



DARGAN Landscape Architects, Inc.

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DARGAN Landscape Architects

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017-1

Built Features: Introduction

In this lesson

- Introduction
- Retaining Walls
- The Conversation
- City restrictions
- A brief tour of built structures

Introduction

- Built structures, or built features, should be customized to your own needs and include everything in a landscape that has a footing, such as:
 - Arbors, pavilions, pergolas
 - Walls
 - Retaining walls
 - Steps
 - Fences
 - Swimming pools
 - Dependencies (outbuildings)
 - Backdrops

- Remember, structures are part of the masterplan for a property—view the example in the slideshow showing a plan, and before, during and after photos for a property in Charleston, South Carolina. Previously the area comprised of an overgrown space with a chainlink fence. The owner wanted a very authentic recreation of an 18th century Charleston garden using the types of materials that would have been used historically. The result of the reconstruction involved building new walls and a small pavilion and creating a walled formal garden.
- If a structure has a roof on it, it is recommended to have an architect either draw the drawings or check your own drawings, and remember, landscape architects do not design heated space or a space that might have an oven.

Retaining walls

- View the sectional drawing of a typical footing for a retaining wall, showing the different materials, including:
 - The veneer
 - The core
 - The rebar
 - The compacted subgrade
 - The gravel
 - The footing concrete
- Note how the footing runs below the frost line, which incidentally allows for planting above.
- Consider the additional elements of soil fabric to keep the soil away from the gravel—the gravel provides drainage and helps to keep the pressure off the wall that would otherwise build up due to rainwater and freezing.

The conversation

- It is recommended to go to the site during a construction project and talk through what is to happen with your builders and check that the construction is as intended.
- Communication is the key to ensure the contractors fully understand what they are supposed to be doing—giving the contractors’ the plans and just leaving them to get on with it could lead to many problems.
- Spending time with stone masons, ironworkers, carpenters, bricklayers or other craftsman is also a learning experience that will help you to be more informed.
- There are many techniques involved in achieving the best results through working with contractors, as well as working to a budget.
- An excellent resource is *Off the Board, into the Ground*, by Gary O’ Robinette.

City restrictions

- Remember, when you are planning on building walls in a city, you may discover that you cannot have a wall as tall as you want it to be in front of your house—there are usually zoning codes that state that if you are on the property line, you may only be able to build up to 4' tall.
- If you set a wall back further into the property, for example where the building envelope occurs, you can usually build higher.
- A higher wall can give a more stately look, which might be desirable to be in keeping with the heights of neighboring walls, for example in Charleston, South Carolina, that would be in the context of the city, whereas for a suburban cluster home development with no other walls, it might not be appropriate to build a tall wall—so look at the vernacular.

A brief tour of built structures

- View the slideshow to see design ideas for built structures, including:

Walls

- A gate screen within a wall that has features including arches, pierced brickwork, a saddle cap and molding—a wall and a gate can become art objects in their own right.
- A monolithic granite boulder wall—made out of a reused funeral, monument stone in northern Georgia, with lichen growing on it.

Arbors

- A small ironwork arbor—with storage areas concealed in the columns.
- An arbor by a swimming pool—as seen again in Lesson 5.
- An arbor constructed out of old telephone poles with vines growing up.
- Sketches of a column, rafters and the beam of an arbor—be sure to line up your rafters with the center of the column, otherwise it will look very awkward.

Pavilions

- An extravagantly designed pavilion—view the front and side elevation drawings.
- A small Palladium pavilion—a design that works with a more sophisticated style of house.

- A front elevation of a larger Palladium pavilion—could be a free-standing structure or attached to a building.

Gates

- A moon gate (forms a complete circle)—with a view through the middle, pickets and stately columns—proportionately works well with taller properties.
- View the drawing of a very intricately designed gate with scrollwork, a medallion with a flower pattern and a dog gate at the bottom—dog gates are usually around a fourth to a third of the height of the whole gate.
- View the drawing of a gate with brick columns and an overthrow that has a lamp fixture—remember when planning unusual ironwork details, you really need to draw every detail and work closely with the ironsmith. It should be a meeting of the minds between the craftsman and the designer.

Trellage

- Treillage (trelliswork) can be bought off the shelf—of course, you can cut it to any shape or use several standard pieces together to suit your own design—give the supports a footing and keep the trellis panels off the ground to avoid rotting.
- View the examples in the slideshow—perfect for roses or vines to climb through.

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Built Features: 017-1 Homework Assignment

In this assignment

1. List built features in your property
2. Create a wish list of additional built features

1. List the built features in your property

- Write down all the built features in your property. If you do not have a garden (for example, you may live in an apartment) use a garden you know well.

2. Create a wish list of additional built features

- Perhaps there are built features you wish you had, but do not have already. Maybe you would like a pavilion, or trellis along the side of a garage. Think about where you could locate additional features and add them to your list.

017-2

Built Features: Fences, Gates and Treillage

In this lesson

- Gates
 - Treillage and arches
 - Fencing
 - Trellis structures
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- The slideshow in this lesson is to provide you with design ideas for fences, gates and trelliswork. Use this lesson in conjunction with looking in catalogues or online images.
 - Using inspiration from a selection of examples, consider designing your own—sketch it on a sheet of paper and speak to ironsmiths or carpenters to get their input and to get an idea of prices and turnaround times.

Gates

- View the slideshow to see examples of gates, including:
 - 5' wide double gates with an iron overthrow light fixture. Generally, a gate can be about 3' wide if it is a single door. If the opening is more than 5' wide, it would usually be a split down the center to form two gates.
 - Cast ironwork gates with a very detailed decorative design combined with pickets.
 - Gates with scrollwork and a dog bars below.
 - Double gates with a downward arch that is repeated in the design of the brick wall.
 - Double gates with pickets, a decorative freeze and dog bars.
 - A moon gate in Charleston, South Carolina—the gateway doubles as a pergola archway. Remember, whenever you are working in a city like Charleston, you need to get permission from the city to do something that is a visible feature

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from the streets. The design will need to be approved by the Board of Architectural Review—you will have detailed designs and possibly a mock-up to get approval.

Treillage and arches

- View the slideshow to see examples of treillage (trelliswork), including:
 - A simple iron arch curving from one column to another—view the elevation and the plan.
 - A decorative iron arch—view the dimensioned elevational drawing—the arch would probably be pre-assembled and lifted into position on site, possibly by crane.
 - A flat ironwork archway that can be used to enliven a masonry wall.
 - Another iron trellis with an arched top.
 - A blank garage wall brought to life with the use of treillage.
 - Trellis that is designed to give a sense of depth—view the example of its use in a garden in Charleston, where the arches on the house are repeated in trellis on a garden wall.
 - Ladder trellis for plants to grow up between windows.
 - A trellis that covers a wall, but through relief, exposes the wall in a series of arches.
 - Curved bars used to give an arch to a rectilinear window.
 - Iron trelliswork to surround a fountain feature.
 - A garden with an ironwork trellis and an arborlet.
 - An iron arch used as a wall-mounted backdrop for a fountain.
 - A latticework ensemble with a bullseye window—used to dress up a sidewall of a garage.
 - Off-the-rack trelliswork, with 4” wide spacings.

Trellis structures

- View the example of a structure created from walls of trellis panels:
 - Two tiny pavilions with arched entrances, are connected by trelliswork over a fountain—note the use of a mirror inside each pavilion to give the illusion of a series of arches.
 - View the series of plans for the project including a colored garden design plan showing the position of the arbors, and construction plans and elevations.
 - View the slideshow of photos taken during construction, including the building of the backdrop wall, the lifting of the pre-assembled roof into place, the completed project with the fountain as the central focus point and custom made furniture, and newly planted palm trees behind.