

Residential Site Check List - REVISED

Site Location

Surrounding Land Uses and Their Conditions

- ✧ The site is in an established residential subdivision in the Dunwoody/Doraville corridor. The neighborhood residences are generally well-maintained.

Neighborhood Characteristics

- ✧ The neighborhood is a forty-year-old subdivision. The sites are all approximately 1/3 acre in size. The homes within are a combination of ranch, split-levels and traditional two-story residences. Most styles are colonial derivations, however some modern style homes exist. The vegetation is mature and includes hardwoods (primarily oaks and maples) and pines.

Vehicular Circulation

- ✧ The site sits one lot away from a T-intersection on a cut-through route for morning and afternoon traffic. Other than this work-commute traffic, the street is generally quiet. The most common approach to the home is from the southeast corner, which is the view for drivers sitting at the T-intersection. The driveway is on this corner of the lot. The front yard is highly visible.

Legal Restrictions/Covenants

- ✧ The front yard setback is 60' from the street. Building permits are required for any structure that has a cement footing or foundation.

Site Characteristics

Lot

- ✧ The lot is a little over one third of an acre. It is rectangular, measuring 97' wide by 180' deep. The layout is favorable, with the garage located on the rear of the house. There are some existing maintained flower beds as well as many areas that require pruning, weeding, ivy removal and other clean up functions.

Topography

- ✧ The site is sloped gradually from the center down to the east and west (front and back) edges. The house is sited on the highest elevations. The grade change is 5 – 5.5' from the house to each of the east and west edges. There is no difficulty traversing the site.

Drainage

- ✧ Water drains away from the house toward the east and west edges. The house foundation is poorly conceived thus a sump pump moves water away from the house in the back yard. The sump pump is located on the northwest corner of the house and moves water due west from the house for approximately 20 feet.
- ✧ The client has built a dry creek of North Carolina river rock to carry water from the northwest downspout and the sump pump further away from the yard. This water currently pools in a low spot in the back center of the back yard, inhibited from leaving the yard by a modest berm. This berm is inadequate from a functional standpoint as well as an aesthetic standpoint; it is the view due west of the deck.

- ▶ The dry creek should be completed to deliver the water to a more formal shallow pool with a gravel bottom. This will help eliminate mud during rainy seasons.
- ▶ The berm must be formalized functionally and aesthetically by increasing its height and facing it with stacked stone, to complement the dry creek. A water-loving tree, such as Salix, should be introduced to deplete pooling water as quickly as possible. A tree in this location will also screen the view of the neighbor to the west.
- ▶ The view to the decks and sunroom from this "problem" area should be exploited with a remote seating area.
- ✧ There are no drainage issues in the front yard.

Soil

- ✧ The soil is clay. It is good Georgia clay – red to a depth of 18 inches and then fiercely compacted and yellow.
- ▶ The soil must be vigorously tilled and amended to add nutrients and improve drainage, wherever new plantings will occur.

Vegetation

- ✧ The site includes many oaks, maples and pines. The client would like to remove the three large pines which are located in the middle of the front lawn.
- ✧ Many ornamental shrubs exist on the site. These are in generally good health and location.
- ✧ The front yard is approximately half lawn, half planting beds or mulched areas, specifically pine straw. The lawn is in good condition.
- ✧ There is no lawn to speak of in the back yard. A mix of wild strawberry, clover and chick weed poses for green coverage in the summer. Due to the dog traffic, many clay patches exist. A healthy third of the back yard is covered in English Ivy, promoting mosquitoes and erosion control all at once.

Microclimate

- ✧ Sunrise is at the northeast corner of the house in summer and the southeast corner of the house in winter.
- ✧ Sunset is at the northwest corner of the house in summer and the southwest corner in winter.
- ✧ The front yard is mostly partial shade except at the street, which receives full morning sun for 4 hours.
- ✧ The back yard is mostly partial shade except on and immediately surrounding the deck.
- ▶ More sun will be introduced to the site by removing the three pines in front, and by selective pruning of the largest tree in the back yard, a red maple.

Existing House

- ✧ The home is a 1960s tri-level with a red brick and white clapboard façade. The shutters and window boxes are painted black. The style is a colonial derivative. It is the only home of its configuration and floor plan in the subdivision.
- ✧ The front door and driveway entrance are on the east side of the lot.
- ✧ There is no distinct walkway from the street to the front door. Access to the entrance is up the driveway to a narrow walkway that is attached to the house and protected from rain by an overhang. Paralleling this walk is an established boxwood hedge. It is healthy and mature yet blocks view of the walkway and is of minimal personality. By its configuration, the hedge and

walk provide no sense of welcome from the approach nor invite gaze from the interior through the glass front doors.

- ✧ The mailbox is located at the end of the driveway.
- ✧ There is a bay window in the living room, the view from which is the front yard. Directly in front of the bay window is a clearing covered with pine straw. This area is shaded by a spindly volunteer oak and a misshapen maple.
- ▶ The site will benefit from improved curb appeal, to be accomplished by renovating the entrance elements at the street and the front entrance and establishing a distinct walkway between them. These improvements will include new planting areas at the entrance and the street to welcome visitors from the street, direct traffic to the front entrance and accentuate the front door. In addition, the existing mixed bed at the mailbox should be enlarged due to its street visibility.
- ▶ The new walkway must circumnavigate utilities. Hence, this walkway should not begin at the existing mailbox. The mailbox should be relocated so that the amount of walkway crossing utility lines is minimized. The walkway should be soft set, in acknowledgement of the inevitability of future utility work, although the existing sewer outtake was installed just 3 years ago. The walkway should be of ample width to allow two people to walk side by side.
- ▶ The living room bay window offers plenty of potential for a focal view to the right of the front entrance, including a new shade bed. An outdoor room should be created here to exploit the view and create a conversation area at the front entrance. This will incorporate a soft-set hardscape to establish a base plane and define the area. Other features may include an arbor, fountain, seating, bird bath as well as additional plant material.

Other Existing Structures

- ✧ A 6' privacy fence surrounds the back and side yards. This inhibits harsh winds from the west, northwest and southwest.
- ✧ Some raised beds are located in the back yard. These are necessary to inhibit dogs from trampling plant material.
- ✧ The driveway is old and cracking as a result of root upheaval. The turnaround area is surrounded by low volunteer growth. The sunroom is exposed across the turnaround to a neighbor's back yard view.
- ▶ The driveway must be replaced. Following this construction, plantings can occur surrounding the turnaround to create interesting views from the sunroom and screen the view of the neighbor.
- ✧ The air conditioning unit is located on the north side of the house, out of view from any window and from the sundeck.

Utilities

- ✧ Telephone, electricity and cable are located on the street in the northeast corner of the property, suspended from a telephone pole, above-ground. The gas line is located in this same general vicinity and is buried. All approach the house at the center of the north side.
- ✧ Four solar lights line the driveway and are inadequate for practical or ornamental purposes. A light pole exists in the shrub bed but is inoperable.
- ✧ An existing sprinkler system is malfunctioning and hence unused. A network of hoses and soaker hoses facilitate the watering of plant materials in a relatively inconspicuous way.

- ▶ Lighting should be introduced for safety and guiding traffic. Lighting should accent the drive and the front walkway. Lighting should also be introduced near the steps from the deck to the yard for safety and to create a sense of ambience. Lighting should also be introduced adjacent to the dry creek to create a sense of intrigue while the homeowner and guests enjoy the deck at night.
- ▶ The sprinkler system should be updated and expanded with soaker components to promote efficient watering and minimize risk of plant fungus.
- ✧ The water meter is located at roughly the center of the lawn on the east edge of the property.

Spaces and Senses

- ✧ There are two wooden sundecks in the backyard. One is directly off the sunroom and rises just two feet off the ground. The other is on top of the sunroom, and is accessed from the master bedroom. Both are 17' x 12'. Neither has an overhead plane – both are open to the sky. The lower deck has vertical planes on two sides, the dog house and the sunroom. The upper deck has one vertical plane, the house.
- ▶ A vertical plane should be established to screen the view to a neighbor's window on the north side of the property. This plane should be of fast-growing trees sited in an existing raised bed against the fence on the north side of the backyard.
- ✧ Birds, including hummingbirds, and crickets are prevalent on the property. Geese often fly overhead back and forth to the neighboring reservoir.

Client Background

- ✧ The client is a single female who is the sole maintenance provider for her site. She is a gardening enthusiast of moderate experience and maximum curiosity. She enjoys tending the existing beds and would like to expand the existing annual and perennial areas.
- ✧ The client's dogs weigh 90 and 60 pounds. They are both four years old and very active. In addition, these dogs enjoy frequent K-9 visitors to the back yard.
- ✧ The client desires an 18 to 24-month total installation period to be executed in phases.