

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Historical Materials from University of Nebraska-
Lincoln Extension

Extension

1963

EC63-1177 Plan...your Yard for Use and Pleasure

Jerre Withrow

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/extensionhist>

Withrow, Jerre, "EC63-1177 Plan...your Yard for Use and Pleasure" (1963). *Historical Materials from University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension*. 3639.

<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/extensionhist/3639>

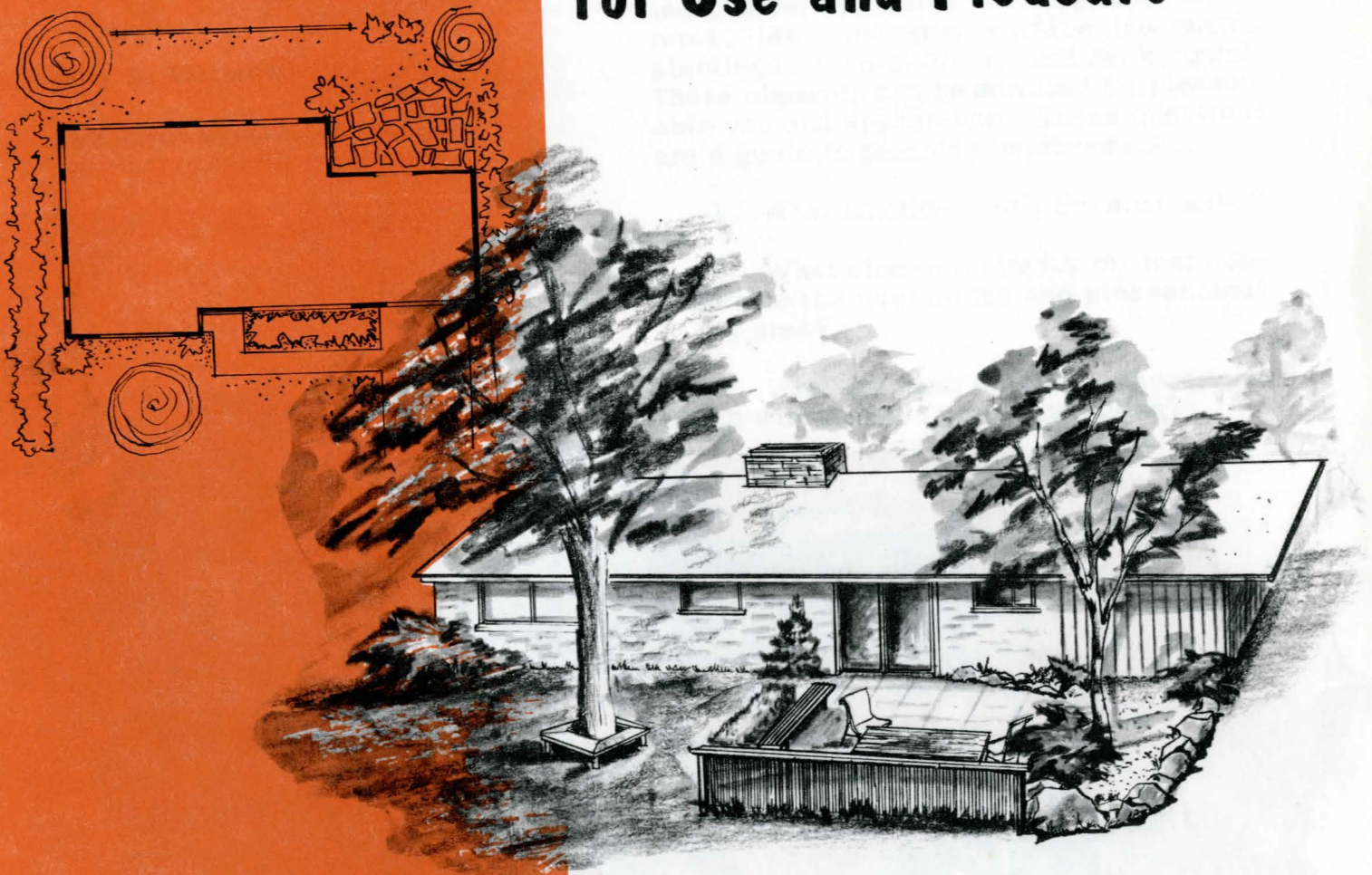
This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Extension at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Historical Materials from University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

AGRI
S
85
E7
#63-1177
C.1

E.C.63-1177

PLAN...your yard

for Use and Pleasure



EXTENSION SERVICE
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE
AND U S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
COOPERATING
E F FROLIK DEAN E W JANIKE DIRECTOR

Plan your Yard...

for USE and PLEASURE

Jerre L. Withrow

Extension Specialist, Housing

INTRODUCTION

The living space your family can enjoy includes the total landscape as well as the house itself.

An attractive residential landscape can be created from any urban or rural plot whether it is undeveloped or already established. Careful planning is the key.

A landscape is the picture seen from any one point. There are as many landscapes of a yard as there are points from which to view it. Let's consider the ever-changing views from the road or street and as we approach the house.

The elements of a residential landscape include the house and its immediate surroundings; driveway, walks, fences, other structures, lawn or other surface treatment, plantings, land contour, and background. These elements can be arranged for pleasurable use and appearance. These questions are a guide to planning improvements.

1. What functions shall the area serve?
2. What elements already present contribute to the usefulness and pleasantness of the area?
3. What are some possible arrangements which will increase your satisfaction?

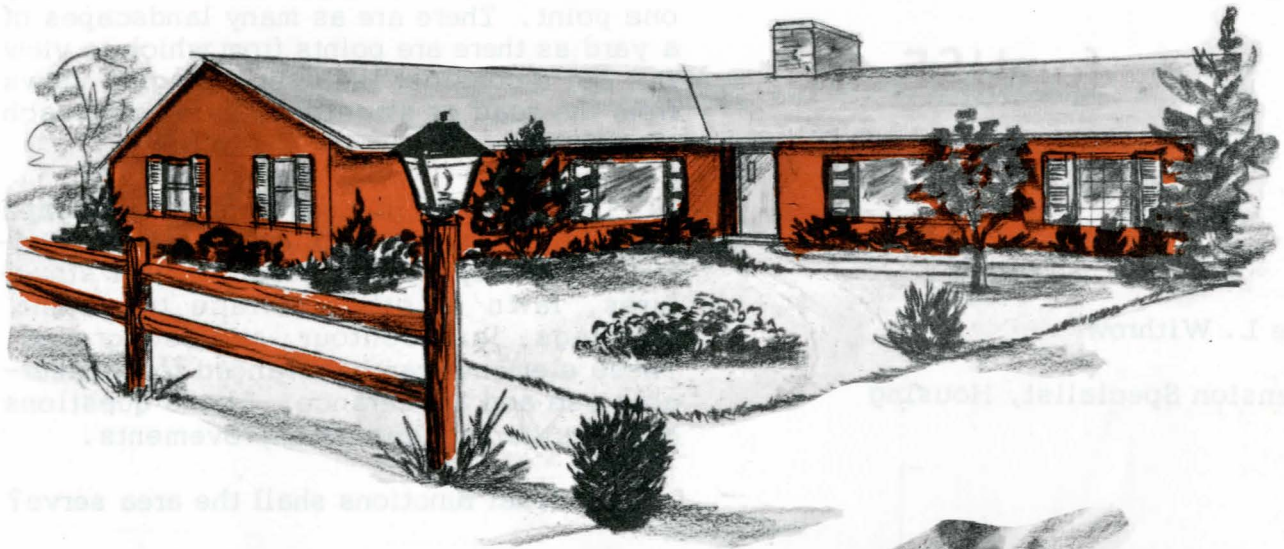


FUNCTION

The desires of the family and the characteristics of the yard will determine the use of the area.

1. Approach

The main access to the house is usually a driveway from the street or road in front. The driveway should be convenient to both the social entryway and the service entryway of the house. The driveway should allow the family car to be driven easily and safely into the garage or carport, and should provide ample parking space for guest cars. A turn-around area or circular driveway may be desirable.

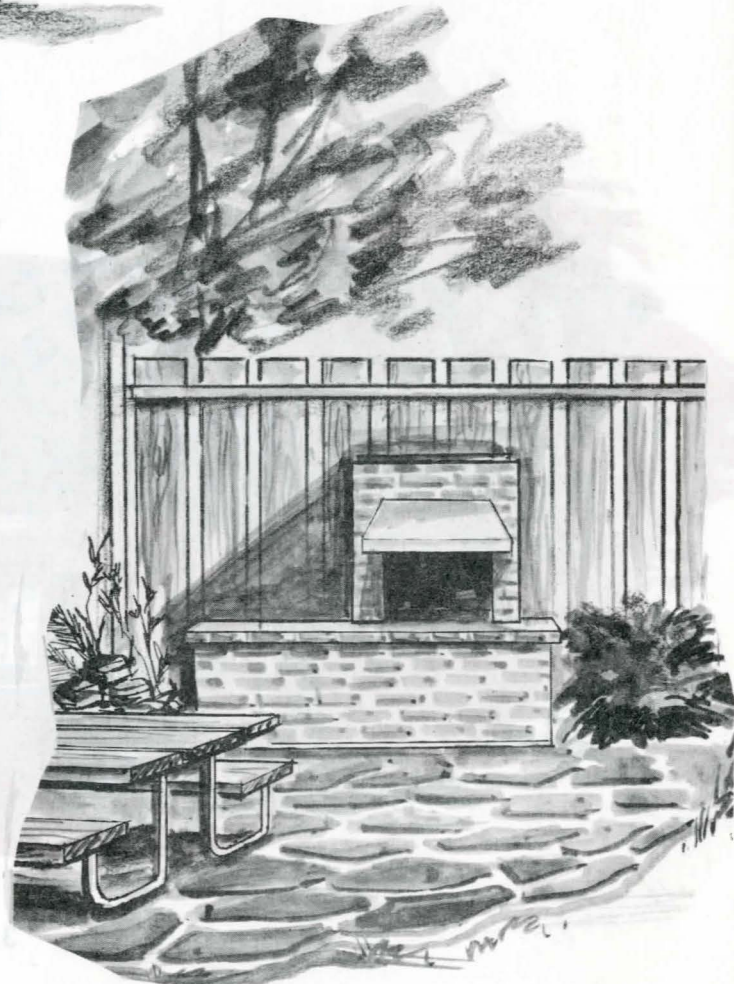


2. Outdoor Living

Areas to be used for specific purposes should be planned in relation to similar areas on the inside of the house. These areas may therefore be more usable if located in the front of the plot. An area just beyond the social area of the house can allow activities to move out of doors for a change of pace. A private garden outside a bedroom can provide a welcome retreat for relaxation.

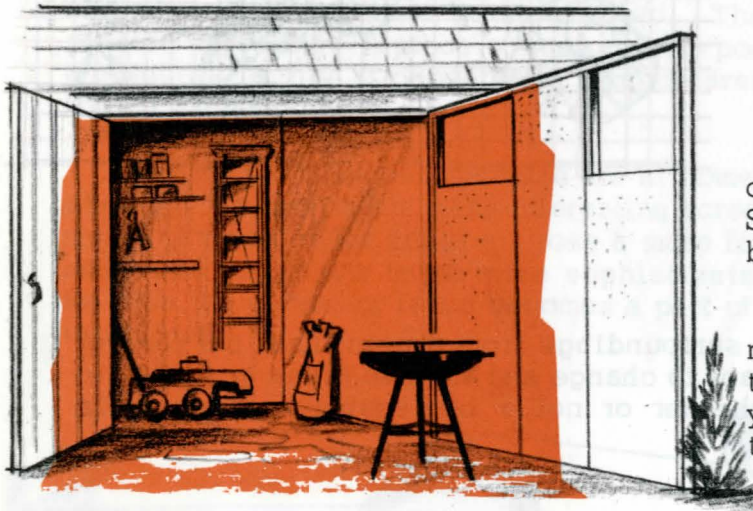
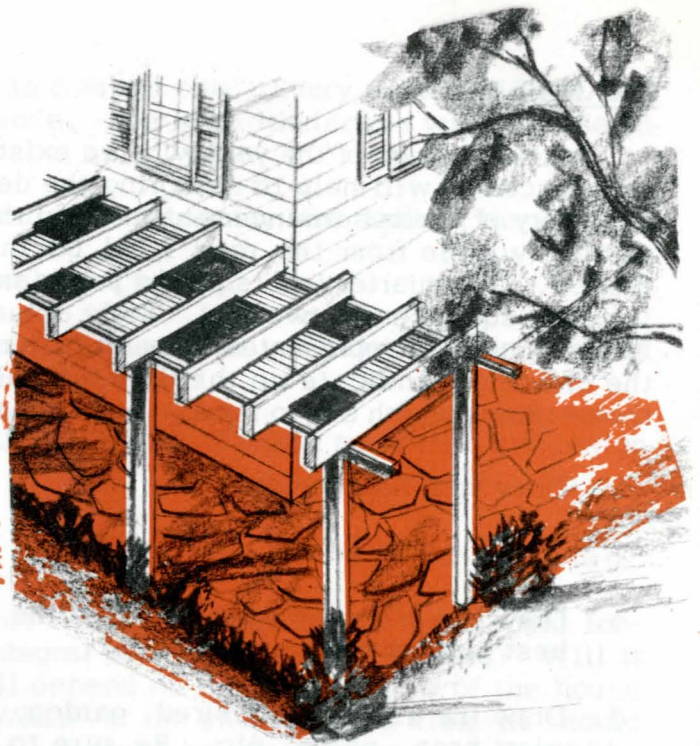
An outdoor dining area is most convenient if located next to the kitchen or dining area.

A play area for small active children should be visible from the kitchen window. Lawn sports such as croquet, badminton, horseshoes, etc., enjoyed by teen agers and adults require large clear areas. Space of this size may only be available in the front of the plot.



3. Protection

A windbreak can reduce snow drifting in winter and dust blowing in summer. Shade helps keep the house temperature moderate and will increase the efficiency of fans and air conditioners. Large glass areas in particular may need protection from direct sunlight. A cover over walks or parking area will protect the family and guests from rain or snow. Cover also will make recreation areas usable during wet weather.



4. Storage

Storage space may be needed for gardening or recreation equipment or outdoor furniture. Storage benches, walls, or buildings should be included in the design.

Providing these features will require planning and imagination. Start by listing ways the family would like to use this part of the yard. Necessary compromises can be made as the plan progresses.

PRESENT ELEMENTS

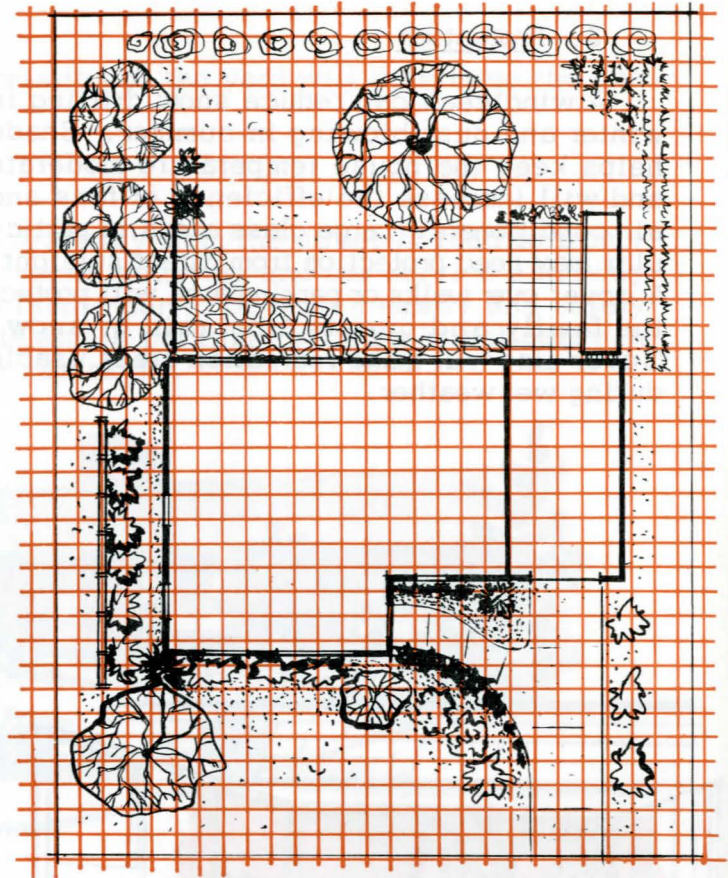
Some existing elements of the landscape probably are serving a purpose and giving pleasure to the family and passers-by. Keep these. Some others may be more effective if moved. Simplicity is generally the key to success. Too much rather than too little may be the problem. Often clearing away haphazard plantings, removing dilapidated fences or part of a structure is the first step in developing a successful landscape design.



ARRANGEMENT

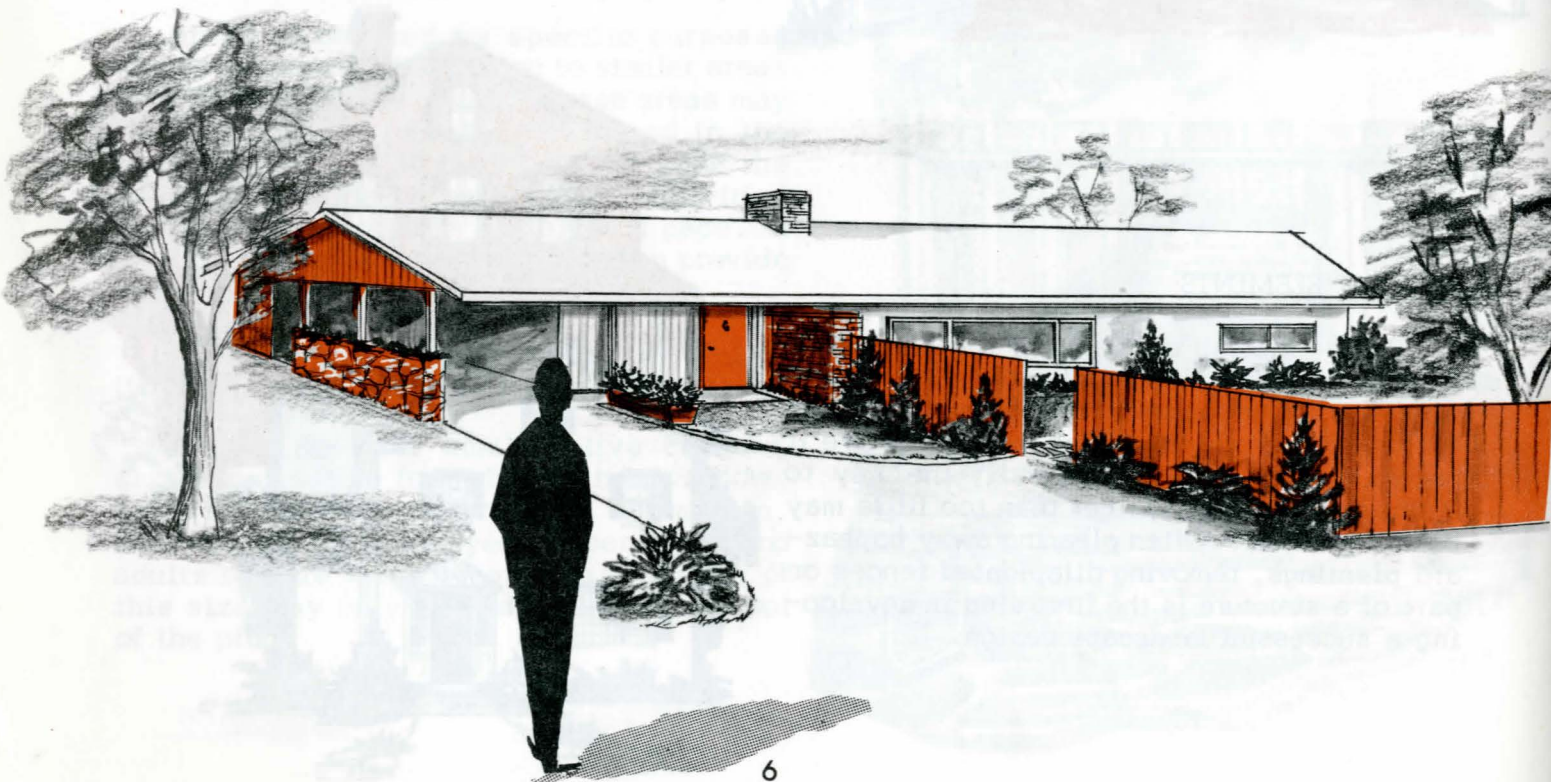
Scale drawings of the yard with its existing structures will help in exploring the desirability of various arrangements. Only the portion visible from the road need be included. Use quarter inch squared paper and let each square equal two feet. Eight actual feet then will be represented by each inch on the drawing. Indicate on the drawing only those things which are to remain unchanged.

- Draw yard boundaries
- Locate the house and other structures.
- Draw the driveway on the plan in the best place for the use intended.
- Draw the use areas desired, garden, play area, patio, etc. Be sure to locate outdoor areas near related interior areas.
- Indicate screen plantings necessary for protection or view.



DESIGN FOR BEAUTY

Take a good look at the house and its surroundings from a point near the road or street. Remember the elements you don't want to change and the use areas you want to develop. Certain principles determine whether or not a landscape is pleasing in appearance.



1. The landscape from the road or street is a broad one. Every element in the design should contribute to the overall appearance. The total landscape will then seem to be one picture.

2. Proportion or scale of each element should be in keeping with that of the others.

3. The total landscape should appear to be balanced.

4. The landscape should have many interesting segments, but one main point of emphasis.

There are a number of ways to accomplish these things. Keep in mind that the design should reflect the personality of the family.

1. Unity

First determine the kind of "look" you want. Will it be stately, in the elegant formality of a Georgian mansion? Will it be an integral part of the natural setting? Will it be gay and informal? In part, your choice will depend on the architecture of the house and the size and characteristics of the yard. Whatever the choice, each element should contribute to the scene being created. They need not be repetitious, but should be similar in feeling. A piece of sculpture, a pool, or a fountain often can give an ordinary garden distinction if chosen and placed carefully. These additions are not appropriate for all situations.

Certain textures and patterns are at home with and complementary to certain atmospheres. Plastic panels make interesting screening in a contemporary setting. Concrete, metal or wood grills could enclose a more formal, but still contemporary garden. Both materials suggest a much more sophisticated setting than a picket or paddock fence. Be sure the screen or fence becomes a part of the scene and does not introduce an unrelated idea.



Often color can be the key to an appealing harmony. Contradictory details of a house may be painted out with a neutral color.

A light grey house would be a pleasing background for bright colored shrubs or flowers. Nature's colors in spring and summer are clear and cool. Fall changes the natural landscape to warm earthy colors. Winter sometimes brings stark whiteness and other times muted tones. Color on buildings remains the same throughout all the seasons. Generally a color that appears in nature is a good choice for a house - green, brown, yellow, or white. A low-intensity, greyed tone will seem to belong and harmonize with the surroundings. A greyed blue-green would blend with summer colors and complement the browns of fall and winter.

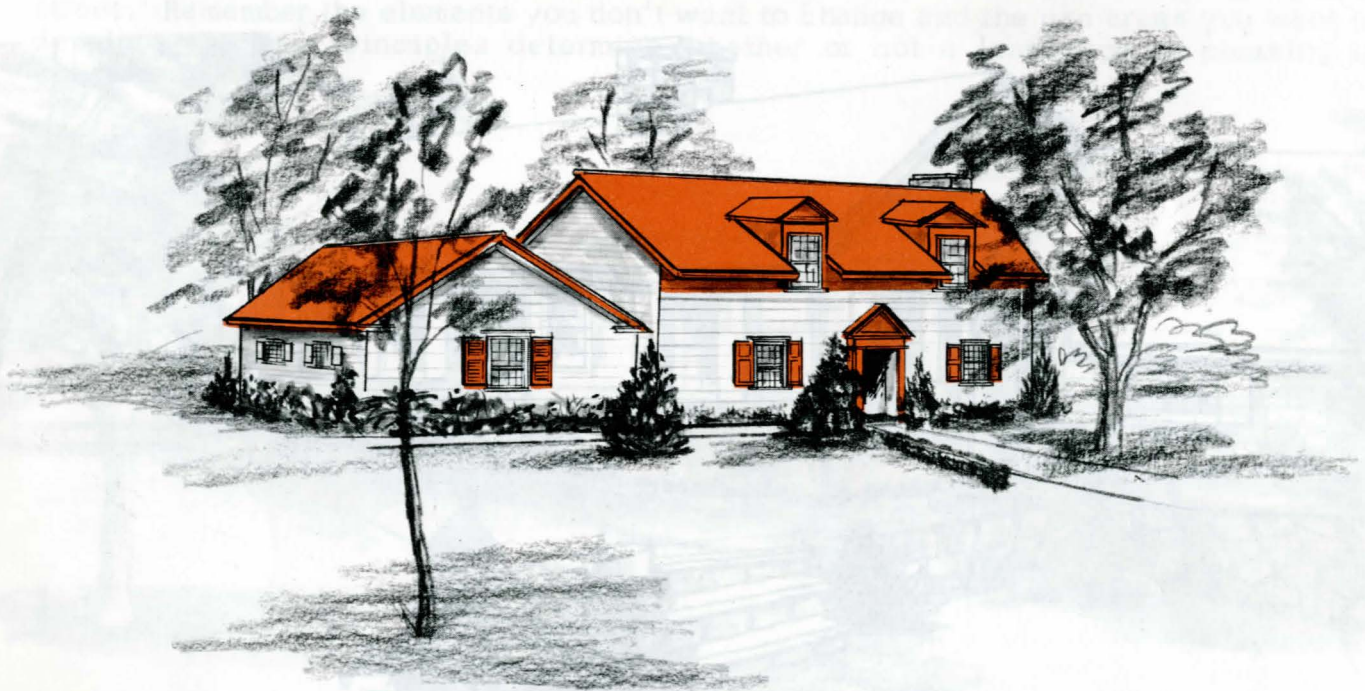
Rhythm or visual movement should flow through the total composition and back to the starting point. This rhythm may be achieved by line which directs the eye easily from one portion of the design to another.

- Repetition of a color or a form in various parts of the landscape can establish this rhythm.

- The roof line of the house might be the uppermost boundary of the composition. The line might be picked up by a fence or hedge. Numerous gables, or particularly steep ones, tend to carry your eye out and attention is called to them. They will be noticed less if painted to blend with the roof.

- A line can be established by shutters or perhaps a porch.

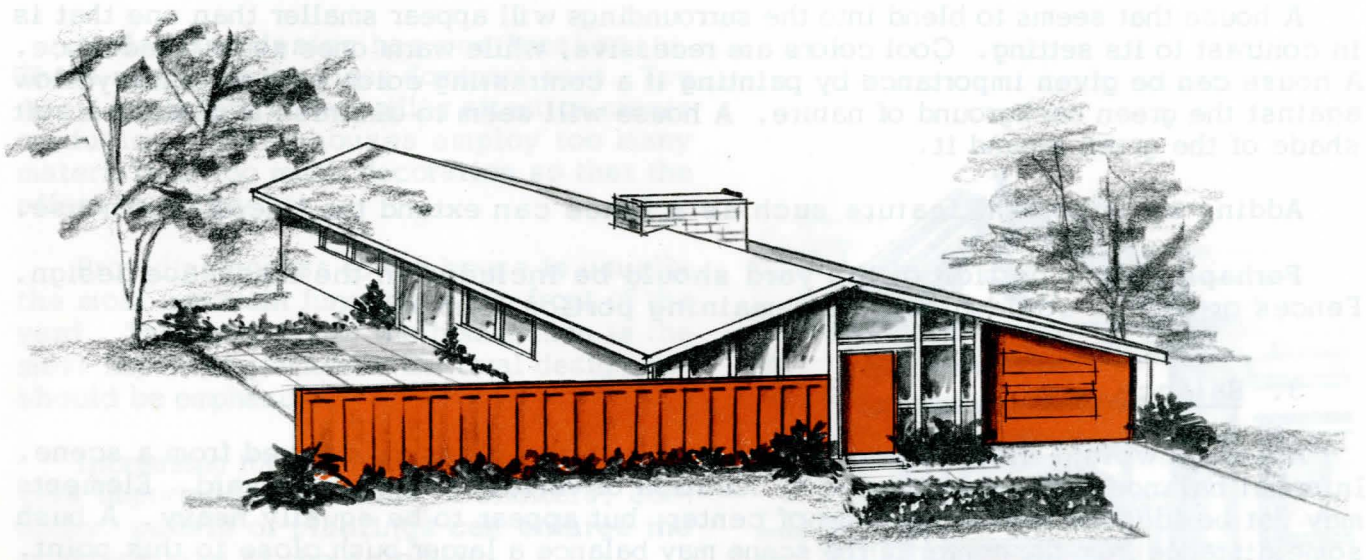
Changing the grade of the yard can create a horizontal line. Areas to be developed for use will probably be flat. They can be retained by walls, rock garden, brick, logs, or sod. Lines then will be repeated at various levels.



2. Proportion

The house is the largest mass in a residential landscape. Its proportion in relation to the yard is important. The mass of the house should not overpower the size of the yard. A large house usually looks best with a large area around it. A pleasing space relationship can usually be achieved. Plantings close to the house will seem to be part of the surroundings and therefore increase their apparent size. The visible portion of the house will at the same time be diminished. Remember, the size of shrubs and trees when full grown must be considered in choosing the variety to be planted and the spacing to be allowed.

Horizontal lines of fences, hedge, etc. will make a yard look wider. If you use a fence, choose one in scale with the house. A tall brick wall would overpower a small cottage, but be appropriate for a two story house. The size of the area to be fenced or walled is also important. A louvered fence of light canvas or plastic panels would give a dining area privacy without confinement. A solid board or woven board fence could screen a larger play area.



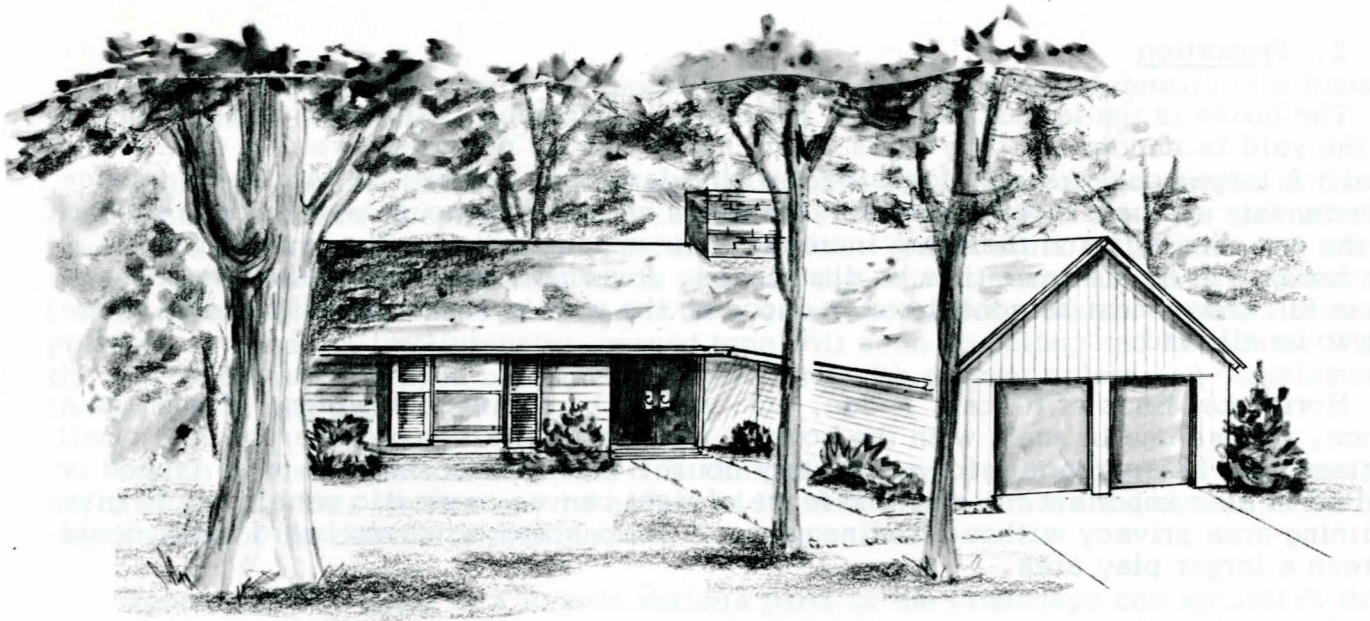
Dividing the upper and lower story by treating each with a different material or color often can seem to cut the height of a building. Be sure to retain some common denominator:

One color in different values or intensities

One color in different material

A close harmony through sharing of a common color -- such as yellow-orange and yellow-green.

If the house is small it may be lost in a large yard. It can be given visual importance.



A house that seems to blend into the surroundings will appear smaller than one that is in contrast to its setting. Cool colors are recessive, while warm ones seem to advance. A house can be given importance by painting it a contrasting color such as warm yellow against the green background of nature. A house will seem to diminish if painted a soft shade of the green around it.

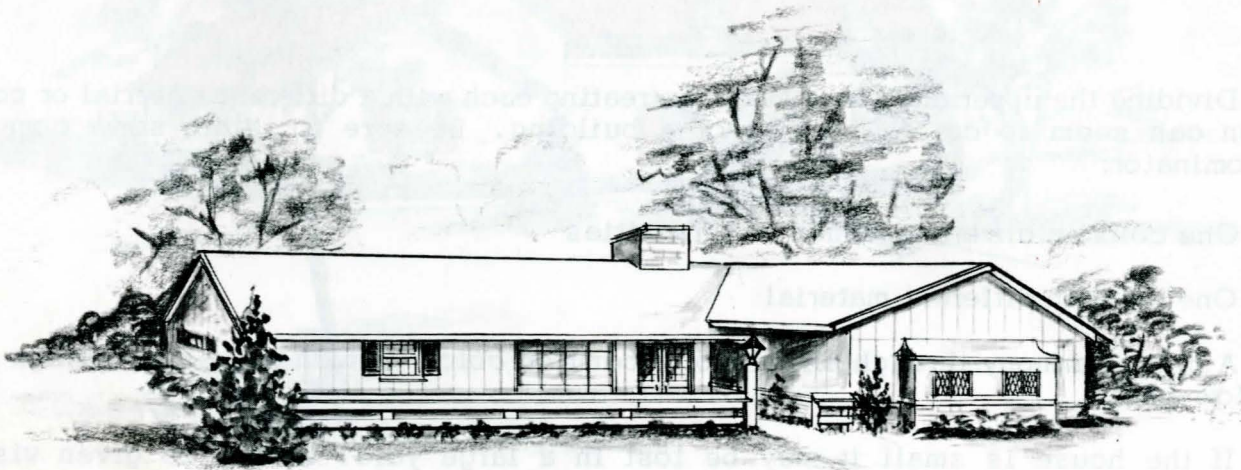
Adding an important feature such as a fence can extend the line of the house.

Perhaps only a portion of the yard should be included in the landscape design. Fences or shrubs could block the remaining portion from view.

3. Balance

Apparent weight distribution also determines the pleasure derived from a scene. Informal balance is often indicated by location of various areas in the yard. Elements may not be identical on either side of center, but appear to be equally heavy. A bush some distance from the center of the scene may balance a larger bush close to this point.

A slender horizontal line, such as a hedge or low fence, can hold the wider vertical line of a tree in equilibrium.



Color also has weight. A dark color seems to be heavier than a light one.

Coarse textures appear heavier than smooth ones.

The total landscape viewed from the street or road should balance. A perfectly symmetrical house placed in the exact center of the yard may lend itself to formal balance. Most designs, however, will rely on careful placement of unlike elements to achieve a pleasing distribution of weight.

4. Emphasis

A pleasing design has one focal point. There may be several less dominant ones. Too many small details demanding attention create confusion. Many houses employ too many materials or too much decoration so that the effect is spotty.

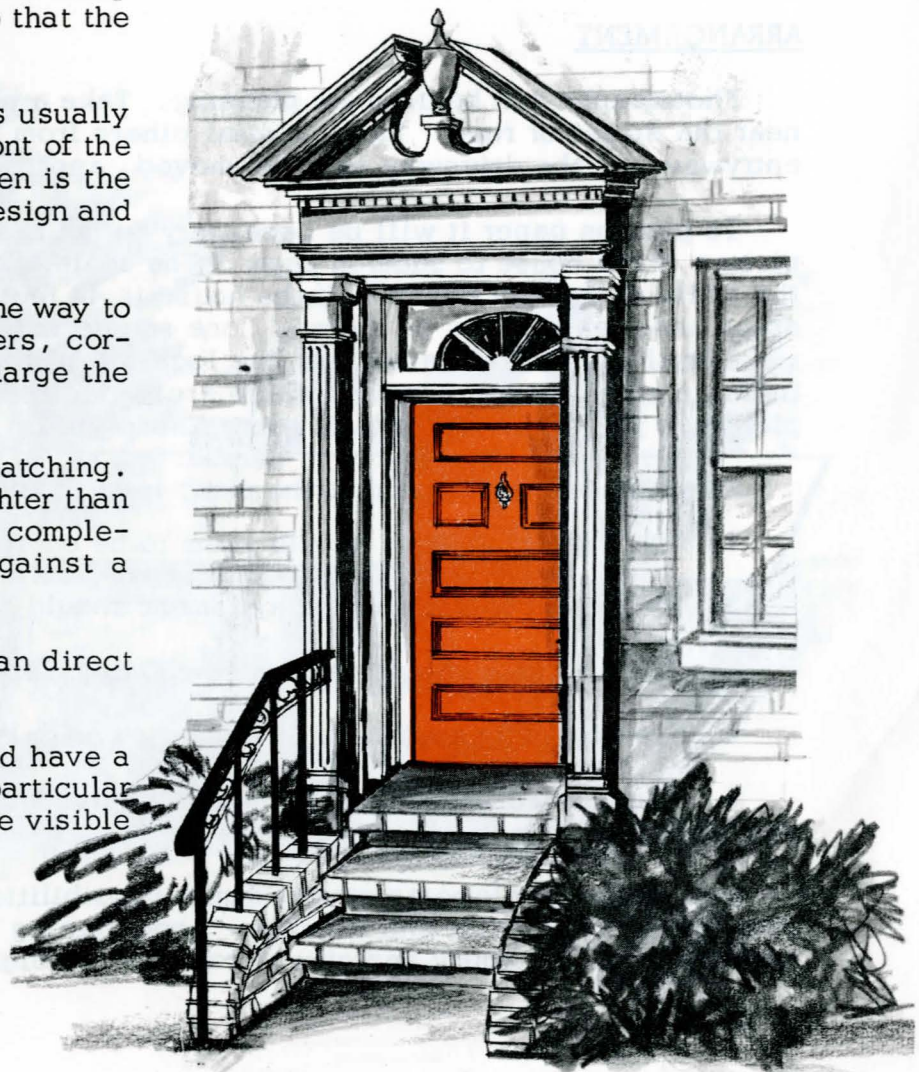
Providing access to the house is usually the most important function of the front of the yard. The entryway of the house then is the most important element in the total design and should be emphasized.

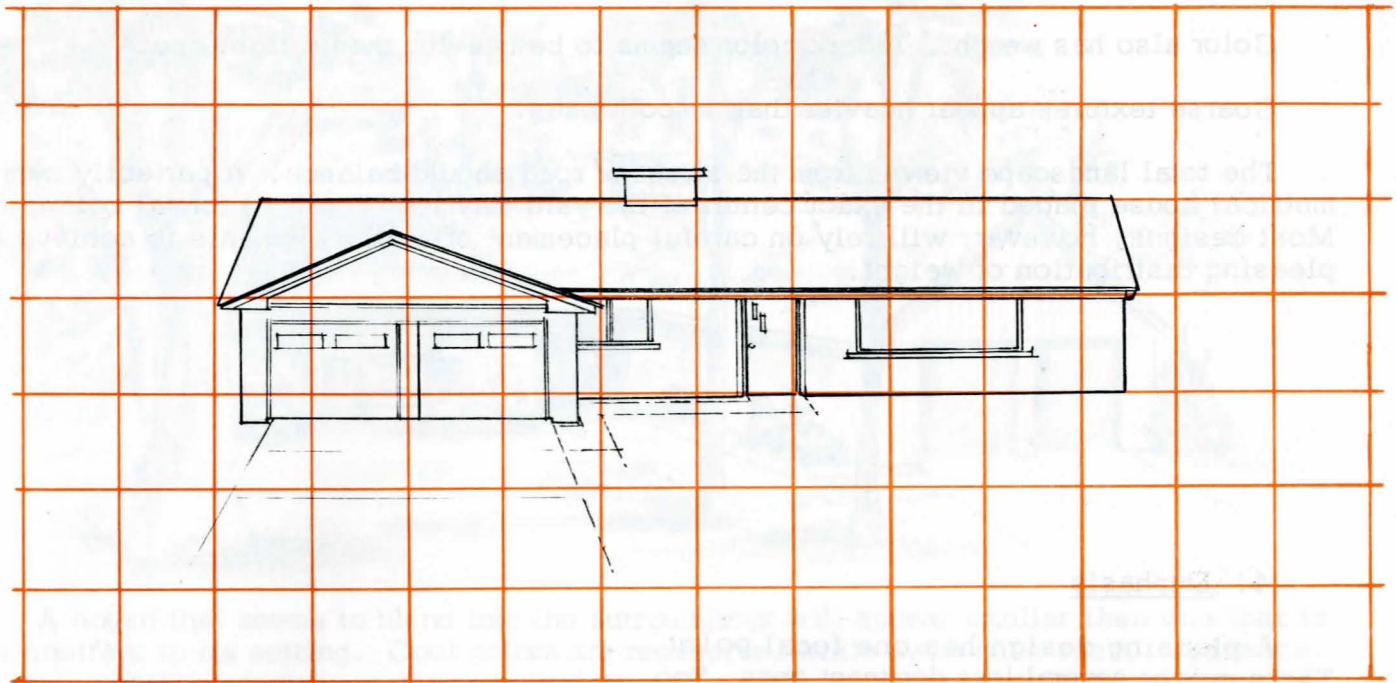
Increasing its apparent mass is one way to give importance. Addition of shutters, cornices, panels or plantings can enlarge the apparent size of the entryway.

A contrasting color will be eye-catching. The entryway might be darker or brighter than the rest of the house. It might be a complementary color such as rich red against a greyed green siding.

Driveways, walks or fences can direct attention to the entryway.

Each individual use area should have a focal point within the limits of its particular view. These, however, might not be visible from the road or street.





ARRANGEMENT

Photographs can be used for planning. Take a picture of the landscape from a point near the street or road. Take several others from various points as you approach the entryway. If the driveway is to be moved, approach from the planned location.

To plan on paper it will be necessary to set a scale on which to work. Fasten the picture of the house to squared paper. The scale of the house on the grid will determine the scale of the plot design. If the house is 40 feet wide, for instance, and the photograph uses ten squares on the grid, one square will equal four feet. Using this scale, make in the yard boundaries and the location of the existing elements to be retained. Indicate elements necessary for use areas desired, protection and storage. List any plantings you would particularly like. These should be incorporated in the total design.

As you rearrange and add to the plan, keep in mind these principles:

1. The total landscape should seem to be one picture.
2. Proportion or scale of each element should be in keeping with that of the other.
3. The elements should harmonize and complement each other.
4. The total landscape should appear to be balanced.
5. The landscape should have many interesting segments but one main point of emphasis.

The variety of elements gives infinite possibilities for interesting combinations, but also requires restraint and thought. Landscaping a yard for use and pleasure can be rewarding for the family and give enjoyment to neighbors and passers-by.