

MILWOOD RESIDENCE PROJECT DESCRIPTION

LOCATION

Venice, California

PURPOSE OF PROJECT/ ROLE OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

The project site is a long, narrow lot that is typical for the Venice area, and in many ways defines the character of the neighborhood. Space restrictions call for innovative design solutions, resulting in homes that borrow views from one another rather than fence each other out. This creates a friendly sense of community in the neighborhood, which this design sought to embrace. Our firm worked as the landscape architect, architect, interior designer, and general contractor on the project, which allowed for close collaboration and careful attention to how the site would be used. This allowed for maximal use of the property while keeping the needs of both the residents, as well as those of the neighbors, in mind.

The architecture and landscape utilize simple, clean designs in a neutral color palette. The indoor-outdoor lifestyle of Southern California, a driving force for the design, resulted in the inclusion of large sliding doors that open up to the garden. This decision increases the living area of the indoor spaces while activating the otherwise narrow side yards. The garage and driveway at the rear of the property allows for a small lawn in the front yard, where low fencing and hedges provide an ideal amount of screening and privacy from the street without blocking views outward.

SIGNIFICANCE

Besides meeting the program requirements of the project, a number of green building principles were incorporated into the site. The architecture and landscape work together to create a sustainable design. The house's minimal footprint leaves room for garden spaces filled with plantings and permeable decomposed granite paving. This, in combination with rain barrels that collect water from the roof, allows most of the site's stormwater to be utilized onsite for landscape irrigation or aquifer recharge. Garden paths consist of narrow concrete or flagstone pavers, keeping the impermeable area to a minimum. In the landscape, a climate-appropriate selection of Mediterranean plants was chosen to match the character of the neighborhood and to keep water consumption low. Drip irrigation throughout the property ensures efficient use of supplemental water that must be used in addition to the water collected by the rain barrels.

SPECIAL FACTORS

Space and budget constraints were handled efficiently in the final landscape design. To save cost on plant material, fast-growing species were chosen to provide screening where it was needed. This allowed the plants to be bought at smaller, more economical sizes than would normally be required. A simple ground-plane palette with minimal hard paving keeps cost down, but still provides solid surfaces where they are most needed, such as at the front entry and on the driveway. The large sliding windows of the home's living spaces create the illusion of a larger interior living area. However, when opened, the windows allow the living space to spill into the outdoors for entertaining. The open garden at the home's entry creates a spacious feeling in what is actually a very narrow space.