



# LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE



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Every rise in the land produces a view, and few such sites remain vacant for long in the urban suburbs. This is view from residence of Dr. Henry Swan II, looking west toward the Rockies.

## WHAT THE CLIENT WANTS

By JULIA SILVERSTEIN RIES

Current work of many landscape architects in the West reflects the demands of clients who want space around their homes, yet do not want the care of lawns and plantings that require continual watering.

They move out onto treeless prairies with a plot of several acres, expecting to have no maintenance problems with new plantings. They discover that they must bring in trees for shade, windbreaks, and a certain sense of privacy. We try to provide some of this planting in a limited area around the house, while most of the plot is put in as much native cover as the owner can be persuaded to accept, thereby reducing the work of keeping a large bluegrass lawn under irrigation.

In city gardens with ample water on tap, the properties become similar to city gardens elsewhere. Acidity of the soil can be brought up to where oaks can be grown. Some broadleaf evergreens—*Mahonia*, euonymus, and Korean boxwood, and occasionally *Magnolia soulangeana*—will be happy until an early frost catches the buds.

We are using gravels and cobblestones out of the river near Aspen. Paving may be of brick, concrete, or local flagstone, varying from pink to buff, but for places subjected to hard wear, there is green slate to be had from Vermont. A growing inclination, especially in the city,

is to use pavement to reduce the lawn area, not a bad choice because the relatively cool climate allows it.

Weeds grow luxuriously where water is applied so the pavements take some care. But people usually prefer green lawns and sometimes convert the native covers and graveled areas back to turf in spite of the nuisance of constant mowing and watering involved. We seem to be mere creatures of habit, wanting what we are used to—more than we are willing to admit.

A trend I deeply deplore but must cope with, is the desire of home owners to take their cars to bed with them, like the cowboy sleeping with his horse, or the farmer keeping his pig in the kitchen. Everyone wants to park at the front door, even in front of a picture window. In this we are losing our civility, something of our feeling for the urbane. We accept the finny obstruction of our outlook from living or dining room. The family car is a pet; its immoderate use is becoming a hysteria, our universal fetish.

Then there is the outcry against such practices as formulating restrictive city codes to limit fence heights and prevent the owner from getting what privacy he wants. But these are matters that pertain to all cities; Denver becomes only a symbol of the growing pattern of urban uses.