



DESIGN PRINCIPLE

The design principle of a tradition English country house has a number of specific aspects which can be applied to contemporary schemes:

- an holistic composition where building becomes an integral part of, and feature within, the wider landscape setting
- ‘informal’ or ‘natural’ landscape in appearance (as opposed to more formal classical axial style which had preceded it or the compartmented arts and crafts gardens which followed)
- ‘enhancement’ of underlying landscape elements to form heightened ‘naturalistic’ composition.
- use of tree line or copse to frame or enclose buildings
- emphasis on sweeping and undulating topography to form naturalistic landscape
- use of water within the landscape to provide separation and reflection
- controlled vistas and view points from and towards key buildings and structures

Modernist houses in the UK differed somewhat from their international counterparts, with the majority being sited on the edge of existing settlements in slightly suburban settings which tends to mean that the scale of landscape relative to the house was rather restricted and can generally be seen at the scale of ‘garden’ rather than a wider natural setting. The number of great modern ‘country houses’ in the UK is therefore very limited. The classic modernist tradition, however, sought a rather more immediate and powerful relationship with the landscape. This can be seen for instance in Le Corbusier’s Villa Savoye where a pared-down landscape of grass and trees runs right up to the building edge, and is exemplified in projects from the USA where the pioneering modernist spirit met with wider expanses of nature. What is particularly interesting is that this approach is part of a clear historical lineage which has its roots in the English Country House tradition. As Tim Richardson notes in his book ‘Great Gardens of America’:

The tradition of the Country House’ under the text of PPG7, a house should be:

- **intrinsically related to its landscape;**
- **adopting the best of modern technologies and sustainability;**
- **responding carefully to light view and landscape setting;**
- **using materials which are relevant to its locale.**

The specific precedents presented demonstrate:

- Modern houses can be intimately linked to their setting and the wider landscape as demonstrated by Bentley Wood
- There is the opportunity through a such an approach to ‘borrow’ the wider landscape beyond, which helps site the building within a larger context than just its immediate site.
- A sense of order and rigour can be maintained around a building within such a setting as demonstrated by Dan Kiley and Thomas Phifer.

- The use of a winding drive through woodland gives a specific character and interest to the approach to a building, which then enhances the ‘reveal’ of the wider landscape upon arrival at or within the building.

- A distinctly modern building can be celebrated within the context of the English countryside (Lasdun Hill House now Grade II* listed), and the rolling English landscape provides a well established foil to contemporary architecture.

- D1: EXISTING ENTRANCE REMODEL WITH AUTOMATED GATE TO ENHANCE VISABILITY AND SECURITY
- D2: NATURAL PLANTING ADD INTEREST AND VISUAL / NOISE BARRIER
- D3: LAND RESHAPE TO CREATE INTEREST AND LANDSCAPING. MOST IMPORTANTLY TO ALLOW BUILDING BLEND INTO LANDSCAPE
- D4: BROWN ROOF TO MINIMISE IMPERMEABLE AREA & ENCOURAGE ECOLOGY ON SITE.
- D5: MATURAL TREES AROUND ALL FOUR SIDES OF BOUDNARY
- D6: PERMEABLE PAVING WITH RAIN WATER HARVASTING TANK
- D7: NARTUAL POND TO ALLOW WILD LIFE TO THRIVE
- D8: HORIZONTAL SHAPE OF THE MASSING AND STRATEGIC WINDOW OPENING TO ALLOW BUILDING BLEND IN THE LANDSCAPE

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