

## ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT.

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## Park Ornamentation.

Nearly all the larger towns and cities of Ontario have possessed themselves of parks of greater or less extent and pretensions. In some instances, as with the City of Chatham, these parks consist of a block in the central part of the town containing an arbor, or bandstand, the grounds prettily decorated with flower beds, shrubbery and trees. In other instances, of which Mohawk Park, Brantford, is an example, these parks are considerable stretches of woodland, in the vicinity of a lake, river or picturesque ravine, which are the yearly object of some expenditure in the matter of foot-paths, drives, drainage, grading and sodding. In other instances these "parks" are merely fields, the beauties of which are enclosed with a high-board fence. The following ideas on park ornamentation are condensed from a paper read before the English Association of Municipal and County Engineers, and should be of interest to municipal officers associated with the care of these public lawns in this province:

"It is impossible to lay down any fixed rules to follow, as no two sites are alike in the character of their surroundings or background, in their elevation, in the configuration of their surfaces, or their size. Except in a few instances, the area would be limited, and where this is the case the size can, to a certain extent, be disguised, and the site apparently enlarged by the disposition of the paths and the position of the shrubberies and trees, so arranged that when standing on one side of the site elongated views can be obtained of the grass on the other side, either over the shrubs or between patches of shrubberies. All objectionable contiguous and distant objects, such as the backs of houses, walls, chimney shafts, etc., should be shut out of view from the interior of the site as much as possible by the planting of quick-growing trees and shrubs, and care must be taken that suitable distant scenery is not obliterated from view.

The building of walls, either of stone or brick, to enclose a site, is most objectionable, as they never harmonize with trees or shrubs, and if there exist any such walls which cannot be interfered with, strong-growing ivy should be planted to quickly cover their surfaces. No doubt a wall would be required for the frontage line of a street, but in this case it should be a dwarf one, surmounted with iron palings. On those sides of the site which are exposed to cold winds a screen of quick growing hardy trees, such as pines, sycamores, poplars, etc., should, if possible, be planted; the former are to be preferred, as they are not deciduous, and

therefore offer protection when most required, viz., during winter months; and if a deep soil can be obtained, either naturally or artificially, they grow very quickly, and the object in view is soon attained. The sombre appearance of some of them may be avoided by either planting two or three varieties, or intermixing with deciduous trees, in order to obtain a combination of greens to prevent a monotony. A screen of this kind is essential where the site is an exposed one, as cold winds have a far worse effect upon plant growth than frost; indeed the latter has a beneficial effect upon all but tender plants unless very severe, by retarding growth during a period of required rest.

If a refreshment or shelter kiosk or arbour houses are required, the former should be erected at an equally accessible point from every part of the site; the position, however, must be subservient to effect. A good plan would be to have the kiosk constructed with two floors, the lower story utilized for refreshments or a shelter perhaps, enclosed and glazed, and the upper story, of a less floor area, roofed, having open sides with an ornamental wood or iron railing, for the location of the band, as by this means the sound would be better blended and distributed; or small arbour houses might be erected here and there over the site, their positions being again controlled by the effect they will have upon the other details of the site. These arbours might be made very inexpensive, and certainly very effective, by constructing a brick or concrete foundation with a framework of hard wood fixed thereon, covered with matchboarding stained a warm color and varnished, and a tiled roof. A light framework of iron might be substituted for wood, covered with strong galvanised netting, and ivy planted round the outside of the arbour.

Ivy is not used so much as it ought to be for this purpose, perhaps on account of its slow growth as it is usually planted; if, however, the ground is properly prepared and quick growing varieties obtained, it would only be a matter of a couple of years before such a structure was covered. A trench four feet wide should first be dug where the ivy is required to be planted, to the depth of the surface soil but no deeper, the subsoil should then be dug over with a long fork and disintegrated, and have at least a barrowful of rotten manure to every yard of trench incorporated with it; this should be well trodden down and the surface soil replaced upon the top again well trodden down; the plants should have previously been grown in pots at least forty inches in size, and have at least four feet of stem, and be planted four feet apart, well trodden in, watered, and if the weather is dry mulched with manure; as soon as growth starts the latter should be pitched out, in order to allow lateral shoots to break and form low growth. Ivy is a gross feeder, and if planted as

nurserymen generally do, by simply digging a hole and putting the roots into it and covering them up, it is a long time before any result is obtained, but if planted as the author advises growth soon commences. A very good effect is obtained by mixing the species of ivy, thereby obtaining the several shades of green, and the space around the arbour to the width of the trench might be either made into a flower border, a few shrubs planted, or the turf, if there was any replaced.

Upon the position of the walks or drives depends greatly the general effect of the laying out of sites. How often are there to be found sites made hideous by a series of walks formed by tar paving interlaced over the grass surface of the site, for no rhyme or reason, and to still further accentuate their ugliness, flat flower beds are formed along the borders, instead of a few shrubs and trees to hide the bad effect the walks give. The general appearance of such a site has somewhat the same result upon the eye that a discord has upon the ear. A walk should never be made unless there is some reason for its use, as an expanse of grass is much to be preferred. No two walks should run parallel with one another, as in this case one would be sufficient if it were made a little broader. Straight walks should be avoided, but, if a necessity, a clump of shrubs or other subject might be interposed to hide its length; the narrower the walk, the shorter should be the length seen. If the walk is a broad one, trees may be planted on both sides, such a distance from the sides that, when they are well developed, the branches would meet and overhang the walk. At the same time there must be some apparent reason for a curve, and to cause this a clump of shrubs or a tree might be planted for the necessity of having a circuitous path. All curves should be well set out; the narrower the path is the greater can the curves be made, and as in straight walks, but short lengths of curved walks should be visible, this being dependent upon their width.

Should a carriage drive be required it should not be made too close to the boundary, and there should be a plateau of grass between the shrubbery and the edge of the drive. If another drive is wanted through the middle of the site a large bank of trees and shrubs should be planted or a kiosk built to break up its length, and also trees planted on either side. In the author's opinion there is nothing equal to good bright binding gravel for paths. Tar paving appears to find favor in some localities, probably on account of its better wearing qualities, but undoubtedly for effect gravel is to be much preferred. Gravel no doubt breaks up when the traffic is heavy, and also on account of climatic influence, but this might to a certain extent be obviated by making the paths broader than if they were tar-paved. It is hardly necessary to