



BAKER LAND DESIGN
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE • LAND PLANNING
WWW.BAKERLANDDESIGN.COM

THE DRAWING BOARD

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**HAPPY
NEW
YEAR
FROM
BLD!**

*WHERE
GOING THE
SECOND
MILE IS
SECOND
NATURE*

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FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Someone once said, “You never get a second chance to make a great first impression.” This is especially true in today’s residential real estate market. The potential homebuyer’s first impression of any development is the entrance to the neighborhood. A well designed entrance cannot only provide great curb appeal, but gives customers a



sense of pride for the place they will soon call home. Beautifully designed hardscape features including sign monuments, walls, fencing, and even water features have become the standard throughout the Southeast home market. Landscaping goes hand in hand with the hardscape features and enhances that great first impression. In addition, some developers choose to go with private

interior streets to allow for the installation of gated entrances. Not only do gates provide the security of limited access, they are also beneficial from an aesthetic standpoint while adding an air of prestige to the development.

Another important design consideration is a logo or brand that appears on the signage. This identifying symbol can be used



throughout the development and also aids in marketing efforts.

It is also possible to extend the entrance experience throughout the community. This is best accomplished with a master plan that incorporates such features as street trees, pocket parks, trail systems, and recreation/amenity areas. Furthermore, varying price points and/or varying products can be identified through the use of

small “sub entrances” that reflect the integrity of the main entrance.

A well planned entrance not only makes a great initial impact, but can leave a lasting impression. Repeating the elements from the entrance throughout the neighborhood completes the picture of a great place to call home.

Here at BLD, Brent Hardman



specializes in entrance and logo design. He is a registered landscape architect and has been employed by BLD for over 9 years where he has completed numerous stunning designs. He is responsible for creating the looks in the pictures shown above.

To get his great ideas for your next project, click here:

[contact](#)

TO GATE OR NOT TO GATE?



“Ask your landscape architect to prepare a concept sketch for the entrance walls, gates and sign as early in the design process as possible.”

It is an important question. Since gates serve as the welcoming front doors to a community, it is vital that they are implemented both from a function standpoint and an aesthetic one. Of the gated entrances we have designed during the past year, more than two-thirds have required our making significant retrofits to plans and/or completed construction. This is to note a few gated entrance design considerations that may prevent costly revision.

The decision to install gates is usually determined by marketing considerations. It's best to make the decision as early in the planning process as possible and prior to the rezoning of the property. Most municipalities require that gated neighborhoods have privately maintained streets and a mandatory homeowner association. Some counties even require a specific zoning classification for gated communities.

Gates, entrance walls and signs have a significant affect on the home sites where they are located. Ask your landscape architect to prepare a concept sketch for the entrance walls, gates and sign as early in the design process as possible.

Ask your engineer to include the gate/island configuration in the subdivision construction documents. The design should be shown at an enlarged scale so that you can see the effect that the gate/wall configuration has on the home site. Gated entrances, especially on narrow lots, may crowd the building area, block an important view of the home, affect drive location, etc.

There are other reasons to include the gate design in the construction plans. Most municipalities have several different departments that review gate design. These may include the fire, traffic and planning department. Many times, each department will have different design criteria. Even if the design criteria are well-defined and consistent, varying interpretations of rules occasionally occur.

A few other design considerations to keep in mind:

Provide properly located island breaks to allow for access to the first drives on the right and left side.

Provide ample distance for vehicles to turn into the first drive after passing the gate.

Maintain a maximum street grade of 4% near the gate, so it swings

without dragging on the pavement.

Provide extra conduits under the pavement to allow for irrigation, power and telephone lines (that service the control pad).

Consider, as early as possible, if a manned or unmanned guardhouse is desired.

Consider if a separate gate for residents and guests is desired.

Consider if a pedestrian gate and/or walks are desired or required.

Maintain a minimum of ten feet between gates and catch basins.

Whenever possible, ask your engineer to show the gates on the final plat and show an “entrance and landscape maintenance easement” that encompasses the gate, entrance walls/fence and landscaping.

We hope this information is helpful and prevents costly revisions. We look forward to helping you with your next project!



BLD welcomes Jim McComiskey!



BLD welcomes a new staff member, Jim McComiskey, who will serve as the new head for our Charlotte Team. He received a

Bachelor of Science in Landscape Architecture from West Virginia University in 1997. Prior to joining BLD, Jim worked for several top named design firms throughout the Southeast. Jim is an active member in the American Society of

Landscape Architects, Urban Land Institute, the Homebuilders Association of Charlotte, and the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce. Jim resides on the south side of Charlotte, where he has ties to the community since 2000.

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Tree Plan vs. Landscape Plan-What's the difference?



There has been a lot of misunderstanding as to exactly what a tree plan is and how it differs from a landscape plan. Part of the problem is the name itself. Tree plans, tree protection plans, tree preservation plans, tree replacement plans, and tree recompense plans are some of the names that are commonly used. However, they, essentially, are all the same thing. The only difference is various municipalities refer to them by different names. No matter the name, this plan is a requirement that is typically included in the construction plans for the development. This plan only shows the *minimum* required plantings as determined by the governing municipality. Each municipality has different requirements as to what number and what size

of trees need to be planted after clearing and grading have taken place.

Also, a tree plan usually includes any buffers and landscape strip requirements. Again, this will vary from municipality to municipality.

A landscape plan, on the other hand, is a plan that goes beyond the minimum tree plan requirements and includes turf areas, bed areas, additional shrubbery, seasonal color beds, etc. Tree Plan requirements are also included in the landscape plan. The landscape plan is the comprehensive plan for the development vs. a Tree Plan which is only the minimum required plantings.

Oftentimes, owners think they actually have a landscape plan because there is a plant chart and tree symbols on the plan when in fact they really just have a minimally required tree plan. We have found these tree plans are being sent out for landscaping

bids; oftentimes to determine the landscaping budget for a project. If this occurs, there is no money allocated for items such as sod or foundation shrubs around the buildings.

To avoid confusion, the tree plan and landscape plan should be prepared by your landscape architect at the same time. Only the tree plan will be submitted to the municipality to meet their requirements. The landscape plan can then be sent out to bid to aid in irrigation design and budget considerations for the project.

To get assistance with your next landscape or tree plan click here: [contact](#)

“THE LANDSCAPE PLAN IS THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR THE DEVELOPMENT VS. A TREE PLAN WHICH IS ONLY THE MINIMUM REQUIRED PLANTINGS.”





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Founded in 1996, Baker Land Design provides landscape architecture, land planning, and construction management services to property owners, developers and civil engineers.

BLD specializes in neighborhood entrance design, recreation design, master planning, custom residential design, and planting/ site design for commercial developers.

For examples of our work, please see our website.



Spotlight on our Services

One of our specialties at BLD is the conceptual design, construction documentation, permitting and building of recreation facilities a.k.a community amenity centers. As the housing market becomes more and more competitive and lot sizes become smaller, rec areas are becoming a must have to attract potential homebuyers. Some traditional features that might be included at a rec area are a pool (competition and/or free form), water slide, water toys

(mushrooms, sprayers, etc), sports courts, gazebos, and tot lots. In the past few years, trends have moved to include some non-traditional features such as zero-entry/beach style pools, bocce ball, shuffleboard, outdoor kitchens, walking trails, soccer/softball fields, tree houses, community gardens and even skate parks. Basically the sky (and the budget) are the limit as to what can be included in these community common spaces.

The team at BLD has over 30 years combined experience designing these facilities. We would love to work with you on your future projects.

Project Manager, Sam Brown, has permitted a countless number of rec areas for BLD. To get his assistance with your next project click here: [contact](#)



Recreation area with specialized water toys and features