

4: Good Design Overview

What's Coming Up:

Now that we've looked at the why, the what, and the how of good design, it's time to demonstrate it in action. The remaining chapters in the workbook each look at a real case study, an actual site in the Southern Tier region. Each of these sites has been taken on as a design problem by a class of Landscape Architecture students at Cornell University, with a goal of producing financially-sensible, ecologically-sound design. Since these designs all stem from real life, they provide a good base of examples of the potential diversity of solutions to the challenges of a particular site.

In addition to simply showing examples of student work, the designs will be discussed in terms of their connection to the programs, incentives, tools, and other goals detailed in the last chapter. It's important to remember that these aren't necessarily perfect designs, nor do they represent the full range of design possibilities; this is work done by students in an academic setting, where the strength of a "design concept" occasionally means more than the financial realities of the situation. These projects, however, contained a continual emphasis on the practical as well as on the process detailed in the preceding chapters, and so are quite representative of real, workable options at the concept-planning level.

Each of the "Good Design" Chapters contains the following two introductory sections, followed by individual pages highlighting each design solution:

Site Introduction:

Each site is unique, and became part of the Rural Design Workbook through its own circumstances. In this section of each chapter, you'll find a brief overview of the site, some of its history, its location, any noteworthy features, and other pertinent information.

Site Analysis:

As detailed in Chapter 2, a comprehensive site analysis is an important part of a good design. For each of the following sites, the students researched, developed, and communicated a wide range of information. For the purposes of the Workbook, a few examples from each site are shown to demonstrate the diversity of aspects that can be looked at in a strong site analysis process. In addition, we've maintained a common base level by including the two most important facets - slopes and existing conditions - in a common format for all the sites.

Individual Design Pages:

Each page of students' work will consist of a title, a large plan showing either the full extent of the site or a detail of the relevant area, a verbal overview of the design to assist you in reading the plan, a list of highlighted programs and incentives, and an analysis of pertinent statistics.