

Original Research Article

Arts and Crafts Gardens

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Abstract: The Arts and Crafts movement emerged during the 19th century Industrial Revolution, aiming to revive handcraftsmanship and pursue a simple lifestyle. Despite being considered unrealistic, its influence in fields such as architecture and gardening has been profound. This essay explores the historical background and design characteristics of Arts and Crafts gardens, showcasing their design elements and typical vocabulary through the analysis of iconic gardens like Red House and Munstead Wood. Arts and Crafts gardens exemplify the coexistence of humans and nature, featuring inspirations from nature, unity between buildings and gardens, functional and simple designs, and the use of local materials and traditional crafts. These principles have significantly influenced modern landscape design.

Keywords: Arts and Crafts Movement; Industrial Revolution; Design Characteristics; Modern Landscape Design; Red House; Munstead Wood

1. Introduction

In the context of the 19th-century Industrial Revolution, the Arts and Crafts Movement emerged as an idealistic response to industrialization, aiming to revive the culture of handcraft and pursue a simple lifestyle. Although Cumming and Kaplan argue that the movement's ideology was unrealistic due to its reliance on societal prosperity, its influence on fields such as architecture, gardening, furniture, and graphic design has been profound, with its legacy still evident in modern art designs. This essay seeks to explore the historical background, design characteristics, and heritage of Arts and Crafts gardens, showcasing their design elements and typical vocabulary through the analysis of iconic gardens like Red House and Munstead Wood, as well as a modern Walled Garden inspired by their designs.

2. History context

Historically, the Arts and Crafts movement started in the Victorian Era as a reaction towards the rapid growth of industrialization and can be referred to as 'the first truly modern artistic movement' (Parry and Livingston, 2005: p. 10). Socioeconomically, in the later 19th century, the industrial revolution transferred Britain into an industrialized kingdom and established new manufacturing processes, leading to booming of the economic^[1]. As the society prospered, the social structure was changed: the status of aristocratic class was taking place by new new bourgeoisie. While farmers who lost their land in Enclosure movement, had to move to cities to find a job. On the other hand, the traditional handcrafts were substituted by mechanical production. However, it seems to be that the aesthetic aspect of traditional crafts and economical benefits of industrial products was irreconcilable. Sociologists and artist argued that the only way to achieve harmony between the two aspects was artistic intervention and intended to re-establish the power of handcrafts (Cumming and Kaplan, 1991)^[2]. Therefore, the influence from the industrial revolution, in the aspect of social structure and production method,

was reflected in the culture and art aspects^[2]. In 1851, The first Great Exhibition held in London to displayed the achievements of industrialization. However, the low quality of British design drew the public attention which was one of the main reasons that instigated the arts and crafts movement (Nygren, 2012)^[9]. John Reskin, an art critic and one of the most remarkable man in arts and crafts movement, indicated that the architecture and object should be created with aesthetic value (Cumming and Kaplan, 1991). This idea was written in *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* and became a basis to guide this movement. Consequently, the arts and crafts movement occur in the Victorian Era.

During the Victorian era, the Gardenesque style, characterized by a distinct separation between nature and picturesque elements, was prevalent. However, it was opposed by Arts and Crafts advocates, who were influenced by Gothic aesthetics and sought a return to pre-industrial simplicity, favoring Gothic Revival. William Robinson, an influential figure, promoted naturalistic gardening in his book *The Wild Garden*, advocating for low-maintenance designs that allowed plants to grow more naturally^[3]. Discontent with industrial products led many proponents to prefer rural living and simplicity, ideas that became central to the Arts and Crafts movement.

3. Two case studies: Red House and Munstead Wood

The Red House is located in Bexleyheath in Southeast London and was built in 1859. The owner of the house is William Morris, who was one of the pioneers and leaders in arts and crafts movement and innovated wallpaper. The house was designed with the cooperation of Morris and architect Phillip Webb as a home for Morris's marriage. In fact, the house was the icon of Arts and Crafts building and a milestone of Arts and Crafts movement, since it represents the belief of being against the lack of aesthetic in industrialization and emphasize the rural aspect of nature (Hollamby et al., 1991)^[5].

As for the Munstead wood, it was situated in Godalming in Surrey in England and completed in 1896, as a masterpiece from the cooperation with Gertrude Jekyll and young architect Edwin Lutyens. Gertrude Jekll, the owner of Munstead Wood, was an outstanding gardener and the greatest artist in arts and crafts movement, and developed the design through her previous art background^[4]. She became a staunch follower of William Robinson by developing wild garden theory and bridging formal gardens with wild gardens, which was the core of her design (Nygren, 2012). And she applied those theories in the design of Munstead Wood.



Figure 1. the plan of Red House (Hollamby, 1991, P4).

When it comes to the spatial composition of arts and crafts gardens, Hitchmough (2005) indicated close distances between the house and the gardens. The Red House are designed in accordance with the common principle of arts and crafts, namely, the unity (Hollamby et al., 1991). The house is an L-shape building surrounded and enclosed by shrubs. Morris retained the majority of orchard trees and added other native plants in his garden, leading to a sense of harmony between the building and its surroundings to display the aesthetics of

idyllic lifestyle. However, the distance between house and garden was than the ordinary arts and crafts gardens. The innovative fenestration which allowed exterior landscape to permeate into interior (Hollamby et al., 1991), and dense climbing plants on the wall made a continuation between indoor and outdoor.

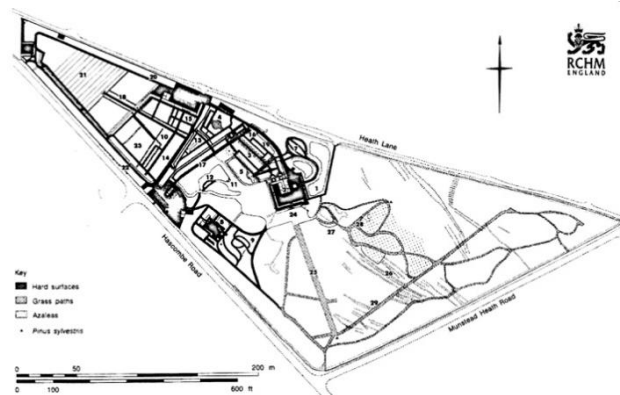


Figure 2. the plan of Munstead Wood (Tooley and Arnander,1995, p 85).

Munstead Wood exemplified the integration of the main house with its natural surroundings through themed gardens and climbing plants, mirroring the approach seen at Red House. Both gardens featured buildings seamlessly blending into their environments with asymmetric designs and functional elements. However, Munstead Wood advanced this concept by being segmented into multiple themed gardens connected by natural paths, creating a sense of mystery and wildness through the concealment of buildings by plants.

In terms of arrangement of the plants, the majority of arts and crafts gardens preferred to select native plants as well as imported exotics species (Nygren, 2012). Moreover, Hitchmough (2005) stated that the innovation of Arts and Crafts gardens was that mixture of different plants were planted together in accordance to the current season. Apart from that, plants are functioned as hedges to enclosed a space of ground and creating a clear boundary from neighbor, allowing a sense of peacefulness within the gardens (Davey, 1995). According to Hitchmough (2005), this planting strategy expressed the fundamental philosophy of craftsman that gardens were their own spiritual place to escape the mundane industrial life. Those beliefs were also applied in the planting design in Red house. Morris clustered a series of plants together, for instance, climbing roses and passion flower were planted on the wall. Furthermore, Morris created green-close and green rooms with plants to allow deep contemplation, where he was inspired with the idea of wallpapers. On the other hand, the material of fence was unique comparing to other gardens. According to Morris (1870) as cited by Marsh (2005), metallic railing was so disharmonious with the integrality of nature, that live hedges would be the better option. Therefore, hedges played a crucial role to divide space in Red house.

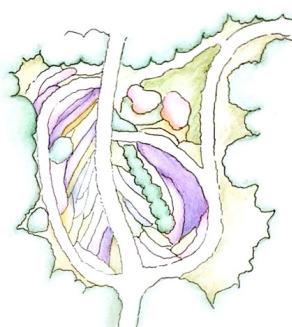


Figure 3. the planting of garden.

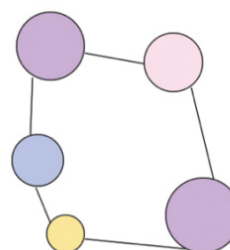


Figure 4. the analysis of colour tone.

Similarly, in Munstead Wood, Jekyll (1995) emphasized that plants that have the same bloom period, should be arranged and grouped together^[6]. Furthermore, she developed the wild garden concept from Robinson which later became the more naturalistic planting scheme that people are familiar with today. The pioneering design of Munstead Wood was an experiment of her colour schemes. Plants that bloom during June and October were used in Jekyll’s design and were arranged in a colourful palette fashion.

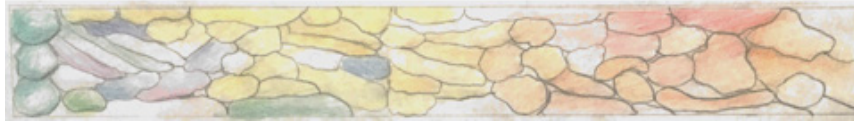


Figure 5. the colours of the main border.

Yellow	Red
yellow iris	dahlia
gold privet	tall red canna
rue	dahlia
yellow snapdragon	tiger lily
helianthus	orange atrican

Figure 6. the plants used in the main border.

Jekyll applied this theory in many borders and walls to produce the most memorable border within the Mustead Wood. The border utilises colourful plants with high resilience and colours range from white to yellow and orange to strong red (Tankard, 2011). Although both of the gardens were designed by naturalistic planting strategy, they produced opposite results. While Morris selected the plants that were natively grown in Red House, Jekyll preferred to cultivate a wide range of plants with high density that required expensive maintenance.

4. Contemporary garden



Figure 7. the image of walled garden (Patton, 2012).

The walled garden in Taunton, Somerset, designed by Amanda Patton in 2012, reflects her advocacy for naturalism. Utilizing local materials and a naturalistic planting scheme, the garden embodies a blend of wild garden and contemporary Arts and Crafts elements. The design features buildings surrounded by diverse trees and shrubs, promoting harmony between structures and the landscape. Climbing plants, such as roses, further integrate the buildings with the garden. Inspired by the Green Garden at Red House, yew hedges create secluded green rooms, enhancing privacy^[7]. Plant selections in the borders, similar to Munstead Wood, are based on color, blooming season, and function. While maintaining an Arts and Crafts style, the garden incorporates modern elements like rectangular ponds^[8]. Overall, the design conveys an idyllic, naturalistic lifestyle with Arts and Crafts influences.

In conclusion, the aim of this essay was to describe and analyse the historic background of arts and

crafts movement, the typical language and design elements in arts and crafts gardens and the contemporary gardens. Historically, with the booming of industrialization and the modification of social structure, a number of philosopher and artists took actions to fight against the industrialization and appealed to revive the aesthetic of Gothic and the power of crafts. Arts and Crafts gardens, which acted as their spiritual home to escape from the industrial world and to search for a simpler lifestyle, were an outstanding example of coexistence between human and nature (Hitchmough, 2005). The typical features of Arts and Crafts movement were the inspiration from nature and Gothic style, the unity of building and garden, the planting scheme and hedging, the functionalism and simplicity of the designs, and the utilization of local material and traditional craftsman skills. the design of Red House was a pioneer to develop and establish principles of this movement, while the design of Munstead Wood was based on those principles and the colour schemes developed accordingly. Arts and Crafts gardens have a far-reaching influence on the modern society and the design elements can be seen in numerous modern garden designs, such as the walled gardens. Therefore, the Arts and Crafts movement was, without a doubt, a significant influence in the development of the modern landscape industry.

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