

Building Scene

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From the ground up

Orchestrating major landscaping means more than planting a few hundred trees

By Gerald Frawley
staff writer

Only God can make a tree, but sometimes He needs a little help where to put it.

Most people are familiar with the landscaper who comes out and gushes up a backyard, but few realize the site preparations undertaken by the developer when building a subdivision, condominium project, apartment complex, or commercial project.

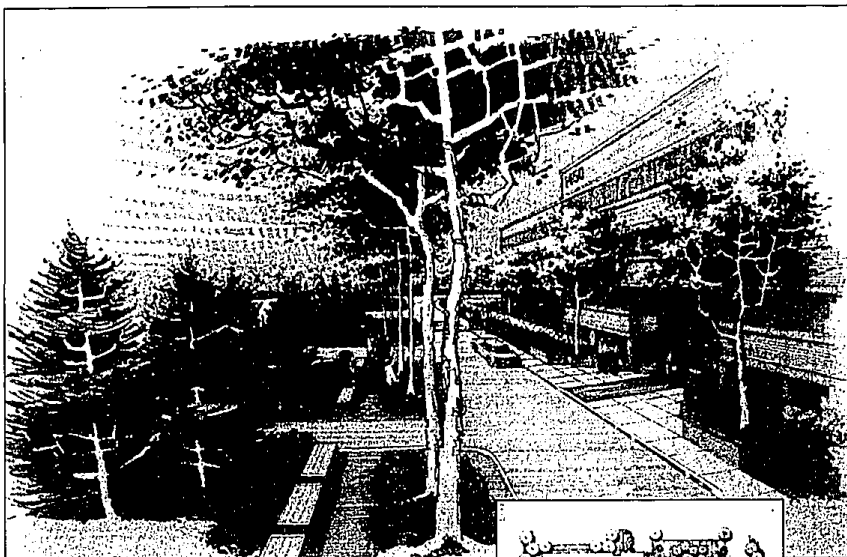
"You're not dealing with three pine trees, you're dealing with 3,000 pine trees," according to James Scott, president of James C. Scott & Associates in Bloomfield Hills. "People don't realize the complexity of orchestrating a major landscape job, Scott continued. Coordinating his work with everyone from the rough carpenters to the carpet layers while dealing in the sheer volume and quantity of material can at times be daunting.

"There are a lot of details that must be coordinated — so many things have to be worked out in advance," agrees Dave Jackson of Holtzman & Silverman Cos. in Farmington Hills.

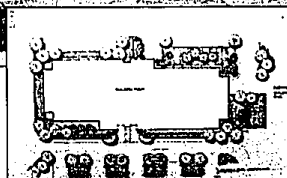
The difference between a backyard landscaping job and a residential development, office or commercial landscape job is like the "difference between a main frame and a personal computer."

LARGE LANDSCAPE jobs require extensive planning, more and larger plant materials and making accommodations for lighting, electrical conduit, irrigation and utilities. "All these things compete for space in a confined area," he said.

Landscaping is more than just lawns and a couple of trees. It's planning, coordination, walls, fountain, ponds, paved walks, and anything else that has to do with outside appearance and function, according to president Mike Dul of Dul and As-



To the untrained eye, a two-dimensional diagram (right inset) fails to demonstrate the extensive planning and work that will result in a landscaping effort like this one planned as building No. four at the Timberland Office Park in Troy (above). The landscape architect was Michael Dul of Michael J. Dul and Associates of Birmingham.



sociates in Birmingham. "Plantings are just icing on the cake."

Dul said you can begin to get an idea of what a large-scale landscape project is like by comparing it to a parachute jump. First there's the overall view that has to blend with its surrounding area.

Then the landscape architect must be concerned about the lay of the land and the immediate site and its usage. Landscaping should enhance without interfering.

Moving closer, you have to be concerned about the individual parts that make up the whole, Dul said. "You move from the general to the

specific and consider everything along the way.

Jackson, of Holtzman and Silverman, said good design is something landscape architects strive for, but may not be able to describe.

"We try to create mystery with landscaping," he said. "You want the eye to move smoothly, but slowly — to interrupt and direct the view."

ALL GOOD landscape, he said, reveals only portions of a development at a time. Individually and collectively, the landscape's various segments are appealing, Jackson said.

Like a painter with a blank canvas or a sculptor with an uncut stone, the landscape architect wants to know what he's going to be working with before anything else, Scott of Scott and Associates said.

"First thing you want to do is put on some boots and walk the site," and after that maybe get some aerial photography, a topographical survey and some soil samples. The more the architect knows about the site the better off he'll be, he said.

"You got started early and you're one of the last finished," Jackson of Holtzman and Silverman said. After studying the site, Jackson

said the architect creates a menu of what he wants on the site. Then he develops a design based on the menu and how the buildings are to be placed on the site.

After reviewing the plans with the developer, the landscape architect sits down with the civil engineers, the building architects and the contractors to work out a schedule. "You've got to get as many people involved as early as possible."

"You have all these things going in the pot at once," he said. "The way construction companies coordinate

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Homearama opens in Shelby

Two Observer & Eccentric area builders — Masterpiece Homes by James Joseph Enterprises and Baypointe Homes, both of Rochester Hills — have built luxury houses for the summer Homearama June 14-July 8 in Shelby Township.

Altogether, 10 builders will showcase their work in the Pheasant Run Subdivision north of 21 Mile and east of Schoenherr.

Homearama enables buyers, remodelers and decorators easy access at one site to view the latest in style, construction, energy conservation measures and living conveniences.

The show is sponsored by the Builders Association of Southeastern Michigan, Detroit Edison and Standard Federal Bank.

Tickets are \$5, which includes a program booklet describing each house. Discount coupons for \$4, good weekdays, are available at Detroit Edison and Standard Federal branch offices.

SHOW HOURS are 3-11 p.m. weekdays, noon-11 p.m. weekends and holidays.

Masterpiece Homes built a Kingsley Estate Model for Homearama. The two-story traditional brick house has 3,300 square feet, four bedrooms and 2½ bathrooms.

Features include a hexagonal-shaped kitchen with semicircular nook, a media room with built-in surround sound system

and big screen TV, and a two-story great room with overlooking balcony, brick fireplace and attached deck.

The house carries a price of \$239,000-\$319,000. The lower figure represents base construction price, the higher figures extras like landscaping, fixtures, wall coverings, window treatments and some appliances.

Baypointe Homes constructed a brick and cedar exterior Bradford Model, 3,600 square feet with four bedrooms and 2½ baths.

FEATURES include a sunken cedar spa room with hot tub and motorized skylights, a master suite and den/library with a nine-foot ceiling and built-in shelving and entertainment center, and a three-story stainless steel, floor to ceiling.

That house is priced \$225,000-\$275,000.

Detroit Edison encouraged the developer, D&T Construction of Mount Clemens, to install a contemporary lighting system with goose-neck-style, high-pressure sodium fixtures in the subdivision.

Standard Federal, which provided construction loans for the model homes, will have an information booth in the exhibit area.

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Houses Nos. 7 and 10 were built by Rochester Hills builders. No. 7, Kingsley Estate, was built by Masterpiece Homes by James Joseph Enterprises. No. 10 is the Bradford by Baypointe Homes.

