

Project notes, Elevation 314, Takoma, D.C.

The site functions as a whole; the garden and building are interdependent in two important ways:

- a. As a deliberate sequence of experiences about color, light, scent, sound, seasonal change, views in the courtyard and views from within the building. Creating microclimates with seasonal exposure to light to help control heating and cooling costs and attracting birds were both part of our intentions.
- b. The site systems that control the quality and quantity of storm water runoff from the building, parking lot and courtyard are an integral part of the design language of the garden. Engineered detail and garden detail becomes the same thing.

The native plantings had to respond to the extreme lighting conditions of the courtyard and we were very intent on making each edge of the courtyard distinct in character as a way to differentiate the experience of living on the east, north or west side of the courtyard.

The west side (deepest shade conditions) of the courtyard is planted with woodland grasses, moss, ferns, foam flower and anemone. The east side (mixed light conditions) is planted with oak leaf hydrangea. The north edge (southern exposure) green roof has a mixture of native grasses, their placement depending on the light exposure. The grasses on the green roof will be allowed to establish themselves for two years; native blooming perennials will be added to the planting at that point.

The center of the courtyard is a bioretention area planted with trees, shrubs, perennials and grasses. This area, plus the green roof treats all of the site run off for quality and reduced quantity.

The street trees are planted in a recessed tree lawn with a suspended metal grate as a walking surface to reduce compaction, increase walking surface and allow for free movement of air and water to the trees roots.

The courtyard includes a fountain for sound abatement and has an underground drip irrigation system for the plantings.