

## **Article for Homelife (May edition)**

### **Landscape Architecture**

No matter what building you live in, the space that surrounds you is part of the Jersey landscape. As such, the scope of landscape architecture and its impact on the Island can be huge.

A landscape architect is able to look at the whole site and how it fits its purpose, its inhabitants and its chosen environment.

Landscape architecture is now used widely for large scale developments but is also just as relevant for a home-owner looking to improve outside spaces and ensure that these match with their own expectations and the impact on the surrounding area.

This is a concept which is now being driven forward by a Planning Department determined not to see any more developments which are designed without any thought given to the area in which they are placed. There is much more understanding now about creating sustainable structures, both in their materials and aesthetics.

As well as working with the built surroundings landscape architects will consult with the Environment Department, particularly in sensitive parts of Jersey to ensure that the character of the area is maintained and the wildlife protected through the careful selection and positioning of trees, hedges and other planting.

The other important task for the landscape architect is to ensure that the external space reflects the taste and needs expressed inside a building. In terms of a residential project, this means thinking of the garden as another room of the house.

The scope of landscape architecture is wide and landscape architects have a much broader base of knowledge and training than in garden design alone. The fact is, however, that for many people, their 'landscape' is their garden and so that is the best term of reference for them in understanding landscape architecture.

Where the built environment can be quite static, one of the benefits of landscape architecture is that it is quite easy to adapt to suit the changes of life. You can design an outside space to plan for the future. With an overall plan for an area you can complete work in phases according to your budget and your current needs. That way you are able to still enjoy the space but adjust it as your life changes.

### **Do I need a huge property and acres of land to warrant using a landscape architect?**

Absolutely not, projects can range from large developments to a small urban space.

In recent years, especially as the footprint of people's property holdings have become smaller, roof gardens and terraces have become important alternatives for creating outdoor rooms.

Designing the space in which you live, whether it is a terrace in St Helier or a cottage in St Lawrence is about your design taste and your budget. The process is about improving your lifestyle and standard of living.

No matter what size space you are working with, it is always worth having an initial chat with a landscape architect to get some ideas. It will encourage you to look at the outdoor space as an integral part of the house.

### **What should I ask before I employ someone?**

As with any professional, you will want to know that they are qualified. It takes a minimum of seven years to qualify as a landscape architect. This involves studying at university level, work experience and professional exams. As well as having relevant qualifications, a landscape architect will be a member of the Landscape Institute. Look also at their previous projects and ask for references.

### **What can I expect from the process?**

You will need to meet the landscape architect at an early stage to ensure that the project is looked at as a whole and to build a rapport with them. They will need to understand your needs, taste and budget. From the start there will be clearly defined stages, from creating a 'mood board', drawing up plans and taking the work to trusted contractors, all of which can be project managed by the landscape architect.

### **Will I need planning permission?**

You may need planning permission and building control may need to become involved. A landscape architect will advise you on these matters as and when they arise so, although you should be aware of them you don't need to worry about it.

### **How much will it cost and how long will it take?**

The cost will depend completely on the scale of the project. Landscape architecture is a profession so expect professional fees, however, the work can be tailored to suit a client's budget and can be phased. How much a project will cost will change according to the quality of materials used, the manpower involved and the size of the space.

Again, the time a project will take is dependant on its size. One word of advice, however, is to get a landscape architect on board as early as possible and be aware that the Planning Application process can take a lot of time.

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