MISSISSIPPI STATE
U N I V E R S I T Y ™
EXTENSION SERVICE

Florence Gardens

Gulfport, MS

Project Highlights:

- 420 acre traditional neighborhood development

- Development footprint is minimized to certain areas

- Stormwater is treated by routing to grasslands, swales and bioswales

- Walkways and boardwalks occur throughout the community and connect housing to public spaces and natural areas

- Curb cuts and downspout removal allows rainwater to filter into soil

Preserving natural habitat

Pedestrian pathways and streets wind through preserved grasslands, woodlands and wetlands.

Project designers:

Christian Preus Landscape Architecture, PLLC

landscape architect

Geoff Dyer and Howard Blackson,

Placemakers, planners

Brown, Mitchell & Alexander, Inc. , engineers

Context: residential, subdivision, suburban

Award: Merit Award, Professional, Public Design, Mississippi Chapter, ASLA

Project Overview

Initiated in 2004, Florence Gardens is a traditional housing development that had changed from its original concept of a large-lot, high end subdivision, to embrace the concept of SmartCodes. SmartCode is a land development code that customizes and unifies zoning, urban design, structures, and the natural environment. It also promotes walkable neighborhoods. Florence Gardens features numerous amenities including a community pool, a 27-acre lake, parks, a community hall, boardwalks, post office, community garden, and woodland reserves.

Smart landscape features and practices

Preserving natural habitat. By utilizing Low Impact Development principles, the designers were able to preserve a large percentage of existing woodlands and wetlands. Out of 427 total acres, only 240 acres are allowed for development. Low Impact Development is a land development approach that preserves natural features to serve as sites to manage stormwater. Christian Preus, landscape architect for the development, states "Environmental stewardship plays a major role in how the property is developed. Our approach to stormwater management has been to catch and treat the water as close to the paved surfaces as possible, and allow it to filter through native meadows, swales, or bio-retention cells. In Phase I, each lot has a bio cell incorporated into the landscape that treats up to a 25 year storm event before overflowing into the drainage infrastructure."

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Retention ponds hold and filter stormwater and provide for natural amenities.

Creative water spillway structures carry water from retention ponds to overflow basins, dissipate water force, and help reduce soil erosion

Written by Robert F. Brzuszek, Associate Extension Professor, The Department of Landscape Architecture, Mississippi State University. All photos by Christian Preus and used with permission.