

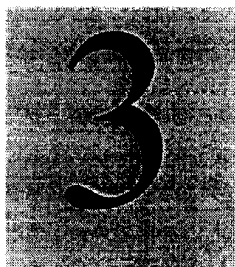


The Hole Truth

Guide To Golf Careers



by Whitney Crouse
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Golf Course Architect

A golf course architect is a very unique person. Of the 5 billion people on this planet, only about 200 or .000004% are making an honest buck designing golf courses. Now that's a *very* exclusive club.

Perhaps this is because the first golf courses were designed by *the man himself*, and his unpredictable assistant, mother nature. When the game began 400 to 500 years ago on the linksland of Scotland, the first golf courses followed the existing terrain of the land, which usually consisted of high, windswept sand dunes and hollows where grass grew if the soil was reasonably substantial. There were no trees or ponds, but natural hazards were numerous. Areas of grass were grazed bare by livestock. Sheep seeking shelter from the North Sea winds would burrow in hollows or behind hillocks, revealing the sandy base beneath and creating the first sandy wastelands and pot bunkers.

Furthermore, mother nature also doubled as the first greenkeeper. Bird and animal droppings combined with periodic rain from the ocean provided plenty of nutrients for the turf. The sandy nature of the soil provided excellent drainage. Grazing sheep and wild game kept the grass clipped and the sandy wastelands and bunkers were smoothed by the constant gusts of wind from the sea.

Old records indicate most new golfing grounds were created by the golf professional. It seemed natural for the men who were the best players, taught the game, and made the golf clubs to also lay out the golf courses. In the 1850's, several golf clubs hired the first "greenkeepers" to maintain the turf of the course. These first superintendents were soon called upon to help establish new courses. And more often than not, the golf professional and greenkeeper at a course were one and the same person. These first course designers did their work on site, never relying on any kind of drawings and completing their work in just a few days. Little construction was undertaken as the natural contours of the land were seldom

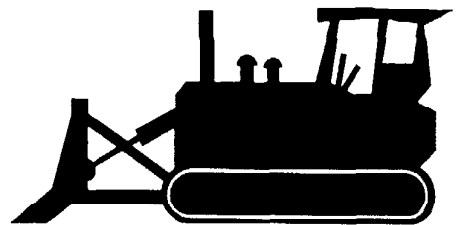
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altered. Hedgerows, stone walls, sheep hollows and the like were incorporated as hazards to the golf course. Except for a small supply of sand to top-dress a green periodically, little course maintenance was done by today's standards.

The earliest records of the first golf course designers date back to the late 1800's. The first recognized designer was Allan Robertson, long-time golf professional and clubmaker at St. Andrews who proceeded Old Tom Morris. He is credited with widening the Old Course and the design of several other Scottish courses, including 10 holes which were later to become the basis for the famed Carnoustie golf course.

Obviously, golf has changed, and within the past 75 years course architecture has become a highly specialized, very technical profession. Today's course designer must have knowledge of the following skills and sciences:

- ✓ A thorough understanding of the game, including its history and its rules.
- ✓ Engineering ability. How to read a contour map and operate an engineer's transit for developing cut and fill plans and checking levels.
- ✓ Hydraulic engineering. How to design an irrigation system, including an understanding of pumps, motors, piping systems, etc.
- ✓ Landscape architecture. The development of aesthetically pleasing plan compatible with the existing natural landscape and environment.
- ✓ Agronomy. The science of soil fertility and drainability.
- ✓ Agrostology. The science of turf culture.
- ✓ Chemistry. How to properly use fertilizers, fungicides, herbicides, pesticides, etc.
- ✓ An understanding of major earth moving equipment and its operation.
- ✓ Cost accounting. An ability to analyze and itemize costs in order to work within prescribed construction budgets.



The American Society of Golf Course Architects

The American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA) is the professional trade association of this unique group of people. Almost every qualified golf course architect is a member of the Society.

The Society is composed of four types of members:

Associate Member

An Associate Member must be at least 28 years of age, have a minimum of five years experience in the design, preparation of plans, and observation of construction to completion of at least five 18-hole courses.

Regular Member

A Regular Member must be at least 31 years of age, must have been an Associate Member for at least three years, and have a minimum of eight years experience as a golf course architect and be the architect for at least seven 18-hole facilities.

Fellow Member

A Regular Member in good standing for at least 10 years, age 70 or over, and approved for this status by the Board of Governors.

Honorary Member

Persons selected by the Board of Governors who have made significant contributions to the profession of golf course architecture.

An architect who meets the qualifications to be an Associate Member must submit an application for membership in the Society which contains the written sponsorship of four Regular or Fellow Members. An Associate Member applying for Regular Membership in the Society submits an application stating his qualifications and furnishing such other information as required by the Membership Committee.

The Hole Truth's Advantages and Disadvantages

The Pluses

- ◆ Knowing you're one of a very few people on earth who are qualified to design a golf course. Becoming a member of the American Society of Golf Course Architects is a significant accomplishment and one to write to mom about.
- ◆ The joy of creating a golf course enjoyed by thousands of golfers - and will continue to do so long after you are placed in the final big divot.
- ◆ Working with our nation's highest profile developers, businessman, and celebrities. As the golf course architect, you are often treated as a celebrity by these same clients.
- ◆ Self-employment. All course architects are independent contractors and enjoy the freedoms associated with owning your own business.

The Minuses

- ◆ It's a very difficult and time consuming profession to break into. Gaining the experience and credibility to design your first course is a major obstacle.
- ◆ You're subject to the ups and downs of the economy more than most people. New golf course development is extremely sensitive to interest rates and recessions. Real estate and course development are the first to suffer in periods of high interest rates and economic downturns. It's often feast or famine as an architect.
- ◆ Self-employment. While your income is not guaranteed, you can count on significant personnel, travel, and office expenses.

Compensation

A recent college graduate with a bachelors or masters degree in landscape architecture working as an assistant to an active ASGCA member will earn \$24,000 - \$26,000 annually.

With some experience and tenure, this same assistant may make \$50,000 or more as a project manager, but generally after 10 -15 years in the business.

Architect's fees in today's market range from \$75,000 to \$1 million per course, depending on the architect's experience, reputation, and marketability. Most beginning designers must charge minimal fees to become established, unless they are Jack Nicklaus or Arnold Palmer and their name has substantial marketing value from the outset.

The average non-celebrity architect usually charges \$100,000 - \$150,000 per course, from which he must pay all the expenses of running a business. The amount an architect takes home annually therefore depends on the number of projects he completes and the level of his overhead each year.

Getting Started

The overwhelming majority of golf course architects have a degree in landscape architecture and first worked as an apprentice to an established ASGCA member for a minimum of 10 years, usually 15. Their first solo golf course design normally occurs while they are in their mid-thirties after substantial experience working for an experienced architect.

What Makes For A Successful Architect?

One course architect told us "great architects need great clients." If the client you are working with has a minimal budget and is building a course on less than desirable land, your chance for fame and fortune are not good. Yet how do you get great clients when you have little experience?

A lot of hard work, talent, and luck are required. Unless you are a Tour player bringing your name to the table, success comes with building a reputation as a skilled designer, and nothing enhances your reputation as having just one of your golf courses win an award or receive accolades from the golf community.

Once you receive national press and have at least one design known as a "zinger," your name as an architect begins to have considerable marketing value to golf course and real estate developers. Once this happens, projects come to you and your fee can increase dramatically.

Tom Fazio, Pete Dye, and Arthur Hills are examples of success breeding success.

The reason for the long apprenticeship is this: what golf course developer, risking \$2 to \$10 million on a project, is going to hire a 25-year-old with little experience, regardless of his degrees and considerable technical knowledge? And while a few course architects have made the jump from golf course superintendent or even golf professional to course architect, most follow the route as an apprentice to a ASGCA member. The career path therefore begins with

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a degree in landscape architecture, continues with a lengthy apprenticeship as an assistant to an architect, and progresses to hanging-out one's own shingle only after many years of experience and dues paying.

Once you are ready to go out on your own, plan to live on one-half the income you are accustomed to, or even going one year with no income at all. Like any entrepreneur, you are starting your own business, making minimal bids on new projects while incurring travel, personnel, and office expenses. Making the jump from employee to employer, assistant to architect, may be the most difficult task in the profession.

Helpful Resources

The ASGCA can send you additional information on becoming a golf course architect and a copy of the Society's by-laws and code of ethics.

American Society of Golf Course Architects
221 North LaSalle Street
Chicago, IL 60601
(312) 372-7090

The following colleges and universities are recognized by the ASGCA as offering courses of instruction in the skills needed to be a successful architect.

University of Illinois
College of Applied and Fine Arts
214 Mumford Hall
1301 W. Gregory
Urbana, IL 61801
(217) 333-0176

University of Kentucky
Dept. of Horticulture & Landscape
Science Center North
Lexington, KY 40546
(606) 257-3485

Iowa State University
Dept. of Landscape Architecture
College of Design, Room 146
Ames, IA 50011
(515) 294-5676

Louisiana State University
School of Landscape Architecture
College of Design Building
Baton Rouge, LA 70803
(504) 388-1434

Kansas State University
College of Architecture and Design
215 Seaton Hall
Manhattan, KS 66506
(913) 532-5961

University of Massachusetts
Dept. of Landscape Architecture
Hills North 109
Amherst, MA 01003
(413) 545-2255

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Michigan State University
Landscape Architecture Program
Dept. of Geography
East Lansing, MI 48824
(517) 353-7880

University of Michigan
Dept. of Landscape Architecture
Dana Bldg., Room 1548
Ann Arbor, MI 48109
(313) 753-9214

University of Minnesota
College of Landscape Architecture
213 North Hall, 20005 Buford Cir.
St. Paul, MN 55108
(612) 625-8285

Mississippi State University
Department of Agriculture
P.O. Drawer MQ
Mississippi State, MS 39762
(601) 325-3012

North Carolina State University
Dept. of Landscape Architecture
P.O. Box 7701
Raleigh, NC 27695
(919) 737-206

Ohio State University
Dept. of Landscape Architecture
136 B Brown Hall, 190 W. 17th St.
Columbus, OH 43210
(614) 292-8263

University of Oregon
School of Architecture and
Allied Arts
Eugene, OR 97403
(503) 346-3634

University of Pennsylvania
Dept. of Landscape Architecture
119 Myerson Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19102
(215) 898-6591

Pennsylvania State University
College of Arts and Architecture
210 Engineering Unit D
University Park, PA 16802
(814) 865-9511

University of Arkansas
School of Architecture
116 Camall Hall
Fayetteville, AR 72701
(501) 575-4907

Auburn University
Department of Architecture
104 Dudley Hall
Auburn, AL 36849
(205) 844-5425

Ball State University
College of Architecture
Dept. of Landscape Architecture
Muncie, IN 47306
(317) 285-1971

California Polytechnic State Univ.
Dept. of Landscape Architecture
3801 West Temple Ave.
Pomona, CA 91768
(714) 869-2673

University of California at Berkeley
Dept. of Landscape Architecture
202 Wurster Hall
Berkeley, CA 94720
(415) 642-4022

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University of California at Davis
Landscape Architecture Program
Dept. of Environmental Design
Davis, CA 95616
(916) 752-6233

City College of New York
Urban Landscape Architecture
138th St. and Convent Avenue
New York, NY 10031
(212) 650-8732

Colorado State University
Dept. of Landscape Architecture
College of Forestry
Fort Collins, CO 80523
(303) 491-6591

University of Colorado at Denver
Landscape Architecture Program
1200 Larimer St, Box 126
Denver, CO 80204
(303) 556-4090

Cornell University
Landscape Architecture Program
440 Kennedy Hall
Ithaca, NY 14853
(607) 255-4487

University of Florida
Dept. of Landscape Architecture
331 Architecture Building
Gainesville, FL 32661
(904) 392-6098

University of Georgia
Dept. of Landscape Architecture
609 Caldwell Hall
Athens, GA 30602
(404) 542-1816

University of Guelph
School of Landscape Architecture
Guelph, Ontario
Canada, N1G 2W1
(519)824-4120

Harvard University
Graduate School of Design
409 Gund Hall, 48 Quincy Street
Cambridge, MA 02138
(617) 495-2573

University of Idaho
Landscape Architecture Department
College of Art & Architecture
Moscow, ID 83843
(208) 885-6272

Purdue University
Landscape Architecture Program
Horticulture Building
West Lafayette, IN 47907
(317) 494-1326

Rhode Island School of Design
Division of Architectural Study
2 College Street
Providence, RI 02903
(401) 331-3511

Rutgers University
Dept. of Landscape Architecture
Blake Hall, Cook College, Box 231
New Brunswick, NJ 08903
(201) 932-9317

State University of New York
Faculty of Landscape Architecture
1 Forestry Drive
Syracuse, NY 13210
(315) 470-6541

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Texas A&M University
College of Architecture
321 Langford Architecture Center
College Station, TX 77843
(409)845-1019

University of Toronto
Landscape Architecture Program
230 College Street
Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5S 1A1
(416) 978-6788

Utah State University
College of Humanities, Arts
And Sciences
Logan, UT 84322
(801) 750-3471

Virginia Polytechnic Institute
202 Architecture Annex
Blacksburg, VA 24061
(703) 231-5506

University of Virginia
School of Architecture
Campbell Hall
Charlottesville, VA 22903
(804) 924-3957

Washington State University
College of Agriculture
Pullman, WA 99164
(509) 335-9502

University of Washington
College of Architecture
348 Gould Hall, JO-34
Seattle, WA 98195
(206) 543-9240

West Virginia University
Landscape Architecture Program
1140 Agricultural Science Bldg.
Morgantown, WV 26506
(304) 293-2141

University of Wisconsin
Dept. of Landscape Architecture
25 Agriculture Hall
1450 Linden Drive
Madison, WI 53706
(608) 263-7300