

Landscape Models for Suburban Properties and Country Estates

*By Albert D. Taylor**

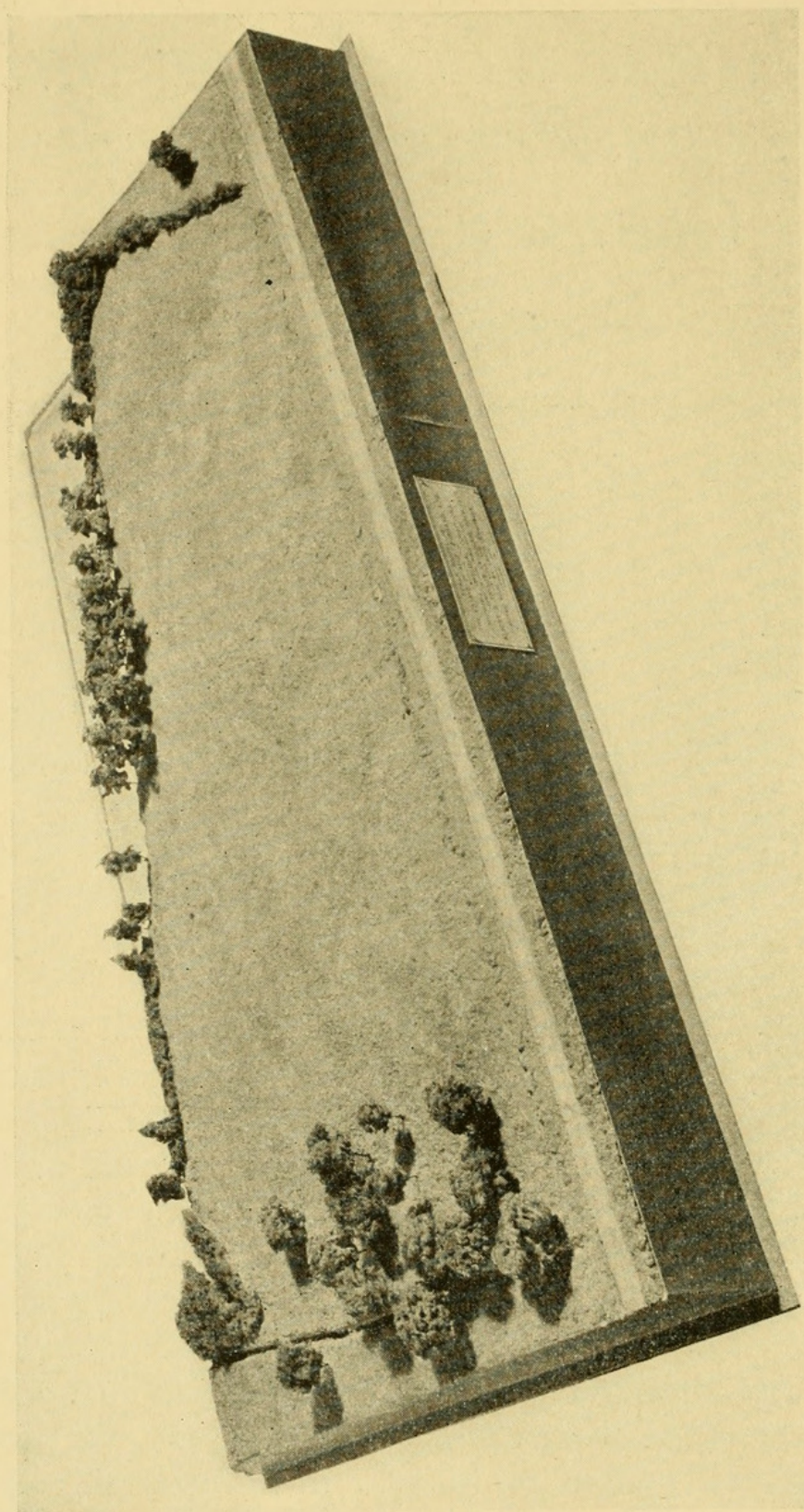
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THE value of small models for use in the development of the landscape features of the suburban lot and of the country estate has been but little appreciated until very recently. The value of landscape models for the development of such properties can readily be appreciated through a careful study of the photographs and plates accompanying this article,

The owner of property, contemplating the erection of a new home, or the improvement of the grounds surrounding an existing home, is at once confronted with the problem of picturing in his imagination the complete development from its various points of view. He is provided with interesting and attractive drawings. These drawings at best, impress the layman as being complicated. He can appreciate possibly but little of the real architectural details and much less of the difficult problems involved in grading. Through a comparison of the photographs of the models, the difficulty of solving these grading problems entirely through the imagination, may be at once appreciated. The difficulty of solving these problems with nothing but plans of existing and proposed conditions, is much more apparent. In general, unless the design is a very simple one, the average person is entirely unable to imagine in a pictorial way, the finished work.

* With photographs and models by the author.

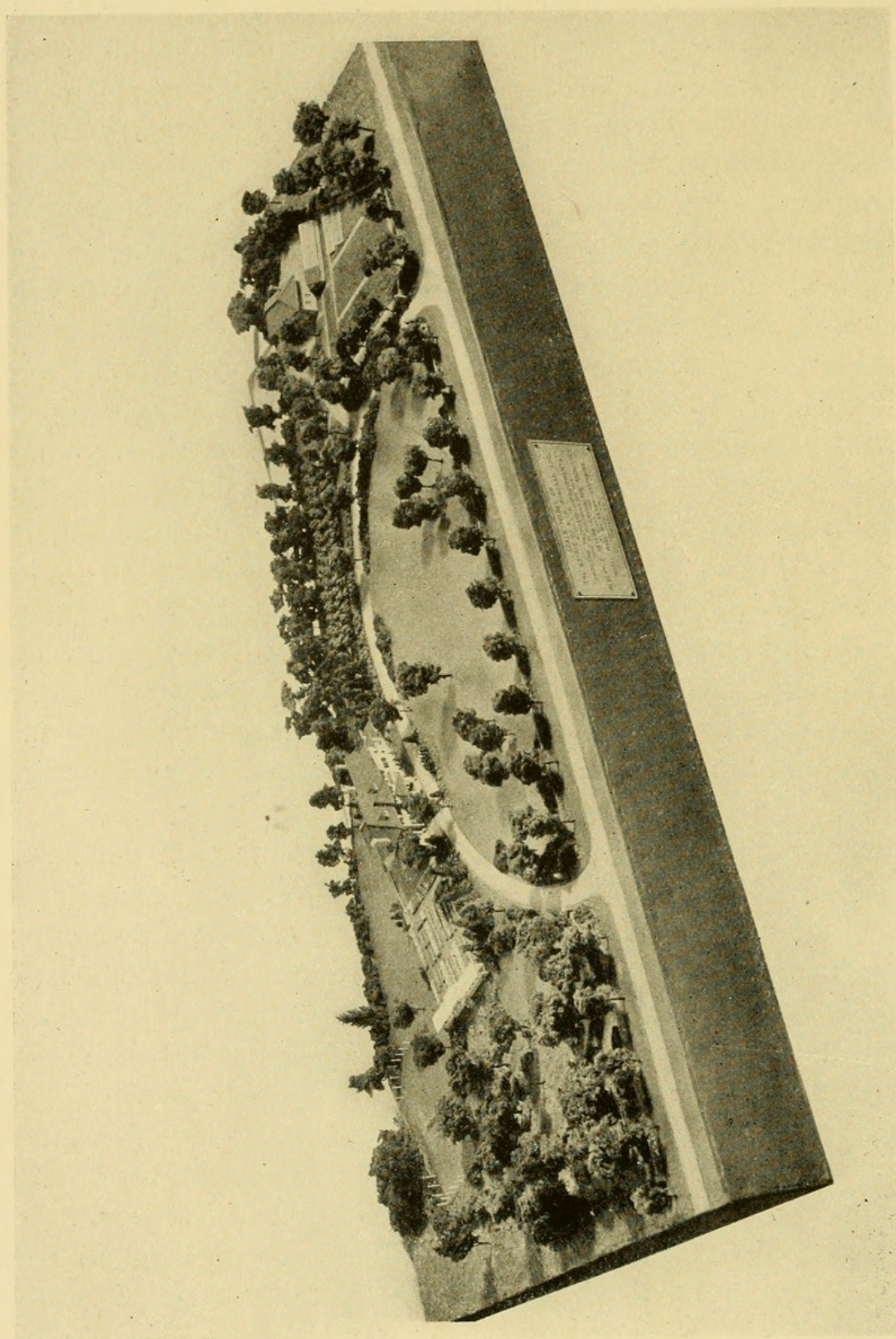


LANDSCAPE MODEL SHOWING
EXISTING SURFACE
H. P. BURGARD, ESQ., BUFFALO

Perspective drawings are frequently made and aid the imagination greatly in solving these problems. They are expensive to develop and in but few cases are sufficient perspective drawings made to enable the owner to study the property from more than one or two points of view. Then the owner is left entirely in the dark concerning an innumerable number of details to be studied from the many other different points of view. Many times in the development of such properties, the question of tree location and massing of shrubbery must be settled definitely long before the buildings are completed. These problems are much more easily solved if studied in the model form. Perspective drawings are frequently forced, or "faked" very often to overcome the weak points shown in unnatural settings and impossible surroundings, together with unnatural lights and shadows, in order to produce a pleasing effect in the client's mind. The relationship of plantings to the scale of the architecture, the relationship of open areas, one to the other, and the relationship of vistas and screen plantings to desirable and undesirable views, are readily appreciated in the development of models. They are not appreciated in the development of perspective drawings.

Models are of invaluable assistance in connection with the development of plans in the office. They are of equally as much value to the office as to the owner or developer of property. The survey of a property, which is the basis of all landscape studies, is much more valuable if accompanied by a model, illustrating the existing conditions. The designer and the client are both able to study the property from all points of view. If in the development of the model, the effect produced is not pleasing or desirable, changes in the model can be made and many costly mistakes avoided in the execution of the work.

There are two types of models which may be used in the landscape development of properties. The first type of model is the one to be used for observing purposes and not to be handled. The representation of various features on the property such as buildings and plantings, may be made in a less stable manner so long as the desired effect is produced.



DETAILED STUDY OF
PROPOSED PLANTING
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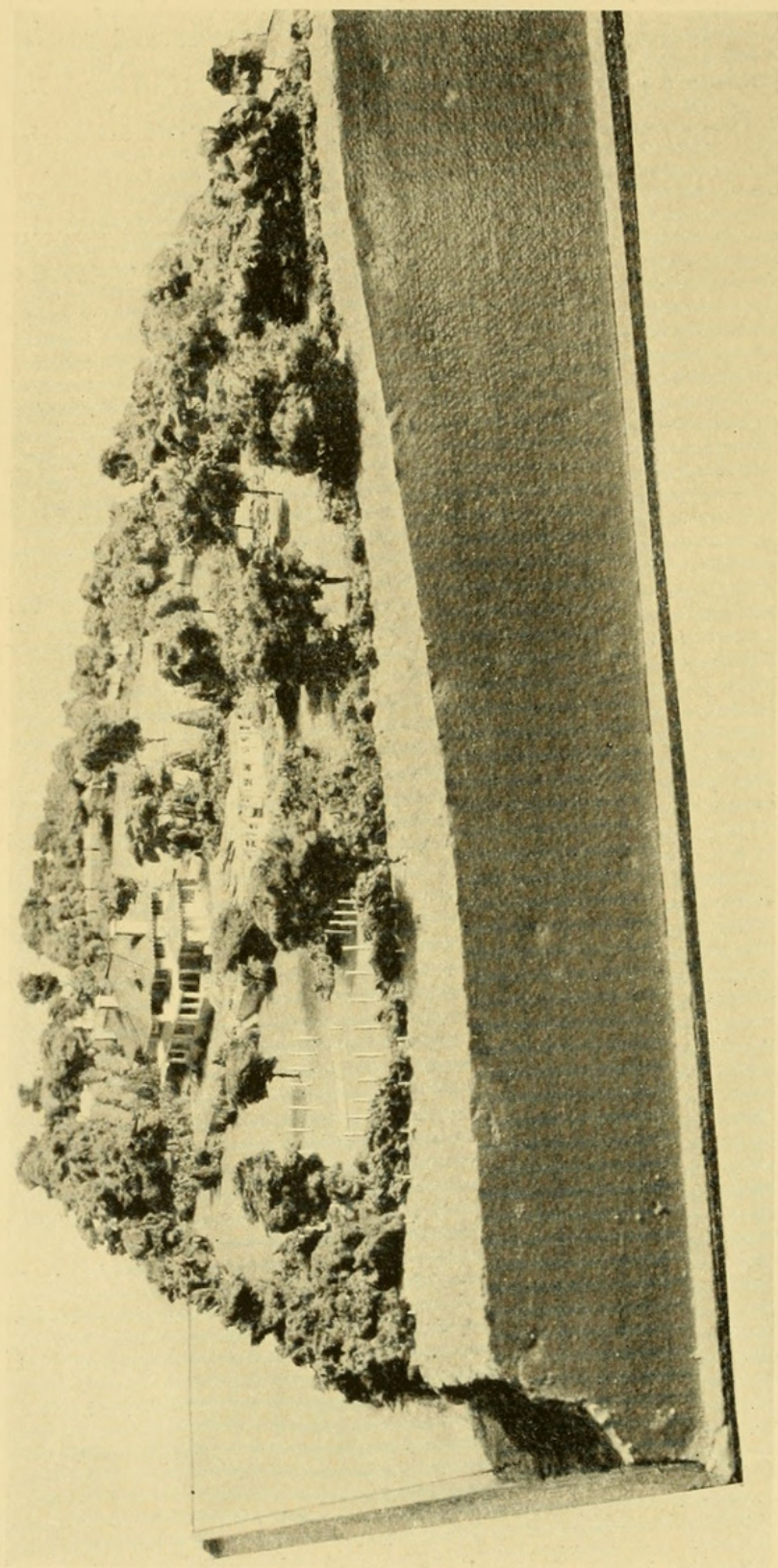
The second type of model is the model which is to be subjected to handling. This must be made in a much more stable manner. The buildings must be more firmly glued, the trees must be firmly imbedded in the form of the model, and in many cases reinforced with additional wiring.

The making of models as shown in the accompanying photographs is a fascinating occupation. The requirements are few, and consist principally of patience and the ability to do accurate work with a few simple tools.

The objects to be modeled, as shown by the accompanying photographs, are divided into two classes, buildings and landscape. The former is naturally the simpler problem and depends on the scale of the model and the limitations of patience and time given to the work and admits of showing as much of the detail as is desired. The latter, however, depends more upon suggestions conveyed through plans and much greater ingenuity is required. While many of the smallest details of buildings can be shown, it is impossible to model the branches or leaves of trees or the ripples on water. A few suggestions covering the methods of making such models may be of value.

In the modeling of buildings, cardboard is the most practical material. Each wall and roof plane is drawn with a T-square on cardboard. The windows are shown the same as in any elevation, and later traced on a piece of transparent celluloid. White or colored ink is used to represent sash. The window is then cut out of the cardboard, thus forming a reveal. The celluloid on which the window has been traced is placed back of the opening and glued to the cardboard. Brick, shingles, waterboards, and casings may be marked on the cardboard with a ruling pen or pencil. They may also be indented with a dull knife. The different pieces of cardboard showing the different elevations of buildings are then cut out and assembled by applying suitable paste to the edges.

The roof tile is represented by the use of corrugated paper. Cylindrical columns can be made by use of pencils, brush handles, or matches, painted with Chinese white or other colors.



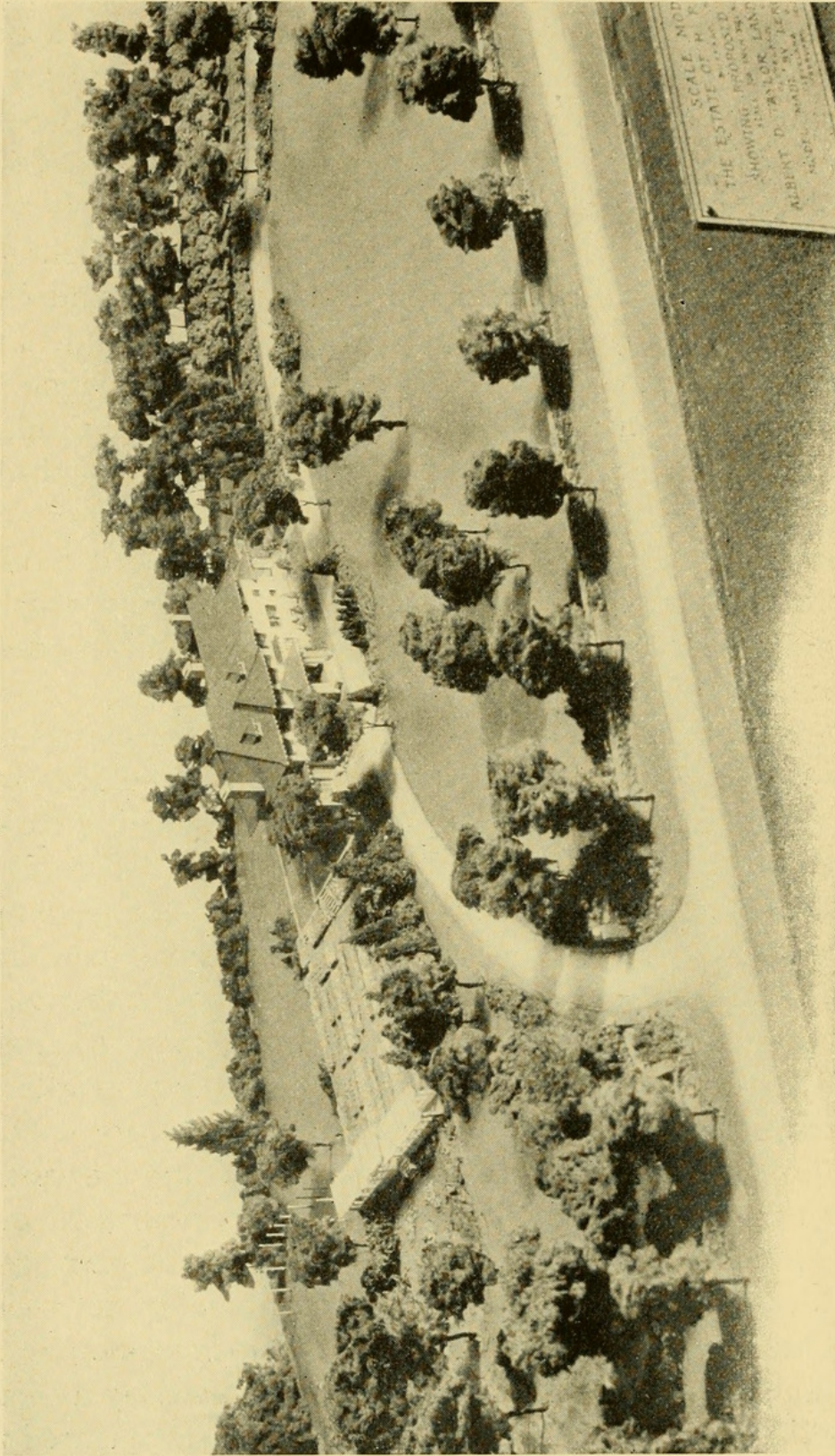
NEARER VIEW OF MODEL
SHOWING EFFECT OF CONTOURS
H. P. BURGARD, ESQ.

Cornices are constructed by the use of cardboard of various widths and thicknesses with rounded edges, produced by rubbing with sand paper. Representations of rafter ends are cut out of cardboard and pasted under the eaves. If the scale is sufficiently large to show any ornament in the caps of the columns, these may be modeled in clay or cast in plaster, small duplicates being cast in plaster and glued on the model. The only limitations in the execution of architectural detail is the amount of time and money one is willing to expend. Very often it is not necessary to show the smaller details which with a little careful handling may be omitted in a manner similar to that in which the painter avoids detail on canvas through suggestion.

The work in developing the landscape features of a model is much more complicated. There are many different methods and materials which may be used. These should be selected with special reference to each individual problem.

The contour of the ground may be modeled in a plasteline or patent clay, which admits of unlimited alteration. The objection to it, however, is that the surface never thoroughly hardens and, therefore, does not form a solid base on which to attach trees and buildings. If plaster is the material decided upon, the plaster cast can be readily made of the model for permanent use. The plaster cast offers a hard unchanging material, the only objection to which is that it is easily broken and is unnecessarily heavy, the added weight often making large models too heavy to be easily handled. The most satisfactory material probably is cardboard. This material has many advantages over other materials in that it is light, making the model easily handled and withstands a considerable amount of jarring and offers an ideal substance in which to drive nails or pins, or on which to glue architectural features or to attach trees.

Water such as lakes or ponds, is best represented by a sheet of thin plain glass under which may be placed a surface tinted with a light grayish blue, inked or painted. These water areas should be first developed in order not to interfere with the rest of the work later.



MODEL SHOWING PROPOSED
LANDSCAPE ARRANGEMENT
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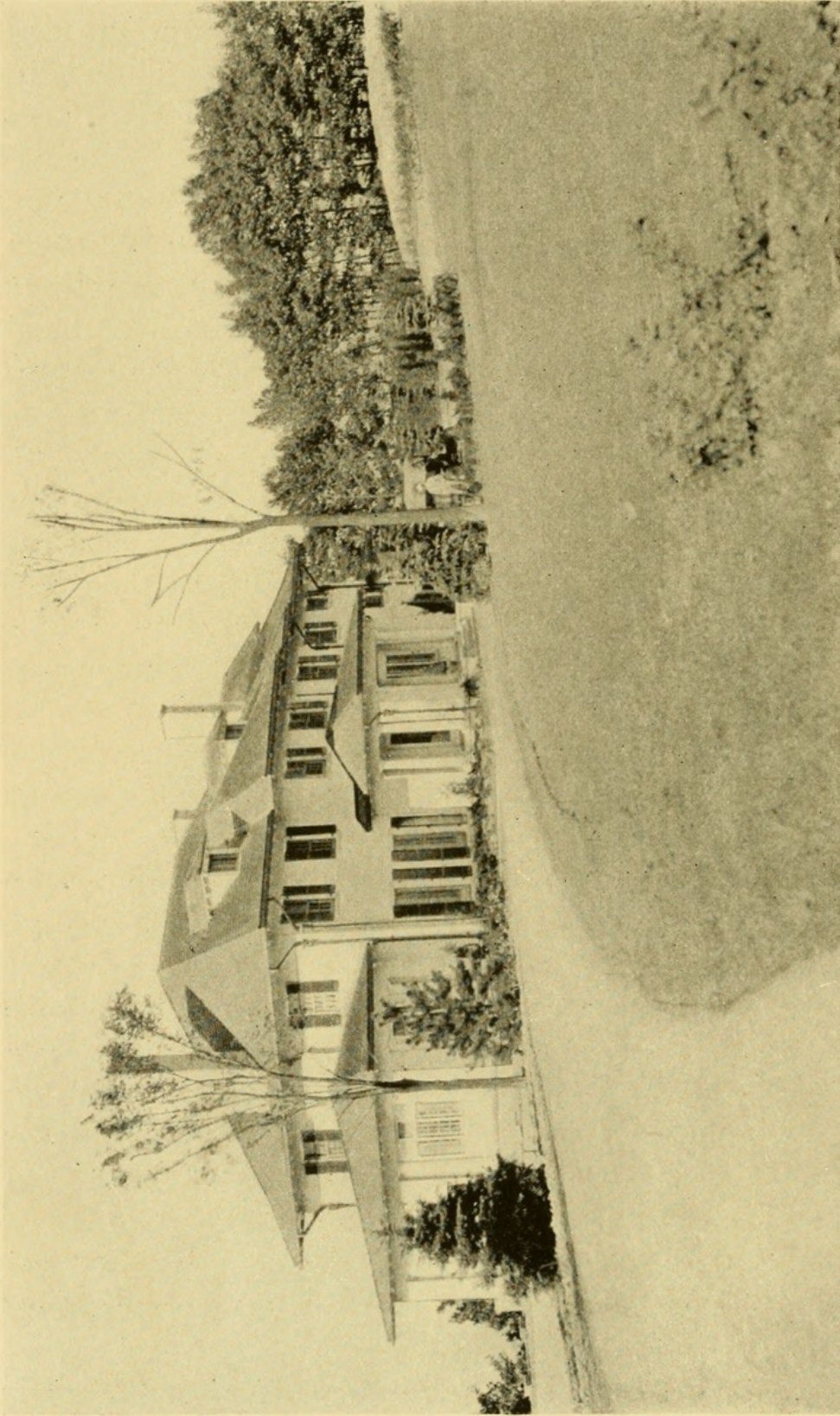
Models are usually made with a study similar to that shown in one of the illustrations in hand. This information together with architects elevations, photographs of the buildings if any exist, and a study of proposed or existing conditions are used for reference. Ground work, showing the difference of elevations is modeled in clay and plasterine. The plat is drawn on a board which is used for a base of the model. Points are located at convenient intervals and nails driven into the board at these points. Each nail is driven down until the height is at the proper elevation above the board to indicate the definite grade at that point on the model. Clay is then applied and smoothed down even with the tops of the nails.

Another and more accurate method of modeling contours of the grounds is to run small slabs of plaster representing typical sections, through the property. These to be cut to conform to the contour lines on the plat and then placed side by side and glued together with shellac. In all such models, the permanent model is generally produced as a plaster cast.

Sheets of cardboard or beaverboard may be used instead of plaster slabs. The clay, which covers the surface of the model in a thin layer, is then shellacked and painted.

After the general base of the model has thus been developed, the buildings, fences, shrubbery and garden areas are added. The features such as trees and large shrubs are often omitted until the model is colored, because if inserted in the earlier stages, they would interfere with the ease of the work over the remaining details on smaller features and the painting of the model. Wire fences and tennis court backnets are represented by pins with their heads clipped off at the proper height. Shrubs and bushes are represented by pieces of sponge painted green, and attached with pins or shellac. Small shrubs as well as small trees, vegetable and flower gardens are best represented by being modeled in a pulp made of soaked tissue paper, water, and plaster paris, which is added to the surface of the model.

Trees are best represented by sponges reinforced with wire to represent branches and trunks. Two or three strands of small wire are twisted together at the bottom to form the trunk



PHOTOGRAPH OF PARTIALLY
COMPLETE DEVELOPMENT
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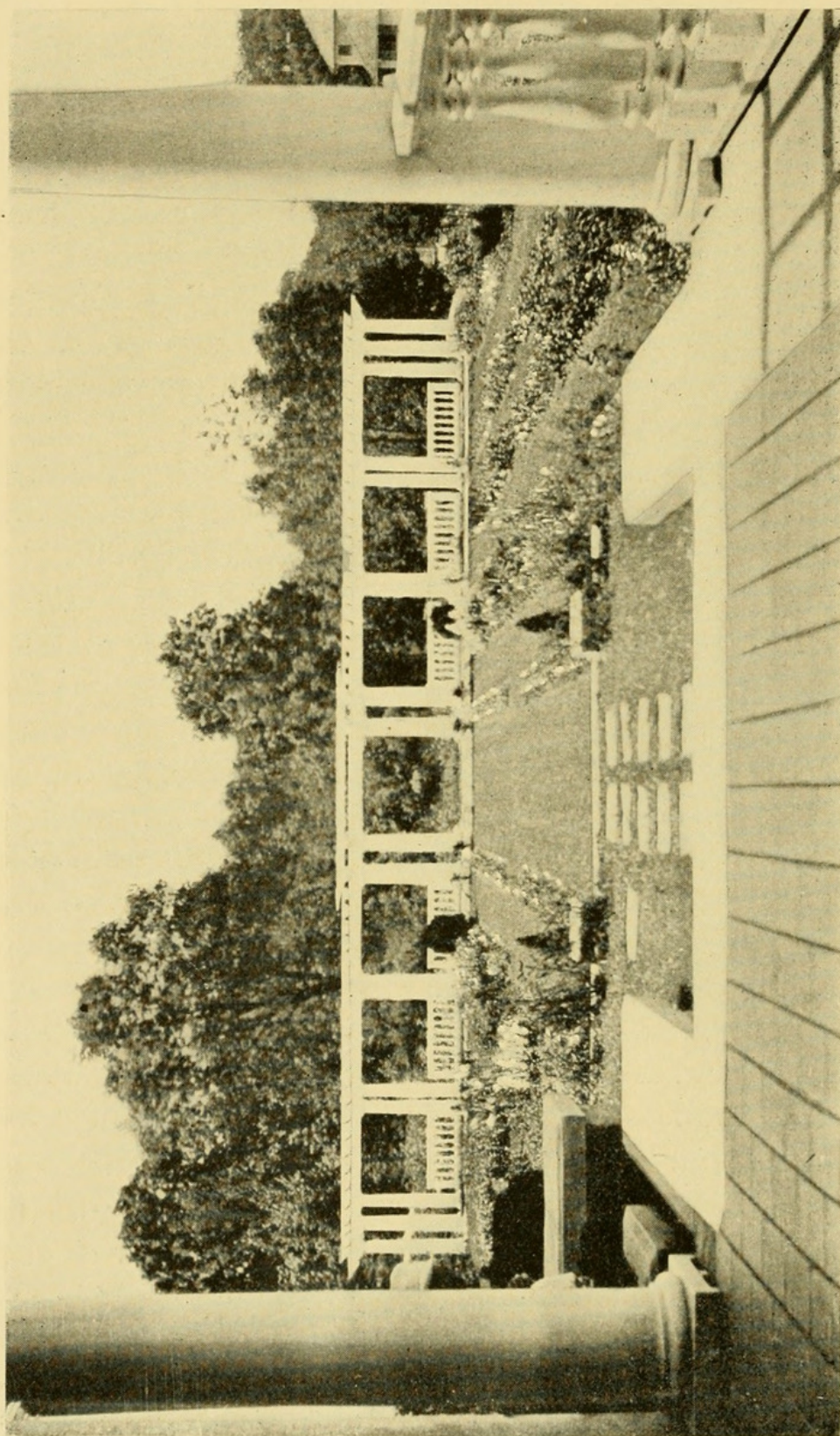
and they are spread at the top to form the branches. Pieces of sponge cut to the proper shape to represent the tops of trees are then slipped over the ends of the wire and the ends of the wire turned back, hold the sponge in place. It is often much better to conform the sponges to the shape of the trees after they have been attached to the wire. It may be interesting to note that coarse pieces of sponge cut in jagged horizontal layers well separated from each other, are used as excellent representation of oaks; elms are made of flat pieces of sponge cut in an umbrella form; evergreens are represented by pieces of sponge cut in conical shape.

Coloring of landscape models is one of the most difficult features and often requires great artistic skill and knowledge of color combinations in order to produce the best results. Contrary to the liberal interpretation of color schemes, the result is sure to be disappointing if colors are used to match the colors of nature for the reason that the same color has an entirely different effect out in the open sunlight as compared with the effect produced indoors under artificial lights where models are so often seen. A color appears much stronger when covered over a large surface than when it covers only a small spot. Atmosphere and the variation of color caused by its varying intensities, are entirely lacking of its effects indoors. It is, therefore, desirable to use pigments lighter than those seen in nature, in order to neutralize and make up for the lacking of "atmosphere" and to brighten colors in many other cases because of the small area. A considerable variation of color on objects of seemingly the same color is adopted in order to make up for the lack of reflection and the accumulation of dirt and weather stains, producing the effect of age.

It is highly desirable that the models should be observed in a strong concentrated light which comes as much as possible from one direction.

The photographs accompanying this article illustrate to a greater or less degree, the value of models in the development of large suburban estates.

Cleveland



DETAILED STUDY OF
INTERIOR OF FLOWER GARDEN
H. P. BURGARD, ESQ.



Taylor, Albert D. 1918. "Landscape Models for Suburban Properties and Country Estates." *Journal of the International Garden Club* 2(3), 427–438.

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