

**WOODLAND OVERLOOK**  
MCLEAN, VIRGINIA



View of garden terraces stepping down to the heated pool

**Client:** Withheld at owner's request  
**Contractors:** Fine Earth Landscape Company  
(general contractor)

**Intent**

A Normandy style renovation to a 1970's California style wood frame house provided the impetus for this comprehensive landscape renovation. Working from an existing out-of-grade hillside swimming pool and surrounding wooden decks, the landscape plan involved creation of curvilinear stone retaining walls and backfilled earthen terraces, resulting in a traditionally inspired three-part terraced garden plan, thus creating enduring landscape features where only air and wooden "flyover" decks previously existed. While Italianate in its inspiration, the hillside terraces harmonize with the architectural stucco, and timber elements of the renovated French country home styled building. The upper terrace provides intimate loggia and open terrace spaces, paved with rustic dolomitic limestone, surrounded by mature specimen fruit trees, ground covering, and retained native shade trees. An alluring small sculptural water feature provides inspiration, while overlooking a stone potting table, located in a nook against the house. A mid level terrace provides a stone paved pathway garden, of various planting textures and seasonal color, leading to the lower terrace lawn and swimming pool. A curving hand wrought iron railing, matched to the existing stairway railing, surrounds the formal lawn, providing an attractive overlook to the native woodland canopy, floor, and stream beyond, and more than twenty feet below the new retaining wall, which is, surprisingly, clad in a naturalizing ochre tones, thus naturally camouflaged and harmonizing with the native landscape ground cover of leaves, mulch, and timber. At the pool, with integral spa, surrounding terrace steps and landings interact with rockwork, wall spouts, and terraced planting to provide engaging views and a playful interactive atmosphere, reflective of historic European garden heritage, while naturally harmonizing with the Virginia woodland nature of the site.



View of limestone terrace and cedar pergola after construction