

MASTER TREE PLAN



TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
BACKGROUND	5
Introduction	5
Benefits of Trees	5
Historical Perspective.....	8
Climate	9
Tree Selection Criteria.....	9
Visual Criteria, Functional Criteria, Cultural Criteria	
THE LANDSCAPES OF OXFORD	11
The Natural Landscape	11
Oak/Hickory/Pine Woodland	
Riparian Woodland	
The Transitional Landscapes	12
The Developed Landscape	13
Commercial Zone	
Street Trees for the Major Boulevards and Primary Access Roads	
Street Trees for Secondary Commercial Streets	
Malls, Pedestrian Walkways & Pocket Parks	
Parking Areas	
Schools, Churches and Government Buildings	
Residential Areas	
DISTINCTIVE TREES & GROVES OF OXFORD (<i>Published in 2006</i>)	
Recommendations for Grand Tree Designations, Tree Groves, Specimen and Historical Trees	
TREE SELECTION, PLANTING & MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES (<i>Published in 2006</i>)	
Tree Selection, General	
For Special Situations, e.g. Spring Flowers, Fall Color, Deer Resistant	
Plant Quality	
Tree Planting	
Tree Maintenance	
Fertilization, Watering, Staking, Pruning	
Tree Preservation	
Sidewalk Conflicts, Overhead Wires & Sign Conflicts, Underground Work Conflicts	
“Best Practices” Management Techniques	
Process for Tree Management	
Education: 10 Myths to Think About & How to Kill a Tree	
ANNUAL ACTION PLANS	
GLOSSARY (<i>Published in 2006</i>)	
Tree and Vegetation Types	
Horticultural and Pruning Terms	
References	

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Many sources were referenced in preparing this booklet. However, one in particular was used extensively: Trees For Lafayette, The Master Tree Plan for Lafayette, California, by Russell A. Beatty, published by the American Society of Landscape Architects. The general outline of this booklet and in particular the design concepts and philosophy were heavily used. In fact, without Mr. Beatty's book, it is unlikely that what we think (and hope the readers agree) is a thoughtful, comprehensive look at Oxford and its trees, would have been possible.

Special thanks go to John Arrechea, a long time member of the Tree Board and its past Chairman and Alderman Janice Antonow. Through their hard work, Oxford has seen the Tree Board become a viable and important component in the City government.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Oxford is blessed with an abundance of trees. They are a major part of Oxford's heritage and define much of its character. This Master Tree Plan is dedicated to the principle that today's decisions and actions about trees are a key part of tomorrow's heritage. The primary purpose of this Plan is to establish a vision for the future, using cultural factors unique to Oxford along with landscape and urban design criteria. This "vision" will be gradually implemented by the execution of detailed Action Plans to be developed annually for the approval of the Mayor and the Board of Aldermen.

The benefits of trees are discussed and while the importance of the aesthetic impact trees confer will not be ignored, the dollars and cents impact on the City and its residents is stressed—with particular emphasis on the impact on climate modification, especially in mitigating our high summer heat. For example, trees properly placed around buildings can reduce air conditioning needs by 30 to 50% and up to 65% in the case of mobile homes. A Cost/Benefit analysis is also presented that shows for each dollar spent on a city's tree program, the community received \$1.85 in benefits.

From a historical perspective, much has changed since the arrival of the Europeans. The Chickasaw Indians, who were hunter/gatherers, generally did not clear the land for crops. Rather they routinely burned the country over. The resulting landscape was an open woodland whose atmosphere resembled that of a cathedral. In fact, if one wants to experience the landscape our forefathers discovered, make a trip to The Grove and envision it stretching as far as the eye can see.

Tree selection criteria is discussed with an emphasis on choosing the right tree for the right place. Such decisions are really design problems to be solved, and instead of using a subjective approach (what's my favorite tree), an objective, rational process is presented. Specifically, trees can be considered as having three major categories of selection criteria—visual (aesthetic), functional (utilitarian) and cultural (horticultural or ecological). These factors are interrelated and one or more may be dominant given the particular planting situation, but all must be considered.

In the next section, the various landscape types of Oxford and Lafayette County are discussed; starting with an overview of the three naturally occurring landscapes, the transitional landscapes which occur as landscape types change from Natural to Developed, and finally a detailed look at seven Developed landscape types. With the area under heavy development pressure, thoughtful attention to the impact development projects have on the various landscapes is critical. Otherwise, the risk of losing the charm of the natural woodlands—along with that of Oxford's itself—is very real.

In the Developed Landscape section, emphasis is placed on Oxford's Primary Access Roads—or Gateway Corridors. After work on this Plan began, we were encouraged by a very similar concern in Oxford's Comprehensive Plan, specifically in Section 2D1, Oxford Master Gateway Corridor Plan. "The intent of the plan is to maintain and preserve significant visual assets within the gateway corridors and to enhance the visual appearance at problem areas and key locations at the entrances to the community." We feel that the specific street based discussions and recommendations are important steps in implementing this vision.

Seven of these recommendations are depicted by "Before" and "After" photos. The "Before" photos were taken over the last year while the "After" photo is the same, only graphically enhanced to show how the street would look 15 years later if the recommendation were implemented. We hope that in these cases a picture is indeed worth a thousand words.

Throughout the Master Tree Plan, recommendations for actions are made (in bold, italic type) following the discussion of the specific issue(s). We believe that these recommendations are directionally correct if we are to realize the vision for the future that is presented in this Plan.

The cover photo shows the reason why this Master Tree Plan is so vital to Oxford and it's citizens, not just today, but for future generations. Planting a tree is not only a gift, but an act of faith in the future.

*“We are children of our landscape;
it dictates behavior and even
thought in the measure to which
we are responsive to it.”*

— LAWRENCE DURRELL, “JUSTINE”, (1957)

BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION

Trees have always been a common part of our daily lives, so much so that we often take them for granted. In fact, it is usually not until the loss of a large tree that the “sense of place” it bestowed is fully appreciated. This is not unlike the loss of a special building to a fire; however, there is a critical difference. To replace the visual impact of the tree takes a generation, while that of the building often takes less than a year. For this and other reasons, we are becoming increasingly conscious of the importance of trees, yet they are baffling to most of us. How many of us can name the trees in our gardens or on our street? How often are we puzzled over the selection of a new tree to plant; question how to prune a young tree; or wonder what to do when an old tree appears to be dying?

This dilemma also exists at the community level. Questions about tree selection, maintenance and preservation are raised continually in the governing of a city. Tree plantings and the preservation of existing trees are becoming paramount issues in the development of both public and private land. Communities are assuming greater responsibility in the maintenance of street trees, parks and open spaces. Unlike a “natural” forest, the “urban” forest does not have the opportunity to sustain itself. It exists in an environment which is constantly under the manipulation and influences of mankind. As a result, the amount and quality of care an urban forest receives is directly related to its longevity and health.

The City of Oxford is blessed with an abundance of trees. The lush creeks and wooded rolling hillsides are the framework and backdrop of the Oxford environment. They are a major part of Oxford’s heritage and define much of its character. The choice of trees to be planted is an important one. New trees planted today affect the quality of the environmental heritage for years to come. The maintenance and preservation of fine old trees links the past with the present, binding this heritage to the future. The adoption of the Tree Ordinance, which established the Tree Board and its Historic and Specimen Tree Program, is evidence of this concern for our environmental heritage. This Master Tree Plan is dedicated to the principle that today’s decisions and actions about trees are a part of tomorrow’s environmental heritage. The Plan is intended to answer some of the questions asked about trees both individually and collectively as a community, to offer design and technical information to assist decision making and to enhance the health and longevity of

our urban forest. As such, this Plan establishes a vision for the future, while specific, detailed Action Plans will be developed annually for the approval of the Mayor and Board of Aldermen. These Action Plans will coincide with the City’s yearly budget.

A discussion of Oxford’s natural vegetation and its historic development is presented to highlight the community’s important woodland heritage. Guidelines for tree plantings complimentary to the natural landscape are developed. The many different types of streetscapes of the community are discussed and design guidelines for future tree planting are presented along with lists of trees for specific situations. Tree planting, maintenance and preservation techniques are explained and illustrated with diagrams.

Becoming more familiar with the trees of our community adds a new dimension of understanding and enjoyment of the surroundings. This Plan is designed for all the citizens of Oxford, old-timers and newcomers alike. It is intended to become a useful reference for residents, public staff and officials and developers of Oxford & Lafayette County, both now and in the years to come.

BENEFITS OF TREES

The last few decades have seen a more serious attempt to qualify the benefits of trees. While many people appreciate the presence of trees, questions about the expense of these aesthetic attractions have become more important as communities struggle with rising costs and limited budgets.

The following are some statistics on the importance of trees in a community setting:

- “The net cooling effect of a healthy (mature) tree is equivalent to ten room-size air conditioners operating 20 hours a day.” - U.S. Department of Agriculture
- “Trees properly placed around buildings can reduce air conditioning needs by 30 to 50% and up to 65% in the case of mobile homes.” - USDA Forest Service
- “Shading an air conditioning unit can increase its efficiency by 10%.” - Tree City Bulletin # 21
- “Landscaping, especially with trees, can increase property values as much as 20 percent.” - Management Information Services/ICMA
- “One acre of forest absorbs six tons of carbon dioxide and puts out four tons of oxygen. This is enough to meet the annual needs of 18 people.” - U.S. Department of Agriculture

- “Trees can be a stimulus to economic development, attracting new business and tourism. Commercial retail areas are more attractive to shoppers, apartments rent more quickly, tenants stay longer, and space in a wooded setting is more valuable to sell or rent.” - The National Arbor Day Foundation
- “Healthy, mature trees add an average of 10 percent to a property’s value.” - USDA Forest Service
- “The planting of trees means improved water quality, resulting in less runoff and erosion. This allows more recharging of the ground water supply. Wooded areas help prevent the transport of sediment and chemicals into streams.” - USDA Forest Service
- “In laboratory research, visual exposure to settings with trees has produced significant recovery from stress within five minutes, as indicated by changes in blood pressure and muscle tension.” - Dr. Roger S. Ulrich Texas A&M University
- Asphalt paving contains aggregate in an oil binder. Without shade, the oil heats up and volatilizes, leaving the aggregate unprotected. The oil does not dry out as fast on a shaded street as it does on a street with no shade trees, thus deferring street maintenance. - The University of Colorado

In the late 1990’s, the USDA undertook a comprehensive study to tie all the benefits and costs together for a “net” financial impact on a city. One of the study cities was Modesto, CA. A city in the Central Valley of California, and while quite a bit larger than Oxford, it has summer temperatures similar to ours. The benefit/cost ratio was 1.85; that is, for each dollar spent on trees, \$1.85 in benefits were realized by the community. The specific categories were:

BENEFIT CATEGORIES		TREE PROGRAM EXPENSES		NON-PROGRAM EXPENSES	
Energy Savings	\$1,000,560	Planting	\$ 167,062	Hardscape Repair	\$ 297,586
Carbon Dioxide	312,920	Pruning	1,202,252	Leaf Clean-up	106,426
Air Quality	538,106	Removals	342,896	Claims & Legal	68,000
Storm-water	616,139	Other	186,722		
Property/Other	2,380,415	Administration	315,572	Total Non-Prog	\$ 472,012
				Revenues	68,132
Total	\$4,848,140	Total Program	\$2,214,504	Total Program	\$2,214,504
				Net Expenditures	\$2,623,384

Climate Control

Frequently, reference is made to the usefulness of trees for microclimate control. This function deserves special emphasis in this day of decreasing energy reserves. Because of the high summer heat in Oxford, air conditioners are used to control the indoor climate. The trend toward technological solutions to climactic control negates time-tested building design and siting techniques. As a result, energy consumption has spiraled in recent years, accelerating the depletion of our energy reserves.

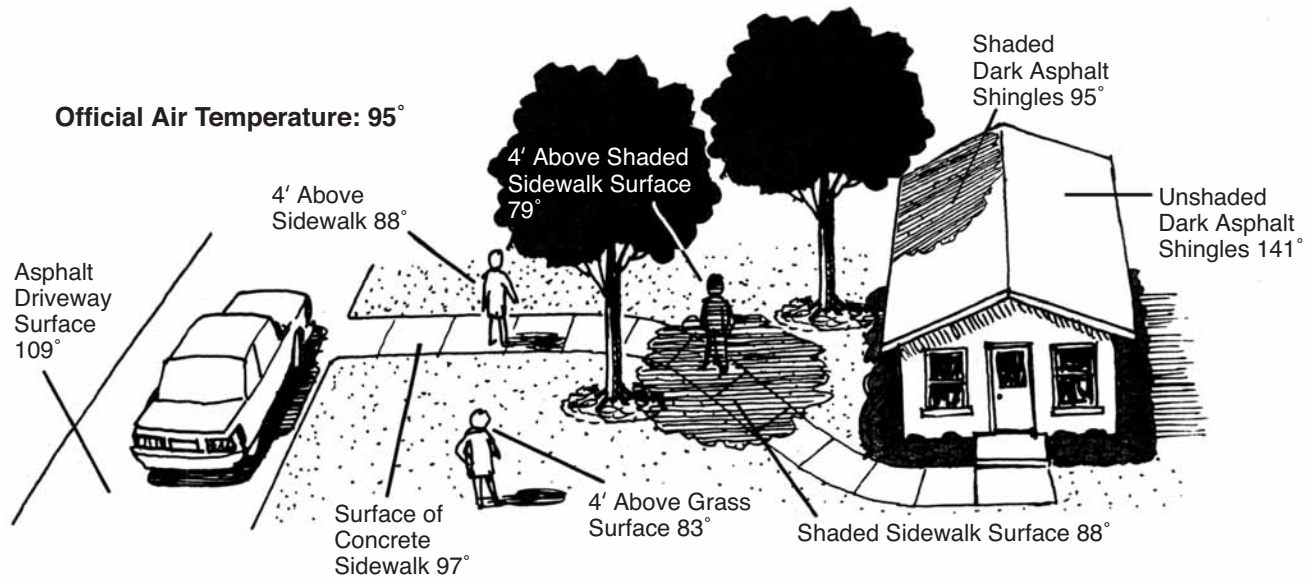
Trees are extremely efficient air conditioners. Their foliage canopy blocks the intense direct sunlight, maintaining a consistently cool zone of air beneath. Used in conjunction with building design and orientation, trees can reduce the heavy reliance upon air conditioners for summer cooling. The choice of deciduous trees allows the warming sun to partially heat interiors in the winter, thereby reducing winter fuel demand. A few basic principles are presented

here as guidelines for using trees to reduce energy demands.

Shade on building walls during the summer is a function of building orientation and sun angle. The easiest side of a building to shade is the south facing wall. Here the sun angle is the highest in summer and only a narrow extension of the roof line is required to shade the wall. Extended eaves with a vine arbor may be sufficient. However, several deciduous trees (even if small) can also be effective. By preventing the sun from entering the windows or striking the wall, very efficient cooling is possible. Conversely, in the winter allowing the sun to warm the south wall maximizes the use of sun to heat the building.

The east and west facing walls are the most difficult to protect in summer. The sun angle is lower and strikes windows and walls more directly. Broad spreading, low branching canopy trees are needed to, in effect, extend the roof line and block the sun’s rays. The west side is most critical. Because the air has been heated all day long, the sun is hottest in late afternoon.

TREES FOR SHADE



Homeowners and business owners can realize significant savings by properly using trees for shade. How much is saved depends on climate, existing tree cover and the type and orientation of the building. Savings of 58% in daytime air conditioning have been documented. (Tree City Bulletin #21)

Leaf density and branching characteristics combine to determine the amount of solar radiation that can penetrate the canopy of a tree. The less penetration, the higher a tree's shade value. The following table rates some of the more common trees for their shade value. (Tree City Bulletin #21)

SHADE VALUE OF VARIOUS TREES

HIGHEST	MEDIUM	LOWER
Maples	European Birch	Hickories
Horse Chestnut	Crabapple	Catalpa
Hackberry	Sweetgum	Ginkgo
Beech	Oaks	Locusts
Green Ash	Littleleaf Linden	Golden Raintree
Walnut	Kentucky Coffeetree	Quaking Aspen
Yellow Poplar (Tulip)	Cottonwood	Pears
Sycamores	Elms	Washington Hawthorn

The City of Oxford should encourage the use of trees as a long-term means of energy conservation in its review of site plans for all new development and proposed improvements.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

When the Mississippi Territory was formed in 1798, Americans flooded into lands along the Mississippi River and then along the Natchez Trace that ran through the middle of Chickasaw lands. In 1817 the State of Mississippi was admitted to the Union. Then in the early 1830's, the Chickasaw Cession lands were carved into twelve counties, Lafayette being one. And finally, in 1836 the City of Oxford, at the center of Lafayette County, was founded. We know quite a bit about events since then, but what of the preceding centuries under the Chickasaws? And specifically, what were the major characteristics of this early landscape?

Long before the arrival of the Europeans, the Chickasaw Indians inhabited North Mississippi, including what is now Lafayette County. Most accounts describe the Chickasaws as hunter/gatherers and fighters first, and agriculturists only upon occasion. While they "farmed" their land for its abundant resources of nuts and game, they generally did not clear the land for crops. (Their primary commerce with Europeans was deerskin trading.) Many American Indian tribes with similar ways of life routinely burned the country over in order to clear out the underbrush to make the gathering of nuts easier, to foster the growth of seed bearing annuals and to flush-out game. The result on the landscape was a more open woodland since such frequent burning usually kills tree seedlings. In fact, a significant aspect of the Indian tenure of the land was the stability of the tree cover.

There is a recurring theme of the early European settlers commenting on the park-like appearance of the countryside, even stating that the atmosphere conveyed by these "old" forests was like that of a cathedral. The following passages from A Southern Tapestry, Marshall County, MS, 1835-2000, reinforce this general historic view of the stewardship of woodlands controlled by hunter/gather Indian tribes. "In 1834, surveyors wondered at the size and age of the forests and noted one grove of 300 walnut trees, the largest they had ever seen." And "The land was wonderfully rich and beautiful, heavily timbered with oak, hickory and chestnut, but no pine near Holly Springs. The primeval forest resembled an English park, for there was no underbrush...it had been kept down by the Indians burning the grasses annually. There was a wealth of wild flowers and all streams were clear and full with game fish." The latter quote is from a letter by Jane Hull Minor, who came from Spotsylvania County, VA (Fredericksburg) for the cession land sales.

From The Encyclopedia Britannica; "The Indians of Mississippi lived in harmony with the environment of the Southern woodlands and took great care to maintain the ecological balance they found in nature. Early European travelers often spoke of the Indians' love for the land and their bravery in defending it. The Chickasaw tribe was a semi-nomadic people who not only patrolled the immense territory that they claimed for themselves but also raided tribes far to the north. Their dwellings were scattered for miles along a stream or river rather than clustered in villages."

Given all this, it does not seem a stretch at all to envision that at the start of the 19th century, many parts of North Mississippi, including Oxford and Lafayette County, resembled the "Grove" on the Ole Miss Campus more than the current forestlands which are usually thick with underbrush and/or introduced vines. The bottom line is that starting with the removal of the Chickasaws, the landscape of Lafayette County has changed remarkably.

Much of this change was the result of the drastic transition in the use of these lands. Specifically, the 6 million acres of the Chickasaw Cession composed the "last great expanse of virgin land in the southeastern states" and was widely advertised as "cotton's last empire." The ensuing wholesale clearing of the forests for farming and pastures set the stage for major problems that came to a head in the early 1900's. The "Big Woods" that were not cleared for farming met another fate. By the 1880's, Northern timber speculators began purchasing the South's timberlands. Across the state of Mississippi, the felling of the virgin forest took only about 50 years. From 1880 to 1930 sawmills reduced the vast stands of timber to only scattered remnants surrounded by farmland. (Faulkner and the Natural World, pg. 200) As for Oxford and Lafayette County, all indications are that much of the old growth forest was gone by the start of the 20th century and the rest by the early 1930's.

The decline in crop profitability and the onset of the great depression left much of the cleared farm land fallow. Combine this with the logging, and much of Lafayette county was treeless. Without trees to stabilize the soil and with local soil types very prone to erosion, the entire county experienced severe erosion. This crisis was eventually stemmed by the focus on reforestation that grew out of programs aimed at ending the depression. However, this effort also resulted in the planting of thousands of exotic (introduced) plants, namely Kudzu and Loblolly Pine. (The native pine in this area is the Shortleaf.) (Faulkner and the Natural World, pg. 214)

For example, as part of the Yazoo Little Tallahatchie Flood Prevention Project, with Oxford as its headquarters, the Forest Service helped plant 101 million Loblolly Pines in Lafayette County alone between 1948 and 1985. Also, during the 1930's & 40's, the USDA distributed 85 million Kudzu seedlings in the South with extensive use in Lafayette County.

Abandoned farmland and cleared timberland often returned to various forest types, sometimes regenerating on its own to a mix of oak, hickory and short leaf pine and sometimes through the planting of Loblolly Pine. However, today, Lafayette County's landscape bears little resemblance to that prior to 1800. Large areas are overrun with Kudzu, evidence of severe erosion is still visible, pines in some areas are the predominant tree and much of the remaining forest lands are choked with underbrush. This landscape is not necessarily "bad", it is just very different and not in keeping with the long heritage of past centuries.

The City Of Oxford has experienced the same changes as the rest of Lafayette County. However, over the years, the City fathers clearly saw the benefit of trees and took steps to ensure future generations would reap their benefits. As an example, some of the grand trees on Lamar were planted over three generations ago.

CLIMATE

The elevation of Lafayette County averages about 500 feet above sea level, although Thacker Mountain reaches a height 623 feet. Oxford is the USDA Hardiness Zone 7, meaning that the typical lowest temperature experienced is 0 to 10 degrees F. [The Southern Living Garden Book](#) places Oxford on the border of their "Middle" and "Lower" South regions. In the Middle South region, winter lows usually don't drop below zero, but temperatures of minus 15 degrees have been recorded. In the Lower South region, it is seldom colder than 10 to 15 degrees. Snow is rare, but ice storms are not. Summers are hot, sticky, often dry and seemingly endless. Nighttime temperatures during the summer usually fall no lower than the mid-70's. The Lower South region extends from Oxford to Hattiesburg, so being on the extreme northern edge of the region, we should expect to experience winter weather that combines the coldest of the Lower region and the warmest of the Middle region.

Precipitation averages 52 inches per year, while temperatures are moderate with a mean July reading of 81 degrees F and a mean January temperature of 44 degrees

F. Snow is a minor problem with generally 5.2 inches per year. The mean annual humidity is about 64%. The potential growing season is long, with usually 220 days per year without a killing frost. As a rule, early April marks the end of crop damaging frost which does not reappear until the latter part of October.

TREE SELECTION CRITERIA

Selecting the right tree for the right place is a design problem to be solved. The subjective approach of choosing favorite plants is often unsatisfactory. Instead, by using a more objective, rational process, the selection of trees and other plants can be made easily with more effective results. From a design perspective, we identify the purposes the tree or trees are to serve. To do that, the criteria to be fulfilled by the tree must be known. This is how we select a car, a house or make many other major decisions.

More specifically, trees can be considered as having three major categories of selection criteria—visual (aesthetic), functional (utilitarian) and cultural (horticultural or ecological). All of these factors are interrelated for any planting situation. One or more may be dominant in a particular instance, but all must be considered. By defining more clearly what these three factors imply, we can determine how they may be applied to any one planting design problem.

Visual Criteria

Trees are design elements like many other materials (wood, stone, brick). Each tree has its own inherent visual characteristics. These include form, color, texture as well as seasonal changes such as fall color and spring flowers. In combination, these give a tree its own character, much the same as a person's character is the composite of individual traits.

For example, a Loblolly Pine has a rather emphatically erect form with dark green foliage, while a White Oak has a broad, sheltering canopy of green supported by a massive, sculptural trunk and branching structure. Some trees are bright and lively, such as a Sugar Maple, while others are more dark and somber, for example many of the native Oaks. Each has a visual impact in the landscape. Individual interpretations may vary (we all perceive things differently), but the visual characteristics of a tree can be fairly objectively described.

Time also must be considered when evaluating the visual quality of trees, particularly tree form. The shapes of some trees change as they mature. Young trees may

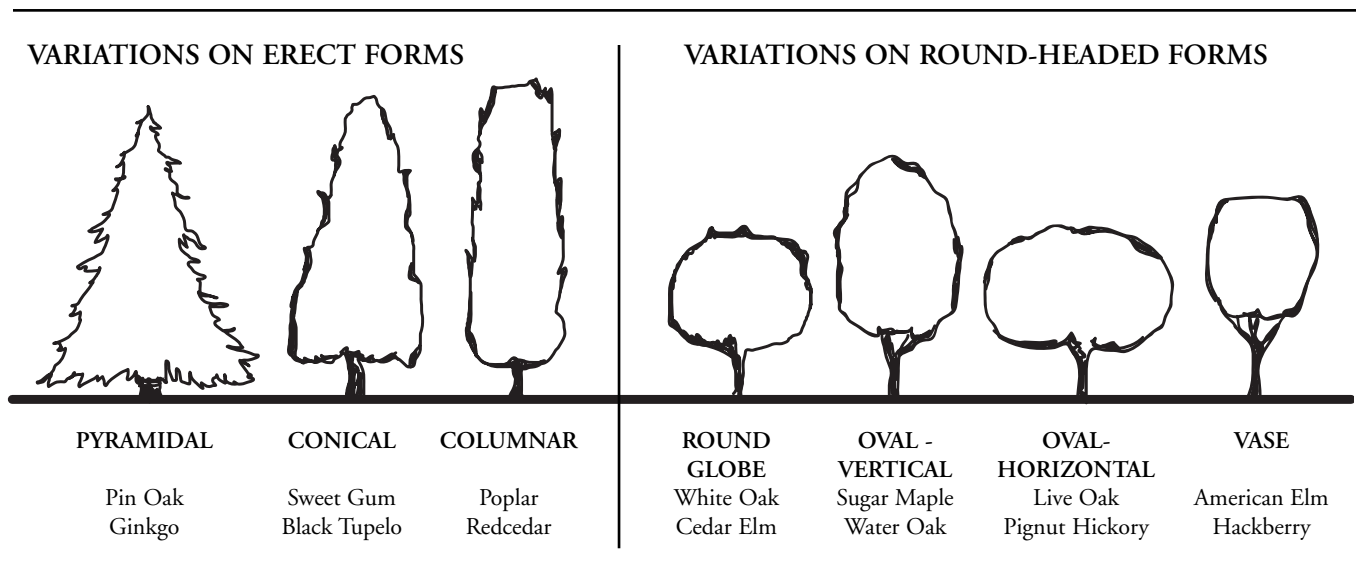
look quite different from older ones of the same species. While it should go without saying, the ultimate size of mature trees must be considered in relation to the spaces they occupy. All too often, major surgery is required when trees outgrow their spaces—a very poor substitute for appropriate tree selection.

Functional Criteria

Trees can and do serve many functions in the landscape. Traditionally we have focused on the aesthetic qualities of plants. However, the many functional roles (plant form) served by trees have become more of a focus

in landscape architecture and environmental planning.

Trees can be classified as architectural elements to define spaces similar to building spaces. They can be used to provide a canopy (ceiling) over a space or define its edge (walls or screens). A broad spreading, round-headed tree casts a large shadow and can serve as a canopy tree. A narrow, upright tree that branches close to the ground can serve as a visual barrier or screen. The degree of screening depends upon the density of the trees and their spacing. The following categorizes the two general forms of trees into a few specific types and lists example trees that fall under each type.



As discussed earlier, environmental control functions (climate, acoustical and atmospheric purification) can be very important. Of these, climate control is one of the most effective uses of trees. In Oxford, the use of trees for summer cooling is a critical consideration in any planting with size and form the key selection criteria.

Cultural Criteria

The ultimate test of the success of any tree planting depends upon the survival of the plants. Each tree has its own set of tolerances and preferences which determines its horticultural suitability. Ecologically, plants adapt to more or less specific habitats based primarily upon climate and soil types. By matching these habitats as closely as possible, greater success is assured.

We can modify a plant’s horticultural environment to better suit its needs. Water is the most common modification. As a general principle, drought tolerant species

should be used in public plantings such as streets, highways and open spaces. With Oxford’s climate, the necessity of watering trees is generally restricted to the first few years after planting, after which nature will supply all the water needed.

Maintenance is an important aspect of a tree’s cultural criteria. If the degree or quality of maintenance can be determined ahead of time, trees can be selected to suit. This is an essential criteria to be carefully considered in the design of public landscape plantings. In essence, the trees used should be selected to match the growing conditions and degree of maintenance to be anticipated.

This brief introduction to the selection of trees will be expanded in later sections of this Plan. These three basic elements of plant selection will be related to specific tree selection for various situations in Oxford. Detailed planting schemes would have to be developed and reviewed for appropriateness and conformance to the appropriate guidelines spelled out in the following sections.

THE LANDSCAPES OF OXFORD/LAFAYETTE COUNTY

THE NATURAL LANDSCAPE

The natural vegetation of Oxford and Lafayette County currently consists of two tree communities: Oak/Hickory and Oak/Pine. (*Mississippi Trees*) Many creeks and streams run throughout the woodlands, creating their own unique Riparian (streamside) woodlands. Farmland is actually considered another type of plant community that often sets off the woodlands with sharp contrasting colors and textures.

To maintain the “feel” of the area, the woodlands must be preserved. Oxford, and the surrounding area, is under increasing development pressure. Unfortunately, many of the new projects, especially large ones, begin with whole-sale clearing of the land. With development, new trees are planted and through time these trees mature and have an effect on the character and quality of their settings. If such plantings are not sensitively related to the natural woodlands, for example the heavy use of exotic (introduced) trees, there is a risk of losing the charm of the natural woodland character. Similarly, along creeks, especially where flood control work has caused the removal of the native trees, new plants are sometimes installed with little regard for either the visual or ecological order.

To help understand how to plant in these natural areas, let us first describe the ecological elements that contribute to their existence and examine their visual components.

Oak/Hickory Woodland

The Oak/Hickory woodlands run from Oxford west and fringe upon the flood-plains of the Mississippi River. It is primarily a hilly countryside and is often referred to as the “loess hills”. The characteristic trees are various upland species such as Southern Red, Cow (Swamp Chestnut), Chinkapin and Water Oaks; Bitternut, Coast Pignut, Shagbark and Shellbark Hickorys; Yellow Popular; White Ash; Winged Elm; Beech; Sugar Maple; Black Cherry and Magnolia.

Oak/Pine Woodland

The Oak/Pine woodlands run from Oxford, east. Generally, upland oaks make up 50% of the stands with minor amounts of various pines. In addition to the trees previously listed, there are also Black and Post Oaks, Sweet Gum and Black Tupelo. It should be noted that both of these woodlands are considered today somewhat artificial due to the widespread introduction of non-native pines (Loblolly and Long-leaf) vs. native (Shortleaf) pines.

Riparian Woodland

The Riparian woodland can often get lost in the surrounding forest. These linear woodlands can be quite dramatic, especially in farmland areas. As such, the woodland becomes a collage of varying colors and textures. All Riparian trees are water-seeking, some requiring more than others; but each finds its place in relation to the water course. The higher drier banks favor Oaks and Hickorys, while Red Maple, Sycamore and Sweet Gums are nearer the water’s edge.

When selecting trees to plant along watercourses, there is an inherent danger of introducing the wrong trees. Some exotics can be extremely aggressive growers and soon overpower the native species. If the natural character is to be maintained, trees that naturally grow in or near the creek should be chosen. Using several species provides the variety which is characteristic of a Riparian woodland. The streams and their woodlands are irreplaceable and are therefore of infinite value. All the streams in Oxford should be officially recognized and protected as essential environmental resources.

When channelization or other flood control methods are required, the City and County should include plans for preserving existing trees as well as replanting tree cover which is removed as part of the construction work.

THE TRANSITIONAL LANDSCAPES

There are two basic types of Transitional Landscapes: those that occur as one moves from the rural countryside into a developed property and those that exist primarily within a city. Of the latter, there are a few specific situations: property lines, school or church boundaries, utility easements and parks, trails and urban open space areas.

In the case of Oxford, all too often what would have been a natural transitional landscape from the countryside to the city has been lost due to the wholesale clearing of the land. Unfortunately, Lafayette County has no zoning for land use, and Oxford's city limits generally do not extend far enough to cover these transitional landscapes. One may do whatever one pleases, and often decisions ignore the aesthetic quality of the community and even the concerns of one's neighbors. For example, approaching Oxford from the west on MS 6 is a very different visual experience from the MS 6 approach from the east. The former is a visual hodgepodge of cleared land, commercial establishments and pockets of residential homes (especially on the south side of the highway). This is in sharp contrast to the approach from the east which gradually changes from rolling, wooded hills to commercial and residential developments. While this is a matter of taste, the image one forms of Oxford based on these two extremes is dramatically different. Coming from the west, one might be very surprised to find a Lamar Avenue environment with its grand trees; while from the east, one would almost expect it! Such images are important, and we should strive to make the "normal" transitional landscape into Oxford more in tune with the City's rich visual heritage.

The types of transitional landscapes that occur within the City often involve areas where native trees intermingle with introduced trees and plants. Neither type dominates the landscape character; but if such plantings were to focus exclusively on exotics, little visual or ecological relationship will exist with the natural landscape. Such a planting of exotics could easily disrupt the smooth flow of the transitional landscape and create an undesirable visual demarcation.

To avoid the continuing establishment of transitional landscapes that are unattractive and visually incompatible with Oxford's heritage, it is strongly recommended that the City of Oxford work with

Lafayette County to institute zoning and permit laws for the County that complement the vision for the City. Such policies should include processes that encourage developments to leave as much as possible of the natural vegetation and terrain unchanged especially along the public boundaries (or buffer zones) of such projects. In the case of large scale developments, leaving areas within the overall development unchanged (for instance an acre or so per X acres cleared) can add much to the quality of the development's visual impact. In addition, the City of Oxford should expand its ability to properly manage developments along its borders by extending the city limits out far enough to cover the rural transitional landscapes bordering Oxford.

Note: This issue is also addressed in Oxford's Comprehensive Plan section 2D1, Oxford Master Gateway Corridor Plan. "The intent of the plan is to maintain and preserve significant visual assets within the gateway corridors and to enhance the visual appearance at problem areas and key locations at the entrances to the community."

Establishing clear planting guidelines for the two types of transitional landscapes is difficult. Neither is completely natural nor entirely exotic. A transitional landscape borrows qualities of both, but as mentioned before, planting clues should be taken from established surroundings.

As a principle to follow when planting in the transitional types of landscape, first determine the relationship of the proposed tree planting to the nearby natural landscape. Tree forms and types which compliment the natural vegetation should be used. Then the trees should be fitted into natural patterns, enhancing the natural topography rather than opposing it.

Where the natural landscape is not a strong element, consideration of tree type is less important. Fitting the trees to the topography still remains an important design factor. Effective screening or spatial definition can be achieved by planting trees in irregular groupings rather than in single rows. These clumps and groupings of trees can blend more harmoniously with the form of the topography than rigid lines of trees.

Specific recommendations for planting in the transitional landscapes are difficult because of the many variables of landscape character and tree use. A list that suggests appropriate trees for various functions is presented in the section on Tree Selection. These trees can be used in the transitional landscapes and in the natural landscape, for instance at the edge of a woodland or to develop a woodland character.

THE DEVELOPED LANDSCAPE

In the more densely developed landscape where residential and commercial development are predominant, the visual connection to the natural landscape is sometimes either non-existent or only remotely visible in the distance. Often, the native vegetation is represented by a few occasional large trees with the dominant treescape comprised of ornamentals such as Bradford Pear, Crape Myrtle, Japanese Maple and Golden Raintree. In other words, introduced plants frequently establish the landscape character.

The compositional elements of the developed landscape are buildings, pavement and introduced plants. In the most densely developed areas such as the commercial center, trees stand out in sharp contrast to structures and pavement. Because of this contrast, as well as their relative scarcity, trees take on important roles as design elements. They serve as landmarks, pinpointing or emphasizing locations. The Oaks of the Courthouse Square are an example of such landmarks. Street trees unify and bring harmony to a street of varied uses and architectural forms as do the Oaks of Lamar. Trees can also reinforce the importance of streets relative to their size and scale. Other trees can humanize the scale of parks and shopping centers such as the West end (Penney's) of the Oxford Mall. Climate control, especially shading, is another important function of trees in this hot summer area.

The question of what trees to plant in this developed landscape becomes an issue of design. Because the relationship to natural woodlands is diminished, the selection of trees must relate to the visual and functional roles to be served.

The following design guidelines are divided into three types of developed landscape: the commercial zone, residential areas and institutional property with an emphasis on schools, churches and government buildings.

Commercial Zone

The hub of Oxford's central business district is the Square, with retail and office buildings radiating primarily east and west, as well as two blocks north and south on Lamar. In addition to the Square and Lamar, other major business venues are on Van Buren, Jackson, and University Avenue.

The concentrated form of the commercial area is reinforced at its north and south edges by the residential

portions of Lamar which are lined with trees forming a distinct, green canopy. The same can also be partially said for Van Buren and Jackson. However these streets, along with east University, provide an opportunity to further this image as discussed below.

The downtown core is in a state of expansion, for both retail and office space, not to mention residential. New development affords an excellent opportunity for the comprehensive redesign of portions of the commercial zone to better unify the character of Oxford. Carefully developed tree planting schemes should become an integral part of any such plans.

Tree planting situations in the commercial zone of Oxford fall into four broad categories:

- Street trees for the major boulevards and primary access roads.
- Street trees for secondary commercial streets.
- Trees for pocket parks, pedestrian malls and walkways.
- Trees for parking areas.

Each situation has its own design determinants from which criteria for tree selection can be developed.

Street Trees for the Major Boulevards and Primary Access Roads

The Approach to the Square

(The Heartbeat of Oxford and Lafayette County)

The principal design requirements for trees relate to scale, reinforcement of street unity, and shade. On wide streets, trees should be large in scale, that is trees that will attain a large size and occupy a large volume. Small scaled trees would not make a sufficient visual impact on such a street. Trees placed closely together (25 to 35 feet) also unify the streetscape by giving it both reinforced form and character. Broad-spreading trees provide a canopy over pavement which shades and cools sidewalks, traffic lanes and building exteriors. This shading is particularly important on the south and west facing sides of streets which are exposed to the sun for long periods during summer days.

The residential segments of "old" Lamar Avenue are one of Oxford's greatest visual assets. As the "Main Street" of Oxford, Lamar is relatively wide and its stately, mature trees set the stage for Oxford's charm. Like Lamar, the general character of our key impact corridors (streets leading to or away from the Square) deserve special attention and treatment. Trees placed close together unify the streetscape giving it both reinforced form and character. Each street might be treated a little dif-

ferently, but schemes adopted should echo the character of Lamar Avenue. While narrower streets do not lend themselves to the majesty of a wide street like Lamar, wisely planned and executed designs can add unexpected attractiveness to such streets.

When planting street trees, the argument over uniform versus varied tree species inevitably arises. Both arguments have validity, making the issue difficult to resolve. Rather than attempting to arbitrarily favor one concept or the other, let us look at the issue as a design problem with the city-wide effects in mind. A commercial street (and to a certain extent a residential street) is a linear composite of many architectural forms and styles. The resulting visual diversity can border on chaos. There is no single unifying element or theme to give harmony to the whole. Tree planting is able to counterbalance this diversity and provide a pleasingly harmonious character to the street.

Because each species of tree has its own visual characteristics (form, color, texture, etc.), a mixture of different species of trees can dilute the strength of unity possible with one dominant tree. A planting scheme which accomplishes maximum harmony but allows some diversity is possible. A dominant tree can be selected for the entire street and planted uniformly throughout, interspaced with supplemental trees.

Lamar Avenue (75 ft R-O-W) Currently, as one moves away from the Square, Lamar is commercial for two blocks, then residential for four or so and then commercial/residential. Attempting to better unify Lamar involves a difficult issue; “Old” vs. “New” Oxford. For purposes of discussion, we will consider the stretch from Price Street south to Beanland Drive as “old” with the outer portions “new”.

Old: From University Ave north through the Square to Jefferson, Lamar is basically void of any street trees. The vision to place utility lines underground on the south portion of Lamar would provide an excellent opportunity to accomplish street tree plantings on both sides of the street. Medium to large trees 30 to 40 feet apart would be appropriate with the goal of retaining as many parking spaces as practicable. There are other portions of “old” Lamar that have few or no trees; particularly the east side of the block between Tyler and Fillmore (#603 through 609) and from the Square to Jefferson Avenue. While the utility lines are already gone on this segment, except for the parking lot north of the new Chancery Building, there are no street trees. To

Diversity is achieved within a unified whole. The dominant tree, selected for its scale, form, size and color carries the theme while the supplemental trees add enrichment without disrupting the unity by visual competition. This type of planting is more appropriate on wide streets with large planting spaces.

Following such a scheme, major access streets can be made more obvious, and the streets will “read” as important thoroughfares in the city as a whole. Diversity is achieved by the variation of trees among the different streets so it becomes a city-wide factor rather than an issue of a single street. For example, some streets might be planted with trees that give a splendid display of fall color, while others could be planted with spring flowering trees. Each would give a brilliant display, undiluted with variations. These effects are not suggested to supplant the other criteria for tree selection—form, size, etc. but they suggest a means of developing strength and richness through city-wide tree selection.

To provide the proper landscape environment for these key gateway streets, Oxford should prioritize work to place all utility lines on these streets underground.

Following are some specific observations and suggestions for the key access roads to the Square.

re-establish the visual impact of these parts of Lamar, a few street trees need to be placed in planting areas, one or two per block.

New: From Beanland Drive south to the MS 7 bypass and beyond and from Price St. north to Douglas Drive and beyond to Molly Bar Road. Both of these segments are generally a hodgepodge of commercial, professional and residential properties with few street trees planted, however, there are many adequate planting areas. These outer portions of Lamar have little character; the unifying elements are missing, whether buildings or landscaping is considered. However, with some effort, the landscaping of these segments could be brought into focus with the “older” parts of the street. While it is basically impossible to change the land use (assuming one wanted to), it is very possible to unify the segments through well planned landscaping.

To avoid such “old” & “new” Lamar dilemmas in the future, Oxford’s vision for its’ major gateway corridors and the invaluable role street trees play should be closely adhered to.

South Lamar from University Ave. looking North



Today



15 years later

Van Buren Avenue (54.5 ft R-O-W) From the west end of the 1st Baptist Church property to the Square, medium to large canopy trees should be planted every 30 to 40 feet or so on the south side of the street. From S 6th to S 9th Street, a 5 ft wide strip between the curb and the sidewalk is more than ample for street trees. The block from S 9th to S 10th (including the Presbyterian Church property) already contains

some large trees, however, the oak that was recently cut needs to be replaced in kind. Finally, between S 10th and the Square there is adequate space to plant a few medium sized street trees without sacrificing more than one or two parking spaces. In fact, if angle parking was installed on only one side of the street vs. the current parallel parking on both sides, no parking spaces would be lost—in fact a few might be gained.

Van Buren Ave. from the Ritz looking East



Today



15 years later

Jackson Avenue (54.5 ft R-O-W) Along with University Ave. East, the section of Jackson between the Square and the old railroad underpass is almost bare of any significant street trees. While there are utility lines on both sides of the street, the lines on the south are telephone/cable and could be moved to the north side on the same poles as the power lines. This would enable the planting of some medium to large canopy trees on the south side. (Currently, only Crape Myrtle—small trees—are planted.) Additionally, the north side could be greatly enhanced by adding large trees on the lawn of the Lafayette County Detention Center (see pg. 22), the east and west lawns of the Federal Building and on the property of various churches. These recommendations would not only improve the visual attractiveness of the street, but provide valuable energy savings for the various institutions.

The section of Jackson Ave. between S 6th Street and the old underpass (approx. 300 yards) is noticeably unattractive with almost all of the right-of-way paved over—similar to a 3 block wide driveway. The addition of a few planting beds along this section would breakup the expanse of the unattractive concrete-scape. Often the appearance of a street can dictate not only what new development will look like but also attract similarly appearing properties. In other words, when everything is paved in concrete, new properties are more likely to be also. We need to ask ourselves if we want this section of Jackson to look like a “strip-mall”? If not, some existing city R-O-W needs to be modified with provisions to install attractive landscaping and street trees.

Jackson Ave. from Star looking East



Today



15 years later

From 9th St. to the Square, were it not for the trees at the old Stone Law Office (1013 Jackson), the Federal Building and the Episcopal Church, this 200+ yard stretch of Jackson would be almost treeless. Similar to Van Buren, this section should have trees planted every 30 to 40 ft. on the south side, even at

the cost of a parking space or two.

Finally, the placement of a few large canopy trees on Jackson from the Square east would reinforce the unity of entrances to the Square and at the same time provide much needed shade for the city parking lot between N 13th & 14th Streets.

E. Jackson Ave. at N. 14th & N. 13th Streets



Today



15 years later

University Avenue (60 to 65 ft R-O-W)

The east portion (from Lamar East) is perhaps the most neglected major street in Oxford as far as street trees are concerned. There are very few trees of any size, and what stands out driving on this portion of University are signs and buildings. Many areas in front of buildings are completely paved with no provisions made for landscaping of any type. Reasonably spaced planting areas (8 ft. wide?) would help change this “parking lot” appearance.

The spacing of these planting islands along East University would be based on the specifics of the lot in question, but should be no more than 40 feet apart. Utility lines are on both sides of the street; however, similar to Jackson, those on the north side are phone/cable lines that could be relocated to the south side along with the power lines. By so doing, the trees on at least one side of the street could be large, while those under the lines should be limited to small to medium size.

University Ave. from S. 18th looking West



Today



15 years later

Street Trees for Secondary Commercial Streets

Most of these streets (for example parts of Jefferson, Monroe, Tyler, S 10th, S 11th, etc.) are narrow and less important as access streets to the Square. They should have a greater pedestrian orientation and while some do have sidewalks, others do not—and actually more resemble a dingy alley than a secondary commercial street. In fact, one is surprised to find themselves on a dirty, sidewalkless street in the heart of Oxford. While the servicing of various business' is obviously a necessity, streets that also handle pedestrian traffic need more attention to this important use. The design criteria for such streets include small scale, narrow planting spaces that could provide shade over pedestrian walks. Each street might be planted with a single species of a small to medium sized canopy tree, thereby providing a unique character to the specific street. When space permits, both sides of the street could be planted with erect, oval-shaped trees which are best suited for the narrowest spaces. Uniform planting of both sides of these streets is of less importance because street width is already scaled down. For effective shading, planting should be concentrated on south and west facing building facades and walks. (North facing buildings need little extra shade protection.)

When selecting trees for streets or paved areas several general considerations are important. The form and size of the tree should allow freedom of movement for both cars and pedestrians. The lowest permanent branches eventually must be able to clear 8 feet over sidewalks and 13 or more feet over streets, depending upon the proximity of truck traffic. Multi-trunked and small, low branching trees should be avoided. Conifers are inappropriate street trees because of their branching habit.

Trees which have deep root systems should be used, and trees which create excessive litter should be avoided. This does not mean selecting only broadleaf evergreens, many deciduous trees are actually "cleaner" in that they shed their leaves only once during the year while many evergreens shed their older leaves continuously, creating constant litter.

Pocket Parks, Malls & Pedestrian Walkways

These spaces are small in scale and size and are related to the slow pace of walking. Close observation of detail is important in small spaces. Interesting shadow patterns on pavement, seasonal color and sculptural form are desirable elements in tree selection here. Trees should generally be planted closely together. The appar-

ent size of a small space can be manipulated through varied tree spacing. Trees for these spaces need not branch at the height required for automobiles, and multi-trunked specimens can be used.

Clearly defined pedestrian ways and linkages should become integrated into the central portion of the business district. They are especially important to include in future development.

Parking Areas

Trees for parking areas fall into three basic use categories; trees for shade, definition and screening.

- Shade trees should have a rounded, high branched form and grow relatively quickly to cast a broad shadow. Low branching, conical trees, particularly conifers, should be avoided in the active parking area due to their interference with cars and people.
- Definition or delineator trees are used to guide traffic, highlight entrances, terminate vistas and indicate ends of parking bays. As such they should be taller and more erect (pyramidal or ovoid forms) than the shade trees used.
- Screening trees may be smaller in size than shade or delineator trees. Both round and erect forms are appropriate. Low branching is important if sufficient planting space is available. Evergreen trees afford year around screening. However, higher branching trees can be effectively used if they are combined with low shrubs.

Parking lots can be significant sources of heat, air pollutants, water pollutants and visual blight. As a result, many communities have enacted ordinances that not only specify general landscape requirements (X number of plants/trees for every Y parking spaces), but also require parking lots to have up to a 50% canopy cover after 15 years. Detailed studies by the USDA have shown how effective such provisions are and the benefits that they provide the communities;

"Unshaded parking lots can be characterized as miniature heat islands and sources of motor vehicle pollutants. Tree canopies can cool these "hot-spots" by direct shading of the ground surface and indirectly by the transpiration of water through leaves. Air temperature differences of approximately 3 to 7 degrees F have been observed for urban neighborhoods of contrasting tree cover, averaging approximately 2 degrees F per 10% canopy cover."

Not only do canopy cover provisions reduce pollution and surface temperatures, they also make the lot more inviting, thereby improving the business climate. I'm sure we've all observed that in hot weather where shade is available in a parking lot, those shaded parking spaces will gen-

erally be filled first, even if one must walk further. For example, the shade provided by the sweet gums to the west of Penney's is the only shade in the entire 500+ lot.

Specific Examples

Generally, Oxford's parking lots are void of large canopy trees. Those that have been landscaped almost exclusively rely on Crape Myrtle or other small trees. While these make an attractive alternative for pavement, they basically provide little shade. However, there are two lots that have either saved existing trees or have planted large specimen trees that will provide significant shade as they grow. One is on N 11th and is used by the Church of Christ. It is a very good example of how to use large shade trees with little lost space. While the trees take up 3 parking spaces (of 47 possible), the visual and cooling effects they provide, both for the lot itself and the neighborhood in general, make a major difference when compared to lots that have no trees. The other lot is that of Bancorp South at the corner of University Ave. and Lamar. While the trees are still young, they already provide a pleasing border and will soon produce significant shade.

Of particular interest is the new parking lot at the Ford Center on the Ole Miss campus. The lot is very thoughtfully laid out; rows run north and south with parking facing either east or west. Planting bays running north and south have been planted with many large trees. Within a few years these will provide substantial shade from the hot, western afternoon sun. Unfortunately, two recently built, large lots only followed a part of this formula. The new Walmart and Kroger lots have N&S rows, but few trees. Unlike the Ford Center lot, the placement of the trees is such that few of the hundreds spaces will ever be shaded.

Modifying Oxford's landscape ordinance to specify a 40 to 50 percent canopy coverage after 15 years would make a dramatic improvement in future lots. Provisions to ensure this coverage be maintained should also be included. Further, when possible, a design with N/S rows, E/W parking spaces and canopy trees planted along the N/S corridors should be encouraged. Such a design provides the best potential for significant shading from the peak solar afternoon radiation.

Kroger Parking Lot



Today



15 years later

Schools, Churches and Government Buildings

Public schools present a splendid opportunity for extensive tree planting. Environmental education is an important feature in school curricula development. By using the school grounds as outdoor classrooms and laboratories, the plantings can be more meaningful as well as improve the aesthetic qualities of the school environment. A good example is the Bramlett/Oxford High School complex. All schools should be encouraged to develop planting programs that combine visual quality and environmental education. However, the objective should be to develop integrated, harmonious plantings following a carefully developed theme, rather than to collect numerous, unrelated plants.

Similarly, churches should be encouraged to develop tree plantings harmonious to their surroundings. Like schools, churches often have large parcels of land that have a great visual influence on the surrounding neighborhood as well as the entire community. Sensitive conceived

planting plans should consider the churches' relationship to the setting, their need for outdoor classrooms as well as the various functional requirements of shade for cars, screening, and planting for low maintenance. Many of Oxford's churches could not only add to the beauty of the community, but also realize significant energy savings by the planting of large canopy shade trees on the west and south sides of their buildings. *(As an example, the placement of 3 large canopy trees 15 to 20 feet from the west wall of the sanctuary of the First Baptist Church on Van Buren would soon provide substantial shade against the hot afternoon sun.)*

Government Buildings and their property offer an excellent opportunity to enhance the visual heritage of the community. As previously discussed in the Jackson Avenue section, these institutions offer real potential to add to the overall charm of Oxford. They, along with churches, are not residential complexes and should not be planted in a residential manner. They are significant institutions which are permanent features in the landscape of the community, and their plantings should reinforce the dignity of this role.

Lafayette County Detention Center



Today



15 years later

Residential Areas

By comparison, the residential areas of Oxford have many more trees than the commercial area. Large native oaks in the wooded areas, older street trees and the many trees in private gardens combine to provide verdant residential neighborhoods. Trees are commonplace here while they stand out boldly in the business district.

The question might then be raised as to what more can be said about trees in residential areas. How can this Plan be useful to areas that seem to be already well planted? Aren't private gardens with their own trees sufficient? Isn't tree selection an individual decision?

To answer these questions, let us examine the role trees can play in residential areas. In this plan we are primarily concerned with the public corridor of the street and not the planting of private yards, patios or gardens. The principle role of trees in this corridor is to differentiate the street from the private gardens and give distinction and harmony to the street or neighborhood.

Residential gardens reflect a high degree of individuality and rightly so. On the other hand, a street is a public space. The street or neighborhood should be considered a design problem just as a garden planting is considered a design problem. However, a street is not a garden, but a larger scale landscape relating to the more or less linear corridor and the higher speed travel experience.

Here the functional uses of trees are less important considerations than in the commercial area. The harmonious character or theme that tree plantings can achieve becomes their dominant role. The repetition of tree species or types of trees helps unify a street of varying architectural styles and garden plantings. A street with too many small, dissimilar, unrelated tree forms tends to appear disorderly.

The most pleasing streets and neighborhoods in Oxford are those with a strength of unity due to a consistent use of trees. This can be achieved without infringing upon the individuality of plantings in private gardens. A number of streets in Oxford exemplify this principle. Perhaps the best example are the few blocks of Lamar, both north and south of the Square, where the grand oaks that were planted decades ago achieve a fine strength of character that does not impinge on the individual gardens; however, in most cases on Lamar, the private gardens reinforce this character. Similarly, other neighborhoods have a fine visual harmony, not necessar-

ily because of regular street plantings, but because of the repetition of similar trees in a consistent fashion—for instance, portions of Sivley.

The decision of what trees to plant and how to plant them along residential streets is based upon qualitative questions relating to the desired street character:

- Should it be open and sunny or closed and canopied?
- Should the tree canopy give dense shadows or dappled light?
- Is formality and regularity or informal consistency important?
- Is seasonal color desirable or is a uniform green necessary?

Planting trees in regular lines is perhaps the first treatment which comes to mind when street trees are discussed. This is the most common approach, but is only one alternative. Others are possible and relate to the street width, the presence or absence of existing trees and the topography. Taking clues from nature, we can observe that a fine Oak woodland is visually pleasing because of repetition of forms, colors and textures—a simplicity achieved through a variety of similar tree species.

In a residential landscape lacking natural tree cover, the harmony we see in the natural landscape can be achieved by the deliberate planting of visually similar trees. A combination of Oaks, Maples and Tulip trees planted randomly, but repeatedly, throughout a neighborhood or along a street can achieve this effect. The predominance of overhead wires on the skyline can be masked or at least softened by using large canopy trees.

In a residential landscape with various existing trees, a more cohesive appearance can be achieved with a random planting of a single species such as Zelkova or Chinese Pistache. In such a planting, the trees are spaced at various distances from each other along the street. Their locations are determined by analyzing the existing conditions and carefully placing the trees in the most effective spaces. This can be done to screen views of utility lines and poles, shade driveways and south or west facing building walls and separate open front yards from the street.

A narrower street in an older neighborhood may have many large trees in the private gardens. Here a smaller tree such as a Japanese Crabapple or Maple might be used to give the street harmony without destroying its openness.

Utility poles and overhead wires are visually distracting elements in most Oxford neighborhoods. Of course, the best solution for eliminating this distraction is underground wiring—a very costly undertaking. However, trees planted along a street can significantly mask the prominence of power lines. Rows of randomly spaced trees planted forward on lots offset the regularity of utility pole spacing. The canopy of small to medium sized trees planted beneath wires can block the direct view of overhead lines. Large trees, if properly pruned when young, can be trained to completely screen the view of lines. The wires are strung unencumbered through the center of the canopies.

Many neighborhoods and streets in Oxford can benefit from developing street planting programs. The results can be a more satisfactory streetscape and quite possibly, a greater sense of neighborhood unity. The actual tree planting can be a shared event that will bring together neighbors, young and old alike, in a concerted effort at neighborhood improvement. The recommendation of specific trees for residential neighborhoods is more difficult than for commercial areas which tend to have more definitive design criteria. Factors such as topography, soil, existing trees and proximity to natural woodlands all add to the more personal nature of residential areas and form a complexity of design determinants.