



You know who you are

This month's issue carries a story about the progress being made by landscape architects and contractors in their daily working relationships.

Have you, Mr. Contractor, ever changed an architect's plans without first consulting with him? Do you believe the architect has a right to see his plans carried out as drawn?

Do you, Mr. Architect, draw your designs after considering the total adaptability of the plan to the job site? Do you believe a contractor deserves to work from plans that are practical?

The green industry's best contractors and architects communicate, respect each other's talents and depend on each other for guidance. They figured out long ago that summers are short, and once you step between the lines, it's time to play ball.

A contractor interviewed for the story on page 47 admitted that some contractors will, for example, use a substitute irrigation product without telling the architect or developer. "Once it's underground," he said, "who's going to know?"

That kind of behavior might go over in high school homeroom, but not in the real world. Sure, no one but the contractor will know of the switch. But if a contractor conducts all his business that way, his days in business are numbered. At best, he'll creep along and make a minimal living.

Every profession has good and bad practitioners. Many great contractors and architects do their best for themselves and the green industry. But some fly-by-night, seat-of-the-pants operators eek out a living by playing fast and loose with professional ethics. They drive trucks that are ready for the boneyard, they don't bathe and they wear the same T-shirt for a month. The true professionals in both fields are constantly looking for ways to improve.

The industry has made great strides in the past decade. But the responsibilities remain, and they extend in many directions.

Architects: draw with practicality; take charge of the project; visit the site regularly; be open to modification. Contractors: accept the architects' knowledge; he needs you as much as you need him; communicate; don't cut corners. Developers: be aware of what is going on at all times, and know that the architect is the project leader. If a contractor makes a suggestion, talk to the architect before giving your okay.

The only side we're taking is that of professionalism and productivity. The industry has enough to deal with as it is, thanks to the anti-everything crowd. Let's continue to work together.

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