

Additional Context Regarding Garden Design

Supplemental Report to the Roy Vue Apartments Landmark Nomination
615 Bellevue Avenue East
September 2018

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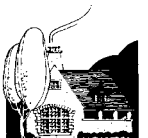


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Roy Vue Apartments Supplemental Report

SEPTEMBER 2018

1. INTRODUCTION

This Supplemental Report to the Roy Vue Apartments Landmark Nomination Report provides additional context information regarding garden apartment design. The Roy Vue garden is believed to be designed by architect Charles L. Haynes in 1924 and the landscaper and nursery which provided plantings and services was Malmo and Company. The building was documented on the Seattle Historical Site survey in 2002. At the request of the Johnson Partnership, Professor Emeritus David Streatfield, researched and wrote this report. Streatfield earned his degree in Architecture at Brighton College of the Arts and Crafts in Brighton, Sussex, England; a Certificate in Landscape Architecture at University College, University of London; and a Master of Landscape Architecture at the University of Pennsylvania. He was a professor at the University of Washington until his retirement in 2012 where he also served as Chair of the Department of Landscape Architecture. The Johnson Partnership prepared this report at the request of Alliance Multifamily Investments.

2. BROAD CONTEXT – GARDEN APARTMENT TYPOLOGY

The Garden Apartment typology is Californian in origin. Its earliest manifestation is in the bungalow courts developed at the turn of the century in the Los Angeles Basin, in cities such as Pasadena and Hollywood. These rental properties appealed to middle class easterners wishing to winter in the attractively mild climate of Southern California. But the roots of these courts derive from the Hispanic phases of Californian history. The missions and the ranch houses, which were discovered and restored at the end of the 19th century, provided a critical design model of living spaces opening on to courtyards. By the 1920s the Garden Apartment appeared as a distinct typology catering to the needs of year-round residents. Many garden apartments were two story buildings built as U-shaped courts that provided a gracious entry space, and spaces to be viewed from the interiors of the apartments. Many garden apartments also provided defined private spaces that could be enjoyed by their residents. The architecture was invariably Mediterranean employing white walls, wrought-iron details, such as balconies, and light fittings, heavy wood doors, shallow roofs sheathed with pantiles, derived from Andalusian vernacular building precedents.¹

The general features of this typology were adopted by apartment developers in Seattle, although a different range of architectural modes was employed frequently realized in brick, and embracing Tudor and French Norman modes. A few examples of Mediterranean architecture occurred, but they are the exceptions rather than the general rule. Apart from the range of architectural genres used the landscape details of the courtyard spaces invariably complimented the architecture.

¹ Stephanos Polyzoides, Roger Sherwood and James Tice, *Courtyard Housing in Los Angeles*. University of California Press, 1982.

The garden apartments in Seattle are typically U-shaped spaces open to the street providing varied sequences of approach to the main entrance, unit entrances and varied garden court spaces. The simplest examples are long narrow spaces leading directly to a single entrance. By contrast, the larger garden spaces, such as the Victoria Apartments (Malmo & Company) and the Roy Vue, provide a greater spaciousness enhanced by pools, fountains, and varied plantings. **See figures 1–4.**

The choice of Tudor architecture might have led to garden designs derived from English Tudor gardens, which were invariably geometric in nature with clipped hedges enclosing plants and emphasizing the underlying geometry. The specific characteristics of English Tudor gardens were poorly understood and accurate restorations of gardens of this period were not undertaken in England until the 1980s. Seattle’s apartment gardens referred romantically to what were considered to be historic precedents such as the use, as at the Roy Vue Apartment, of Italian Cypresses flanking all of the entrances on the garden court and around the edges of the building on the western elevations. There are no precedents for this use of cypresses.

No unaltered Tudor gardens survive. However, the late Marchioness of Salisbury restored the Tudor and Jacobean gardens at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire from the early 1970s onward. She did this using old accounts in the Hatfield archives and her work is considered exemplary among garden historians. Her garden restoration at Hatfield Old Palace has a circular fountain basin and a gilded winged angel in front of the entrance and a wooden bridge across a dry moat in the foreground. Flanking this are clipped laurel domes, almost exactly like those shown in the planting strip in the King County Tax Record photo of Roy Vue. These clipped laurel domes are the Roy Vue’s sole Tudor landscape feature. However, the use of these plants is likely coincidental rather than an intentional attempt at Tudor garden elements as laurel domes were a common planting in the street landscape of both single-family neighborhoods and upscale apartment streets. **See figures 5-7.**

In some of the smaller apartment courts, such as the Garden Apartment, low clipped hedges provide the closest approximation to genuine English Tudor gardens. Other examples suggest that the diverse array of plants available in Seattle nurseries, together with the specific size of the space were more important design determinants than any adherence to authentic historic precedents.

A further factor in understanding the character of the gardens of the garden apartments stems from the fact that few, if any, were designed by professionally trained landscape designers. The profession of landscape architecture was very small at the turn of the 20th century. The American Society of Landscape Architects was founded in 1899 with only 11 founding members. The first Department of Landscape Architecture was founded at Harvard University in 1900 under the chairmanship of Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. The earliest department on the West Coast was founded at the University of California, Berkeley in 1913. Housed in the College of Agriculture this was consequently named the Department of Landscape Gardening and emphasized the use of xeric plants and other design strategies appropriate for the Californian landscape and climate.

On the West Coast the leading landscape architecture office was the firm of The Olmsted Brothers, founded in 1898 by John Charles Olmsted and Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. This office was in headquartered in Brookline Massachusetts. Thus until 1922, when the firm opened an office in Redondo Beach, California, all their numerous national commissions were managed from Brookline. This involved frequent communication by telegraph and telephone, and lengthy train journeys by the supervising landscape architects. This firm was responsible for the design of New Towns, such as

Palos Verdes, the largest new town developed in the country in the 1920s, Parks, Park Systems, such as those of Seattle and Portland, University campuses, subdivisions, such as The Highlands, large estates, and gardens of varied size. The firm rarely designed commercial projects. Typically, landscape architectural firms such as The Olmsted Brothers provided preliminary and final designs, working drawings and specifications, and supervised the design's execution.

Such services were relatively expensive and a number of well-to-do Seattle private clients balked at these costs. It is, therefore, not at all surprising that none of the gardens of Seattle's garden apartments were designed by professional landscape architects. The number of trained landscape architects who had offices in Seattle was small. In the case of the Roy Vue apartment the architect's sketch indicates that he provided the design layout of the paths, fountain basin, and pergolas. The use of framing plants such as Italian cypresses has no historic precedent and was almost certainly an artistic gesture. The role of Malmo Nursery was to select appropriate plants and execute the design, which was a common practice in Seattle. It may, therefore, not be appropriate to refer to the nursery as the landscape designer. The role of designer was often blurred between professional figures such as architects and executant firms such as nurseries. Many professionally trained architects were quite competent in undertaking landscape designs, although their proficiency in providing detailed instructions was often weak. In the case of the Roy Vue apartments it is unclear whether Haynes' drawing was executed in its entirety. If it was, Malmo Nursery was not the landscape designer. It is also possible that Malmo provided a design that was adapted and modified by Haynes. The fact that Haynes' drawing was used to advertise this development is therefore significant.²

The role of nurseries in the broader context of landscape design has been little studied. Malmo not only sold a wide range of plants but also provided design services. By the late 1920s the nursery had established a Landscape Department that provided a complete range of design and installation services for modest residences, public buildings, such as court-houses, apartment buildings, factories, formal and informal parks, golf courses, and planting strips.³ Such services were similar to those provided by several large and prominent nurseries in the Los Angeles Basin such as the Beverly Hills Nursery, the Armstrong Nursery, and Paul Howard's 'Flowerland.' These nurseries provided both a wide array of exotic plants and landscape design services. This was severely frowned on by many landscape architects, who believed that such practices often led clients to buy very expensive plants that were unnecessary. In Seattle the paucity of local landscape architectural offices, and the high costs involved in employing landscape design firms from the East Coast inevitably led to the employment of nurseries to undertake a range of design commissions. **See figures 8-13.**

In 1910 there were 18 nurseries in Seattle and 13 gardeners, not all of whom provided design services. Of these Malmo was almost certainly the leading nursery. By 1927 there were 24 nurseries and 10 individuals listed in the street directories as Landscape Architects and Gardeners.

² Historic Seattle, *Roy Vue Landmark Nomination Report*, "Fig. 13. Ca 1924. Drawing of the west façade and garden courtyard of the Roy Vue Garden Apartments by architect Charles Haynes," 2018, p. 36.

³ Malmo & Co. "Malmo's Landscape Service," *1929 Planting Guide*. Seattle, Washington: Frayn and Co, 1929, p. 20.

3. OTHER GARDEN APARTMENTS IN SEATTLE

Considerable variety is found in Seattle's garden apartments reflecting variations in the shape of the court, the scale of the building, the topography, and the presence of outward views.

3.1 2-Story Apartments

- *Anhalt, East John.* (1600 East John Street, 1930, Landmark, developer: Frederick Anhalt) This is a shallow court raised a few feet above the sidewalk. Protection is achieved through a low clipped hedge fronting a low retaining wall, above which is another clipped hedge. Two large trees flank the central steps.
- *Tudor Manor* (111 14th Avenue East, 1929, developer: Frederick Anhalt) has a deep court flanked by two story Tudor buildings around a simple grass panel with a long narrow central reflection pool. A path at the edge of the central lawn panel provided access to the entrances of the units. A short flight of axial steps in a low retaining wall provides protection from the street which is enhanced by shrub planting behind the retaining wall. The steps lead directly to a small circular bed from which two angled paths lead to the principal edge path system.
- *Creswick Condominium* (1305 East Republican, 1928, developer: Frederick Anhalt) has an intimate entry garden protected from the street by a retaining wall backed by shrubs with large trees planted at the outer corners. The entry to this space is atypically at one end of the retaining wall and leads directly to a path encircling two sides of the modest size garden providing access to apartment entrances. The main area of the garden is a panel of lawn. Two large shrubs against one of the building's walls provides further diversity.
- *Twin Gables Condominium* (1516 East Republican, 1929, developer: Frederick Anhalt in collaboration with M. Borchert, designed by Edwin E. Dofsen) is a similar modestly scaled garden. Here a level of geometric order on the street is established with clipped hedges and domes against the low building and a low retaining wall. A few steps lead to a U-shaped path layout giving access to the apartment entrances at the corners of the court. Large trees at the corners of the path system and on the central axis provide diverse masses that serve to break down the space of the court.
- *Barcelona Court* (2205 Bigelow Ave, 1928, developer: Frederick Anhalt in collaboration with J. P. Hardcastle) has a deep 2 story U-shaped court of Mediterranean styling lying high above the street. A row of garages occupies the bulk of the court's frontage to the street. The court is approached by an angled flight of stairs created with skillfully arranged large boulders at the south end. The stairs lead up to a large lawn completely encircled by a path providing access to the entrances of the units. Large windows in each of the units establish a strong sense of privacy, since the garden court forms the principal view for each of the living rooms. A geometric pool provides further visual character.
- *Tudor Court Apartments* (1719 2nd Avenue North, 1929, possible developer: Frederick Anhalt) has a shallow garden court above the street. There are six deeply indented garages at the street level within the two flanking wings. The retaining wall between these wings is indented

by small semicircular runs of retaining wall to create a fairly narrow space within which an axial flight of stairs leads up to the court. Here, a simple central grass panel is encircled by a path giving access to short flights of stairs providing access to the units.

- *Franca Villa Apartments* (1108 9th Avenue, 1930, developer: Sandberg in collaboration with W. Whitely, architect⁴) This development on the south west side of Queen Anne resembles the Roy Vue Apartments in that the large spacious symmetrical U-shaped court commands a sweeping outward view towards the Sound and the distant mountains. The other similarity is in the treatment of a sloping site. It differs in that the building comprises a long two-story principal section at the rear of the court with deep balconies and single-story wings at right angles. The court is approached by two broad axial flights of stairs rising from a semi-circular space at the sidewalk. To the left is a row of seven garages excavated into the hillside.

From the top of the stairs a continuous slope rises to the base of the two-story central section. This central path is bisected by an oval shaped fountain basin, whose tilted edge follows the fall in the slope. Curving paths extend out to entrances in the flanking single story wings.

- *The Sea View Apartments* (519 W Roy Street, 1932, developer: Lewis Realty Investment Company in collaboration with Michael Leder, designer and builder, extant) Has a small garden court surrounded by brick buildings graced with Art Deco ornamentation. This intimately scaled entry space has blocks of clipped hedges arranged in a simple geometric configuration around a small rectangular pool with a low fountain. **See figures 14-21.**

3.2 4-Story Apartments

- *The Victoria Condominiums* (100 W Highland Drive, 1921, developer: Victoria Investment Company, architect: John Graham Sr., builder: Hans Pederson, landscaper: Malmo & Company, extant) These apartments are most similar to Roy Vue in general character. The large garden court faces the street from which it is protected by a retaining wall with stairs at each end close to the sides of the court. Above the retaining wall is a large space which originally sloped up to the far end of the court. The perimeter paths close to the building lead to flights of stairs from which the path curved around to the central axial entrance. Below this path a steeply graded bank heavily planted with shrubs presided over the inner end of a large level lawn space. This feature was eliminated by a recent landscape revision in which a concrete retaining wall provides an axially oriented double flight branched staircase leading up to the central apartment entrance. **See figure 22.**

3.3 Long Narrow Courts

- *The Wilsonian* (4710 University Way NE, 1923, architect and contractor: Frank Fowler, landscaper: Malmo & Company) has a long narrow court with a central brick paved path leading directly to the single entrance which is flanked by large windows. The landscape design by Malmo Nursery uses a variety of evergreens. At the outer and inner corners were

⁴ Commonly misattributed to Anhalt.

large Italian Cypresses with smaller evergreens in between against the plinth of the multi-storied building. The nursery used this example to demonstrate its strong advocacy of foundation planting. The planting was intended to mitigate any severity in the architecture and harmonize the structure with its environment. The design of this court is also distinct in that there is no grade change at the sidewalk.

- *The Garden Court Apartments* (1631 16th Avenue, 1929, landscaper: Malmo & Company) The court here somewhat resembles that of the Wilsonian Apartments in that the space is narrow and deep. A few steps led up from the street to a central path, the planting at the street being contained by low clipped evergreen hedges forming low growing carpet-like masses. Within the court the low growing plants were contained by low clipped hedges punctuated with the vertical counter-thrust of Italian Cypresses. **See figures 23-24.**

4. OTHER NURSERIES

Peder Sandved boasted in his advertisement in the Seattle Street Directory of 1910 that he had “20 Years experience. Best of references.” He claimed that he was able to furnish plans for Parks, Colleges, Hotels, Parks and Private Gardens.” In addition to providing estimates, Sandved was also able to “superintend the proper execution of the design.”

He advertised that his more than “20 years of study in America and Europe in the profession enabled him to guarantee that his ‘modern’ plans for Parks, and Estates for home gardeners would ensure “the most artistic and pleasing effects.” **See figure 25.**

More typical of the services provided by traditional nurseries was the J. J. Bonnell Nursery which supplied plants over several years to Arthur G. Dunn’s estate south of The Highlands.

In 1923 Fujitaro Kubota, an Issei from northern Japan, opened his landscaping business in Seattle. He quickly moved from basic maintenance gardening such as lawn mowing to landscape design, pioneering the passion in Seattle for Japanese gardens. At that time, there were several Japanese owned gardening firms, which were usually two-man firms providing basic maintenance services. In 1920 the number of Japanese nurseries and gardeners led to the formation of The Japanese Garden Union.⁵ Kubota quickly moved away from such practice into creative design and construction, designing and creating private gardens in Magnolia, Laurelhurst and Windermere.⁶

In 1927 Kubota purchased five acres of land in the Rainier Beach neighborhood, which he was able to extend with subsequent five acre purchases into a 20-acre set of display gardens complimented by a working nursery. In addition to several Japanese display gardens, the Kubota Gardens Nursery included a rose garden, a lily garden and expansive areas of lawn. **See figure 26.**

One of the most unusual features of Kubota Gardens was a circular automobile drive that enabled Kubota’s middle and upper-class clients to drive through the central display area. Thomas Robinson has called this an “automobile ‘stroll garden,” that is the American equivalent of the Heian tradition

⁵ Itō, Kazuo. *Issei : A History of Japanese Immigrants in North America*. Seattle: Japanese Community Service, 1973, p. 8.

⁶ Thomas M. Robinson. *Traditions in Translation. The Gardens of Fujitaro Kubota*. MLA Thesis, University of Washington, 1992, p. 105.

of experiencing a garden from a floating boat.⁷ Gardens reached its apogee just prior to the onset of World War II.

After the War Kubota's practice expanded and he was responsible for a series of Japanese inspired gardens on the campus of Seattle University.⁸ These were developed sequentially without adherence to any master plan.

Another Japanese nursery operating in the region was the Yamasaki and Nakamura nursery which provided design services as well as plants.

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⁷ Ibid, p. 112.

⁸ Ibid, p. 120-125.

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Appendix 1

Figures



Figure 1 • The Victoria Condominiums, 110 W Highland Drive (1921, developer: Victoria Investment Company, architect: John Graham Sr, builder: Hans Pederson, landscaper: Malmo & Company)



Figure 2 • The Victoria Condominiums, upper level detail, 110 W Highland Drive (1921, developer: Victoria Investment Company, architect: John Graham Sr, builder: Hans Pederson, landscaper: Malmo & Company)

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Figure 4 • Roy Vue Apartment Gardens, fountain detail (1924, developer: W. & G. Bergman, architect: Charles L. Haynes, builder: Hans Pederson, landscaper: Malmo & Company)



Figure 5 • Roy Vue Garden Apartments, Tax Assessor Photo, 1937.

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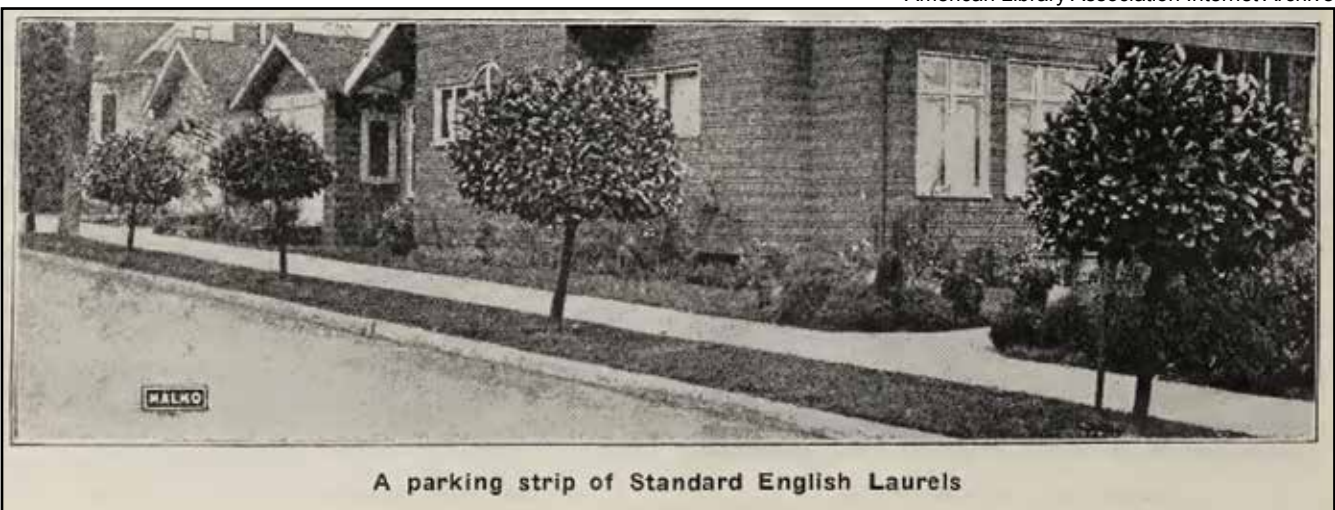


Figure 6 • 1924 Malmo & Company Catalog: example of “city beautifying” parking strip.



Figure 7 • Restored Tudor garden at Hatfield Old Palace, Hertfordshire.



Figure 8 • Paul Howard 1937 Flowerland catalog.

1893-1924


MAR 24 1924

NURSERY STOCK SEEDS

BULBS
FERTILIZERS
SPRAYS

PLANTING GUIDE

PRICE LIST



Spring

1924

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THIRTY YEARS OF SATISFACTORY SERVICE.

*IMPORTED RHODODENDRONS
Over 2000 Plants in fifteen Varieties and Colors covered with bloom buds. (For full information and prices, see index.)*

Figure 9 • Malmo & Co Nursery Stock and Seeds, 1924.

ORNAMENTAL PLANTING
 by
ESTABLISHED 1893
MALMO & CO.
NURSERYMEN • SEEDSMEN

Office and Seed Store
 Corner Sixth and Stewart at Westlake

NURSERIES AT GEORGETOWN

Figure 10 • Malmø & Co Advertisement in Seattle Times Roy Vue Garden Apartments Announcement, 1924.

ORNAMENTAL DEPARTMENT



BROAD LEAVED EVERGREENS

Figure 11 • Malmø & Co Nursery Stock and Seeds, 1924.

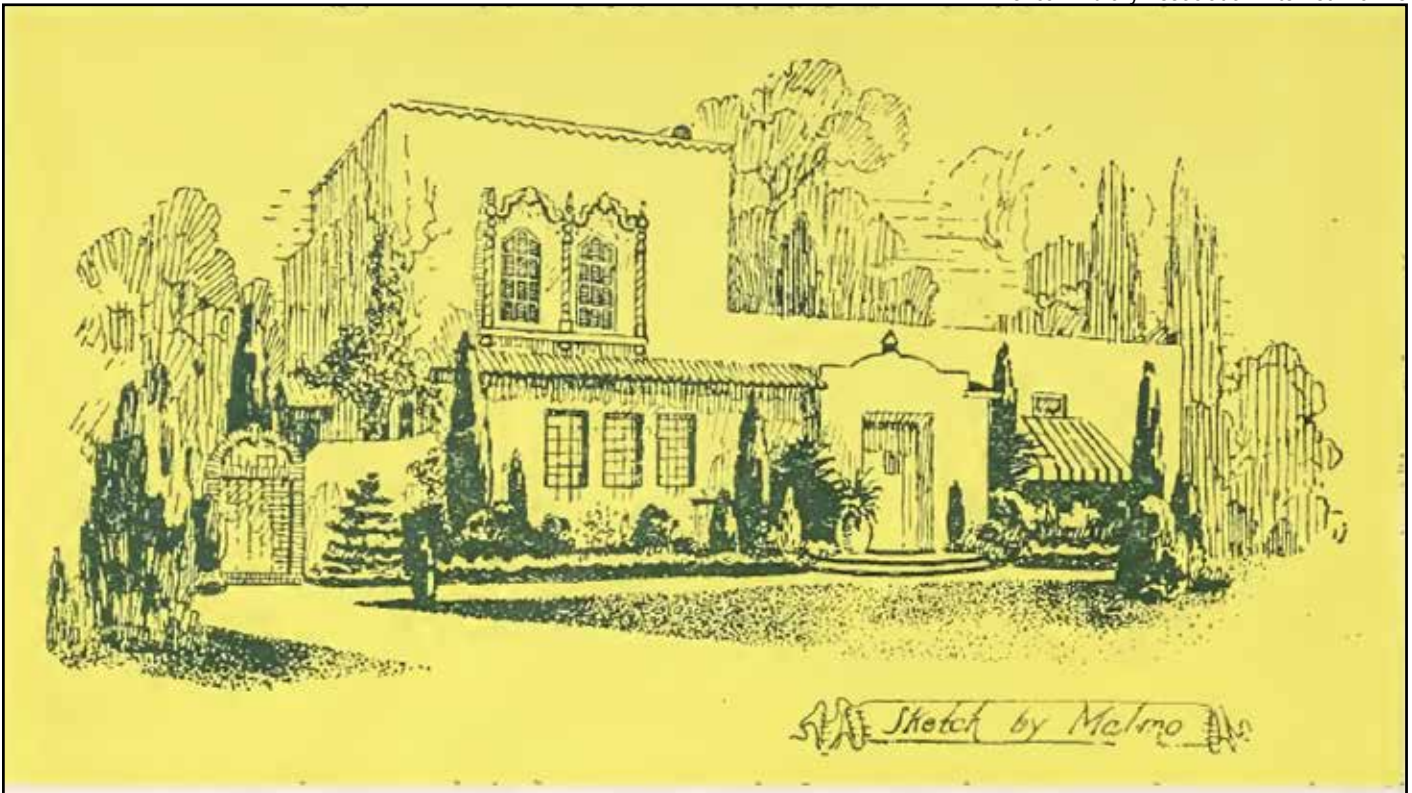


Figure 12 • Malmo & Co Nursery Stock and Seeds, 1926.

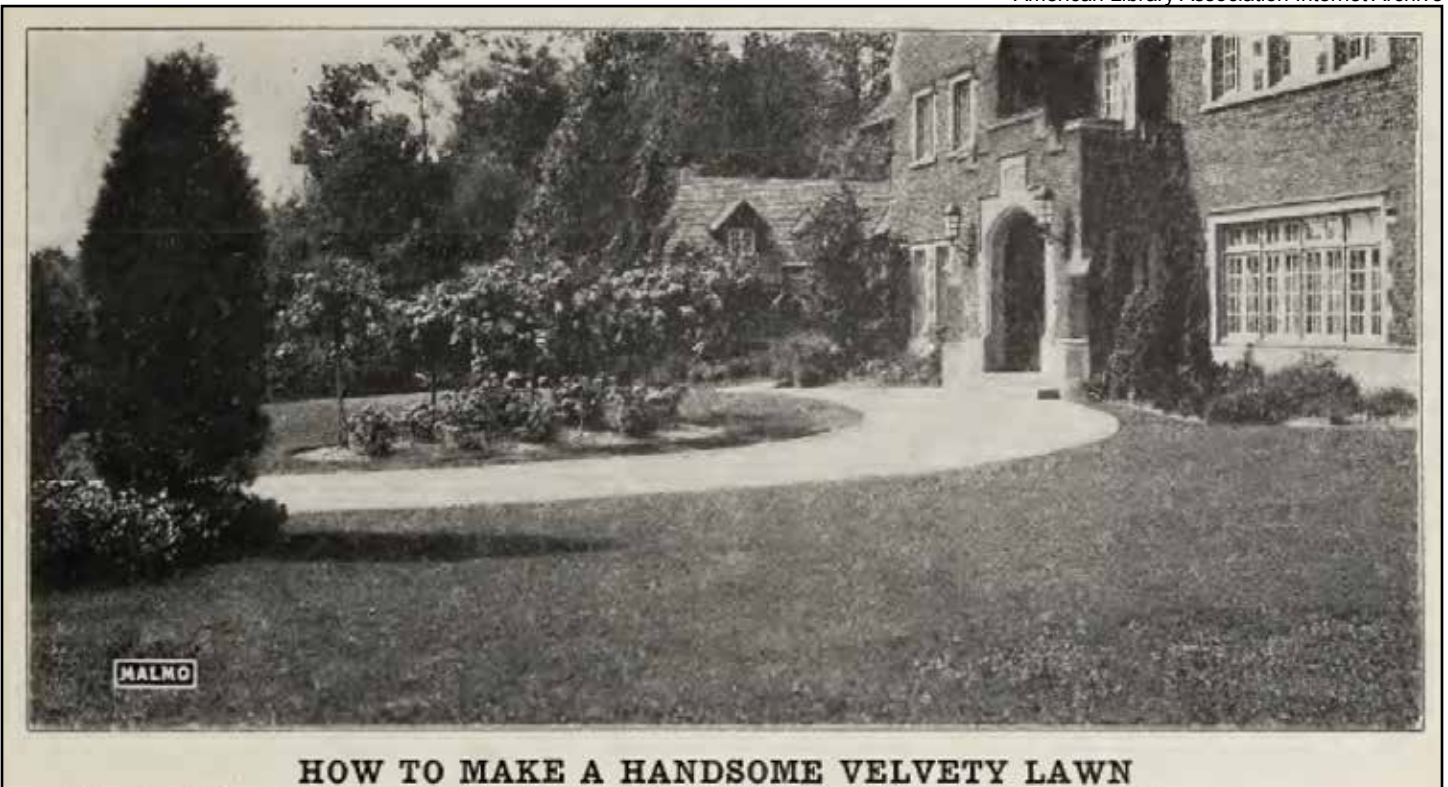


Figure 13 • Malmo & Co Nursery Stock and Seeds, 1924.



Figure 14 • Anhalt Apartments, circa 1949, 1600 East John (1930, Anhalt, City of Seattle Landmark).

MOHAI, 1997.4.28



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Figure 18 • Barcelona Court, 2205 Bigelow Avenue (1928, Anhalt, extant)

Google Maps.



Figure 19 • Tudor Court Apartments, 1719 2nd Avenue North (1929, possible Anhalt, extant)



Figure 20 • Franca Villa Apartments, 1108 9th Avenue (1930, developer: Sandberg in collaboration with W. Whitely, architect, extant)



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University of Washington, Special Collections



Figure 24 • Garden Court Condominium, circa 1930, 1631 16th Avenue, (1929, landscaper: Malmo & Company, extant)



IND. X 7212 P. O. BOX 1528

PEDER SANDVED, Landscape Gardener

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All kinds of Horticultural work for beautifying the home grounds.

More than 20 years of study and experience in America and Europe in the profession enables me to guarantee that my modern plans for laying out Parks, Estates, etc., and for the ornamenting of the home grounds insure the most artistic and pleasing effects.

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Figure 25 • 1910 Polks Advertisement, Peder Sandved, Landscape Gardener



Figure 26 • Kubuto Garden, date unknown.