



STATE UNIVERSITY
CONSTRUCTION FUND



SUNY New Paltz Site & Landscape Master Plan

EHRENKRANTZ ECKSTUT & KUHN ARCHITECTS

WALLACE ROBERTS + TODD

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
PLACES	9
DESIGN STANDARDS	33
IMPLEMENTATION	45
BUDGET	49
APPENDICES	51
A Campus Facilities Planning Task Force Charge	
B Cost Estimate (under separate cover)	
C Large Scale Plans for Places (under separate cover)	

THE ARRIVAL



1

Executive Summary

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The State University of New York at New Paltz is a campus whose origins established a cohesive and beautiful environment for learning. Integrated into a cohesive woodland that extends from the Mohonk Ridge, across the village of New Paltz and beyond, the campus features mature trees, green quadrangles and spectacular views to the ridge and adjacent woodland.

The students, faculty and staff of the college and the residents of the village of New Paltz take full advantage of the region's natural beauty and opportunities for year-round outdoor activity. This beautiful setting has also contributed to a strong sense of place for the college, complementing its academic standing as one of the best liberal arts colleges in the country.

The landscape and open space plan described within this report strives to reinforce the connection of the campus to this magnificent landscape, clarify the campus' boundaries and relationship to both its urban and rural edges, restore and reconnect the existing open spaces on campus, develop the campus' landscape to its full potential and enhance the sustainable attributes of the campus landscape.

Reinforcing the Urban & Romantic Areas of Campus

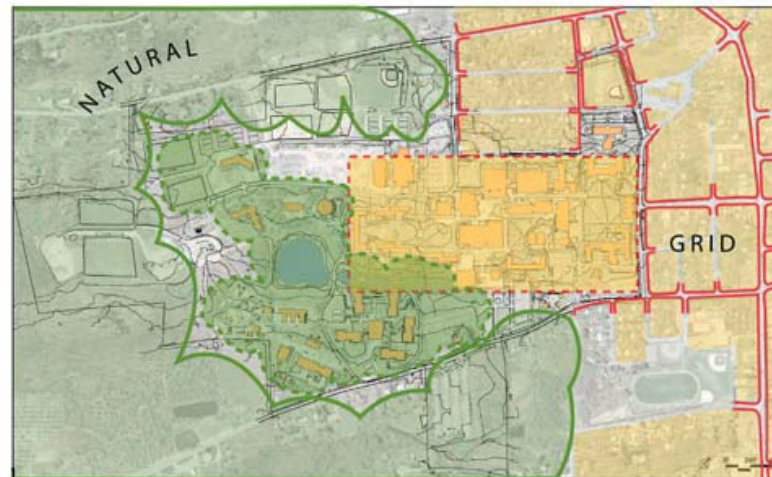
Begun in the early 20th century with the construction of Old Main, the campus has developed over time to create several active and memorable places - most notably the Academic Quad - and others with great potential to create a variety of experience across the campus. This variety stems in part from the campus' location at the edge of the village of New Paltz on the north and adjacent to active farm land on the south. The existing campus has grown to respond to these two contexts in its most fundamental organization. On the north, adjacent to the urban

street grid of the village the campus is more orderly and defined by traditional collegiate quadrangles and walks. On the south, the meandering water of the "Gunk" has begun to define a more "romantic" and pastoral campus experience. This plan proposes to strengthen and better relate these two very powerful organizing ideas.

It should be pointed out that while the campus is well organized and its underlying plan is quite good, some decisions have been made that have incrementally diminished the overall potential of campus and context. This plan has been developed to ensure that the campus continues to take advantage of its natural assets and historic form and repair, to the extent possible, the interventions that have worked against this heritage to create a cohesive network of open spaces. The next sections and the remainder of this report discuss how this will be achieved.



The campus is embedded in woodland.



The campus has both Urban/grided and Romantic/natural areas.

THE "CORNER"



Asserting a New First Impression

Approaching from the north, the first impression of the campus is established by the intersection of Route 32 and Plattekill Avenue. This urban edge of the campus is currently undefined and is dominated by parking lots, missing the chance to publicly assert the qualities of the college, campus and landscape. The visitor then travels further down Route 32 to enter a confusing parking lot in front of the Visitor's Center. Accordingly, the current first impression arriving at the campus is not a positive one.

This plan proposes the relocation and reconfiguration of parking within the campus to create an opportunity for a new gateway building and plaza that define the urban edge of campus at the intersection of Route 32 and Plattekill Avenue. This building and its plaza will announce visitors' arrival at a great place of learning.

As visitors progress toward the Visitor's Center they will be greeted by a new landscaped arrival that unites the more urban portions of the campus with the more pastoral and organic. The extension of the "Gunk" – a connected series of small ponds – into this landscape will help link the more organic to the more urban portions of the campus and feature the water as an integral part of the campus.

Restoring the Quadrangles

The northern section of campus is largely defined spatially by quadrangles. However, over time vehicular circulation and parking have encroached into these spaces, diminishing their presence visually and affecting their use by pedestrians on campus. A parking lot intrudes into one of the oldest and most significant places on campus – the Academic Quad -- used as the site of the spring commencement ceremony. Similarly, a significant portion of the adjacent "Arts & Sciences Quad" has become the location of a temporary faculty office building and its as-

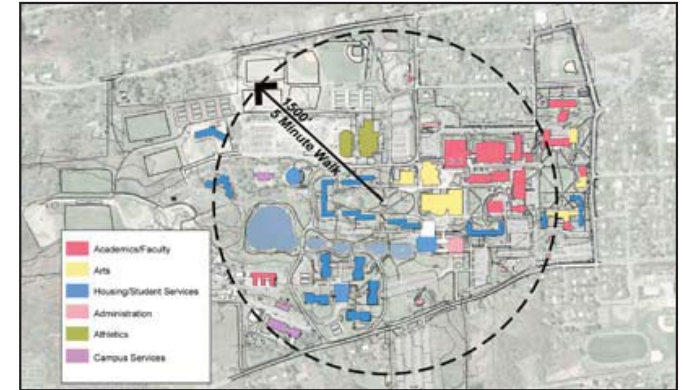
sociated parking lot. Vehicular access into these parking lots has resulted in pedestrian-vehicular conflicts in the very heart of the campus. Since New Paltz is such a compact and walkable campus, this parking can be redistributed to less obtrusive locations and still be convenient.

Accordingly, this plan proposes removing parking and temporary structures from these quadrangles and restoring amenable pedestrian pathways with seating and landscape designed to foster casual interaction. The plan also proposes reinforcing the edges of these renewed places with building additions to the Smiley Arts Center and the Wooster Science Building. By taking advantage of the opportunities for views across these quadrangles, the open facades of these new additions will also enhance the edges of the adjacent quadrangles.

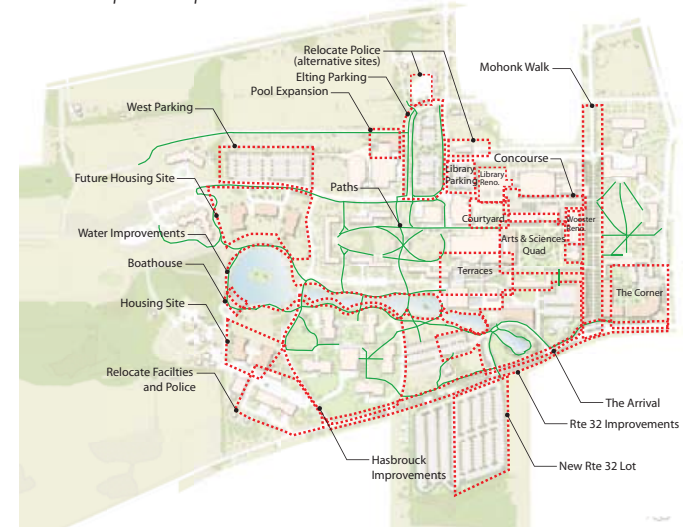
Strengthening Connections

As the open spaces on campus are enhanced or restored, the connections between them will also be strengthened and clarified. For example, the Concourse, which is already a successful place for all of the campus community, will be enhanced with new seating opportunities and better connections to the three adjacent quadrangles. A new elevator tower will create a notable landmark at the southern end of the Concourse and become the accessible route between the adjacent Courtyard and the Concourse. The Concourse's drainage will be channeled into a bio-swale that will further manifest the campus' commitment to creating a sustainable environment.

Likewise, with the removal of parking in the Academic and Arts & Sciences Quads, the new Mohonk Walk will create a new pedestrian thoroughfare in the alignment of the former Mohonk Avenue. This new walk will become a primary East-West pedestrian route across campus linking Route 32 on the east with Vandenburg Hall on the west. New



The campus is compact and walkable.



The plan renews existing and creates new places.

MOHONK WALK



pathways will better connect the residence halls to the dining area in Hasbrouck Commons and improve access from the parking lots to the academic core.

Finally, the interstitial area between the new SUB addition and the Smiley Art Center will become the “Terraces,” transforming a confusing and mostly inaccessible system of pathways into simplified, clear and accessible pathways facilitating use of this important campus node by students and visitors alike.

Integrating the “Gunk”

The southern end of campus is more romantic and pastoral in character than the urban, northern end of campus adjacent to the village. This pastoral character is defined in large part by connected ponds that comprise the “Gunk.” However, much of the campus is oriented away from this visual amenity and the presence of a significant number of geese is a serious problem.

The plan proposes to build upon the presence of the “Gunk” by locating new building opportunities along its southern end (including a new “boathouse” for special events), enhancing pedestrian access to the water by removing vehicular circulation between Hasbrouck Quad and the Gunk and by extending the water into the new arrival along Route 32. Each of these changes will make the water a more central element of the campus. With a new more naturalistic planting strategy that will discourage the geese, the water’s edge and the surrounding area will become more attractive to pedestrians.

Improving the Details

At a smaller scale the plan has established a palette of plantings, site furniture and paving that will help create a more cohesive image across the campus. Currently, many different pavement and site furniture standards are in evidence, confusing way-finding and reducing the overall visual coherence of the campus.

A new hierarchy of pathways will define the qualities of every path on the campus based upon the prominence of its location and the amount of pedestrian traffic it will carry each day. These pathways have been designed to be both attractive and easy to maintain and will be complemented by a consistent palette of benches, trash cans, bike racks and light fixtures.

A “vocabulary” of indigenous plantings has been defined to better integrate the campus into the surrounding woodland landscape visually and environmentally.

Enhancing Environmental Stewardship

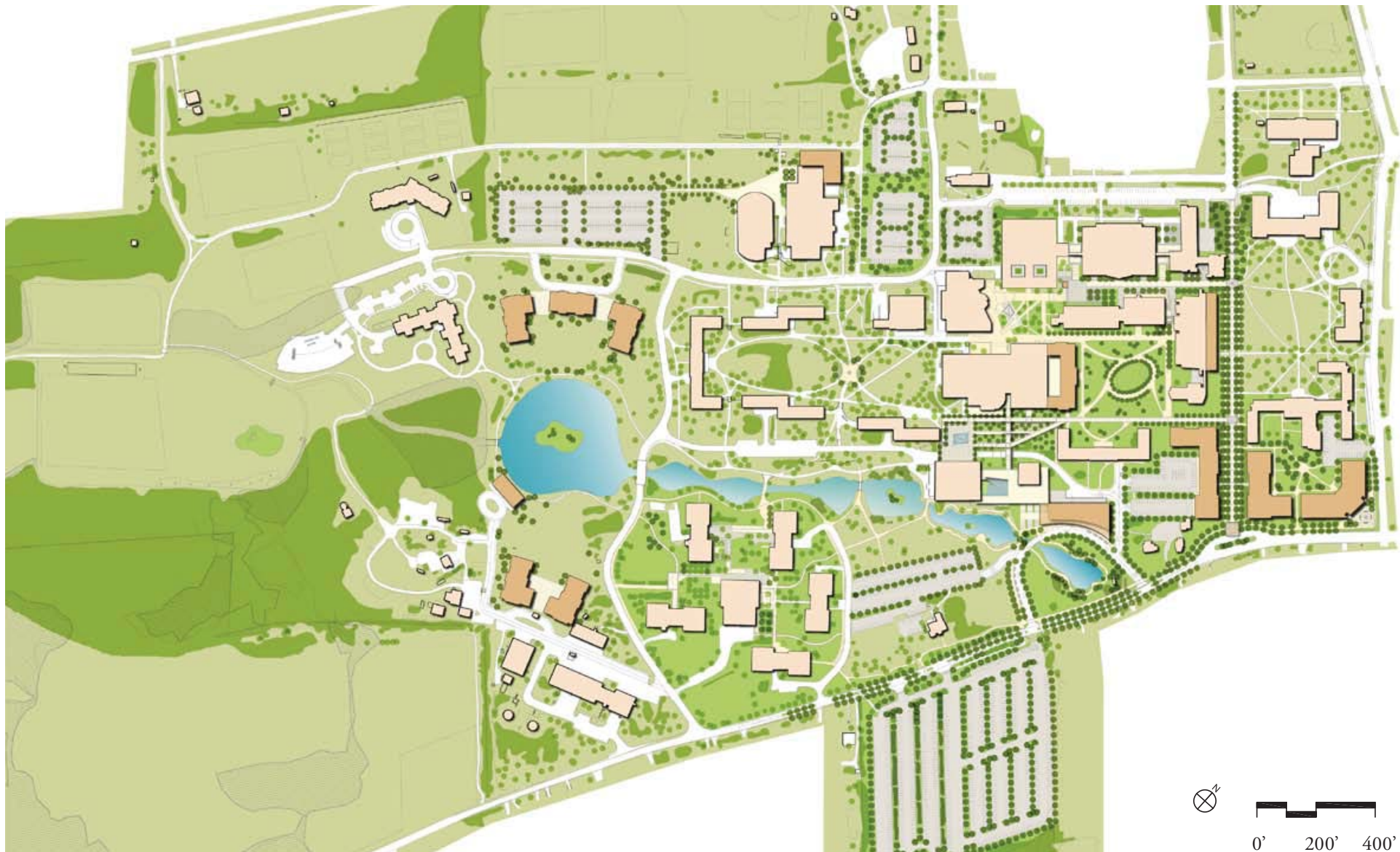
By implementing this plan, the college will enhance its unique connection to its region and sense of place and become an even stronger steward of the environment. For example, indigenous plant species will visually link the campus to the surrounding woodland, help reduce the amount of maintenance required and conserve water. By reducing the amount of impervious area within the campus less run-off will be created. Where there are large amounts of pavement, in parking lots and along the Concourse for example, visually-appealing bio-swales will retain storm water on campus and recharge the local ground water.

Similarly, bike racks and an opportunity for a bus stop along Route 32 will encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation, reducing the generation of carbon dioxide and other harmful gases and reducing the consumption of non-renewable resources. Site lighting will be “dark sky” compliant, ensuring that everyone on campus and off can enjoy views of the night sky and mitigating any impact on nocturnal animal life, while providing a safe night-time environment for everyone on campus.

Enhancing Accessibility

One of the major themes of the plan is to create a campus that is inviting and accessible to all. The proposed modifications to the site will ensure that all students, faculty, staff and visitors will be able to access and utilize the resources of the campus equitably. To achieve this goal, the plan proposes several changes to create new and better accessible routes through the landscape and places of the campus.

These changes include a new elevator that will connect the Courtyard to the Concourse. This elevator will be housed in a glassy, new tower that will become a distinguished new landmark terminating the southern axis of Concourse. The plan also proposes to revise the pathways between the SUB and the Smiley Art Center (an area nicknamed the “Terraces”) improving the connection between the SUB and the Art Center, increasing the accessible routes through this place and removing all unnecessary paving. While the plan in general proposes to remove parking from the center of campus, it retains existing or provides locations for new accessible parking convenient to the many destinations on campus.



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Fostering the Safety of the Campus Community

The plan will enhance the safety of the students, faculty, staff and visitors in several ways. One of which is by the relocation of the campus police to the College Terrace building providing a central, convenient but unobtrusive location for this department. From this central location, emergency personnel and their vehicles will be able to quickly respond to any location on and off campus. This plan provides for the relocation of the functions currently housed in the College Terrace to the “boathouse” to be constructed on the shore of the “Gunk.”

The plan also provides new guidelines that will enhance the users’ perception of daytime and nighttime safety on campus. For example, the current pathway light fixtures are often mounted too high. This frequently results in the adjacent tree canopy obstructing the light, creating dark areas for pedestrians to navigate. New lighting standards will lower the typical lighting fixtures to a more pedestrian scale, twelve feet above campus pathways and below the typical tree canopy. Better illumination of the pedestrian pathways will be complemented by planting guidelines that discourage dense, low plantings that would obstruct open sightlines across the landscape. Instead, the guidelines provide a rich palette of trees and ground covers.

Implementing the Plan

Implementation of the plan will occur over the next five-year capital plan and the two following five-year plans. The Campus Facilities Planning Task Force has prioritized projects by place for the first five-year plan as:

- Concourse (part of the High Temperature Hot Water line replacement underway)
- The Corner (with a new science building)
- Mohonk Walk
- Arts & Sciences Quad
- Police Department relocation
- Replanting the eroded second pond of the Gunk

These initial projects will have a significant impact in creating an appropriate first impression and restoring the core of campus. To advance these projects, design contracts will be let to further develop the concepts for use in preparing construction documents that can be bid.

Design Principles

DESIGN PRINCIPLES
Build on the great “DNA” of the Campus
Provide a notable and distinct “first impression”
Define campus edge, minimize views to parking, and provide safer pedestrian and vehicular crossings along Route 32
Create a gracious arrival experience through a discernable main entrance
Improve parking efficiency, access, and location; maintain adequate accessible close-in parking; re-examine parking policies
Minimize pedestrian, vehicular, and service conflicts
Strengthen and beautify key N-S and E-W pedestrian circulation routes
Better define and improve linkages to quads and open space; improve accessibility throughout the campus
Strengthen and enhance qualities of the “Grid” Campus and the “Romantic” Campus; Identify new building sites
Enhance opportunities for long distance views
Increase opportunities for informal interaction; create small scale places
Reduce excess impervious pavement; rationalize system of paths
Increase opportunities for human enjoyment of the water
Improve building entrances and interactions with open spaces

