

ST. GREGORY ELEMENTARY *Continued*

The site plan reflects the importance of the pedestrian, specifically the safety of the student. Through the use of traffic control devices and generous walkways and benches, the landscape architects were able to produce a design that places the needs of the student first and the motor vehicle second.

The overall landscape plan is a reflection of the flora that one would find in the Lowcountry of South Carolina. Native and ornamental plants such as live oaks, dahoon hollies, sasanqua camellias, and southern Indica azaleas highlight the design. The plant material, with various bloom times and colors, create points of interest throughout the year, while simultaneously complementing the building itself. The planting within the playground required special consideration. The intent here was not only to create an aesthetically pleasing design, but to select plant material that would not be harmful to the students. A mixture of safe, non-poisonous plants free of thorns were chosen. Functionally, these plants were arranged in such a way as to not interrupt a supervisor's view of the children while at the same time providing a physical and visual separation of uses. This gives students the opportunity to participate in group activities or to simply be alone and read a book. Through the use of a well designed landscape, the design team was able to establish a safe, exciting and unique learning environment for the children of Saint Gregory the Great and the children of greater Beaufort County.

Due to zoning restrictions and its proximity to a major thoroughfare, this project presented the planning staff with a unique permitting task. The landscape architects were required to obtain, not only the required construction approvals, but a Corridor Review Board approval and a special use permit. With one of the more complex permitting procedures, the successful implementation of this project demonstrates our ability to navigate the sometimes confusing public hearing gauntlet as well as the lengthy and demanding administrative approval process.

The landscape architects also filled a major role as Construction Administrator, overseeing site construction on a regular basis. Weekly coordination meetings were held on-site with the general contractor, various subcontractors, engineers and the client in order to facilitate the most cost effective and efficient construction possible and to see that the intent of the design was being followed.

