



EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
with Tim Goom

Home and Garden: Cohesive design

Post quake Christchurch continues to be a hive of industry for new builds. Often landscaping will be considered as an after thought with the landscape architect only being brought on board once the building phase is near completion. There are significant benefits to contacting a landscape architect before this point - from both the perspective of your budget and the design, the earlier the better.

Design for the elements

Landscape architecture encompasses all things external. As an example, a landscape architect can help at the design phase to plan the optimum orientation of your home to capture maximum sunlight. It would be a major disappointment to move in to your gleaming new home then realise the deck remains in shadow just at the times you want to entertain outdoors.

A major consideration of your landscape architect will be how to connect your home to the landscape whilst ensuring protection from wind, rain and sun. You probably want to keep the prevailing easterly for your washing line rather than your guests! Clever design will factor in how to keep you and your guests comfortable from the elements when enjoying the outdoors.

Service to your site

Services should be considered early in the design process, as these can be very expensive to alter further down the track. Where will you need power outdoors? For example: outdoor lights, an outdoor room, spa or a swimming pool, tennis court? Where will irrigation conduits need placing for maintaining the irrigation of your garden and lawns? Are you contemplating a gas outdoor fire or piped gas to an outdoor cooking area? This should all be decided before your foundation is laid!

Planning of the service area will ensure better access and functionality, rather than assigning this to any awkward space left over after the build is complete. Where wheelie bins, gas tanks and your washing line can be located discretely but with easy access is a decision best made early on.



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Inside to outside

With flooding now more of an issue in Christchurch, new builds sit higher on the section, and these elevated levels will affect your views and how you access your outdoors. A landscape architect will advise on whether the external doors are of sufficient size, both width and height, to access your outdoor space. Ensuring the transition from inside to outside flows, particularly if there is a significant drop in height from indoors to outdoors, is crucial. Detail such as which doors and windows will work best with which viewpoints and the prime aspect and direction for exits should all be considered in the design.

Reuse your resources

A cost commonly arising in building a new home is the removal of excess soil when the foundation is being dug out. Many then find they need to buy new soil and cart it back in for their post build landscaping needs. What a waste! Involving a landscape architect early will ensure this inefficiency is avoided. Often clients find that their post-build preferred location for garden beds sit over concrete used for the house or wall foundations - so planning where your gardens will be, and where to move excess soil to, prior to foundation concrete being poured, is vital.

The blank canvas of a clear site presents a unique opportunity to give careful consideration to all aspects of the property to make it functional and appealing. Involving your architect in conjunction with your landscape architect in the initial stages will ensure a cohesive design evolves. Call Goom Landscapes to discuss how your plans to build can work symbiotically with your landscape.

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