

Flat land, color green present challenges



Drainage issues and a client's desire to use lots of green in the landscape were the major challenges which faced Scott Byron & Company during a project on Chicago's North Shore.

"This is a very flat property, located within a hundred-year flood plain," says Byron, owner of the Lake Bluff, Ill. design/build firm.

"The residence was constructed six feet above the flood plain, which put the entire location out of proportion. We needed to create a grade that would make the house look as though it had always been there."

Byron engineered a series of gently rolling hills to serve as a temporary water retention system in times of heavy rain and quick-thawing snow. The hills serve as small ponds in about one-third of the property. "The hills hold so much water," says Byron. "With this technique, water collected during a heavy rain is gone within a couple of hours; half a day at most. Across the street, they've had two feet of standing water for weeks at a time."

Lots of hardscaping

The client wanted minimal color, so

Byron's L/A team designed, coordinated and supervised installation of a gently-sloped circle drive court and parking. Privacy was also important, as well as the ability to enjoy long views from the house without using evergreens.

Design elements included:

- ▶ bluestone front walk and rear terrace;
- ▶ swimming pool with a terrace overlook;
- ▶ pool deck and access to an existing tennis court.

"This property is unusual because about 50 percent of the work is hardscape," says Byron. "The drive was paved in black asphalt, to contrast the bright white house. White concrete with minimum wood accents was used on the pool deck and walkways."

'Shotcrete' for pool

The swimming pool design required an excavation to a depth of only three feet. Two 18-inch drainage culverts leading to storm sewer inlets were installed underneath, by using a shotcrete process, a dense mixture of 8 1/2 to 9 bags of cement per cubic yard of concrete. **LM**

Open views from the house were achieved by using low planting areas for a greater sense of yard depth. Perimeter planting was designed to reflect the neighborhood's wooded, secluded character.

Plant selections

Byron's design team chose a wide variety of trees and shrubs to meet the client's demands including: Kentucky coffee tree; American beech; ginkgo biloba; burning bush and red bud.

White accents were provided by hosta; white bud; white crabapple; and viburnum. For a hint of the exotic, quince was used for its delicate pink flowers.

"The natural paradigm is to relate a garden to colors," says Scott Byron. "But by using only shades of green and different leaf textures, we create a more honest perspective. It really has to look good from all angles. You can't cheat by 'throwing in' color."



Swimming pool with a terrace overlook, pool deck and access to an existing tennis court were hardscaping elements used in the project.