

Teaching Research on Urban Landscape Design in Chinese Institutions of Higher Education

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Abstract

As a comprehensive discipline of art and design intersecting crossing multiple disciplines, the urban landscape design in institutions of higher learning is an application discipline integrating art, science, engineering technology and many other disciplines, with main contents covering the art and design of various visual things in cities and spatial organization around cities. The discipline plays a positive role in promoting the improvement of urban environment, maintaining of ecological balance, and assurance of the sound and sustainable development of cities. In addition, the rapid development of information industry brings great changes to the development of teaching research, design ideas, engineering technology and other disciplines related to urban landscape design.

Key words: Higher education teaching research; Landscape design; Information industry; Ecological environment

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INTRODUCTION

Urban landscape design refers to the art and design of various visual things in cities and spatial organization around cities. It is one comprehensive system engineering, and an application discipline integrating art, science, engineering technology and other disciplines, covering many aspects like urban construction and development,

improvement of the people's living conditions, etc.. The instructional content of urban landscape design lies in carrying out artistic creation and spatial organization design for environment, culture and customs, and natural landscape of various regions in their specific circumstances, so as to effectively convey and present the image, artistic conception, shape, and style of urban landscape. The compound multidisciplinary design containing urban community design, tourist resort design, plant landscape design, architectural art design, and square art design can be presented in detail through the urban landscape design. Its scope involves from areal ecological planning, river basin planning to regional landscape planning; from national ecological protection to construction of national park; from urban green space system planning to the design of urban squares and pedestrian streets; from urban park construction to the design of private garden; from renovation of partial environments of cities to the design of small article facilities and sculptures' styles, etc.. In detail, it involves the fields including urban public facilities, planning of parks and leisure areas, regional landscape planning, environmental art design, ecological planning and design, historical protection and renaissance of bases, and social behavior design, all of which should be listed as the compulsory and elective courses for the discipline of landscape design in institutions of higher learning.

1. BASIC PRINCIPLE OF LANDSCAPE DESIGN TEACHING

The three principles of urban landscape design teaching include respect for nature, respect for people and respect for culture:

a. Respect for nature, that is, to establish close and friendly relationships between the human and the nature. In progress of development of urban history, the people

march from succumbing to the nature to attempting to conquer the nature. Respect for nature means the progress of respecting geomancy and living beings in nature, namely, respecting the natural terrain pattern in nature, heading for the ideal state where the human and the nature coexist in harmony, and making the construction and development of cities in orderly combination with the nature, so as to promote the harmonious co-existence between the human the nature.

b. Respect for people refers to respecting concrete persons, namely, the ordinary, vivid and substantial persons with feelings who live in cities and towns (the citizens). The landscape design teaching should combine theory and practice, basing on the local natural environment, and culture and customs and highlighting features of the local natural landscape and style. Convey social demand of the masses with usage of scientific and artistic design language.

c. Respect for culture. As a historical phenomenon, the culture has different times features at different times. Respect for historical culture means to ravel out historical context, value the inheritance, protection and utilization of historical humanism and natural landscape resources, grasp the local environment characteristics in specific environment, and explore the objective law of natural environment, so as to create urban landscape form available for highlighting local features. The urban landscape design and teaching will, through artistic design of the environment, make the human and the nature, as well as culture and environment, coordinating with each other and developing in harmony. It integrates disciplines including engineering technology and art design, natural science and historic culture, etc., presenting the complexity and inclusiveness of urban landscape design teaching.

2. STATUS OF LANDSCAPE DESIGN TEACHING AT PRESENT

The rapid development of urban construction and ever-increasing changes of urban ecological environment reveal the lagging and limitation related to setup of our specialties and disciplines. At current, most of practitioners in the field of landscape design graduate from landscape architecture specialty and architecture design specialty of agricultural and forestry universities and construction engineering schools, or from environmental art design specialty of art colleges. Wherein, the agricultural universities and colleges tend to imitate or copy the teaching mode of forestry universities and colleges; the landscape architecture specialty of construction engineering schools emphasizes the planning and design of artificial environment like architecture, urban planning and landscape engineering; some art colleges also set up environmental art specialty, yet

stress on visual perception and analysis of landscape sketch of environmental art, and interior design. The teaching structure and content of the said colleges are often not suitable for social construction and development, and the improvement of ecological environment. The curriculum provision and teaching content of current urban landscape design teaching should be improved by integrating disciplinary knowledge of the said 3 classes of specialties. The teaching should focus on fostering the students' exquisite professional skills, profound professional knowledge, sound styling fundamentals and extensive cultural attainment, thus in favor of fostering more comprehensive versatile professionals. In addition, the organic integration between disciplines should be strengthened to form situations of co-existing compatibly and highlighting features, truly stepping in the broad road of urban landscape design field. It is imperative to link the teaching content in line with that of the same specialties in the world, only through which the teaching appearance of urban landscape design in China can be changed fundamentally.

The function of landscape design teaching and studies lies in combining natural, geographical, environmental, and humanistic characteristics to provide theoretical basis for urban construction and development, and cultivate excellent professionals with modern cultural knowledge. To carry out comprehensive adjustment and continuous perfecting of current teaching programme through teaching and practices, and to reset and adjust teaching curriculum in combination of development demands of the society and times. Lay stress on teacher training, and strengthen the adjustment of knowledge structure of teaching faculty and the linkage between disciplines. Update and perfect students' knowledge structure, let students to grasp systematical and complete specialized knowledge related to the discipline, improve and enhance the abilities of students in mastering the modern skills and comprehensive information. Gradually explore scientific theory and methods suitable for the development of urban landscape planning and design in China, develop landscape planning and design theory with Chinese unique characteristics, and advance the education of Chinese urban landscape planning and design to a new level.

3. ISSUES TO BE NOTICED IN LANDSCAPE DESIGN TEACHING

Urban landscape design is a systematic design process with links connecting with each other. The teaching for urban landscape design specialty in institutions of higher learning should first let students to systematically and comprehensively learn various professional basic knowledge and professional skills, have a full understanding of the geography and landform, natural environment, and history and culture of local cities, and

grasp and know the economic development of cities, governmental policies and regulations, and present status of urban planning and projects. Elements like the economic conditions, natural environment, culture and customs, natural vegetation, etc. of the region can be integrated into the landscape design teaching to make landscape design conforming to requirements of the local development.

a. The first to be considered for landscape design is that the design should be feasible, up-to-date and sustainable in following years or even decades, which is a very important feature of urban landscape design teaching. For instance, the urban environmental greening design should consider the growth cycles and landscape effects of plants at four seasons 5 years later or even 10 years later. It is necessary to integrate the growing environment and cycles of vegetation together with the future landscape effects, and conduct comprehensive consideration with it as a long-term landscape planning and design scheme.

b. For application of building materials and plants in urban landscape design, it is necessary to act according to circumstances, plant according to the environment, and adjust according to scenes. For example, to select plants basing on different natural and geological environment, use plant materials including arbors, shrubs, lianas, and herbage in a proper way, and give full play to the features of plants concerning their bodies, lines and colors, and the beauty in form through artistic designing.

c. In each design curriculum, the design is expected to possess its own independence and systematicness, which requires the contents of teaching curriculum to have a set of complete design philosophy and basic theory, where the theme and style of design philosophy should be determined according to the design curriculum and features of subject. For example, the landscaping art design of garden plants should be based on characteristics of growing environment, mature stage, and seasonal aspects of various plant materials. It is necessary to grasp shape, color, leaf type, flowering and fruiting phase, and time sequential changes of various plants so as to attain layering, sense of color, and timeliness of plant landscape.

4. BUILD A NEW CONCEPT OF URBAN LANDSCAPE DESIGN

The urban landscape design concept should be continuously advanced together with the development of times, and be widely propagated and popularized, so as to guide the people in building correct understanding of harmonious coexistence between the human and natural environment. This renders profound significance to the sustainable development of urban landscape design. The mass media should exert a subtle influence on urban residents in building environmental awareness, and realize the same via education in various forms and from

various channels. The purpose is to make urban residents to spontaneously familiarize living environment, care ecological environment, and care the development of cities, letting ordinary people take the earth as the human home. The increase of public environmental awareness will put forwards higher requirements on urban landscape design. In addition, it should be also considered that how to correctly guide and promote the masses' new concept and taste for urban landscape design.

The development of national economy depends on the improvement of quality of the whole nation, and the development of urban construction and landscape design depends on the development of national economy and improvement of quality of the whole nation as well. It is essential for guiding and improving the public taste on urban landscape design to carry out propagation and popularizing of knowledge related to the field of this discipline. The urban landscape design is an inevitable outcome in the process of human development, social progress, and natural evolution. The continuous development of social economy exerts higher and higher requirements on urban landscape design, and thus it is extremely essential for urban construction and development to foster and train more excellent professionals.

The urban landscape design plays an active role in promoting the beautifying and improving urban environment, maintaining ecological balance, and guaranteeing the sound and sustainable development of cities. In theory, the urban landscape design is a discipline derived from urban planning and design, with the ultimate aim of creating ideal human settlement, and yet for realizing such aim, urban planning and landscape design act as important elements. The purpose of personnel training of urban landscape design in China is to foster versatile talents with different knowledge structure and focusing on various disciplinary studies. The urban landscape design will exert greater and greater impacts on urban planning and architectural design, which presents the inevitable trend of development of urban landscape design.

Today, the society has entered the era of intelligence, and requirements of the people on works of landscape design rise continuously. The invention of compute leads to the information revolution whose wide application in all fields has become an inevitable trend. The application of modern information technology in urban landscape design curriculum will inevitably become an important task of urban landscape design and teaching. The learning and application of related professional software should be listed as compulsory courses of this discipline. The surging network wave and rapid development of information industrialization will inevitably exert significant and profound influences on industries like urban planning, urban greening, landscape design,

architectural design, etc., bring in great changes to the development and promotion of urban landscape design in aspects of teaching and scientific research, design concept, engineering technology, etc., and play an active role in promoting the development of human society.

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