

Application for Preliminary Sunrise Review Assessment
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS
June 30, 2008



APPENDIX D

Position Classification Standard for Landscape Architecture Series, GS-0807

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SERIES DEFINITION

This series includes positions the duties of which are to perform or supervise professional work in the planning and design of land areas and concurrent landscape construction and maintenance for integrated developments to meet specific human needs. It involves the analysis of land characteristics, operational requirements, land-use intensities, and commensurate land values and includes the efficient correlation of ground and water forms, plant forms, structures, roads, and walks to serve esthetic, functional, economic, and other interrelated purposes. Positions in this series require professional landscape architectural planning and design ability and require knowledge of the allied physical planning fields of architecture and civil engineering, and the biological sciences of agronomy, plant ecology, horticulture, and botany as they affect land development.

OCCUPATIONAL INFORMATION

Landscape architects in the Federal Government are employed in agencies requiring professional work in the planning, design, and preservation phases of landscape architectural development for such projects as parks and parkways, highway developments, recreational areas, airports, waterfront facilities, public buildings and institutions, housing developments and subdivisions, communities, and military installations.

The landscape architect seeks to obtain the most functional, economical, and esthetic results in physical land planning. To do so, he makes application of his esthetic appreciation, creative design talent, knowledge of natural and manmade elements comprising the total landscape, and technical ability to portray design ideas. In the light of program and project objectives, he considers existing topography and natural features, building and area arrangements, orientation, vehicular and pedestrian circulation, grading and molding of land forms, surface and subsurface drainage, and construction and plant materials. In the design of specific projects he applies not only the technical principles of use, structure, and growth, but also the esthetic principles of balance, scale, proportion, and harmony of line, shape, color, texture, and form. To the maximum practicable extent consistent with the requirements of the individual project, he conserves and enhances the natural environment by the selection of construction methods and plant materials which are compatible with it.

Landscape architects may perform work in one or more of the following capacities:

- (a) originating and developing plans;
- (b) reviewing plans prepared by others to see that they are in conformance with good principles of landscape design and with agency standards and policies and, if needed, making recommendations for improvement of the plan;
- (c) developing and maintaining standards for landscape architectural procedures, methods, and techniques;
- (d) supervising landscape construction; (This supervision is in the nature of inspection of construction to see that it conforms to landscape architectural plans.)
- (e) planning, supervising, inspecting, and advising on maintenance work including restoration of land areas as necessitated by deterioration from age or heavy use and rehabilitation of sites requiring additional landscape design for the expansion of existing facilities; and assisting management in the operation of projects where landscape architectural qualities are involved.

THE PHYSICAL LAND PLANNING PROCESS

The physical land planning process involves the application of specialized principles and procedures in the design, construction, and maintenance of land areas, including:

- (a) analysis of economic, social, physical, and operational factors;
- (b) investigation, selection, and allocation of land and water areas for appropriate use;
- (c) preparation of graphic and written criteria governing land planning and construction programs;
- (d) preparation, revision, and analysis of master planning documents;
- (e) production of area plans, site plans, grading plans, planting plans, construction details, specifications, cost estimates, and reports;
- (f) collaboration with other design professions in the design of roads, bridges, and structures with respect to functional and esthetic requirements;
- (g) negotiation and arrangement for execution of projects; and
- (h) supervision and inspection of construction, rehabilitation, restoration, and maintenance.

A breakdown of landscape design according to phases is given below to show the scope of the field of landscape architecture in the Federal Government. Landscape architectural services in a given agency may not necessarily encompass all of these:

1. The broadest phase is planning for the allocation of land uses and the physical development of large land expanses. This is embodied in plans and descriptive material showing those sites or areas, within a large tract of land, that have been selected for certain uses and have been developed or are scheduled or proposed for future development. The drawings for this plan show the general location and extent of each land-use area, and its relation to the other areas and to the tract as a whole. Tract, as used in this context, corresponds to a national park or 'parkway, national forest, reservoir area, military installation, community, or other land expanse of similar scope, and encompasses a number of areas. Landscape architects give advice and recommendations on the selection of these areas and are frequently responsible for coordination of this planning. Land planning and design for extensive areas and large-scale developments are initially embodied in an overall master plan containing drawings and written analyses of existing and required facilities, plans for future management and development, and construction priorities and program information. Such a master plan is usually composed of land-use and other basic information maps, area or general site plans for future development, and narrative reports.
2. The second or intermediate phase is area or general site planning. This is embodied in a plan showing the relation of all major landscape elements in an area to each other and to the site. Major elements correspond to such things as the location of structures, sections of land within the area to be maintained for specific use, planting masses, and the circulation patterns (roads and walks). The scale of this plan is such that the landscape architect must consider detailed topographic and natural features of the area and the manner in which they can be used to best advantage, the functional aspects of each element, and soil and climatic conditions. Examples of areas in this general category are listed below. They are given for purposes of illustration and are not all-inclusive.
 - a. resort areas, including such features as a hotel, shops, drives, and utility buildings;
 - b. recreation areas, such as an area in a national park, parkway, forest, or reservoir area which might include such features as campgrounds, picnic grounds, shelters, small bridges, roads, trails, scenic views, beaches, marinas, docks, recreational sites for group use, and recreation residences;
 - c. housing developments, including arrangement of dwelling structures and such community features as shopping centers, schools, churches, and recreation facilities;
 - d. administrative areas, including offices, garages, and maintenance buildings;
 - e. airports, including runways and adjacent buildings; and
 - f. industrial areas.
3. The third phase is detailed site planning. In this phase, the landscape architect prepares the following for specific land area projects:

- a. site plan giving the location, surface grades, and dimensions of each element;
- b. grading and drainage plans showing existing and proposed contours and collection facility locations;
- c. drawings of alignments, profiles, and cross-sections of roads, walks, and other facilities;
- d. planting plans, which may include selective cutting of existing vegetation;
- e. construction drawings for incidental structural features; and
- f. specifications covering all of the above and cost estimates for proposed construction.

QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED

The college or university is the normal source of basic technical training for the landscape architects of today. In the past, many landscape architects acquired their training by working in a landscape architect's office. Although this is still possible, an academic course leading to a degree in landscape architecture or landscape design is the most likely source of basic training for this profession in view of the tempo of our times and the increased range of knowledge required.

Landscape design must be compatible with architectural and engineering principles, and landscape architects collaborate closely with professionals in these fields. The landscape architect must have some knowledge of the allied physical planning fields of architecture and civil engineering, and the biological sciences of agronomy, ecology, horticulture, and botany as they affect land development. He must also have the ability to correlate various functional elements into a cohesive and efficiently operating whole properly related to the characteristics of the terrain and the environment.

In addition to the technical knowledge required, the landscape architect must have imagination, esthetic taste and appreciation, and the ability to envision designs of projects as they will exist on the ground. He must keep abreast of contemporary culture, artistic and professional trends. His creative ability must be supported by methodical and orderly habits, perseverance, and the ability to organize work. In his role as a member of the design team, he must have communicating ability to a marked degree. He must be able to express his ideas through sketches or renderings, through written reports, and by the spoken word. He should be able to persuade, to motivate, and to deal diplomatically with the problems of others.

Landscape architects in the Federal Government must recognize factors which may place limitations on a project. For example, planning and design must be in accord with the philosophy, policy, and standards of agency. Frequently, public pressures for certain features must be taken into account, and both short-term and long-term costs must be analyzed. Landscape architects have to place these factors in their proper perspective and adapt their design solutions accordingly. They are also responsible for negotiation with representatives of various Federal, State, and local organizations on matters of mutual interest, and are responsible for the coordination of engineering, architectural and landscape architectural activities on projects where landscape architectural work predominates.

The knowledge, skills, abilities, and attributes mentioned above are not possessed to the same degree by all landscape architects, nor are they required to the same degree in all positions. The abilities of communication and persuasion are increasingly important at the higher grade levels.