

Understanding Landscape Symbols

I. Purpose of Landscape Symbols

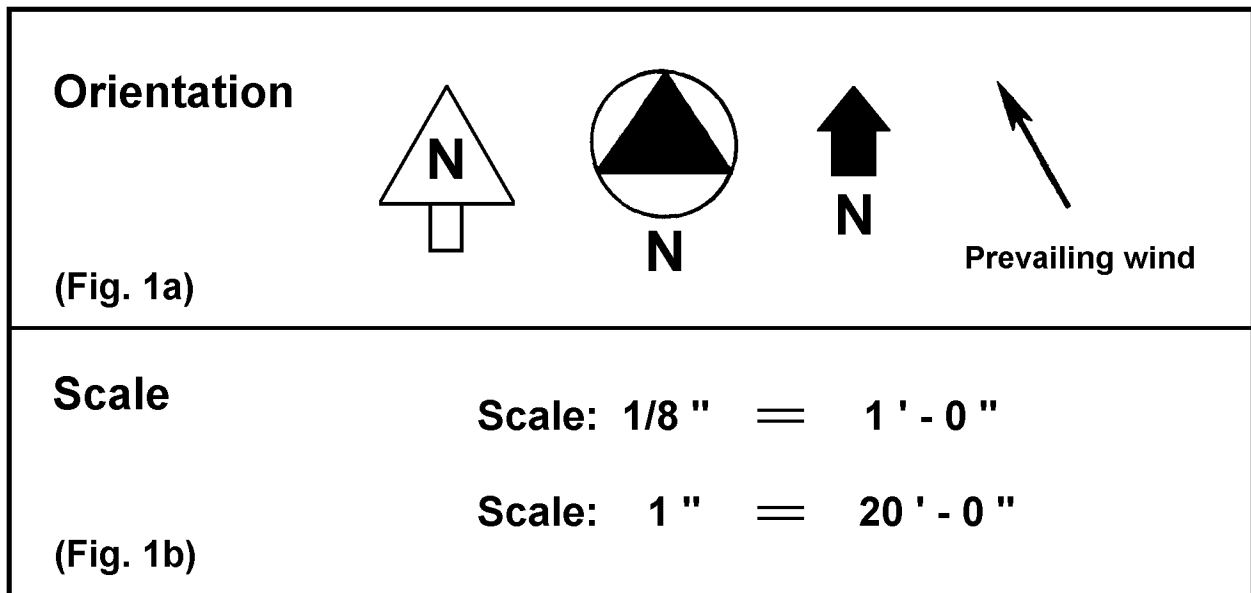
Landscape plans make use of *symbols** and words to indicate plants, buildings, and other items of information in the plans. Neatly constructed symbols that are drawn to scale present an accurate description of the landscape. Symbols used to feature landscape items should be kept simple as possible. They should, however, be suggestive of the actual appearance of the landscape features.

This topic provides a discussion of various symbols used by landscape architects and others. Illustrations are used to describe various symbols. Since landscape symbols are not standardized, the symbols shown in this topic may vary from those shown in other reference material on landscaping.

II. Examples of Landscape Symbols

a. Orientation Symbols

Arrows are generally used to indicate the direction of north on landscape plans. North is at the top of the sheet on many landscape plans. The north direction on the blueprint should be checked with a compass on the site. The direction of prevailing winds usually is symbolized by an arrow and words near the symbol for the north direction. (Fig. 1a)



Figs. 1a & 1b - All landscape plans should have a symbol to indicate the north direction. The scale of measurement should also be shown.

Italicized* words are defined in the **Glossary of Terms.

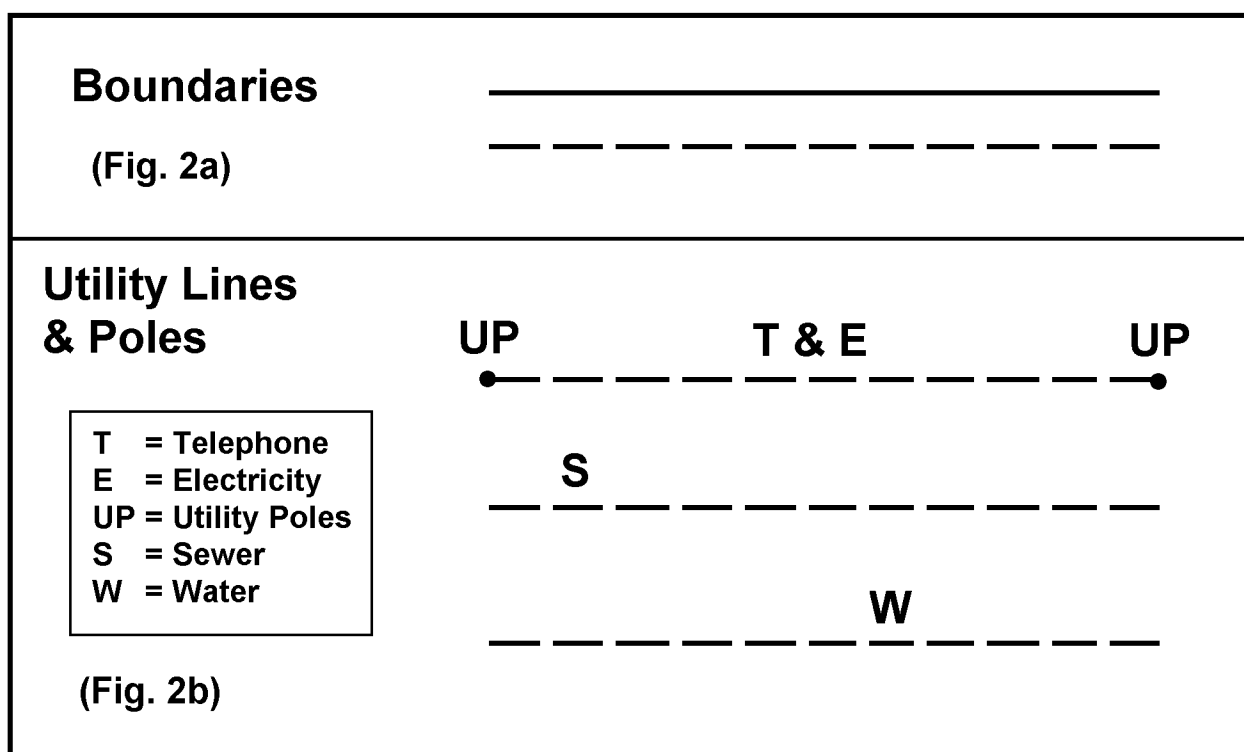
b. Scale Symbols

The scale of measurement should be shown on the landscape plan. The scale indicates what a given distance on the blueprint would equal on the ground. For example: a scale of 1" = 20'- 0' means that one inch on the landscape plan is equal to twenty feet and zero inches on the ground. (Fig. 1b)

c. Boundary and Utility Symbols

Boundaries of the landscape site and other permanent features usually are indicated by solid or dashed lines. (Fig. 2a)

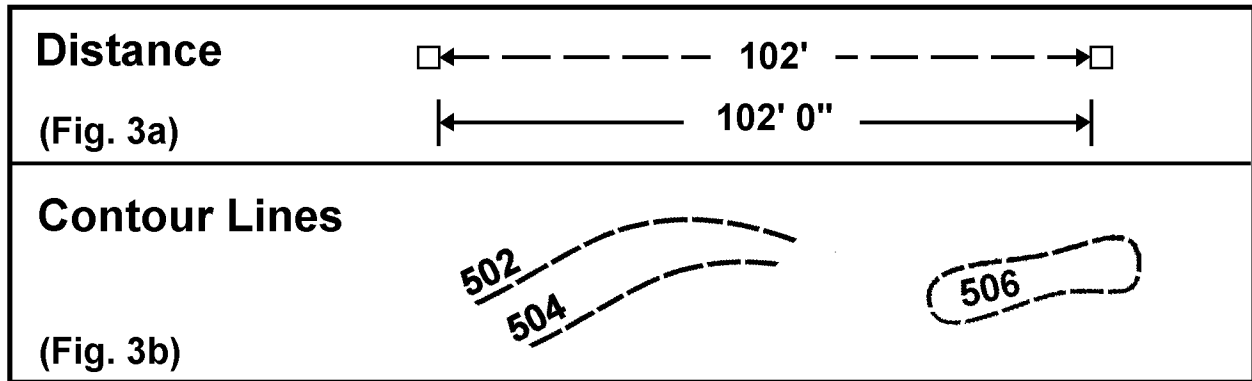
Utilities are represented by dotted lines for wires or pipes; letters to indicate telephone, electricity, sewer, water, or gas; and dots for utility poles. (Fig. 2b)



Figs. 2a & 2b - Boundaries are indicated by solid or dashed lines. Utility lines are represented by dashed lines and letters. Poles are shown by dots and letters.

d. Distance and Contour Line Symbols

Distance is indicated on a blueprint by a solid or dashed line with arrows indicating ending points. Numbers on or above the lines indicate the distance in feet, and sometimes in inches. (Fig. 3a)



Figs. 3a & 3b - Distances are indicated by dashed or solid lines and numbers. Contour lines usually are not added to landscape plans.

*Contour lines** are used to designate elevations above sea level or some other benchmark. All points on a contour line indicate the same elevation. Contour lines spaced closely together indicate steeper slopes than those spaced far apart. Contour lines that join together in a circular pattern indicate high spots or depressions. Landscape plans usually omit the use of contour lines to prevent cluttering the blueprint. If contour lines are needed, they can be drawn on a separate sheet. (Fig. 3b)

e. Construction Symbols

1. House Construction Symbols (Fig. 4)

Exterior walls of houses usually are shown as broad and solid lines. Interior walls are symbolized by thin and solid lines. Doors are shown as interruptions in the solid lines. Interruptions in the solid lines, but with two or three parallel thin lines, symbolize windows. Other construction features may be symbolized in various ways. Rooms are designated by words or abbreviations.

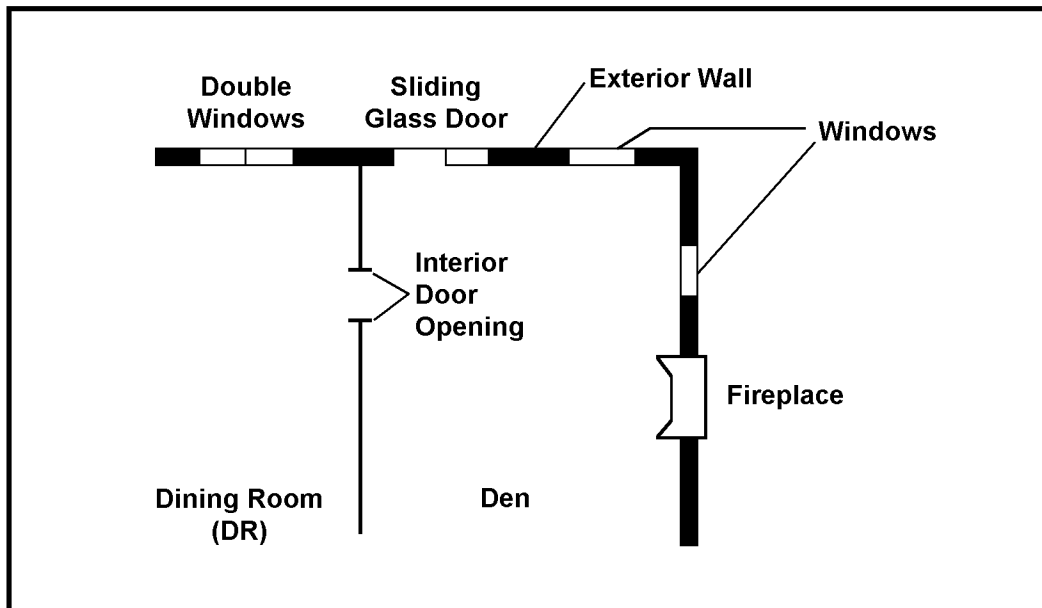


Fig. 4 - House construction features may be symbolized in various ways.

2. Paved Area Symbols

Paving can be indicated in several ways. Concrete walks, driveways, and play areas usually are indicated by solid lines for boundaries with "concrete" designated inside the boundaries. Other paving materials can be indicated by words or symbolized by *patterns**. (Fig. 5)

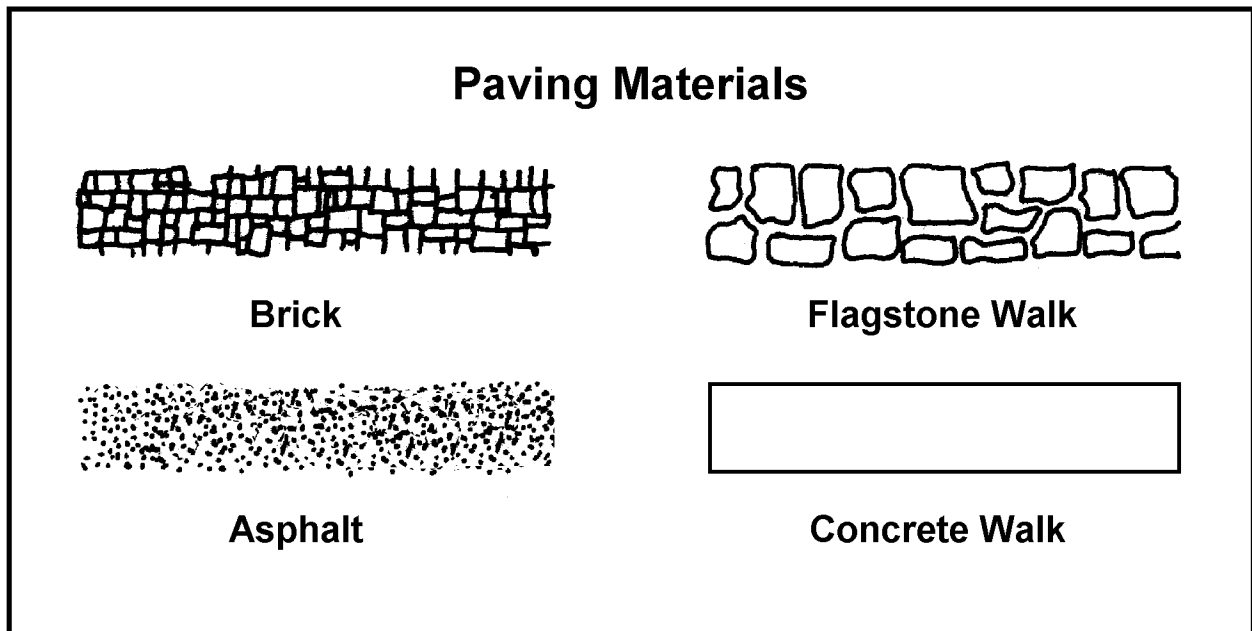


Fig. 5 - Paving materials can be symbolized by words or patterns.

3. Steps Symbol

Steps are often symbolized by a series of lines for *treads** and an arrow indicating "up" or "down" from one level to the next. (Fig. 6)

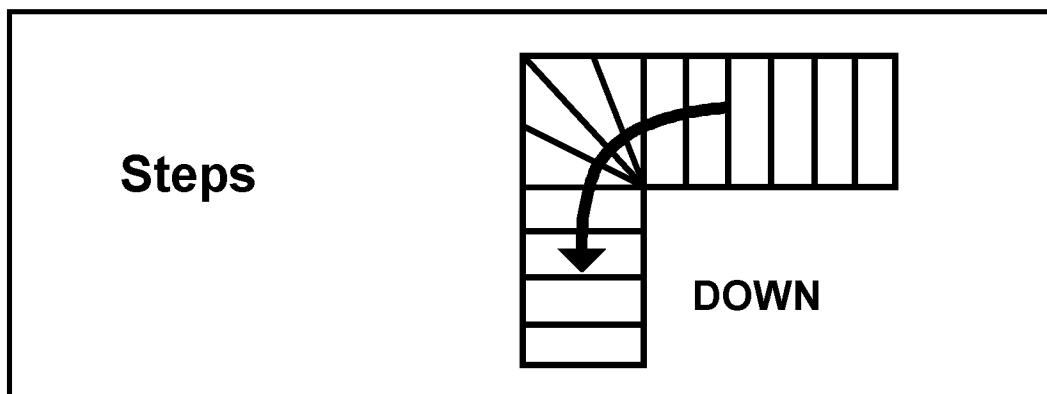


Fig. 6 - An arrow with the word "down" indicates the steps go downward from one level to the next.

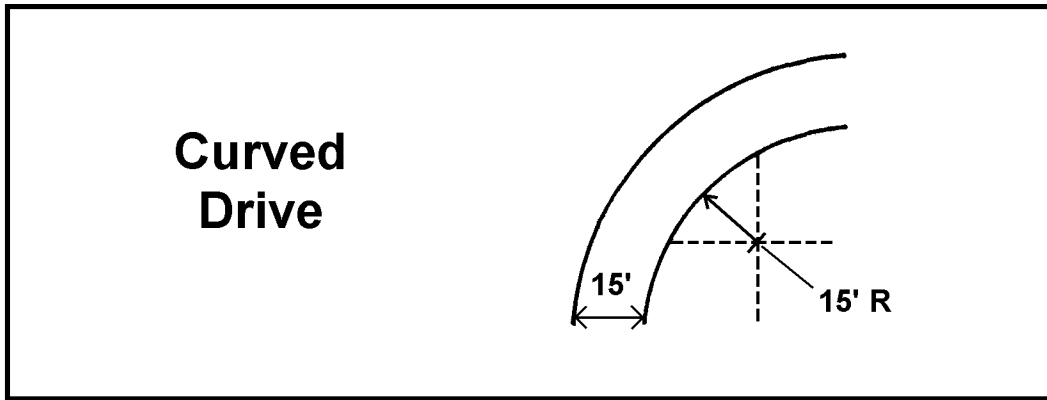


Fig. 7 - This curved drive is 15 feet wide with a 15 foot radius measured from the inside of the drive.

4. Curved Drive or Walk Symbol

Curves in walks or driveways are shown by two parallel lines. The width of the walk or drive is indicated between the two lines. The *radius** from the inside of the curved driveway is also shown. (Fig. 7)

5. Other Construction Symbols

Lawn features such as pools, grills, fences, and so forth can be indicated by simple outlines and words. (Fig. 8)

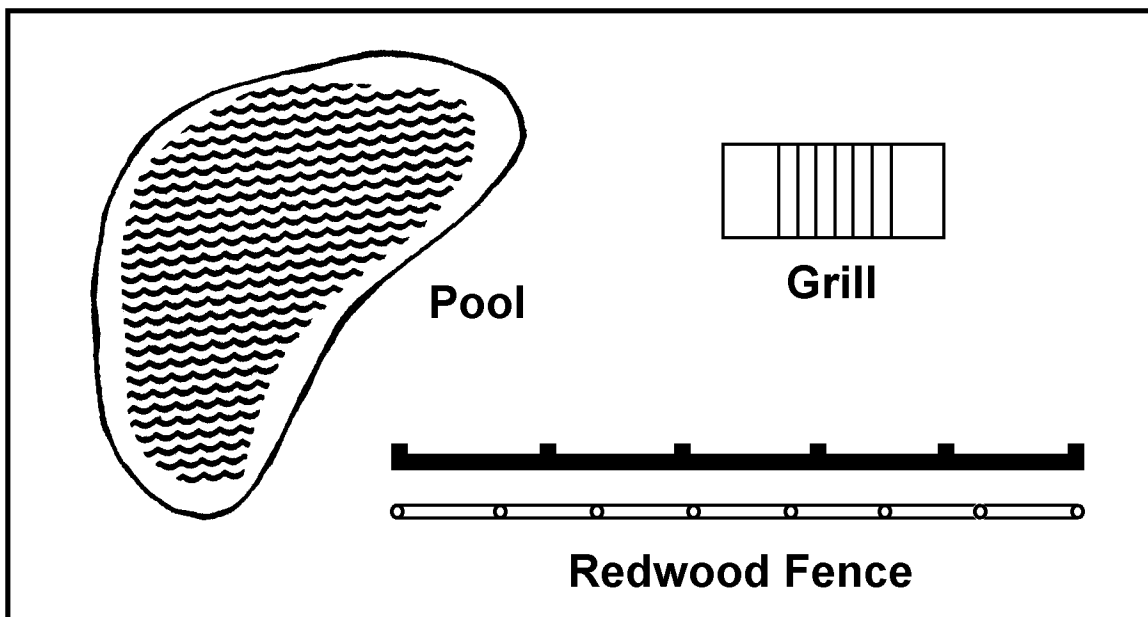


Fig. 8 - Simple outlines and words can be used to symbolize lawn features such as pools, grills, and fences.

f. Plant Symbols

Trees, shrubs, and flower beds can be shown by plant symbols as shown below. (fig. 9)

Deciduous trees often are shown with dark spots representing trunks and curved lines indicating the extent of the tips of branches. Evergreen trees can be shown the same way, but with lines radiating from the trunk to the curved lines.

When two trees of the same species are touching, the space between them can be left open to indicate this feature.

Shrubs can be shown as dots with circular line patterns indicating the occupied space. Sheared hedges can be shown by straight line enclosures. Flower beds can be indicated by enclosing lines and words.

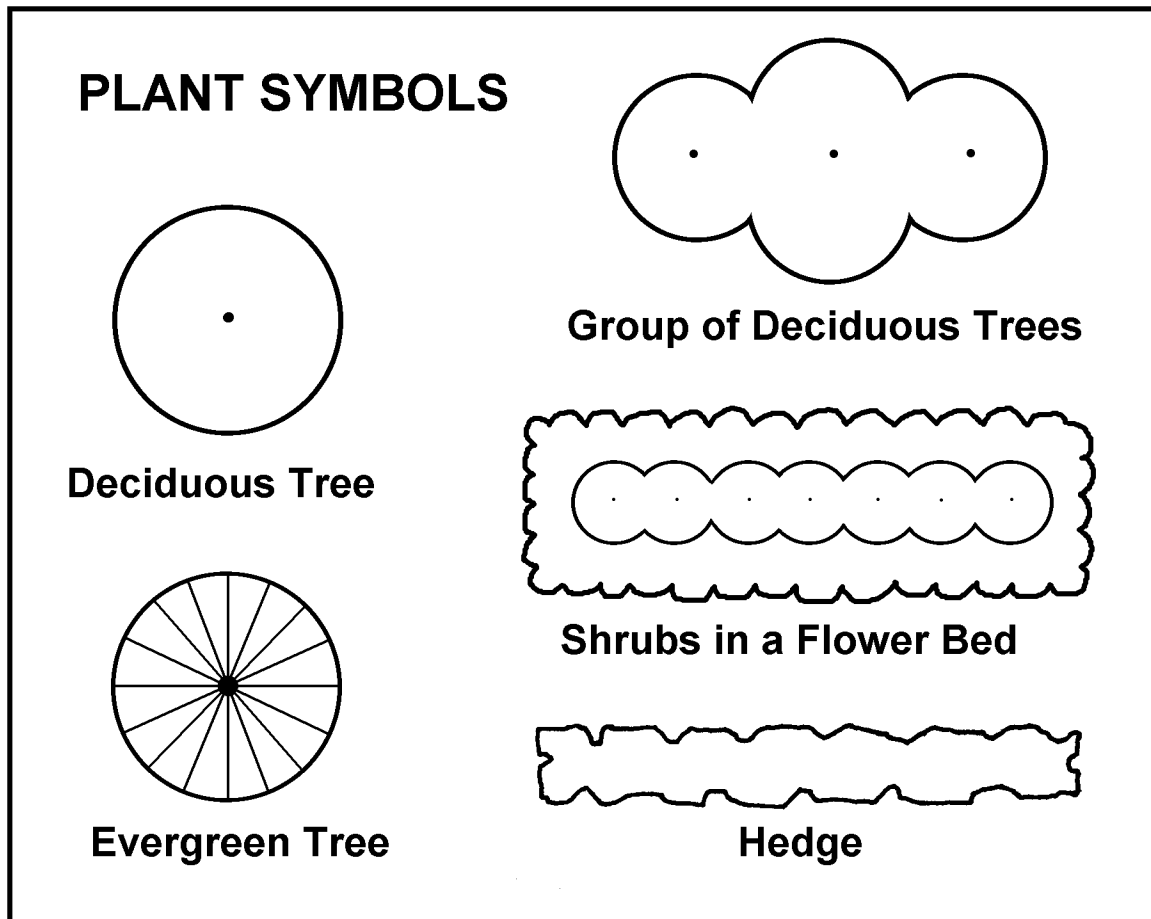


Fig. 9 - Various symbols can be used to show many kinds of plant forms.

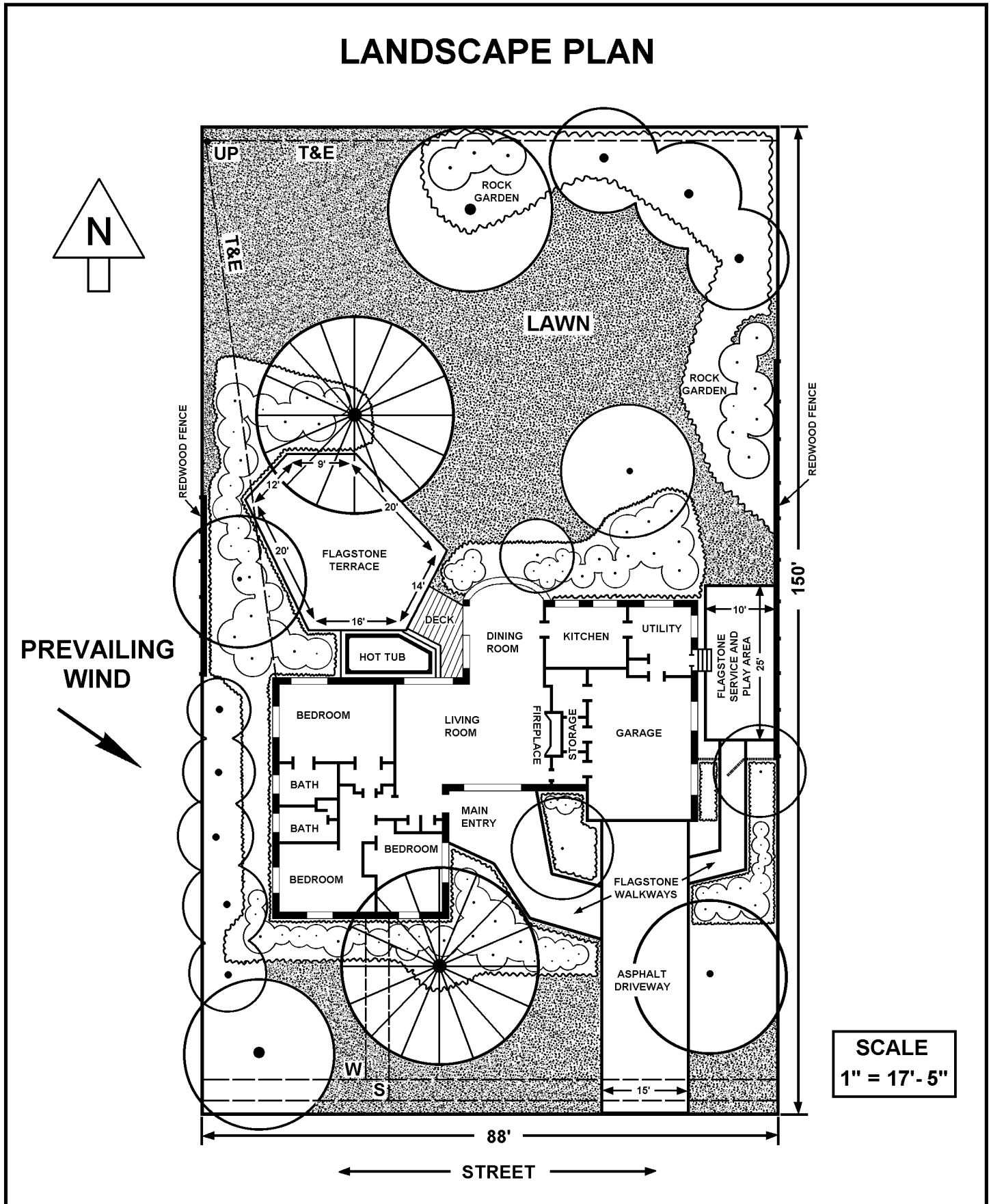


Fig. 10 - The landscape plan will contain many features indicated by simple symbols.

III. Summary

The previous landscape plan (Fig. 10) illustrates most of the features discussed in this study guide. Symbols for orientation and scale are shown in the upper left and upper right of the drawing. Boundaries and utilities are shown near the *perimeter** of the drawing.

The outline of the house is set off from the rest of the drawing by broad dark lines. Paved areas are symbolized by solid lines and words. Many trees, shrubs, and flower beds are symbolized. Plant names have been omitted on purpose to keep from cluttering the drawing.

Glossary of Terms

1. ***Contour line*** - An imaginary line connecting all points of the same elevation on a part of the earth's surface; a line drawn on a map to represent an elevation.
2. ***Pattern*** - An arrangement of a form to represent a feature.
3. ***Perimeter*** - The outer boundary of a figure or area.
4. ***Prevailing wind*** - A wind that is recognized as being widespread and occurring more often than other winds.
5. ***Radius*** - The distance along a straight line from the center to a point on a circle.
6. ***Symbol*** - A character or icon that stands for or represents something else.
7. ***Tread*** - The horizontal upper surface of a stair step.

Understanding Landscape Symbols

Provide a complete response to the following:

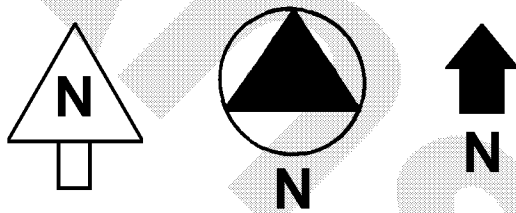
1. Why should symbols used to feature landscape items be kept simple?
2. Draw a symbol used to indicate the north direction on a landscape plan.
3. How is distance indicated on a blueprint?
4. Why are contour lines usually omitted from landscape plans?
5. How can deciduous and evergreen trees be distinguished from each other on a landscape plan?

Understanding Landscape Symbols

Answer Key E-02

1. For the purpose of making the landscape plan easy to read and understand.

2.



3. Distance is indicated by a solid or dashed line with arrows to indicate ending points, and numbers on or above the line to indicate amount of feet or inches.

4. To prevent cluttering the landscape plan.

5. Evergreen tree symbols can be distinguished from deciduous tree symbols by adding multiple diameter lines that divide the circular symbol into equal sections.