

HOW TO PLAN THE HOME GROUNDS

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649608638

How to Plan the Home Grounds by Jr. Parsons

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
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JR. PARSONS

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How to Plan the Home Grounds

By

S. PARSONS, JR.

Ex-Superintendent of Parks, New York City

Fellow of the American Society of Landscape Architects

With Illustrations

drawn by W. E. SPADER under the direction of the
author and of G. F. PENTECOST, JR., F.A.S.L.A.



GARDEN CITY NEW YORK
DOUBLEDAY, PAGE & COMPANY
1912

KD14412

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To the Memory of

CALVERT VAUX AND WILLIAM A. STILES

WHOSE WORDS AND DEEDS HAVE BEEN THE CHIEF INSPIRATION OF THIS
BOOK, AND WHOSE SINGULARLY FELICITOUS EXPRESSION OF THEIR
OWN PERSONAL FORCE AND CHARM SERVED EVER BUT TO
EMPHASIZE THE FEW, SIMPLE UNDERLYING TRUTHS UPON
WHICH ARE BASED ALL MANIFESTATIONS OF THE
ART OF LANDSCAPE GARDENING, FROM THE
MOST RESTRICTED TO THOSE OFFERING
THE LARGEST POSSIBILITIES.

12

13

14
15
16
17

PREFACE

THE purpose of this book is to set forth briefly some simple basic principles concerning the processes whereby home grounds can be made beautiful. From the beginning it will follow the various stages through which may be gradually and naturally developed the sensible, which is always the pleasing and attractive, dwelling place; for everything which is done according to sound rational principles and common sense is bound to be agreeable and beautiful. In as short a fashion and as clearly as lies in the author's power, it will seek to set down the few points which are to be kept always in mind to properly work out and accomplish the permanently satisfactory result. To make these points tangible, by giving with the reason the example which makes that reason evident, the author invariably reverts to the general principles that should never be lost sight of in the selection and arrangement of the territory intended for occupation. These principles apply invariably to the small as well as the large places. The statement cannot be made too emphatically at the very outset, that it is always just as simple and just as difficult to lay out a small yard 25 x 100 feet as a gentleman's great country place of many acres. There may be more details in the

large place, but the principles are the same in both, and in the village lot the dainty finish and the perfect proportion, where all things are so evident, may be more difficult to accomplish than the more massive and less emphasized effects of the regular country place.

It is needless to dwell upon the necessity of having entirely good reasons to control the choice of a place. Should that be left to unrestrained fancy or whim, the result is sure to prove disastrous. Why the house should stand in one place and not in another, is not and cannot be a matter of fancy. Certain reasons govern it. Many points have always to be considered. Everything is interdependent. There should be a general scheme from which everything naturally develops in its relative and just order and place, and the basis of all design and of all arrangements should be the natural conformation and incidents of the ground.

It will be evident and natural that the existing landscape must control the general design, but, of course, never to the point where danger threatens the actual comfort of the householder by shutting out sunlight and air, and otherwise making unhealthy and uncomfortable conditions, such as low, damp ground and bleak exposure, for art and beauty in such cases always go hand in hand with common sense and reasonable comfort. The arrangement and construction of roads and paths, whether on large or small places, will then develop in a natural fashion that will be practical and agreeable. Gardens will be seen in their proper places and performing their true functions under existing conditions. In the same spirit, the location of ponds and streams and their construction will be studied, as well as the health of woodlands and the retention of their most characteristic