

visual communication

within the smaller scale



Examensarbete inom landskapsarkitekturprogrammet, 30HP av Kajsa Björne

VISUELL KOMMUNIKATION - i den mindre skalan

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VISUAL COMMUNICATION - within the smaller scale

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preface

Why did I decide to write about visual communication as a final thesis and why did I choose this out of all the subjects I could have chosen? It is quite obvious when looking at my background. I have studied many different types of visual communications over the last 15 years such as; graphic design; photography; illustration; web design; industrial design etc. Prior to that I was always “the girl with a pen in her hand” and drew at every opportunity. I decided to attend the course in Landscape Architecture for two reasons. First of all I wanted to continue working creatively with visual communication but felt there was something missing in my current studies. Secondly I had a desire to connect my prior studies to reality and nature. Landscape architecture is the perfect mix of them both and therefore I can still today enjoy working with visual communication.

Throughout my course and final thesis I have had the opportunity to look a little deeper at visual communication from a Landscape Architect point of view. I have also been able to do this through a reality based investigation of a Landscape Architecture firm in England.

Kajsa Björne
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abstract

In order to understand how landscape architects communicate and what visual language is being used when communicating design; we have gained vast knowledge in a number of areas. Visual communication touches many subjects such as perception, communication, language, marketing, image making, image analysis, rhetoric etc. How we perceive an image and what influences us is affected by many different things. Examples can include society or even the individual background.

How an image appears is dependent upon what consistencies are being used. The image a landscape architect normally produces differs from the commercial image and art. In order to communicate most effectively it is important to be aware of what language is being used. Being clear and using a set language will minimise misunderstandings.

Through a case study I have been looking at one company's opportunities and problems regarding visual communication and helped them to gain insight of what they were mediating. From this insight I have helped them improve their visual language and defined new goals to strive towards.

Moreover I have been looking at the existing market through 14 Landscape Architect firms in order to gain an understanding of what visual languages are being used in today's Landscape Architecture environment.

Sammanfattning

För att kunna förstå hur landskapsarkitekter kommunicerar och vilket visuellt språk de använder sig av vid förmedling av designarbete har jag fördjupat mig i ämnen som berör detta. Visuell kommunikation nuddar vid många ämnen exempelvis följande; perception; kommunikation; språkliga medel; marknadsföring; bilduppbyggnad; bildanalys; retorik osv. Hur vi uppfattar och läser av en bild och vad som påverkar oss som observatör är influerat av åtskilliga företeelser bland annat av vårt samhälle och vår bakgrund.

Hur en bild ser ut avgörs av vilket sammanhang den används i. Illustrationerna en landskapsarkitekt normalt sätt skapar skiljer sig från reklamens bild och från konsten. För att kunna kommunicera på ett verkningsfullt sätt är det viktigt att man är medveten om vilket språk man använder. Ett tydligt språk minimerar missförstånd.

Genom en fallstudie har jag fördjupat mig i ett landskapsarkitektkontors möjligheter och svårigheter inom visuell kommunikation och vidare ökat insikten i vad de idag förmedlar. Därefter klargjort åtråvärda mål samt arbetat med att förbättra och klargöra delar av deras visuella språk.

Jag har även studerat 14 landskapsarkitektkontor som aktivt arbetar med visuell kommunikation för att få kunskap i vilka metoder och visualiseringsspråk som används i arkitektursammanhang idag.

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BACKGROUND

Pictures gain my attention. I look at colours, structure, design and techniques. It doesn't matter how much knowledge I have (or do not have) in the subject, I always end up looking intently – analysing, admiring, criticising. Throughout my course I was able to see hundreds of presentations and consequently also hundreds of different styles, which fascinates me a great deal. The pictures are the things that capture my attention, and once they have captivated me I am ready to take in the rest of the presentation. If the presentations do not have any (attention drawing) images, unfortunately it also loses me as an observer. With this thesis I plan to demonstrate why that is, by gaining insight in the two factors; the observer and the way of expressing. What differs in me as an observer? What different ways of observing are there? What differs in the picture? Why do some pictures draw our attention and some not?

Throughout my course I have worked periodically for a landscape architecture firm in England. I have been working for an organisation experiencing change. When I established first contact with the company it was a very small organisation with two employees, apart from the main designer/owner. Approximately a year before our meeting the company went from drawing everything by hand to virtually all computerised.

Gradually over the years the commissions increased, and so did the number of employees. As the amount of employees in the company grew, I realised that more styles of visualisations were developed. As the main designer himself is not capable of using the computer as a drawing instrument, it has been hard for him to make obvious and clear guidelines regarding the direction of the employee's work. Added to this, most work is made under time pressure, which leads to a lack of reflection and realisation of how widely the presentations have differed. This is the reason why I started the dialogue at the office and suggested my thesis as an aid in helping the firm to improve. Personally I also knew it had been requested by the employees. I wanted to help the firm to become aware and to unite the styles of the presentation material. The most important reason for this was that I felt that our visualisations did not represent what the company offers through its design: Top quality design. The firm is producing amazing design work with a distinct style and is a well-

known practice in the country, why should we not then also make sure our drawings reflected the same quality? When it comes to typeface, formats, photos and the way of presenting, a style is much defined, just not the visuals.

As the company's clients are mostly private our drawings have never appeared in public consistencies; as a result it has not been an important or urgent matter. Clients contact the company because of designs they have seen and therefore know what outcome the company offers. As a result there is no need for pretty drawings as the conviction is made before even contacting us.

Once the ambition of expanding the company had been realised and it was agreed to do more public design work, it was time to look a little closer at what we really were producing. This is where my thesis enters the process – by evaluating and gaining insight on how we communicate and are seen as a company today. Not until we have got an understanding and a perception of how we work today - can we change and strive towards the same goal, i.e. finding a united and professional style in which we as a company mediate quality and values. I also want to look at the commercial aspect of it since knowing how to work, with a clear defined guidance, will help us save time and therefore even expenses.

To be able to get a deeper knowledge of the questions above I first of all need an understanding of all subject areas it concerns such as; visual perception, communication, language, marketing, media, image making, image analysis, market today, rhetoric etc.

OBJECTIVES AND AIM

- To gain a deeper knowledge and understanding of how we perceive visuals and how visuals can communicate the content.
- To gain a deeper knowledge of what driving force is behind those visuals we see in architecture consistently today. (Marketing, trends, techniques etc)
- To gain deeper knowledge in the various forms that can be used for visualisation of architecture proposals.
- To give examples in a specific project of how you can work with, and how to develop and communicate a visual identity.

DELIMITATION

As a Landscape Architect you can end up with many different types of communication consistencies containing varied mediums of communication. There are different dialogues for different target groups depending on what scale you are working in. For example, when it comes to large scale projects and planning we talk about infrastructural documents and basis of discussions for politicians. This is one way of communicating.

At the next scale level we deal with documents made for planning of residential areas, large parks, urban design etc. and communicate in other ways. We can still use the document as a basis for discussion with politicians but it tends to be more common with private clients. Regardless of whom the client is the documents made in this scale differ a lot to the large scale.

The next scale level is the level I have chosen to investigate - the smaller scale. This is the human scale where the Landscape Architect stands in direct and close relation to the client and is usually private or municipalities. It includes projects such as parks, show gardens, private gardens, urban rooms etc. This is the scale of more details.

So why did I decide to delimitate my thesis to this scale? This is the scale my company usually works within and hence the area of my expertise. It is also the scale that interested me most when choosing my thesis subject.

the perception

INTRODUCTION

What is a picture? Why do some attract and others not? What is visual perception? How do we comprehend and perceive pictures? Do we all perceive the same things? These are huge questions and impossible to give a detailed answer to in a master thesis. A picture is not just a visual but a whole situation of messages, signals, interpretations etc. Maybe it is not the picture itself that is important, perhaps it is how we perceive and comprehend that is the most important when talking about visual communication? That is why I now will try and introduce the subject of visual perception.

WHAT IS VISUAL PERCEPTION. HOW DO WE COMPREHEND AND PERCEIVE PICTURES.

Medically speaking visual perception is the ability to interpret information from visible light reaching the eye. Conscious and sub-conscious signals are sent to the brain via 130 million sensitive sight nerves within one thousandth of a second. This occurrence is called perception. (Carlsson, Koppfeldt.2001)

Psychological or cognitively speaking perception is a mental interpretation of feelings or sensations produced by stimuli from the surrounding world. It is a fundamental function to keep individuals informed about the world. Perceptions occur with an inner picture that is organised so that we can generate appropriate actions. (Nationalencyklopedin, n.d) The visual perception is a personal judgment that can transpire quickly and spontaneously. On one level, it is a superficial and preconceived judgement that usually leads to two actions within the viewer – rejection or response. This quick judgement is not always fair. It is impossible to predict the reactions. The beholder's different criteria of how they perceive the picture can be vast. It is about personal impressions, consistency, values, knowledge and which experience the beholder has. (Carlsson.Koppfeldt, 2001)

“Far from being a mechanical recording of sensory elements, vision proved to be a truly creative apprehension of reality – imaginative, inventive, shrewd, and beautiful.” Arnheim, 1954, p.5

PERCEPTION IS NEVER INDIVIDUAL

Above I describe perception as something for each individual. This makes the information very limited and inaccurate and is not enough to understand perception. For that reason we need to expand our view.

“But it is also in the nature of man that he wishes to define what he sees and to understand why he sees what he does.” Arnheim, 1954, p.8

To be able to understand and perceive a picture you also have to understand a society. Every single individual has got a place in a real society. They also have access to a knowledge that is superior to all anthropological knowledge (Barthes, 1977). This means that perception never exists with one person alone. Perception always collaborates with a society, cultural conditions and shared experiences. Therefore when we are talking about visual perception we must understand that it shall always be in the consistency of “us” and “we” as “we” is the foundation of all communication. Obviously individuals within the society see things differently, both medically and psychologically, but the society has coloured our view. Our psyche is built like a language and therefore each individual function as a lexicon where we read symbols and put them in a whole of practical and technical strategies. (Barthes, 1977). It is a complicated subject I have recently undertaken and difficult to explain in any great detail within a master thesis. However, I will do my best to demonstrate as much as I can. First of all let me begin with some conceptual words that are often being used when talking about perception.

WHAT IS A DENOTATION

“Denote betoken, designate, express, imply, import, indicate, mark, mean, show, signify, typify” Collins, 1986, p.261

A denotation is said to be literal, precise and what the beholder directly can see in a picture i.e. how it is structured and what it depicts. For example the composition (format, lines, colour, and light) and the pictures attribute (objects, environments, and people). Denotations are often said to be a universal language and interpreted nearly the same all over the world. (Panofsky, 1970)

WHAT IS A CONNOTATION. DO WE ALL PERCEIVE THE SAME

Depending on our background we adapt a picture to a content that is appropriate and suitable to ourselves. We organise, create meaning, order and place a picture in a context. This type of subdivision and interpretation is called connotation. The connotations are our associations. In other words, everything a picture makes us think of. They can be symbolic, an idea of something and are rich in meaning. This interpretation cannot always be pointed out in the picture but noticeable to many beholders. Connotations are not obvious but can be very significant. The associations can be collective and cultural. (Carlsson.Koppfeldt, 2001)

"The way we see things is affected by what we know or what we believe"
Berger, 1972, p.8

Is it really that easy? Can denotations and connotations get divided like this and stand separate from each other? No, it never happens – they can never get separated. A picture always gives associations and is impossible to separate from its denotations. If you remove all connoting signs, codes and associations that comes up in your mind when perceiving a picture (which is impossible) what remains after that would be the definition of what a denotation really is. This never works in reality, even if a picture would be made extremely simple with the motive of achieving a picture free from connotations, it would get experienced as naive and therefore connoted to naiveté. A picture will always be ambiguous. (Barthes, 1977)

THE INTERPLAY OF CONNOTATIONS AND DENOTATIONS

The literal and precise perceiving of a picture (denotations), work as a foundation for the associations (connotations). Without the pictures literal meaning we can't associate and hence necessitates them both working together. The interdisciplinary approach of denotations and connotations is a very interesting function and results in the following example: The pictures denotation naturalises the symbolic and encoded value and tends to make the connotations more innocent.

"We can now understand that it is precisely the syntagm of the denoted message which 'naturalizes' the system of the connoted message. Or again: connotation is only system, can only be defined in paradigmatic terms; iconic denotation is only syntagm, associates elements without any system: the discontinuous connotators are connected, actualized, 'spoken' through the syntagm of the denotation, the discontinuous world of symbols plunges into the story of the denoted scene as though into a lustral bath of innocence."* Barthes, 1977, p.51

What Barthes is trying to explain is that often we get fooled or confused by the denotative message form and for that reason it makes us believe that connotations are something natural - a truth. We have a tendency to think that there are permanent meanings of certain

things and mix these with the connotative meanings therefore we believe they are natural. Connotations are never natural; they only exist in our brains. Complicated? Yes, it is a very complex subject. I will now delve further in to how we perceive through a society.

WHAT IS TASTE. IS TASTE INFLUENCED BY A SOCIETY

A picture attracts us according to our background, our associations and society. Is there anything else apart from this that affects us? What is taste? Is taste an ability to appreciate and choose what is beautiful or pleasant? (Norstedts, 1997) Who decides what it is good taste or bad taste? To define what good taste is can be hard or even impossible and the meaning of the subject varies extensively. Predominantly you talk about the ability to understand and appreciate the excellence in human work and achievements. You talk about the aptitude of having a good sense in beauty, order, harmony, proportions and symmetry. It is a personal approach or response towards an aesthetic occurrence where you judge and say: it is either good or bad. (Webster, 1986) However, this is an obsolete way of looking at taste as it is never that simple. Even words are connected to connotations. The above statement believes that taste exists in this invariable form and that taste is a sense that some people are better than other in judging. It simplifies the word to a non-dynamic and denoted description that belongs to essentialism and idealism. What about the saying; the beauty lies in the eye of the beholder. If that is true then it is impossible to see taste as an aptitude of having a good sense. Because it is then up to each individual beholder to decide what is good taste or not? In a socio-cultural society we collectively create meaning, develop, test and communicate knowledge. We interact in many ways, through languages, culture etc. It is a complex social environment. The society at large can influence what we like and do not like along with our own connotations and opinions. In essence, our own connotations added with society's values, is what we call "our taste". Where we grow up, work, and live, all colour our thinking. Our values are formed by habits and social positions within society. We create our identity after more advanced cultural shapes with the aim of getting associated with those who are seen to have more experience in intellectualism. Hence we have a tendency to consume products related to it. What we consume is "good taste". Taste today has become something that is extremely commercialised. (Wikipedia, 2009) So as an overstatement, we can say that the society in large decide what good taste is.

* "syn•tagm or syn•tag•ma n. pl. syn•tag•ms or syn•tag•ma•s or syn•tagma•ta
1.a systematic collection of writings
2.a syntactic unit: word or phrase that has syntactic relation"
Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1986

“All aesthetic experience, whether of art or nature, seems to be informed by and dependent upon an exercise of taste. We choose the object of aesthetic experience, and often do so carefully and deliberately. Moreover, we are judged by our choices, not only of works of art but also of colour schemes, dresses, and garden ornaments, just as we are judged by our manners and our sense of humour.”
 Encyclopædia Britannica. 2009

OTHER ASPECTS OF TASTE

Despite the above assertion, our individual taste is a matter of something more than connotations and influences by society. I think we all, as individuals, have a personal opinion that is less simple to define and explain. Something that we are born with, that is in us, independent and detached to our connotations and social influences, an individual complex entity, something genuine, deep and personal. Does this then mean that every person has one taste each? A taste that is not somehow shared or universal. We cannot be certain. It is difficult to answer although I believe there exists something in each individual that has not been affected by external factors.

Another interesting aspect of taste is the adolescent culture. Often a style that is seen as “bad taste”, arisen to provoke the adult generation, to mediate a message, dissatisfaction or to make the youth voice heard. These inputs have in the past been important factors in movements for social changes around the world. Once established it has become accepted within society and united with all influences of taste. However, when talking about taste in this form the taste is not initially deep and genuine as the personal taste. It is a social game. A political and personal protest with the aim to steer, affect and develop a society. (Hellström Reimer. M, 2009)

Where do we as Landscape Architects stand? Are we players of the social game or is our taste deep and genuine? As we are not resolute and harsh in our opinions we are not political nevertheless are we deep and genuine as we always deal with a client taste as well as our own. We stand in the dialogue between the political revolt and the deep and personal.

DOES THE PURPOSE OF THE PICTURE DECIDE HOW WE PERCEIVE

We perceive what we perceive sub- consciously and consciously depending on all the points discussed thus far. What other factors can affect our perception and understanding of a picture? It is impor-

tant to understand that the purpose of the picture decides what the picture looks like. Depending on what the picture looks like we will receive different reactions. For example if an image is structured in a dramatic and informative way, it might only provoke resistance within you as a beholder. Because of that you don't want to pay it any more attention and the picture gets less time with the beholder. If a picture is structured in a non- dramatic transformative way it might generate thoughts and you continue to interpret, therefore the picture gets more time with the beholder. (Carlsson.Koppfeldt, 2001) What can the purpose of an image be? What does the creator behind the image want to achieve? Will it convince me to buy a product, prove something or evoke feelings? Depending on what the author behind the image want the outcome to be, determines what the picture looks like.

To discuss this a little further I have decided to simplify and divide the purpose and reason of an image in to three types; the commercial image, the artist's image and the Landscape Architects image.

The commercial image

These are images that aim at a result, for example the result of selling a profitable product. In this consistency the receiver is in focus. The receiver is also passive and the communication is often dramatic and sometimes informative. The receiver is not actively choosing to observe the picture, it gets forced upon him. These types of images, such as commercials and advertisements, do not command much time or respect other than those short seconds of judgement in which we perceive an image. If this is the case then there is a forceful and dramatic power hidden. The creator behind the picture must work in an obstinate way to catch the beholders attention. He wants to capture the beholder, he wants to keep the beholder and he wants to defeat him, do everything that is in his power to present the content. The creator behind the image must affect and influence the beholder here and now. There is no other opportunity. (Carlsson, Koppfeldt 2001)

The artist's image

When it comes to art (art which isn't commercial), the purpose is totally different. The artists produce pictures with the purpose of expressing themselves, inner thoughts, experiences and knowledge. They play with reality, questioning subjects and societies, examine and test ideas and conceptions and art become imprints in the spirit

of age. The artists focus is on the action and on the inner dialogue which more or less means that everything is in focus; sender, message, action and receiver. Everything gets questioned and analysed, the image is the outcome of it. As a result the art is mainly made for the artist himself, hence the focus on the creator and not the receiver. Nevertheless an audience is assumed, as art never turns into art until it has a beholder. The difference is just that they don't expect any profitable results. Perhaps this is an obsolete way of looking at artists today as to the commercialised world we live in. Is it possible to make non-commercial art in today's society?

The Landscape Architect's image

In general, being the image creator as a Landscape Architect, we have time to influence the receiver. Our images are assembled on walls, in presentations, in exhibitions, printed, together with texts etc., in a non-dramatic and transformative way of communicating. As a Landscape Architect we want the receiver to listen, take on board, contemplate and evaluate our images independently. We want the receiver to experience, reflect, and maybe even change attitude and standpoint in the long run. It is an open structure with big participation from the beholder, where we can let them evaluate the message, generate thoughts, open eyes and inspire with courage. (Carlsson, Koppfeldt 2001)

We also use the image as a language with the purpose of starting a dialogue. The image is being used as a catalyst for our discussion that will continue throughout the project. Another aspect to think of is that as much as we want to mediate a design through our image our clients expect us to propose something fun and different. The client should get a new vision when they see our image and something unique shall be aroused. The client should be encouraged to be participate in the process at a higher level than someone that is observing art. After all it will be that person that is paying for what we must mediate. To understand and interpret Landscape Architecture as an art form is an art form in itself – a creative action.

Remember that although the purpose of our images is to start a dialogue and make the receiver to listen and take on board, the first impression the beholder receives has a tendency to stay vivid in mind throughout the whole presentation. A bad impression might not dis-

appear no matter how much we are trying to influence and convince about our brilliant idea. You have only one chance to make that first impression. (Carlsson.Koppfeldt, 2001)

the picture

IS THERE A UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE

Regardless of the knowledge that taste and perception differs depending on what social groups we belong to there is still the idea of a universal language, a language that we all perceive the same. Is this true, that a universal code exists, a denoted vision of symbols that most of us interpret the same way? As said before it is impossible to separate the denotation from its associations, but if we do pretend we can separate the two then yes, there is a universal language, according to Rudolf Arnheim in his book Art and Visual Perception;

“If it could be shown in the laboratory that a well-organized line figure imposes itself upon all observers as basically the same shape, regardless of the association and fantasies it stirs up in some of them because of their cultural background and individual disposition, one could expect the same, at least in principle, with respect to people looking at works of art. This trust in the objective validity of the artistic statement supplied a badly needed antidote to the nightmare of unbounded subjectivism and relativism. “Arnheim, 1954 p.6

In addition to Arnheim’s book there is a lot of information written on the subject of how the rules of perceiving are set out. Rudolf Arnheim divided perception into 9 categories; Balance, Shape, Form, Growth, Space, Light, Colour, Movements, Dynamic and Expression where he in depth explain our way of observing. Yet again, it is impossible to get a deeper understanding on this subject, as it is very extensive and complex. Nevertheless I’ll point to a few examples from the book to clarify and give you an idea of what the topic is about.

- Proximity between elements makes you see vertical groups
 - Similarities of elements make you see horizontal groups
 - Contours strive after continuity therefore a whole is seen and not lines.
 - Tensions in a picture depends of objects, colours, shapes, movements and sizes; it is an interplay of directions
 - Weight is spatial depth and can be adjusted by size, colour, isolation, shape, directions
 - Form is the invisible shape of content
 - Light creates space
 - Motion is the strongest visual appeal to attention
 - Simplicity is not enough
- (Arnheim, 1954)

WHAT IS GESTALT PSYCHOLOGY

As mentioned earlier there is a lot of research within this huge subject. In Germany at the beginning of 20th century a theory called Gestalt psychology arose as a polemic to the association psychology. A universal language as an underlying theory from a Gestalt psychologist point of view believes that the human being only perceives things as a whole. The whole is based on forms, shapes and figures instead of seeing simple lines and curves. Visual recognition of the figures create forms and organized patterns, hence the whole is more important than all separate parts together. The Gestalt psychology claims that it is impossible to isolate parts from its entirety and see them as independent units. (Nationalencyklopedin, 2009)

”Much of the later experimentation of the gestalt theorists was designed to show that the appearance of any element depends on its place and function in an overall pattern”
Arnheim, 1954 p.5

Discussing visual communication as a universal language or within gestalt psychology we talk about the same thing, visual perception as a set rule of how we perceive in symbols, patterns, forms, consistencies etc. No one can be sure if a set of rules exists in our brain or not. On the other hand we need them in order to create meanings, codes and rules to be able to understand each other. A universal language or the Gestalt psychology describes how symbols, shapes and colours function in our everyday life. It is a constant game that always overstep and changes. If we compare it with rules of a game in sports, the reason why they are there is to make sure we all do the same thing but we just need to learn them once to make a game work. The rules are there to create interaction with all participants. We can also see the universal language and symbols as a discussion of experiences, a language to be used so that we can function in a society. Moreover, humans have a need to generalize and have a common vision, especially when it comes to level of education in the subject. There is a need for setting up rules and codes so that we all can educate alike in order to talk about the same thing.

What fascinates me greatly when discussing a universal language are colours. Colours are such strong elements they can’t possibly exist without any associations. They cannot work as a universal language as they are experienced differently all over the world. However, in the western world colours are experienced as following:

COLOURS AND MEANING IN THE WESTERN WORLD

Colours have various movements that give depth and energy. Strong colours draw attention; others create atmospheres and influence us emotionally. Colours are said to have different temperaments. A picture enhances balance and unity if it gets structured with related colours such as yellow, orange and red, and draws attention if structured with light/dark or warm/cold colours. In the western world we see our primary colours as following:

- Red has got a lively force and is considered to be a warm and active colour.
 - Yellow is also active and considered to strive towards the beholder.
 - Blue is a passive colour that gives a cool and quiescent impression.
- (Carlsson, Koppfeldt 2001)

“Evidence has been found that human responses to colors are to some extent physiological. Exposure to red, for instance, has been found to arouse a person’s autonomic nervous system-to speed up heart, respiration, and eye blink rates; to raise blood pressure; and to affect brainwaves. Blue, on the other hand, is soothing and helps reduce blood pressure and rates of breathing and eye-blinking.” Bloomer, C.M, 1976, p.84

More often we see colours as symbols of something that we associate with. White symbolises innocence, red is a royal colour that is associated with love and socialism. Blue is the colour of the sky and associated with wisdom, sorrow, longing and spiritual qualities. Green symbolises hope and is the nature, life and the colour of youth. Yellow is the sun and the blessings colour. Violet often has negative associations like betrayal, disease and bad luck.

(Carlsson. Koppfeldt, 2001)

“Through time and across cultures, people have ascribed various meanings to color. Color invests ritual and custom with symbolic meaning, represents the identity of cosmological forces, and promotes desirable feelings and mind/body states. It is tempting to look for universals in color symbolism because of certain constants in human experience: the blue sky and water: the red of blood, ripe fruit, and sunsets; the white of milk, semen, clouds, moon, and sun; the green of vegetation, foodstuffs, and copper ore; the black of blindness, night, organic decomposition, and iron; the yellow of pus, grain and gold; the orange of fire; the browns of earth and tree bark; the rose and violet of dawn and dusk. But these experiences do not mean the same thing in every culture; they fit differently into different cultural world views.” Bloomer, C.M, 1976, p.101

Colours can be divided into these two groups, the denotations as in the Gestalt psychology and the connotations that originate from a

culture and a society. The two groups always collaborate. However, colours are not interesting as set rules- of how it must be used and of how we perceive them. It is not interesting until they turn into action or a dialogue, when they start and interact with each other. Instead of mechanically applying laws or setting up rules in order to create colour harmony we shall use it in turn to create powerful effects. The picture we look at changes with our seeing; the colours create movements. Colours can generate a strange contradiction towards the pictures precise and strict composition that can lead to a colour suddenly losing its identity and look totally different. (Albers.1963) In visual perception a colour is almost never seen for what it really is - for what it physically is and can get experienced extremely different. This makes colours to the most relative medium within art. It is also rare that we see colours alone with no relation to another and for that reason colours are in constant change. They are always in relation to surrounding colours and in specific circumstances. Furthermore surroundings get exchanged and conditions vary.

Our optical illusion makes us see and read other colours than what we physically deal with and not even the most trained eye is secured from optical illusions. However we also discover that some colours are hard to see differently and others are more open to transformations.

This can be compared with individuals liking blondes or brunettes, in the same way we have prejudice and favorites within colours and colour combinations. In the same way as we in our everyday life conduct ourselves to people we conduct ourselves to colours. Throughout our lifetime we modify, correct or totally change opinions about colours, our views are in a constant change. (Albers, 1963)

COLOURS WITHIN LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

When creating drawings and images within Landscape Architecture it is almost expected to use a certain palette of colours as Landscape Architecture and its content is so strongly symbolised. Living material such as plants and trees are expected to be green, water blue and buildings grey or black.

Can we draw living material in any other colour and still mediate the same meaning? Green is the set colour being used, however maybe it isn't the colour that is mediating what we see? Is it the shape and lines? Would we be able to mediate the same feeling if we turned things around? What would happen if we used blue for trees and green for water, would that be confusing or would it work if the

drawn symbols and lines where individually clear as symbols? It is common to use the colour grey in order to show vegetation and trees. A few Landscape Architects are also using random colours such as pink and yellow, mainly then referring to the trees or the plants flowering colour. How much can we experiment with colours and symbols without losing the concept?

VISUAL COMMUNICATION AS AN ACT

- WHEN CREATING YOUR PICTURE IN DIALOGUE

The language usage and the communicating do not begin until we play, displace and question the universal symbols. Once you have started to play and displace prejudice theories and thoughts, it becomes interesting. Commercials push the limits and displace conceptions in order to arouse attention. The artist pushes the ideas of the visual language in order to understand himself or question a society. Landscape Architects push and play with concepts because we want to start a dialogue, open eyes, arouse trust and set off a process.

When you are about to start your own image work you have an exciting time ahead. It is important that before you start you have a good strategy. There are three fairly shallow and superficial forces vital if you are making an image for commercials, art or for a Landscape architecture consistency. These three forces are the format, the composition and the content. The format decides the limelight and make sure the objects in the picture catch the beholder. An image must attract and be easy to orientate- if the beholder can't read the image then he also will lose interest rather soon. The composition is the most important part. It is here we differ within each profession. The focus when discussing composition is that lines, volumes, space, light, colour, entirety etc should together bring forward the content and the message. To make the message clear you sometimes have to reduce the elements. Simplicity is often equivalent with clarity and communicates an idea better. (Carlsson, Koppfeldt 2001) To guarantee you produce the right content consider the following questions before you start. What is the purpose of the picture? What message do you want to mediate? In what consistency will the picture be shown? (Bergström, 2000)

"Art is the product of organisms and therefore probably neither more nor less complex Than these organisms themselves."
 Arnheim, 1954, p.2

the language

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT THAT WE AS LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS ARE AWARE OF WHAT VISUAL LANGUAGE WE USE

Before we can answer the above question we must ask ourselves if it is the outcome that is most important. The answer is simple...yes. If you fail to reach the required result and the ultimate goal is not achieved then the visual can be considered unsuccessful. If we do not manage to communicate in the right way from the beginning we will never reach an outcome and therefore we will never get commissioned for designs.

What is the desired outcome? What do we want to achieve? Is it the dialogue we are after or is it the final design? They both result in different outcomes. First, let us say the desired outcome in this case is to arouse trust and start a dialogue with the client that we have an opportunity to have an exchange of ideas with. We want to be certain that we share values and we want them to be convinced that a project with us will result in a high-quality product. If we have not before managed to convince the world of what an amazing and reliable design company we are; trust must be aroused through what we communicate at this meeting. What the client sees is what he/she buys. If you communicate something that contradicts your values you unavoidably work against your own company. . (Rawet, Dahl, Flick, 2002).

Second, there is a contrary trust, the other way around. The client that hires us expects us to do something fun, interesting, and rejuvenating or a little crazy. If we cannot provide this, dissatisfaction will be the result.

Third, who is the client? It is important to consider who the clients are, as Landscape Architects often have a tendency to complicate things and make the subject impossible to grasp for “common” people. If the clients are not familiar with our profession and how we work then it is important that we clarify and simplify what we want to communicate. Make our own language understandable.

However it is important to be aware of our visual language but we also must know it is not the key answers to all of our problems. The most important thing is to be aware of the possibilities and options when talking about a visual language.

“Unchecked self-analysis can be harmful, but so can the artificial primitivism of the person who refuses to understand how and why he works. Modern man can, and therefore must, live with unprecedented self-awareness. Perhaps the task of living has become more difficult – but there is no way around it.”

Arnheim, 1954, p.3

CAN A SET VISUAL LANGUAGE RESTRAIN OUR CREATIVITY

If you as an organisation decide to clarify your language through using templates and patterns can this then result in a restrained creativity? Will this mean the employee has to work within boundaries that might not personally suit them? When deciding to work with a reciprocally visual language it should be done in a way that does not restrain any creativity. A reciprocal language should develop in order to facilitate the employees to a common and new starting point.

Visual communication on the basis of marketing - the art of persuasion

THE MARKET OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE TODAY

Before I explain the principals within marketing I want to look a little deeper in to the current Landscape Architect market. What are the driving forces behind these topics? Who decides what good visual communication is and what is in fashion?

Why some organisations appear trendier than others when it comes to visual communications is not easy to answer. Nevertheless it is a fact that many styles of communicating go out of fashion. One reason for this is the development of computer techniques. The various techniques we choose characterise the look of our drawings. Innovation evolves with new technique styles.

The second driving force is based around what is requested. We only do what we need to do. After spending two days at the RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) library in London, going through all published material, I came to an insight. As I was looking in to the smaller scale I only focused on visuals limited within this. I realised that most visualisations in magazines, journals, books, papers etc. are made for the larger scale. Images published were within urban planning, larger structural dwellings, and infrastructural projects i.e. projects with more capital involved hence overview and less detailed drawings. I understood that Garden Designers or Landscape Architects have not been requested to make advanced and attractive drawings in this scale. Not until today. Drawings made in the past have been completed on site as a discussion board to get going on a job. Today the Garden Designers and those Landscape Architects working within the small scale are expected to make the same types of documents as they do in the larger scale.

A third aspect that I also will bring up when talking about marketing is media. Media has a crucial role in which visuals we chose to be present. What gets attention also tends to create trends.

MARKETING A MUST

Marketing can seem like a linear, clear and direct way of communicating as most of the time it is focused on measurable results, hence very commercial. It might not suit the Landscape Architect when you first come across the subject; as the intention is to start a dialogue. Nevertheless there are many useful aspects of the subject for Landscape Architects. It is also helpful to get an understanding

of how other professions think when it comes to communication. When working with marketing it is important to look at the whole picture, as the whole will give the result that's desired. It is the same attitude and thinking as within Gestalt psychology. Marketing might not be the highest on a Landscape Architects agenda nevertheless it is something that affects us and that we should take more seriously. I will now go through important guidelines in marketing.

HOW CAN WE COMMUNICATE OUR ORGANISATION AS A TRUSTWORTHY RELIABLE UNIT

In today's society, organisations are forced to communicate with their credibility, trustworthiness and reliability in order to be seen and heard. This phenomenon has arisen because of the mass information society we live in and the competition in a commercial world. Every day we are fed with masses of information, some of this being important and some not so. Due to its relative mass it drowns in an enormous ocean of words, pictures and sounds. Organisations fear and dread not to be heard, it is a battle out there of becoming the one that is seen and therefore chosen. (Rawet, Dahl, Flick, 2002). What make us as consumers choose a certain organisation? Why do we choose companies that offer the same services over another? I will now endeavour to answer the above questions.

WHAT IS A TRADEMARK AND ORGANISATION IDENTITY TODAY

An organisation today is not only associated with a product, a service and/or a logotype, it is also associated with a complex trademark. The trademark provides a feeling, lifestyle, vision, value, the relationship between product and people etc. (Carlsson, Koppfeldt 2001) A trademark gives associations and is the symbol the world has of the product, the organisation or the person, both aware and unaware. (Rawet, Dahl, Flick, 2002). As a customer, we want to feel we can choose and find the organisation we want to work together with; we don't want anything we feel is forced upon us. We want to be among and belong to groups and choose the organisations that we can identify most with. This is what all organisations dream about, being that esteemed and valued unit that everyone wants to belong to. (Holmberg, Salzer-Mörling, 2002)

It is important that organisations are distinguished in the market. A well-defined trademark strengthens presence in today's market. If we are not identifiable and the message is quite ambiguous or unclear then we fast disappear from the market. (Rawet, Dahl, Flick, 2002).

A failure occurs when it is not clear what the work means or what the company is, or even when an obvious leader isn't present. It is important that the leader develops the organisation's identity and the employees' identify with this identity. (Holmberg, Salzer-Mörling, 2002) The employees are those who create the trademark, unite the organisation, give the company strength and build up a culture with common values, sense and visions. If the employees don't know what the company is or what it stands for then this leads to a divided and disrupted image of the trademark. A trademark is not only important in order to make it clear for the employees; it also strengthens the relationship with the customers who therefore will use the organisation's services again. The organisation achieves an acceptance in the society that benefits the entire business process and results in success for the owner or owners. (Rawet, Dahl, Flick, 2002).

HOW CAN WE STRENGTHEN OUR TRADEMARK AND SUCCEED

We must be clear, consistent and recognisable. We have to look "right" and have the "right" values. It doesn't matter how much we are trying to affect opinions and conceptions, it is the market that decides what we as an organisation are. It is the market that judge and that is why it is so important to mediate a trustworthy trademark. (Holmberg, Salzer-Mörling, 2002) We must have an understanding of the surrounding world; an ability to communicate with many audiences and be able to see the connections between these. We must have an understanding for how the mediums and other information technology interact with the society. The audience we want to reach and communicate with must be clearly defined. We must mediate a true, genuine and relevant communication. (Rawet, Dahl, Flick, 2002) The more well known an organisation is, the more success it generates. The more success it generates the more you can steer the surrounding world's views and opinions. As the manager of an organisation you can influence views and attitudes, create images, express values and evoke feelings. (Holmberg, Salzer-Mörling, 2002)

MARKETING IS ONE-SIDED

Marketing communication seems very easy to succeed in if you just follow the rules. However we must remember that Landscape Architects don't all have the same goals. The marketing way of looking at communication is a one-sided way as it focuses on a commercial result where the target group is like a target board that must get hit. Certainly we want to hit our goals too but we have an interest in keeping the constant dialogue alive on our way. For this reason Landscape Architects must not look at marketing as the only way of communicating, we must widen our view.

Visual communication on the basis of rhetoric - the art of dialogue

WHAT IS RHETORIC COMMUNICATION

The classical rhetoric used to be called the art of communicating convincingly.

It is the antique science of how to use the language as a way of expression in order to speak well or to communicate the best way. (Carlsson, Koppfeldt 2001)

Still today the purpose is the same. Rhetoric teaches us how we can mediate feelings and thoughts with the largest possible impact. It gives us an understanding of how the human communication works in different consistencies. Knowledge in rhetoric sharpens our critical ability to analyse what we get influenced by. It is practically a guide to get better in communicating and in gaining insight in how we get influenced by different communication forms. (Luleå tekniska universitet, 2006)

An old fashioned and general opinion on rhetoric is that this communication form is persuading and only desires to convince people. Because of this opinion rhetoric has a bad reputation and is often seen as something suspect and manipulative which is disappointing as the rhetoric has much to offer, even to the most humble communicator. However, the rhetoric communication form sometimes does work in a manipulative way, especially when it comes to marketing and commercials. When rhetoric is limited to this, interplay does not exist. The communication form is independent and does not need context; the information has to go straight into the perceiver's brain. The perceiver is an object and the communication form modifies the perceiver's brain.

A BROADENED VIEW OF RHETORIC

Normally rhetoric isn't isolated and used this way. As mentioned, it contains many positive aspects. Marketing is a very straight, focused and commercial communication form. Rhetoric as a whole is distinguished as being dynamic and a more winding way of communicating where the result isn't as predictable. The focus in rhetoric is the dialogical situation, i.e. how the dialogue works. It is a socio-cultural way of communicating as it depends on social aspects and social skills. Rhetoric is the answer of how to interplay with a language; it is the art of communicating. The rhetoric is a humble, linguistic and social interplay and the dialogue is dependent of a context. The

dialogue takes you to a place you have not previously known, a topic – the place of the dialogue. These topics develop through the language and it is impossible to predict where it will end. What becomes how. (Hellström Reimer. M, 2009)

HOW CAN WE USE US OF RHETORIC

According to rhetoricians there are three ways of communicating, or as they would call it - three ways of convincing. It is through your ethical appeal, your logical appeal and through your emotions. These methods have been used since the ancient times. (Carlsson, Koppfeldt 2001) However, as these approaches are much topical even today I now would like to rename them to 1 way of persuading and 2 ways of starting a dialogue. Let me explain the various ways further.

1 WAY IN PERSUADING

2 WAYS OF STARTING A DIALOGUE

The character, with personality (ethos)

In Greek ethos means personality or character. This is your ethical appeal where you convince with your personality, credibility and trustworthiness. You have to think of keywords such as image, respect, character and trust along with intelligence, moral, sympathy etc.

The logical, with sense and judgement (logos)

Logos mean arguments or thought. Logos influence people's senses and critical judgements

by informing, illuminating and teaching. To speak pertinent is a way of arousing trust. With logos you give background to facts so that the beholder can make their own interpretation. Think of keywords such as common sense, judgement, argument, thought, inform, enlighten, and instruct. (Carlsson, Koppfeldt 2001).

The emotional, with feelings (pathos)

Pathos means to arouse or show feelings. Depending on the aim of the picture you can arouse feelings such as dread, indignation, longing, comic, hope or compassion. Think of keywords such as arouse, belief, human needs. Make the viewer feel; significant and important; understand the viewers dreams and give these hope; make sure the

viewer feels a participation; collective feelings of fellowship; consensus and pride; make them agree with flatter, empathy, understanding and with humour.

(Carlsson, Koppfeldt 2001).

Having the knowledge of each of the above forms and being able to combine them to create what is of best value for your firm is integral to its success. It is important to remember that a dialogue can never be predicted and the client's reactions decide how the dialogue will continue.

WHAT COMMUNICATION FORM SHALL LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS USE

What have we learnt from the marketing and rhetoric way of communicating? As it is very rare that Landscape Architects want to sell a product, the commercial marketing form is not the best way of communicating. If we have worked deeply and hard with a project that we truly believe is the best design we can make, even Landscape Architects are extremely interested in the result. In essence, if they decide to go ahead with the project. In this case we do agree with the marketing way of communicating. On the other hand we are taught to be humble. Our profession works predominantly as a coordinator or as a "spider in a web". We have modest knowledge in all the professions that we have to cooperate with in order to mediate a design. As a result we are all well aware that the design is for the client. Nevertheless that doesn't mean we should hold back and not mediate incredible design. The client expects us to present something fun, crazy and different even if they don't know exactly what we are able to mediate. At the same time we don't know exactly what the client is expecting; we just have to make the most out of an order so it suits both the client and us.

Therefore the dialogical way of communicating suits us better. What we mediate to our clients are documents that will start something else much more fun. Discussions that lead to new unexpected results you never would have ended up with if it were not for the client and your mutual dialogue. Together we listen; take on board, contemplate and evaluate what's been said. We try and look at things in different ways and perspectives. The constant dialogue is the fuel for all Landscape Architecture projects and the end result is impossible to predict.

We can conclude from this that our visuals are not made to solely

convince the clients to buy our end product. Nor be seen at a museum as art. Even if the market requires better qualities today, our visuals are made for the dialogue between the client and us. Our images are important, for a while, until the dialogue continues and enters another sphere.

A parenthesis to this is that; it is no longer only about the closed dialogue with our client as much as the mass media society we live in today. We are asked to show our visuals in public consistencies such as magazines, books etc. This means we unavoidably are seen more as an art form. As mentioned throughout we already use each other to learn off and get inspired. New ways of visual communication are like a fresh wind in our everyday life.

the case study

the case study

INTRODUCTION

After having discussed the theoretical applications of my thesis I will now look at it practically through the case study of a ‘real company’. Although this is distinct from my theory it is important to note that the theory is the basis upon which it is made deeper and more exciting. Nevertheless I will not try and combine them both.

How companies and organizations undertake their visual communication varies widely. There are many ways in mediating what is needed, with as many communication styles as there are companies. I have the chance to delve deep into one of the company’s opportunities and problems and to gain an understanding of what difficulties or possibilities a visual language can create.

As mentioned in the introduction, throughout my course I worked periodically for a Landscape Architecture firm in England. One of the reasons why I decided to write about this subject was due to the knowledge and experience gained within this company. I experienced the company changing and expanding, employees increasing and therefore the evolution of new visual styles.

I have made the decision to keep this company anonymous as all presentation material being used is not published material I felt it possibly could be seen as sensitive and potentially harmful to the organisation. Nevertheless, all other material and sources will be named as it has been published on public websites. This is a decision made by myself and not the company.

WHY WAS THERE A NEED FOR THE COMPANY TO GAIN INSIGHT IN THE WAY THEY COMMUNICATE

Firstly, at the time, the company was expanding quite remarkably and from an original base of purely private clients changed to a more public focus and hence demanded different styles of drawings. A change was also seen when people were employed, and the more varied and different the visuals for the presentations of the projects became. Together we came to insight of the importance of a united style and a will of striving towards same goals and agreed on a change. The visuals had come to the point of being a stress element and the dissatisfaction of the end result was high. Due to the lack of time there was no opportunity to develop and look in to this deeper. The owner

has modest knowledge in computerised drawings therefore he could not make any obvious and clear guidelines for the employees regarding the direction of the visuals. Another aspect is that it is still a fairly small company with everyone performing multiple functions with not one being more responsible for the visuals than another.

TWO SIDES OF VISUAL COMMUNICATION IN REALITY

There are two aspects of visual communication within a company. It is important to know as with each of these we must ask ourselves a number of questions.

External visual communication: - How are we seen as a company through our visuals, what defines us? Have we got a clear style? Are our visuals unique and attached to our organisation? How do we want to be seen externally? What are we striving towards? Can we compare and learn from our co-workers and various companies out in the market?

Internal visual communication: - How is our internal design process running? How are we working? What language is being used at the office? Who is doing what? What do we like as a group and what do we like as individuals? What do we want to achieve? Are we happy with what we produce and mediate? Have we got clear guidelines in which we all work towards? Who is deciding how it looks like? Who is in charge?

The two communication forms intertwine in each other and therefore are hard to divide and work with individually.

METHOD

I started with collecting all computer made presentation materials made by the company and that had been presented to clients. With this material I created a Power point document in which each project had its own page. This analysis method made it very clear to the quality of the presentations as it showed the following:

1. How MANY visuals were made for each project?
2. What TYPE and what STYLE of visuals were used?
3. What COLOURS were being used?

The document resulted with 40 pages i.e. 40 projects with various styles which demonstrated a great deal of variation. The analysis gave the company a real wakeup call and realisation of what illustrations they had used and for this reason what they were mediating through their visuals. Prior to this document being made the company was not aware of how much it all differed. It was a mix of colours, styles and types depending on who worked on the project and how much time it had been given.

Below 5 examples showing the variation of visual styles:

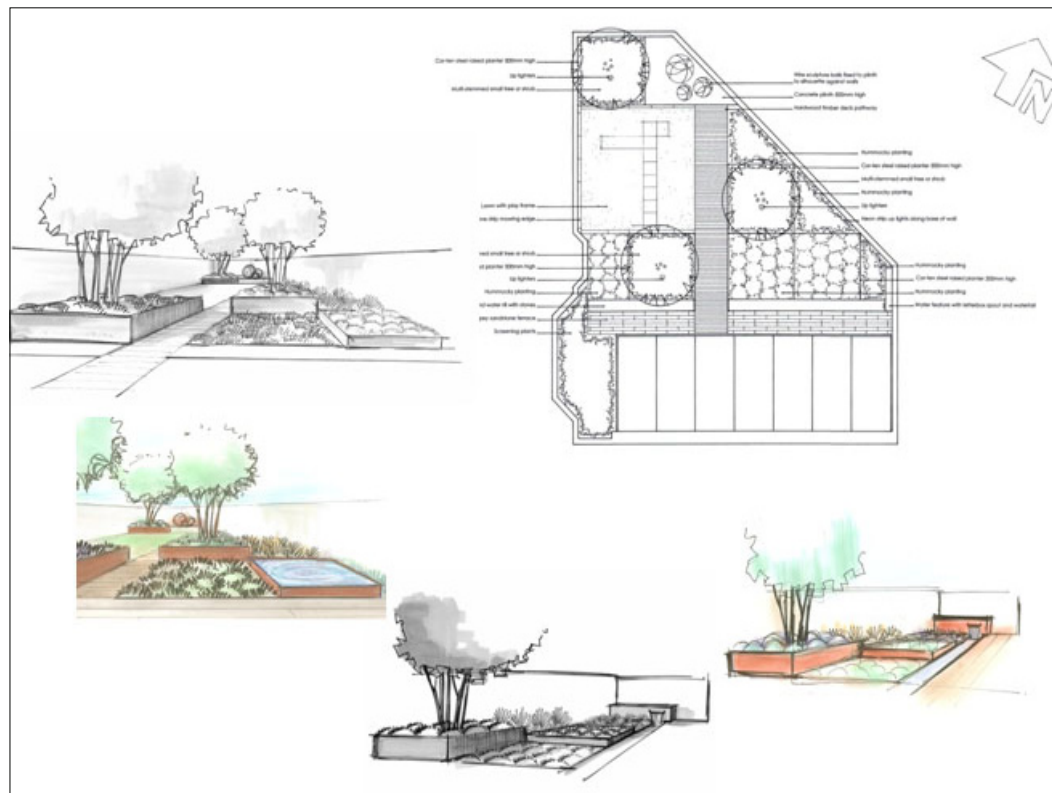


Fig. 01

Project example 1:
Hand drawn

Project example 2:
Plan computer made.
Sketchy views hand
drawn with computer
model base. Sketches
dark and not edited
after scanning

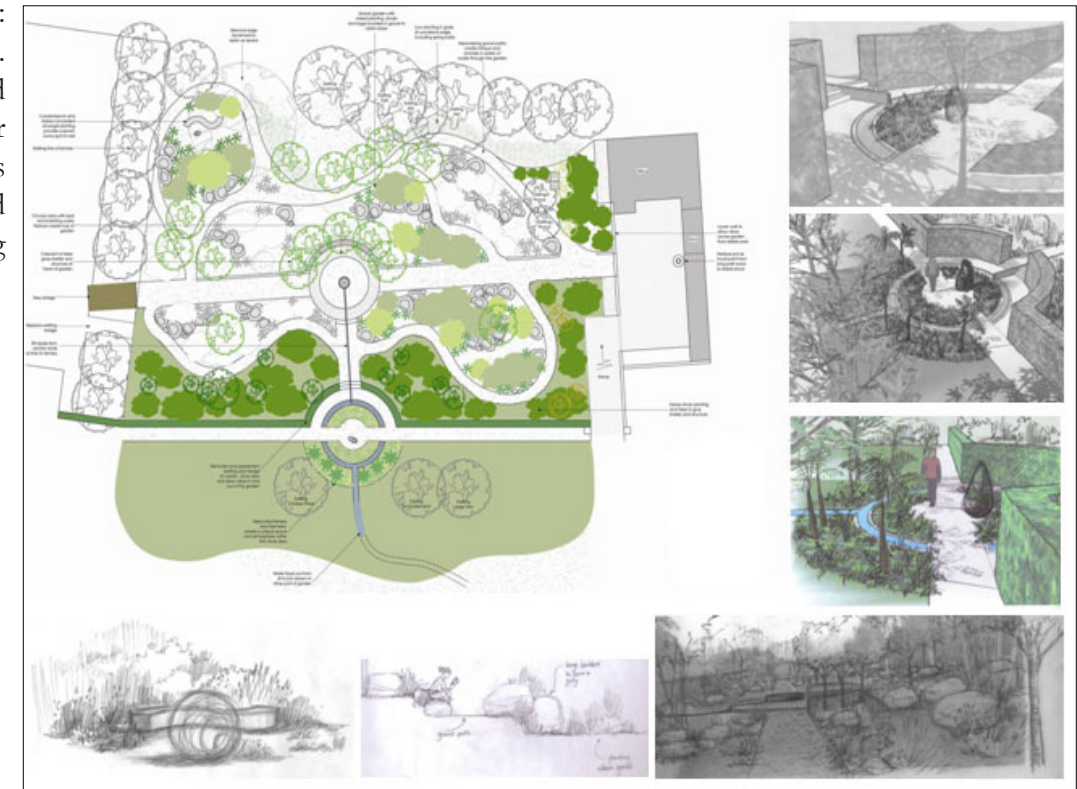


Fig. 02

Project example 3:
Computer made. Plan
consists of bright col-
ours. Dull soft col-
ours in views. Computerised
style views. Typical
SketchUp.



Fig. 03



Fig. 04

Project example 4:
Mixed. Computer
made plan, quick
hand drawn sketch-
es, SketchUp views
and hand drawn
with computer mod-
el base. Dull colours
in views, bright col-
ours on plan. Many
visuals made for
the project. Messy
impression.

Together with the employees I sat down, one by one, and went through every presentation made. The reactions were not proud, satisfied or happy, almost ashamed. Fortunately this opened our eyes to the fact we could all see potential in parts of the visuals. As soon as we overcame this first boundary it started to become something exciting and fun and the employees began to believe in the project. Because the visuals had been seen as a stress element, (due to the lack of time and as to testing new styles in every project) the employees were almost relieved and the atmosphere around the office changed. Together we mutually decided what was worth working on and to our collective program limitations. The next step was to develop the knowledge we already had.



Fig. 05

Project example 5:
Computer made.
Typical look of a
SketchUp model.

At the same time I collected similar visuals made by external companies and created the same type of document as was performed internally but instead of one page for each project there was one page for each company. I used visualisations from various projects made by the company with the aim of getting a grip of their presentation style in general, not for each project. Approximately visuals from 50 offices were collected that were all published on their websites. Later in this thesis 14 of them will be presented in which I have received rights to publish. The companies collected were mainly focused locally i.e. within England with a few occasional global samples.

The main reason behind this document was to start a dialogue internally and to gain an understanding of what the employees like and do not like. With this document we were discussing techniques, styles, types, colours etc. We discussed what was appreciated and what we could learn and strive towards. Analysing other company's images also gives a realisation of the limitations a smaller company has to deal with. From this document we could create a united taste and style upon which we all agreed. Unfortunately however, the opinions and thoughts were vastly different. Based on this I decided to mainly follow the owner's opinions.

Powerpoint document of images from approximately 50 companies across the world. Created in order to start dialogue internally about what the employees like and do not like. Analysis of 14 will be conducted

Company example 2:
Dan Pearson



Fig. 07

Company example 1:
SLA



Fig. 06

Company example 3:
Gross Max

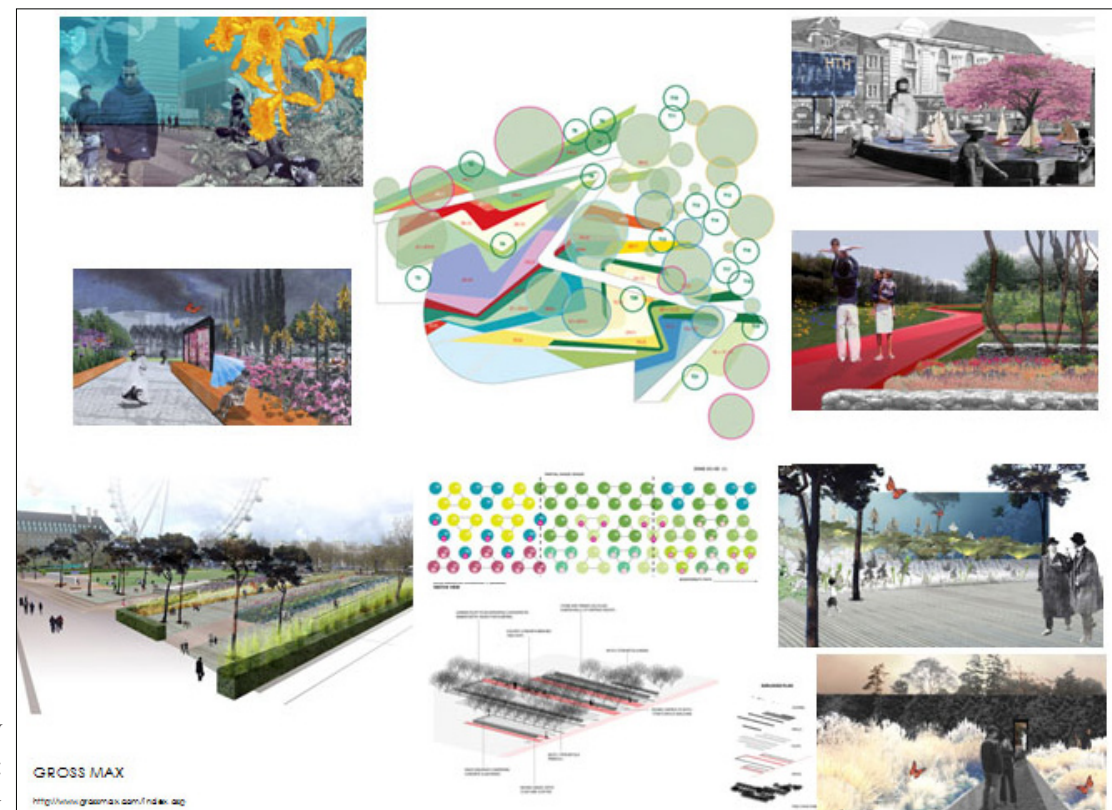


Fig. 08

As a result of the two analyses we made a list of what we needed to work towards as well as what style we wanted to strive for. We made up guidelines and saved images in which we had preferred elements. There was never one specific thing or goal that we all had in common. Based on this our specification was quite vague, although lists were made and we specified exactly what we needed to work on in all areas of our drawings.

Initially we discussed educating everyone further in visualisation within Photoshop and Vector Works, however it was decided that we first needed to discover what level each employee was currently at. After much deliberation we decided to continue developing what we were familiar as it is a small company and slow incremental change is important to create a positive feeling toward it. Based on this we decided to educate at a later time.

Guidelines created and images saved of preferred elements

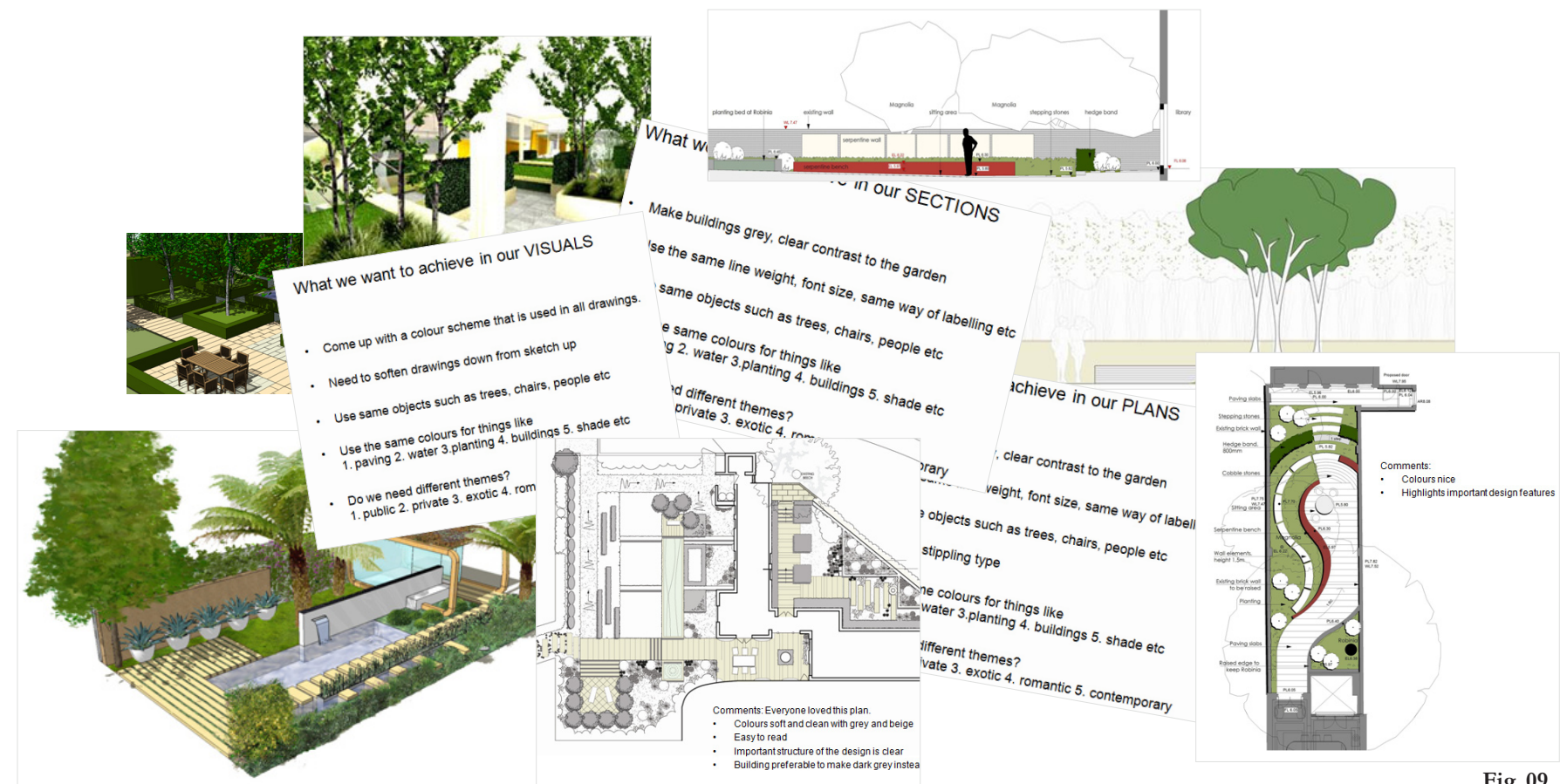


Fig. 09

WHAT WAS OUR AIM WITH A CHANGED APPEARING OF OUR DRAWINGS

We wanted to use a style in which we mediated something happy, fresh, clean and easily understood. We work with private people that on average are not involved in garden design or Landscape Architecture. Being able to read a plan can be difficult for someone that has never performed this. For that reason we decided to make our plans very concise, with fewer colours and clear symbols that were easy to read and understand. Even if we agreed on that there are many visual styles made by external companies that are amazing and highly impressive. Nevertheless we decided on limiting our drawing to the less artistic style to make it less complicated for our clients. We did this largely when looking at the mood images that have the aim to create a feeling and show less of the overall design. However, since we have started to deal with more public clients we might have to reconsider our decision as mood images might be expected.



Fig. 10

An example of a mood image

Throughout the many years of experience gained by our boss he has noted one clear and concise fact of how our clients up until today look at drawings. I will display this in an example

Mr and Mrs both see colours in a different way and their attention is gained through varied methods. She is focusing on the artistic element of the drawing and therefore also likes the colourful aspects. Mr. much quicker reads the plans and can see the overall structure nevertheless doesn't see the details as much. As our clients in general are wealthy traditional English couples it is also an old fashion way in which the results are taken. Mr wants to make Mrs. happy, what Mrs. likes Mr. pays. Still today it works this way.

COLOURS

Our first priority was to deal with the colour scheme. That was our biggest issue when producing various visuals and then putting it all together in one presentation document. We came to the conclusion about what colour scheme to use by;

- Reading books about colour combinations.
- Looking at the colours in our existing drawings that we liked.
- Looking at external drawings and discussing our client's general preferences.
- Testing colours on existing plans and sections, black, white, grey and colour scale.

We then did the following;

- Printed out various colour versions on plans for discussions.
- Looked in to how different printers and plotters printed the colour.
- Created colour templates in all the programs that we use and used them in our documents to try out different styles.

After a period of evaluation our colour scheme was set and we could start using it in our drawings. The result made an immediate impact and subsequently the drawings became united despite the fact the styles were still different.

See appendix 1 for Colour scheme

PLANS AND SECTIONS

The next step after working with colours was to work with our plan and section drawings. Most of the people at work only use/know Vector works. For this reason we had to work solely with this as it would require too much education within the amount of time my thesis had in order to train them in Photoshop.

The desired outcome was to create a symbol library in which all employees could collect symbols easily each time a new plan or section was going to be made. In order to create this we followed the below process

- Reviewed our existing plans and sections and the symbols in those that we liked.
- Made a list of what symbols that we would need to evaluate and work further with
- Studied a few details from external offices and books about plan and section illustrations.

From this research a symbol library was made of all symbols that we frequently use. We then valuated the colour scheme that was set prior to this in order to refine and become part of the symbol library. The symbol library was being used in a few projects together with the colour scheme and it became obvious in what direction we were heading.

See appendix 2 for Symbol library Trees

See appendix 3 for Symbol library Shrubs and diagramming

See appendix 4 for Symbol library Hardscape

See appendix 5 for Symbol library Labelling

See appendix 6 for Symbol library Sections

IEWS

A colour scheme was imported as a template in to the programs SketchUp, Photoshop and VectorWorks. From this a few simple views for presentations were tested.

DISCUSSION OF THE SOLUTION

It is important to remember that all individuals work differently and like different things that can be demonstrated even if everyone works with the same symbols and colours. However, by starting with a set colour and symbol library the drawings became quicker and easier to create and as a result less stressful. The amends made a great impact on the look of the visuals and consequently our visual language became clearer. We all agreed on that the colour scheme and symbol library was mainly meant as a dynamic and changeable guide in order to create a united style, rather than something that would restrain any type of creativity.

the analysis

WHY ANALYSE PICTURES

Analysing a picture is a good method when you want to get an understanding of how you more effectively can express yourself, communicate and reach a certain audience through different media. Analysing a picture is like solving a riddle; you must understand the different small parts to be able to understand the whole. It is a method that makes the process between the image-maker and the beholder visible. To analyse means to divide, take apart and to examine. At the same time as we examine how a picture is structured, we get a better grip of its meaning and for this reason a deeper understanding of what we see. There is hundreds of different ways of analysing, so therefore it is important to be clear of what results you want before you start. You must think of the purpose of the analysis, of what results and answers you search and what is the analysis going to be used for? (Bergström, 2000)

“It often happens that we see and feel certain qualities in a work of art but cannot express them in words. The reason for our failure is not that we use language, but that we have not yet succeeded in casting those perceived qualities into suitable categories. Language can not do the job directly because it is no direct avenue or sensory contact with reality; it serves only to name what we have seen or heard or thought. By no means is it an alien medium, unsuitable for perceptual things; on the contrary, it refers to nothing but perceptual experiences. These experiences, however, must be coded by perceptual analysis before they can be named. Fortunately, perceptual analysis is very subtle and can go far. It sharpens our vision for the task of penetrating a work of art to the limits of the ultimately impenetrable.”

Arnheim, 1954, pp.2-3

Analysis tools are like recipes in which you can add and subtract ingredients, what you feel like and need at the time. Below are two examples of analysis templates with different aim and end results.

A RESULT ORIENTATED ANALYSIS

This analysis form is focused on the result and precise answers. Within this, there are three different types of analysis;

Close up analysis

- General appearance: Denotations such as big, small, dark, light, colour
- What does the image present? What is the content?
- Manner: Photograph, graphic, hand drawn 3D, 2D,

model, collage etc

- Type: Plan, section, overview, concept, model, mood, perspectives, scale etc.
- Composition: Domination, contrast, alignment etc.
- Content: Denotative, connotative, what does the picture communicate?

Intention analysis

- Intention: What is the intention and purpose of the picture?
- Target group: Who is the target group? Who is it for?
- Sender: Who is the sender? What is important that you know about the sender?
- Consistency: In what consistency and context is the picture?
- Performance in relation to intention

Receiving analysis

- The viewers experience, reactions and actions (Bergström, 2000)

A DIALOGUE ORIENTATED ANALYSIS

Another interesting analysis is a dialogue-orientated analysis. This analysis form is focused on the socio-cultural function, on a linguistic action and on the interaction between sender and receiver. This form does not say much of the end result.

- How is the presentation structured? What parts does it include? (disposition)
- How do they attract attention and arouse interest? (exordium)
- What do they want the audience to know first? (narration)
- What is the proposal? (proposition)
- Which are the important arguments and how do they “prove” these? (argumentation)
- How do they end? (conclusion) (Carlsson.Koppfeldt, 2001)

MY ANALYSIS

In order to make a deeper analysis you need the images to be in consistencies with more information. For this reason my analysis will function more informative and as an intermediary with the aim of mediating visuals made by companies that actively work with visual communication, collected in one document.

By studying and analysing differences within visual communication you soon realise the enormous masses that can be obtained. It varies widely in appearance, sometimes based on how many employees and based on the size of the projects i.e. how much capital that is involved. Therefore it was sensible to add information about the companies various states when it comes to amount of employees, years of experiences etc. The analyses of the companies are personal. What you see might be something totally different. Taken together my analysis will look at Style/Appearance/content; Colours; Repeated attributes/trademark; Manner/type; and Time.

COMPANY PROFILE

Company Name: West 8

Based: Rotterdam, Netherlands/Brussels, Belgium

Founder: By Adriaan Geuze, 1987

Number of employees: 75 (architects, urban designers, landscape architects, industrial engineers.)

Local or international: Both

Source: Interviews and www.west8.nl

ANALYSIS

Style/Appearance/content: Artistic, futuristic, dreamy, lively, realistic, exact, precise, ahead, appealing approach, strong trademark, impressive

Colours: Colourful with fresh bright colours. Recurring bright greens and red. General tones based around green, red, white, grey and black

Repeated attributes/trademark: Shapes of people - black or photo. Working with various opacity layers. Projects keep same colour shades. United in diversity. Vegetation realistic. Contains large tree and grass structures, not so often perennials

Manner/type: All images computer made i.e. 3D and Photoshop. Mainly photo collages

Time: Extensive



Fig. 11



Fig. 12



Fig. 13



Fig. 14

COMPANY PROFILE

Company Name: Tom Stuart-Smith

Based: London, England

Founder: By Tom Stuart-Smith, 1998

Number of employees: 1 (collaborates with other designers, architects and sculptors)

Local or international: Both

Source: www.tomstuartsmith.co.uk

ANALYSIS

Style/ Appearance/ content: Sketchy, traditional, beautiful, art like, legible, old-fashioned, well-made, calm, realistic

Colours: Black and white, in grey shades

Repeated attributes/trademark: Distinct as one of the few that today are making pure hand drawn images

Manner/ type: All images are hand drawn in graphite

Time: Extensive

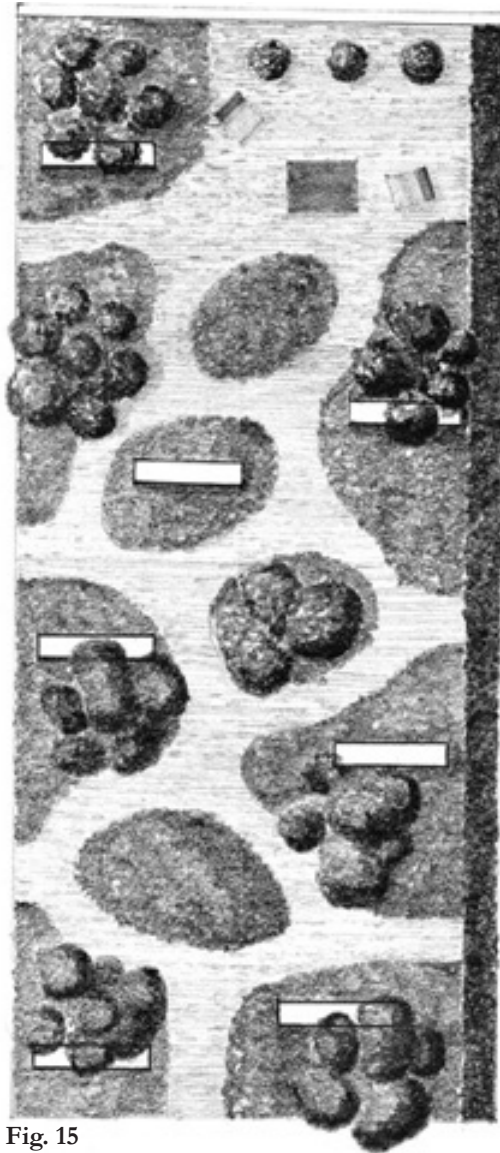


Fig. 15

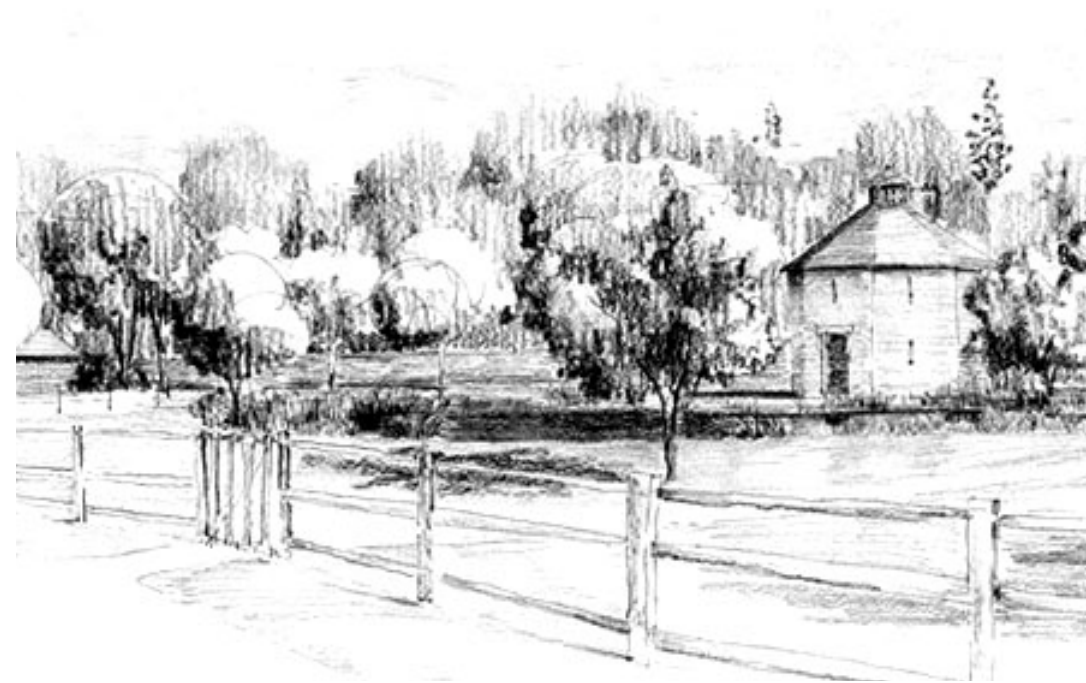


Fig. 16

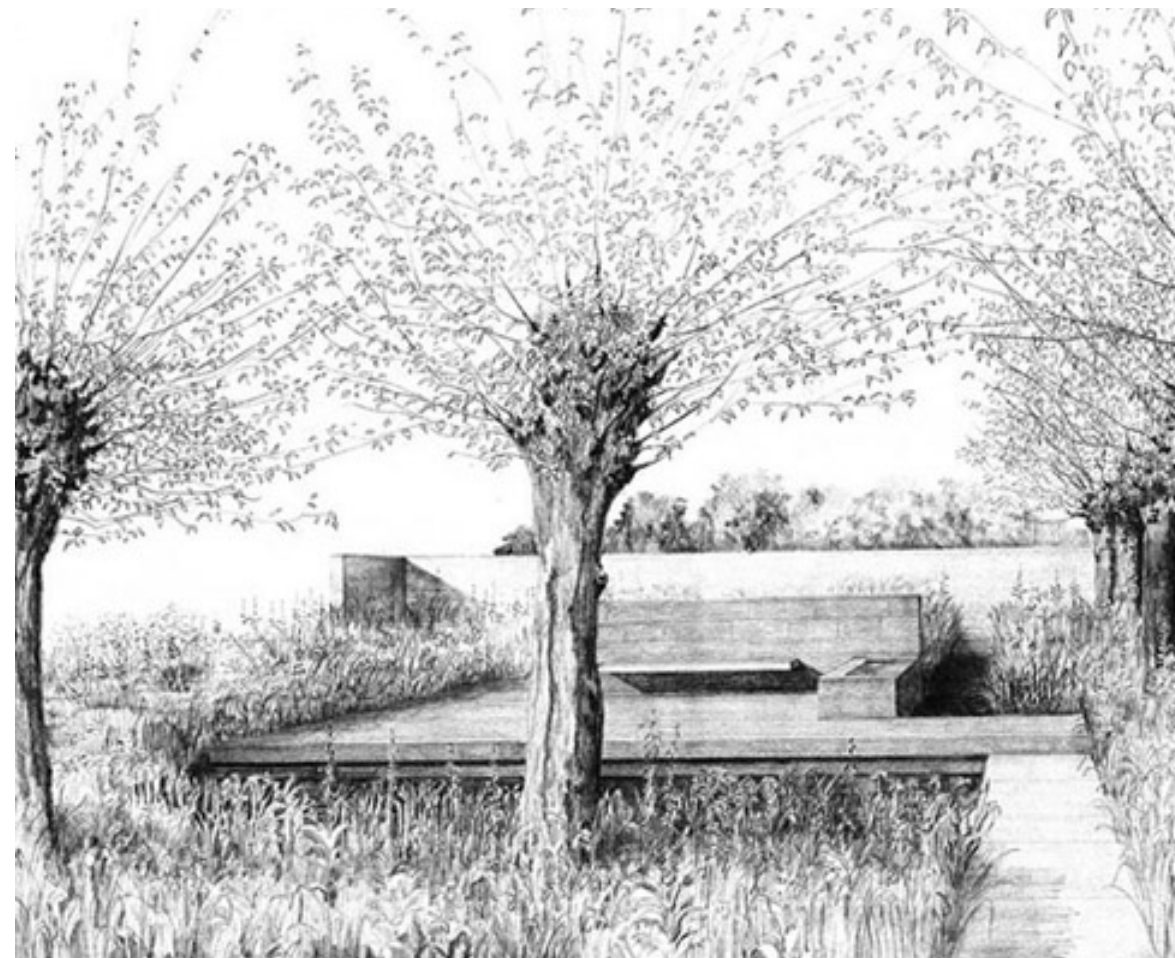


Fig. 17

COMPANY PROFILE

Company Name: SLA

Based: Copenhagen, Denmark

Founder: Stig L. Andersson, 1994
(SLA 2004)

Number of employees: 20

(landscape architects, art historians,
architects, and planners)

Local or international: Both

Source: www.sla.dk

ANALYSIS

Style/Appearance/content: Beautiful, mad, appeal to our imagination, fun, mix of mood and reality, attention drawing, dull, scary, eye-opener, dreamy, realistic, science fiction, movement, rich, exaggerated, exciting, absurd, incomprehensible, and different

Colours: The colour scheme goes in beige, pink and grey-mainly grey and is united in all projects.

Repeated attributes/trademark: A distinct style, typical for SLA. Contains captivating attributes that arouse attention, questions and open eyes. Projects keep same colour shades. We cannot exactly understand the environment

Manner/type: All images are computer made i.e. 3D and Photoshop.

Time: Extensive



Fig. 18



Fig. 19



Fig. 20



Fig. 21

COMPANY PROFILE

Company Name: Sarah Price Landscapes

Based: London, England

Founder: Sarah Price 2004

Number of employees: 1

Local or international: Local

Source: Interviews and
www.sarahpricelandscapes.com

ANALYSIS

Style/ Appearance/ content: Beautiful, dream-like, artistic, significant, informative, exact, easy to understand, realistic, precise, atmosphere, perfect, striking vegetation

Colours: Same tone that goes in a soft, pastel, grey beige green style

Repeated attributes/trademark: The realistic vegetation and material in focus, the dreamlike illustrations make a clear trademark

Manner/type: All images are computer made. Photoshop, 3d and model

Time: Extensive



Fig. 22



Fig. 23

COMPANY PROFILE

Company Name: Philip Nixon design

Based: London, England

Founder: No information

Number of employees: No information

Local or international: Both

Source: www.philipnixondesign.com

ANALYSIS

Style/ Appearance/ content: Characteristic, nice, artistic, modern, clear, easy to grasp, beautiful, mellow, traditional

Colours: Black and white in tones of grey

Repeated attributes/ trademark: Hand drawn but still modern images

Manner/ type: All images are hand drawn in graphite. Might be drawn in computer as a template

Time: Average to extensive



Fig. 24



Fig. 25

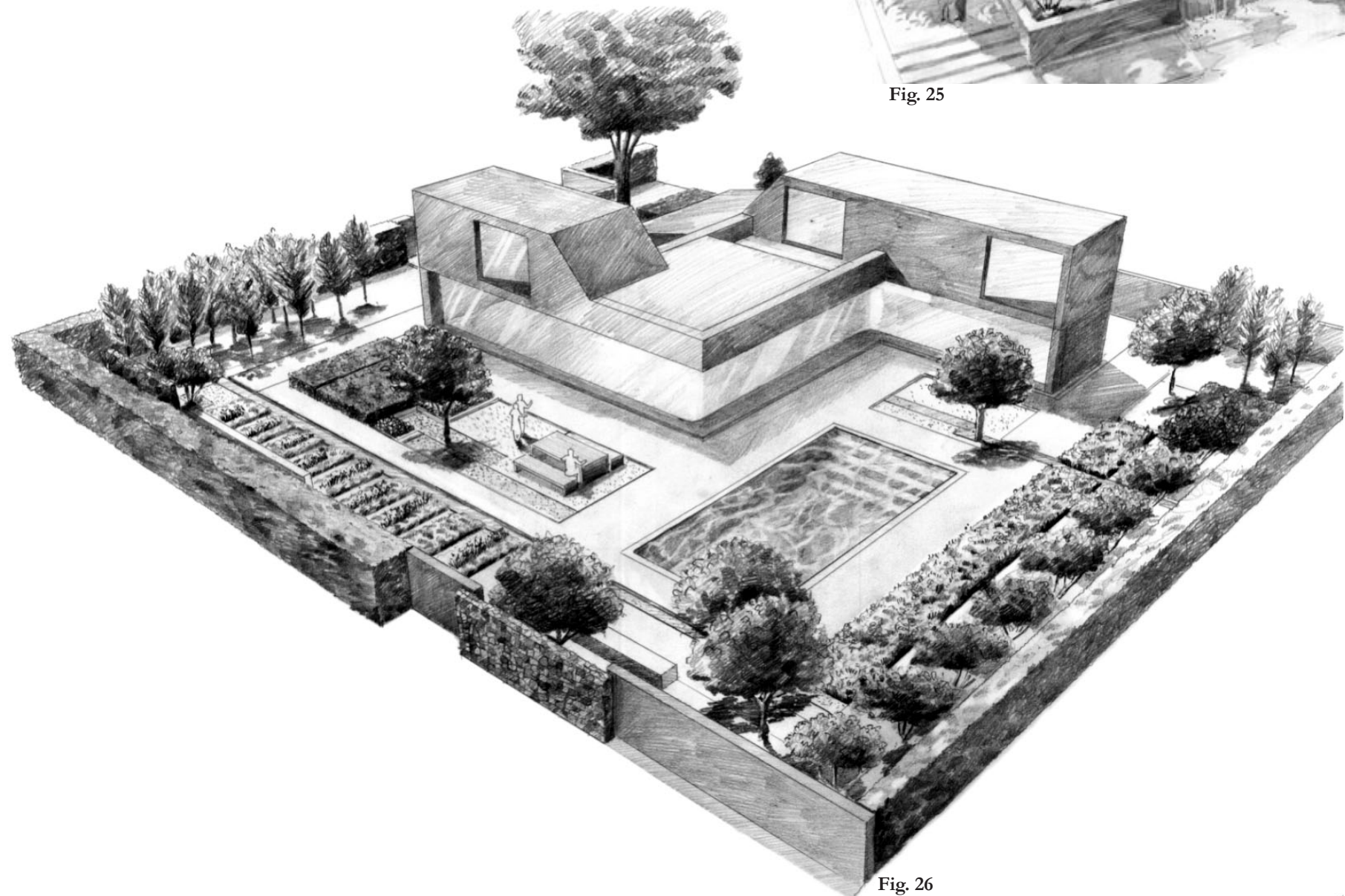


Fig. 26

COMPANY PROFILE

Company Name: Nicholas Dexter Gardens

Based: Brighton, England

Founder: Nicolas Dexter

Number of employees: 1 (geologist)

Local or international: Local

Source: www.ndg.de.com

ANALYSIS

Style/ Appearance/ content: Computerised, realistic, flat, nice, lush dark, certain style, clear, sterile, exact, professional, depicting, impersonal

Colours: The colour scheme contains lush greens and greys that are united in all projects

Repeated attributes/ trademark: Very realistic and computerised style that is distinguishable in the market

Manner/ type: All images are computer made. 3D and rendering

Time: Extensive

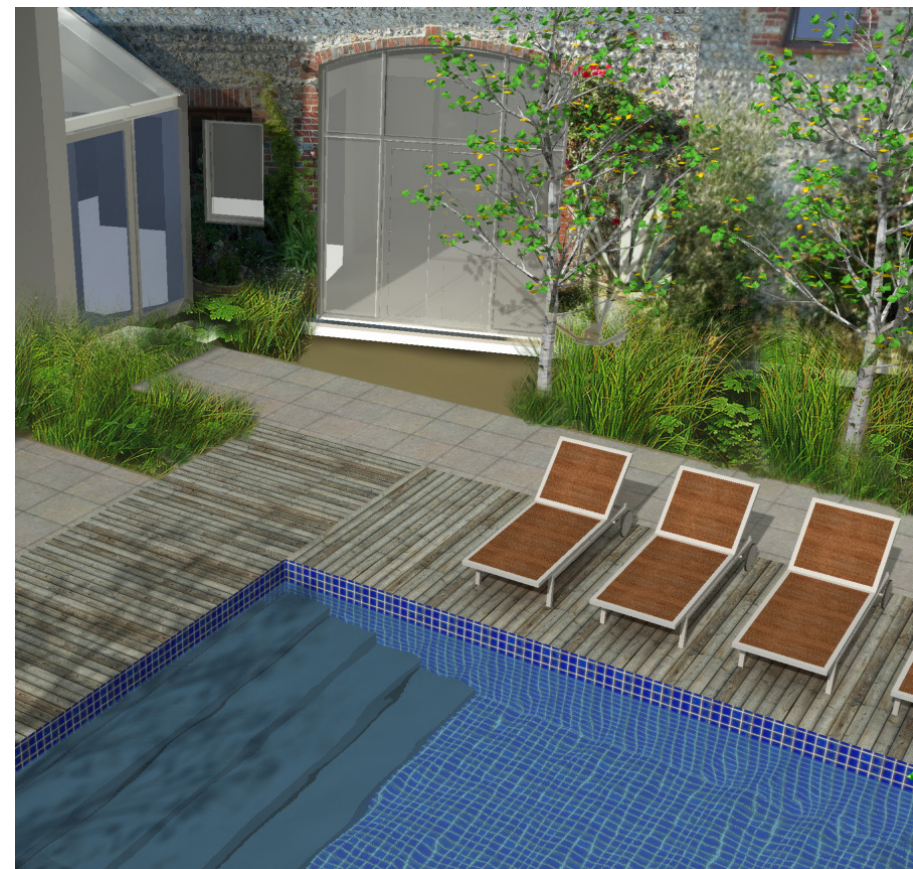


Fig. 27



Fig. 29



Fig. 28

COMPANY PROFILE

Company Name: LDA design
Based: London/Oxford/Exeter/
 Peterborough-England
Founded: 1979
Number of employees: approx 35
Local or international: local
Source: www.lda-design.co.uk

ANALYSIS

Style/Appearance/content: Fun, different, bright happy, mood, conceptual, energetic, selling, realistic, speedy, human focused, happiness, easy to grasp, colours, reality usage of colours, sky etc.

Colours: Bright but soft in a blue and pink tone

Repeated attributes/trademark: The happy and mad realistic approach with reality usage of colours

Manner/type: All images are computer made. Photoshop

Time: Extensive



Fig. 30



Fig. 31

COMPANY PROFILE

Company Name: Gustafson Porter

Based: London, England

Founder: Kathryn Gustafson & Neil Porter, 1997

Number of employees: approx 20 (landscape architects, architects)

Local or international: both

Source: www.gustafson-porter.com

ANALYSIS

Style/Appearance/content: Precise, simple, realistic, easy to grasp, mild, kind, sterile.

Colours: Colourful with a general tone in greens, pink, beige, turquoise but mainly greys

Repeated attributes/trademark: Shapes of people, in black, grey, white or photo. Realistic and lush vegetation that utilised the colours extensively (the rest are picky in colours.) Projects keep same colour shades working with opacity layers

Manner/type: All images computer mad i.e. 3D and Photoshop. Plans, photo collages, sections, models etc.

Time: Extensive in some and a little less in others



Fig. 32



Fig. 33



Fig. 34

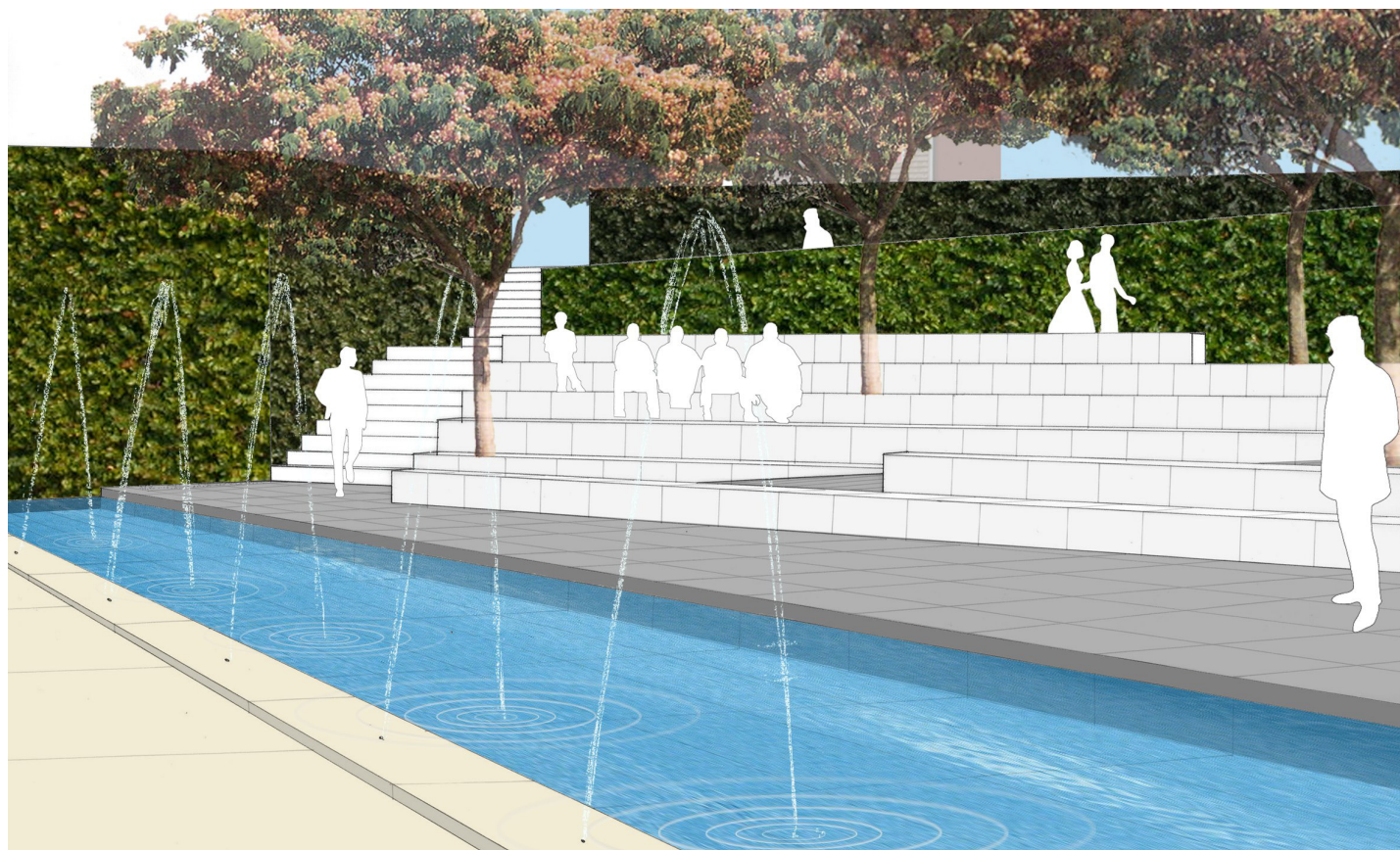


Fig. 35

COMPANY PROFILE

Company Name: Gross Max

Based: Edinburgh, Scotland

Founded: 1996

Number of employees: approx 13

Local or international: Both

Source: www.grossmax.com

ANALYSIS

Style/Appearance/content: Atmosphere, unreal, fairytale, arouse attention, artistic, mad, dramatic, unrealistic, mad, arty, beautiful, amazing, fun, lovely colours, happy, melancholic, imagination, innovative, youth, disrespect, free of prejudice, new thinking, energy, choose to work with us

Colours: Black and white combined with strong colours. No particular colour usage, however still connected individually to the company

Repeated attributes/trademark: The images are unpredictable images that show more than the design. Always involve people. The style of involving mad attributes distinguishes the company. The people in the images are telling you what atmosphere the environment will have

Manner/type: All images are computer made. Photoshop

Time: Extensive



Fig. 36



Fig. 37



Fig. 38



Fig. 39



Fig. 40



Fig. 41



Fig. 42



Fig. 43



Fig. 44



COMPANY PROFILE

Company Name: Gillespies

Based: Glasgow/Edinburgh/Leeds/London/Manchester/Oxford, England

Founded: 1964

Number of employees: 115

Local or international: both

Source: www.gillespies.co.uk

ANALYSIS

Style/Appearance/content: Precise, clean, messy, bright, dark, strange, trustworthy

Colours: The colour scheme goes in lots of greys, greens with a little strong orange touch and is united in all projects

Repeated attributes/trademark: Two types. The sections, plans and views are clear and light, the photo collages heavy, still it is possible to see it is made by the same company

Manner/type: All images are computer made i.e. Photoshop and 3D

Time: Extensive

COMPANY PROFILE

Company Name: EA-DG

(earthasia design group)

Based: HongKong/Shanghai/Beijing/
Guangzhou/Wuhan, China. Manila,
Philippines

Founded: 1981

Number of employees: 250 (landscape
architects, art historians, architects, and
planners)

Local or international: Both

Source: www.ea-dg.com.cn

ANALYSIS

Style/ Appearance/ content: Realistic, explain-
ing, lush, detail rich, photo similar, luxu-
riant foliage, easy to understand design,
straightforward, computerised

Colours: Colourful. Contains deep, rich
and strong greens with touches of grey
and blue

Repeated attributes/ trademark: Images cover
large areas, focused on getting a feel of
the vegetation

Manner/ type: All images are computer
made i.e. 3D, Photoshop and rendered

Time: Extensive



Fig. 46



Fig. 47



Fig. 48



Fig. 49

COMPANY PROFILE

Company Name: Dan Pearson Studio

Based: London

Founder: Dan Pearson, 2002

Number of employees: 7 (garden designer, landscape architects)

Local or international: Both

Source: www.danpearsonstudio.com

ANALYSIS

Style/Appearance/content: Moderation, restraint, stingy, calm, sketchy, simple, dreamlike, flat, still, united

Colours: Pale pastel colours, only a handful amount of colours

Repeated attributes/trademark: Simple illustrations with only a few colours. Obvious trademark, quick to produce

Manner/type: Images are hand drawn and coloured in computer

Time: Average



Fig. 50

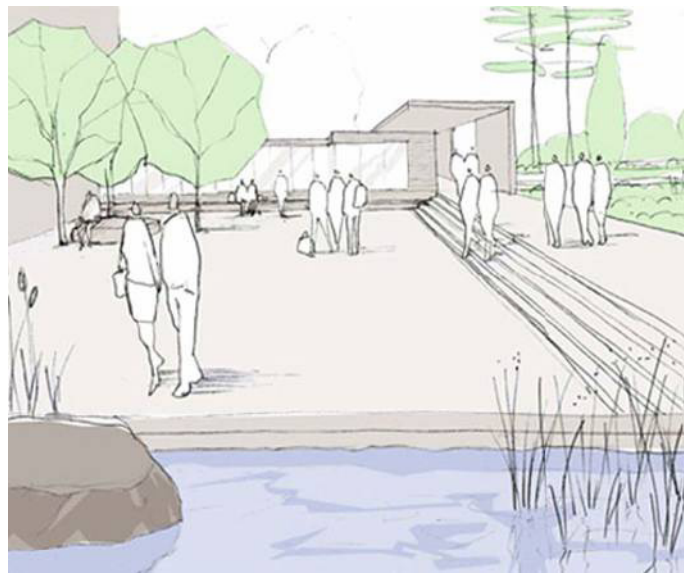


Fig. 51



Fig. 52



Fig. 53



Fig. 54

COMPANY PROFILE

Company Name: David Wiberg
Based: Stockholm, Sweden
Founded: No information
Number of employees: 1(illustrator)
Local or international: Both
Source: www.davidwiberg.se

ANALYSIS

Style/Appearance/content: Artistic, dreamy, lush, fun, beautiful, art, happy, sketchy, detailed, hand drawn, computerised, ordinary, realistic, linear, montage

Colours: Colourful chart, united in all projects

Repeated attributes/trademark: Hand drawn and sketchy looking approach, always involving people

Manner/type: Computer made, collages

Time: Extensive

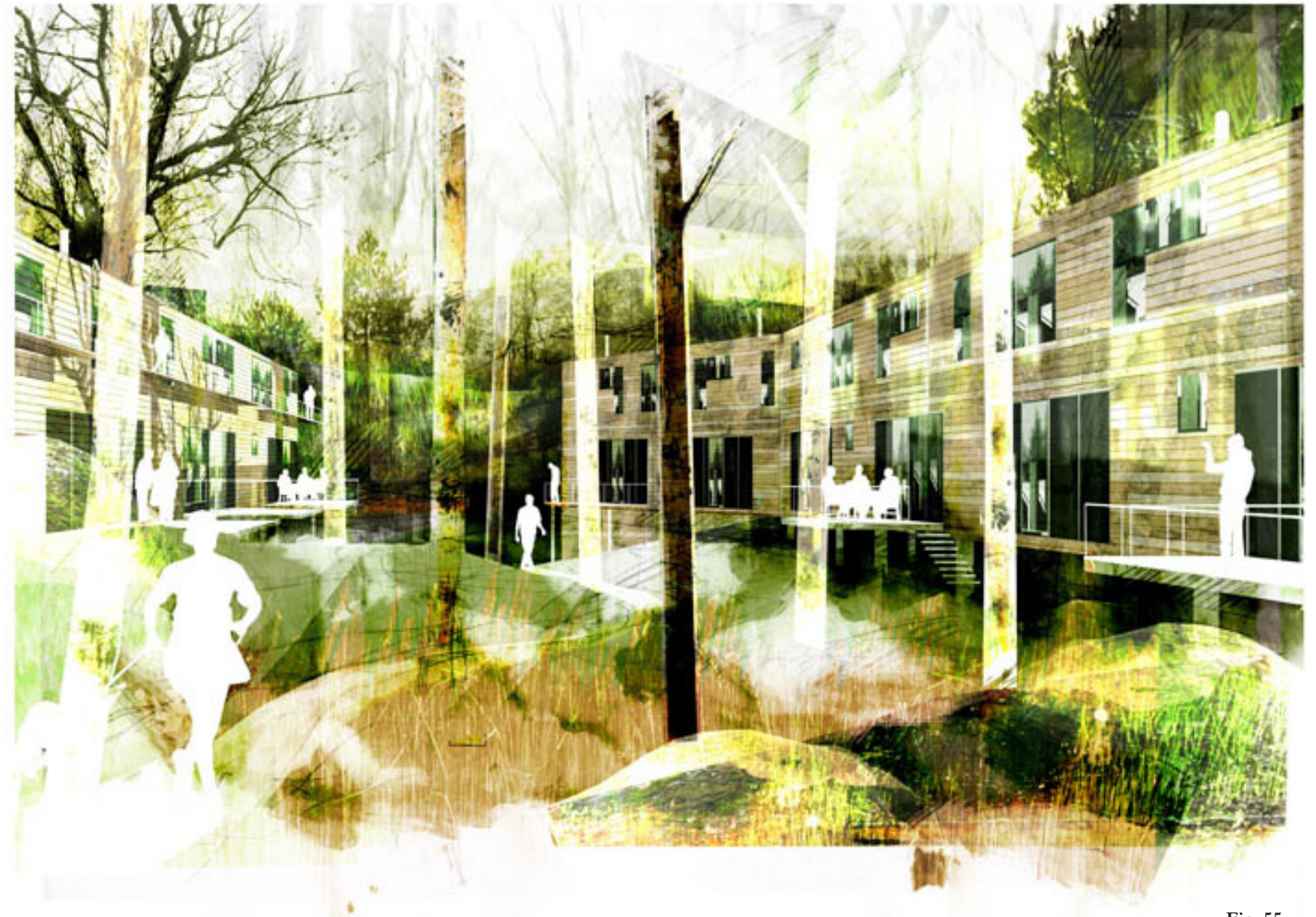


Fig. 55



Fig. 56



Fig. 57

COMPANY PROFILE

Company Name: Acres Wild

Based: West Sussex, England

Founded: Debbie Roberts, Ian Smith, 1988

Number of employees: No information

Local or international: local

Source: www.acreswild.co.uk

ANALYSIS

Style/ Appearance/ content: Traditional, sharp, clear, easy to grasp, simple, lush, childish, fun, and fresh

Colours: Very strong greens

Repeated attributes/trademark: The strong greens make the plans very easy to read and notice

Manner/type: Images are both drawn coloured by hand

Time: Average



Fig. 58

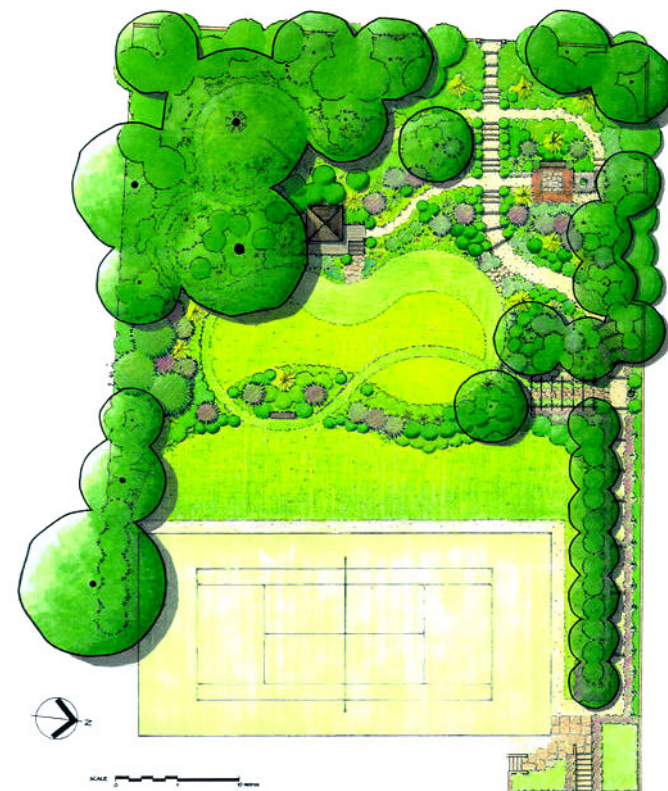


Fig. 59

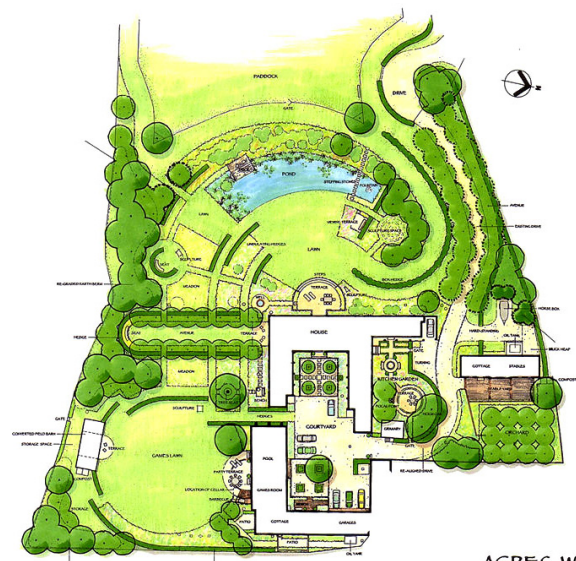


Fig. 60



Fig. 61

A landscape architect is educated to design and plan interesting, inspiring places and environments and to make sure it gets built the way we want it. The visual communication is very important for the initial and continuous communication between the designer and the client and also forms a highly useful tool for the design work.

Even though the images and visualisation form a small part of the process a design work permeates they are almost more important than the project itself today. The most vital part of our visual communication is having the dialogue with the client. This discussion and dialogue only last for a few weeks whilst the entire project goes on for months or even years. The initial visualisations and exemplifications set the level of customer expectation and designer creativity. The image is decisive and a critical component between client and designer.

Promising images show that possibilities are endless as they appeal to our imagination. Therefore it doesn't matter if the images demonstrate a vague identification with the project, as long as the client in the first meeting or dialogue can imagine the possibilities.

First impressions last. A project will not begin unless the client feels that the designer can not only capture their ideas but also further develop and add value to the sketching level. Therefore it is natural that a visually focused company gives the image significant time and thought. If the communication form we are applying does not work nor can our dialogue or future cooperation start or continue.

Telling is selling. The visual language for communicating ideas is important for a fruitful client/designer relationship and business agreement. A strong, clear language and style is only of advantage as it minimises misunderstandings. If we are clear, subsequently we make sure we mediate exactly what we mean. For that reason it is also clear and understandable for our clients.

The visual language of a designer firm becomes an important piece of the designer trademark. A recognisable way of communicating through images also decides how the designer firm will be experienced around the world. The impression the client receives is decisive towards the appearance of our future workload. Being a recognised unit is profitable.

If a designer firm defines a professional visual language style that both the creative personnel and the design manager finds distinct, vivid but also practical, it will become fun and inspiring not only for the client observing their visualised idea, it will also become enjoy-

able for all parties involved. Choice of colours and by communicating a good language is inspiring for everyone involved. In addition, the images are originally a result of the client's thoughts created in a new form by you. Therefore it is also important that the client can recognise these thoughts in the image. Added to this we should mediate something more than the client asked for and something that the client did not expect. Through the image we add values and give the client new visions. Furthermore we must not forget that the creative process is not only the architect creating the design; it is also the client participating in the process.

Complications can arise if employees cannot identify themselves with or embrace a style being implemented at the office and therefore experience it as restraining. A set language might mean that you have to work within barriers that do not suit you. However, a set library and a colour scheme is not meant to restrain any type of creativity, but rather be a guide in order to create a united style, take away stress and save money. It is meant as a basis upon which everyone can begin at the same level and from there create what is suitable. Nevertheless, when developing a visual language, consideration must constantly be taken, evaluations performed and frequent discussions take place with all employees in order to mediate the visual language that's desired and together create the tools that will work for everyone.

A set visual language is also important in order to make the design work more efficient.

It is important that the visual language does not go to extremes and end with the common man failing to understand it. It shall be a fine balance linking exciting communication and the actual design. A visual language shall optimise the possibilities in order to supply a maximised content.

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[article=true#](http://www.ne.se/lang/perception?i_whole_article=true#) [Accessed 10th January 2009]

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2009]

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Email to Björne, K. (kajsabjorne@hotmail.com)

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IN THESIS

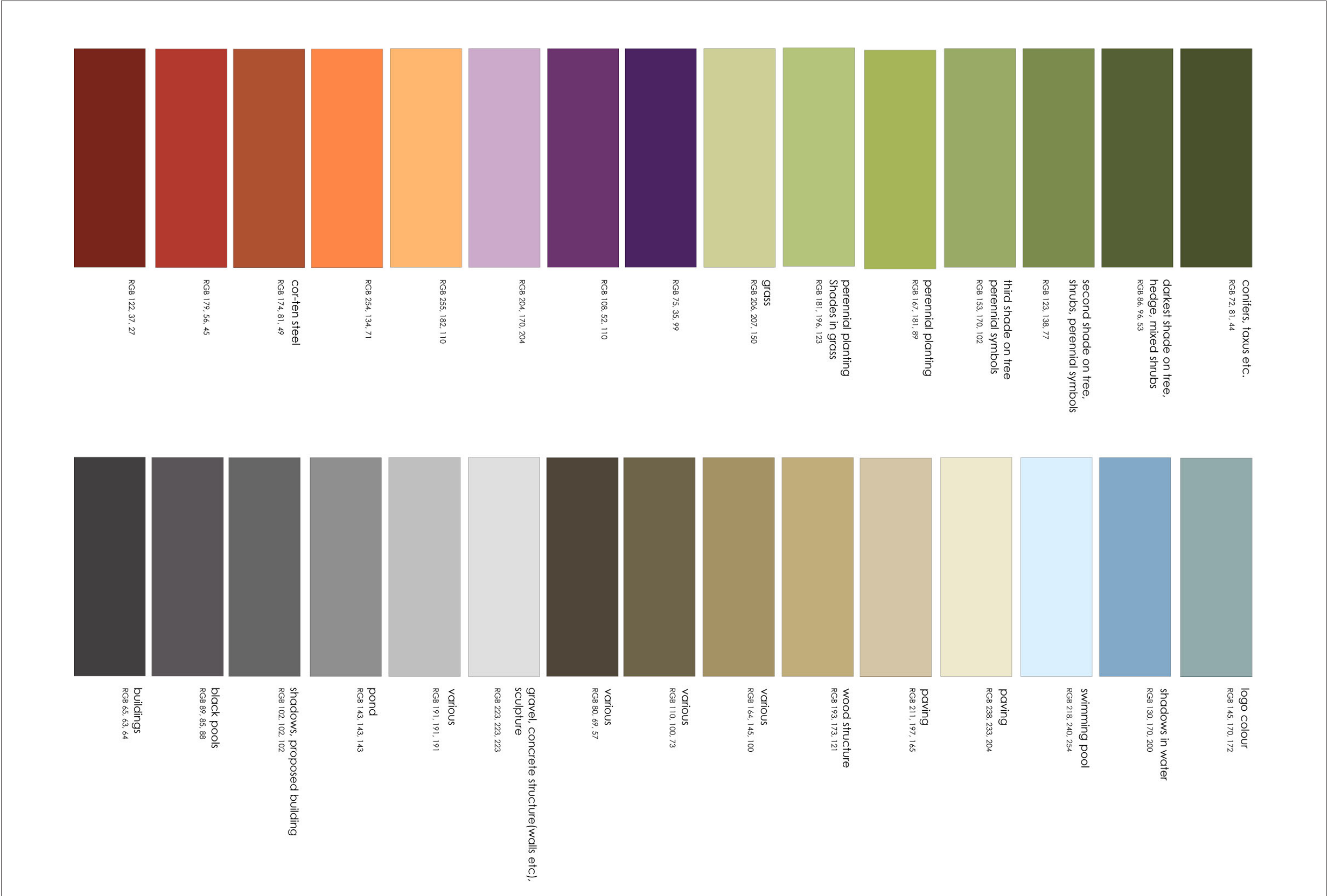
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APPENDICES

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 Fig. 63. Symbol library; Trees. Copyright Kajsa Björne
 Fig. 64. Symbol library; Shrubs & diagramming. Copyright Kajsa Björne
 Fig. 65. Symbol library; Hardscape. Copyright Kajsa Björne
 Fig. 66. Symbol library; Labelling. Copyright Kajsa Björne
 Fig. 67. Symbol library; Section. Copyright Kajsa Björne

appendices



APPENDIX 1 - COLOUR SCHEME

Fig. 62

symbol library - trees

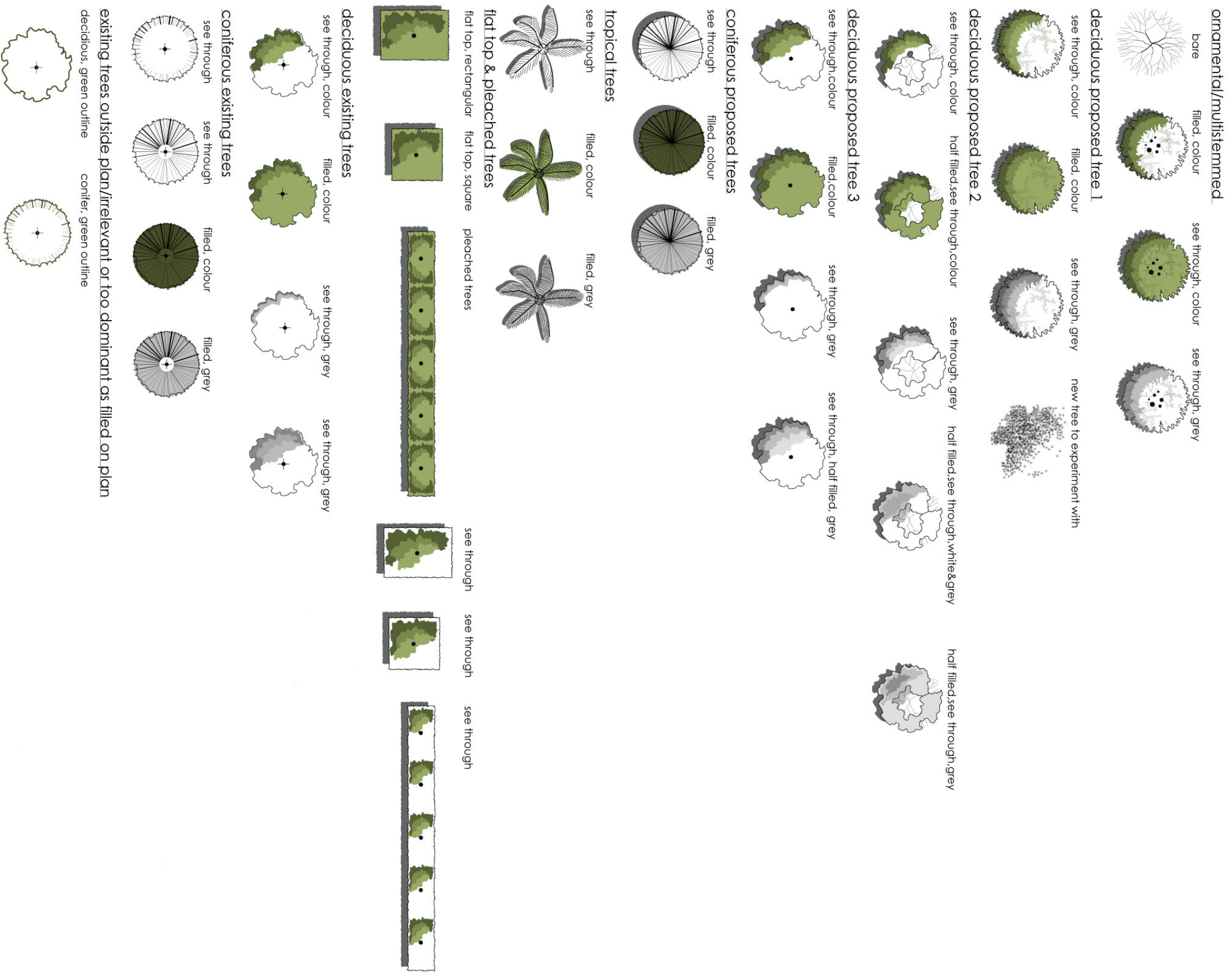
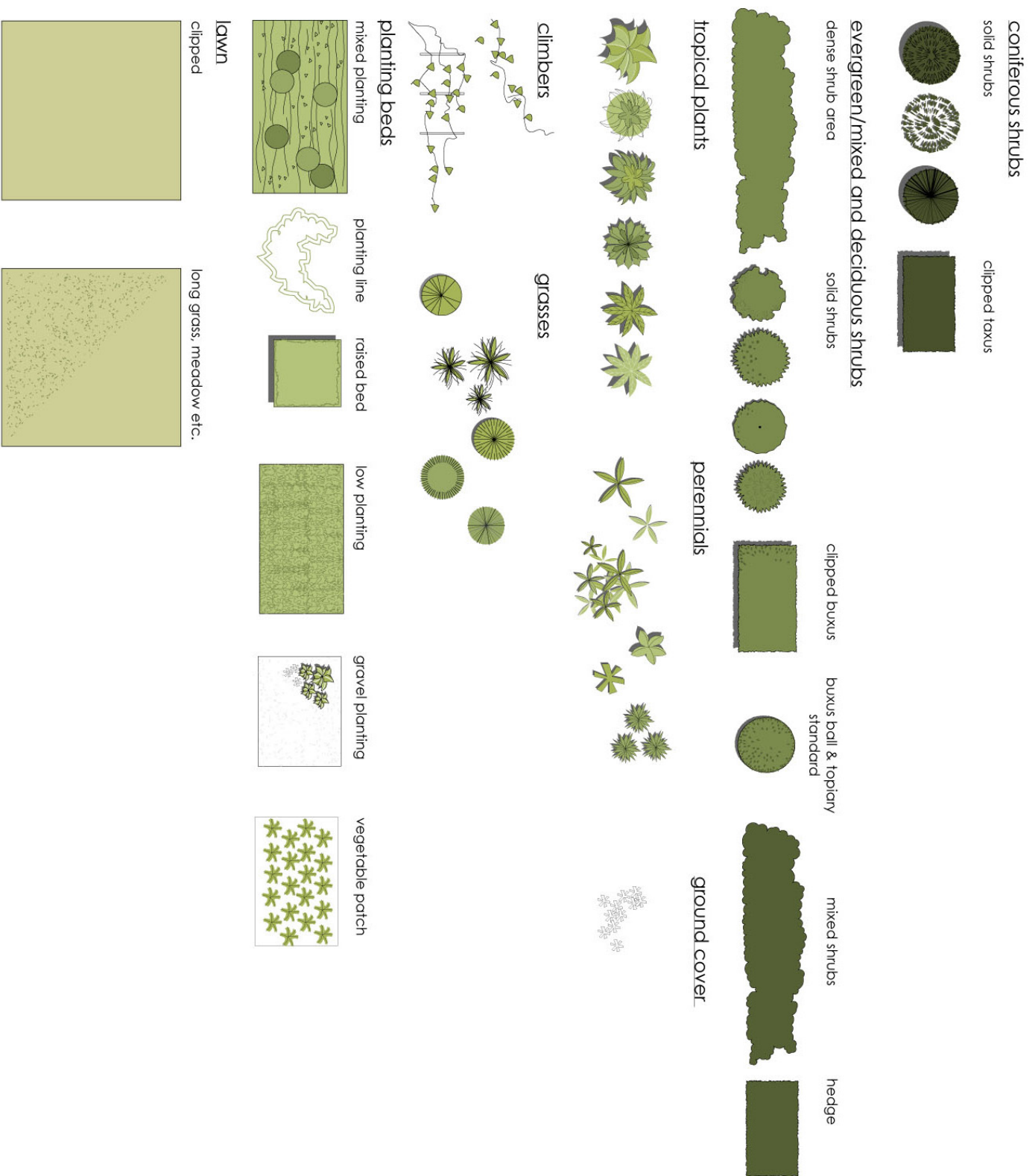


Fig. 63

symbol library - shrubs and plants



symbol library - conceptual diagramming

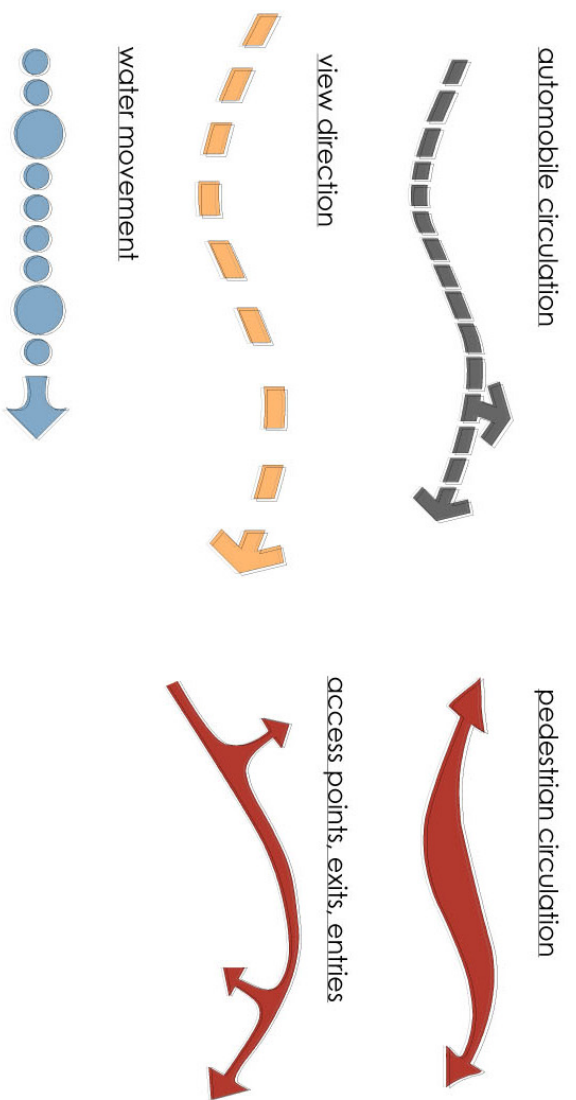
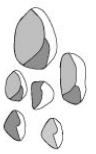


Fig. 64

symbol library - hardscape

stone and concrete

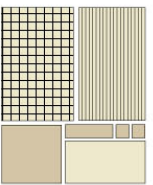
boulders



rocks



paving / bricks etc.



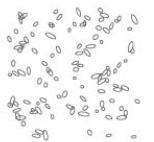
concrete structure (ex.walls)



gravel



pebbles



cobbles / cobble set (if detail needed)



wood structure

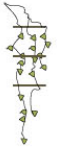
decking



pergola

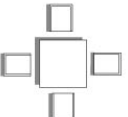


pergola simple structure

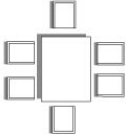


furniture

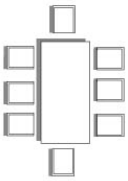
dining 4



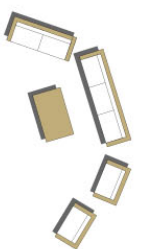
dining 6



dining 8



seating



sunbed



bistro



pots and sculptures

ornamental pot



urbis pot

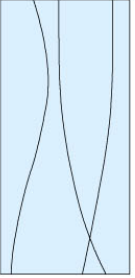


sculpture

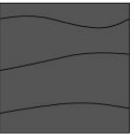


water

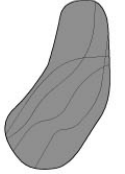
swimming pool



black pool



pond



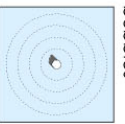
movements



hot tub



fountain/ water bubbles

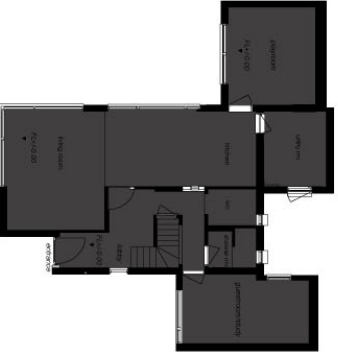


rippled black pool



buildings

flat

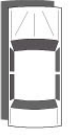


proposed building



human scale objects

car

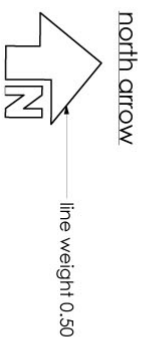


motorbike



Fig. 65

symbol library - labelling



line weights

recommended line weight usage (be aware of that if you rescale a large plan to an A3 size you might have to change the line weights to be thinner)

0.05 paving, plants and less important details

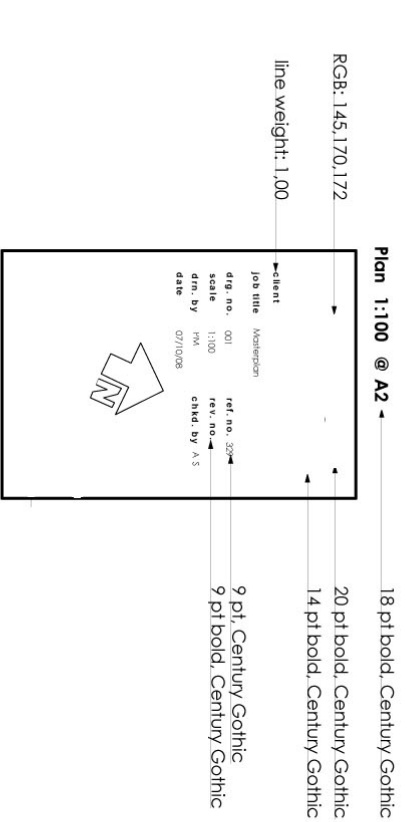
0.13 - 0.18 general drawing line

0.25 - 0.35 trees and taller structures

key

only used on special projects. to be positioned on the right side of the plan

textbox



labelling rules

text:

1. all labels + textbox shall be in a 1:1 layer
2. no text on plan apart from number of steps, key level information and buildings (house, garage, stables, etc)
3. text should be 10pt Century Gothic

label lines:

1. all labels s + textbox shall be in a :1 layer
2. no text on plan apart from number of steps, key level information and buildings (house, garage, stables, etc)
3. text should be 10pt Century Gothic
4. never show text on a white box (for example levels)
5. all text to be lower case
6. text should sit on the label line. Text box should be maximum 45mm wide
7. text to left of drawing to be 0.05
11. label lines should end with an arrow point on the plan
12. label lines should start a reasonably close distance from the edge of the plan (ie. very long lines not ideal)
13. label lines should always be horizontal or vertical and never crossing
14. label line weight to be 0.05
15. thick, wide arrow/45 degrees angle within the span of the first to last risers. label with amount of steps

8. text to right of drawing to be ranged right, aligning with start of the label line
9. text and label lines should always be aligned with other labels
10. level labelling should be in black 6-8 pt Century Gothic italic and with the level point marked with a cross



Fig. 66

APPENDIX 6 - SYMBOL LIBRARY SECTIONS

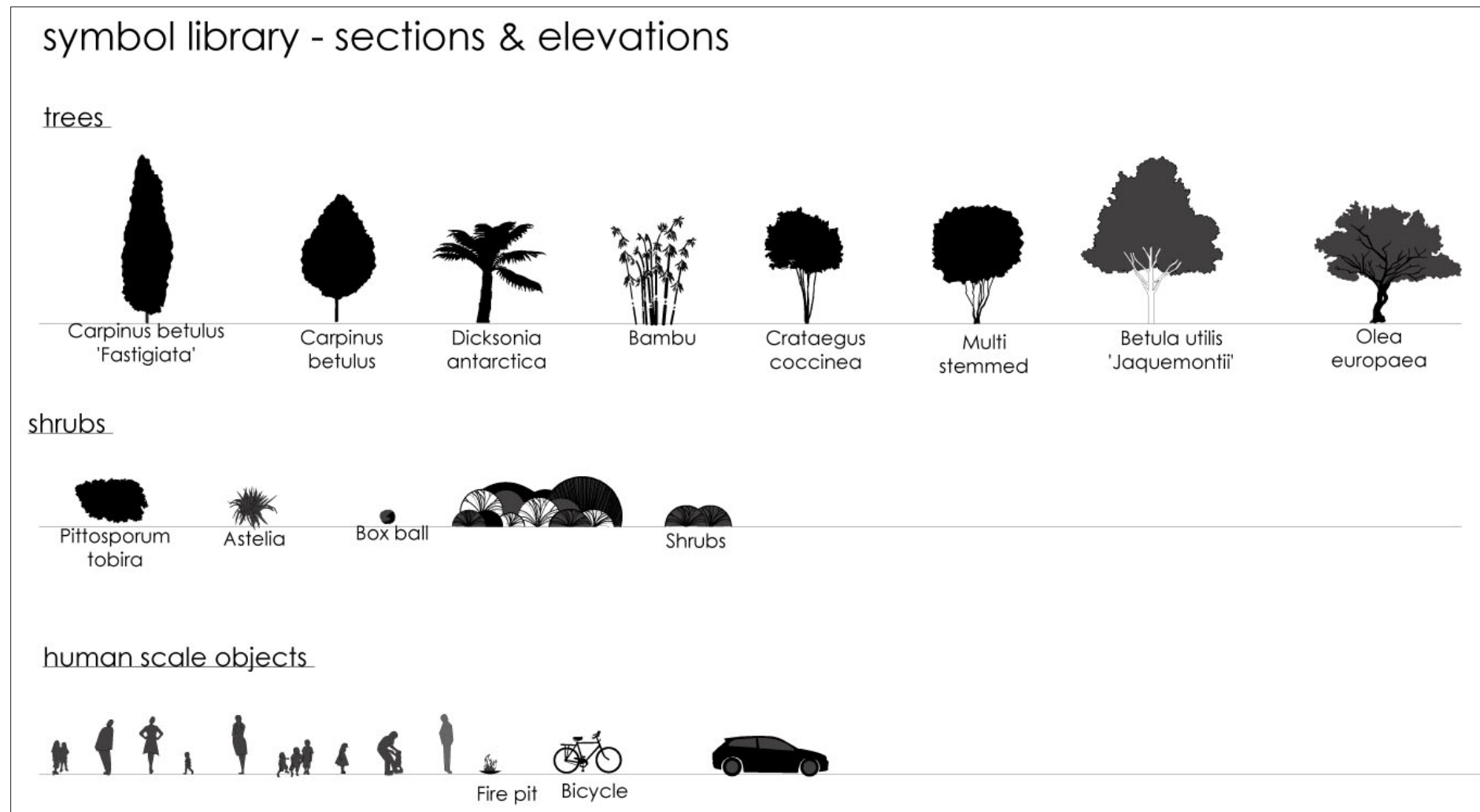


Fig. 67