

**Rediscovering and Recovering the Front Yard:**  
A Study of Garden Yard Meaning and Owner Attitudes

BY

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for the degree of

**MASTER OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE**

Department of Landscape Architecture  
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**BY**

**Gillian Jurkow**

**A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University  
of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree  
of  
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## *Abstract*

Many people are rediscovering and recovering their front yards. This long ignored landscape typology is, in some places, gaining recognition as an outlet for creativity and personal statement. Viewing landscapes as expressions of the people who inhabit them, this study seeks to gain a better understanding of the broader implications of an emerging landscape- the garden yard.

The study combines three scales of analysis: the micro, meso and macro. It applies a survey and a set of statistical analyses to determine the personal motivations and the social and physical patterns behind the emergence of this new idea of 'yard.' Although garden yards had personal meanings for each individual responsible for their creation they provided, in general: a medium for people to express themselves and be creative, a reduction in lawn size and a source of relaxation and stress relief. Aside from this, these yards occurred most frequently in vegetatively enclosed, small-scaled, older neighborhoods with smaller front yards and large, mature trees. These neighborhoods are comprised of a younger demographic where individuals are most often employed in fields related to the arts and humanities, fine arts and social sciences.

The study highlights the dual aspects of this landscape. In particular, the front yard is revealed to be a place where the innovation of new landscape forms occurs simultaneous to the mimicking of these forms. While innovation can alter the landscape for a time by offering new landscape ideas, the copying of these ideas leads once again to a visually homogeneous landscape. Other aspects of the front yard's dual nature include that it is at once: private and public, personal and communal, cultural and natural. However, within the context of traditional front yard design, these aspects are not fully articulated or appreciated. Garden yards, on the other hand, seem to provide a better 'fit' or solution for this space, one that strikes a better balance between these seemingly opposing dualities.

## *Acknowledgements*

I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to all the members of my committee: Alf Simon, Charlie Thomsen and David Walker. First, I'd like to thank Alf for his encouragement in pursuing a study on *Garden Yards*- I'll never forget his excitement when I first approached him with my ideas. Next I'd like to thank David, who quite miraculously was able to make some kind of sense with my data (I would never have gotten past the analysis stage if it wasn't for him)! Lastly, I'd like to thank Charlie for his commitment and kind words- these will always be remembered.

I should also mention that I am greatly indebted to the "Ladies of Landscape," (Tricia Wasney, Wendy Simonson, Chris Harris, Emma Hall and Barb Haffner) for keeping me sane. Thank goodness you were going through the same ordeal, or could appreciate what it was like.

I'd like to thank my family for knowing when to ask questions (i.e. "When are you going to be done your degree so you can *start working*?"), but more importantly when to *not* ask questions (i.e. "When are you going to be done your degree so you can *start working*?"). Finally, thanks to David Cowie for: editing my document, massaging my feet and providing me with words of support and encouragement.

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## *Introduction*

It seems that the front yard is being rediscovered by many Winnipeggers; patio furniture, play equipment and exceptional displays of front yard ornamentation (even a fire pit!) abound in some neighborhoods. All reveal a more considered approach to this transitional space between the public and private realm. Furthermore, while most front yards in Winnipeg, and North America for that matter, consist of a lawn and foundation plantings, each year it appears that an increasing number of front yards are being *recovered*. That is, lawns are being dug up and replaced by gardens that host a diversity of herbaceous groundcovers, perennials, shrubs and other materials such as boulders, riverstone and paving. Thus, the intensively managed, monotonous single-species North American lawn may be giving way to a more relaxed approach in front yard design that includes other plants, and at most, a complete substitution of the lawn with native grasses, wildflowers, groundcovers and mosses (Daniels, 1995).

It is well understood that most North Americans participate in *yard* work rather than *garden-  
ing*, and this shift in outlook is most likely related to the fact that the space around our homes is just that- a *yard*. Yet the connotations that this word carries is part of the problem, as it is difficult to maintain a *yard* without spending time mowing. However, in many places throughout the world this space is commonly referred to as a garden. While yards are defined by their edges, gardens are defined by their contents (Groth, 1990). Thus, the 'yard' with lot line and foundation plantings is giving away to a truer notion of a garden, where flower beds fill a much larger space adjacent to the house. In order to gain some middle ground on the subject, this study will refer to these yards as 'garden yards,' and they will include any yard where a proportionally equal or greater amount of

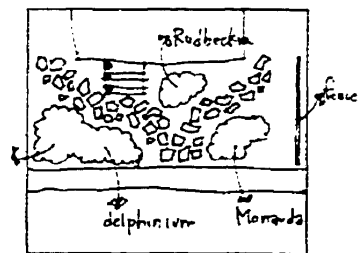


*"Gardening is a great thing, and it is a great thing to have a garden in the world to say, 'I have a garden.' It is a great thing to have a garden to know my neighbor's garden."*

garden (perennials, shrubs, rock) exists in relation to turf.

This study focuses on the front yard because it is accessible, but also because it is a transitional space between private and public realms; making it susceptible to both personal and communal ideals. Therefore, this study is concerned with understanding the meaning of this increasingly popular landscape and also gaining insight into owner attitudes. Among numerous possibilities, garden yards may be an expression of an increasing sophistication in landscape taste or a manifestation of concern for the environment, or both. Perhaps they reflect an aging community, where gardening has become a favorite pastime or even an attempt to lower maintenance. Other questions arise: are the neighborhoods in which these yards occur distinct in some way, or are they managed by particular types of individuals? In addition, this study is interested in discovering if this approach to front yard design might someday become a more normative front yard expression, just as lawn and foundation plantings are today.

Note: The photographs and plans on this and the following pages were taken or drawn in the field. Quotations were acquired from survey information that was also collected during this time (See Method for details). Images and text correspond to the same yard.



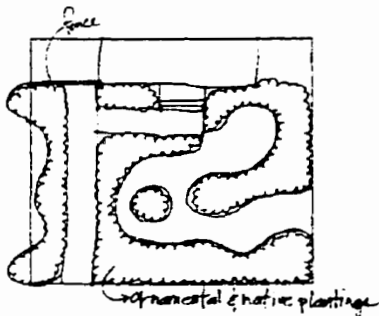
*"This garden, for all its beauty, is not for me, but for others to enjoy."*

## Part One: Context

### *Culture and Landscape*

The tangible and visible scenes of our everyday experiences have been described as places in which numerous knowledge systems intersect. In other words, they are considered 'nodes' that reflect and articulate cultural ideologies, shared meanings and common sense assumptions or 'discourses.' Each discourse is a readable social framework within which all practices are communicated, negotiated, or challenged (Schein, 1997; Robinson, 1998). Thus, each seemingly individual decision behind any (North) American landscape is embedded within a discourse. When the action results in a tangible landscape element, or total ensemble, the cultural landscape becomes the discourse materialized (Schein, 1997). In simpler terms: *culture changes landscape and culture is embodied by landscape* (Nassauer, 1995a). Yet it is human nature to take that which is familiar for granted, especially places that comprise our day-to-day experience such as our drive to work or the streets, yards and parks that make up our neighborhoods. This sentiment is encapsulated in the statement "for most Americans, the ordinary man-made landscape is something to be looked at, but seldom thought about ... the cultural landscape just is" (Lewis, 1979, p.11).

One such cultural landscape is the front yard. Although its functions and meanings are seldom pondered, the front yard is still valuable. As a transitional territory between the private and public realm, it has become *the* forum for a slow but on-going cultural conversation about conformity, civic duty, tradition and values (Jackson, 1987; Nassauer, 1995a; Nassauer, 1995b). Furthermore, the yard allows the home owner to pay his or her respects to public opinion; a place where

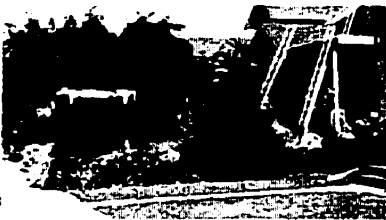
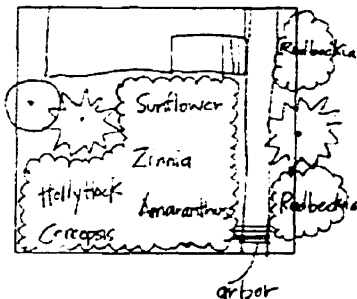


*The garden is a means of communication with the outside world. It is a way of saying to the world that we are thinking of them, thinking of the community and its appearance, and asking for goodwill and approval (Jackson, 1987). Baba and Gumbhani are the most common plants in the garden of an English gardener. I hope to see some of them in my garden, hopefully, much sooner than I do. My garden is a means of communication done with my front yard. It is a way of saying to the world that we are thinking of them, thinking of the community and its appearance, and asking for goodwill and approval (Jackson, 1987).*

communication among residents is expressed through the use of greenery (Jackson, 1987). Thus, the very act of maintaining and displaying a yard for public view tells the public that we are thinking of them, thinking of the community and its appearance, and asking for goodwill and approval (Jackson, 1987, Nassauer, 1995a). Girling and Helphand (1994) stated that in addition to shelter and the satisfactions of home life, the yard expresses identity, status, and the pride of ownership. It is not just territory, but a means to personalize one's environment *and* to signify participation in the community. The communication of these two messages in our yards is important. One message exhibits a recognition of community, a measure of sharing or togetherness between residents of a neighborhood, while the second is more personal; stating that within a community there are distinct individuals (Quayle and Driessen van der Lieck, 1997). In this regard, the personalization of the exterior space of a dwelling creates a continuous dialectic between individual identities and the implicit and explicit social codes of a community. It serves to both introduce the occupants and to distance the dwelling from the public sphere (Jacob, 1992).

### *Front Yard Vernacular*

Before Landscape Architects such as Andrew Jackson Downing, Frederick Law Olmsted and Frank Waugh influenced the vernacular of the front yard (Henderson *et al.*, 1998), most saw it not as a symbolic or ornamental showpiece (Girling and Helphand, 1994; Jackson, 1951; Cooper Marcus and Sarkissian, 1986), but as a utilitarian laboratory and workshop (Jackson, 1987). It was often an enclosed or fenced living space used for a variety of social and economic activities, including food preparation and keeping in children and animals (Schroeder, 1993; Groth, 1990). In fact, up





until the 1880s Americans fenced in their entire lots, linking front and back spaces mentally and visually (Groth, 1990).

The mid-1800s saw new fence laws. Movements such as the Rural Improvement Society and garden clubs, whose members learned the new outdoor manners of the late Victorian period, successfully altered the appearance of the front yard by eliminating fences in residential areas. With their absence the space became the open, flowing, park-like space we now associate with upper-middle class suburban life (Groth, 1990; Jackson, 1987). In addition, when Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux designed Riverside in 1869, an influential suburb in Chicago, they also consciously eliminated fences in the front yards and set a distance of at least thirty feet between the house and the street where lawns were required to be maintained (Daniels, 1995). In doing so, Olmsted and Vaux furthered the establishment and codification of the (North) American lawn (Poilan, 1991; O'Malley, 1999) and set the stage on which the current and ubiquitous open vernacular of the North American front yard could evolve.

Today, the wide acceptance, appeal and institutionalization of the front lawn makes it resistant to change (Schroeder, 1993). Perhaps this is because several generations of Americans spending their weekends mowing and watering lawns has embedded the idea of the lawn deep within the (North) American psyche; entrenching it as part of the social fabric of suburban culture (Daniels, 1995). Schroeder (1993) maintained that the traditional front yard persists because grass is easy and inexpensive to establish and maintain in most parts of North America. In addition, the contiguous lawn represents the 'best fit' between two adjacent households, whereby a general

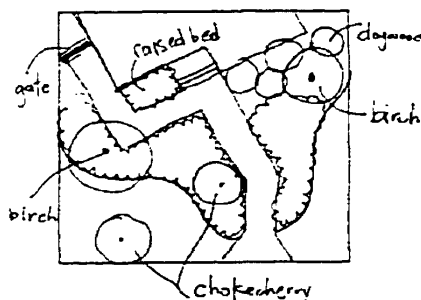
"My yard is better than a court, and the best of all is that  
so I went to the court."

consensus can be established between residents (Schroeder, 1993). Finally, the lawn persists because developers leave little option for new home buyers to replace it with anything else. Pollan (1991) expressed the (North) American love for this 'institution of democracy' in the following:

Perhaps it is this common land, rather than race or tribe, that makes us all American, we have developed a deep-seated distrust of individualistic approaches to the landscape. This land is too important to our identity to simply allow everybody to have their own way with it. And having decided that the land should serve as a vehicle of consensus, rather than as an arena for self-expression, the American Lawn- collective, national, ritualized and plain -presented the ideal solution. (p.73)

However, there has long been a lingering desire to create an alternative form to the open and flowing communal yard (Jackson, 1951). This notion was first championed by Elizabeth Gordon in the 1950s, and later by James Rose (1961). Gordon advocated the adoption of a more private, more American 'garden,' and undertook this task in a series of articles written in *House Beautiful* during a ten year period between 1951 and 1960. Such titles as "A Garden is American Style..." and "Does Your Front Yard Belong to You- or the whole Neighborhood?" reflect her growing discontentment with the ever-popular open front 'yard.' To Gordon's dismay an informal interview of homeowners conducted by *House Beautiful* in the summer of 1959 revealed that people are not likely to give up the public nature of their front yards. This is perhaps attributable to the fact that an open design facilitates the human desire to see and be seen (Gordon, 1960).

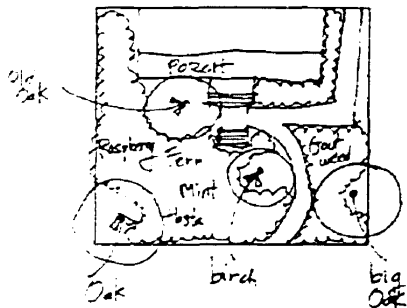
Rose (1961) also made an argument for privacy. He supported the use of vegetated screens that, when placed in small sections, create 'privacy-baffle' sequences which block undesirable views while accentuating pleasing ones, ultimately setting up a series of spaces or volumes within



*"This yard is a room, a room that I can go to when I'm in the mood for a quiet place to sit and read. It looks like a town house."*

the property. However, even after the suburban boom of the 1950s and 1960s, North Americans still insisted on nurturing the open yard, not an enclosed and private garden (Groth, 1990). Interestingly, Karen Koegler's (1991) study of an upscale neighborhood of smallish houses from the 1930s and 1940s in Lexington, Kentucky, showed a pattern of elements that produced a *softening of the front yard*. Elements such as asymmetry, curvilinear beds encompassing more lawn area, and greater use of flowers accounted for this softening trend. Such a design palette bears a striking similarity to Gordon's 'American Style' and professionally designed landscapes in general. Despite this trend, Koegler admitted that, while there is an attempt to enclose the space, it has still not become a place for private enjoyment (in Schroeder, 1993).

Today, less attention is focused on making the front yard a private space. However, a serious rethinking of this space is underway. In fact, a more recent edition of *House Beautiful* articulated this idea in an article by Ken Druse (1991) in which he stated: "The front yard is the stepchild of garden design" (p.50). He questioned why even garden lovers plant this most visible part of their property with turf grass and then ignore it, while their backyards are filled beyond capacity. Druse suggested that gardeners rediscover this often forgotten but obvious place- the land in front of their homes. He described privacy as an option, rather than a serious political stance on landscape taste, by discussing how to achieve a more or less private appearance to your front yard depending on personal taste. Perhaps most interesting, Druse highlighted how the front yard garden may be a creation that one shares with the community, where a beautiful entry garden becomes something that can inspire your neighbors. He even remarked that your entire street might gradually become a garden showpiece. While privacy is not the main issue anymore, the acceptance of the commu-



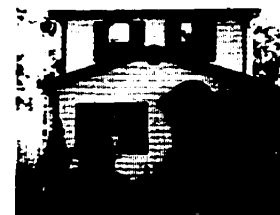
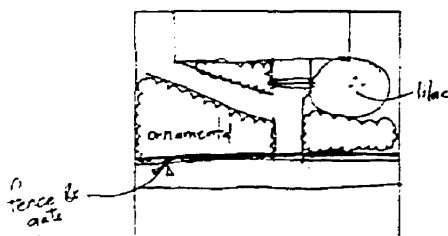


nal aspect of this space is noteworthy, as this is an appropriate and fundamental acknowledgment when designing for this personal, yet very public space.

### *New Idea(I)s, New Landscape*

Although the lawn is considered by some to be the heart and soul of the entire front yard (Jackson, 1951), to others the image of the lawn has been tarnished and has grown to symbolize something much less heroic in nature. This sentiment undoubtedly arises from the fact that the maintenance of a verdant green lawn not only feeds a billion dollar lawn care industry (Girling and Helphand, 1994), but also results in environmental damage due to pesticide and herbicide misuse and overuse (Henderson *et al.*, 1998). In the spring, 2000 a committee of Ottawa Members of Parliament presented a bill that would ban all lawn and garden chemicals for cosmetic purposes. Halifax City is the first Canadian city to actually ban these chemicals, while about fifty towns and cities across this country are seriously considering this option. More recently, research by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the United States has lead the government to ban the use of a pesticide known as Durzban. It is expected that the Canadian government will follow suit. At any rate, people are now more than ever seriously questioning the environmental and health hazards associated with the verdant green and weed-free lawn.

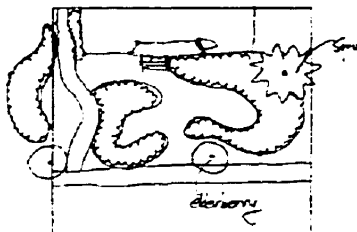
Today, (according to the Lawn Institute in Tennessee) the United States alone has some 50,000 square miles of lawn under cultivation, on which is spent an estimated \$30 billion a year (Pollan, 1991). Daniels (1995) believed that changing attitudes about home landscape design are reflected in various movements that have grown steadily in the last ten years. She stated that



*"My yard expresses my desire to be able to sit on the lawn and enjoy the process of growing things, and to be able to share the lilies with other people who are interested in them."*

trends towards more natural landscaping, including xeriscaping, backyard wildlife habitat programs, wildflowers in home landscapes and roadsides, represent a shift from a ceremonial perspective of the front yard to one that is more functional in nature. Moreover, perhaps these trends indicate the emergence of a North American aesthetic in garden design. This is well overdue considering that (North) America has not achieved an indigenous garden style (Rose, 1961). In fact, many feel that garden design continues to be the one aspect of our culture in which our dependence on England has never been broken (Pollan, 1991).

J.B. Jackson stated that the lawn may possibly be replaced. However, he stipulated that if it does it will not be because "the toiling masses behind the lawn mower have rebelled. It will be because a younger generation has fewer convivial associations with it; has found other places for group functions and other places to play...it will be because the feeling of being hedged in by conventional standards of behavior has become objectionable" (Jackson, 1951, p.7). In contrast, gardens unlike lawns create experiences that uplift our spirits, expand our vision and invigorate our lives (Daniels, 1995). This aspect of gardens and gardening has been studied extensively by environmental psychologists Stephen and Rachel Kaplan, who describe the garden as *the* quintessential *micro-restorative* environment, whereby participants derive intense satisfaction and fascination from this small, but meaningful place. Pollan went on to describe gardening as "...a subtle act of give and take with the landscape, a search for some middle ground between culture and nature. A lawn (is) nature under culture's boot" (1991, p.74). He added that if the lawn is a symptom of, and a metaphor for our skewed relationship to the land, then the garden can serve as a metaphor for healing our relationship to the earth.





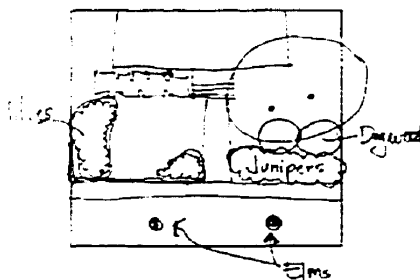
*"The small lot, back to back, with a narrow strip of lawn between them, is sort of L-shaped, but it is not a typical lot. It is a very narrow lot, and my front yard is a very narrow strip of lawn. It is a very narrow strip of lawn multiply*

Reynolds

### *Think Globally, Garden Locally*

Since the beginning of human time, we have expressed ourselves through the gardens we have made. They live as records of our private beliefs and our public values, good and bad. Today, "the garden is a potent symbol for what many believe is happening to humankind- a transformation of consciousness whereby the technocratic, exploitative world view is no longer sufficient" (Cooper Marcus, 1990, p.30). A yearning for a more balanced holistic world view has been, and continues to be, expressed by various movements including ecology, holistic health, feminism, and by a general reemergence of spiritual values. Cooper Marcus remarked that "the rising intellectual interest in the garden is as much a reaching out for this earth metaphor as it is a concern for those tiny plots of land attached to our homes" (1990, p.30). She believed that "by focusing on the landscape of the simple domestic garden, perhaps we can learn to reconnect with the most complex and precious of gardens, our planet earth" (Cooper Marcus, 1990, p.32).

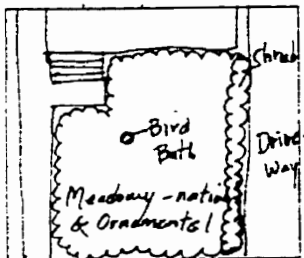
Traditionally, North American ideas and symbols of the front yard derive from the European ideal of nature translated to a new continent. It was the European appreciation of nature through post-Renaissance landscape painting that eventually gave rise to the green symbols (lawns and evergreens) of the American front yard (Smardon, 1988). In essence, this space is an attempt to reproduce a small-scaled but certain and familiar setting; it is a landscape in miniature where the patch of grass and ornamental plantings stand for something much larger, richer and more beautiful (Jackson, 1951). Furthermore, the suburban landscape is also a record of changing ideas about this space; as cultural values change and new ideas emerge, so new forms are required and created (Crang, 1998). In this context, the need to create landscapes that are not just *symbols* of

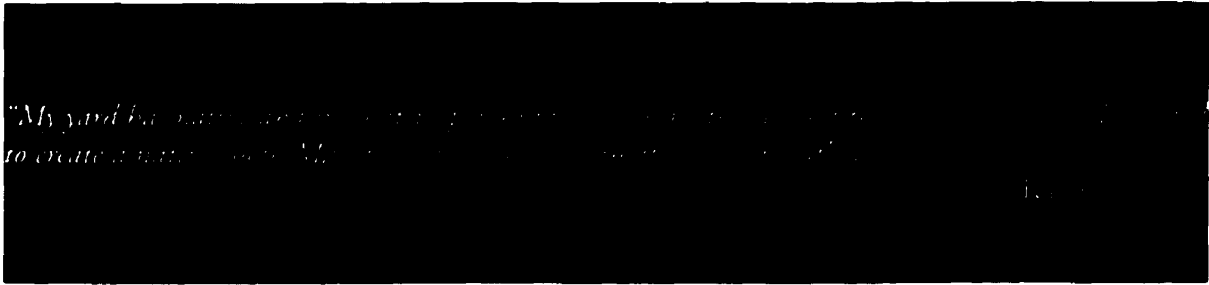


*"I told the neighbors about the meadow, and that they should take care of it. I was surprised that was my responsibility. We are the ones who have to take care of it."*

11/11/11

places that are rich and beautiful, but are *real* symbols of diversity and health is imminent. More specifically, they need to more fully recognize, articulate and reflect today's society- particularly in reference to the importance and value that we, as a culture, place on ecology and community. This can be accomplished by further study of those front yards that already offer this biotic richness- places where people have already *rediscovered* and *recovered* their own front yards.





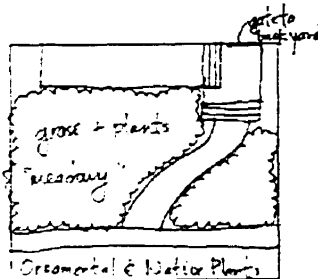
## Part Two: Previous Studies

The vernacular of the front yard is so unquestioningly accepted that relatively few studies have analyzed this landscape typology specifically. The studies which do exist tend to span a variety of disciplines including urban ecology, cultural geography, landscape planning and landscape preference. Interestingly, regardless of the discipline of the researcher(s), the studies tend to overlap in the subjects that they examine. This section describes a series of studies which have been influential in the design and content of this study. Their findings provide insight and information that allows for the making of predictions about where and why garden yards occur, as well as who is likely to create them.

### *Landscape and Built Form*

Henderson, Perkins and Nelischer (1998) conducted a study in Guelph, Ontario to determine the number, distribution and qualities of 'lawn alternatives.' A lawn alternative, though similar to a garden yard, was defined as a front yard dominated by woody and herbaceous plants with a maximum of 20% lawn cover. Lawn alternatives were observed and documented by driving every street in the city of Guelph and viewing each house with a front yard. Approximately 1.5 % of all residential front yards were classified as lawn alternatives.

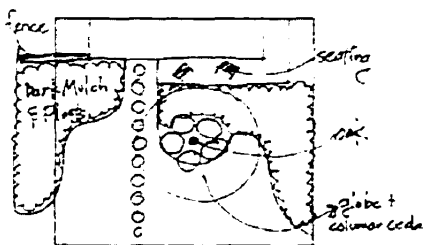
In general, they found that the physical form of the community appeared to have a strong influence on the distribution and abundance of lawn alternatives, as the majority of alternatives were found in older, more established neighborhoods that had smaller scale streets and a strong sense of vegetative enclosure. These older communities were characterized by a diversity of form



*"I'm from Houston and I've always had a lawn. I've never had a lawn in my life. It's different, grass is a different thing. I've never had a lawn in my life. It's a year for the people."*

and social makeup that seemed to also influence the presence of lawn alternatives. Larger trees found in older communities were observed to provide an abundance of shade, making it more difficult to grow turf grass and more tempting for homeowners to opt for an unconventional ground cover. Congruity was also highlighted as a major reason why lawn alternatives are more plentiful in older communities. Wohlwill and Harris (1998) in Henderson *et al.* (1998) described congruity as a condition whereby harmony or integration exists between a feature and its background. In this respect, the rich vegetative matrix of older communities was observed to create an environment in which unconventional front yards could visually disappear. Similarly, Jim (1983, p.136) found that "house age is an important determinant of tree characteristics." For example, "older streets have more houses with trees, and also more species. The more recently completed streets have spare plantable spaces yet to be exploited." Thus, older communities have had more time to evolve and for trees to grow, mature and spread their seeds.

Jacob (1992) studied the personalization of micro-landscapes in New York by comparing front yard ornamentation in two neighborhoods that are socioeconomically and ethnically similar but spatially distinct. Johnson City in upstate New York originated as a Company Town in the 1930s surrounded by factories and warehouses. All houses were of a standard design: rectangular with two stories, a steep roof and a fairly deep front porch. The Stair Tract, in Vestal New York, was named after a developer-builder who constructed it in the 1960s. Plots are identical but considerably larger than those of Johnson City. Also, there are three types of house designs in Vestal. All are variations of a basic blueprint that combine traditional features from the Colonial Revival style (clapboards, shutters, an eagle above the door frame), with strong horizontal lines and low-pitched



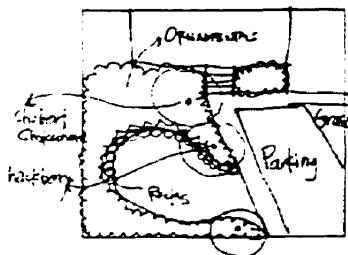
"My yard is not a place that I go to, it is a place that I go to because of my hobby that sustains my life."

1991

roofs of the Ranch-style home.

Jacob's study found that spatial context significantly modified patterns of yard activity in the two neighborhoods, particularly the presence or absence of a front porch. For example, throughout the summer months the older residents of Johnson City spent long hours on their broad porches. In general, it was found that the more front-focused homes of Johnson City along with its broad sidewalks encouraged more social interaction. In turn, residents had fairly detailed knowledge of and concern for their neighbors, suggesting a well developed sense of community. In contrast, front yards in Vestal, although almost twice as big, were rarely used; most activity took place in the back. In addition, the absence of sidewalks, hilly terrain (making walking more difficult), greater distance from shopping destinations, as well as large garages and driveways ensured that pedestrians are a much rarer phenomenon in Vestal, emphasizing the depopulated feel of the neighborhood. Furthermore, these observations corroborate findings of a study on the American front porch by Sue Beckham. She theorized that the presence or absence of this feature can either nurture or suppress the formation of social networks in a neighborhood and that the liminal state of this area generates codes of behavior that are quite different from those observed in interior or exterior spaces (in Jacob, 1991).

Both studies indicated that residential built form can, to some extent, predict the way people use and behave in their yards. These findings are not surprising. We know that designed spaces can be either *sociopetal*, places that promote social interaction, or *sociofungal*, spaces that discourage such interactions (Osmond, 1957 in Coley *et al.*, 1997). In relation to this study of garden yards, perhaps physical form, behavior and use of exterior spaces are linked. For example, one



*"My garden is a part of my life, and I have spent many hours in it. I have learned much from it, and I have found it a source of joy and inspiration. It is a place where I can be alone and yet feel part of a community. It is a place where I can be myself and yet feel like I am part of something larger than myself."*

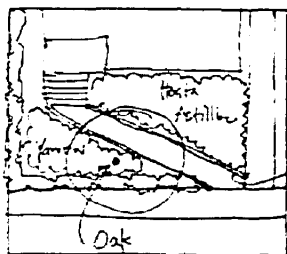
Kate

might predict that garden yards will most likely occur in older neighborhoods, where houses have front porches and where there is a more active street life. With more activity occurring in the front people are more likely to spend time in their front yards. In this respect, it is not hard to imagine that garden yards may in part be a symbol of a socially cohesive neighborhood, where residents enjoy casual interaction with their neighbors while they putter in their gardens. In fact, the potential social aspects of this built environment are well-known. Quayle and Driessen van der Lieck (1997) made the comment:

In the neighborhood, tinkering, gardening, and fixing up, if seen from the public street, are activities that draw comments, sometimes unwanted advice, helpful hints or nosy questions. People feel encouraged to talk to one another when there is something obvious to talk about. Raking leaves or clearing snow off the sidewalk are communal activities often commented on by passersby. Words of support make the person doing the work feel valued as part of a social group; their role as an appreciated member of the community is affirmed. (p.102)

### *Socioeconomics and Landscape Expression*

Blake and Arreola (1996) questioned the claim that residential subdivisions lack identity. Their paper tackled this subject by exploring the subtle ways that people attach and convey meaning through their landscapes. They investigated subdivisions in Phoenix, Arizona, a city touted as the "essence of a master planned subdivision landscape" (p.24). In their quest for meaning Blake and Arreola used the word *identity* to refer to "the connotations or subjective meanings projected by a unique combination of name themes or landscape elements" (p.24). Identity is also described as encompassing the character or distinctive qualities of a place that enhance feelings of attachment. *Landscape* refers to all elements visible from a subdivision: vehicular or foot paths, and attributes

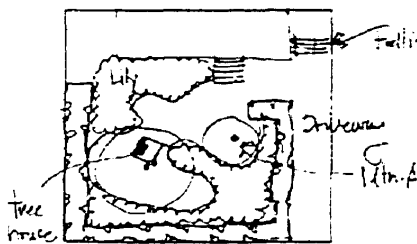


*"It's a quiet, serene, and peaceful world. I've never seen a more beautiful world."*

of the houses, yards, streets and alleys. When choosing subdivisions, careful consideration was taken in selecting for a range of the following variables: location, age of area, race and ethnicity of residents, house value, and type of development (master planned, tract, or custom). Census data and field observations were used in the selection process.

Among the three different classes of subdivisions, the number of landscape signatures, such as professionally managed ornamental plantings, security gates and lush expanses of lawn, were highest in the upper-income residential areas. This is not to say that lower income areas did not have identity, they simply had fewer institutional markers to project it. Instead, brightly painted houses and trims tended to project identity in lower-income subdivisions. However, the age of the subdivision was found to be a more significant indicator of identity than location or house values. This is in particular reference to ornamental planting and the degree of homogeneity in house style and color. Interestingly, in newer subdivisions personal identity was not expressed through house style, so the yard was the signature medium. "Yard art and front line property markers abound on xeriscapes, where multicolored rock art, a personal landscape signature, is practiced with relish" (Blake and Arreola, 1996, p.30). In contrast, the identity of older subdivisions is more often based upon lush ornamental plantings.

Numerous other studies have produced similar findings. For example in 1975, Schimid (in Dorney *et al.*, 1984) conducted a study of urban vegetation in Chicago by studying five neighborhoods involving 35 census tracts in Chicago. He distinguished between the *open* landscape typical of most urban areas and the *closed* landscape of older, wealthier suburbs with dense plantings of trees and shrubs. Based on this study he concluded that vegetation patterns reflect differences in

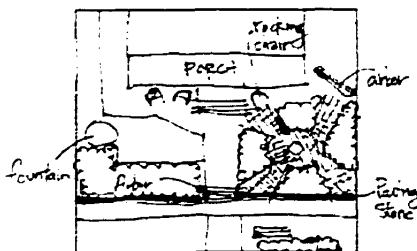


*"For me, my gardening is a hobby, and I have a lot of fun doing it. I have a lot of friends in the community and neighborhood groups. I'm the president of a garden club, and I've been given that as a step. I don't know if it's a step or not, but it's a nice thing to be in. It's nice for me and for the community. I'm responsible for taking care of the garden. I started the whole community garden."*

age and socioeconomic attributes of the neighborhoods. The idea that landscape tastes can reflect status and wealth was examined further in Duncan's paper "Landscape Taste as a Symbol of Group Identity." The study took place in Bedford, New York, where it examined the landscape tastes of two socioeconomically similar (upper-middle to upper-class) but geographically and socially distinct groups of people. It was found that members of the *alpha* (upper class) landscape attempt to exclude lower socioeconomic people who live in the *beta* (upper-middle class) landscape from their social circles by using landscape tastes to distinguish between people who may be desirable members of their social network and those who clearly are not.

The alpha landscape was the oldest residential landscape in the area. It was characterized by a picturesque landscape comprised of unpaved, winding roads and wide expanses of meadowlands studded with fine trees. Lots were large and the closed or heavily vegetated landscape limited casual interaction between neighbors. In contrast, the houses in the beta landscape were visible from the road, reflecting the area's newness as well as a desire to maintain a more open landscape. The degree of openness of the landscape appeared to be central to each group's image of the landscape. The alpha resident wants to stand in their garden and feel that he/she is out in the country, while the beta resident wants to "see and be seen" (Duncan, 1973, p.334). The close spatial arrangement of beta houses was also conducive to interaction among neighbors. Also, the alpha residents were much more concerned with their gardens, while beta residents tended to be more concerned with their houses. Their grounds tended to be neat and carefully coordinated to project the ideal of "traditional American" yards (Duncan, 1973, p.337).

These two styles of landscape design enhance the ways in which the two groups interact



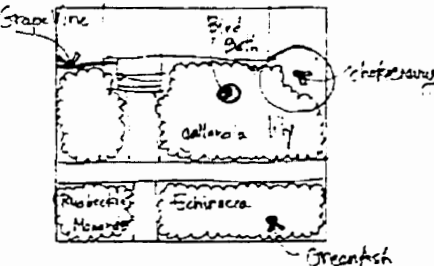


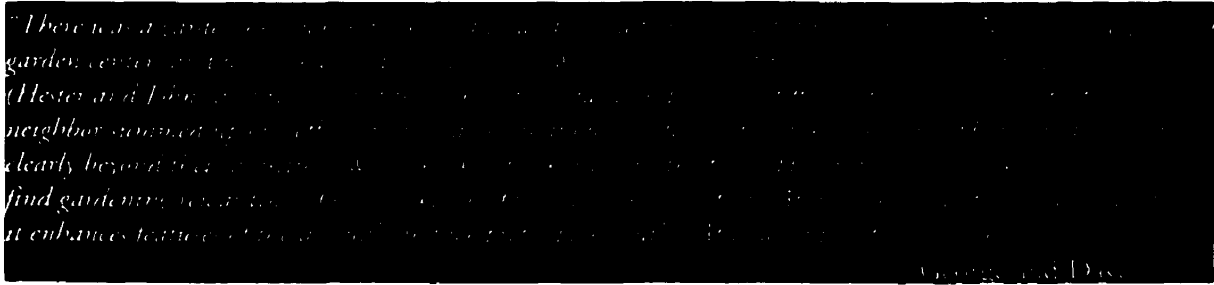
"I prefer to report what I see in the garden, and to me a garden is not a place where you see a plant. I see a plant that has been brought home from a garden. A garden is not a place where you see a plant brought in from a garden. A garden is a place where you see a plant brought in from a garden of our neighbors."

socially. The alphas socialize when at the golf club, the church or private school, making it unnecessary to interact with neighbors. Minimal interaction among neighbors was therefore facilitated by the *closed* alpha landscape, where fences and dense, lush vegetation obscure views between houses and gardens. This neighborhood pattern of interaction is similar to English neighboring patterns. For instance, in England the fact that you live next to someone does not grant you permission to socialize with them since English relationships are often patterned according to social status, not geography (Duncan, 1973).

Helphand has broken down residential typologies into three categories based on social class. For lower income families the yard represents an unconscious, vernacular expression because it is utilitarian, largely functioning as a work place. Middle income suburban lots tend to be more consciously divided into front and back yards, with the front yard functioning as the public garden and the backyard as the vegetable garden. Often there is a deliberate display of status symbols, for example, outdoor furniture or party equipment and children's play sets. These yards are also user designed and residents still cut their own grass and perform yard and garden work. Upper income yards are characterized as having specialized gardens such as flower or rose gardens. Here the *gentleman farmer* tinkers on his/her hobby that is by and large cared for by the garden staff. In general, the spaces of this yard are professionally maintained and designed and often perform only single functions. Thus, as socioeconomic status increases, the yard becomes more specialized and less multipurpose as zones are designed for specific uses. Essentially, a makeshift character gives way to a consciousness and pretension in design (Girling and Helphand, 1994).

Socioeconomic status does influence the way people manage their exterior space, but pre-





cisely how this is manifested in the landscape is more difficult to articulate. For example, based on Blake and Arreola's findings it would seem that garden yards are less likely to occur in either very wealthy or very poor neighborhoods. For instance, very wealthy residents likely hire people to maintain their grounds and therefore are not likely to be directly involved with their yards. Economically disadvantaged people, on the other hand, may find maintaining a garden unfeasible. Similarly, in Winnipeg, many people who are economically well-off tend to own 'cottages' or 'lakes' that they retreat to in the summertime. Therefore, maintaining a garden is difficult when families leave town on weekends or for extended vacations. In this context, it may be easier to have someone else mow the lawn while one is away, rather than hiring a gardener to maintain extensive flower beds. Plus, to these people the cottage or the lake may be a more appropriate or feasible place to tinker on their days off and therefore may be their primary place for self-expression in the landscape. People who are not as wealthy may be more likely to personalize their exterior spaces since they tend to spend weekends in the city.

It is also important to note that Winnipeg's economic climate is much less disparate as compared to that of Phoenix, the city where Blake and Arreola's study took place. For example in Winnipeg, the value of houses used in this study range from \$38,000 to \$72,000. In Phoenix house values range from \$40,000 to \$600,000. This makes it more difficult to extract trends associated with economics because most people have moderate incomes. In light of this, however, perhaps garden yards not only reflect a growing 'middle-class' love for gardening, but a new level of sophistication in landscape taste not completely unlike the closed landscape of upper-class citizens described by Schmid (in Dorney *et al.*, 1984) and Duncan (1973), or the public garden's defined by

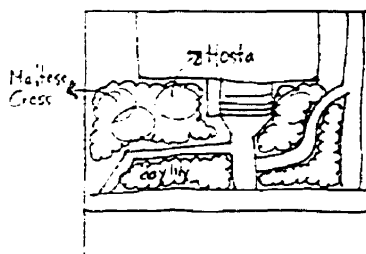


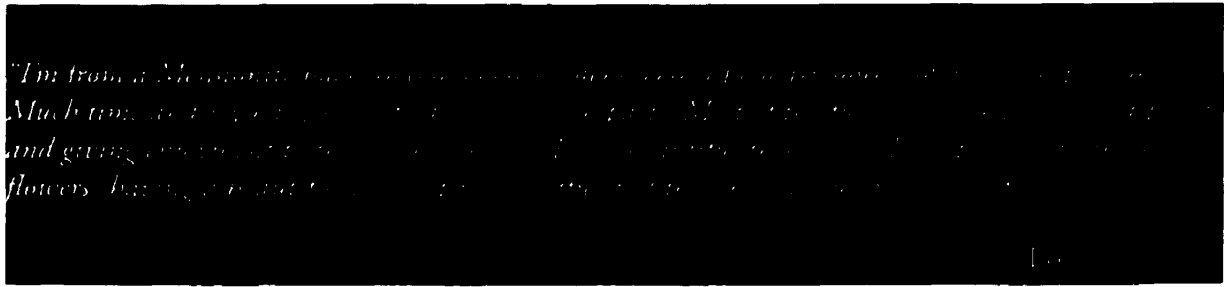
*"My entire yard was a garden, and I was proud to show it to my friends. My sister was a garden writer for a long time, and she said that I had a 'flame colored bloom' of flowers, and she said that I had a 'flame colored bloom' and weed."*

Helphand (1994). Thus, participating in gardening and having a garden on display to the public may be a (new) way to elevate one's socioeconomic status.

Another view may be that the garden yard may be an expression and reflection of local conditions. For example, in Phoenix newer subdivisions have caught on to the idea of xeriscaping. Hecht's study of the decline of the grass lawn tradition in Tucson supports this notion. While he found that people in Tucson were rejecting lawns because "growing grass in a near-arid, tropical setting no longer impresses many as a wonder of American technology and economy" (Hecht, 1975, p.9), they were also interested in adopting a regional, more appropriate 'desert' aesthetic. These changing attitudes were found more often in higher income residents, while grass was more persistent in lower income groups. He also found that the older population of Tucson was contributing to the growth of grass substitutes (Hecht, 1975).

Winnipeg on the other hand, although a 'prairie town,' isn't quite as parched as Phoenix. In fact, Winnipeg is an exceptionally treed city, especially its older neighborhoods. Located at the junction of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, its core and areas along rivers are naturally composed of lush, riparian forest. Therefore, when nature is left to its own devices, for example in an empty lot, the land very often reverts to forest not prairie. This has particular relevance in view of Henderson, Perkins and Nelischer's finding that "alternative lawns" tended to occur in places where there was a higher degree of vegetative enclosure and contiguity (Henderson *et al.*, 1998). In contrast, the outer neighborhoods of Winnipeg are indeed built on 'prairie' or abandoned agricultural lands characterized by open meadows and fields dotted by oak and aspen bluffs. In this context, the garden yard may represent a model that is more appropriate to certain areas of the city, based on



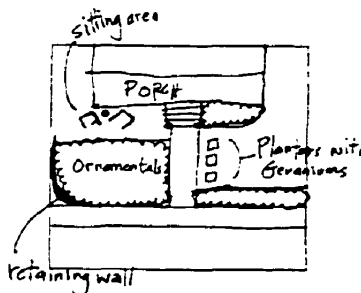


vegetative history. Thus, in Winnipeg the writer predicts, based on previous findings, that on a macroscale garden yards are likely to occur in the microclimate of older, naturally treed areas of Winnipeg that are comprised of average income home owners. They are less likely to occur in outer neighborhoods that are not as established or as naturally lushly vegetated.

### *Innovation and Mimicry*

Zmyslony and Gagnon (1998) investigated the dynamics of residential vegetation at local scales, in order to propose management strategies that were founded on residents' actions. They analyzed the vegetation composition, structure, and distribution of front yards in 17 successive residential street sections of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve District, Montreal. They hypothesized that the vegetated and non-vegetated areas of residential front yards were not randomly distributed in a street section. To test this hypothesis they tried to demonstrate that the landscape of residential front yards is an autocorrelated (or regionalized) variable at a local scale. Autocorrelation assumes that any object in space is affected by the objects around it, and that closer objects have more effect than those that are further away.

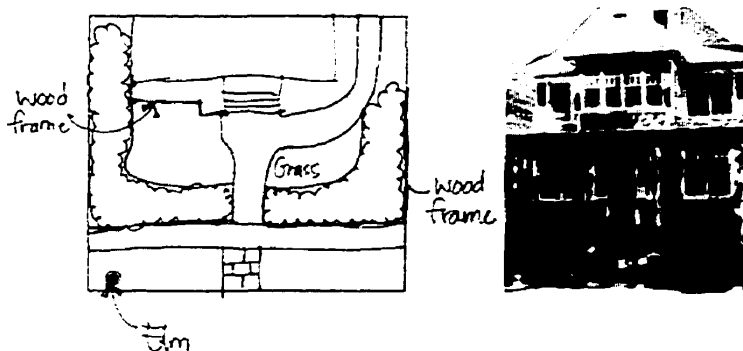
Results from this study support their hypothesis. They indicated that residents in a street section are influenced by the shape, color and location of vegetation they see in yards of their nearest neighbors, but that they are not often influenced by the specific species. For example, the distinction between a fir and a spruce tree, or honeysuckle and a cotoneaster hedge is not always made, most are simply satisfied to reproduce any kind of 'Christmas tree' or a hedge that looks similar to their neighbors. Furthermore, resident interactions were described as mimicry, whereby



*"My yard brings me new neighbors. I've discovered I'm not alone in my love of landscaping. I'm experimenting with new plants. I've seen a lot of people who have been inspired by my yard and with people talking to me about my yard."*

front yards in close proximity share significantly more characteristics in common than yards further away. Specifically, residents are most influenced by next door neighbors, but also by yards opposite from them, though not as obviously. Finally, spatial regularities are described as a contagious mode of landscape management that can be generalized to many types of urban environments (Zmyslony and Gagnon, 1998). In support of these findings, Eveillard (1991) in Zmyslony and Gagnon (1998) stated that actions such as copying, adapting, exchanging plants and suggesting ideas were all examples of mimicry, and they have the ability to promote the propagation of similar plants and landscape elements in the neighborhood. In time, spatial regularities can emerge in front yards that can be detected through statistical means.

A study of the street trees and landscape of a suburban residential community in Hong Kong revealed similar findings. The almost ubiquitous presence of certain varieties and the clustering of those that are less popular on certain streets suggests that spatial proximity of houses has some contagious effect on the adoption of selected species. Moreover, houses built in the same year of a similar style, with similar exterior space boundaries tend to invoke similar landscape preference. Thus, a homeowner's choice of vegetation is subject to external influences, as species composition suggests an inclination to conform to the landscape norm established by earlier settlers who played the innovator's role (Jim, 1993). Likewise, Routaboule *et al.*, 1995 (in Zmyslony and Gagnon, 1998) found that people tend to propagate landscape forms in their neighborhood through observation. For example, they may reproduce what they see in the front yards of their street section, or respond to neighbors suggestions. However, other residents may react differently. While some are completely indifferent to front yards, including their own, others may intentionally avoid copying

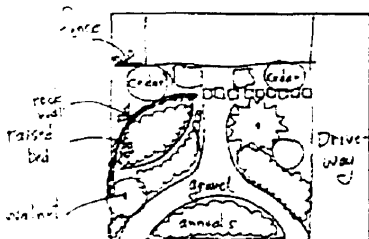


"I like color, flowers, birds, and animals, and I like to be creative. I like to be expressive. My yard is a reflection of my personality and interests. I like to be creative and to express my personality in my yard. I spent a lot of time thinking about what the front yard should be a reflection of."

Debra

the content of neighboring front yards and instead create totally new arrangements. These front yards may be managed differently, and their gardens may be occupied by plants, shapes and colors unlike their neighbors. These new arrangements may offer new and better models which can be mimicked by nearby residents who aspire to something different (Zmyslony and Gagnon, 1998). In addition, Nassauer (1995a) stated that existing variations suggest possibilities for the future of the domestic landscape, including landscapes that do not exist now but might be designed or altered slightly to promote such purposes as ecological function in the future.

Perhaps Garden Yards represent a better, more innovative approach to yard treatments, which over time might be adopted by more and more residents in a neighborhood. However, in certain circumstances a particular model may be more suitable to a certain neighborhood, and therefore more readily adopted. According to Jim (1993) we might expect that garden yards will more often exist in neighborhoods that are built in a specific era and therefore have a homogeneous appearance. While this may be true, a clearer understanding of how garden yards may be adopted and spread throughout a community can be informed by spatial diffusion theory. This theory tells us that three general types of diffusion processes can be recognized: *expansion* (contagious) diffusion, *hierarchical* diffusion and *relocation* diffusion. In addition, most diffusion processes represent a combination of these processes, particularly the first two. Expansion diffusion begins with just a few people having knowledge of an innovation. This knowledge is then compared with existing information and a decision is made on whether or not to adopt. If the innovation is proven successful the number of people who know about and adopt the innovation steadily



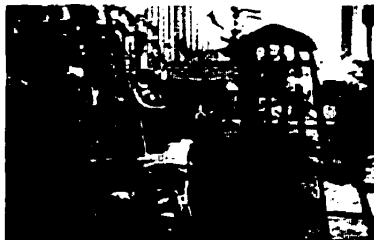
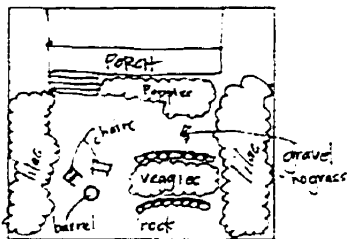
*"This yard is a statement of the gardener's commitment to the garden. It is also low-cost and has a minimum of equipment."*

Richards

increases. However, an innovation can leap over intervening people and places, following a path that concentrates on major cities or people before filtering down to those not directly involved. This is known as hierarchical diffusion. Also, innovation can spread when holders of information migrate, taking their knowledge with them, thereby transplanting new ideas into a different environment. Perhaps in the early stages of garden yard adoption, hierarchical and relocation diffusion are in operation. At this point the innovation is limited to certain individuals who have more information or are more involved with gardening- perhaps they belong to a gardening club. These individuals may also be living in certain neighborhoods, possibly in older ones where, due to visual contiguity their yards will not be so obvious. Over time, expansion or contagious diffusion begins to operate. In this case, neighbors and others in close proximity adopt the concept of a garden yard if it is an appropriate model and spatial regularity reemerges (Zmyslony and Gagnon, 1998).

### *Residential Vegetation*

As part of an ongoing study of the total greenspace resources in Syracuse, New York, Richards, Mallette, Simpson and Macie (1984) undertook a study in order to characterize its residential greenspace. They hypothesized that changing development patterns and tendencies of residents to share similar social characteristics should result in less variation in residential greenspace character within certain areas of the city than among areas of the city. In other words, areas within the city will have distinct landscape character. They chose 10 census tracts that represented a range of residential areas. Selection of the tracts was based primarily on predominant development age, lot size and housing type.



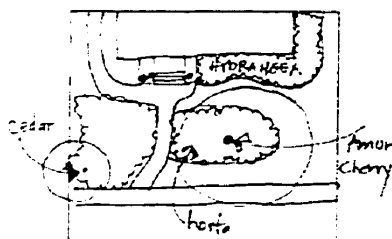
*"Gardening to me is a relaxing activity that I have enjoyed since I was a child. I have always enjoyed it, but people stop for various reasons to not do it. I have always enjoyed it."*

1984

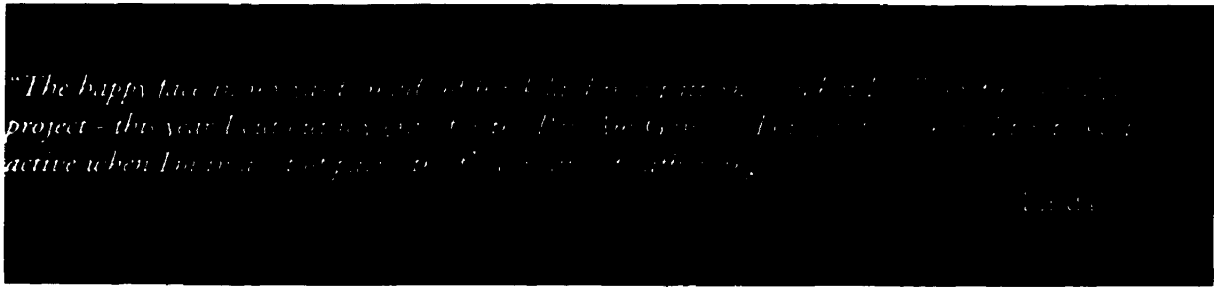
Their study did not provide strong support for their hypothesis, but instead documented great heterogeneity of residential greenspace and vegetation. However, correlations between lawn and total greenspace were found to be highly significant in all tracts. From this they were able to conclude that neighborhoods with larger lots have more total area in lawn and less in gardens. Diversity of vegetation, then, was found to be greater in neighborhoods with smaller lots even though there is more greenspace in larger-lot neighborhoods (Richards *et al.*, 1984).

These findings provide strong evidence in support of the idea that neighborhoods with smaller yards are more likely to have higher proportions of herbaceous perennials in relation to the amount of lawn and therefore fit the definition of a garden yard. While larger yards may have similar amounts of vegetation, perhaps even more, the proportion of vegetation in relation to the amount of lawn may not exceed this study's required amount of 50%. Also, because older neighborhoods have smaller yards the *idea* of replanting grass with flowers is much less intimidating. This has important implications for the design of exterior spaces, particularly issues surrounding sustainability and residential satisfaction.

Kaplan's study entitled "Nature at the Doorstep: Residential Satisfaction and the Nearby Environment" (1985a) dealt with contextual factors that involve the world as seen from one's window and as accessible as within a few steps from one's home. Kaplan discussed the fact that while there is a growing body of literature suggesting that the natural environment contributes in important ways to human well-being, landscape design of residential areas and complexes has not yet received the careful consideration that the building itself receives. Worse, the landscape treatment of many residential areas is consistently referred to as amenity- "a term carrying the connotation of



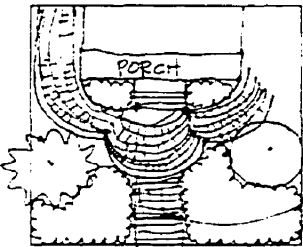




something pleasant but certainly quite optional” (Kaplan, 1985a, p.124).

The study focused on multiple-family clustered housing developments because these are assumed to be the most common form of residential housing in the future. It relied on a questionnaire to determine what kinds of ‘nature’ or landscape design are meaningful in terms of human perceptual and cognitive processes and to find out whether such processes have any bearing on residential satisfaction. That is, the nearby environment a frill, basically a luxury, or does it play a more central role in the context of the home environment? Among several important findings, Kaplan’s first conclusion was that the opportunity to grow things and the availability of gardens within one’s view of the home were strong predictors of satisfaction. If places to grow flowers were not available, satisfaction with aspects of sociability in the community suffered severely. Results from the study also suggested that people make a distinction between open space and ‘nature.’ Although open space or large ‘commons’ were readily available at each of the sites, people did not rate them highly or perceive them as being important, even when they were neatly edged and well-maintained.

Kaplan established a very important link between environment and residential satisfaction. She found that the unspectacular, everyday, small-scale aspect of the natural environment plays a significant role in the lives of all people, no matter their age or background. Furthermore, what is so highly valued among most people is not greenbelts and urban parks, instead residents expressed intense satisfaction with small pieces of nature; with the view of some trees and shrubs rather than large open areas and mowed expanses. She also established that it is important to provide opportunities for growing flowers. It was found that “residents who could see gardens or who felt their



P. Pine  
Stone

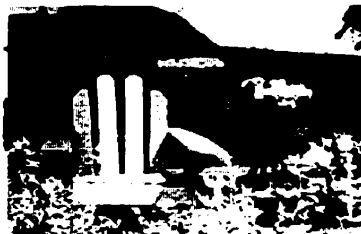
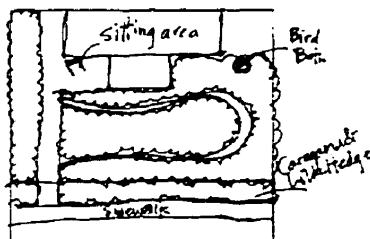


*"Working with nature is a matter of scale. It is not about the size of the garden, but the scale of the plants and sizes. I'm always learning that the scale of the plants is what matters. Not just the size of the plants take over. It's about the scale."*

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need for them was adequately met found their neighbors to be friendlier and felt their housing development had a stronger sense of community" (p.125). Ultimately, gardens provide more than their harvest, they are an excellent place for people to get to know one another. For relatively little investment, gardens can foster greater attachment to the neighborhood.

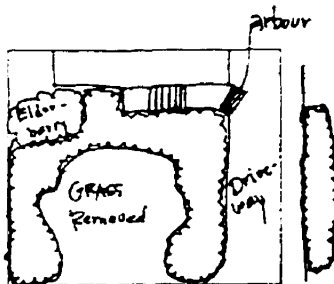
This study provided strong evidence in support of better designed and more richly planted exterior spaces. However, it does raise other questions. For example, it would be interesting to find out if these people would have thought differently of lawns if *they* had been the ones to design and maintain the area. Since they do not manage the appearance of their exterior environments themselves, they are in essence a control group in terms of their landscape tastes and desires. In other words, because they potentially have little experience in manipulating exterior space, it may be easier for them to take a more objective stance on this issue. By lacking a fuller appreciation of the difficulties, expenses, and pleasures that a single-detached homeowner has gained by their experience with their own yards, it is interesting that these people did not strongly favor mowed areas. This begs the following questions: Do people have a natural propensity towards more natural and more social environments? More specifically, do people *really* love their lawns (or *that much lawn*) as much as they think they do? Or are they just doing what everyone else is doing? Or, are they unsure of how to go about changing the appearance of their front yards?



"I look at my yard in my town and I feel I have a right to it. I can't go through my yard and not stop to look at it. I'm always working in the yard."

## Landscape Preference

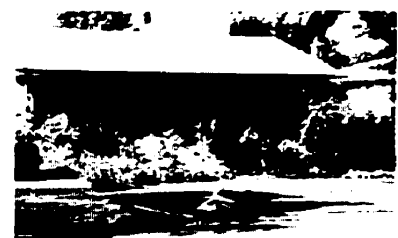
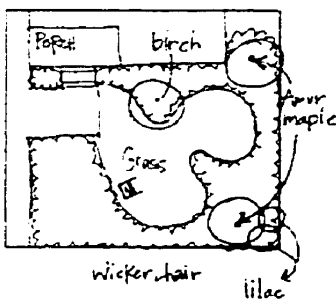
Landscape preference studies help to give us a better understanding of the various aspects of vegetation and landscape that people favor. Kaplan (1985b) examined issues of categorization and prediction of environmental preference. She found that mystery (the sense that more information would be available as one entered into the scene) and coherence (the degree of visual organization in the scene) were found to be effective in accounting for environmental preference. Some practical implications for the practice of landscape architecture are outlined in this paper, the first states that the arrangement of elements in space is a central factor in human environmental preference. Wide open vistas and dense, impenetrable forests both fail to provide information about one's whereabouts. In contrast, scenes that convey a sense of orderliness, such as parklike areas, provide a smooth ground texture that affords prediction about how one could function in the setting. The texture of one's surroundings has been found to be perceived along ground, vertical and overhead planes. However, the ground plane is of particular importance because it permits locomotion. The feeling that one can traverse an area should one want to is an essential part of creating an environment that is perceived as being comfortable. Of greater significance is the fact that wide areas of smooth surfaces are found to be more interesting when broken up with different textures and forms. Too much smooth ground is found to be monotonous (Kaplan *et al.*, 1998, p.42). The second implication concerns the informal properties of the landscape. Variety in and of itself is unlikely to be valued in as much as an unrelated confusion of elements is unlikely to enhance comprehension or to lend interest. Also, uniqueness is not guaranteed to be 'good' or accepted.

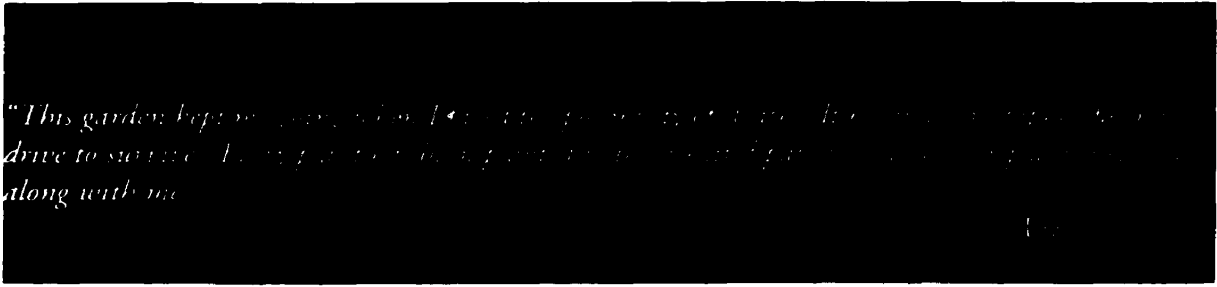




Other studies of landscape preference indicate similar findings. Appleton proposed that human aesthetic responses to landscape are in part inborn and derive from biological requirements for survival (in Zube, 1984). He proposed that landscapes which provide humans with the opportunity to see (prospect) without being seen (refuge) are aesthetically pleasing because they satisfy basic biological needs that evolved when humans were hunter-gatherers. Other studies have indicated that people prefer park-like or pastoral settings, with an absence of underbrush and scattered mature shade trees; vegetative characteristics of the African savanna (Zube *et al.*, 1974; Rabinowitz and Coughlin, 1970; Kaplan, 1977 in Balling and Falk, 1982). Balling and Falk (1982) inferred an innate preference for this landscape based on landscape preference studies of young children and adults. While children from the forested northeastern United States preferred savanna to forested landscapes, adults preferred the more familiar forest environment. Balling and Falk (1982, p.10) stated that "it is an interesting question whether, when, given an aesthetic choice people modify their settings toward a particular ideal. Are many of the parks and backyards people have so assiduously created wherever they have lived in part an expression of an innate predisposition for the savanna?"

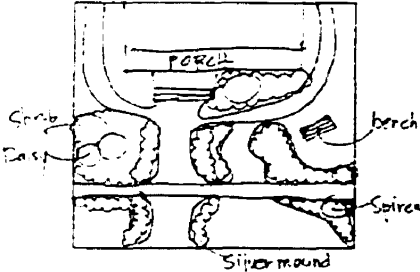
These findings have strong implications for the design of space. In fact, they imply that environments can be designed to provide places that are better suited to our natural or biological needs. Charles A. Lewis, a horticulturist who has spent decades studying people/plant relationships contended that urban gardens can provide a strategy for achieving a better fit between humans and their environment. Lewis stated that if we juxtapose our ancient biological selves against contemporary settings there exists a gap between our evolutionary landscape and our technologi-





cal world. He believes that this gap can be bridged by gardening and gardens. The reason lies in the fact that gardens and gardening are life-enhancing; they also have the ability to create a sense of tranquility and well-being (Lewis, 1979).

As for front yards, these findings indicate the need for a balance between smooth textured ground surfaces, such as lawn or paving, and masses of vegetation to provide what Kaplan described as coherence and mystery. Also, since uniqueness and variety aren't necessarily accepted, it makes sense that when designing a 'garden yard' that some conventional or traditional ideas are incorporated. Nassauer has contributed a great deal of important research to the study of this domestic landscape and this specific idea. She is interested in discovering optimal ways of employing conventional landscape trends, such as mowing and foundation planting to communicate human intentions of caring for the landscape, as well as to accommodate new trends such as improved ecological functioning and biodiversity. Nassauer proposed that using conventional "cues to care" (1995b, p.167) is not a means of perpetuating traditional landscape forms, but rather a means of reconciling cultural expectations with ecological health. Over time, cultural expectations will learn to value and manage appropriately landscape forms that include greater biodiversity. Therefore, the design of "orderly frames" is simply a way of using vernacular language to create front yards with both highly stable social conventions and greater ecological health (Nassauer, 1995b).



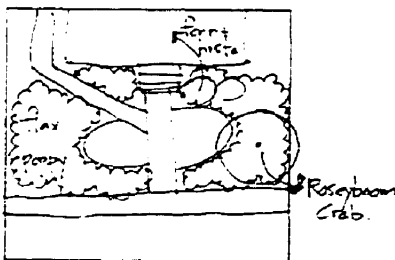
"The yard change, to me, is not the change of the physical space, but the change of the mind. It is the learning about new plants, new ways of growing them, and the new degree of freedom that comes with it."

Rachel Kaplan

## Beyond Gardens

The idea that the activity of gardening and the garden as a place that provide benefits well beyond the fruits of the earth is well understood anecdotally, but poorly supported by empirical research. In fact, Kaplan and Kaplan (1990, p.238) describe it as "a topic rich in lore and low in research." However, Rachel Kaplan did provide serious research on this topic in her paper entitled "Some Psychological Benefits of Gardening" (1973). The study was designed to examine the benefits people experience in one particular activity when nature is an essential component- namely gardening. Gardening, as a starting point for studying such benefits is advantageous for a few reasons. First, nature is an essential component of gardening and not simply background which can be ignored by the participants. Second, it requires continued contact and commitment rather than a chance or casual experience with the outdoor environment. Thirdly, it is a close-at-hand leisure activity. All of these "tend to decrease its 'image' value and increase its potential role in an individual's psychological economy by its very accessibility and frequency of contact" (Kaplan, 1973, p.146).

In this paper she outlines the theme of *fascination*. She describes it as involuntary attention, whereby little effort is required to sustain concentration. This has several benefits. "First, it provides rest from the effort otherwise required for attention. Second, since attention by definition excludes competing thoughts, a rest is provided from whatever worries or cares of the day might otherwise be uppermost in a person's mind" (p.146). Her study looked at the role of fascination and

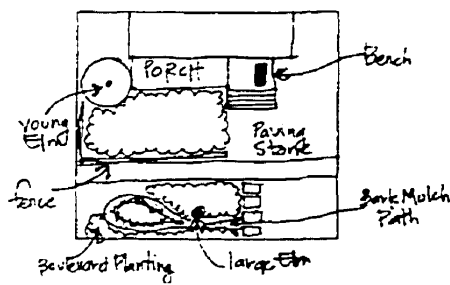


*"My garden is a place of simple abundance."*

gardening and how such benefits are achieved, but is also concerned with variables that might predict psychological benefits. For example, it was anticipated that demographic and attitudinal variables might interact with the kind of gardening (e.g. organic versus chemical; flower versus vegetable; group versus individual) people chose to participate in.

Kaplan's study was based on two groups: community and home gardeners. Of the 50 home gardeners surveyed, 34 were women. Of these women 80% were housewives and 65% considered that to be their primary role. The modal age was 20-30 but all generations (from teens to 70's) were represented with at least two individuals. Both males and females had post-secondary education. Of the 34 women, 10 completed college, 10 went beyond a college degree and 11 had some college education. For both groups age, sex, education and prior gardening experiences were immaterial at predicting the questionnaire answers regarding their perceived benefits of gardening. However, younger people had a stronger preference for organic gardening than did older gardeners. This is a reasonable outcome since in 1973, when this study occurred, the popularization of organic gardening was spreading rapidly. That younger people who are beginning to garden would opt for this alternative is not surprising. It is also not surprising that older people would be more likely to stay with the gardening methods that they grew up with. The fact that many older gardeners indicated that they apply organic methods whenever possible reflects a gradual shift in their gardening style. It should be noted that whether chemical or organic, gardening method did not relate to his/her satisfaction with the experience or the benefits derived.

Kaplan did find strong evidence which suggested that the psychological benefits that can accrue from gardening are closely related to the kinds of plants that ones grows. While the majority

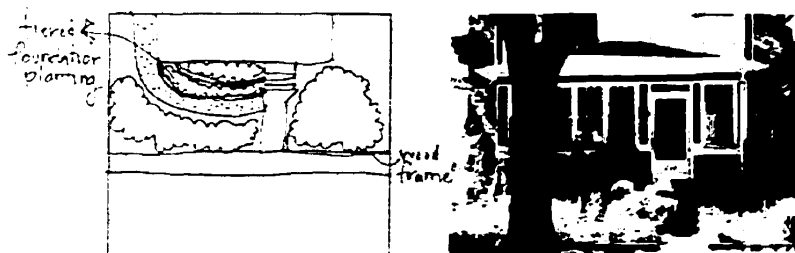


*"The garden is not only a relaxation and a pleasure but also a way to learn something new to see and to feel and to work. Most of the people I interviewed who were gardening as I would like to have plan to be better."*

Harold

of home gardeners grew both flowers and vegetables, flowers were almost always grown by the more experienced group, and vegetables were mostly grown by the younger, less-experienced gardeners. Flower growers were found to derive benefits associated with 'sustained interest' or 'fascination'. That is, they tended to value gardening as a way to spend time and as an opportunity to relax. They also found that their gardens gave them a sense of accomplishment and they enjoyed the aesthetic pleasure they gained from the plants. Vegetable growers tended to be more concerned about practical consequences such as cutting food expenses, but also enjoyed the feeling of producing and harvesting their own food. From these findings Kaplan concluded that there is the possibility of a *developmental variable* that alters a person's reason for gardening over time. This principle is founded on the fact that older people emphasized more aspects of fascination as being important to their gardening experiences. These people also grew more flowers. In contrast, younger people tended to start gardening with its tangible or practical consequences foremost in their mind, and at this time they have little understanding of how they may react to the gardening process. Fascination, on the other hand, may require a certain level of competence which, like self-knowledge takes time to acquire.

Kaplan also wanted to discover if there was a relationship between people who garden and people who enjoy woodland areas, campfires, lakes, and wilderness in general. She found that there was a relationship between these variables- people who derived a sense of fascination from their gardens also tended to be people who enjoyed nature experiences. Results from the questionnaire also suggested that the attitudes of gardeners towards the environment reflect general ideas that were central to the current upsurge of environmental concern. In particular, it was found



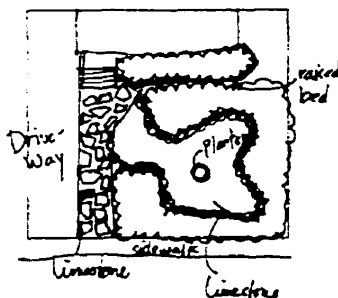


*"This yard is fantastic. As you can tell, it is a small lot, but it is so beautiful and relaxing and fun. I love the way it is planned and the way it is so close to the house. It is a change. Gardening, it is the best of all worlds."*

that questions about nature predicted fascination in gardening so strongly that the idea that gardens and gardening can play a role in peoples lives not unlike that played by more distant, and less frequent encounters with nature was strongly supported.

Finally, Kaplan notes that "it isn't surprising that gardening emerges as a powerful source of fascination," and that "it appears to possess a great many properties that would tend to enhance fascination" (p. 160). It does so by first calling on basic informational processes whereby it not only permits, but actually invites recognition, prediction, control, and evaluation. It achieves this by both providing knowledge and requiring it, and although it is an ordered setting, that order is embedded within uncertainty and change. "Thus it challenges the human information-processing capability and to an extent that the challenge is met, both reward and more challenge are forthcoming" (p. 160). Second, it is a nature based activity, and nature per se has been found to be an "object of preference to a striking degree" (Kaplan *et al.*, 1972 in Kaplan 1973, p. 160). The factor or factors in nature that have this effect are not yet understood, but that such an effect occurs seems clear.

Kaplan's study helps us to predict that people with garden yards in Winnipeg are in general likely to be older, well-educated women. However, since this study occurred in the seventies we might speculate that organic gardening by this time would be much more widespread throughout the age classes. Although the appearance of garden yards can vary quite a lot it will be interesting to see which gardeners are most concerned with the ecological aspects of gardening. Perhaps those people have been gardening for a long time and have broadened their philosophy of gardening, or perhaps like the organic gardeners in Kaplan's study this aspect of gardening represents an alternative that younger people are more likely to adopt. The evidence that these people likely gain



"The front yard is a tiny garden. I don't even think it's a garden. It's just a little. And it costs a lot of money because it took out the old lawn and put in a garden. It's a wonderful experiment to see what it can do. As a town it has to give something to the street. My garden is a good example of that. I want to give it an even more park-like feeling. I don't want to give it a lawn grass."

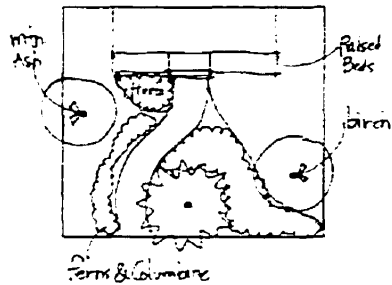
Frank Lloyd Wright

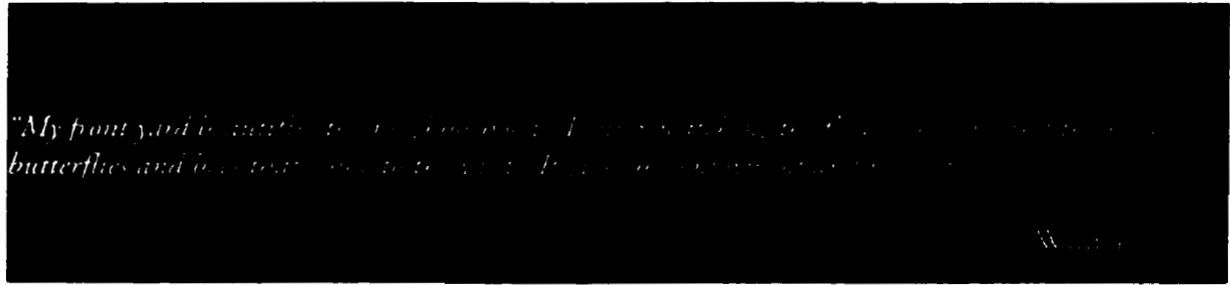
psychological benefits from gardening is clear; however, it will be interesting to note individual motivations for gardening. This study also outlines the importance of gardens as places for refuge and places to commune with nature; with particular emphasis on its ability to mimic experiences in nature.

### *Predictions*

The studies that were previously discussed reveal much about the nature of garden yards. Specifically, we can predict that garden yards are more likely to occur:

1. In older neighborhoods where smaller-scaled streets (Henderson *et al.*, 1998) front porches and sidewalks contribute to a more front-focused and sociable neighborhood (Jacob, 1992). Also, the strong vegetative enclosure of older communities provides a more attractive and inviting environment (Coley et al, 1997) by contributing to the feeling that people are in segregated volumes of space (Cullen, 1971 in Henderson *et al.*, 1998).
2. In economically moderate areas where housing values are not extravagant, as it is likely that *garden yards* represent the tastes of middle income families (Blake and Arreola, 1996; Girling and Helphand, 1994).
3. Where local vegetative history and growing conditions make the garden yard an appropriate landscape innovation (Hecht, 1975; Blake and Arreola, 1996). In Winnipeg, these yards will most likely occur in neighborhoods along rivers where lush vegetation and rich soils naturally occur.

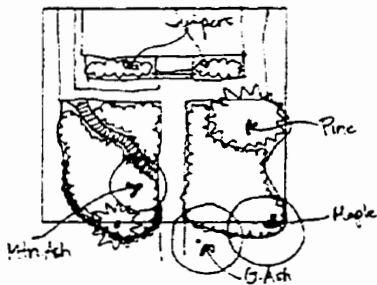




4. Where residents accept and adopt the garden yard as an appropriate new landscape model (Zmyslony and Gagnon, 1998). This will likely occur where residents have smaller yards (Richards *et al.*, 1984) and where the model suits the building architecture (Jim, 1993).

In addition, garden yards are more likely to be made by:

1. Well-educated women (Kaplan, 1973).

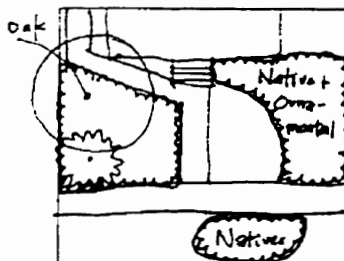


*"When we first moved to this home, there was a large lawn. It had been raised by a father who had deep love and care for his lawn. He had his own yard long before it was fashionable to do so. It was the only lawn I had ever seen that was 'natural' in my gardening. My husband and I have been very fortunate to have a husband and I that, in 1995, we decided to do something different. We started introducing prairie herbaceous species, but soon found that we were not doing anything... nothing was done with a grand scheme or overall plan. It was just a*

### Part Three: Method

Since it is assumed that the distribution of garden yards is influenced by processes working at several scales (Henderson *et al.*, 1998), an analysis of factors contributing to the presence of garden yards will occur on three scales- the micro, meso, and macro (these will be described in fuller detail later in this section). A 'garden yard' will be considered any front yard of a single-detached dwelling that exhibits a proportionally smaller or equal amount of grass than some other surface material. For the purposes of this study alternative materials will include a majority of herbaceous plants, trees and shrubs, but also gravel, bark mulch and limestone, etc. in lesser quantities. These proportions were chosen based on findings from a study by Joan Nassauer, in which 234 suburban residents rated video imaging simulations of seven alternative treatments of home landscapes using five categories: attractiveness, care, neatness, naturalness, and apparent need for maintenance. Results indicated that while the recognizable and conventional landscape treatment was generally preferred, the treatment in which half of the mown lawn had been replaced by indigenous plants of the oak savanna was rated almost equally attractive (Nassauer, 1995b). A similar study found that residents disliked an open lawn at ground level or a very dense canopy, preferring a balance between ground and canopy enclosure (Palmer, 1986 in Smardon, 1988). Since both studies support the notion that novel yards are most likely to be appreciated if they support an equal amount of lawn and plant material, these proportions will reflect the minimum requirements of garden versus lawn.

Although Henderson, Perkins and Nelischer in Guelph, Ontario found that certain physical

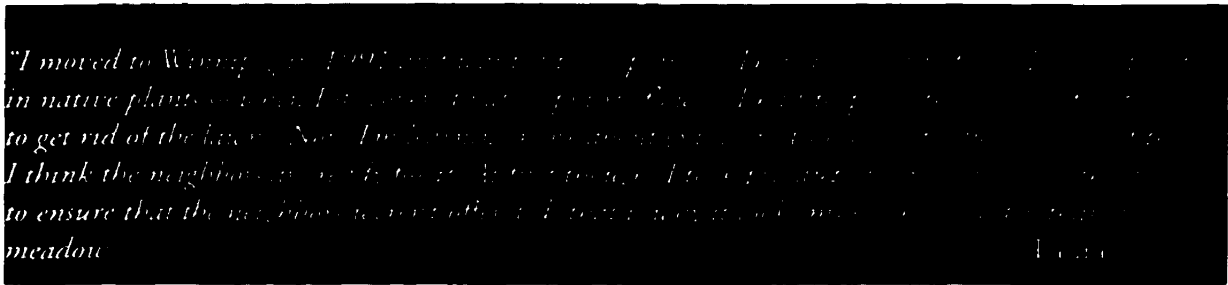


*"It is mainly my interest in the garden that has led me to write this book. I have seen how gardens have changed the character of the city and how they have helped to make it a more pleasant place to live. It gives me the opportunity to share my ideas and to help others to see the value of the garden in the national world in the context of the modern city."*

characteristics associated with older residential neighborhoods were highly correlated with the presence of lawn alternatives, their study admittedly did not look at the influence of social factors in the adoption of novel yards. Therefore, at the microscale this study of garden yards examines both the individual lot characteristics of garden yards and surveys the owners to develop a better insight into their motivations and philosophies about gardening. Field work was performed during July and August of 1999. For both the micro and meso scales field data was collected by driving all the streets in the selected census tracts in order to identify garden yards. Once spotted, data was collected for each yard in a systematic fashion- a checklist (appendix a), noting the address of each house with a garden yard, was filled in and a survey (appendix b) was delivered to each mailbox. Also, photographs of each yard were taken using a 35mm SLR camera. Photographs documented details of the yard, but also included a picture taken from the opposite side of the street in order to capture the entire front facade of the house.

The mesoscale analysis looks at the physical characteristics of the street section. This examination is similar to work done by Henderson, Perkins and Nelischer. It is highlighted by an investigation into the relationship between garden yards and location context by examining variables such as: street width, the presence or absence of street trees, lot size, distance from facade to facade, visibility of the house from the street and the tree coverage on the lot.

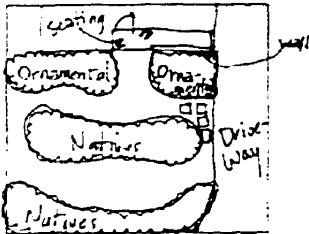
In order to develop a sense of city-wide patterns of the presence of garden yards, approximately 25% of each of the fifteen areas of Winnipeg (North End, River Heights, St. James, etc.) were systematically examined; a random sample for each area was derived from census tract data



and based on the census tracts themselves. Note that census tracts are defined by the U.S. Bureau of the Census (1972) in Whitney *et al.*, (1980 p. 432) as "small, relatively homogeneous socioeconomic areas into which cities are divided for the purpose of providing comparable small area statistics." Since the single family dwelling is the basic unit to be sampled, the total number of single-detached dwellings for each area was calculated and then a census tract or tracts were then chosen to comprise roughly 25% of the total number of single-detached dwellings in that area.

A few stipulations were placed on census tract selection. First of all, since it was felt that ownership plays an important role in the degree of care an individual places on their property (Richards *et al.*, 1984), each tract contained a substantially higher proportion of owned dwellings than rented ones. Secondly, because the physical environment has been found to be a predictor of lawn alternatives by Henderson *et al.* (1998), census tracts that have had most of their construction over one period were selected to ensure that the physical environment within a census tract is more or less homogeneous.

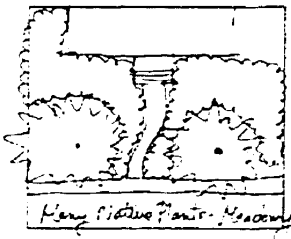
The macroscale analysis will examine the proportions of garden yards within census tracts across the city, and decipher general patterns as to their presence or absence. This scale of analysis will also rely upon standardized census tract data from the Statistics Canada 1996 census. The use of this data will help us to mathematically derive and graphically illustrate relationships between social and physical variables within the data set. For example, in order to derive a better understanding of the relationship between certain areas of the city and the people that inhabit them, a Correspondence Analysis (CA) will be performed. CA is a descriptive and an exploratory technique designed to analyze simple two-way and multiway tables containing some



*"Rather than a machine, the house is an organism. New plants are not just planted from the catalog, but are grown up with the structure and the life of the place."*

measure of correspondence between the rows and columns (Pielou, 1977). In this case, the CA will express professional data of people within census tracts in relationship to these areas of the city. Specifically, it will tell us what kinds of people (in as much as profession describes an individuals' personality) tend to live in which kinds of places.

In addition, a Principle Component Analysis (PCA) will be conducted in order to understand the importance of various factors (*physical and social variables*) on the adoption of garden yards. The analysis will consider: income, house value, level of education, age of housing, age of people, ethnic diversity, and the density of people in the tract. These characteristics have been chosen because they have been linked to ornamentation and identity of residential landscapes (Whitney and Adams, 1980; Blake and Arreola, 1996; Girling and Helphand, 1994; Mallette *et al.*, 1984). In PCA these factors can be plotted. Euclidean distance between the plotted points is a measure of the difference between points (Pielou, 1977). For instance, higher house values will most likely be associated with people who have higher incomes, therefore we would expect to find the points plotted closely together. It should be noted that the variable for garden yards will be added to the analysis as a post-hoc structure component. In other words, all of the other variables are unconstrained in relationship to the garden yard variable, allowing us to maximize the spread between all the variables and giving us a better sense of the relationship of the number of garden yards with respect to all other variables. If this wasn't done, all variables would be tightly packed together, making trends difficult to establish and graphically illustrate. Lastly, this analysis will allow us to take the proportion of garden yards within a census tract and express it as a function of these variables. This way trends can be extracted and a better understanding of the cultural discourse which is fostering this new landscape expression can be developed.



"We like to play in the dirt. We've learned a lot about plants and how to take care of them. We've learned about and try new plants. One of the things we've learned is that you can't just plant a tree and walk away, we have new ideas. We've learned a lot about plants and how to take care of them."

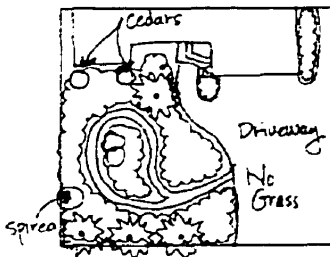
University of Regina

## Part Four: Results

### Findings and Discussion of the Microscale Analysis *A Newer Tradition*

This study found that most garden yards are relatively new (1-3 years) and that the number of them is increasing with time. These results indicate that garden yards are a phenomenon that is catching on in popularity. In fact, in the Wolseley area of Winnipeg there is strong evidence that this phenomenon is growing rapidly. When garden yard home owners were asked to indicate how long their yards have looked untraditional, it was discovered that ten years ago the census tract that was surveyed in this area had only 2 garden yards. Between 4 and 9 years ago another 12 were created and within the past 3 years, 16 more yards cropped up. Of course, a number of garden yards could have been established and then deleted by successive home owners over the years, but these results do indicate that as a basic trend the number of these yards is growing. In addition, people seem satisfied with this landscape as 97% would be willing to design this type of yard again if they moved.

These results are interesting if we consider the Diffusion of Innovation theory. Developed by Everett Rogers, this theory identifies five types of people who exhibit different rates of adoption. The first people to adopt a new idea are called *innovators*. These people tend to be young, highly educated and economically secure. They are also risk-takers and visionaries, with a high tolerance of uncertainty and failure. Also, they do not hold leadership roles in their communities because of their risk-taking behavior. Typically they are a very small portion of society; repre-



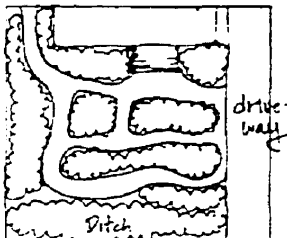


*"We have a large population of people who are not interested in change and do not have the appeal to deal with this new technology."*

*Wolseley*

senting 2.5% of a normal bell curve. In contrast, early adopters (opinion leaders) often *do* hold leadership roles in their communities. They follow shortly after innovators and are also young, highly educated and economically secure. While innovators look to professional or technical publications as their primary sources of information, early adopters tend to rely on personal contacts with professional specialists and technical experts. They represent about 13.5% of the bell curve. The next two groups (34% each) represent the early and late majority. The early majority follow the early adopters in moving toward and embracing change. These people are also educated, but are less likely to have attended university. They are also less financially secure and tend to adopt new ideas once all of their concerns have been addressed. These people may or may not hold positions of leadership in the community but they are similar to opinion leaders because they are also people to whom others look for advice and guidance. Their sources of information, however, tend to be informal: personal contacts with friends, family or mass media. Finally, the late majority-who tend to be older, less financially secure and less educated- join in. They are not viewed as opinion leaders and rely strictly on friends and family for advice. They take time to process, feel comfortable with, and realize that there will be positive outcomes from a change before they move forward. The final 16% of the bell curve represent the laggards. These individuals are resistant to change and find it extremely difficult to handle, they also tend to uphold and value traditional ideas and ways of living. Often, they do not adopt the new idea at all. This may be because they cannot afford the costs or because they feel their current methods are suited well-enough to their needs (Rogers, 1983).

In Wolseley, the expanding acceptance and implementation of garden yards implies that,

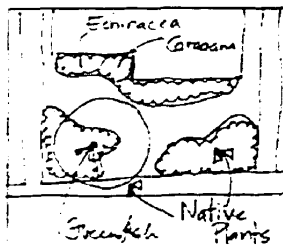


*"I worked, for a time, on land-use management strategies to increase the amount of green space in low resource use."*

Doyle

although at one time this novel landscape was limited to a few risk-taking individuals, it has now become popular enough that less innovative people are recovering their front yards. According to Rogers these people would be early adapters, early majority and perhaps even the late majority. Therefore, in this neighborhood, having a garden yard is potentially no longer perceived as unusual, but regarded as something that improves neighborhood spirit and imparts a degree of caring and commitment. Ruth-Anne of Arlington St. in Wolseley states "...as you can see, gardening has become a wonderful part of our street culture. It brings us together and really enhances our neighborhood." Out in the suburbs, people with these yards are few, and are likely to be regarded as risk-takers who defy traditional front yard ideals. This idea comes across in the following statement: "This yard is not as boring as typical ones, it is my hobby and provides me with good exercise." Also, Ilse and Andy of St. Boniface state "We're tired of the same old style. We like to be more modern, besides, the yard makes more sense this way and is easier to look after. It's like food for the soul; I love to watch the change from spring flowers to later in the year." As a general comment, people in the Wolseley area mention much more often the importance of the communal nature of gardening in this space, while those in the suburbs tend to make statements that they like the fact that their yard is different.

The increasing popularity and in some places the rapid adoption of this landscape form also provides strong support for the ideas put forth by Zmyslony and Gagnon (1998). They found that residents tend to mimic forms found in one another's front yards. They also concluded that residents are more significantly influenced by their closest neighbors and people living opposite to them. This is described as a contagious mode of landscape management, which in time has the

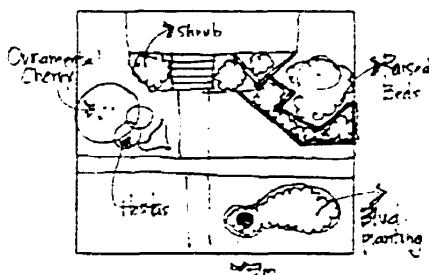


*"My wife and I were talking one day to a woman who had just started gardening. She said, 'My garden has inspired my friends and other people to start gardening...gardening has brought us (my neighbors) together, sharing ideas and pride in our neighborhood.'"*

ability to promote spatial regularities. In this study many yards tended to cluster together on the same street. For example, in Wolseley, where 38 garden yards were found, over half of the yards encountered were found on two streets: 13 on Evanson and 8 on Arlington. Moreover, written evidence from Carrie, a woman who has cultivated a garden yard for over 10 years, supports the theory that neighbors help each other perpetuate new landscape forms. She writes: "My garden has inspired my friends and other people to start gardening...gardening has brought us (my neighbors) together, sharing ideas and pride in our neighborhood."

Interestingly, many inhabitants of Jacob's (1992) study of yard ornamentation in Vestal and Johnson City mentioned that the primary source for their landscaping ideas came from observing other homes while driving or walking around. Others named magazines and television as their sources. However, it was noted that when one home owner made a strong visual statement on the house exterior or front yard, neighbors often felt compelled to respond. Similarly to Zmyslony and Gagnon, Jacob argued that this unspoken exchange of ideas among residents can impart a communal appearance to a neighborhood and aid in the formation of regional paradigms in yard ornamentation.

Gardening in the front yard seems to be a highly social activity with 83% of people indicating that they talk to their neighbors while they garden. A large proportion of gardeners, however, do not belong to gardening clubs (88%) and surprisingly few people in Wolseley indicated they belong to a club despite the well-known existence of the Wolseley Garden Society. This supports the idea that garden yards most likely and most often spread by contagious or expansion diffusion; that is from neighbor to neighbor rather than belonging to certain 'in the know' individuals or by hierarchi-



cal diffusion. However, the idea of the garden yard most likely begins with a form of hierarchical diffusion where certain individuals 'plant the idea' or play an innovator's role by being the first people to create these yards. Of many possibilities and explanations, these people may be gardeners extraordinaire or people who simply wish not to conform to typical North American landscape standards. In addition, most of the people belonging to a club listed the Friends of the Assiniboine Park Conservatory. Only two mentioned that they belonged to the Wolseley Garden Society.

### *Men, Women and Front Lawns*

Of the 119 surveys issued 95 were returned, indicating a 80% success rate. The primary person in charge of the garden was most often the woman (64%) of the household. Men were the primary gardeners about 25% of the time and 11% of those surveyed said that both were equal partners in respect to gardening duties. While further investigation of the survey information reveals that male gardeners are common in all areas of the city, the philosophy behind garden yards seems to differ based on whether or not gardeners are male, female or garden as a couple (Table 1). For example, while the majority of women in the sample have garden yards because they have a strong interest in gardening (52%), men's reasons for creating this landscape are twofold. The first reason is that they, like women, also have a strong interest in gardening (35%) and secondly, garden yards decrease the amount of lawn (30%) they have to maintain. Also, men are more

*Table 1: Inspiration for Creating Garden Yard (first choice)*

	female		male		both	
Friends/Relatives	3	5%	0	0	1	10%
Neighbours	2	3%	0	0	0	0%
Gardening T.V./magazines	1	2%	0	0	0	0%
Own Interest	30	52%	8	35%	1	10%
Decrease Lawn	12	21%	7	30%	3	30%
Low maintenance	1	2%	5	22%	1	10%
Something Different	9	16%	3	13%	4	40%
	58	100%	23	100%	10	100%

concerned about achieving a low-maintenance yard (22%) while women only list this as a main concern 2% of the time. Very few couples had garden yards primarily because they were interested in gardening (10%), although they had it as a secondary reason (40%) for gardening (Table 2). Most often these people expressed a desire to "create something different" (40%) with their yard and also to decrease the size of their lawns (30%).

Perhaps the fact that men express a stronger desire to decrease the size of their lawns and the fact that women are more interested in gardening is not surprising considering traditional roles or stereotypes associated with the activities of the front lawn. Jenkins (1994) highlights these 'roles' when she discusses how advertisers and horticulture writers noted these differences long ago and used them to market lawn and gardening equipment to men and women. She claims that many writers and advertisers assumed that the lawn was the responsibility of the man, while the flower garden was the domain of the wife. This may explain differences in reasons today for having garden lawns. Interestingly in the 1940s, the Jacobsen Manufacturing Company introduced a power mower for women named the Lawn Queen. Although the advertisements pictured women mowing the lawn, it seemed that the company never actually believed that women would use the mower. This was made implicit in the fact that they made references to high school boys operating the machine instead of women.

Furthermore, results indicate that many more garden yards belong to women than they do to men. This may relate to the possibility that women may have a different vision for creating their

*Table 2: Inspiration for Creating Garden Yard (second choice)*

	female		male		both	
Friends/Relatives	4	8%	1	4%	0	0
Neighbours	3	6%	0	0%	0	0
Gardening T.V/magazines	3	6%	1	4%	0	0
Own Interest	8	15%	2	9%	4	40%
Decrease Lawn	11	21%	5	22%	2	20%
Low maintenance	11	21%	9	39%	4	40%
Something Different	12	23%	5	22%	0	0
	52	100%	23	100%	10	100%

territories, although this has rarely been examined. However, a study by Kolodny (1984) has shown that American frontier women dreamed about locating their homes and communities within a cultivated garden, but by the time they had reached the shores of the New World men had already begun to act out their own fantasies towards the land. It also appears that traditionally "many women (saw) the front lawn as part of the garden, not as interesting as flowers but an integral part of the overall effect" (in Jenkins, 1994, p.117). This idea is further articulated in an article appearing in a 1938 edition of *House Beautiful* in which the writer exclaims "If I were left to my own devices, the lawn area would receive scant care, merely because it is uninteresting as most necessities are to life. Yet there is no garden feature that makes for cooperation between the sexes as proper respect shown by Her for His invariable secret passion, the Grass!" (in Jenkins, 1994, p.122 ). It is difficult to dispute the notion that historically a dichotomy in yard care and preference exists based on sex; however, one wonders if this dichotomy exists to such an extent today. In fact, closer inspection of this study's survey information reveals that almost 50% of garden yards cared for by men have absolutely no lawn whatsoever, while only 40% of women's garden yards are completely without turf.

In general terms, it seems that garden yards help to achieve similar basic priorities among all gardeners. These priorities are: facilitating an interest in gardening, reducing the size of the lawn, and creating something different. Also, low maintenance was a very strong secondary reason for garden yards of all the people surveyed (Table 2). In contrast, friends and relatives, neighbors, and

*Table 3: Primary Reason for Garden Yard*

	female		male		both	
Ecological	4	7%	7	30%	0	0%
Functional	9	16%	1	4%	1	10%
Aesthetic	37	64%	8	35%	7	70%
Symbolic	0	0%	4	17%	0	0%
Maintenance	8	14%	3	13%	2	20%
	58	100%	23	100%	10	100%

media influences such as: gardening television and magazines seem to provide relatively little inspiration to all gardeners.

Men and women also tend to differ in respect to the reasons for their yards (Table 3). When given the choice to pick from functions such as: ecological (habitat, biodiversity), functional (usable space, gardening hobby), aesthetic (beautification, self-expression), symbolic (pedigree landscape, conveys an image) and maintenance (low-maintenance, easy to keep up), 64% of women chose aesthetic reasons. Men on the other hand chose the 'aesthetic' option only 35% of the time and chose 'ecological' 30% of the time. In contrast, very few women (7%) in total chose 'ecological' as an option. Of gardening couples 70% believe their yards serve primarily an aesthetic purpose.

Secondary purposes (Table four) for garden yards also show variation. Women chose 'functional' 45% of the time and men chose 'aesthetic' and 'maintenance' equally (32%), while couples felt their yard had symbolic value (40%). This reinforces previous ideas that women use their gardens as a place to express themselves and to relax and unwind while they garden. Men generally have more concerns when it comes to this landscape. Perhaps this again relates to traditional responsibilities that men and women have held in relationship to this environment. Similarly, Jacob (1992) found that the primary reason for ornamentation of yards in Vestal and Johnson City was to impart a pleasing appearance, but also important was a love for gardening, a form of relaxation, a means to go outside, an opportunity to while away time, and enjoying experimenting with different effects and ways to be different. The extent to which people participated in yard ornamentation was found to be dependent on their age. Typically, those who were retired had the most elaborately

*Table 4: Secondary Reason for Garden Yard*

	female		male		both	
Ecological	8	15%	2	9%	2	20%
Functional	24	45%	4	18%	3	30%
Aesthetic	10	19%	7	32%	1	10%
Symbolic	8	15%	2	9%	4	40%
Maintenance	3	6%	7	32%	0	0%
	53	100%	22	100%	10	100%

landscaped yards because they have more time to spend. In addition, Jacob describes expressions of individuality as being not necessarily a defiance of the norm but rather an excess of it.

### *Greener Thumbs*

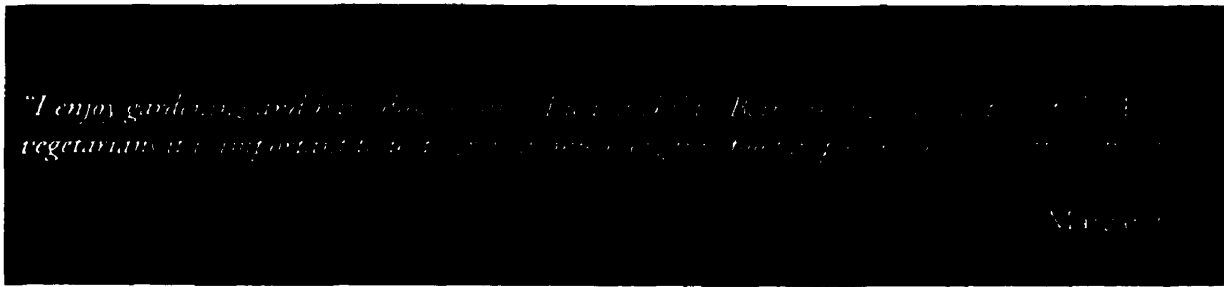
Further investigation of the surveys reveal that people who chose 'ecological' as the primary purpose of their yard were more experienced gardeners or people who did not consider themselves gardeners at all (Table 5). For example, of the people who considered themselves to be gardeners (76%) those who had been gardening between 1 and 9 years tended to have aesthetic reasons for their yards. People gardening for over 10 years shared this reason 51% of the time, but had ecological as their second most popular reason for having a garden yard with functional and maintenance issues not too far behind. Interestingly, people who did not label themselves as gardeners had similar results to experienced gardeners. These two groups may indicate a growing awareness about humans and their relationship to the land, where one has developed over time (as in the case of the experienced gardeners) and the other as perhaps as an expression of a more developed philosophy towards nature overall. At any rate, these results have implications that are similar to Kaplan's idea that a developmental variable may be involved in determining why people garden. It should be noted, however, that aesthetic and functional purposes were listed most often, and that ecological purposes were relatively uncommon in comparison.

Gardeners were also found to be evenly distributed among age classes from 35 to 54. Once

*Table 5: Reasons for Garden Yard  
according to number of years gardening*

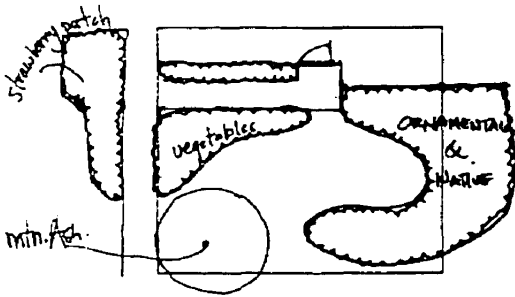
	1 to 3		4 to 9		10		non-gardener	
Ecological	0	0%	0	0%	8	17%	3	15%
Functional	0	0%	0	0%	7	15%	3	15%
Aesthetic	3	75%	18	90%	24	51%	9	45%
Symbolic	0	0%	0	0%	2	4%	2	10%
Maintenance	1	25%	2	10%	6	13%	3	15%
	4	100%	20	100%	47	100%	20	100%

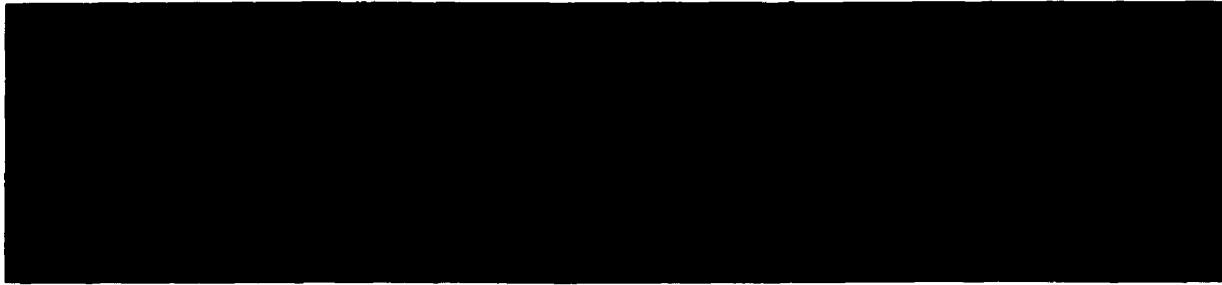




people get over sixty, however, very few tend to have garden yards. In fact, only 11 people have garden yards in age classes from 60 to 69, and none beyond seventy. Generally, people with garden yards tend to be younger to middle aged. Few people, however (6%) under the age of 34 have these yards. Furthermore, not all people with garden yards considered themselves to be gardeners (23% did not). But of the people who did, the majority had a good deal of experience—with 66% gardening over 10 years and another 32% gardening between 3 and 9 years. Organic gardening is popular with 47% of gardeners, with another 14% indicating that they are working towards becoming organic. 42% indicated that they were not organic. In addition, organic gardeners are more common among younger gardeners, with 73% of people between the ages of 35 and 39 indicating that they were organic, 59% of people between the ages of 40 and 44, 55% between the ages of 45 and 49 and only 27% of people between 55 and 59. Also, 77% of moderately experienced (4 to 9 years) gardeners indicated that they were organic while only 54% of people who have been gardening for over 10 years said they were. These results indicate a growing awareness and adoption of organic gardening practices. They are also similar to Kaplan's study mentioned earlier where she found that younger people tended to adopt new approaches to gardening, while older gardeners commonly maintain an approach to gardening that they've participated in all their lives.

The use of native plants was popular amongst 86% of the gardeners, and 73% indicated that would be interested in planting a wildflower meadow. On only one occasion did the gardener actually replace their lawn with a mixture of native prairie plants including an abundance of grasses; and although a few other yards achieved a meadow look, they tend to rely on non-natives. Thus,





the vast majority of yards contained a mixture of native and non-native horticultural varieties of plants. In addition, most yards looked like gardens, and most were considered to be gardens (75%) and not meadows. Although most people consider planting native plants to be important, they tend not to treat natives and non-natives differently. Moreover, they tend to rely on horticultural convention when planting natives by using them in a similar way that they would horticultural varieties. While planting a meadow is a nice idea to most, in practice the more cultural construct of the garden is more popular. Also, when people responded negatively to the idea of a meadow they usually made comments about not having enough space, or “not in the city” or “too messy.” These findings express the importance of the garden as a model from which to achieve greater ecological health within the context of residential environments. Perhaps this relates to the notion that the garden represents a middle ground between nature and culture; a place that is at once nature and unapologetically set against it (Pollan, 1991). A meadow or a lawn on the other hand are too skewed in either direction to achieve this optimal and delicate balance of residential ‘cultivated nature.’

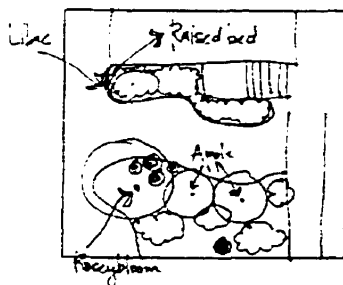
Like all research so far these findings simply beg more questions. Questions about landscape, gender and culture. At the risk of sounding chauvinist or oppressive, such references about gender can be explicit because they will ultimately lead to better designed landscapes; ones that are more responsive, more accessible and more empowering. As the meaning of the garden yard is further revealed, light is shed on these areas of interest to the landscape architect, as they will help us to recognize the complex ways in which people attach meaning to their environment.

*"This is a small, simple yard that is a great example of a good yard. It is a great example of a good yard. It's the only yard I've seen that is a great example of a good yard."*

### Findings and Discussion of the Mesoscale Analysis *Old House, New Yard*

Henderson *et al.* (1998) found that while many of the neighborhood characteristics they measured varied with the distribution of lawn alternatives, neighborhood appearance seemed to be the strongest predictor. In general, neighborhoods with houses built before 1940 overall had higher numbers of alternative lawns. These findings were corroborated by this study. The Henderson Study also discovered that the majority of garden yards were found on small-scaled streets with a distance of 15-30m between house facades. In Winnipeg the majority of garden yards were also found on smaller-scaled streets. Here, 64% occurred in census tracts with a distance of 35m or less from facade to facade. Very few (13 of 119) occurred where this distance was greater than 50m. Also, 57% of garden yards were found in residential areas with old elm stands, and 77% in total had street trees; and most garden yards (84%) were found on narrow streets (8m) with sidewalks. When considered together these factors constitute a vegetatively enclosed, smaller-scaled pedestrian environment and highlight the importance of vegetation as an ordering device in the landscape. Furthermore, Henderson *et al.* (1998) discuss how larger trees create a feeling of vegetative enclosure that may provide a sense of ownership to the front yard. This may also lead to owners wanting to "install a private oasis in an otherwise public space." Cullen (1971) in Henderson *et al.* (1998) addressed the fact that trees provide structure just as buildings do; they can create a sense of volume, enclosure and intimacy that promote the development of outdoor rooms.

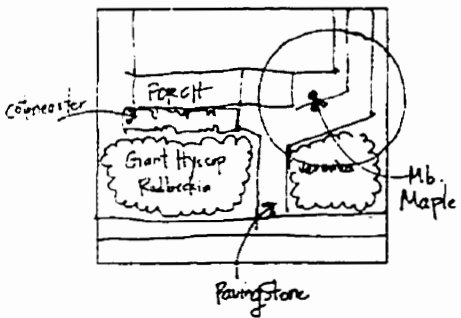
Similar to Henderson, Perkins and Nelischer it was found in Winnipeg that most garden yards exist on small to medium sized lots. This again supports ideas that smaller yards are easier and

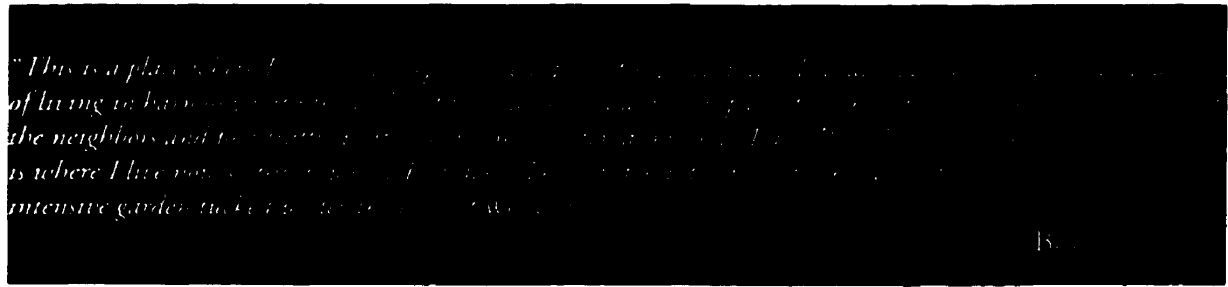


*"My garden is my therapy. I take time to sit in the garden and think about things. I don't have flowers or shrubs at all, but I put a lot of love in it. I also put a lot of love in it just knowing that I planted it from scratch. A lot of people are talking about how important it is to our street culture. It brings us together and it's a beautiful thing."*

Ruth Ann

less intimidating to convert to garden yards, and that they are more likely to fit the definition of a garden yard. Furthermore, yards were found to have medium to low congruity with neighboring yards. In contrast to the "closed", upper-middle class landscape described by Schmid (in Dorney *et al.*, 1984, p.85), houses with garden yards were generally highly visible from the street. In fact, 61% of houses were 100% visible, with another 28% between 80% and 90% visible. Less than 1% of houses were mostly concealed from view. This evidence further reinforces the notion that the garden yard, while perhaps reflective of changing landscape tastes, is still providing a place where people can 'see and be seen.'

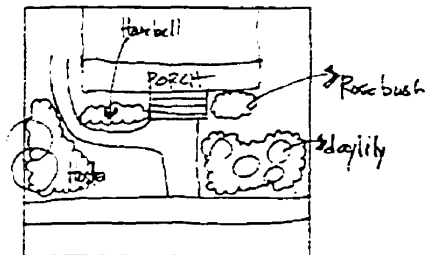


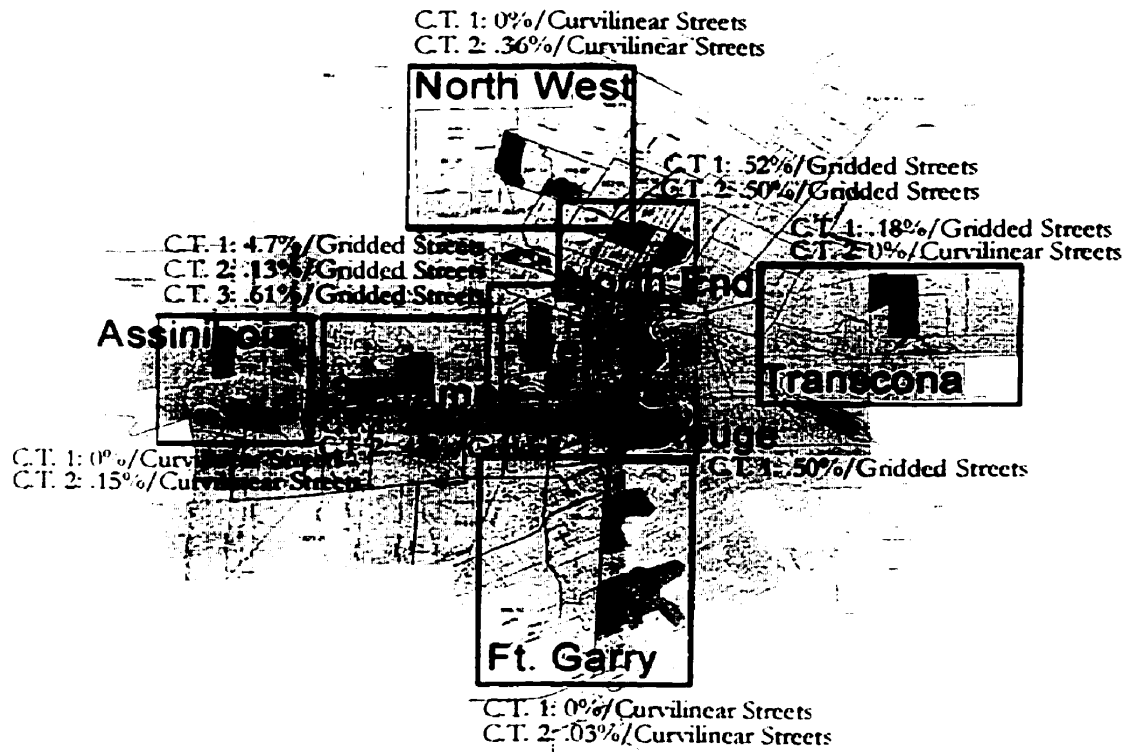


**Findings and Discussion of the Macroscale Analysis**  
*Age, Pattern, Location*

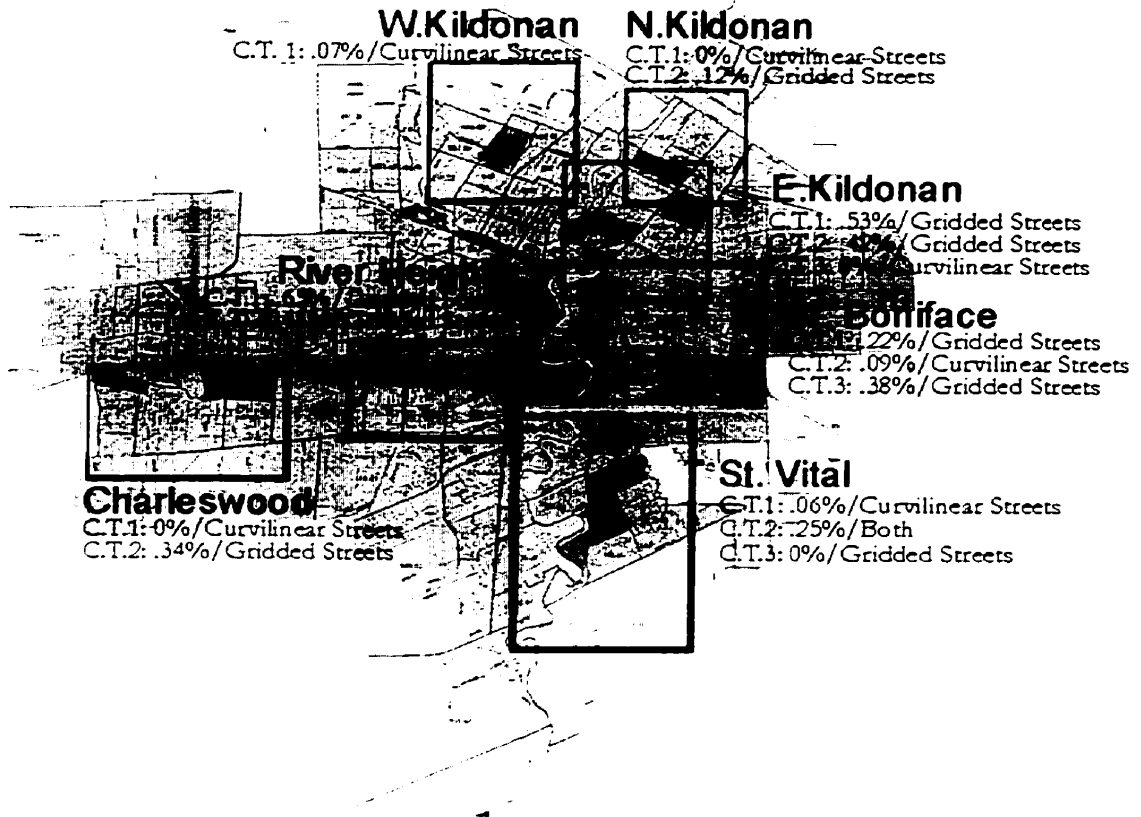
Across the city, the proportions of garden yards varied considerably (Figures 1 and 2). Eight census tracts were found to have no garden yards while the highest proportion of garden yards was 4.7%, substantially higher than the second highest proportion of .6%. The average number of garden yards in the city was less than 1 in 100 houses at .35%. Figures 1 and 2 also illustrate that census tracts with the highest proportions of garden yards tend to have three things in common. They are located in older neighborhoods where streets are gridded, they are closer to the core of the city and they lie in close proximity to rivers. On the other hand, those areas with few or no garden yards tend to be newer areas with curvilinear street patterns that lie near the outskirts of town. Of course, neighborhood age, development pattern and geographic location within a city are linked, therefore, we have to continue our analysis in order to clarify what is occurring. We know that one reason this may be happening is because older neighborhoods have smaller yards that are easier to fill with assortments of plants. However, could different people with different tastes also result in the abundance or absence of garden yards? For example, perhaps 'lifestyle,' or 'personality' as depicted by the profession that one chooses, contribute to where a person lives.

The Correspondence Analysis (Figure 3) found that professions were very good at predicting which areas people were likely to live in. It also found that men and women are closely correlated among professions, meaning that men and women of the same profession tend to live in the same area. Perhaps most revealing is the fact that areas of the city where the most garden yards occurred (Ft. Rouge, West End, River Heights and North End) were clustered together near profes-





*Figure 1: Map A of Winnipeg Indicating Areas Studied  
Census tracts are highlighted*




*Figure 2: Map B of Winnipeg Indicating Areas Studied  
Census tracts are highlighted*



*Figure 3: Correspondence Analysis*

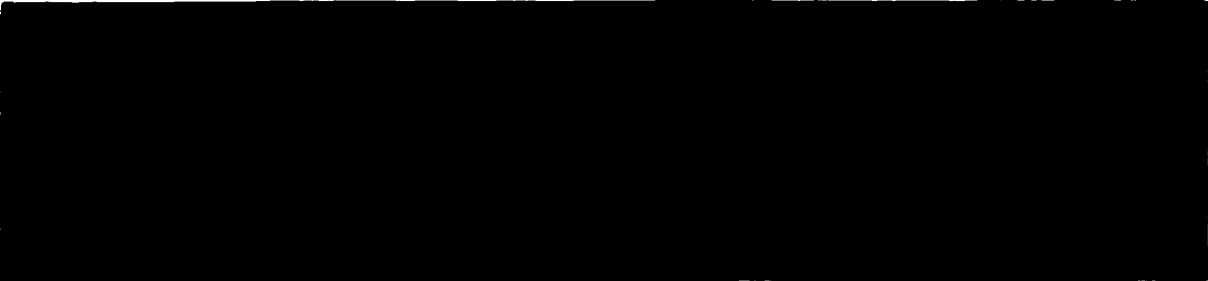




sions associated with the arts. For example, people living in these areas tend to be professionals in the Social Sciences, Humanities and Fine Arts. In contrast, Transcona, North Kildonan, East Kildonan and St. James tend to be associated with Trades and Commerce. Finally, other areas of the city such as Charleswood, St.Vital, Assiniboia, and Ft. Garry are clustered with professional engineers, mathematicians, and people in professions of commerce. Both of these clusters tend to have fewer garden yards. These patterns fit very well with commonly held assumptions about residential patterns in Winnipeg. For example the West End is an 'artsy' community, while Charleswood and Ft. Garry tend to be wealthier and more conservative; places where more professionals (bankers, engineers, etc.) reside.

This analysis provides some strong evidence to support the idea that people are not randomly distributed throughout the city. Furthermore people tend to choose places to live that reflect their tastes and ideals. Also, we can make the assumption that since garden yards tend to occur in areas where there are old elm stands, perhaps the existing vegetation in an area plays a strong role in attracting certain individuals. In fact, Weichhart's (1982/1983) study: "Assessment of the Natural Environment- A Determinant of Residential Preferences" supports this synopsis. He found that the natural environment was a significant determinant of residential preferences. Moreover, among other determinants such as facilities of infrastructure, variables related to distance, social attributes, etc. the natural environment ranked among one of the most relevant criterion for decision-making. However, Weichhart highlights that the natural environment has not been treated sufficiently throughout the literature as being a very important determinant in this matter.

It is difficult to isolate riparian forest as a predictor of garden yards since areas around rivers



were generally developed first and are therefore linked with older residential areas with gridded street patterns and more mature trees. In other words, these variables are confounding. However, there is some evidence that the model of garden yards might be more suited to the social and physical nature of older and more vegetatively lush communities. For example, one woman in Wolseley notes that "This garden is the way it is because of where it is- a small, intensive garden tucked under the elms of Wolseley." Perhaps models based on 'no mow' regimes or prairie plants and grasses replaced in swaths through ditches and along roads are better practices to reduce the amount of lawns (and chemicals) in other neighborhoods. In summary, it is extremely difficult to derive singular reasons for the presence or absence of garden yards, instead they tend to occur as a result of a combination of certain social and physical factors. Some, however, may be more important than others. The next analysis will shed more light on these issues.

### *Social and Physical Context*

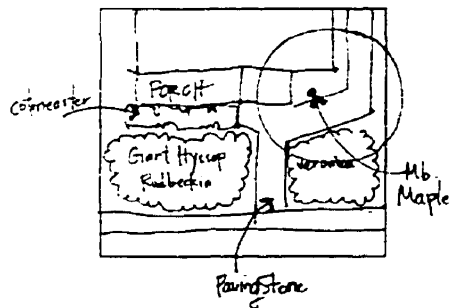
A Principle Component Analysis (PCA) was used to determine which socioeconomic and physical factors best predict the presence of garden yards (Figure 4). The variables used were: proportion of older homes (pre-1946), average value of houses, male and female average age, male and female average income, the proportion of visual minorities, the proportion of people with post secondary education, the density of the area (number of people/area) and population change (attrition). The first axis (horizontal) of this analysis explains 39% of the data set, while the second axis (vertical) explains another 25%. Correlation of garden yards, however, with variables along the first axis is weak. This may be partly explained by the fact that this axis seems to be describing

*"My garden is my therapy. I have been a gardener since I was 12. I have planted flowers or shrubs at all times in my life. I have been a gardener at all points in my life, knowing that I planted it for myself. A garden is a personal space, a place that is part of our street culture. It brings a sense of pride to a community and a sense of ownership."*

Rita V. ...

affluence, which is highly correlated with areas of the city but poorly correlated with garden yards. For example, variables such as house values and male income trend upwards and to the right with more or less affluent communities such as Charleswood, St. James, St. Vital and River Heights highly correlated with them. Trending in the opposite direction are neighborhoods with lower incomes, ranging from \$35,000 to \$44,000. Garden yards, however, trend downwards. Indicating that they are not an expression of extravagance and wealth, but occur in all economic situations. For example, West End or the Wolseley area is actually below average income by about \$6,000 per year, but has the highest percentage (4.7%) of garden yards. East Kildonan is also below average at \$43,000 per year but has above average numbers of garden yards. On the other hand, areas in River Heights are more affluent but also are also correlated with garden yards. It should be noted, however, that income values are averages of all families in a census tract and therefore do not necessarily reflect individuals with garden yards per se. Still, census tract data provides a useful way to determine the general characteristics of a community in which garden yards are occurring as this is a highly public landscape susceptible to input from external sources.

Garden yards trend opposite to age. This implies that as people age, they are less likely to own garden yards. It should be noted that the ages used in the survey and the census tract data ranged from 25 to 85+, thus 'young' in this case refers to people between 25 and 55. As an aside, age is difficult to deal with because how do we determine who is old and who is young? Also, we intuitively imagine gardening to be an activity that older, retired people participate in (indeed Kaplan's study found this) yet Roger's theory stated that innovators are younger, more educated and risk-takers. At any rate, these findings reflect those found at the microscale; which indicated that



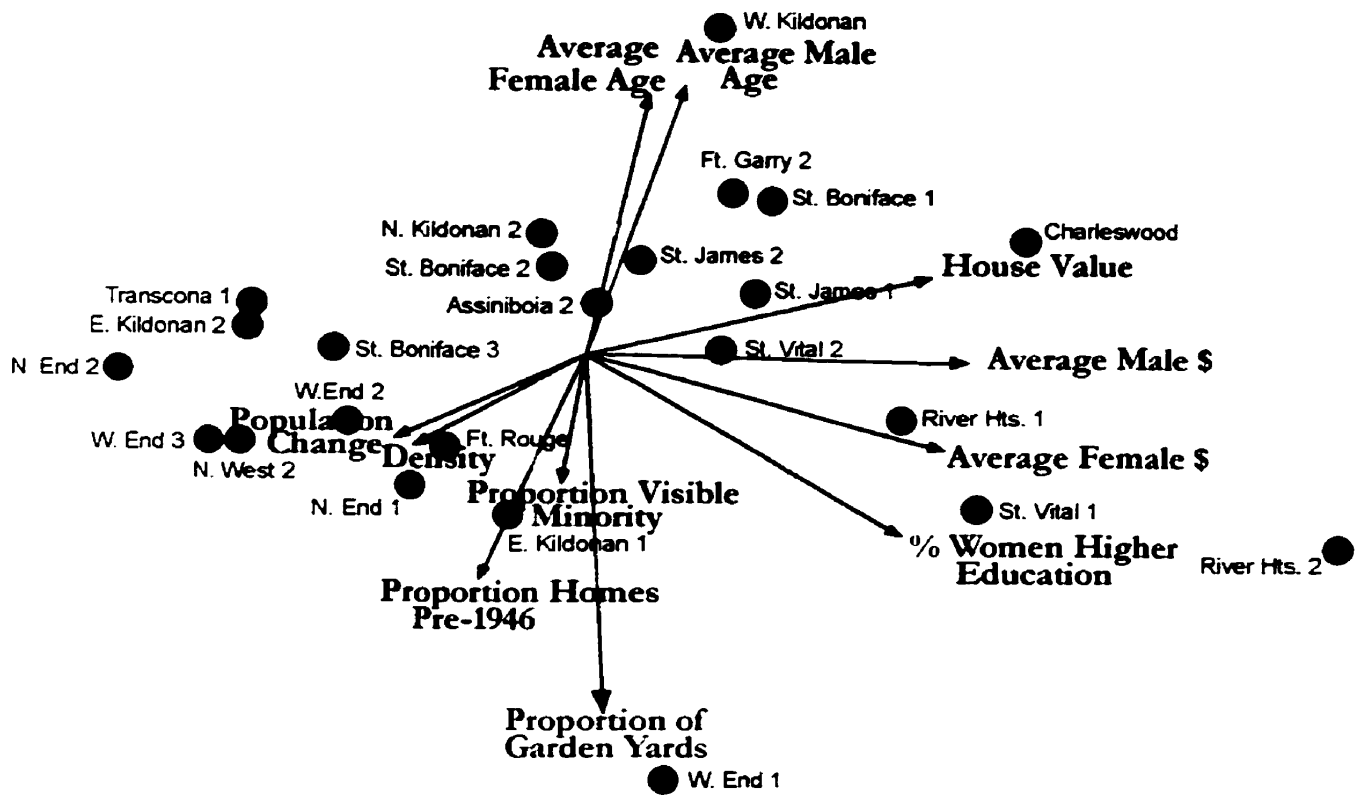
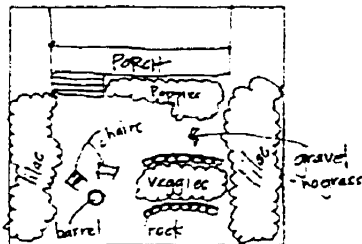


Figure 4: Principle Component Analysis

"This yard is a station of great expense, but it is not so expensive as it is made to appear. It is also low-cost and low-maintenance." (Harris, 1994)

younger people tended to have these types of yards. This is important since census tract data does not necessarily reflect individuals with garden yards. Therefore cross-referencing findings at the micro- and macroscales allows us to determine how representative people with garden yards are of the larger population. As mentioned, most people with garden yards tend to be evenly distributed among participants between the ages of 35 and 54. The most common age of people in all of the census tracts is between 35 and 39, with most people between the ages of 30 and 49.

This analysis also reveals that garden yards are most strongly associated with older neighborhoods. This is not surprising considering all of the data that supports this idea. Unanticipated, however, is the fact that garden yards are also strongly trended with census tracts where women are more educated and affluent with, by extension, more disposable income. But perhaps most significant of all is the fact that all of these are linked. In this context it is difficult to dispute the idea that garden yards may represent a manifestation of *landscape empowerment* whereby older neighborhoods not only provide the right physical context, but also the proper social and political climate in which these yards can flourish. This is not unheard of; the link between gardening and empowerment has been made previously. Lewis (1979 p. 334) noted that "the garden enhances self-esteem by providing a medium whereby people take responsibility for a living, growing and changing entity that responds to their care." More specifically, Harris (1994) commented that historically the garden provided a liberating environment for women during times that were otherwise restrictive in social, economic and political terms. In fact, the language of feminism in early garden literature contained both subtle and overt messages encouraging women to question and resist societal norms and to empower themselves through domestic gardening activities.



*"It takes much less time to maintain my garden than you would think because I don't have the challenge of new personal, the pressure of a design, bloom time, the maintenance of flowers, and the joy of the growing, the color, and the maintenance of the garden."*

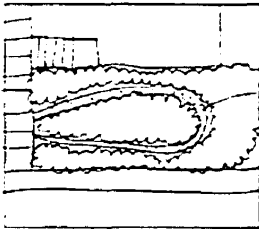
Archer

## Part Five: Summary and Conclusions

### *A Landscape of Dualities*

Certainly one of the most interesting aspects of front yards is their contradictory and transitional nature. At once, they are private and public, personal and communal, cultural and natural. Yet for the most part, front yards are more public than private, more communal than personal and most definitely more of a cultural artifact than a natural one. People with garden yards, on the other hand, seem to reflect a more considered and functional approach to this landscape. That is, they exploit the dual aspects of this space by striking a more balanced effect on the continuum between these opposing ideals. Through their practices of dwelling these people have creatively reinterpreted prescribed allocations of space and made it their own (Jacob, 1992).

From the survey we know that some of the most important reasons for having a garden yard are that it facilitates an interest in gardening, is functional, decreases amounts of lawn and is aesthetically pleasing. However, when asked to comment on their garden yard, the owners often stated that it allows them to communicate aspects of themselves by acting as an extension of their personalities. Many people also pointed out the restorative aspects of their garden yard; that they find gardening relaxing and stress relieving, and that the plants- changing, growing, blooming- capture their imaginations. Barb reiterates this sentiment when she stated: "I love my yard, I get excited when my flame calla blooms." Yet the garden yard, aside from being a place that is very personal, is also something quite the opposite. Many people claim that it pleases their neighbors,

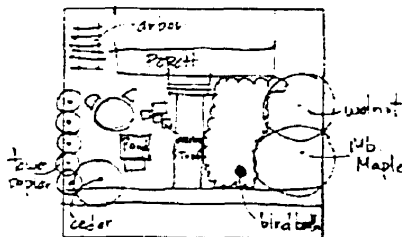


*"I believe that the garden is a form of personal expression (and a way to connect with nature, to beautify their neighborhood and adds to a sense of community, etc.)."*

beautifies their neighborhood and adds to a sense of community. Judy summed up these ideas when she wrote: "Gardening to me is very relaxing- relieves stress from the workplace. Not only does it please me, but people stop by regularly to thank me because they get so much enjoyment from it." So far, part of the cultural conversation of this landscape implies a more pronounced understanding of how this space can be used to achieve a more desirable outcome. For example, instead of spending hours behind a noisy lawnmower, these people have redesigned their yards so that they can partake in an activity that provides them with pleasure and relaxation, but also allows them to interact casually with their neighbors and to give back to their community in their *own* way.

Although the ecological aspects of the garden yard did not show up in the survey as being important, people often made comments that suggested a more progressive understanding of the role of their yard in the broader ecological context. This suggests a more attuned relationship to nature, even though garden yard owners may have chosen an aesthetic function for their yard over an ecological one. This is evident in Doug's statement: "My yard increases local biodiversity, and the plant species offer genetic preservation, low maintenance and low resource use." Karen added: "My garden is a form of personal expression. I enjoy that it evolves both through the seasons, and in form and plant species from year to year. The garden is neither fixed nor controlled, but a merger of my hand and the will of nature." These ideas are further established by Leslie's comments: "This is my yard, it is a very spiritual place for me. I nurture it and it nurtures me. It is a place where I can pause and attune myself to the cycles of nature- a place of communion. I think the same goes for my neighbors, it is a place, where people stop and reconnect with nature."

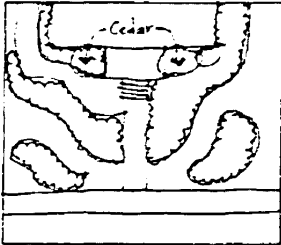
Furthermore, these yards often convey an awareness and attachment to nature similar to



*"I don't consider myself a landscaper. I just wanted an English garden. I don't think I'm very relaxing and a certain type of English garden is to not too formal and not too formal as they garden. I grew up in a garden and I love gardening but I don't think I'm a landscaper. I'm "extras" from my yard."*

the nature lover/gardeners described by Kaplan (1973). This was evident when Nicole stated: "My choice of trees reflects the species that I love in the habitats my husband and I travel in. For example: birch, native cedar, pine of the boreal forest...nothing is done with a grand scheme in mind. It is mainly my love of digging in the dirt, seeing things grow, and appreciating the way my efforts have changed the face of our little corner of the world. From barren grass to microhabitat teeming with life, it gives me great satisfaction to observe how I've helped keep a little bit of the natural in the heart of the urban environment."

While there is little doubt that beauty is paramount when it comes to this landscape, people often made reference to a more compromising approach to their yard- a give and take relationship between their ideas and those of mother nature by accepting that some plants will work and flourish, while others, if unsuitable, will die and be replaced by others that will succeed. Cheryl expresses this best: "I am always learning from and always changing the garden. Some plants die and some plants take over. Just like life." In this sense, garden yards go beyond simple ideas of ecology, they represent an approach to the landscape that accepts it as a changing and evolving process. This contrasts dramatically with traditional management practices of this space- where year after year people strive for a constant, static picture of neatness and presentability.





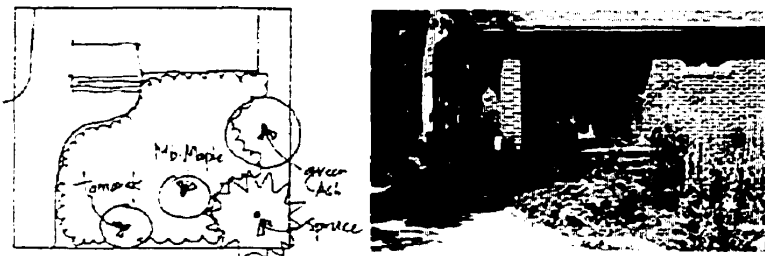
*"Some of our neighbors have front yards that are just beautiful. They are just what the neighbors need. The space that is created is a great place to live. It requires zero chemical input and is a great place to live."*

One of the other interesting dual aspects of the front yard is its simultaneous visual diversity and conformity (Jacob, 1992 and Jim 1993). These aspects are evident in the on-going production of innovations and the subsequent adoption or mimicry of the said innovation. It seems that once someone alters their front yard, others feel compelled to do the same. Perhaps this is an attempt to reestablish a visual equilibrium, where people feel obliged to mimic new ideas. Jacob (1992) had similar conclusions. She states that this often unspoken exchange of ideas among residents helps to impart a communal appearance to the neighborhood. When one occupant made a strong visual statement on the house exterior or front yard, neighbors felt compelled to respond. Mrs. Greenwood was certainly aware of this trend, as she grumbled, "I don't understand it, but for some reason people have a tendency to have terrible mailboxes. If you make your mailbox pretty, you'll be surprised how many people do something to theirs!" (Jacob, 1992, p. 99).

### *Neighborhood or Suburb?*

In older areas, the idea of the garden yard is catching on more rapidly and its consequent diffusion throughout the neighborhood has altered the appearance of these places quite remarkably. Girling and Helphand (1994) made note of this visual alteration and commented on why dramatic changes in front yards are occurring almost exclusively in older neighborhoods. They stated:

Lawns are being converted to vegetable gardens or planted with native materials, ranging from wildflower meadows to cactus deserts. As front yards change, a new streetscape emerges, one that is more villagelike and projects a sense of individualized craft. On the other hand, in new subdivisions it is business as usual. Although the tiny green yard attracts attention, it is important to note that



"This yard reappears as a site of a new, more complex, and more interesting idea of being surrounded by a more plural and more interesting world. The yard simply makes our lot a part of the world and a place to be."

Bob and Kathy

it now competes with the garage and driveway for space and identity, as the stability of the family and home now competes with mobility. (219)

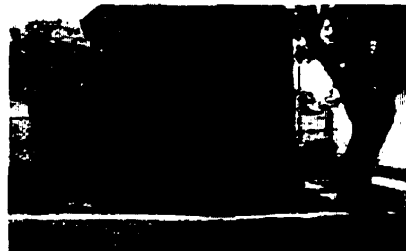
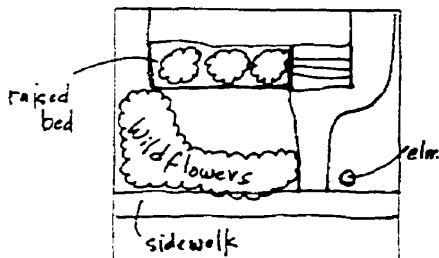
While these comments are not scientifically based they are noteworthy, because they are part of a growing cultural dialogue that questions the design of suburbs. Jacob (1992) noted that people harbor few illusions about their suburban homes as being dream houses. Instead, their criticism of planners and architects is explicit:

I grew up in the city where we *did* know the neighbors. Unfortunately, in these tracts all the women are working and have cars and garages, and no sidewalks or anything for evening walks. You drive in, wave to your neighbors while your all getting your mail out of the mailboxes and go inside. It's not a real neighborhood and I miss that sometimes, too. (p. 101)

Pollan (1991) pointed out that Suburban America has been laid out to look best from the perspective not of its inhabitants, but of the motorist. He is convinced that:

Gardening- *real* gardening, not just putting in beds of flowers or tomatoes- begins with the removal of one's property from the motorist's gaze, with one's secession from the national lawn. This might mean throwing a hedge or a fence around your yard, letting it go to a meadow, or ripping out the grass and putting in something else entirely. (p.271)

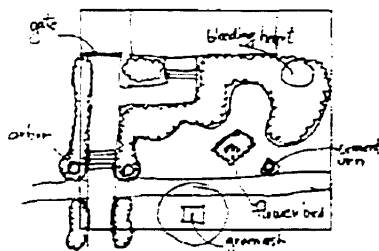
Other criticisms of suburbia have entered the media. Recently, an article in the Ottawa Citizen discussed how home builders in Ontario are finally getting the message that people don't like garages stuck out in front of houses. Some developers are now creating wider, shallower lots so that the garage can be built flush with the house. This geometry allows for roomier front porches,



"We enjoy sitting on the top of our front porch, just watching the street. The front porch is the best part of the house. The front porch is the most interesting because it's the only one that's not a porch." — Steve and Becca

bigger front windows (with a 180 degree visual radius of the street), brighter interior spaces and front doors that fully face onto the street. They noted that by pushing the garage to the side, flush with the house, the front porch becomes more interesting and the roof has more design options. Overall, they claimed that this type of design is certainly a much more appealing, people-friendly look (Young, 2000). Interestingly, most of these ideas come from the New Urbanism- an approach to development that relies heavily on recycling the ideas that give older neighborhoods their charm, character and livability. Recently, DPZ (Duany and Plater-Zyberk) and Peter Calthorpe used small, modest yards in their projects. Their drawings show small front yards as gardens that fill the space between the house and sidewalk. At Calthorpe's Laguna West, residents were discouraged from planting large lawns and encouraged to install native, drought-resistant plants (Girling and Helphand, 1994). Along with the results of this study, these recent developments indicate that garden yards are particular to traditional looking neighborhoods where people have smaller, more intimate exterior environments, often with front porches where they can interact with people on the street. Calthorpe's ideas are noteworthy, particularly the fact that residents are installing alternatives themselves rather than hired laborers. This way, people gain expertise, and are more empowered to deal with issues if they arise.

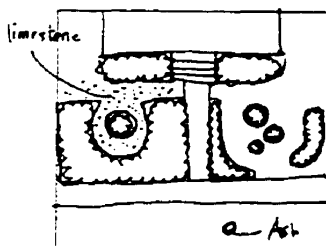
Perhaps the most fundamental reason that garden yards occur in older areas is because they are *neighborhoods* rather than *suburbs* or *subdivisions*. Older, well-established neighborhoods often have qualities that are dear to their residents; they are warehouses of memories that have built-up and accumulated over time. People plan to stay in such places, making it reasonable for



*"This yard isn't having the garden as it is, but the more I know about the garden, the more this will make the yard more interesting."*

Ann

them to commit both personally and financially into their homes and yards. In other words *attachment* plays a strong role in the satisfaction that these people derive from their community (Quayle and Driessen van der Lieck, 1997). In such a context, the garden yard can spread rapidly because people are using this space- they are in their front yards talking to their neighbors or sitting in their front porch- and more often than not they notice and are a part of what is happening on their street. On the other hand, suburbs are often transient. Although residents may be satisfied with their housing conditions, there is often less attachment to the community (Quayle and Driessen van der Lieck, 1997). They often see their houses and yards as real estate ventures that enable them to buy and sell their way to another higher priced, more affluent suburb. Accordingly, people do not plan to stay as long, or they only spend time there on a seasonal basis. This way, their homes and yards are less likely to accumulate personal changes over years of occupation. It is interesting to note that lawns, while the cheapest groundcover to install, are the most expensive to maintain. Therefore, as a landscape strategy lawns seem to make sense where people are transient and less likely to make higher investments in landscaping upfront. Furthermore, people in suburbs tend to use their spaces differently. Here, the backyard is used more frequently (Jacob, 1992), with the front remaining as a necessary, but underutilized gesture to the community.



*"It is different, can be done, but it is not always easy to do. I have seen people do it with all perennials so I can't see why anyone would not try it."*

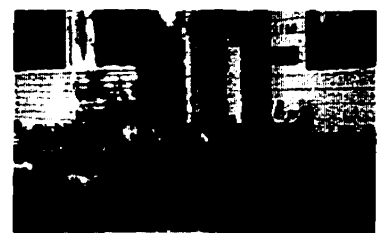
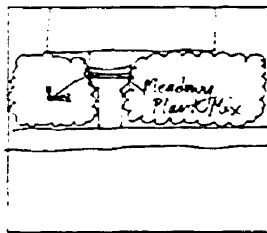
*Shelton*

### *Last Words*

In conclusion, while garden yards are popular and appealing in some parts of the city, they do not yet appear to be feasible everywhere. As mentioned earlier, they reflect personal and distinctive tastes fashioned and moulded by the social and physical conditions of a particular area. They seem to convey certain ideals- earthy, artsy, individualistic, communal- that don't appeal to everyone. The notion that homeowners everywhere can or should have this type of yard is extremely hopeful, if not downright unrealistic. However, the most interesting part of this new and emerging landscape may be that it is a nonconformist approach to an extremely conformist landscape. Garden yards provide evidence that there are ways of slipping through the cracks of even the most rigid systems and that those who create those systems can never predict how they will be reinterpreted and used. While garden yards do seem to represent a barometer of community cohesiveness and satisfaction in some areas, it is acceptable that they are not the panacea of all of our residential landscape woes.

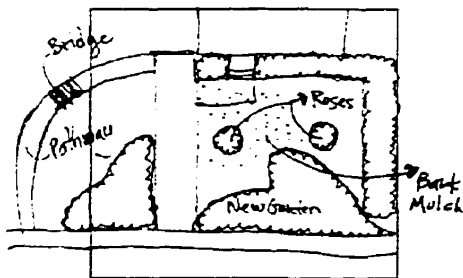
With that said, there is little doubt in my mind that garden yards will continue to catch on (although this is more likely to happen where they are already occurring most frequently) as more members of our society take up gardening as a hobby or come to question the expense of maintaining a lawn. Other lawn alternatives may also emerge, such as buffalograss, moss, native prairie or even water- alternatives that suit a wider variety of individuals with different needs and ideals, who live in different (not traditional) areas of the city.


This study has also led to a fuller understanding and appreciation of the importance of the front yard as a space in which humans can articulate their personalities and beliefs, partake in



*"My definition of a beautiful garden is a garden that has been made by introducing new concepts into an existing garden. Most gardens are just a copy of the garden next door. This yard contains a feeling that is not to be counted."*


soothing and restorative activities such as gardening, and get acquainted with their neighbors. The front yard represents a great *placemaking* opportunity for homeowners that could be pushed further in order to better fulfill the true dual nature of this space. By rediscovering and recovering the yard more people could use their property as a laboratory; a 'homegrown' microcosm of chance, change and evolution- where the chaotic nature of the universe is not manipulated and controlled against its will but understood, embraced and delighted in. In this light, perhaps the garden yard, a more empowered and thoughtful approach to this space, can help us to achieve greater ecological and cultural health for our cities.





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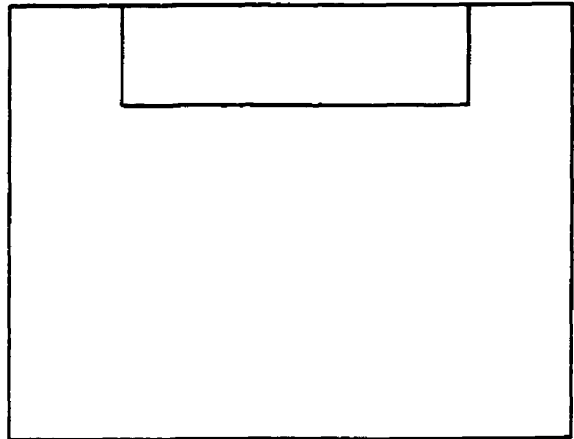
*Appendix A-Checklist*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Neighborhood: \_\_\_\_\_  
Census Tract #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Sheet # \_\_\_\_\_

- Dominant age of houses: \_\_\_\_\_
- Street width: \_\_\_\_\_
- Size and approximate age of the street trees: \_\_\_\_\_

Design Cues: Presence/Absence

- Mowing \_\_\_\_\_
- Flowering plants \_\_\_\_\_
- Wildlife feeders and birdhouses \_\_\_\_\_
- Mass plantings \_\_\_\_\_
- Trimmed shrubs \_\_\_\_\_
- Foundation plantings \_\_\_\_\_
- Linear plantings \_\_\_\_\_
- Architectural details \_\_\_\_\_
  - Fences \_\_\_\_\_
  - Gates \_\_\_\_\_
  - Trellises \_\_\_\_\_
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_



- Lot size: S/M/L
- Congruity Hi/Med./Lo
- Native or Ornamental Plantings \_\_\_\_\_
- % area turf grass \_\_\_\_\_
- % area other dominant groundcover \_\_\_\_\_
- Topographic relief \_\_\_\_\_
- Tidiness (1-10) \_\_\_\_\_
- % tree coverage \_\_\_\_\_
- North, south west or east facing
- % visibility of residence from street: \_\_\_\_\_
- Degree of Care: Hi/Med./ Lo
- Busy or Slow Street: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes:

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## Appendix B- Survey

1. Your address \_\_\_\_\_
2. Is the *primary* caregiver of the garden male or female? M/F
3. What age category does the primary caregiver of the yard fit in to? 25-29 / 30-34 / 35-39 / 40-44 / 45-49 / 50-54 / 55-59 / 60-64 / 65-69 / 70-74 / 75-79 / 80-84 / 85+
4. How long has your yard been different from others? 1-3 years/4-9 years/10 or more
5. Do you consider yourself to be a gardener? Yes/ No
6. If yes, how long have you been gardening for? 1-3 years/4-9 years/ over 10 years
7. In *previous* residences (single-detached dwelling) was your yard similar? Yes/ No/ N/A
8. Would you design this type of yard again if you moved? Yes/ No
9. Do you talk to your neighbors about your yard? Yes/No
10. Do you watch gardening shows on tv? Yes/ No
11. Do you use the internet as a gardening resource? Yes/ No
12. Do you subscribe to gardening magazines? Yes/ No
13. Do you belong to a gardening club? Yes/ No
14. Do you consider yourself an organic gardener? Yes/No/ Not Yet
15. Do you think that planting native plants is important? Yes/ No
16. Do you consider your yard to be more like a garden or a meadow? \_\_\_\_\_
17. Would you ever consider planting a wildflower meadow? Yes/ No
18. Do you feel that your yard somehow expresses your ethnic identity? Yes/ No
19. If yes, how? \_\_\_\_\_
20. Did you design and implement your garden yourself? Yes/ No
21. If not, was it professional designed by a landscape architect or a landscaping company? Explain: \_\_\_\_\_
22. What *inspired* you to have such a yard? Number in order of significance:  
\_\_\_ Friends and relatives  
\_\_\_ Neighbors  
\_\_\_ Gardening television and magazines

\_\_\_ Your own interest in gardening

\_\_\_ You wanted to decrease the amount of lawn you had

\_\_\_ You wanted to create a low maintenance landscape

\_\_\_ You wanted to create something different from most others

25. Which of the following categories best describes the purpose of your yard, and which least describes its purpose? (Number the spaces in the order of how well they describe reasons for your yard- 1 being the most descriptive, 5 the least.)

\_\_\_ Ecological (water conservation, habitat, biodiversity)

\_\_\_ Functional (usable space, gardening hobby)

\_\_\_ Aesthetic (beautification, self-expression)

\_\_\_ Symbolic (conveys an image, pedigree landscape)

21. At first, were you concerned that your neighbors might not appreciate your yard? Yes/No

25. If yes, did you take any precautionary measures to ensure that your neighbors *would* appreciate your yard? Yes/ No. If yes, explain: \_\_\_\_\_

26. Do you think that your yard is better than a traditionally designed and maintained yard of grass and foundation plantings? Yes/No. If yes why? \_\_\_\_\_

27. In your own words, what does your yard mean to you- what do you like about it? -tell me what you wish. \_\_\_\_\_

