the high road and offer more than asked while listening to the client. Being a professional is doing the best you can with what you have. **Service** it the key to any career and or profession. **Service** your client, the environment, and yourself and you will be successful.