Landscape Design Guidelines

The network of green connective spaces strongly influences the character of landscape improvements in the Main Street North District. These improvements visually re-enforce the flow of pedestrian traffic and the character and richness of new open spaces. The landscape of the Main Street North District also showcases existing memorable architecture and much loved public spaces, while bringing a more articulated sense of scale and intimacy to a part of campus that has thus far been defined by poorly-scaled buildings and public spaces from the 1960s and 1970s. While landscape improvements should respect the character of historic buildings and existing open spaces where they occur, it should also generate new forms and typologies to give this District a better sense of place.

The campus geometries in play here are largely derived from the campus grid, and the major north/south pedestrian corridors that connect the campus. In addition, the landscape of the Main Street North District has some topographic variation that needs to be addressed in terms of physical accessibility. There are major grade changes between the current C-B-W Quad and Converse Hall, the Aiken Center and Bailey/Howe Library Quadrangle, and in the open space between Lafayette Hall and the Cook Science Building.

Landscape Initiatives

There are multiple gateways within this District, including two on the north side of the Main Street North District on Colchester Avenue at the FAHC access road and at the intersection of Mansfield Avenue; and on the south side of the District, on Main Street at the intersection with University Heights Drive. The Colchester Avenue and Main Street Gateways form the two primary entrances to the Green Mountain Walkway. All gateways act as points-of-entry to the vehicular access and connective green spaces of campus and must orient the visitor.

Formal avenues of trees reinforce the geometries of pedestrian circulation along Green Mountain Walkway, through the new Dudley H. Davis Center “oval,” and along the subsidiary pedestrian corridors that cross the District. In addition, large open spaces are articulated by informal copses of trees that bring a sense of composition to the landscape, and create intimate places for gathering and relaxing. Access ramps are considered an integral element of the design of the landscape and its connective green spaces and are designed to create strong gathering spaces and a pleasant pedestrian experience. By utilizing universal design concepts, access ramps will blend into the campus fabric.

The University previously supported the original concept of a “land bridge” over Main Street within the Main Street Improvement Project that was federally funded. The University would support the reintroduction of this concept as it is an innovative solution to provide a safer and more efficient pedestrian connection between the Main Street North and University Heights Districts while significantly improving the aesthetics of the area.

The architectural initiatives in this District further support its green connectivity by opening up buildings with lantern-like glass-enclosed public spaces, and interior pedestrian walkways that offer shelter from the weather.

Improved street tree planting along Colchester Avenue will further enhance the visual character of the Main Street North District and create a positive first impression of the campus from its primary vehicular approach routes.
MAIN STREET NORTH DISTRICT
TRINITY DISTRICT

Architectural Characteristics

The Trinity District has a diverse collection of architecture that includes academic buildings and small residence halls. The buildings have a range of materials: Mann Hall built in 1939, has red brick and limestone trim in a late Art Deco Style; McAuley and Mercy Halls were built in 1958 and 1962, and have metal and glass in an International Style; and Delahanty Hall and the five residence halls (Hunt, Ready, Sichel, Richardson, and McCann), built between 1966 and 1973, have brown brick with slate panels. The roofs are typically flat although the Farrell Building, built in 1985, has a prominent sloping metal roof.

New Buildings

New buildings in the Trinity District should respect the architectural characteristics of the District in terms of height, mass, scale and proportions. Exterior walls should be of brick or stone in a color which is sympathetic to the District. For example, the use of slate panels that reference the adjacent buildings would be encouraged. Windows should also fit in with the scale and rhythm of fenestration in adjacent buildings. Roofs may be sloped or flat.

Additions and Renovations

Additions to buildings should follow the same guidelines as the other Districts. Additions to older buildings should follow the guidelines for the University Green District while additions to any of the buildings built between the 1950s and the 1980s should be designed with large areas of glass to make the existing buildings feel more open and inviting.

Renovations to the interiors should be compatible with new programmatic uses and technologies.
TRINITY DISTRICT

Landscape Design Guidelines

The Trinity District’s intimate sense of scale, its mixed use program, and its situation at the edge of a heavily wooded ravine are reflected in a landscape that is more intimate in scale than that of the rest of the campus.

The existing fabric of the Trinity District is structured by a grid derived from its neighborhood context that is distinct from those of the rest of University. The existing character of the landscape has historically been set by a legally-zoned setback from the road. While this setback may change, future buildings on the Trinity District should maintain some distance from the road to preserve the green character of the surrounding neighborhood.

Landscape Initiatives

The network of walkways in the Trinity District juxtaposes a formal structure derived from the Trinity Grid and the layout of its existing building, and a more sinuous series of braided walkways that cuts through the grid on the diagonal and connects the north edge of Trinity to the rest of the campus. Tree plantings in the Trinity District consist of linear allées blending into alternate side plantings on the braided paths. While the Trinity Walkways are narrower than the Green Mountain Walkway and the Redstone Walkway, their curvilinear form and similar palette of plant and paving materials will give these paths a unified and coherent appearance.

An outdoor amphitheater located west of McAuley Hall will take advantage of existing grading conditions to serve as an outdoor gathering and performance space that will be a focus for the open space in the Trinity District.
GATEWAY DISTRICT

Architectural Characteristics

The character of this District is currently evolving to include a renewed medical and natural sciences research focus. New development in this District should be sensitive to its impacts, including traffic, circulation, open space, views to the mountains, and impact to the residential neighbors.

The existing buildings in this District were built between 1957 and 2000. Almost all of them, except for the largely glass-walled 1960s International-Style Given Medical Building, are built of red brick in the utilitarian International Style with flat roofs. The landscape character of the District is defined by its stunning panoramas of the Green Mountains to the south.

Although not constructed but in the planning phases, a new Plant Sciences Building is underway to co-locate the plant sciences academic and research departments. An exciting new addition is in the early phases of planning for the “greening” of the Aiken Center and a new addition to the Marsh Life Sciences Building is under construction in anticipation of co-locating the Nutrition and Food Sciences academic and research department. These new facilities and additions will change the character of the Gateway District into a more vibrant and heavily utilized campus district in the near future.
**Foreground Buildings**

New foreground buildings in this District should herald the future of the University of Vermont. They should be expressive of the importance of scientific research to the University, but need to also fit in well with the landscape, particularly the new University Gateway and Arboretum planned along Main Street. The sites for foreground buildings are at the head of new quadrangles or at strategic locations seen prominently from Main Street. Although red brick is currently the predominant exterior material in this District, it is important that other materials such as stone, metal, wood and pre-cast be considered. Large areas of glass for public spaces that celebrate a sense of community should also be encouraged. Roofs may be pitched or flat, and should be carefully thought of as seen above the tops of the trees of the University Gateway Arboretum.
**Background Buildings**

Background buildings are quieter than foreground buildings and should form the edges of outdoor spaces or quadrangles. Most of the existing buildings in this District would be considered background buildings. Exterior materials should be compatible with adjacent buildings, although the use of limited amounts of stone, metal, and wood is encouraged. Windows need to be in punched openings, but larger areas of glass at entrances, lounges, etc. should be provided.

**Additions**

Additions to any of the buildings built in the 1950s and 1960s should be designed with large areas of glass to make the existing buildings feel more open and inviting. The addition to Marsh Life Sciences, currently under construction, is an example of this. It is important that any addition differentiate between the new construction and the original.
The Gateway District represents a more modern face of the campus. Until now it has largely served as the home of the College of Medicine, the College of Nursing and Health Sciences, the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, the Rubenstein School of Environmental and Natural Resources and as a parking area for the University and Fletcher Allen Health Care. Future development will change the character of this District from what it is today. It will take on a greater built density, and will become a more integral component of the campus.

The geometries guiding future development in this district are defined by a downward extension of the existing campus grid, and wide setbacks from the road that will preserve the open, green character of the landscape. As the first part of the campus that most visitors will encounter, the Gateway District also serves as a visual point-of-entry to the University.

**Landscape Initiatives**

Landscape improvements in the northern end of the District, are conceived as being urban in character. The existing and proposed quadrangles in the vicinity of the Given Medical Building are more structured and geometric than on much of the rest of campus. Further south and east, the landscape of the Gateway District becomes more naturalistic, and part of a larger University Gateway Arboretum, that will extend to the other side of Main Street in the University Heights District. Plantings should be arranged in naturalistic groups that frame new buildings from Main Street, but allow for clearings and glades for playing games, outdoor classes and informal gatherings. The building land banks should also inform landscape designs for this district.

The curvilinear form of the walkways reflects the informal structure of this part of the Gateway District. Here the arrangement of pedestrian walkways takes its cue from the great 19th century public gardens, with their gently meandering walkways, and constantly changing composition of landscape. The walkways are of a scale that reinforces the intimate pedestrian experience of the University Gateway Arboretum, and negotiates the grade change with a physically accessible slope of 5% or less. The sidewalk along Main Street is preserved for bicycle traffic at a steeper slope. A series of terraces are laid out at the southeastern end of the District, looking out to the distant view of Camel’s Hump and the Green Mountains.

Near to the corner of Cargan Drive and East Avenue is the site for a Wind Turbine that is used as a public demonstration of the potential of wind power. This object in the landscape reflects the broader ethic of sustainability embraced by the University, and serves as a symbolic gateway element for the Environmental University.

There is a major gateway element to the University on Main Street. The design of this gateway element should be considered as an integral part of the pedestrian and University Gateway Arboretum experience. As Main Street is also the primary vehicular approach to the campus the gateway element must also engage motorists. Its design should be coordinated with the gateway on the opposite (south) side of Main Street within the University Heights District.

The formal structure of allees of trees along Main Street established in the University Historic Green and Main Street North Districts is carried on here, although at this point the formal plantings serve as a frame that merges in and out of the informal drifts of the University Gateway Arboretum. Similarly, Cargan Drive and Beaumont Avenue to Fletcher Allen Health Center are planted with rows of trees to screen the surrounding parking.
Architectural Characteristics

The University Heights District contains a number of residential complexes, including Marsh-Austin-Tupper Residential Complex built in 1960, Harris-Millis Residential Complex in 1967, and the Living and Learning Center Complex in 1972. All were built on the north-south grid of the campus with rectilinear plans. They are typical of the buildings built on the campus during that period, with brick walls, small windows, and flat roofs.

The new University Heights project, now under construction, is designed to set itself apart from those earlier complexes. It has four wings that are splayed at different angles to the grid, to follow the curve of University Heights Road. The buildings will have sloped roofs with dormers, and will be clad with concrete block and shiplap siding. The project is intended to feel more like a village than the earlier residence halls and to provide compatibility between a densely populated student environment and an adjacent residential neighborhood.

New Buildings

New buildings in the University Heights District should respect the architectural characteristics of the District in terms of height, mass, and scale. New buildings that are adjacent to the residence complexes built in the 1950s and 1960s should continue the architectural direction of the University Heights project with a village-like feeling. Roofs may be pitched or flat. Exterior walls should be of a combination of materials such as brick, stone, wood, and metal.

Additions and Renovations

As with the residence hall complexes in Redstone District, additions to any of the buildings built in the 1960s and 1970s should be designed with glass enclosed public gathering spaces to make the existing buildings feel more open and inviting.

Renovations to the interiors should be compatible with new programmatic uses and technologies.