

Consultation Services: Design Coaching

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Good design is no accident!

The well-designed home landscape doesn't happen by chance. Because this is a familiar zone, we may see neither its problems nor its possibilities. We are lulled into taking it for granted, or are confident that our well-intentioned efforts will produce optimal results. But too often we lack the perspective and experience to see the bigger picture. The results can be inconvenient at best, expensive or even disastrous at worst. Too late we realize mistakes that, if caught earlier, could have saved us a bundle!

Invest now, save time and energy later.

If hiring a landscape architect to provide a site master plan or construction drawings is beyond your needs or means, enlisting a few hours of "design coaching" may be a wise investment. Similar to garden coaching but broader in scope, WCA will help you define your design program, assess current conditions on the site, look at the larger context in which the property sits, and develop a sketch plan that can guide your work on the property.

Whether you are new to the site or have reached a certain plateau in your creative endeavors, a design coach will bring new eyes to the property. We can help you identify circulation patterns, gateways and landings; capture optimal spaces for gathering; create focal or destination spots; and expand your understanding of the multiple functions of plants. More importantly, we look at the relationships between outdoor spaces and features, as well as indoor-outdoor connections. We help you think in four dimensions - to look at vertical elements as well as the ground plane, and to understand how the landscape evolves through seasons and over time, as well as anticipate long-range plans.

"I so appreciate the wonderful plan you gave us. It's a bit overwhelming, very challenging and very exciting!"

--client, Blandford, MA



This 1830 Federalist style home has established perennial beds, handsome stone walls, and inviting surrounding woodlands, but lacked cohesion.



Typical of older homes, the driveway is right against the house, with no turnaround, forcing the client and guests to back onto the road.



After an hour walking the site and exchanging ideas, Walter spends another hour creating a simple scaled map of the property and sketching out ideas.



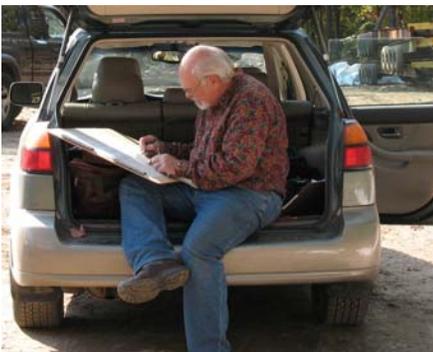
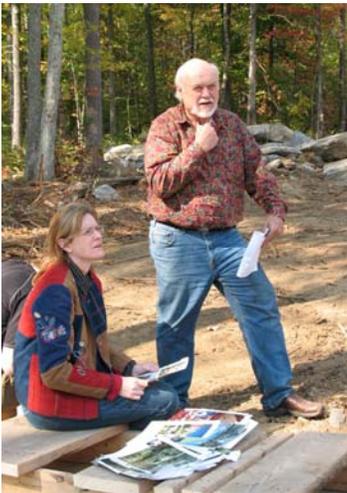
With key concepts quickly illustrated, Walt walks the client through the sketch plan, identifying ways to improve circulation, create outdoor rooms, and provide a comprehensive outline of actions the client can accomplish over time.





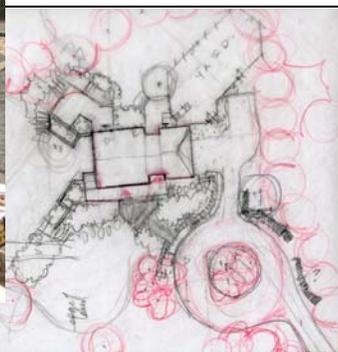
Hiring a few hours of design consultation can be particularly helpful with new construction.

Architectural plans and site surveys, if you have them, are helpful materials to have on hand, as are any images or clippings that express your design preferences.



The same design process of careful listening, site reconnaissance, and concentrated design time leads to surprisingly comprehensive recommendations.

Though rough and unfinished, these sketch designs provide many ideas that help the homeowner envision their next steps to a more comfortable, functional and beautiful landscape.



Design Coaching, *continued*

The goal is to establish a unifying vision, which in turn will give you the confidence to implement the next step. This big picture will guide you as you expand, redefine or claim space. We will identify common design errors, and provide techniques to reduce maintenance by working in harmony with natural systems.

What you can do to prepare:

Spend some time identifying what you like the most about the site or why you purchased the property. How do you really use the site, and what keeps you from using it as you ideally would? Are there inherent conflicts in site use (dogs, kids, cars, public/private zones, access)? What future projects (garage, pool, tree removal, or adjacent development) will affect the site? What are your overall goals for the property? What two or three actions are your priorities?

The process:

- We will spend an hour or more, listening carefully to your ideas and concerns as we walk around the site. We'll share our observations, as well as point out design principles along the way. We'll step back and look at the larger context.
- We then spend another hour preparing a base plan, by pacing approximate measurements of house, driveway, accessory buildings, key trees and gardens, surrounding vegetation, views, drainage patterns, and drawing it to a suitable scale.
- Overlaying a piece of trace, the design process begins – usually starting with the most challenging part of the site.
- We then summon you back and, with a fresh piece of trace on top, draw the ideas as we explain them in a virtual walk through your property.
- This final sketch remains with you – a rough iteration of design concepts and recommendations, which you can use to prioritize and phase your work on the property, as you work toward a comprehensive vision.