CONTRACTORS DESCRIBE PROJECTS CHOSEN AS 1979 AWARD WINNERS

The Martin-Marietta Corp. Headquarters

by Bruce F. Shank, Editor

An award winning landscape project demonstrates the skilled combination of natural beauty, functional efficiency, and personal comfort. In 1979, regional and national groups selected and recognized more than 100 successful landscape projects in the United States. Seven award winning contractors have agreed to share their project reports with us. They offer a variety of solutions to regional and topographical conditions in the design and construction of a professional landscape.

These projects offer tips on how to take an existing area, to identify problem elements, and to arrive at a controlled, yet balanced, environment for plants, structures, and people. We encourage you to keep this issue for future reference and to participate in design/build contests in 1980.

Chapel Valley Nursery Co., Woodbine, MD
Project: Martin-Marietta Headquarters
Landscape Architect: Andrew Balderson, of Donovan, Feola, Balderson & Associates, Inc., Silver Spring, MD.

This project has received four awards during the last three years for different phases of construction. The 1979 award was a Certificate of Merit from the American Nurserymen's Association. In 1978 it received a merit award from the Associated Landscape Contractors of America. In 1977, it clinched the Grand Award from the Landscape Contractors Association of Metropolitan Washington and the Contractor Award from the Maryland Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects.

The Martin-Marietta Corporation Headquarters Building was designed to reflect the high standards of the corporation. The location, site development and building design were intended to produce the best environment possible.

In order to achieve this high standard, the owner demanded that all facets of the project be carried out with the highest quality of materials and workmanship. To that end, the owner worked closely with the architects and contractors in overseeing that all stages of project development were implemented and completed in a proper and professional manner.

The project landscaping proceeded in two phases: exterior planting and interior courtyard planting.

The exterior planting included a complete irrigation system, 4 inches of topsoil over site, bermed areas, fine grading, seeding and sodding, large and varied planting areas, walks and a paved plaza entrance area.

Changes and corrections to original rough grading were necessary to create the proper berms for the planting and lawn areas. These berms provide a rolling effect to the exterior planting areas.

Owner dissatisfaction with particular plants was resolved by consulting with the architect on substitute tree varieties to achieve the desired effect.

The plants were selected in size, groupings and color to contrast and complement the building as well as to provide a tranquil and pleasant area for both employees and visitors.

In order to heighten this effect, a screening of sixty White Pines was planted to both cut off the view and lower the noise level from a major highway, Route 495. All sides of the building were landscaped to provide a picturesque setting either viewing the area from the perimeter roadways or looking out from the building over the site. A canopy of Kwanzan Cherry trees, as suggested by the landscape contractor, surrounds the employee cafeteria adding seasonal interest to an important gathering place. A manmade pond was created with walks and sitting areas to enhance the overall impact.

View from entrance of Martin-Marietta headquarters.

The three interior courtyards, North, South and Central, required individual irrigation systems, intricate site grading, special planting mixtures, numerous large and small plants and decorative paving.

The North Courtyard posed a particular challenge to the landscape crew's ingenuity. The North Courtyard is located 15 feet above grade on the top of a parking garage. After analyzing the situation, it was determined that access to this area was limited to a four by four foot trap door located in the floor of the courtyard. Plant material was lifted through the trap door either by hand if light or by tripod and chain hoist if heavy. Because of weight constraints, a special soil mix was used consisting of one-third perlite and two-thirds topsoil for this area. In order to bring in the necessary 500 cubic yards of special planting mix, an 80 foot long conveyor was set up to bring materials from outside the building, through the building and into the courtyard.

The Central Courtyard required twenty-five 12 foot wide, hexagon brick units held together by steel edging. After a discussion between the shop manager and landscape foreman, it was decided to make the twenty-five, preformed, welded metal edged shapes at the shop and then take them to the job site. This courtyard, which is overlooked by the visitor waiting area, provides a colorful and seasonal vista for all interior employee offices.

Again, access was a problem in planting the South Courtyard. But, utilizing the experience gained in competing the North and Central Courtyards, the crews were able to complete this courtyard planting without any additional difficulty.

The desired environmental effect of quality and tranquillity was achieved through owner involvement, designer capability and landscaping excellence.

The Port Ludlow Recreational Complex

Evergreen Services Corp., Bellevue, WA
Project: Port Ludlow Recreational Complex
Landscape Architect: Glen Hunt & Associates, Seattle, WA

The Port Ludlow project won a merit award for landscape maintenance from ALCA in 1979. Even though termed a maintenance project, in fact it is more an overhaul to a major landscape project which had been previously maintained by personnel of the developer. Rod Bailey, president of Evergreen Services, says the big challenge was developing a site management program for a site already worthy of recognition. Bailey credits Robert Rooney and Mike Emel for their work on this project.

The Port Ludlow project was developed and planted in 1969-1971 and was initially maintained by developer personnel. Evergreen received the maintenance contract in 1973 and began a five-year program to upgrade the landscape. Available budget was low and placed a strong emphasis on labor, equipment, and chemical productivity.

The 26 acres of landscaping posed significant challenges. There was no irrigation, topsoil was thin and the landscaping was sparse and weedy. The project is physically remote from Evergreen's Bellevue offices and is located in a commercially undeveloped area.

The prioritization of the program was to upgrade the site while maintaining, watering during restricted periods, working with special events and weekend traffic, and working with different groups of owners to establish and affect common objectives.

There are six important factors which influence maintenance practices:

—A moist, salt water marine climate
—Extensive areas of groundcover plantings (6.4 acres).
—Extensive turf areas from rough (12 acres) to fine mow (7.3 acres).
—Native areas surround the grounds and transitions are important.
—Heavy public use of the facilities.
—Three different customers involved in budgeting and contracting although project is handled as single unit.

Six acres of groundcover make the Port Ludlow maintenance job especially challenging.

Evergreen decided on a three-phase program to upgrade and maintain the property. The first was to clean out beds and reestablish weed control and native area encroachments. Watering, fertilization and turf improvement practices were implemented.

During the second phase, site modifications and improvements were made to align maintenance with foot traffic and public use patterns. Bed mulching was improved and chemical technology began to play a larger and increasingly effective role.

The third and current phase involves increased emphasis on edging, pruning and shaping plants as they mature, and establishment of permanent standards of maintenance.

Throughout the five years, budgets have remained constant with allowances for inflation only. The combination of upgrading and maintenance under one budget has made upgrading a longer-term project.

A twelve-month program is carried out by two full-time workers. Mowing operations must cover steep banks, boggy areas, high-traffic areas and native transition areas. Edge maintenance ranges from formal to natural edges. All clippings are removed from both rough and fine turf for thatch, appearance, and fungus control. A 72-inch rotary Excel Hustler with grass catcher and a 36-inch Lawn Genie flail mower with grass pickup are the largest pieces of cutting equipment. The Lawn Genie is also used to dethatch large turf areas. Bobcat rotaries and a Flymo floating rotary for mowing wet, soft areas are used for close mowing. A Jacobsen Edger-trim is used for formal edging and a number of Green Machine monofilament trimmers are also used for trimming. A backpack blower is used for walkway and parking lot sweeping as well as leaf control in the fall and winter.

Watering of turf areas is 90 percent manual using soakers, hoses and impact heads. The glaciated soil wets quickly to the point of runoff and dries quickly thereafter. During drought periods watering priorities are followed.

Fertilizing turf areas is influenced by subsoil conditions and is done on an as-needed basis with a slow-release 15-5-10 granular fertilizer with trace elements. Overall, turf areas receive 6 lbs. nitrogen per year. Weed control is accomplished mainly by spot sprays. Insecticides are used only when indicated.

Groundcovers are fertilized regularly. Both ivy and Hypericum are pruned to maintain a natural transition between turf and groundcover areas. Parking lots are below grade and surrounded by berms to preserve the natural appearance of the area.

More than 350 rhododendrons are carefully maintained while in bloom to remove all spent flower heads. Bed areas are treated twice a year with pre-emergence herbicides. Native areas are maintained by removal of deadfall and debris, pruning and mulching bare areas.

Significant numbers of hand tools, hoses, irrigation heads and spraying equipment are maintained on site.

Drought tolerant plants as they appear at dawn around the Tucson Credit Union.

Harlow and Co., Inc., Tucson, AZ
Project: Tucson Municipal Employees Federal Credit Union
Landscape Architect: Daniel Elder, Tucson, AZ

The Credit Union project was awarded a design/build Environmental Improvement Award by ALCA because it was one of the first public buildings to be landscaped entirely with drought tolerant plants. The challenge was lack of water and Harlow and Co. found a beautiful solution.

Instead of turf or groundcover, decomposed granite was used. Unlike pea gravel, decomposed granite does not show foot prints or shatter. This was important due to the large amount of foot traffic at the building and because a bus stop was located next to the property. Underneath the granite, gravel mill reject was used instead of topsoil. This eliminated any trouble from weed seeds. Usually, preemergence herbicides are needed to control weeds in gravel yards.

Drought tolerant plant species including fountain grass, Texas ranger, eucolyptus, mesquite and caffia artemisoides were used in designs around granite boulders. A drip irrigation system provides water when needed at a cost of less than $30 per month. Part of the two acre site is covered with brick walkways illuminated by architectural lighting.

Bill Harlow told Weeds Trees and Turf, "Ten years ago we used no more than 100 yards of rock per year, now we use almost 20,000 yds. per year. Still, there has been a noticeable return to grass since the drought scare has been relaxed."

Green Brothers Landscape Co., Smyrna, GA
Project: Dana Jones Residence
Landscape Designer: Jim Gibbs

A design/build winner this year in ALCA's Ninth Annual Environmental Improvement Awards Program, the Dana Jones residence is a contractor's dream. Green Brothers were essentially asked by the Jones family to design and build the best landscape possible. And they did.

Actually one job led to another. Green Brothers was hired to provide a more inviting appearance to the Jones home in College Park, GA. The house was white, positioned on top of a steep grass-covered slope to the street. Turf quality was poor and there were very few landscape plantings. The net effect was a cold, glaring appearance.

Arbor at rear of Jones residence ties back of yard with house.

Gibbs recommended the house be painted in a softer shade, a circular drive be built, groundcover planted on the slopes, and installation of a brick walk bordered by fine turf. Shade trees were planted to provide a canopy effect.

Pleased with their work, the Jones asked Green Brothers to do the rest of their yard over a period of three years.

The back yard faces south and drainage is relatively poor. Deciduous trees were planted to provide shade in the summer and raised beds and mounds were used for much of the plant material. Brick walks, summer house, arbor, and an activity area were designed for foot traffic.

Instant use of the back yard was achieved the first year with construction of a brick patio and lattice brick wall. A small garden pool with a bronze wall fountain and recirculating pump provided a water feature for the patio. Potted plants and urns soften and add interest to the patio.

A summer house was constructed as a place to view the gardens. A wooden planter was placed on top of the brick wall and filled with Hans ivy.

An architectural mound constructed of field stone was added and planted with Hosta lily, ferns Carissa holly, and Gumpo azalea as accent plants.

An arbor was constructed as an activity area and to tie in the back of the property with the rest. A curved walk to the arbor gives the garden a feeling of being much larger than it really is.

In another area, a path of stepping stones was installed and a groundcover of Mondo grass was placed between the stones. Finally, flowering displays were added for color.

Green Brothers takes care of all pruning, spraying, and fertilizing. The firm boasts that as a design/build firm, the work of its designers, contractors, mason and carpenter result in a unified and improved level of quality.

Stark appearance of Jones residence before (left) and more inviting appearance after professional landscaping.

Looking over pool and waterfall toward street from Lackey residence

Landscape Associates Inc., Little Rock, AR
Project: William Lackey Residence
Landscape Architect: Robert L. Shaheen, Little Rock, AR

This ALCA winner was the result of the site not lending itself to the construction of a swimming pool in the rear yard as well as the client's desire for more direction to the front door for arriving guests. Therefore, the swimming pool was constructed in the front yard where it serves as both a functional swimming pool and a whirlpool bath as well as a garden pool when viewed as part of the total project.

At the street a lantern designates the entry point into the garden. Guests are then led through the space on large stepping stones to a large stone bridge which directs them to the front door. The space is night lighted by using subtle downlight fixtures which illuminate the walks and flagstone areas, with sunken uplight fixtures that high-light the multi-trunk Yaupon Holly trees around the pool area. Lights were also used on some of the existing large native trees in the space.

Informal plantings of Dwarf Chinese Hollies, Azaleas and English Ivy as a ground cover along with multi-trunk Yaupon Holly trees were used to humanize the scale among the large native species around the pool.

To provide separation from the street, plantings of Chinese Holly, Cotoneaster, and Japanese Black Pine were intermingled to establish a dense buffer. Areas of flagstone and decking were used around the pool to provide a hard surface for gathering and circulation.

The carport and driveway were both designed and constructed by the landscape contractor. The carport not only provides shelter for the automobile but also has a complete cooking range, sink and bar facilities which can be covered when not in use.

To add to the more natural appearance of the pool, chrome ladders and diving board were eliminated, steps were built into the pool wall at several locations and for diving a large stone was cantilevered out over the water. Also, to add interest a small waterfall was located close to the bridge stone. This waterfall is connected directly to the circulation system of the pool filtration system. The pool inlets were also adjusted upward to add additional water motion.

Although the total space is relatively small, many exciting landscape features were achieved as well as the separation and privacy that was needed for the pool. Landscape Associates acted as the Landscape Architect and Contractor and performed all the work, including the construction of the carport, driveway and entertainment center. In addition to this the Landscape Architect consulted the clients as to the change of color for the house to make it more harmonious with the landscape.

Frost and Higgins, Burlington, MA
Project: Faneuil Hall Marketplace, Boston, MA
Landscape Architect: William Pressley, Newton, MA

Frost and Higgins won an award during AAN's 25th Landscape Awards Program this year for this attention getting project in Boston. William Rae received the award for Frost and Higgins.

Take 150 years of history, 10 years of restoration work, and finally just a few weeks to add the final touch of trees surrounded by a cobblestone walkway. But that's not all. Add temperatures in the 90's, the need to find 22 large and matching honey locusts, and to install them without injury in a tightly packed construction location filled with other workers.

First a little history. The Faneuil Hall Marketplace is in the center of the government and financial district of Boston. Before the marketplace, the area consisted of a 100 foot wide street between two 500 foot long, 150-year-old buildings. There were no trees, just granite walls and paving, with the resulting glare and noise. New high rise buildings had modified the wind patterns turning the area into a wind tunnel.

To prepare for the 150th anniversary of the area, the Rouse Co. of Baltimore had spent more than ten years planning, designing and restoring the area. As the date approached the pedestrian mall, which had been the street, was not completed or planted. Press coverage made the completion of the project even more critical.

Frost and Higgins had to locate 22, seven to ten inch caliper, honey locusts. Tre-ease of Millbrook, NY, had them. The trees were watered well before digging and hardened off for a few days. Each tree weighed about 15,000 lbs. with root ball.

Because of extreme heat the trees had to be moved to Frost and Higgins main yard in Burlington at night. Upon arrival they were thoroughly watered and kept under cover.

Due to other construction taking place in the mall area during the day, the trees had to be installed at night to avoid any injurious delays. The project took six nights and planting was hampered by news cameramen.

The results were spectacular and the trees were in a week before deadline. The deadlines were important because the trees had to be in place prior to cobblestone paving. The 22 trees 30 feet above the cobblestone walkway buffered the wind, stopped the glare and provided a soft light and warm atmosphere, and replaced the noise of traffic with the rustle of leaves.

Three little leaf lindens and numerous planters were also installed in the area. Taxus and seasonal flowers in the planters add another natural dimension.

Frost and Higgins currently maintains the mall plants with watering, spraying, pruning and inspection. Today, the marketplace contains 36 honey locusts and three nine-inch caliper lindens. Six three-inch locusts are in large planters with the rest planted at grade, surrounded by cobblestone walkway.

Faneuil Hall Marketplace's new look.

Twenty-nine tons of river rock were hauled from mountain streams to provide a natural appearance.

SaBell's Inc., Lakewood, CO
Project: The Crestwood Restaurant, Littleton, CO
Landscape Architect: Don Godi & Associates, Lakewood, CO

Atmosphere is a good part of enjoying any restaurant. This merit award winning project of the 25th AAN Landscape Awards and the 1978 ALCA Environmental Improvement Awards, took this fact and provided a customer conscious exterior environment for the Crestwood Restaurant.

"We want people to feel the quality of our restaurant from the time they get out of their car until they leave," says owner Peter Winfield. "The landscape beauty is the first and last impression we make with every meal."

LA Don Godi commented that the site is small with no natural features to really capitalize on, except for a few trees. Godi planned a mound and tons of stream rock to act as natural features.

"Since there was no waiting area in the restaurant, we designed the front to serve as one, Godi points out. "Under tree canopy, two parking spaces were removed, and two benches were installed. The design is very pedestrian oriented."

A rock and concrete stream winds through the design. Since the site is small, plant beds with floral displays and groundcover replaced turf. Honey locusts provide canopy and are highlighted during the night with overhead, indirect lighting.

"Of all the initial impact," says Wally SaBell, "the soft canopy effect of the honey locust trees, combined with the running fountain water give an overall effect of peace, serenity, and luxury. Sun loving annuals will eventually be replaced with impatiens, sultanas or other florals as the honey locust canopy provides increased shade. The stream is designed to be maintenance free."

Lighting ties the project together. "The three corners of the parking area are lit and landscaped like the restaurant area, says SaBell. "Fountain lighting is changed to coincide with the season; i.e. amber in summer, red and green during the Christmas holidays.

Appreciating the value of landscaping, Winfield says, "We have been very cognizant of maintaining our property. We try to provide it the same care as a Classic automobile. The older the project gets, the better it looks." **WTT**