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Exterior Spaces – Gardens & Landscapes

Winner: Richard Anderson Landscape Architect



Project: Landscape Design of an English Country Home, Atlanta, GA

Landscape Architect: Richard Anderson Landscape Architect, Atlanta, GA; Richard Anderson, principal in charge

Architect: Pak Heydt & Associates, Atlanta, GA; Yong Pak and Charles Heydt, partners

Outdoor Quarters

In 1973, the Georgia General Assembly enacted the Metropolitan River Protection Act to prevent further pollution in the Chattahoochee River – Atlanta’s largest river and the region’s primary source of drinking water. The act required the Atlanta Regional Commission to adopt the Chattahoochee Corridor Plan when reviewing development proposals; the plan was designed to regulate use of the river and its corridor – 2,000-sq.ft. on either side for a 48-mile stretch between Buford Dam and Peachtree Creek. The act was later amended to extend another 36 miles to the downstream limits of Atlanta’s Fulton and Douglas counties. Regions in the corridor are assigned to one of five vulnerability categories with restrictions ranging between a maximum of 10 to 90 percent of allowable land-disturbing activities and two to 75 percent of impervious surfaces.

In 1998, the owners of a six-acre lot within the Chattahoochee Corridor hired Pak Heydt & Associates of Atlanta, GA, to design their new home. Before any plans could be drawn, firm partner Yong Pak consulted Richard Anderson Landscape Architect (RALA), also based in Atlanta, to investigate if the client’s goals were feasible given the site’s development restrictions. “The goals were to have a functional landscape that related strongly to the site, complemented the architecture and at the same time appeared to have been there for decades,” says Richard Anderson, landscape architect at RALA. “The clients had specific needs for reasonably large outdoor spaces for entertaining, a kitchen garden, a pool and to have enough plant variety year round for floral arrangements – it didn’t matter if it was foliage or flowers as long as it was something interesting they could bring into the house.”



Richard Anderson Landscape Architect of Atlanta, GA, designed a series of outdoor rooms for this English Country home, also in Atlanta, using limited hard-scape elements to comply with the site’s strict development restrictions. All photos: Richard Anderson



The one-room-deep English Renaissance-styled manor, designed by Pak Heydt & Associates, also of Atlanta, features Lutyens-inspired architectural details including a loggia framed with limestone arches and covered side porches.

"In our first meeting, we walked around the site to experience it and to discuss its potentials and limitations," continues Anderson. "One of the things that intrigued us was the view – a limited but interesting view to downtown Atlanta. At the high point of the site there is a ridge that was basically bald because it was the site of an abandoned house that burned at some point. The rest of the site was beautifully wooded and lovely."

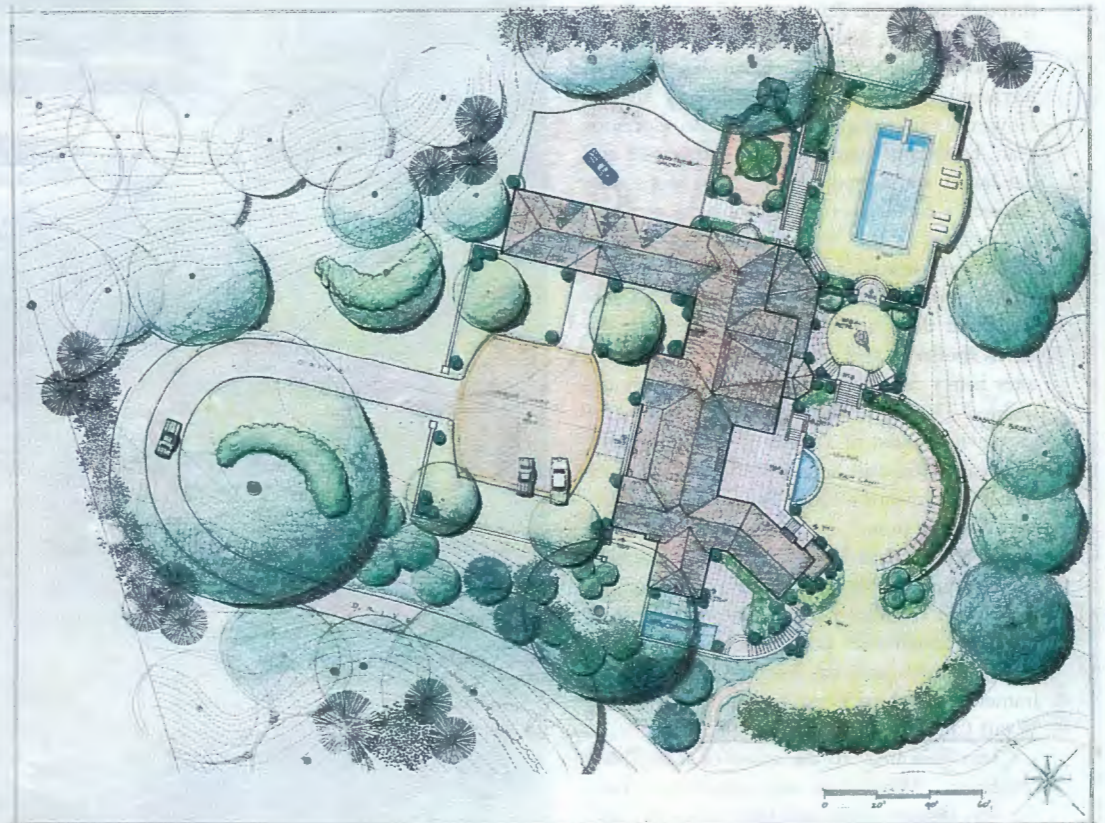
After Anderson sited the house and the driveways, the architects designed a rambling, one-room-deep manor with the rear positioned to take advantage of the city view and southerly exposure. Drawing from Edwardian precedents, the English Renaissance-style home features Lutyens-inspired details, including a loggia entry framed by rusticated limestone arches and side porches with coffered ceilings. Brick and stone façades are updated with large expanses of French doors and windows to flood interiors with natural light.

"All of the exterior spaces or outdoor rooms are related to the house and to each other axially," says Anderson. "Everything ties together that way so there's a sense of formality. We introduced asymmetry by offsetting placements of specimen plants and combined that with climbing roses and vines that lend a measure of informality."

Upon entering the property, the driveway is manipulated to allow a view of a valley towards the west while evergreens are planted on the opposite side to conceal views of the house. The drive pivots around an existing large water oak that was preserved during the construction phase to align axially with the arrival court and formal house façade. "We carefully placed

natural-looking drifts of evergreen, flowering plants, ferns and ground covers along the length of the drive so that it would feel like you were going through a natural woodland setting," says Anderson. "We used evergreens to control the views. In essence, plant materials and road alignments pinball you through the site and give you glimpses of views we wanted you to see and deny you others."

The arrival court features a pair of Chinese elms and vertical hollies that frame and anchor the corners of the house. On the southeast corner, a custom-forged iron gate with components from Baltimore,



The driveway was strategically placed to highlight features of the woodland site such as an existing water oak. Outdoor rooms relate to the house and to each other axially to create a sense of formality, while large specimen plants were placed asymmetrically to soften the landscape. Site plan: courtesy of Richard Anderson Landscape Architect



A patio with a Baroque fireplace atop a grotto fountain in the main lawn terrace was positioned to capture Atlanta's cityscape and to take advantage of the southerly exposures.

MD-based King Architectural Metals, leads to a loggia garden. The retaining walls were built using locally-quarried, weathered granite topped with brick and limestone accents. A limestone walkway echoes the material of the arches and provides a path to the main entry. Boxwoods and lawns create a neat and balanced scale in the tradition of English gardens. Through a *porte-cochère*, the adjacent motor court leads to a kitchen garden – a diamond-shaped parterre with abundant soil beds of interchangeable plantings for floral arrangements. A gazebo positioned axially to the kitchen entrance provides a shady seating area; statuary and cast-stone urns, supplied by Haddonstone of Bellmawr, NJ, are placed throughout the garden.

At the south side of the house, a series of outdoor rooms – the main lawn, bar and pool terraces – provide ample gathering spaces. However, in compliance with the Corridor Plan, hardscape materials were minimized and flat lawns were used instead. “We were only allowed a certain percentage of hard surfaces, and because of that we had to be very careful about pavements,” says Anderson. “We used engineered lawns to serve as a semi-hard surface even though it’s all green. We built the lawns similar to golf course greens so that even after heavy rains the lawns would be firm and usable.” The 12-in.-deep prepared surfaces for the lawns consist of a layer of washed gravel, permeable soil and sod covering a subsurface that slopes toward a valley installed with a perforated drain pipe.

A patio with a baroque fireplace above a grotto fountain creates a dining area for the main lawn terrace. Across a large expanse of lawn a semicircular perennial border of foxgloves, lamb’s ear, cat mint and boxwood is framed with Yorkstone pavers, supplied by Wyatt Childs, Inc., of Barnesville, GA.

“This goes back to the sense of scale,” says Anderson. “When you step outside you have the sky, distant views and large trees to compete with, so I didn’t want to use small stones. We found a source for these large slabs of Yorkstone that were massive; I believe 4x8



Abundant soil beds with interchangeable plants and boxwood form the kitchen garden.

Pavers were placed in a semicircle to frame a perennial border of foxglove, lamb's ear, catmint and boxwood.

ft. was the maximum size so we took advantage of that. We left slight gaps in between stones to keep it from looking sterile and we planted a variety of sedums, most of which are evergreens. We selected plants that would look good throughout the season; they are primarily green but some of these plants get a bronzy look."

Following the steep slopes of the land, the bar terrace – a circular lawn enclosed with retaining walls and boxwood hedges – serves as a landing between stairs leading to the pool terrace. On the north side of the pool, a mural of terra-cotta medallions is incorporated into the retaining wall. "The client inherited these medallions and wanted to use them," says Anderson. "They weren't suitable for pavement, so we set them vertically in three different locations, placed strategically throughout the site, and used them as wall art. In each location, depending if they were on a brick or stone wall, we used different materials to frame and fill the crevices of the medallions."

With such attention to detail and setting, Anderson's Palladio Award-winning landscape design has both respected the integrity of the Chattahoochee River corridor and seamlessly integrated itself with the architecture of the site to create a sense of timelessness. – Annabel Hsin



Slight gaps left between the large slabs of rustic Yorkstone pavers were planted with a variety of sedums.