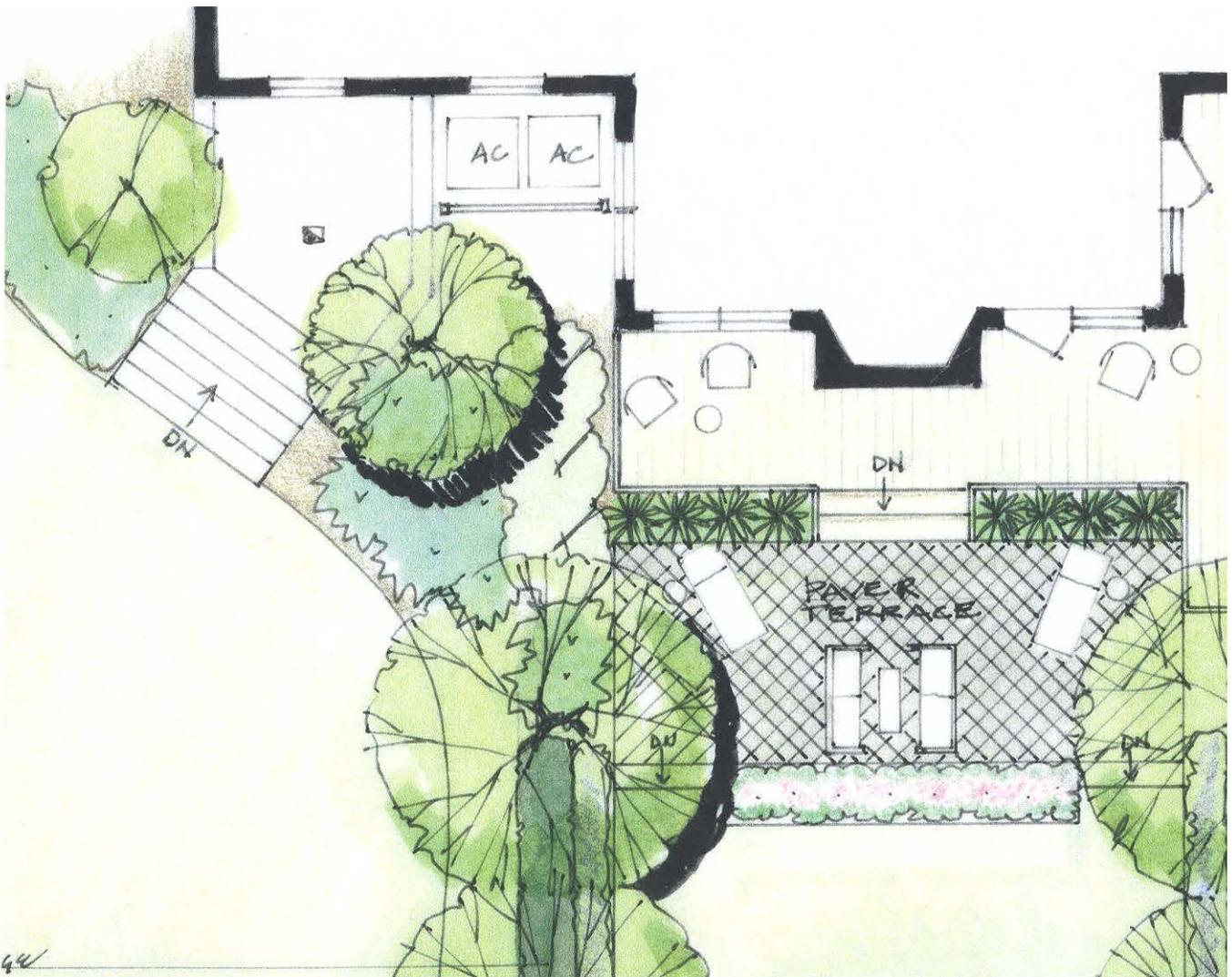




SRS LANDSCAPE  
ARCHITECTURE

# LANDSCAPE PLANNING



AVOID MISTAKES

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## AVOID MISTAKES

Bad planning can be as devastating on the outside of your house as on the inside. A perfect yard—may look beautifully simple, however many factors contribute to it. People can spend a lot of money on professional landscape design and a lot more on installation and construction. Yet, they often have little idea what they are spending their money on. After all, this stuff grows all over the place for free. How hard could it be and how expensive? You would be surprised.

Without exception, people are stunned by the cost of a landscape. Only after they see all the work that goes into it do they understand. So, make a realistic budget. The rule of thumb is planning to spend 20% of the property's value on the design and installation. If this estimate seems steep, consider that appropriate landscape improvements are estimated to return 100 to 200 percent of their cost when a house is sold. Landscaping is the only home improvement that can boast this kind of return on an initial investment. After all, when potential buyers pull up to your home, it's not the luxury faucets or the gorgeous granite counter they see first. It's the landscaping. And if your lawn is patchy and your trees are on their deathbed, it isn't going to matter what kind of magic you've worked indoors. Those buyers may keep on driving.

Once you have considered the front curb appeal of your house, your next thoughts of attack should be the backyard "sanctuary." More and more, people are valuing a private place they can retreat to—away from work. Extend your living space outdoors. Patio additions with barbecue stations are the natural way to extend one's living space outside. And a key feature of any sanctuary is water: fountains or small ponds that bring motion to an otherwise static environment.

So, start early. This winter season is the best time to consult with a designer. This way you'll be all ready to go when spring weather arrives. Think about what you want and how you will use your landscape. Formal entertaining, herb gardens and playgrounds are all possibilities. Consider your home's style. An English Cottage-style garden may look of place in front of a modern home. To find the look for you, go through pictures in magazines and view gardens in your neighborhood. Designing is only the initial step to a dream landscape. Deciding how to install the materials is the next. A lot depends on how complicated the plan is. Obviously, moving large amounts of earth and installing a drainage system is not a do-it-yourself project.

Often a little change in your environment can mean a lot of happiness. Substantial change may also end up being more profitable. This is often the case with landscape investments. Consider doing what not only attracts you when it comes to creating an outdoor area, but the added impact landscape has - higher property values, a more desirable neighborhood, and a rewarding finished product that is functional and beautiful.

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