Planting design: An exploration of emerging theoretical frameworks to support sustainable landscape design.



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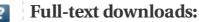
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Abstract

The aim of the project has been to develop the theoretical framework of a new planting design paradigm to support sustainable landscape design. The project has involved the content analysis of a cross section of international literature representing both traditional and emerging theoretical positions. This analysis has resulted in the identification of a diverse range of thematic approaches that have been variously applied to planting design. A design study of a specific site, selected to encourage a deliberate focus of design on sustainable landscape issues was then taken through a two stage workshop process of conceptual design and peer review. The peer review involved a detailed examination of three conceptual approaches to dealing with the case study site in relation to the themes identified in the literature review. What has emerged is that there is no clear pattern evident to support the objective of developing the theoretical framework of a new planting design paradigm. It is clear that there are discernible trends and that considerations driven by a sustainable ethic are increasingly applied. It is equally clear that many of the traditional theories of planting design are still evident in ecologically driven contemporary design. The case study demonstrated that the overall mix of traditional and emerging theories applied to planting design is highly variable and will be influenced by intended end use of the site, the existing characteristics of site and context and the particular belief systems of the designers involved. The project has shown that a great deal of debate and further research is necessary if there is to be a definitive planting design paradigm to support sustainable landscape design.

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