THE DESIGNER'S TOOLBOX:

THE DISTILLATION METHOD AS A CROSS-CULTURAL DESIGN TOOL

by

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(Under the Direction of Scott S. Weinberg)

ABSTRACT

The United States trains hundreds of landscape architects each year. Many of them will work in cultural contexts with which they are unfamiliar at some point in their careers. Designing in an unfamiliar cultural context without extensive knowledge of the host culture creates the possibility of severe conflict between designed intent and actual use. This thesis looks at the topics of *culture*, *cross-cultural study*, and cross-cultural experiences as they relate to design and examines the tools available to designers for cross-cultural design. Terry Harkness' Distillation Technique is used as a case study to demonstrate a design method that can allow designers working in unfamiliar contexts of which they have not experience to create landscapes that reference local culture contexts.

INDEX WORDS: Cross-cultural, Landscape Architecture, Design, Tools,
Italy, New England, Design thesis, Terry Harkness, Culture

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to the faculty, staff, and students of Gordon College's study abroad program in Orvieto, Italy and the sisters of the Company of Mary Our Lady at San Lodovico.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

As landscape architects, we work with cultural landscapes everyday. From the cyclic burning historically done by some Native Americans to the feats of engineering accomplished on the land by current American culture, the amorphous concept of culture heavily influences the character of a landscape. Landscape architects inherit, with every new project, a singular landscape rich in multi-layered cultural history.

However, the individuality of a landscape's cultural history can present difficulty for landscape architects. Without first hand knowledge of the individual histories that created the cultural landscape at hand, landscape architects seeking to design culturally sensitive spaces must find other ways to design across the cultural boundaries of history and society. Whether a landscape architect is asked to design within the historic and societal context, to blend with the current and future contexts, or to overlay a new context on the extant landscape, the first step is to observe and seek knowledge of the cultural landscape through the means available. In the absence of a full cultural report or access to a societal insider, this study can be quite challenging.

Though landscape architects often consider culture unconsciously during the design process, the systematic approach discussed in this thesis increases the accuracy of some cultural references and tends to create well-used spaces reflecting the needs and familiar landscapes of the users. A true study of the designer's toolbox and this design method would incorporate a controlled experiment using both native and foreign designers each designing in both foreign and native contexts. This type of experiment is beyond the scope of this paper.

This thesis examines culture in the cross+hairs, discusses the meaning of *culture* and *cross-cultural* in landscape architecture and looks well+crossed design, or designs where the cross-cultural goals of the task were successfully met, and un+crossed design, or designs and situations presenting difficulty for cross-cultural designers. It goes on to review some of the tools available to landscape architects in the quest for culturally sensitive design, and examines a particular design methodology as a means, though imperfect, of quickly referencing some aspects of the cultural landscape in an unfamiliar context. Particularly useful in conjunction with other tools in a designer's toolbox, this design tool's power comes from the ability to use it in less than ideal situations as a means to understand a host culture.

As Mary G. Padua, University of Hong Kong Faculty of Architecture professor asserts landscape architecture is "unique among the design professions in its potential to close the gap between designed spaces and the surrounding natural and social environments" (Padua, 2005, p. 87). Landscape architects are given much advice on how to bridge this gap. Author, lecturer, and visiting scholar at New York University, Tony Hiss, offers some suggestions on how to accomplish this:

- If there's time, try to visit the site at least once when you're not on duty. See what it has to say.
- What would you think about the site if you hadn't been hired to work with it?
- What about the site seems precious? What qualities would you like to see remain a part of it?
- If you had been hired by the landscape itself, what would you do? (Speckhardt, 2001, p. 85)

He goes further to say,

> "Landscape architects use their experience of the place to inform their design, and developing an awareness of what design features promote simultaneous perception, [or a conscious effort to acknowledge the four senses other than sight,] will allow landscape architects to design a space that will encourage [this] broader focus in visitors." (Hiss as quoted in Speckhardt, 2001, p. 85)

With this statement Hiss charges landscape architects to design with each individual place in mind. Consequently, every design process commences with a learning period; the landscape is studied for its historical, environmental, and social uniqueness. Learning these things about familiar landscapes becomes second nature with practice. When arriving at a new site, a designer reads the features of the land common to similar landscapes and, often unconsciously, incorporates that knowledge into the design. A practitioner familiar with cotton farming practices in the Southeast sees a gradual series of hills in the forest and understands that they are the remnants of terraces necessary for cotton farming. Consciously or unconsciously, the historical and cultural reference is handled appropriately in the design.

What happens when landscape architects are taken from the land they know best? In order to hear what the land has to tell them about this new place, they must make a deliberate effort to learn the landscape. In many cases, the knowledge of previous landscapes will help inform the new, but in increasingly the new landscapes are entirely foreign. Many landscape architects practicing around the world are trained in countries other than those of their birth. The United States does much of this training and often helps to set up new programs (Sabri & Miller, 2002, p. 95, inset). This is not surprising considering only 43 countries in the world have education programs in landscape architecture; the United States has 61 programs, more than twice the nearest country (IFLA, 2004, pp. 2-8). In some cases, there is no history of landscape architecture in a country (Ulam, 2005, p. 135); in others, the profession is still nascent (Martignoni, 2004, pp. 163, inset). In either case, the exchange of information and designers across borders increasingly challenges traditional knowledge about the landscape.

Working abroad is becoming easier (Martin, 2001), and universities are incorporating cross-cultural opportunities into their curriculum (Bellafiore, Harkness, Sinha, & Westcoat, 2003; Hou, Kinoshita, & Ono, 2005; Lawson, 2005). How to employ the common design tools in a cross-

cultural situation is an especially relevant notion in the cross-cultural world in which we now design. It is time to review the landscape architect's toolbox and to determine how the tools can be employed to close the gaps between cultures to allow designers to work on closing the gap between designed space and society. Evaluating the toolbox, requires an examination of the basis of cross-cultural design.

CHAPTER 2

CULTURE IN THE CROSS+HAIRS

Landscape architects often work in cultural contexts other than their own; George Hargreaves' design for the Olympic Plaza in Sydney and Peter Walker's work on the Sony Center in Berlin are two examples of international work by American landscape architects. Cross-cultural design enriches surroundings all over the world. However, no discussion of cross-cultural design is complete without addressing both the differences among cultures and cultural values and how we determine those differences; to do this we must define and discuss the often slippery terms *culture* and *cross-cultural.*

Defining Culture

The word *culture* derives from the Latin *cultura* meaning cultivation or agriculture. It has come to have a great variety of meanings. In 1952 when Alfred Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn, prominent American anthropologists in the early 20th century, wrote *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions*, there were over 100 definitions and concepts (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952). Broadly speaking, culture is a set of values, a way of life. Specifically, it is defined by Richard Brislin* as the "shared values and concepts among people who most often speak the same language and live in proximity to each other" (2000, p. 4). This covers several aspects of culture but does not wholly address consistency of culture remaining even in the diasporas experienced by many cultures. In a diaspora, members of a displaced group are still identifiable as belonging to that group, despite living in different locations. The Hmong populations living in the United States and Thailand represent a

* Professor of Management and Industrial Relations at the University of Hawaii-Manoa, in a textbook on cross-cultural psychology titled *Understanding Culture's Influence on Behavior.*

fairly recent diaspora; these groups retain a high degree of cultural cohesiveness with the original cultural populations located in Vietnam and China. Another diaspora created Chinatowns in most major cities in the United States as work brought significant numbers of Chinese peoples to work in the United States.

In his book *The Interpretation of Cultures*, Clifford Geertz, a Harvard trained anthropologist who spent his professional career at Princeton, gave this definition of culture: "[culture is] a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which people communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life" (1973, p. 89). Geertz's definition focuses on symbols and attitudes about life and improves upon the previous definition. Webster's New World Dictionary®, perhaps not surprisingly, defines culture in the broadest terms:

> 6a) the ideas, customs, skills, arts, etc. of a people or group. That are transferred, communicated, or passed along, as in or to succeeding generations b) such ideas, customs, etc. of a particular people or groups in a particular period; civilization c) the particular people or group having such ideas, custom, etc." (Neufeldt & Guralnik, 1994)

This definition, in addition to being broader, links culture to civilization and accounts for temporally based cultures. These three definitions give a sense of the variety of elements associated with and ways to define culture. Given the number of elements important to the definition of culture, it is, perhaps, not unexpected that entire books have been written to define it.

One such book, *Understanding Culture's Influence on Behavior*, suggests there are 12 features of a culture's values that help distinguish cultural values from personal ones (Brislin, 2000, pp. 5-21). For any given value, the more of the 12 features it fits, the more likely it is part of a culture's value system. According to Brislin, the features of cultural values include:

1. Create assumptions about life – The cultural value of equal education for both the sexes creates the assumption that women have the right to attend school in the United States.
2. Person-made part of the environment – This requires distinguishing cultural values from environmental aspects of a culture such as living near an ocean or in a cold climate. Many peoples build warm habitat in the Arctic's cold climate; building with ice blocks versus building with animal skins is culturally determined.
3. Transmitted generation-to-generation – Transmission to the next generation usually refers to written and oral traditions such as the moral fairy tales told to children in many cultures. *The Three Little Pigs*, in part, transmits cultural building knowledge.
4. Exemplified by experiences during childhood – Often there is an experience in childhood which directly teaches a particular value; being admonished for not showing deference to elders in cultures which value elders' knowledge is one such experience.
5. Not widely discussed – Cultural values are neither often, nor openly, nor widely discussed except during childhood. Adult members of a culture are expected to understand the proper behavior towards elders, for meal times, at funerals, during religious meetings, etc.
6. Lead to well-meaning clashes – Well-meaning clashes arise when persons of differing cultural values each react to a situation in a manner appropriate for their own culture creating a misunderstanding. For example, visitors to Japan who, acting according to their own values, bring a gift when visiting may unintentionally offend their hosts since Japanese culture values gift giving and uses a highly structured gift giving and receiving paradigm which dictates not only what one should bring but the size and nature of the gift.

7. Allow people to fill in the blanks – Knowing what is proper behavior towards elders, at meal time, or when being invited to someone's house without having to be told is possible when culture fills in the blanks. However, the feature is most readily understood with humor. Without cultural knowledge, humor is often lost or misunderstood. Even the elementary joke "Why did the Beethoven get rid of his chickens? They kept saying 'Bach, Bach, Bach.'" requires knowledge of Western musicians and English onomatopoeic sound words for animals. Knowing half the information does not reveal the joke, and the joke is entirely unintelligible with no knowledge of either reference.
8. Remain intact despite mistakes – To use an example from *Understanding Culture's Influences on Behavior*, even though free speech allows for journalistic sensationalism and the occasional questionable news story, free speech is still valued in some cultures (Brislin, 2000, pp. 17-18).
9. Lead to emotional reactions to violations of the values – Restrictions on free speech can evoke strong emotional reactions in the United States. At the same time flag burning also evokes emotional reactions even though it is a form of free speech because respect for the flag as a symbol of the United States is also a value.
10. Are accepted and rejected over the course of a person's life – Culturally, the adage "you will be come your parents" is true more often than not. Youth often reject cultural values such as family traditions, religious affiliations, etc. only to reaccept them later in life.
11. Difficult to change quickly – While *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka* made segregation illegal in 1954, it took many years for the civil rights movement to effect any change to cultural values.

12. Readily described by sharp contrasts – Again to use an example from *Understanding Culture's Influence on Behavior*, the difference in preferred distance from a conversation partner across cultures is sometimes in sharp contrast. Latin Americans generally prefer 2 – 2.5 feet of space between conversation partners; for many U.S. citizens this is 6-12 inches too close, as they prefer 3 feet. Miscommunications arising from this sharp preference for distance are often based on incorrect assumptions of familiarity (Brislin, 2000, pp. 20-22).

In summary, *culture* refers to the body of knowledge, customs, and values passed down through a group of people. Brislin's features help identify culturally determined values. Even though culture represents a multitude of behaviors, values, and traditions, many of which change at the individual level over the course of a lifetime, cultural values are slow to change and are influenced by environment (i.e. the absence of ice means there is no need for shelter built from ice).

Cross-cultural Defined

The consistency of cultural values over time allows the study of cultural phenomena between or among different cultures, as defined by their differing cultural value systems. *Cross-cultural* refers to the differences between two groups; *cross-cultural study* is the systematic study of differences between cultures. The first step in cross-cultural study is to define the groups to examine; the next step is to determine what to observe to make the comparison. Because cultural values influence what a culture creates in the landscape, the landscape can be used as a proxy for culture in a cross-cultural study.

The heuristic, or empirical, self-adjusting rule of thumb, used to define a cultural value group is a sliding scale. When using cultural values to determine a cultural group, a researcher must decide which elements of culture to use: some cultural values meet many of the features enumerated by Brislin, some do not; some may be more closely held than others; some may be held by certain members of a culture and rejected by others. The cultural groups may also be geographically

dispersed (Hmong people) or concentrated (Aleut Native Americans); or they may differ in total size.

Cross-cultural studies must define the cultural groups and/or scale to be used in the study. For example, the scale of the cultural groups blind persons, Americans, and New Yorkers are drastically different; any individual may be a member of more than one of those groups. While blind Americans may share the overarching culture of America, there are still cultural differences between blind persons living in the Northeast and those living in the Midwest. Therefore, within the culture of blind Americans are the sub-cultures of blind New Yorkers and blind Iowans among others. The study scale determines whether the cultural groups are blind Iowans or blind Americans. Populations living in new places may need to be treated as new cultures (Hmong in United States vs. Hmong in Laos) if the study scale requires looking at differences between them. Often the use of study will dictate the appropriate scale and cultural groups.

Having defined the cultural groups to be studied, cross-cultural researchers must then decide how to gather information about the different cultures. One of the hurdles to cross-cultural study is that cultural values are not widely discussed, making it difficult to directly interview members about cultural values. Consequently, cross-cultural studies are often done using observational techniques. Observing proximity in conversation, changes in language showing deference, and patterns of space usage in public places are all techniques that illuminate cultural differences. Considered together these techniques are called proxemics, a field created and advanced by anthropologist Edward T. Hall (1969). Art, dance, and music can also be used to examine cultural differences: Classical French Ballet vs. Classical Indian Ballet.

Like other physical objects (i.e., art) objects from the built environment and landscape are culturally determined. Cultural values influence what is built, where it is built, and what happens there. Therefore, the built environment can also be used in cross-cultural study as representative, at

least in certain ways, of the culture. As observers and workers of the built environment and landscape, landscape architects routinely carry out many types of cross-cultural study in daily practice. That landscape architecture is connected with culture should be no surprise. The word *culture* is itself rooted in land and land practices specifically recalling farming and cultivation techniques used by the Romans.

Cross-Cultural Study in Landscape Architecture Practice

Landscape architects routinely perform the cross-cultural study of disabled/non-disabled users in order to provide equal access as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). In order to meet ADA regulations, many landscape architects who are not members of the disabled community attempt to understand the cultural values and subsequent spatial and environmental requisites of the disabled community, which often differ from users with a full range of motion. Landscape architects implement cross-cultural study to create useful landscapes when consideration is given to differences between populations of professionals/laypersons, blind/sighted, hearing-impaired/non hearing-impaired, or even healed/sick. For example, designing a botanic garden involves knowledge of both professional horticulturalists' needs and the layperson's experience. Likewise, creating spaces for hearing- or vision-impaired patrons requires an understanding of what those patrons value, and designing healing gardens requires information on the needs of the sick, their families, and the attendants or caregivers. These are typical, concrete cross-cultural design problems with clearly defined needs dealt with frequently in landscape architecture.

Landscape architects also study and manipulate other culturally influenced landscape characteristics which deal with more abstract ideas and concepts. Examples include the urban/rural and the American/foreign contexts. Just as Americans designing outside the United States must often draw on knowledge of the host culture to create effective designs, urban landscape architects designing in rural areas must draw on rural concepts and characteristics to create successful designs.

Patterns of use or arrangement in public spaces; flora and fauna choices; preferences for certain materials or shapes; existing ecological conditions; aesthetics; social justice; environmental awareness; and sense of ownership all require cross-cultural study of abstract concepts. A landscape architect designing a public space for a population with different values concerning arrangement of public spaces, for example, would study the differences in the same manner used for ADA compliance or healing gardens. In designing green areas in a culture placing special value on particular flora and fauna, cross-cultural study would determine what is the appropriate, expected, or preferred flora and fauna. Likewise, the cross-cultural study of landscape architect working in a culture with significantly different preferences for shape or materials would include reasons for and specific information about these features. Cultural values concerning agriculture and development influences the ecological conditions available to a landscape architect. Study concerning the different ways the culture used the site historically will enrich the design of that site.

Aesthetics, social justice, environmental awareness, and sense of ownership are more difficult concepts to study. Aesthetics vary widely, even for an individual, but there are groups who prefer clean neat lines and those who prefer busy wild arrangements. Understanding these differences helps landscape architects' designs match the preferences of the group. Social justice is a concern because there are groups who intend public spaces only for a segment of the population. In these cases, social justice (meaning designing to encourage social equality) in the design may be tested. Studying existing attitudes towards social justice can help inform the design and reduce the mismatch between designer intent and the expectations of the client or user.

Environmental awareness and sense of ownership varies from group to group. Landscape architects familiar with ecological mitigation and other environmental concepts may experience well-meaning clashes with populations who do not share the same outlook on environmental issues. Studying the differences and causes of environmental value may help landscape architects create

acceptable and enduring environmental solutions. Attitudes about ownership in public spaces or nature can affect the use of those spaces. Study concerning a group's attitudes toward public space can help landscape architects create spaces that are maximally functional.

Landscape architects already engage in cross-cultural study fairly frequently. However, landscape architects will benefit from cross-cultural study of more abstract ideas and concepts. The potential to influence cultural values across cultures is a powerful tool. Used well it can spread knowledge and enrich cultures; used unwisely it can lead to poorly designed, underused space and cultural hegemony. Every person has a specific set of cultural values that influence and guide that person's decisions. It is the responsibility of the people working in cross-cultural contexts to attempt to understand the differences between those cultures and make the appropriate changes. Cross-cultural study is a tool for creating well-used cross-cultural design. As with many tools, using it well is, in part, up to the designer.

CHAPTER 3

WELL+CROSSED AND UN+CROSSED DESIGN

International projects are so prevalent that *Landscape Architecture* magazine has covered at least one a year for the past seven years. An increasing number of firms have both the resources and the cultural sensitivity to include studies on social habits, use patterns, and cultural contingencies or culturally local designers in their design teams when working abroad. These practices tend to lead to more culturally successful designed spaces by taking into account what Cyrus R. Sabri and Patrick Miller[*] termed the "accreted layers…[which] have formed a sedimentary layering of culture"(Sabri & Miller, 2002, p. 88), those culturally significant facts and factors that the casual outside observer may miss. There are a number of ways to design sensitively to these factors.

Well+crossed Design

Ideally, local designers locally trained would be assigned the work. Since many countries have no landscape architecture training available or have just begun landscape architecture programs, foreign trained culturally local designers would be the next logical choice. Using culturally local designers assures some degree of familiarity with cultural norms, cultural building techniques for gardens, and cultural references. Designed by Indian designers in India, New Delhi's Garden of the Five Senses references many of India's diverse cultural garden traditions such as the Garden of Eden with rivers flowing in the cardinal directions and the Mughals' water-gridded Khas Bagh (Majumdar, 2006). Landscape architect Tooru Miyakoda used his cultural knowledge to include the community in the development of the Hotarumibashi Park which resulted in additional acreage for the park. He also

[*] Professors in the United States and Iran and Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University respectively.

used local materials and local craftsmen in the construction of the park (Padua, 2005, pp. 82-83). Similarly, landscape architects Ines Stewart and Cecilia Murray used their knowledge of the Argentine pampas landscape to create polo grounds and luxury living on two *estancias* on the Argentine plain referencing traditional pampas views, building, and siting styles (Martignoni, 2006b), and Rosa Kliass, a Brazilian landscape architect trained under an American, has referenced the Amazonian culture to create successful, well-used parks that preserve both the local culture and environment in the Brazilian city of Belém (Martignoni, 2004, 2006a).

According to Tony Hiss landscape architects are "in the business of consulting the landscape and listening to the land, and much less…about imposing some notion of their own onto what's there"(Speckhardt, 2001, p. 85). That said, "listening to the land" in a culturally unfamiliar setting often requires working closely with local people. The planning team for the Taj Mahal heritage district, consisting entirely of Americans, used historical and onsite research; ground truthing, or checking printed maps against geographic reality; and firsthand experience of the culture to inform their recommendations (Bellafiore et al., 2003). For Lawrence Halprin's work on the Tayelet in Jerusalem the design committee consulted with the mayor on ways to reduce division and create a cohesive image for the city (P. Bennett, 2000, p. 62). In several war torn countries, Karla Christensen, a landscape architect working for Catholic Relief Services, has consulted with the children for whom she designs playgrounds and schoolyards (Christensen, 2002). All three landscape architects used techniques commonly taught now in landscape architecture programs to integrate design with the community. Landscape architects have a powerful tool available in the form of freedom to call in the resources necessary to achieve integration across cultures.

These often time-intensive tactics tend to create well-used, culturally appropriate spaces. They also provide an opportunity to spread ecological design knowledge, exchange disparate design philosophies, learn new design skills, and afford the chance to deepen understanding of another

culture through the process of design. The detailed exchange of information and worldviews necessary for the ideal cross-cultural design increases knowledge of the similarities between the cultures on both sides and usually beneficially informs future design work in both cultures. Christensen's work in Bosnia produced well-used playgrounds designed by and for children of many ages, and because they had a part in designing them, children of many ethnicities felt safe playing on them together. These safe play areas help start the healing process in the children from such war-torn areas (2002, pp. 97-98).

Unfortunately, not all cross-cultural design is undertaken with the time or money necessary to create the ideal situation. When cross-cultural design is poorly done, there is often no immediate benefit to the users of the space. Though one could argue it still provides opportunities to learn about and from cultural differences through hindsight evaluations of inappropriate or mismatched designs.

Un+crossed Design or Good Designs Gone Wrong

An unsuccessful cross-cultural design can be inappropriate on many different levels. The mismatch can occur ecologically where the design does not match the water resources or climate of the host site, it can be a mismatch of design style where high design of one culture is placed in a setting poorly equipped to deal with it, it could be a mismatch of program where the designers idea of how the space will be used does not match the users', or perhaps a mismatch of historical reference where the relative importance of certain periods of history are misaligned. There are as many reasons for these mismatches as there are ways to mismatch, perhaps a crucial element of the program was lost in translation or maybe the ecological information was not available, and as many ways to mismatch as there are facets to culture.

The mismatch between some upscale resorts and their destinations is a good example of an ecological mismatch. The lushness of these resorts is often at odds with their ecosystem creating

what Kim O'Connell, former managing editor for *Landscape Architecture*, refers to as "'plopped-down' architecture" (O'Connell, 2000, p. 50). This can give the illusion of being in Hawaii when you're visiting the semi-desert of Baja-California. Ecological mismatch is rampant in and around Las Vegas where water-hungry lawns and lush resort plantings are ubiquitous but water is not.

The Keshar Mahal Garden of Dreams in Nepal beautifully exemplifies a mismatch of design style. This recently restored Edwardian-style garden originally built by a Nepalese aristocrat has been opened to the general public. Unfortunately, the general public in Nepal is so poor and has such limited leisure time that accessing the green oasis in the center of Kathmandu for a fee renders the garden *practically* unavailable. Even if the local residents do have the means and time to visit the garden, the style mismatch still creates dissonance. While the beautifully rebuilt garden contains axes of symmetry and pavilions in the Edwardian style, the Nepalese people consider all flora God's property and therefore expect to pick flowers to show reverence. Picking flowers out of a formal garden of this type conflicts with the designed intent (Ulam, 2005).

The Keshar Mahal Garden of Dreams also represents a mismatch of program to some degree. The garden could have been designed to allow users to pick flowers for religious expression; certain areas could have been designated for such expression instead of making the whole concept off limits. Another example of a program mismatch is the area adjacent to the Guggenheim in Bilbao, Spain. While it references the port city's history and is architecturally stunning, some of the cultural habits of the Spanish seem to have been overlooked in the museum's program. As Judith DeJong, an architect from Chicago and recent graduate of Master of Architecture in Urban Design at Harvard, points out there are no places for "outdoor eating, even though there is a strong café tradition in Spain"(De Jong, 2001, p. 115) All the food service is inside the museum, effectively shutting down the activity in the whole area when the museum closes. The cultural mismatch in the program of the public space probably needn't have happened.

Puerto Rico's new convention center complex has the potential to avoid a mismatch in historic reference. The convention center is on the site of the former U.S. Naval Base. Based on the architectural design, the intent appears to be that the project move past the colonial architecture and towards the future. There exists, however, the potential to express the specific maritime history of San Juan's harbor (Ward & Pullekines, 2000). This selective historic reference (de-emphasizing the colonial history of the area and focusing on the maritime), while uneven, may represent the concerns of the community. On the other hand, should the specific maritime history of San Juan be ignored or replaced with more general seafaring references, the whole project may suffer from lack of community support because it seems generic or lacks sense of place.

Dr. Kongjian Yu, founder and dean of the Graduate School of Landscape Architecture at Peking University and founder and President of Turenscape design firm, discussed the mismatch in historical reference and the lack of sense of place in China in his address to the IFLA conference in 2006. He put forward some potential reasons for this mismatch. One is China's long isolation which, when eventually broken, led to a fascination with the new and a desire to have what Western countries had. A second reason is decisions are not made by planners or landscape architects but by city officials. These reasons account for his third reason for the lack of appropriate historic reference in China: a lack of education in landscape architecture or planning available in the country. Dr. Yu puts the responsibility squarely on the shoulders of the Chinese people to request appropriate buildings, not just the biggest and most beautiful, but the most Chinese (Connell, 17 October 2006). Situations where cross-cultural design is requested because it is new or foreign present great challenges to designers seeking to create culturally sensitive designs. Culturally sensitive designers should meet these challenges with new, "exotic" designs based on the host culture.

Another difficult situation in cross-cultural design arises when foreign designers are called on through international aid. For example, if a community is destroyed by a natural disaster, culturally

foreign aid may be responsible for rebuilding creating a situation where the monetary concerns of the aid agency conflict with the desires of the community. Ecological and monetary concerns may make moving the community prudent, while historic cultural ideas suggest the community should stay and rebuild in the same place and manner as they have in the past. These ideas need not be entirely at odds. Culturally sensitive design can meet apprehensions concerning the maintenance of cultural traditions while simultaneously tending to ecological and monetary matters. The tools available to landscape architects, including communication skills, can be used to persuade the community of the benefits of moving or making a compromise which reduces the environmental impact and helps assure continued safety of the community.

Ideally avoiding 'plopped-down' architecture or the feeling that a place is Anywhere, U.S.A., will result in designed spaces which have a sense of being tied to the landscape they inhabit. The users should not say that a place feels "too American in concept and execution" as the Catalans do of the commercial center with "240 shops, an 18-screen AMC cinema complex, indoor and outdoor fast-food restaurants, and underground parking" in the Diagonal Mar complex in Barcelona (Hazelrigg, 2004, p. 33). Even when the style is borrowed, the uniqueness of the landscape should shine through. The original design for the Keshar Mahal Garden of Dreams was influenced by the owner's study of great European landscape architecture of the 1920s but included architectural elements and blooming plants for each of the six Nepalese seasons and used the Indian system of Bastu Shastra (the progenitor of feng shui) to arrange certain garden elements (Ulam, 2005, pp. 132-133). Landscape architects have a number of tools to help them design culturally sensitive places. As technology develops, new additions will provide more ways to involve culture in design. A review of some of the tools available to help landscape architects design cross-culturally follows.

CHAPTER 4

EVALUATING THE DESIGNER'S TOOLBOX

Landscape architecture is at heart a form of communication. Many of the tools of the discipline are forms of communication: drawing, writing, speaking, creating web pages.

Design Styles

As designers, landscape architects are taught both basic communication skills and the history and tools of what Eduardo Lozano, a planner, architect, and author of *Community Design and the Culture of Cities*, calls "the professional design tradition." By this he refers to the whole of recorded design history specifically all those buildings meant for official government, religious, or public uses and the high style private residences built for the upper echelons of societies past and present (1990, p. 17), often referred to as high design. Recorded history provides high design styles specific to the landscape ranging from French to Modern gardens and for public space design spanning the centuries between the Hellenistic agora and community based public design, a design style stemming from what Mark Francis, professor and past Chair of Landscape Architecture at the University of California – Davis, refers to as the "advocacy planning movement of the 1960s" (1999, p. 61).

The education of new landscape architects is founded in these high design practices and many of the stylistic tools in a designer's toolbox come from these traditions. To this set of basic understandings and skills are added modifications and new developments. As designers learn to use space as a "*medium* of communication [emphasis in the original]" (Gumpert & Drucker, 1996, p. 34), both in the sense of communicating ideas through designing and designing spaces meant for a community to communicate in, the stylistic tools of high design sometimes do not suffice.

Participatory Design

Designed spaces, especially public ones, provide opportunities for cultural exchange or reinforcement through interaction with others. It is important that they allow this communication to take place. Participatory, or advocacy, planning steps in where high design styles leave off and allows designers to become intercultural communicators, people who understand others even without sharing a cultural heritage (M. J. Bennett, 1998, p. 1). As intercultural communicators, public space designers create spaces for communication by understanding needs of users.

Even the relatively new tool of participatory design process has been modified as culture changes and emphasis shifts. Randy Hester[*] suggests the planning process should be characterized by refocusing on community participation, social/environmental justice, and empowerment; be bimorphic, or occurring from the top-down and bottom-up simultaneously; refrain narrow special interests; be reflective; be cross-linked through associated (sometimes formerly competing) groups; allow multiple simultaneous insights and be aware of separate vested interests; and be renewable, through the process of reflection the design process continues and starts over with new a knowledge base (Hester, 1996, pp. 50-51).

Intercultural Communication

Participatory planning and its corollary design processes are tools of intercultural communication. According to Dr. Milton J. Bennett, director of the Intercultural Communication Institute (ICI) and author of *Basic Concepts of Intercultural Communication*, intercultural communication is made up of several processes and skills, which he lists as: language and the relativity of experience, perceptual relativity, non-verbal behavior, communication style, and values and assumptions (M. J. Bennett, 1998, pp. 12-24). Integrating these concepts and Hester's changes to participatory planning

[*] Professor and former Chair of the Department of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning at the University of California – Berkeley.

lead to culturally sensitive design collaboration between designers and users. An effective communicator in intercultural situations has a good understanding of these processes and their effects in design work.

For example, the first of Bennet's intercultural-communication processes says language influences experience. This means languages with words denoting many gradations of status relationship create cultures that put heavy emphasis on the relative status of the speaker and listener. In cross-cultural design, keeping these types of differences in mind will result in smoother working relationships with project managers or culturally local designers in unfamiliar cultures. Similarly, understanding differences in communication style is important when dealing with members of another culture. For example, feeling that the relatively slow speech of the Southern United States is an insult or that the clipped speech of the Northeast United States represents anger, are examples of communication differences breaking down lines of communication.

Differences in perception also play a role in cross-cultural design. Cultures closely linked to water bodies read much information from its surface. As a culturally sensitive designer, referencing culturally-enhanced perceptions (snow types in northern latitudes, sun angles/brightness in middle latitudes, etc.) will lead to designs well integrated with the culture. In designing spaces, non-verbal behavior is paramount. Physical proximity when conversing directly influences the shape and arrangement of public space, as does tolerance for seclusion and need for eye contact. In fact non-verbal behavior is so ingrained in culture that it remains important even in the alternate reality of a cyber world such as the online reality game Second Life (Rosenbloom, 2006, November 16).

Empathy

Updating the tools in the toolbox helps cross-cultural designers create well-used spaces in unfamiliar cultures. However, knowledge of these processes and tools doesn't guarantee success. One more tool is necessary for successful cross-cultural design. The participatory process and

intercultural communication both rely on the empathy of the designer. Empathy is the understanding of how the other feels. It is separate from sympathy, the projection of how the self would feel in the other's situation.

Bennett lists six steps to developing empathy: Step one is to assume there is a difference between what the other experiences and what the self experiences. Step two is know the self; being aware of one's own cultural and values and assumptions helps distinguish between those concepts and the other's. The next step is to suspend the self; modify and extend the boundaries of the self to allow the awareness of the other's experience. Allowing guided imagination, the fourth step, is like letting imagination lead the self to the experience of the other. Step five is to allow empathic experience; become immersed in the experience of the other. The final step is to reestablish the self. In coming back to the experiences of the self the differences between the self and the other can be more fully understood (M. J. Bennett, 1998, pp. 209-213). Describing the process of empathy belies the fact that it is often unconscious; many people naturally empathize. The ability to empathize across cultures often creates culturally sensitive people.

Participatory design, intercultural communication, and empathy combine with the traditional tools of high style design to create the toolbox of the culturally sensitive designer. However, should a designer not have all the skills in the toolbox, there are still methods and experiences designers can draw upon to achieve culturally sensitive spaces. Some firms hire a group to study in the host culture or create interdisciplinary teams "involving historical research, archaeology, horticulture, landscape management, and city planning" (Birnbaum & Hughes, 2005, p. 15) in addition to sociologists, economists, and environmental psychologists. Teams such as these provide detailed knowledge of the experience and expectations, often at incredible expense. In the absence of teams of this kind, other skills and experiences many designers have can be called on to help bridge the gap between cultures.

Study Abroad

Even without formal training in participatory planning or intercultural-communication, many designers learn the skills of these tools through study abroad. Experience abroad gives designers some basic tools to use in cross-cultural designs. As a testament to this, many university programs provide study abroad experiences as part of the curriculum for future designers. As Bennett says it creates people with "attributes and characteristics that prepare him or her to serve as a facilitator and catalyst for contact between cultures" (M. J. Bennett, 1998, p. 242). For many years no designer's education was complete without a Grand Tour of Europe. These days the tour is less grand and the destination is limited only by imagination. The tools and skills developed while studying in another culture help build empathy, intercultural communication skills, and participatory design knowledge; exposure to high design styles of other cultures and practice drawing, writing, and presenting also build skills for the cross-cultural toolbox.

According to a survey of schools participating in the Council of Educators in Landscape Architecture (CELA) between 2002-2005, the majority of CELA schools offer international education and the number of schools offering education abroad has increased in the past 30 years (Hewitt & Nassar, 2005, p. 188). The *Landscape Journal* even devoted a whole issue to the subject of "'Teaching with Culture in Mind: Cross-Cultural Learning in Landscape Architecture'" in which they argue that "cross-cultural studios provide practical, critical, and professional preparation for many contemporary practices, which increasingly require communication between working groups with differing values and objectives (Deming & Palmer, 2005, p. iv).

Study abroad can serve as bridge to professional participatory processes as exemplified by David Myers, Margarita Hill, and Stacey Anne Harwood[*] and the Sustainable Futures Program. In the

[*] Professors at the University of Maryland – College Park, California Polytechnic State University – San Luis Obispo, and University of Illinois – Urbana-Champaign respectively.

Sustainable Futures Program, student participants, in conjunction with the Monteverde Institute in Costa Rica, help with community based projects in a range of scales from conservation planning to local site solutions (2005). Cross-cultural learning can also experiment with new tools available to the cross-cultural designer. For example, Jeffery Hou, professor at University of Washington, and Isami Kinoshita, and Sawako Ono, professors at Chiba University in Japan, explored new computer-based tools in the Global Classroom Studio. This studio used online collaboration between student groups from Japan and the United States to evaluate challenges the online world presents as a medium of communication between distant collaborators (2005). Margarita Hill, professor at California Polytechnic State University – San Luis Obispo, also studied the elements of a meaningful cross-cultural exchange for students. She found that the exchange should provide experiential learning or learning by doing; chances for self-reflection and self-knowledge or situations where deep-seated beliefs, values, and attitudes will be challenged; opportunities for new knowledge and skills, especially opportunities to learn about another culture from local sources; and new strategies for engagement or exposure to new ways to structure the client/professional and related relationships (2005).

For those who do not have a chance to study abroad, learning to "strike a balance between the need to protect the shared values and the need to be permeable in order to accommodate newly emerging needs," as Hill puts it, is doable. For example, Hiss suggests designers develop what he terms "habits of experiential watchfulness". He provides three example checklists in his book *Experience of Place*:

> 1. *America the Beautiful.* Other than parks, what landscape do you know and care about that you would nominate to a list of Outstanding National Landscape? How secure are these places at this point? Who's in charge of them? What kind of change to what you see, hear, smell or touch would damage your sense of connectedness to these landscapes?
>
> 2. *Sweet Spots.* What are your favorite nearby places – rural or urban, public or private – within walking or driving distance of where you live or work? What's the nature of the experience there, and is it different during the daytime, at night, on a weekday, on a

> weekend, a holiday? Is anything missing, or neglected, or not regularly maintained? Have any recent changes to such places changed what you can experience? Do you go less often? How vulnerable are these places?
>
> 3. *Reaching Out to a Region.* How closely connected do you feel to the people in neighboring communities, to other living creatures around you, to the land nearby? How many towns, counties, or states are part of your region? What are the region makers in your areas – rivers, mountains, valleys, forests, lakes, trails, railroad tracks? How far do you have to travel to get a feeling not available in your own neighborhood – for instance, if you live in a city, where's the nearest place that feels like countryside? Where's the nearest wilderness? (Hiss, 1990, pp. 222-223)

Being aware of the answers to these types of questions for a person's surroundings is a good step towards the types of lessons learned abroad. Being immersed in another culture often puts into sharp relief the things most important about the familiar landscape of home. These questions ask for self-reflective thought and build self-knowledge. While slightly more difficult to do from home, stepping out of one's self is a good beginning to cross-cultural understanding. Understanding the cross-cultural gap is a requisite step to bridging the gap between society and designed space.

Terry Harkenss' Distillation Technique

Though access to study abroad is commonly available, it is not always attainable due to financial or time constraints. For those designers who don't or didn't have access to a study abroad experience and who have not had formal education in intercultural-communication or the application of participatory design in cross-cultural situations, there is a relatively recent design methodology which may be of some help. Terry Harkness, Fellow of the American Society of Landscape Architects and professor of Landscape Architecture at the University of Illinois – Urbana-Champaign, developed a more concrete method of studying and understanding one's surroundings which can be added to the designer's toolbox. His Distillation Technique uses the physical environment as a stand-in for cultural patterns. It is applicable to any country, area, region, city, or neighborhood.

By systematically studying patterns in the culturally-influenced landscape, an idea of cultural building norms, preferences for color and materials, and preferred spatial arrangement is developed and then abstracted to create new landscapes. The new landscapes reference patterns created by the historic layering of phenomena fashioned by the interaction of culture and landscape. In extreme cases, with sufficient photographic resources, this technique can be used with minimal or no contact with the host landscape itself. It is not recommended that any designer complete a design without visiting the location and attendant culture at least once. However, the distillation tool, though not an ideal substitute for substantial research and cultural input, could be useful in providing a modicum of cultural reference in what would otherwise be a 'plopped-down' Anytown, USA design. A case study in applying the distillation methodology in a cross-cultural design situation follows.

CHAPTER 5

A CROSS-CULTURAL DESIGN CASE STUDY

This case study distills the landscape to the essence of its structure created by by society. In "Garden from Region" by Terry Harkness in *The Meaning of Gardens* (1990) the procedure is described as "based on the idea that the common cultural-physical landscape is a container and reflector of diverse, diffuse, and often ambiguous cultural meanings." He goes on to say that the "design approach explores and reveals the meaning, memory, and power of yesterday's and today's landscape" (p. 110). Harkness intends gardens created through this process to represent "closely observed readings of context that transform the common, everyday landscape into a carefully constructed distillation of place" (p. 118). This method is particularly useful because of its ease of use and versatility in a variety of situations. The essence of both familiar and unfamiliar landscapes is illuminated in terms easily applied to the site's program. The deliberate and studied process allows the unique sense of place to shine through while simultaneously grounding the design in the history, environment, and society associated with the place.

Through focused study of physical elements widespread in the landscape a sense of the cultural essence of a landscape is distilled. The procedure starts by grouping physical elements by function, type, or setting. The groupings depend on the landscape. In landscapes with obvious or known functions, grouping by function becomes important. In those landscapes with less obvious functional elements, general types or settings form more useful groups. The elements are then illustrated by group, abstracted to built design elements, and re-illustrated as design elements. During the abstraction process the physical elements are used as a reference to create new design elements by changing scale, function, materials, etc. Once distilled, the elements can be used to design gardens

representing the landscape as a whole or as subsets of the overall landscape. It is unnecessary to illustrate each physical and abstracted element as long as a general idea of the elements is demonstrated. Harkness distilled the Midwest's water and drainage, remnant orchard, and lowland woodland patterns to backyard scale with the Lowland Garden described in *The Meaning of Gardens*. Referencing the vast area of the Midwest, the garden of furrowed turf grass, trees planted in rows and groves, and a embankment with a standing pool of water at the top fits in a backyard (pp. 111-112, 114, see Figures 5.1 – 5.3).

The design site for this case study is a working convent for the Company of Mary our Lady in Orvieto, Italy called San Lodovico, which hosts the study abroad program for Gordon College of Wenham, Massachusetts. Because the San Lodovico convent hosts a study abroad program, it presents the opportunity for two different applications of the distillation method. Since the author has had numerous experiences in Orvieto and in Italy, the site allows the use of the distillation method as one of the many tools in a designer's toolbox, an analogous application to the one described above. On the other hand, since the author has never visited Wenham, Massachusetts or New England and has little or no prior knowledge nor firsthand experience of that landscape, in the second application of the method, the distillation is carried out entirely at a distance from the setting and serves as the only culturally referential tool. In this manner, the case study demonstrates the application of the distillation method from a distance and in situ as a tool complimenting the designer's entire toolbox. Consequently, the proposed design combines references to the landscapes of both the host location of Orvieto, Italy and the college's native land, Wenham, Massachusetts or New England. This combination of cultural references may be seen as an example of a culturally sensitive designer's reaction to being asked for a foreign design because of its foreignness. Instead of creating a 'plopped-down' design, the designer responds by creating a space which references the host culture along with the new, foreign culture.

A three-day visit to San Lodovico in September of 2006 provided an opportunity to measure and photograph the primary garden locations, as identified by the director of Gordon College's study abroad program in Orvieto (J. Skillen, personal communication, September 18, 2006, see Figure 5.4 [overview of property]). In addition, the major hardscape elements and large trees and plants were identified and located on a base map. After the distillation process, the distilled elements were used to fulfill the program and uses requested by the directors of the study abroad program and the convent (J. Skillen and Sister G. Galli, personal communications, September 18-19, 2006). The collective set of distillations provided consistency in design across both spaces, one of the directors' primary objectives for the spaces. A discussion of the distillation process and garden designs follows.

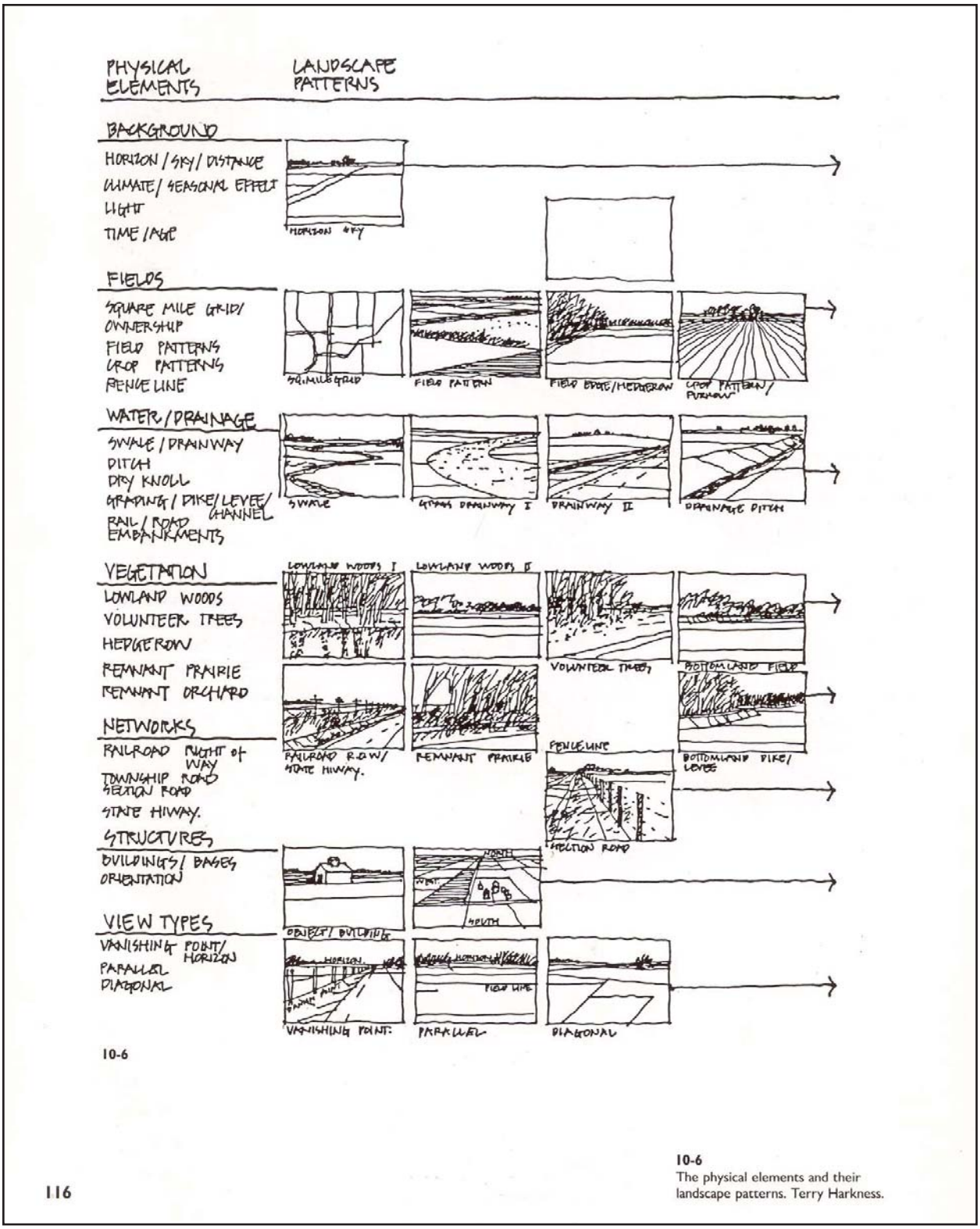


Figure 5.1 Physical Elements of the Midwest

Note. From *The Meaning of Gardens* (p. 116) in "Garden from Region" by Terry Harkness, 1990, Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press. Copyright 1990 by Mark Francis and Randolph T. Hester, Jr.

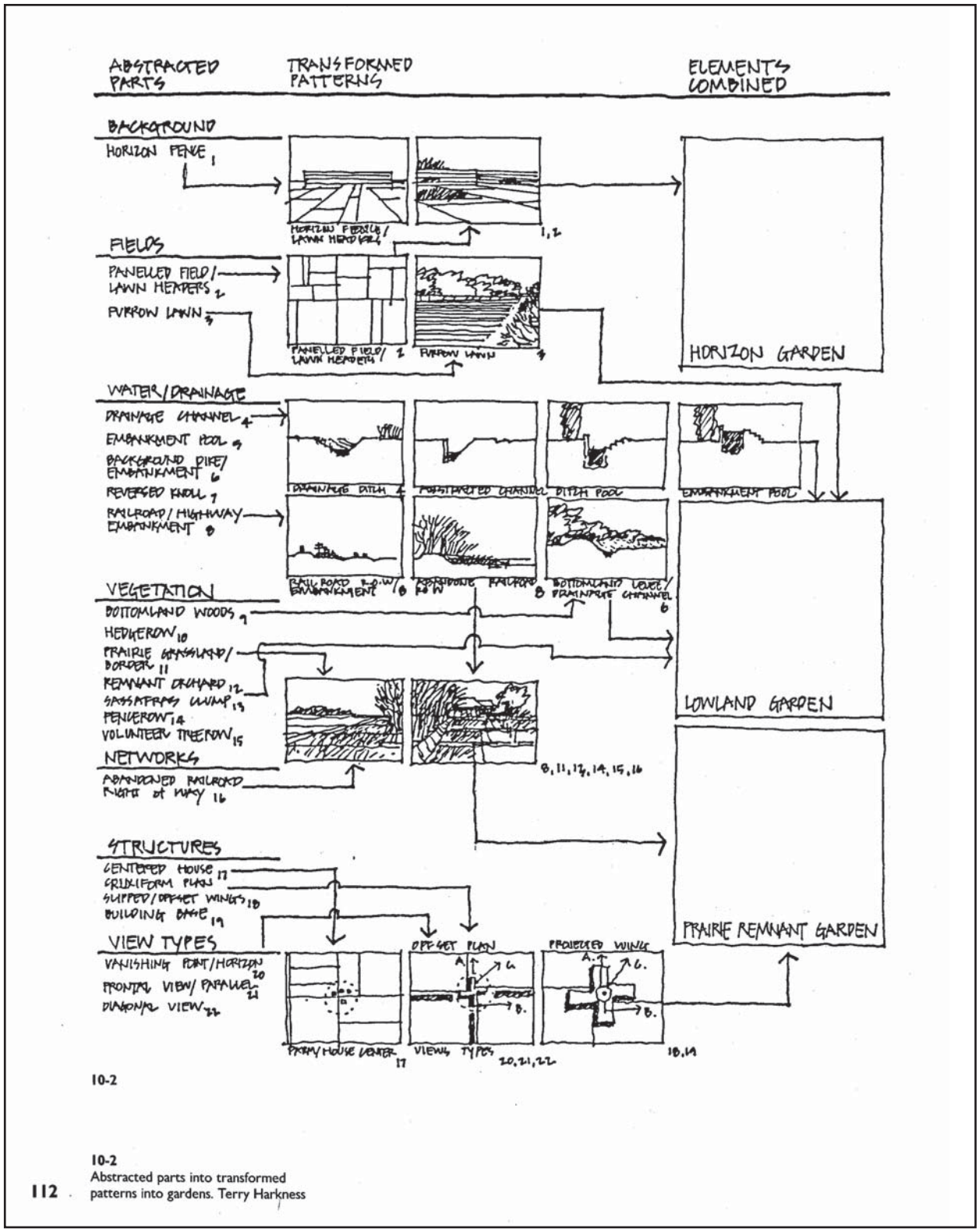
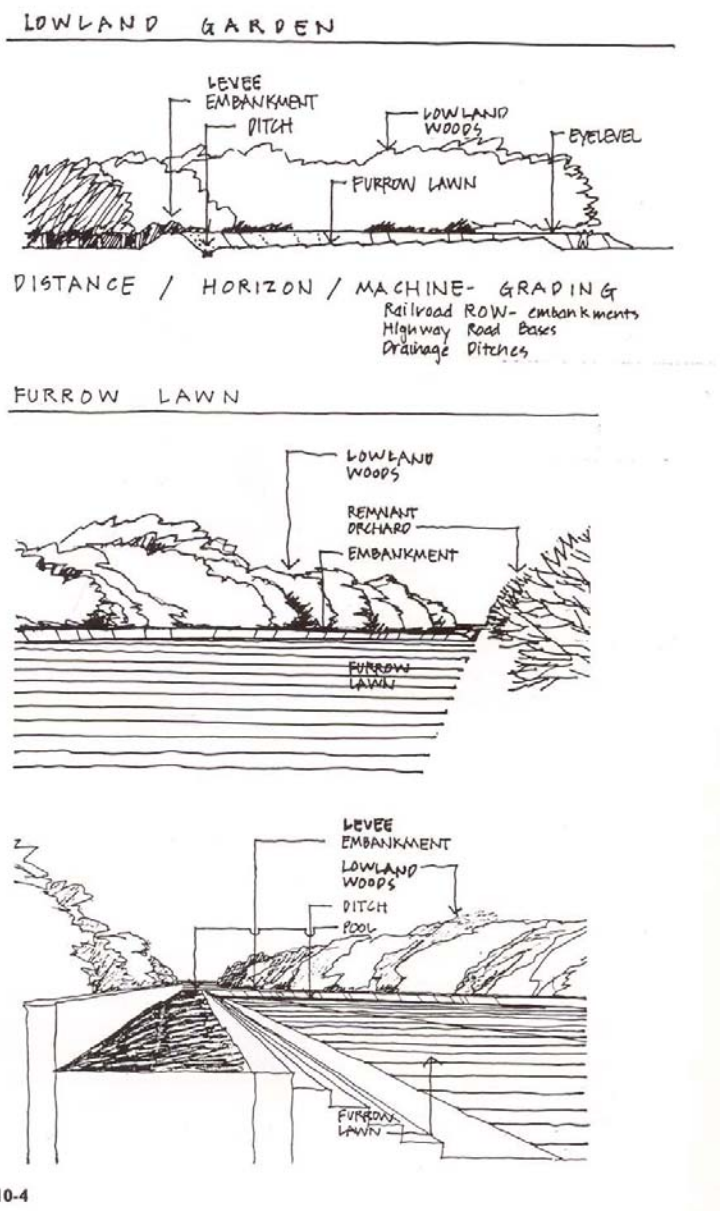


Figure 5.2 Abstracted Elements of the Midwest

Note. From *The Meaning of Gardens* (p. 112) in "Garden from Region" by Terry Harkness, 1990, Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press. Copyright 1990 by Mark Francis and Randolph T. Hester, Jr.

The Lowland Garden

The lowland garden quadrant addresses rain, rivers, and valleys and the bottomlands they have created. Their historic claiming through drainage control is the motif of this garden. The strong artificial geometry of dikes and levees has contained those river bottomlands for use as fields. Their precise boundaries and sloping sides attempt to manage the river and its periodic flooding. The river and the bottomland woods shift and encroach on the man-made structures. The inscribed fields of corn and soybeans are foreground to the long extended dikes, lowland woods, channeled streams, distant bluffs, and riverside. The lowland garden distills and contains these elements in a small quadrangle of land.



10-4
South garden: bottomland, wood and fields, drainage channel and levee embankment. Terry Harkness

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Figure 5.3 Lowland Garden

Note. From *The Meaning of Gardens* (p. 114) in "Garden from Region" by Terry Harkness, 1990, Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press. Copyright 1990 by Mark Francis and Randolph T. Hester, Jr.

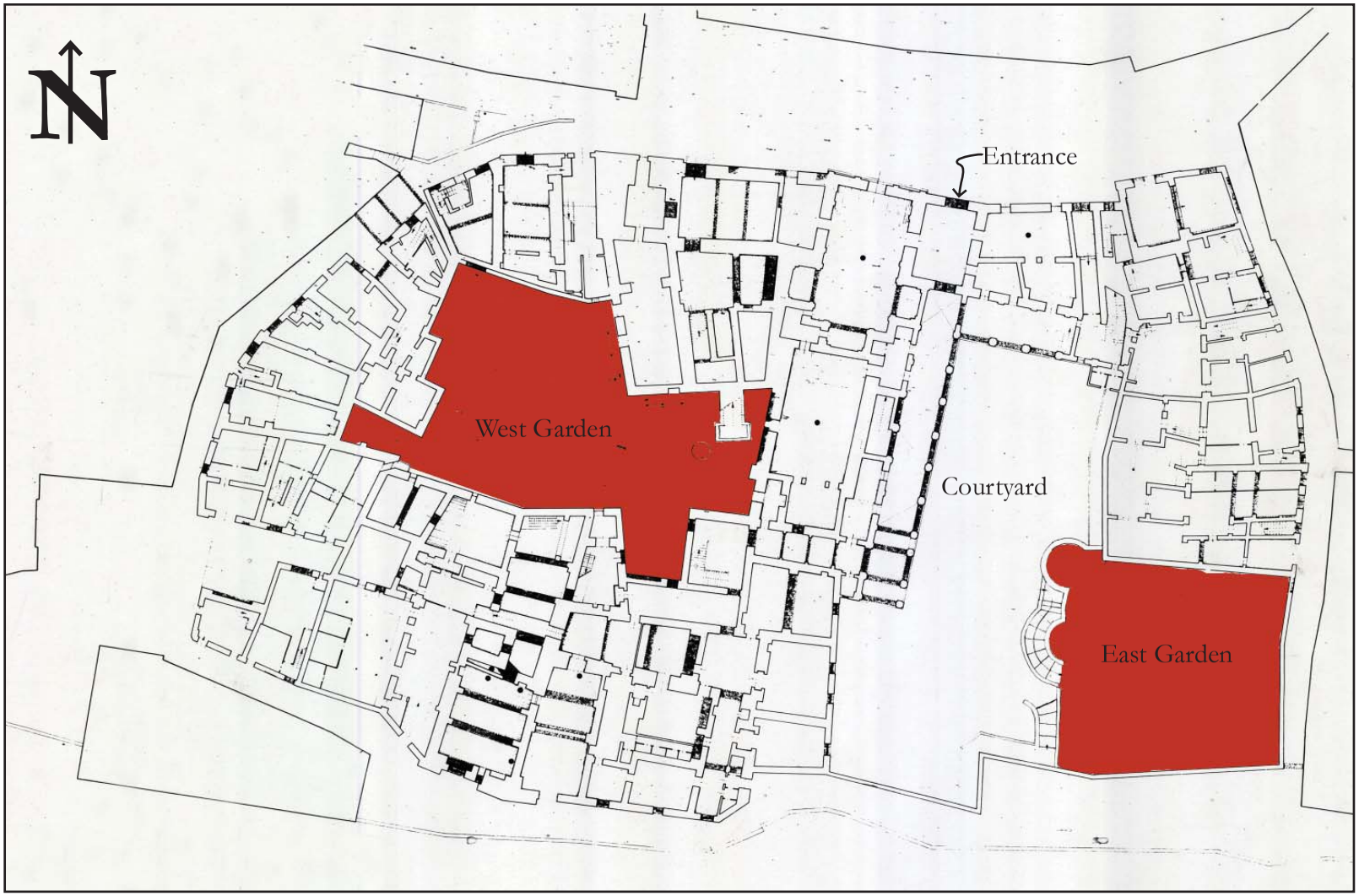


Figure 5.4 Overview of San Lodovico

CHAPTER 6

CASE STUDY DISCUSSED

San Lodovico presented the opportunity to incorporate two applications of the distillation technique. Since the applications were different, the distillations were carried out individually. The first distillation was done on the landscape in and around Orvieto, Italy. In September 2006, the last day of a three-day visit to the city of Orvieto was spent touring the city, collecting guides, taking pictures, making observations, and experiencing the place from as many angles as possible. This information combined with knowledge gained on previous trips both to Orvieto and to Umbria, its province, and images found on the Internet formed the foundation for the list of physical elements for Orvieto (see Table 6.1). From the physical elements, illustrated with ink and colored pencil renderings (see Figure 6.1), was next extracted a list of abstracted elements (see Table 6.2) illustrated with line drawings (see Figure 6.2). As an example, the physical category Structures contains the element Groups of Buildings illustrated by images of the countryside around Orvieto showing many clusters of several buildings surrounded by farm or wooded land (see Figure 6.3). Physically, these groups represent cities and working or abandoned farmsteads; abstracted, these groups of buildings become groups of planters of various heights and sizes arranged to represent the spatial relationships between buildings in the city or on the farm (see Figure 6.4).

The same process created the New England distillation. However, because no trip to Wenham, Massachusetts or New England provided firsthand experience, the information on the physical elements was obtained solely from Internet image searches and from coffee table books of New England. Tables 6.1 & 6.2 list the physical and abstracted elements of New England; figures 6.5 and 6.6 show the illustrations of physical and abstracted elements respectively. New England's rough and

rocky shoreline, illustrated by an image of house on Cape Anne (see Figure 6.7), becomes abstracted as white- and purple-flowered shrubs and ground cover representing the frothing ocean flowing up to a mound of rocks (see Figure 6.8). Using the combined lists of distilled elements from Orvieto and New England, two gardens were proposed for San Lodvico. A detailed discussion of those gardens follows.

East Garden

The smaller, sunnier East Garden measures approximately 22 m by 24.5 m and is secluded from the adjacent courtyard by an elevation change of approximately 2 m (see Figures 6.9 – 6.12). A curving staircase built around an existing well provides access to the garden. Several features of the existing garden are preserved in the proposed design including a large laurel tree, a mature persimmon, a well established kiwi vine, and two arbor structures. The primary purpose of this garden is to display student and visiting artists' sculptures.

Upon arriving at the top of the stairs, the view is terminated by a statue of Mary in an alcove. The central walkway and the two side walkways divide the space into approximately symmetrical planting areas. Each of these planting areas is further divided into north & south sections by a 50 cm wide path running east-west. On either side of this central walkway are four display areas for sculpture created with a dark evergreen background. The existing pillars of the arbor on which various vines are trained overhead divide the niches from one another.

In both beds adjacent to the central walkway, small paths provide access to the sculptural niches created by the back of evergreens on the central walkway and large shrubs. In the southern planting area, south of the small path are two more sculpture display areas created by large white or purple flowering shrubs. A proposed tree provides symmetry against the existing persimmon on the north side, and purple or white flowering ground cover represents the sea and surf of New England.

The main southern walkway curves slightly leading past a group of Italian cypress, shrubs of various sizes, and ground cover: a vegetative representation of a city. The walkway leads to a set of wooden steps up to a 3.5 m high wooden viewing platform which provides a vista over the garden wall of the Paglia Valley floor and countryside around Orvieto. The garden wall forms the southern side of the stairs; the northern side of the stairs is faced with rough stones. Large rough boulders are piled in the corner where the stairs meet the raised platform creating a rough, rocky cliff. Above the rocks stretches a sheer face of rock referencing the New England coast and the walls of Orvieto as they rise from the rough rock of the mountain. The wooden stairs and platform represent the boardwalks typical of the New England shore. The platform contains three square planters, 50cm on a side, which support deciduous vines forming an arbor to shade the space in the summer. Benches around three sides and a moveable table provide ample room for studying, reading, or just enjoying the view. At the base of the rock clad platform is a sea of purple and while flowering shrubs and ground cover representing the sea as it meets the rocky shore of the New England coast.

The northern side walkway curves in a symmetrical fashion past the persimmon to a raised platform in the northwest corner of the garden. Decked in boardwalk fashion and raised 20 cm, the circular platform is ringed with a stone bench, equipped with two tables and requisite chairs, and affords views into the adjacent courtyard. Past the entrance to the platform, the walkway continues east under the persimmon, past the garden sink, and under the wire arbor supporting the kiwi vine. From here, the planting area on the south side of the walkway is dedicated to roses spaced evenly to represent the planting patterns of the olive groves while the north planting area of the walkway formed by an adjacent building displays six Stations of the Cross separated by sunflowers and castor beans standing in for the closely spaced buildings in the city. Various grasses planted in groups in front of sunflowers represent the marsh vegetation in Wenham, Massachusetts.

The mixed grasses and Stations of the Cross separated by sunflowers and castor beans continue around the wall to the south until they meet the alcove containing Mary. The north-south walkway continues past Mary and the large Laurel tree to the supporting wall of the viewing platform where there is a door providing access to the tool shed underneath. Benches are provided under both the persimmon and the proposed tree to the south as places to sit and enjoy the sculpture in the shade in the summer. In total, 18 sculptures can be accommodated, both the statue of Mary and the Stations of the Cross remain creating a contemplative sculpture garden.

West Garden

Courtyard Garden

Because of its great size, the West Garden is subdivided in to three spaces: one approximately 7.5 m by 7.5 m, one approximately 16.5 m by 13 m, and the largest approximately 19 m by 24 m (see Figure 6.13 – 6.22). The entrances into the West Garden are on the east and west walls of the smallest section: the Courtyard Garden. Visitors staying in the recently renovated 3rd floor rooms primarily use the western doorway while Gordon College students and other visitors use the eastern doorway as their primary entrance. Using scored concrete inlaid with irregularly-shaped stones placed in a quincunx pattern, or staggered rows, the Courtyard Garden space represents the olive groves in the Paglia River Valley below Orvieto. In the center of the space is a 2 m diameter sculpture of a rose, a reference to the flower representing the Madonna, or Mary, in Catholicism. A grouping of various sized planters in the southeastern corner represents the clustered buildings in the cities of the Paglia Valley and the New England countryside. Three large planters (two on the east wall and one on the west wall) represent the groups of single buildings, usually a barn and a house, and single buildings common in New England landscape. Two tables with accompanying chairs provide ample room to sit and read, chat, or watch the passersby. A 30 cm band of reused tiles marks the boundary between this courtyard and the next section of the garden.

Holly Garden

North of this tile line is the middle-sized garden or Holly Garden. The area contains a 6 m holly tree growing in a 2.5 m planter and 3 sets of stairs leading down or up from the garden. The two staircases leading down from the garden into the adjoining buildings (one on the north wall, one on the south wall) were left accessible. However, in the proposed design, the set of stairs leading up to the building on the north side of the space becomes a series of sheet waterfalls with pools at the bottom and the top recalling the sheet waterfalls of millponds in New England. To the east of this staircase, the awkward space includes a pool which receives a single jet of water from the top of the stairs in typical Italian garden fashion. A bench provides a place for solitary contemplation and a set of planters of various sizes again presents an herbaceous cityscape against the east wall of the staircase. Along the east wall of the garden, set into a recessed arch are a set of boxy plant racks which recall the shape of Italy's clock towers and *campanili*, or bell towers. Following south along east wall, the space around the elevator shaft contains a larger set of city planters. The magnificent holly tree provides a screen for this secluded and private area of the garden; a path composed of reused tile and the sounds of water draw visitors into the space. East of the path, the scored concrete mimics rows of grape vines. West of the path gravel recalls the rocky shoreline in New England.

The gravel and scored concrete continue on the west side of the holly tree where mirror image paths lead visitors to a raised patio. Bordered by the west wall of the stairs up, the northern set of stairs down, and the holly tree on the south, the patio contains three tables and matching chairs and serves as a more public place from which to look onto the garden. The west side of the stairs up contains a set of city planters. West of the northern stairs the garden is scored every meter to represent the rows of grape vines planted in the valley growing Orvieto's famous white wine: Orvieto Classico. The border between this portion of the garden and the westernmost part is created

with four meter-wide planters with tall thin plants referencing the Italian cypress hedgerows typical of central Italy; also a mound of rough rocks tumbling from the north west corner of the garden 5 m south and 2.5 m east recalls the New England coast and the rocky prominence of Orvieto itself.

Field, Open Space, River System, and Shoreline Gardens

Access to the final, largest portion of the garden is by way of a meter-wide path running between the rose covered southern wall of the property and an 8 m long hedge. This large space is divided into four areas. The Field Garden can be glimpsed through the vegetation and rocks which form the eastern boundary of the garden. Entry is given at the end of the hedge by a 30 cm wide tile path leading off the main path. On the north side of the space stand a group of large shrubs forming a visual barrier and recalling the terminated views of New England. Against the rocky promontory stands a group of ten rose bushes in a quincunx pattern representing the valley's olive groves and a group of grasses representing the marsh in Wenham, Massachusetts. On the south side of the space, a hedge separates the main path from this subspace; on the western edge a group of small trees and large shrubs represent the remnant forests prevalent in the countryside in New England and Umbria. Three benches provide opportunity for chatting in small groups or single study.

The Open Space Garden is entered by way of a 30 cm wide tile path at the end of the main walkway. This space is bounded by a low stone wall on the north, the remnant forest on the east, and the building to the south and west. Against the building to the west are placed four art display stands shaped like the traditional white, pointed New England church spire. The low stone wall on the north references the stone walls of both Umbria and New England and also represents the hedges and vegetation barriers common between the fields in the Paglia Valley. The majority of the space is turf which references the ocean in New England and provides ample room for large gatherings. The small tile path runs along the west and north walls to a large mosaic sunflower patterned after the local Umbrian ceramic style, majolica. The white glazed majolica decorated with

strong colors feature traditional motifs based on renaissance patterns featuring blues (especially deep cobalt blue), birds, roosters, dragons, traditional calligraphy patterns, and flowers.

From this medallion the path continues into the River System Garden. Covered by extant pines, cedars, and two mature fig trees, the winding path splits to direct visitors through the trees to three sitting areas. The path branches and narrows like the river systems in the Paglia Valley and the New England coast. The main sitting area along the north wall contains five benches to accommodate several small conversation groups. The second area is against the western wall in the northwestern corner; a much cozier space created by an evergreen on the north side and the covered utility area on the south. The third area, created by an evergreen and the western building, anchors the southwest corner of the space. Approximately 3 m from the north wall, stands a 0.5 m tall, 1.5 m square raised dais representing the single buildings in New England. Bordering the eastern edge of the space is another stone wall which starts at 1.5 m high; it provides a backrest for the adjacent bench and ends at a meter high when it reaches the medallion.

This stone wall creates the western boundary of the Shoreline Garden. Adjacent buildings provide the northern and eastern boundaries of this part of the garden. The southern boundary is the group of shrubs from the Field Garden. The medallion forms the entrance and stepping stones scattered in purple and white flowering ground cover lead the way to a wooden platform raised 20 cm with an irregular edge to mimic the New England shore line. The deck is large enough to hold three tables and accompanying chairs.

Referencing both New England and Orvieto, the East and West Gardens provide the services of public outdoor space for the study abroad program and the convent. However, this distillation of New England and Orvieto is a simplification of the five main cultural references at San Lodovico convent. In addition to the cultures of Orvieto and New England, the convent represents three others: the Company of Mary Our Lady, the 400-year old French, Roman Catholic teaching order

numbering 5000 world wide; the mainly Spanish heritage of sisters of the Company at San Lodovico; and mother superior Sister Giovanna's 15 years experience in Japan which she brings to bear on what is designed and planted on the property (personal communications, J. Skillen and Sister G. Galli, September 18-19, 2006).

This distillation, then, is a simplification of the parameters available. While this may seem unusual, landscape architects face similar situations frequently. Laura Lawson, an associate professor of Landscape Architecture at the University of Illinois, describes a cross-cultural design workshop conducted in 2002. During the project, the mostly middle- and upper-income suburban students helped design infill and neighborhood improvements in a lower income neighborhood in East St. Louis which was formerly settled by American born and immigrant populations "from Poland, the Czech Republic, Croatia, the Ukraine, Lithuania, and Yugoslavia" whose population is now nearly 100 percent African American (Lawson, 2005, pp. 160-161). In this situation, the users are African American, the cultural history of the place is European, and the designers are suburban upper-class, offering three different cultures which should be accounted for in the design. In another common situation, new immigrants begin to move into formerly African American neighborhoods creating yet another layer. Infill design in these situations becomes as multi-layered as the convent in San Lodovico. Being aware of the many cultural references gives designers more references to make, allows for more creativity, and provides more information to create a culturally sensitive space. As an addition to the designer's toolbox, the distillation method increases the opportunities for meeting the programmatic needs of the users with culturally relevant design.

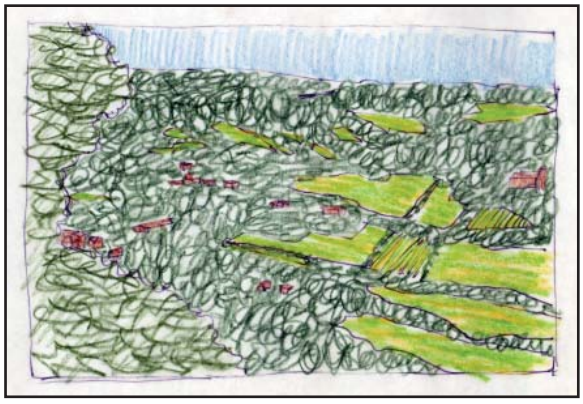
Table 6.1 Physical Elements

PHYSICAL ELEMENTS

	Town	Background	Structures	Vegetation	Networks	Views	Colors	Fields
ORVIETO	Narrow Streets	Sheer Cliff Face	Groups of Buildings	Hedges	Hedges	Ended	Orange-Brown	Orchard Patterns
	20 Churches	Light	Towns	Woods	Roads	Narrow to Vanishing Point	Yellow	Crop Patterns
	Rough Rock near Smooth Rock	Fog	Abbeys	Vegetation near Stone	Rivers	Down/Aerial	Tan	
	Orange Brick	Hills on the Horizon					Grey	
	Tufa	Sky in the Distance					Blue Sky	
	Stucco						Green	
	Potted Plants						Umber	
	Tile						Burnt Umber	
	Piazzas							
NEW ENGLAND	Churches	Rocky Shore	Single Buildings	Trees	Roads	Over Lakes	White	
	Spires	Woods	Barns	Grass	Canal	Partially Obscured Sky	Brick Red	
	Lake	Lakes	Houses	Marsh	Wooden Fences	Shorelines	Green	
	Lakeshore	Rocky Cliffs		Fields	Stone Fences	Reflections	Fall Colors	
	Buildings in Line	Snow			Rivers/Lakes	Out to Sea	Orange	
	Fences	Marsh				Treelined Roads	Red	
	Brick					Views to Vanishing Points Along Roads	Yellow	
	White							
	Clapboard							
	White							
	Clapboard							

View of the Paglia Valley

View of Orvieto



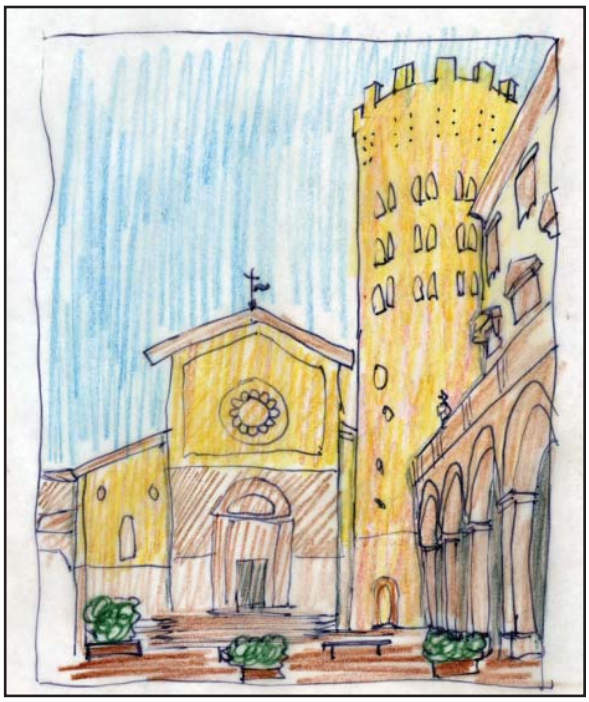
View of the Paglia Valley

Streetscape

Palazzo del Capitano del Popolo

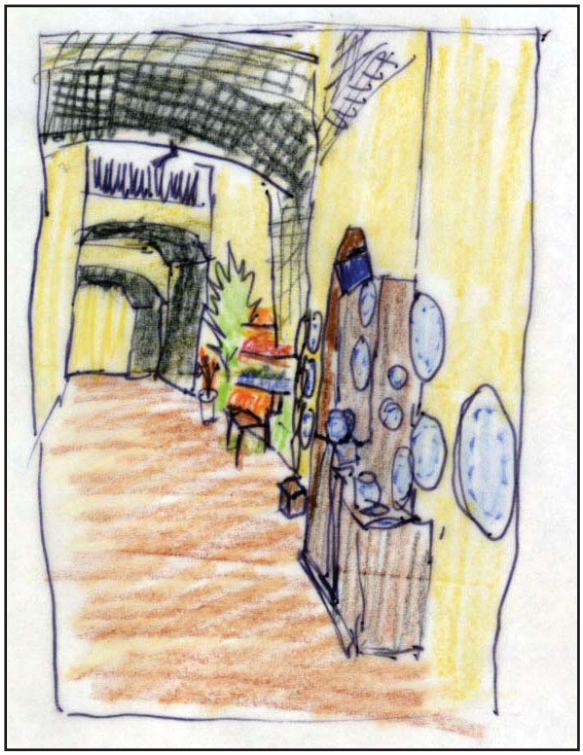
Porta Maggiore - Walls of Orvieto

Figure 6.1 Physical Elements of Orvieto

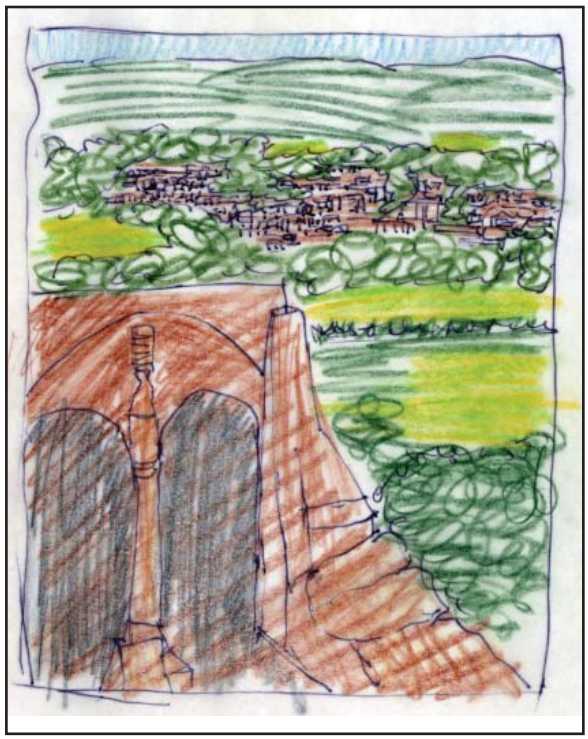


Church of Sant'Andrea

Streetscape



Streetscape



Porta della Rocca - Paglia Valley

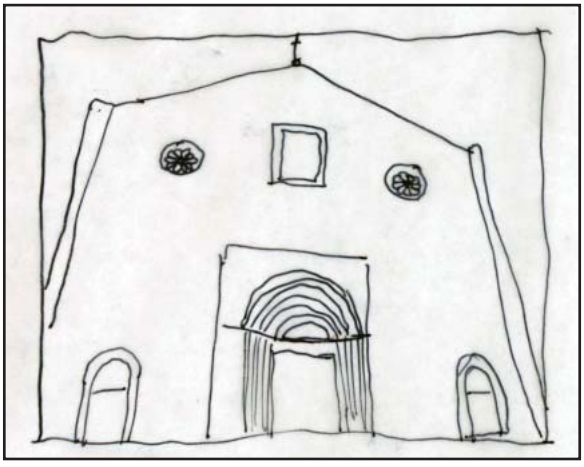
Figure 6.1 Continued Physical Elements of Orvieto

Streetscape

Streetscape

View of Orvieto

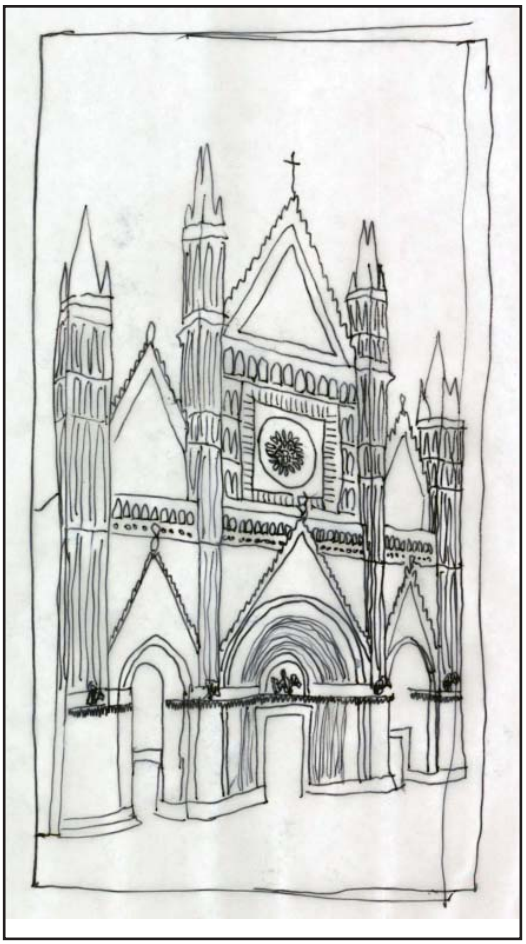
View of Orvieto



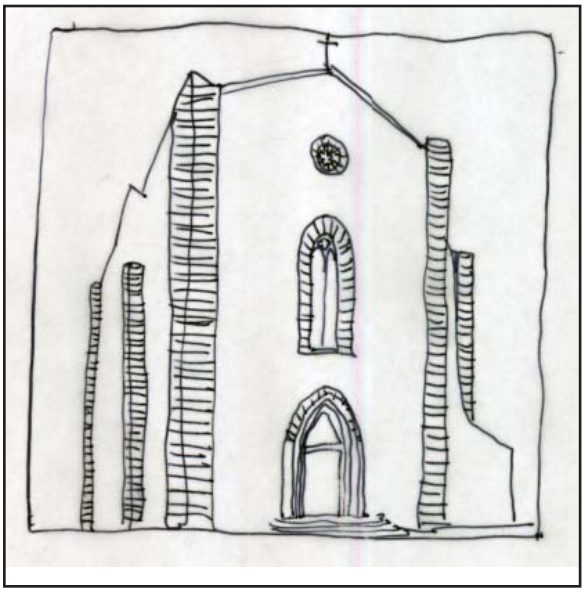
Church of San Francesco

Church of Santa Maria dei Servi

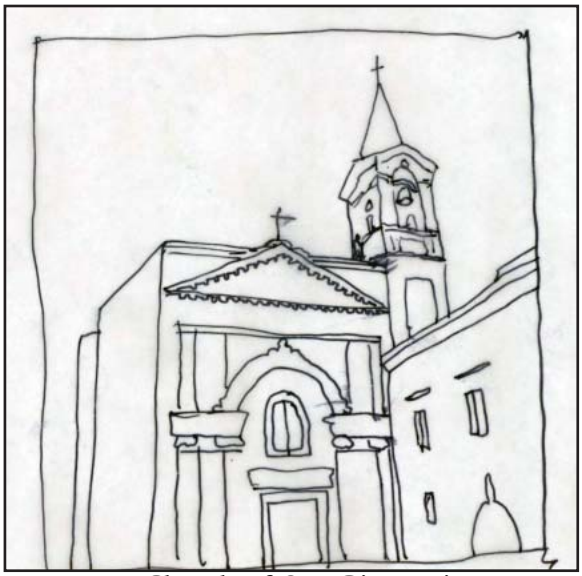
Figure 6.1 Continued Physical Elements of Orvieto



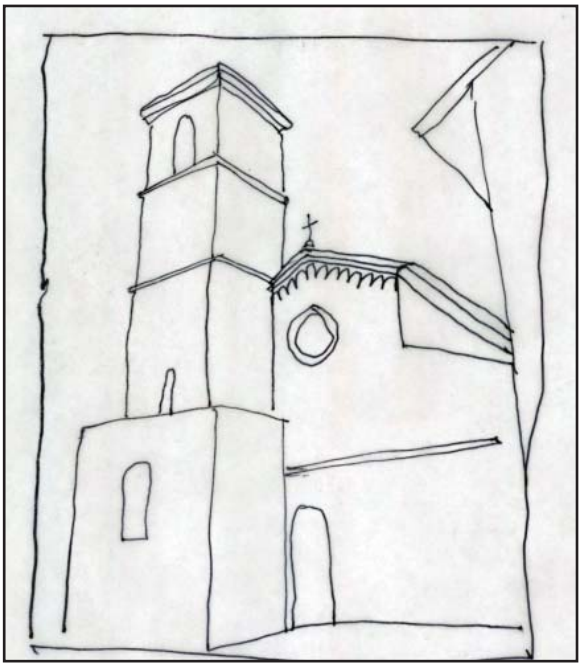
Il Duomo - Orvieto's Cathedral



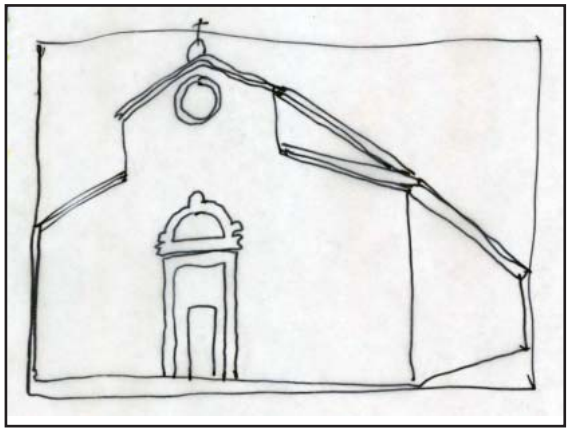
Church of San Domenico



Church of San Giovanni



Church of San Giovenale



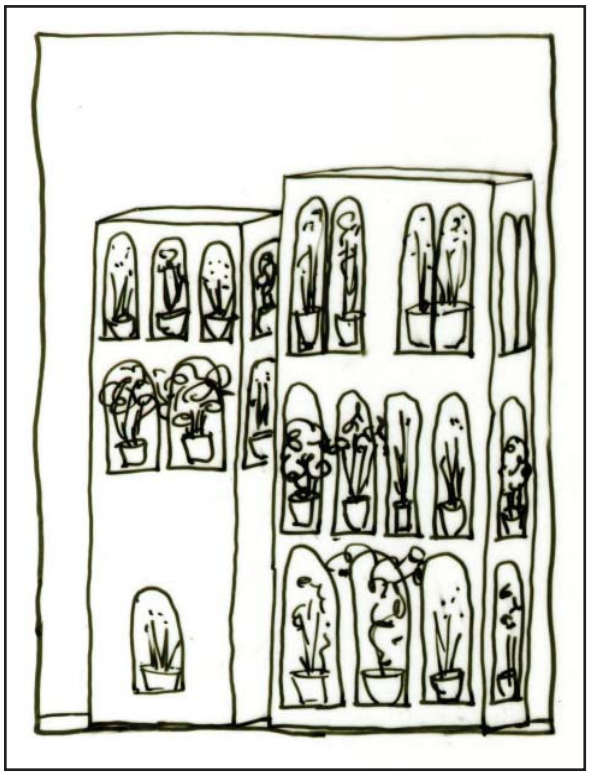
Church of San Lorenzo de'Arari

Figure 6.1 Continued Physical Elements of Orvieto

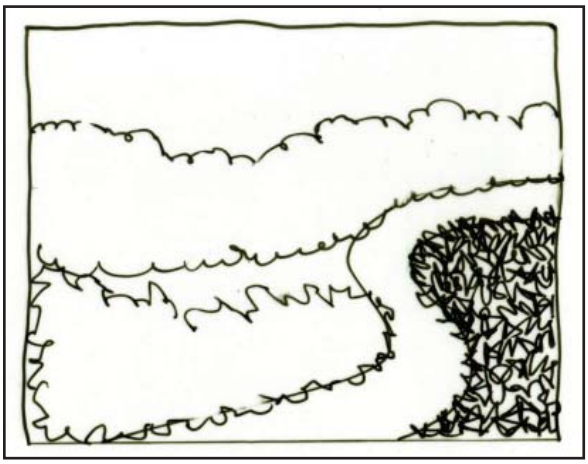
Table 6.2 Abstracted Elements

ABSTRACTED ELEMENTS

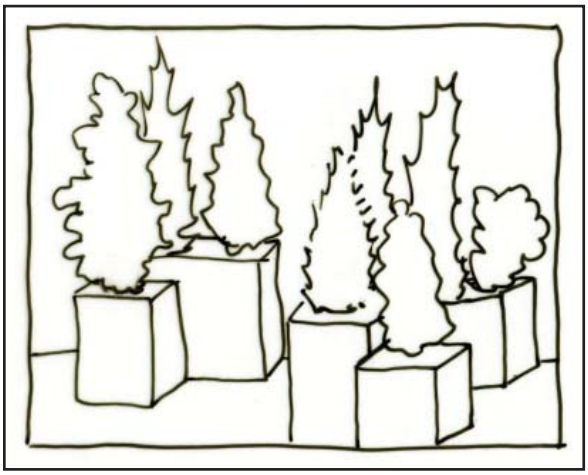
	Town	Background	Structures	Vegetation	Networks	Views	Colors	Fields
ORVIETO	Narrowly Spaced Fence Slats	Walls	Groups of Planters	Rows of Potted Plants	Stone Walls	Hedges Obstructing Views	Marigolds, Liles	Vegetation in Quincunx Tree Planting Pattern
	Bell Tower Shaped Plant Racks	Vantage Points	Groups of Shrubs	Shade Structures with Multiple Supports	Paths with Tile	Vegetation Squeezed Views	Sunflowers	Alternating Types/Shades of Tiles in Rows
	Overgrown Vegetation on Hard-Edged Paths	Bright Colors	Single Benches Secluded	Field Patterns in Tile		Maps on Ground Plane	Tufa, Sand	Potted Plants in Tree Planting Pattern
	Tile Patterned Vegetation	Hill Outline on Fence		Field Patterns On Walls/Fences			Granite	Tiles or Stones Set in Rows Alternating with Vegetation
		Mounding Plants					Violets, Irises	
		Blue					Vegetation, Green Paint	
		Fountains & Pools						
		Pond with Water Plants						
NEW ENGLAND	Tile Patterned Vegetation	Stacks of Rocks/Boulders in Vegetation or Water	Rocks in Isolation	Blue Painted Ground Studded with Moss Covered Rock	Paths with Tile	Vegetation Squeezed Views	Violets, Irises	
	Bell Tower Shaped Plant Racks	Fountains & Pools	Vegetation Planted Singlely	Field Patterns in Tile	Rivulet	Still Water	Vegetation, Green Paint	
	Spires Set into Walls	Pond with Water Plants		Field Patterns On Walls/Fences	Blue Vegetation	Over the Garden Wall	Daisys, Baby's Breath	
	Hardscape with Irregular Edge	Purple or Blue Flowering Vegetation		Various Grasses Planted in Groups	Bamboo in Narrow Rows		Cardinal Flower	
	Vegetation in Lake Shape				Hedges		Marigolds	
	Planters of Different Sizes						Grasses	
	Overlapping Tiles or Steps							



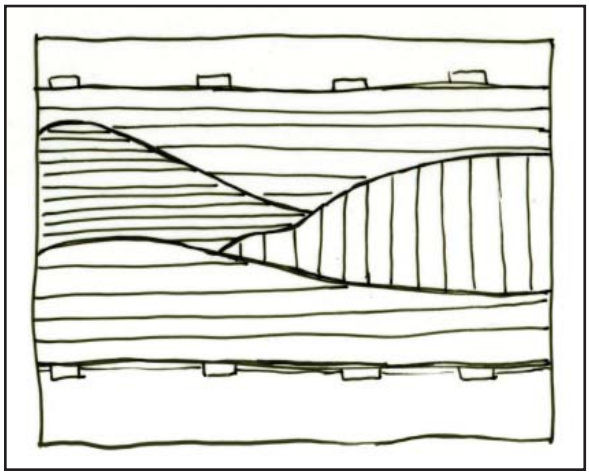
Bell Tower Shaped Plant Racks



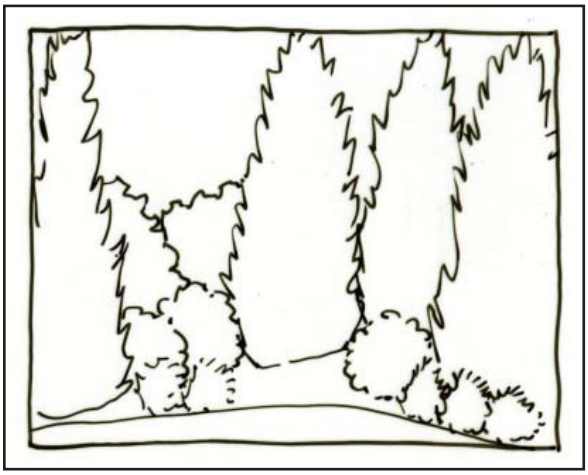
Overgrown Vegetation
on Hard-edged Paths



Groups of Planters

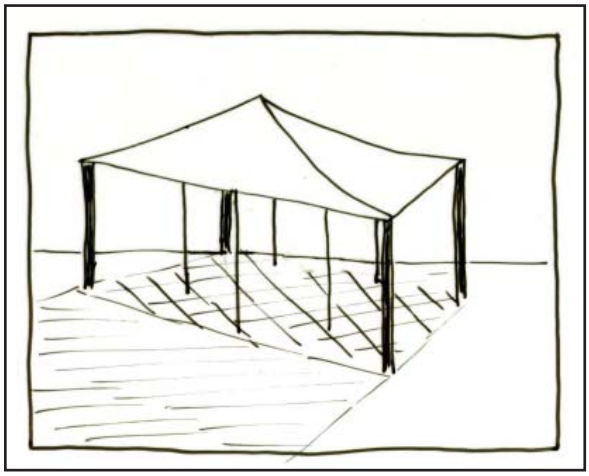


Field Patterns on Fences

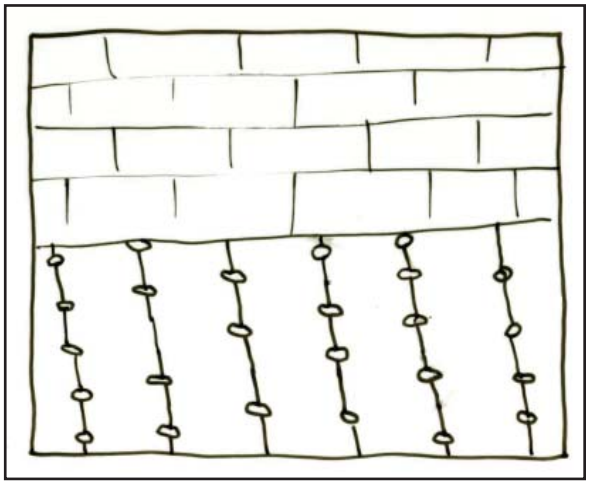


Groups of Shrubs

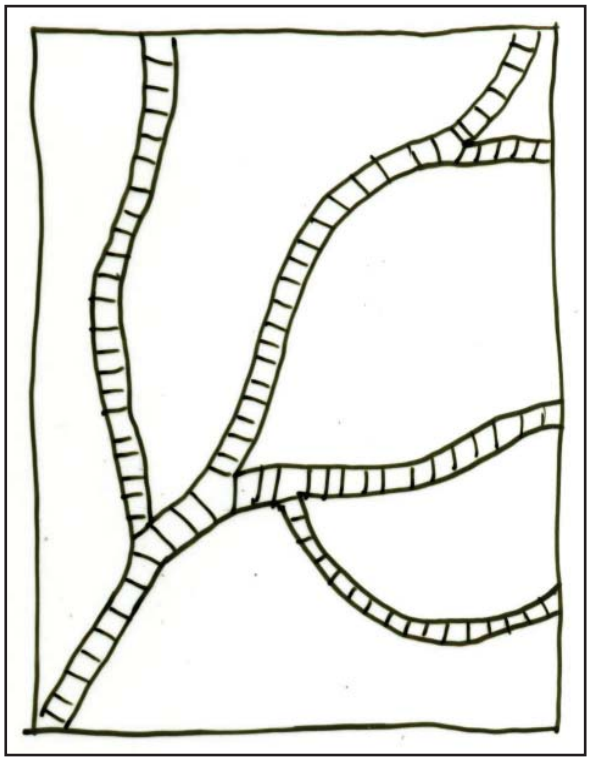
Figure 6.2 Abstracted Design Elements of Orvieto



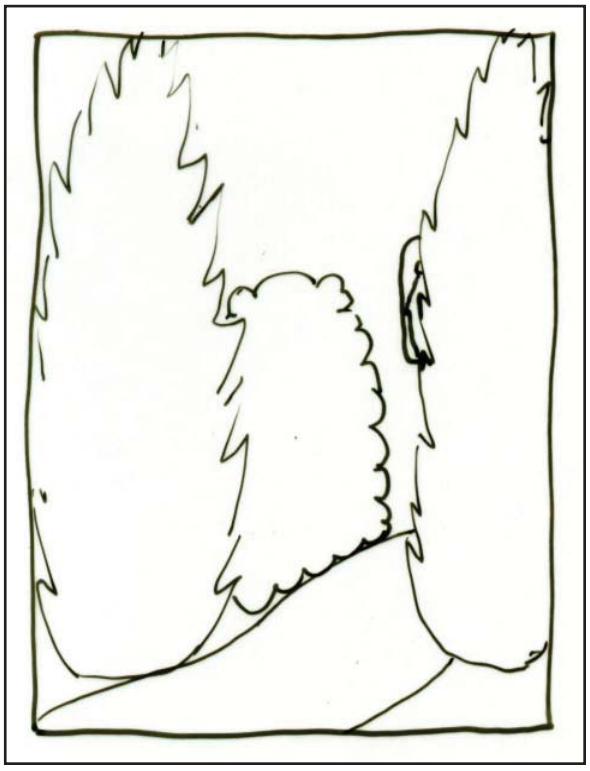
Shade Structures with Multiple Supports



Field Patterns in Tile

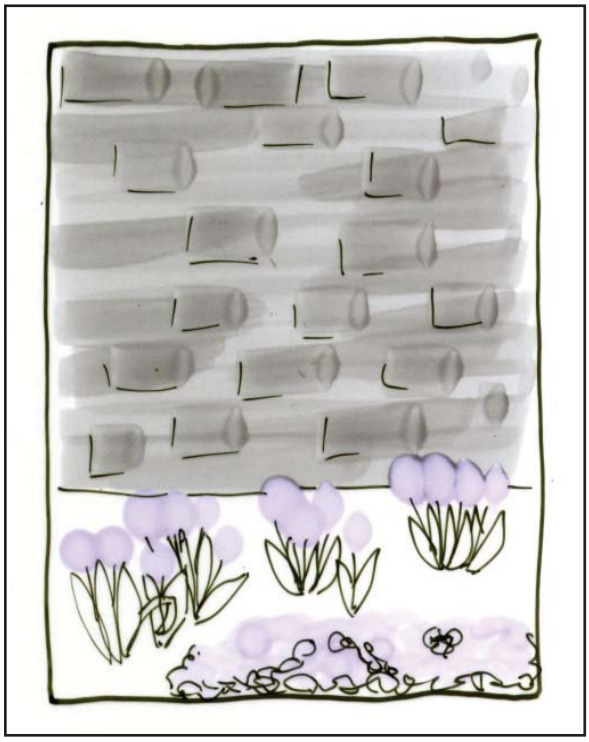


Paths with Tile

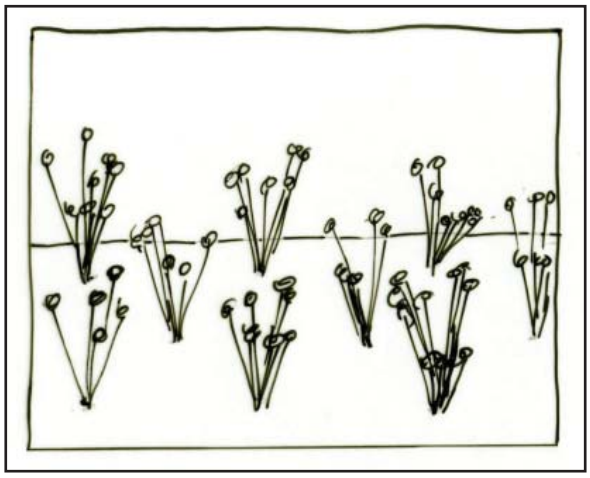


Vegetation Squeezed Views

Figure 6.2 Continued Abstracted Design Elements of Orvieto



Granite, Violets, and Iris



Vegetation in Quincunx
Tree Planting Pattern

Figure 6.2 Continued Abstracted Design Elements of Orvieto

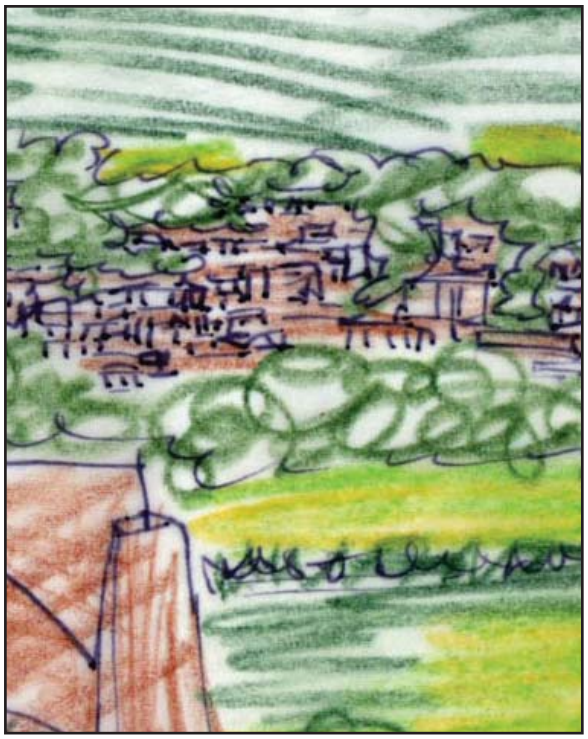


Figure 6.3 Structures: Groups of Buildings

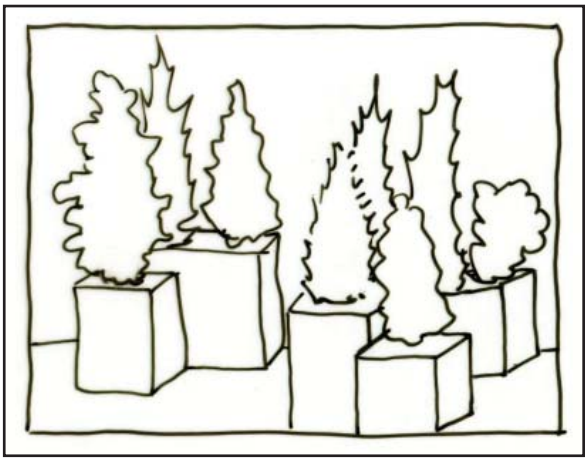
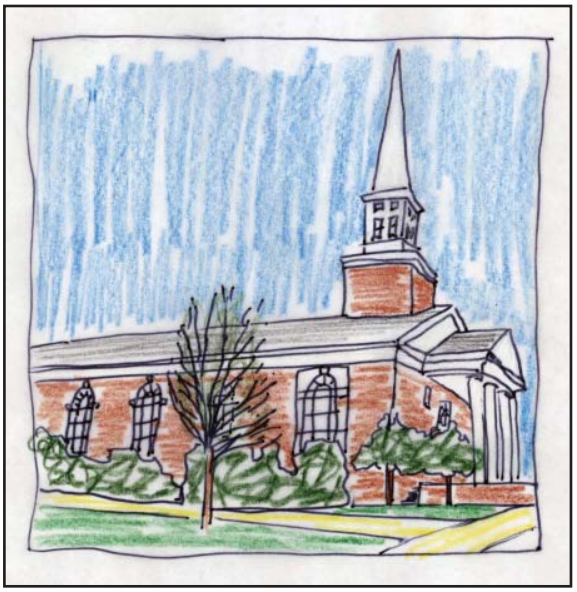
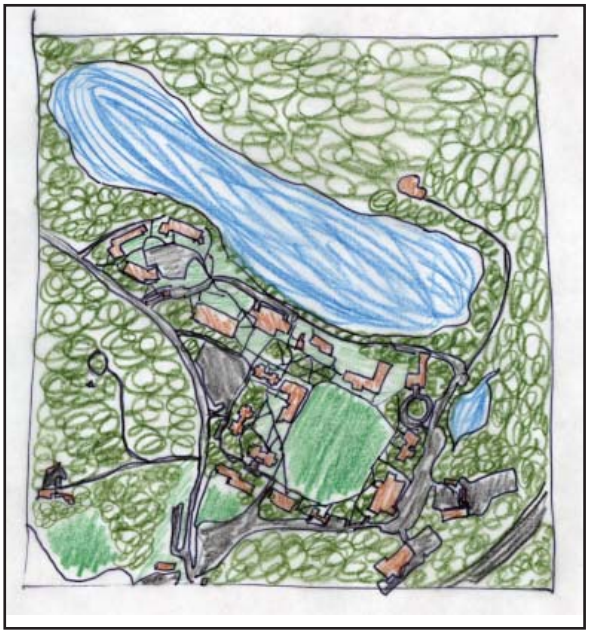


Figure 6.4 Groups of Planters



Gordon College Chapel

Gordon College Campus



Gordon College Campus

Gordon College Campus

Figure 6.5 Physical Elements of New England

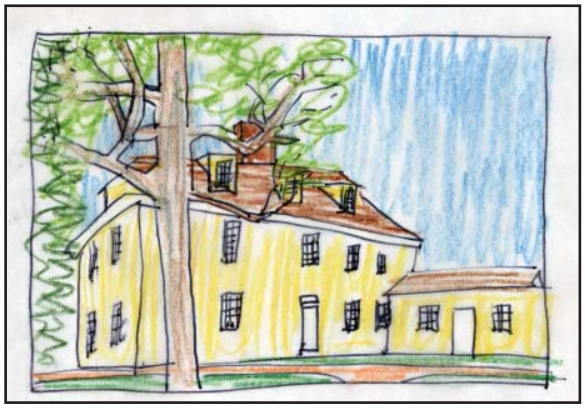
Gordon College Campus

Gordon College Campus

Gordon College Historic Building

Gordon College Campus

New England



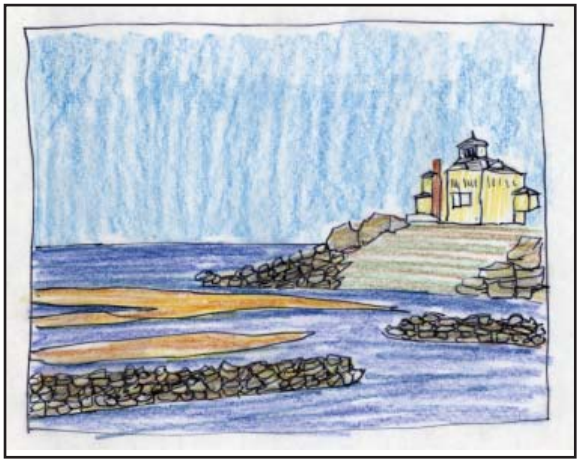
New England

Figure 6.5 Continued Physical Elements of New England

New England

New England Coast

New England



New England Coast

Wenham, MA

Wenham, MA

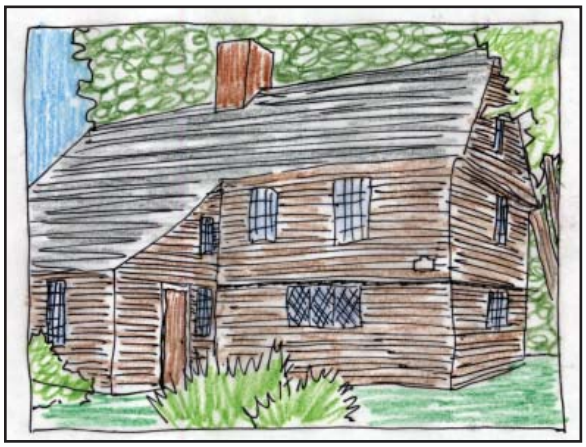
Figure 6.5 Continued Physical Elements of New England

Wenham, MA

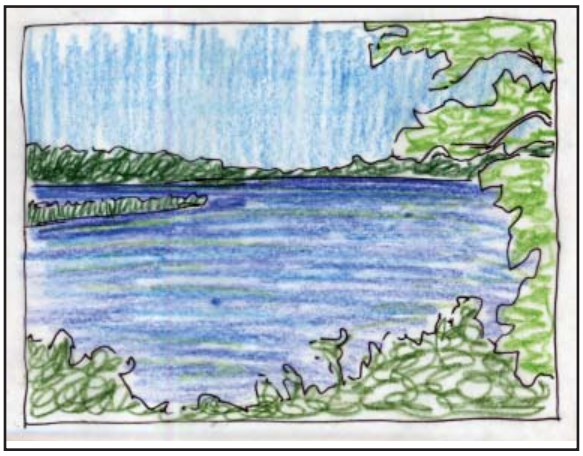
Wenham, MA

Wenham Marsh

Wenham, MA

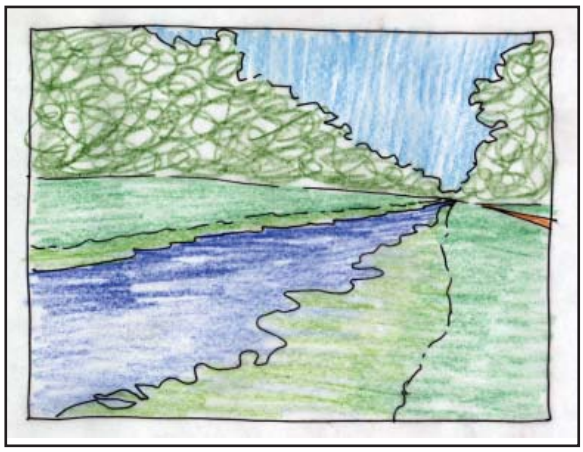


Wenham Historic Building

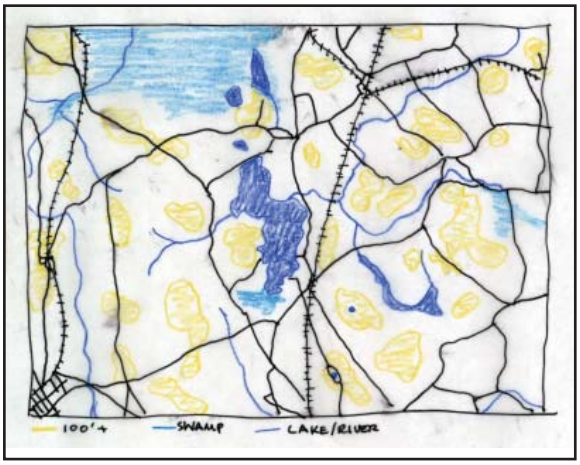


Wenham Marsh

Figure 6.5 Continued Physical Elements of New England



Wenham Canal



Wenham, MA Region

Figure 6.5 Continued Physical Elements of New England

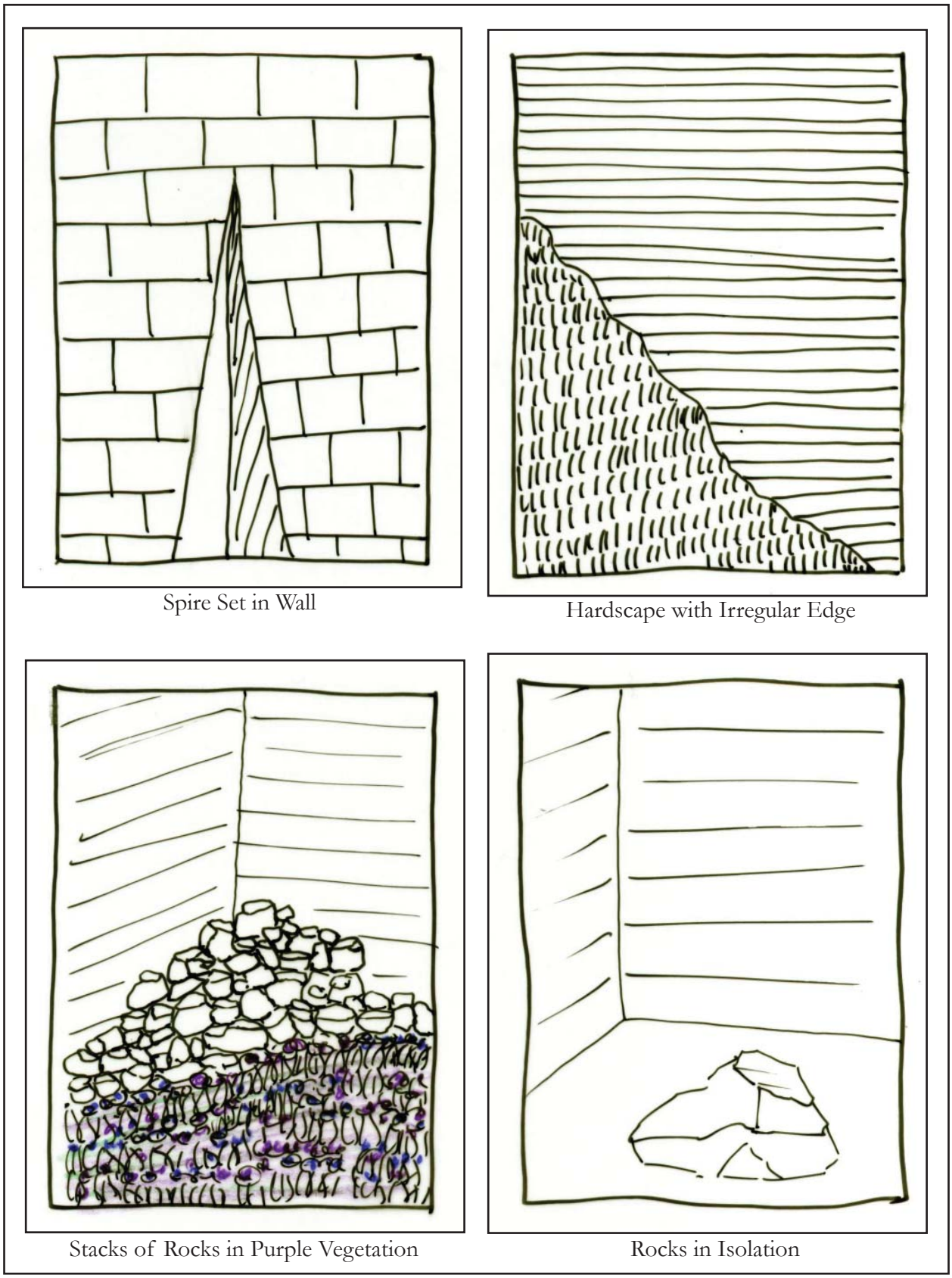
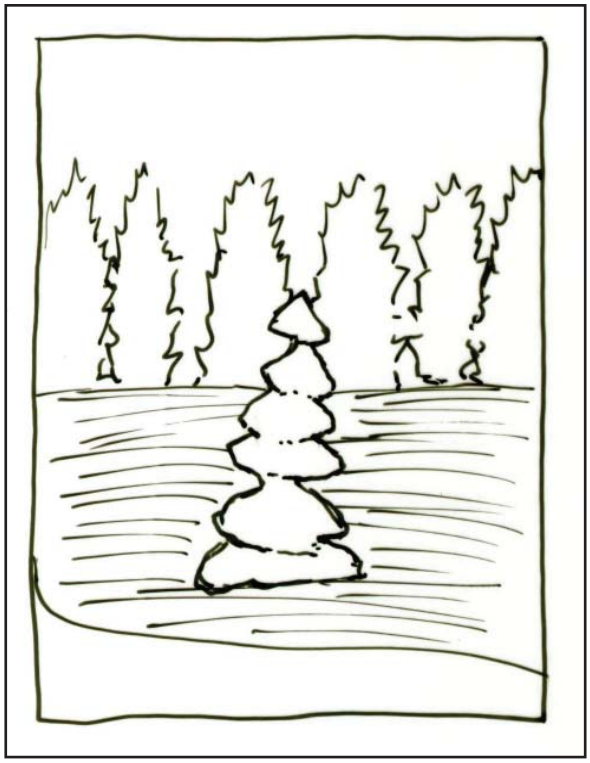
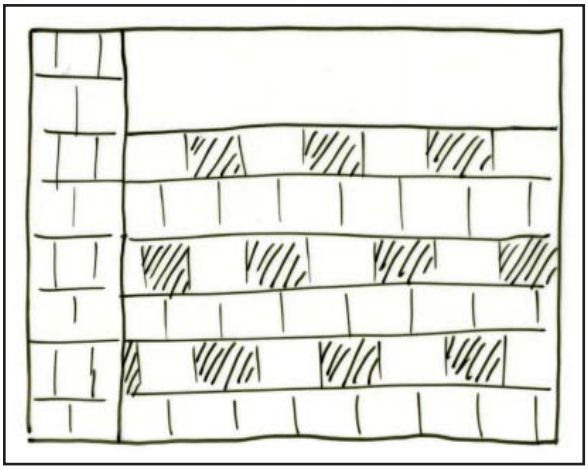


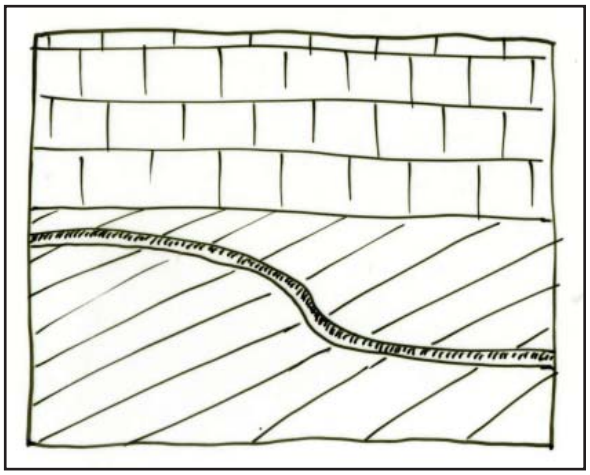
Figure 6.6 Abstracted Elements of New England



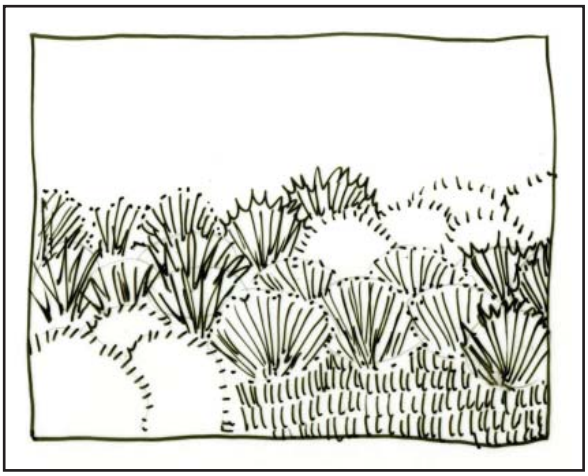
Vegetation Planted Singley



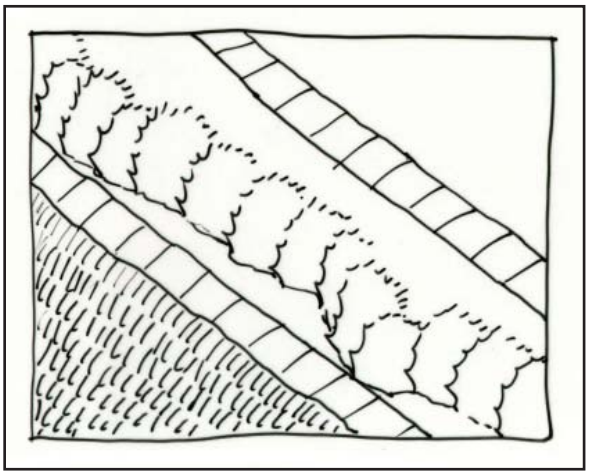
Hardscape with Irregular Edge



Rivulet

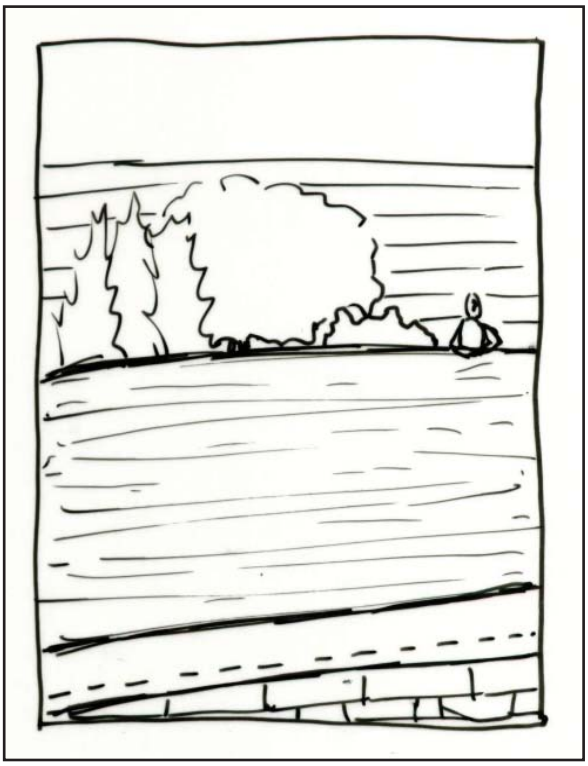


Various Grasses Planted in Groups

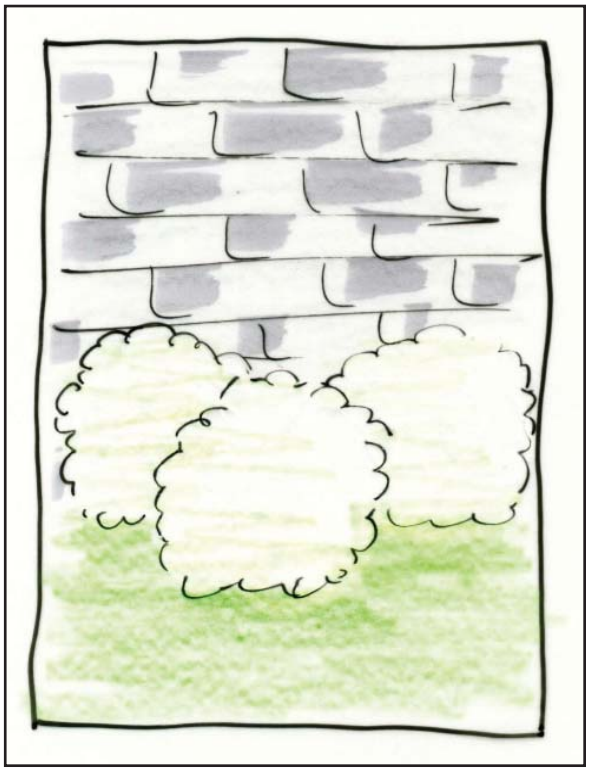


Hedges

Figure 6.6 Continuted Abstracted Elements of New England



Views over the Garden Wall



White Flowering Shrubs

Figure 6.6 Continued Abstracted Elements of New England

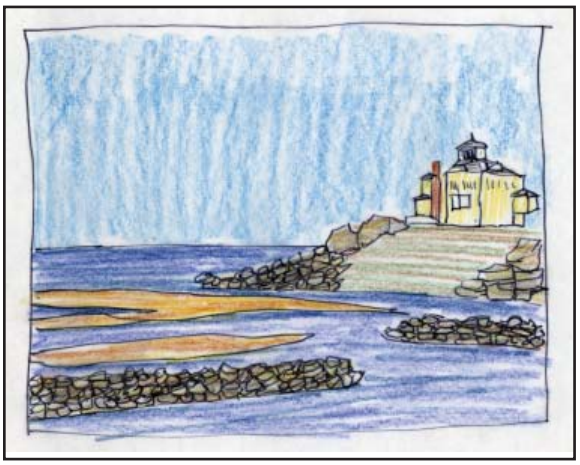


Figure 6.7 Background: Rocky Shoreline

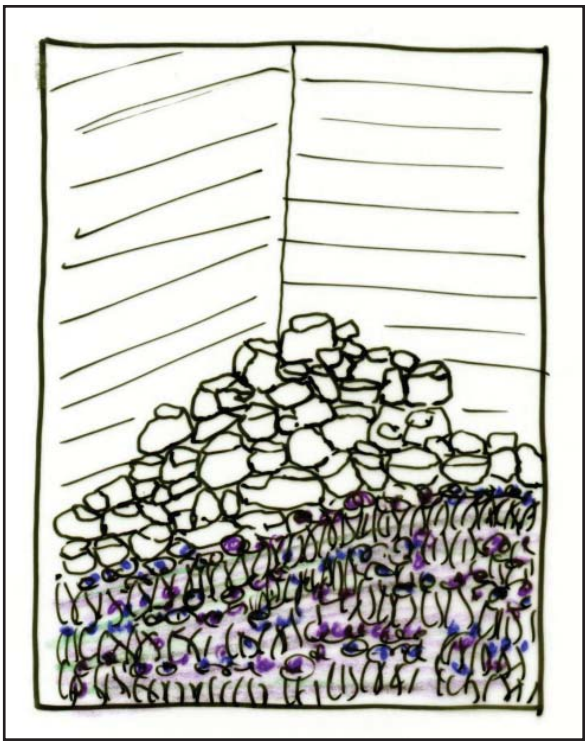


Figure 6.8 Rock Pile and Purple Vegetation

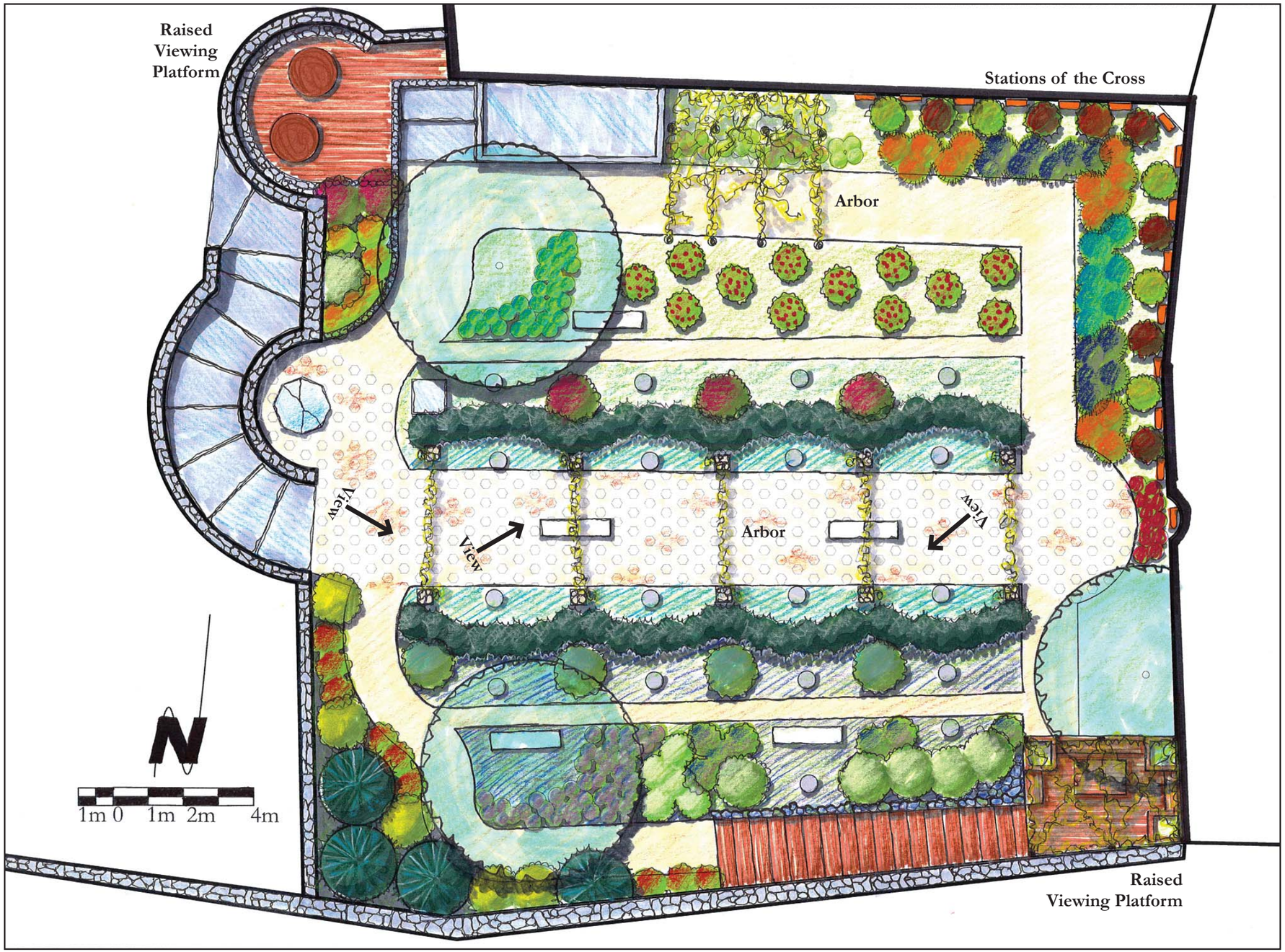


Figure 6.9 East Garden

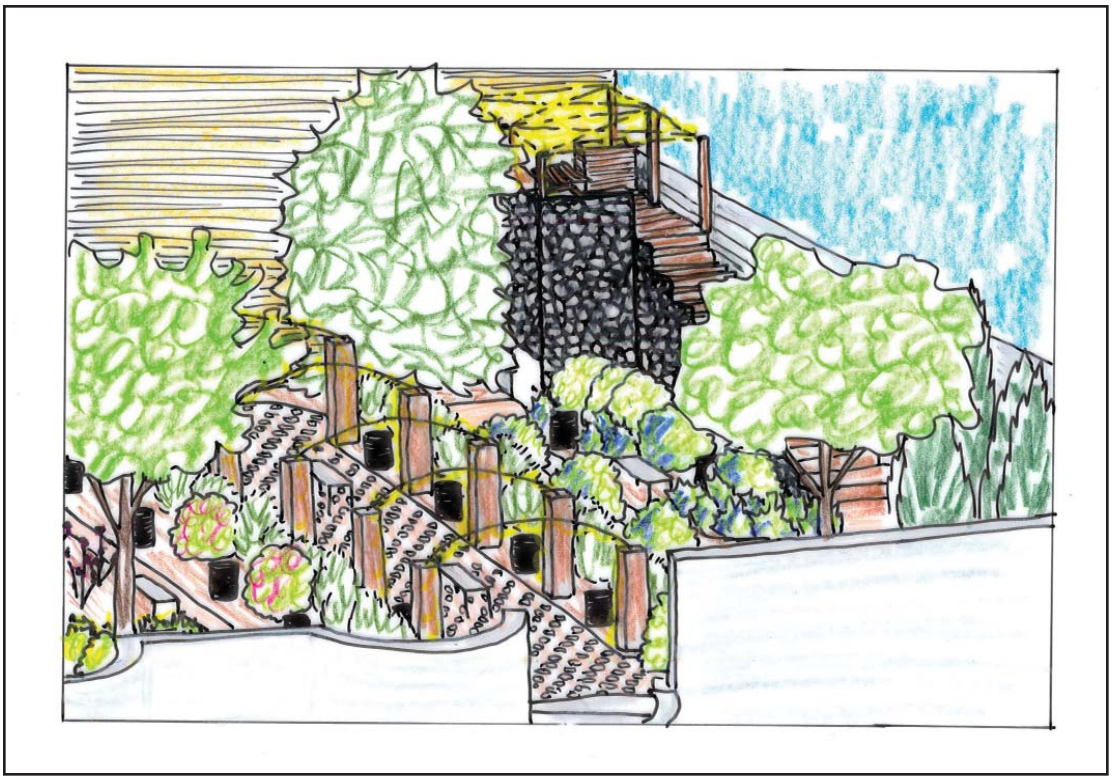


Figure 6.10 View of the East Garden

Figure 6.11 Views of Herbaceous City and Proposed Tree

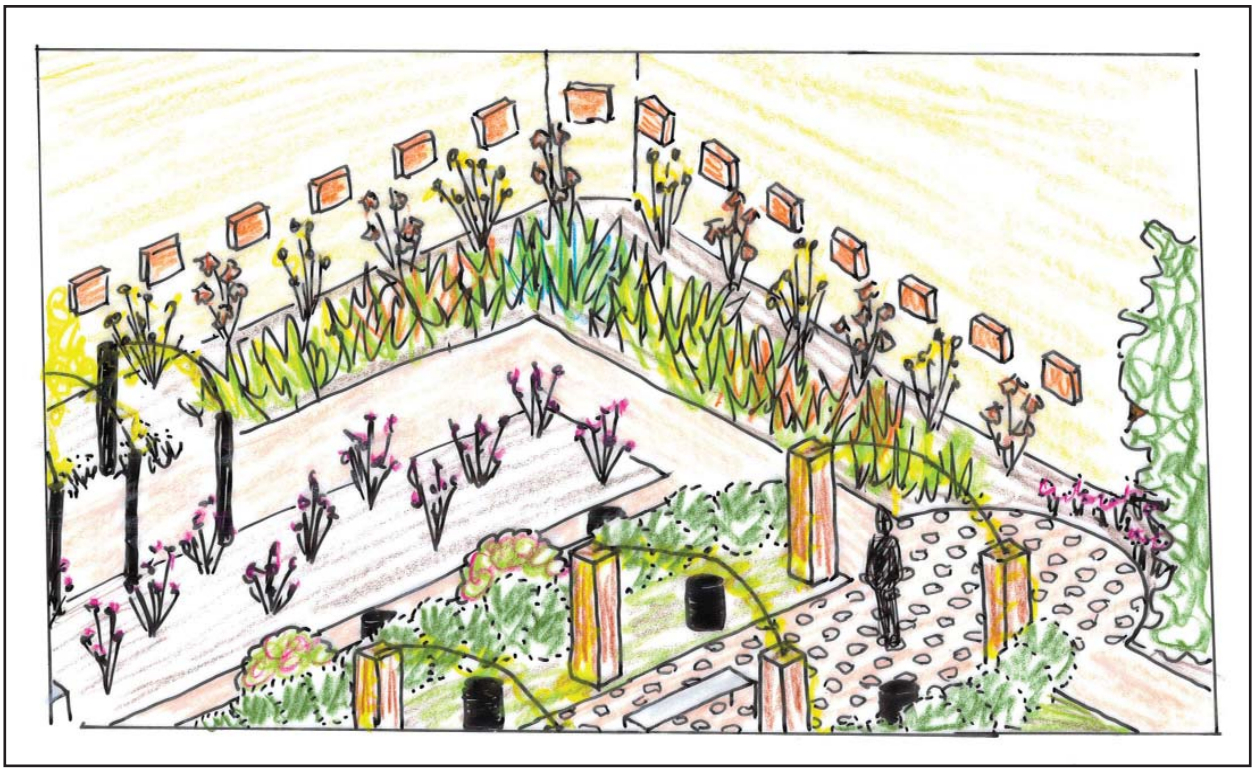


Figure 6.12 Stations of the Cross in the East Garden

Figure 6.13 West Garden

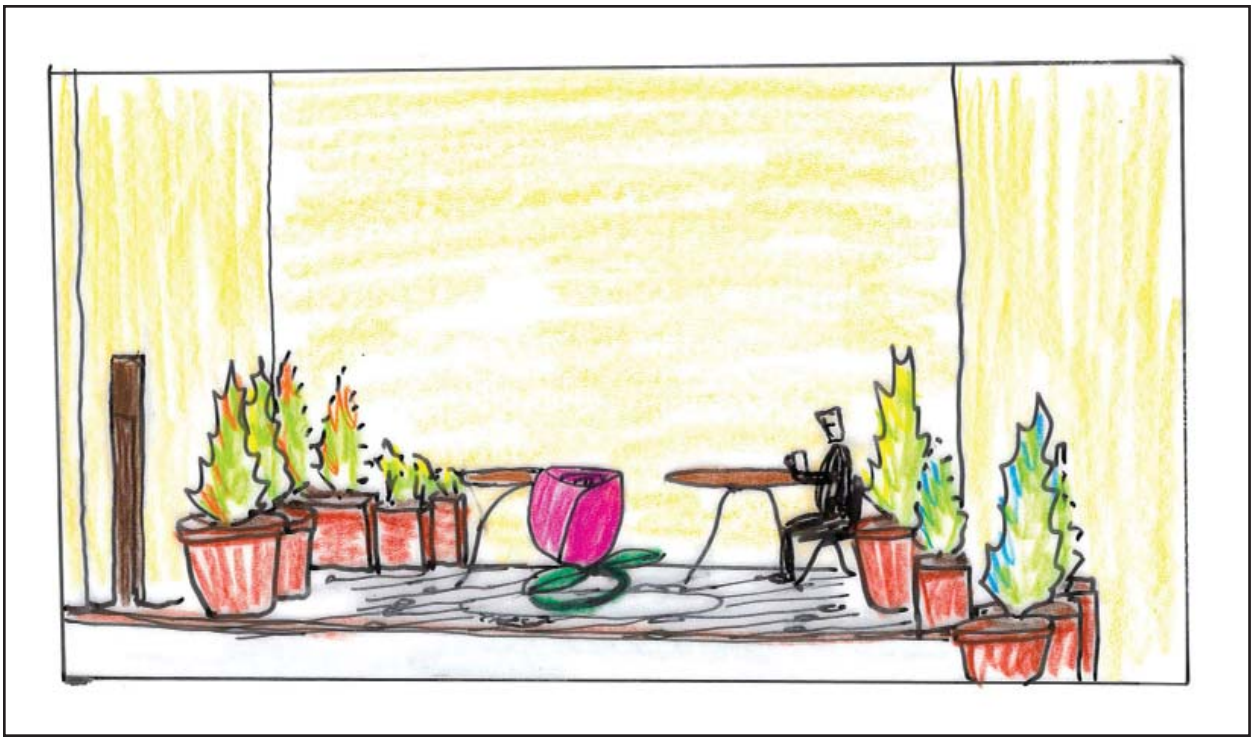


Figure 6.14 Courtyard Garden

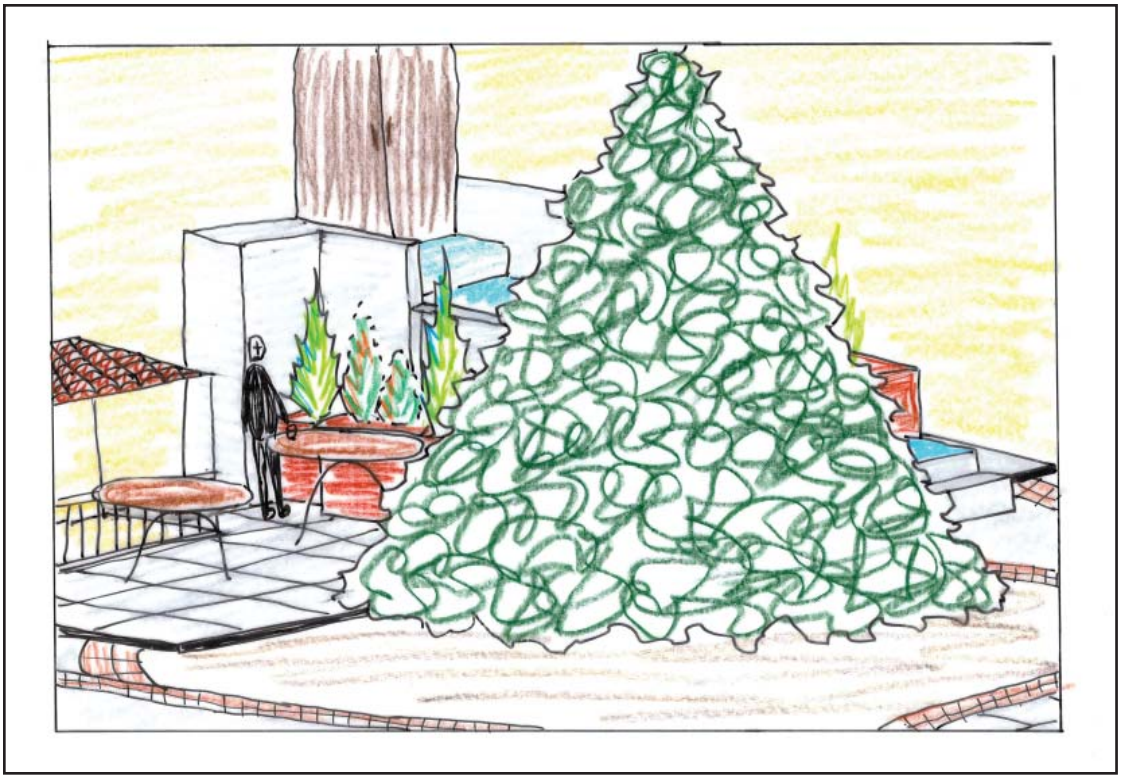


Figure 6.15 Holly Garden

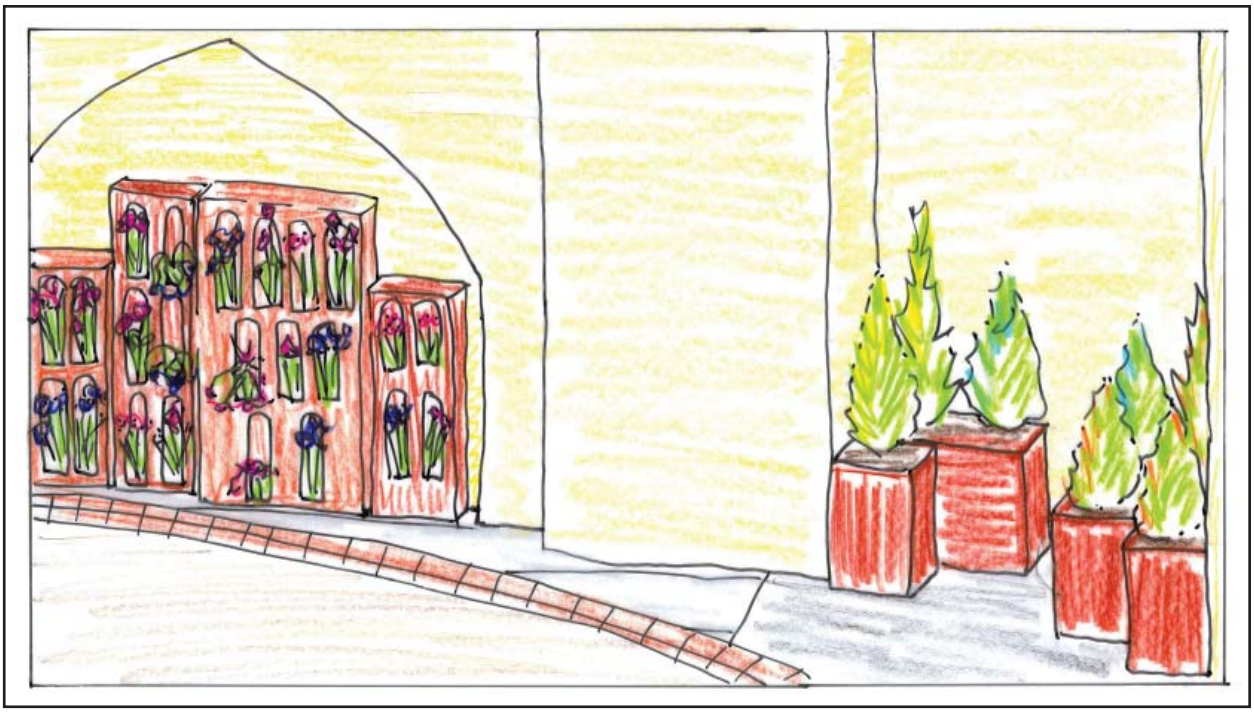


Figure 6.16 Campanile Plant Racks in Holly Garden

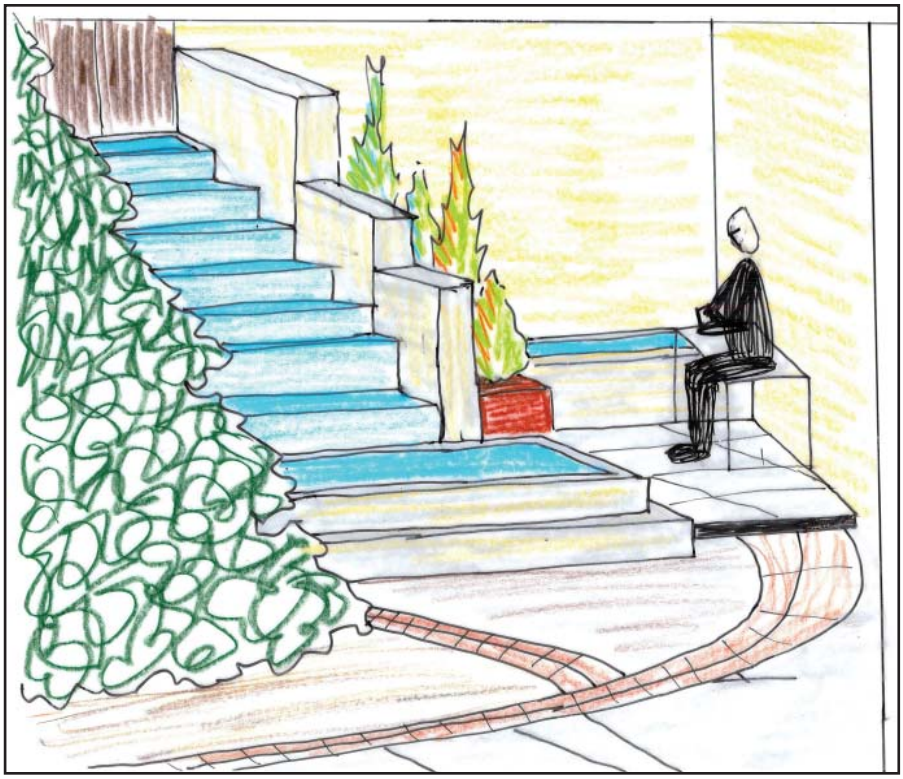


Figure 6.17 Sheet Waterfalls in Holly Garden

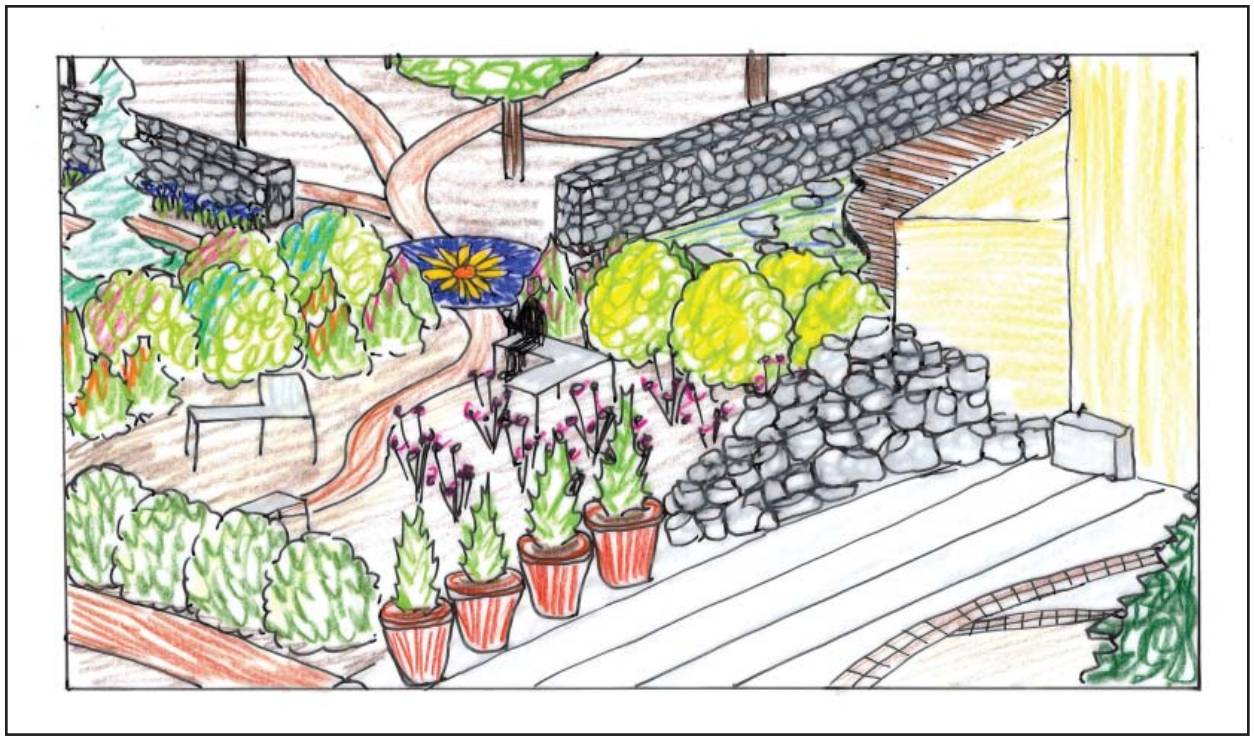


Figure 6.18 Overview of Field Garden and Western Edge of Holly Garden

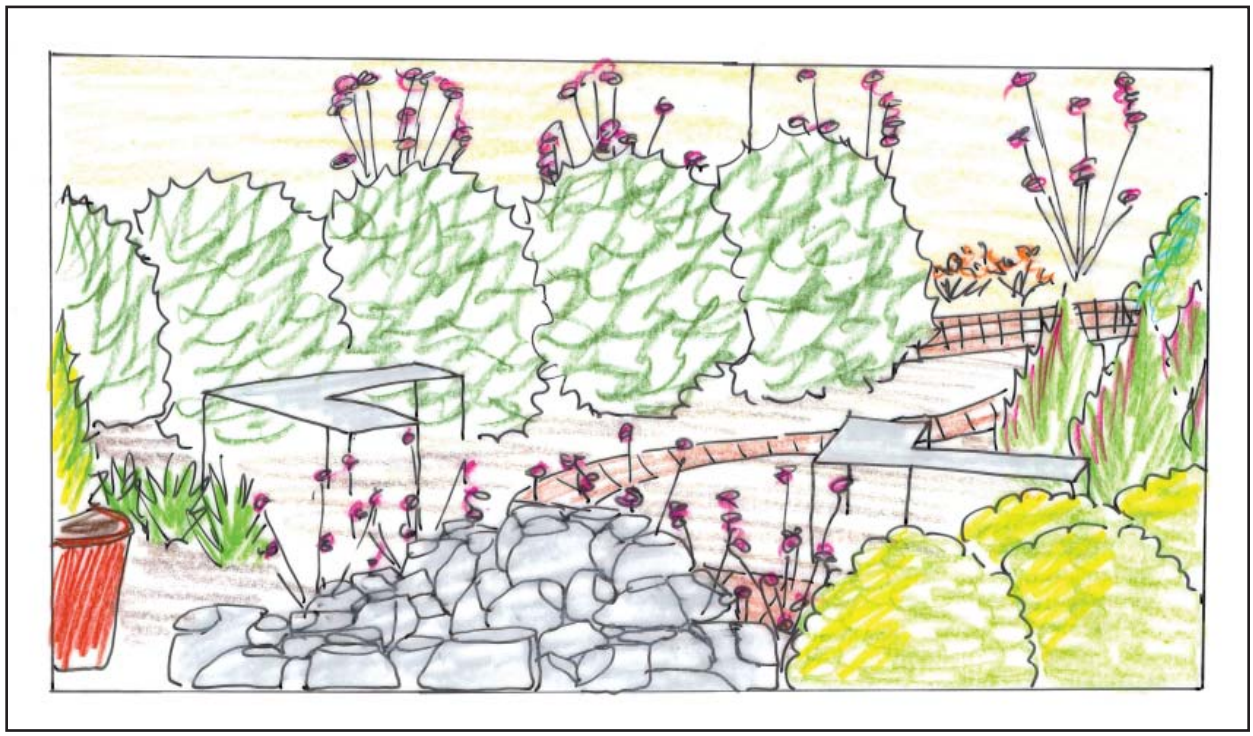


Figure 6.19 Field Garden from Holly Garden

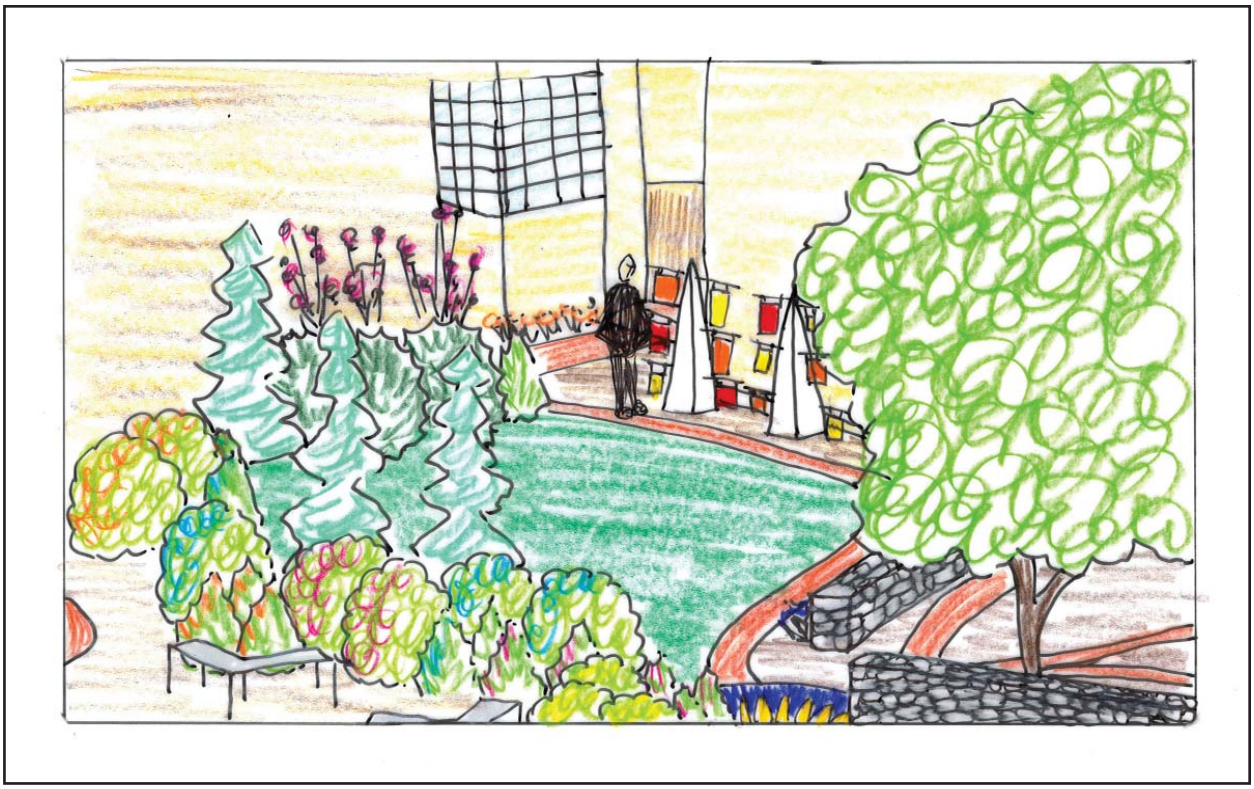


Figure 6.20 Open Space Garden

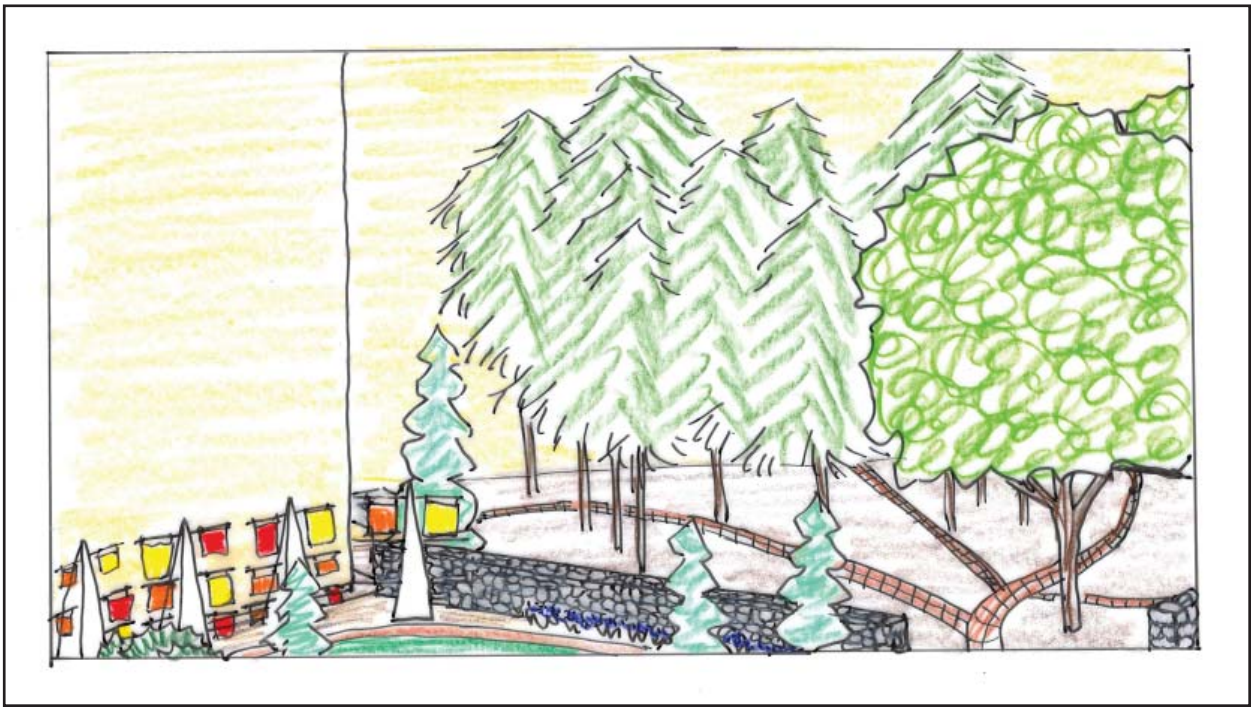


Figure 6.21 River Systems Garden

Figure 6.22 Shoreline Garden

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

In 1996, none of the ASLA Awards were given to designs outside the United States; however, by 2005, of the 35 winners, 5 were designed by non-American firms outside the United States. As landscape architecture moves into the 21st-century, due in part to the access provided by electronic communications systems such as email and the Internet, it is becoming easier to work outside ones own cultural context. Diverse cultures are brought closer by successful educational opportunities abroad, cross-cultural studios, experiential service learning, and design techniques such as the distillation method preparing today's designers for tomorrow's cross-cultural workplace.

On the cusp of a worldwide design market, the designer's toolbox is ready to meet the challenges of cross-cultural design. It is filled with tools which can be used to bridge the gap between cultures and prepare the way to bridge the gap between designed space and society. The distillation method provides a way of reaching the barest outline of a culture in a timely fashion.

Though is it relatively quick and can be inexpensive to employ, it is not the ideal approach to design across cultures. Ideally design across cultures would reference both cultural patterns and cultural meanings. Without cultural input, the abstraction of the physical elements can be easily over done creating landscapes which are so abstracted from the original that there is no real reference left. The Japanese Tori Gate is not just a particular arrangement of beams; it embodies the designer's vision of the perfect view. The distillation method by itself may reveal the Tori Gate as an important element of Japanese design, but it will not reveal the meaning of the gates. Consequently, though users may recognize the elements used in a distillation design as based on the landscape, they may

not be able to reconcile those elements with their traditional meanings. This is a particularly difficult drawback of the distillation method when used as the only culturally referential tool.

However, many of these disadvantages can be overcome by using the distillation method as one of many tools. The controlled nature of the method recalls the controlled study often done for ecological concerns and creates an atmosphere for learning about another culture instead of resorting to stereotypes. When used in conjunction with local informants or designers, the distillation method becomes a strong study tool for landscape architects working outside of their own cultural context.

In the future the toolbox will incorporate more electronic communication tools, cross-cultural experiences, and design techniques making cross-cultural design and collaboration even easier. As these tools are developed and practitioners around the world test them, further study is warranted to ascertain the continued efficacy of the tools in cross-cultural design work. The tools are flexible and powerful in their ability to smooth design collaboration across cultures. However, for this to continue to be true, landscape architects must seek out feedback and evaluate what is the next best step to bridge the gap between society and the designed space. The distillation method takes a first step to understanding across cultures in the design process, future work will have to push that understand further to keep up with the global market.

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