

TO INCREASE RENOVATION SALES,



SAY IT WITH PHOTOGRAPHY

By JIM GIBBS

The old saying, "a picture is worth a thousand words," is very true. A key to the success of Greene Bros. Landscape Co. in the renovation market has been the exposure of our work on garden tours, or in the Homes and Gardens section of the *Atlanta Journal* or recommendations from past clients. We take a lot of before and after pictures to submit to the *Atlanta Journal*. Potential clients see how professional landscaping, good design and construction can enhance the value of

A small, older home (above) required a landscape of smaller plants with an illusion of distance from the street.

their homes.

Greene Bros. Landscape Co. is a design build company. We employ eight designers who meet our clients on-site to discuss their landscape needs. In the first on-site meeting the client gets a rough idea of the cost of the work. We try to determine the budget and satisfy the customer's needs without exceeding it. Many people want a beautiful landscape but have no idea what it can cost. We try to determine the budget before beginning so we will not waste their time or ours.

The designer also tries to incorporate the ideas of the client if possible and offers alternative solu-

tions if not. We want the customer to be comfortable with the design and the designer.

We believe we must stress the benefits of our designers meeting with the clients to discuss their needs and to coordinate the design and construction of decks, brick

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Jim Gibbs is president of Greene Bros. of the Atlanta, GA area, winner of numerous landscape awards. Greene Bros. operates a 200 acre nursery, and separate companies for residential design, commercial design, residential landscape and commercial landscape.



Circular driveway and berm made this simple, boxy house stand out.

and rock patios, walls, walks and garden features such as gazebos and arbors. Our designers are also involved in the design and construction of swimming pools and guest parking, garden rooms and are very involved with many aspects of landscape design. We find the client benefits greatly from hearing the designer coordinate this construction and that the designer is pleased with the overall effect of the landscape design. We find that if the designer is pleased, the owner will usually be pleased.

Because of high interest rates, the trend in Atlanta is to remodel a home, redecorate the interior and extend the living areas to the outdoors by adding patios, arbors, gazebos and other landscape features. We believe in the master plan which the client can follow and complete in phases. I think you have to establish your market and we have found that the market we

want to cater to is the market that believes in quality and appreciates the benefits of dealing with a professional company.

Small boxy house

This house is a very small house and the owners did not wish to buy a larger home, but chose rather to develop and remodel this home the way they wanted. Consequently, major changes were made to the yard and the home as well.

When we started working with the Jones', the house itself was very unattractive. It was a very boxy house with simple driveway and a narrow set of front steps. The front porch was too narrow to be usable and therefore a change was made in the porch and steps were added across the entire length of the porch. The steps now link the home to the new circular driveway we suggested. The porch now serves as

a walkway to the front entrance.

The original driveway came up the side of the yard and there was no garage or guest parking area. We designed a circular driveway which provided not only a place for guests to park, but also added more depth to the house. As you can see in the photograph, it looks like the house was moved back twenty five feet on the lot. In order to block the driveway from the street and soften the large amount of parking, a berm was created with mass plantings of dwarf chinese holly with a ground-cover of english ivy. Red maples were planted along the drive to add shade.

Originally, the house was painted a very drab white color. The color was changed to Holt's storehouse gray with Blair House green shutters. Grayish colored slate was chosen for the porch paving. A pierced brick wall was constructed along the right side of the house where the old driveway had once been, and a brick walkway was installed to connect the front area to the back patio. An iron gate was installed for both function and aesthetic reasons.

The front plantings are very simple but give a variety of color and texture such as the round leaf of the compacta holly and the sharp pointed leaf of the carissa holly. This landscape is very simple and has greatly enhanced the value of this home.

In the middle of a pasture

The next house we are showing was located on a thirty acre farm in the middle of a pasture. The drive was on the left and ended in a recently enlarged parking area which accommodates nine cars. We designed a circular driveway and changed the entrance so traffic can enter a parking forecourt and exit without seeing the parked cars. We installed a small brick wall to retain the area and used the dirt to construct mounds with large plantings to screen the parking area and the house next door. We simplified the landscape by keeping it very symmetrical and used an assortment of groundcovers throughout the landscape for low maintenance.

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Green Brothers changed a flat pasture into a mounded estate with a forecourt to hide the parking lot.

On top of a hill

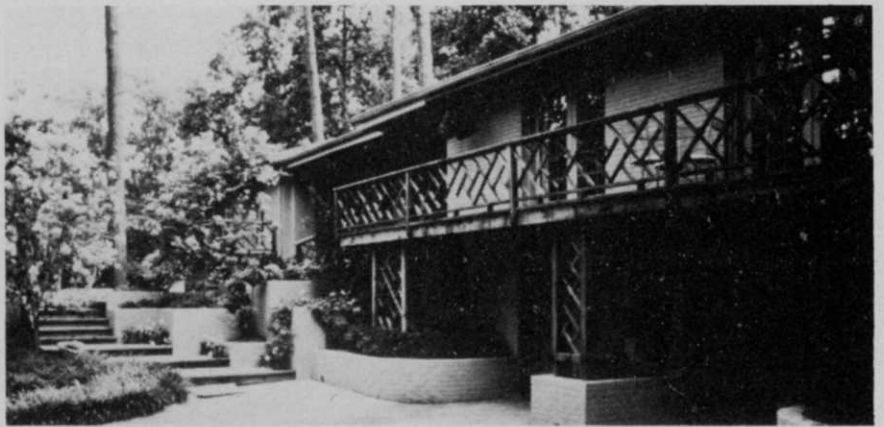
The third home was located on top of a hill. The first thing one noticed when approaching the house was the garage doors and the windows above. We explained that this needed to be softened and suggested adding a cedar deck to the vertical element. The stark white color of the house was not in keeping with the wooded lot so we painted it a tan color which would blend with the tree trunks and give one the feeling of living in the trees.

To make the front entrance, which was set back in the corner, more inviting and visible, we added a series of steps and landings to create an entrance courtyard. We removed the double windows in the dining and breakfast rooms and added double french doors so the owners could walk out on the deck to sit and have coffee. We added raised planters with the various shrubs for texture and color contrasts.

There was more construction at this particular home in the decks and planters than there was in the landscape which was only \$3000. The deck work was approximately \$13,000 and the brick work \$4000. Without the decks and planter, we would never have been able to change the entrance to this house. All of this work was coordinated by our company. These clients were so happy with their front landscaping that we landscaped their back yard.

Problem with access

The owners of the fourth home were concerned about the entrance and the garage under the right wing of the house, as no one used the front door. We explained to the client that one reason that the steps were difficult to walk up was because they had 9-in. risers instead of 6-7-in. risers and 9-in. treads instead of 14-16-in. treads. There was also not adequate room for parking. The parking area needed to be widened from 11-ft. to 22-ft. so that access to the garage would not be impaired. By adding a series of steps and landings, the entrance was made more inviting and accessible. As the house had existing rock,



The dominant feature of this hilltop residence was the garage until a deck and paint job helped the house blend with the landscape.



A poorly designed front entrance had to be corrected here with a larger parking area and a more inviting stairway.

rock planters were designed using plant material with varying textures and color contrasts.

Existing concrete decking around the swimming pool was removed and replaced by cedar decking and landings. Adding plantings in raised planters gave the pool an updated look.

Older Atlanta home

The last home is a small one located in one of Atlanta's older sections. The houses in this area are built on very small lots with little space between them, therefore screening was needed for privacy. The porch, walk and driveway were removed and a small brick wall was added, the yard was leveled and a wider drive was made possible. A new brick wall and porch were added. Gates were added to block the side view.

Since the lot was so small, we needed to use plant material that would always remain in scale with the house. A very old tree-form

crepe myrtle was added for the vertical element needed to soften the left corner. Cleyera, carissa holly and "pure dwarf" mordo grass made up the foundation planting. Tree-form cherry laurels were added to soften the over scale house on the right, while standard tree-form photinia frame the left side. A serpentine planting bed curves to the sidewalk creating an illusion that the house is further from the street than it really is. Various plant materials were added for annual color. **WTT**

ACTION CARD CORRECTION

In the April issue the address for Aquashade, Inc. was incorrect. The correct address is P.O. Box 198 Eldred, NY 12732 (914) 557-8077