Landscape Opportunities

The planning team spent many hours walking the Seattle University campus and its surroundings, examining patterns of how the student and faculty population approach SU and how they circulate once on campus. Such field observations are essential to understanding the form of the place, the daily experiences of the campus community and how these experiences vary from morning to night and for full-time and part-time students. This understanding has been synthesized with interviews of the campus population to create the accompanying diagram of opportunities for improvements to the campus landscape.

These landscape opportunities became the basis for the master plan recommendations for landscape improvements and appear as phased projects in the master plan.

Chapel Environments

Perhaps the most prominent opportunity for Seattle University is the conversion of the existing surface parking lot east of the Chapel of St. Ignatius to a new green open space atop an underground parking structure. The Chapel's role as an emblem of the institution and a central gathering place at the heart of SU is somewhat diluted by the close adjacency of an expanse of un-shaded asphalt. The 1997 SU master plan envisioned a new open space in that location. Architect Steven Holl's plans showed the Chapel acting as an iconic form surrounded by an almost cruciform-shaped green space that separates the Chapel from nearby building encroachment.

Improvements to turf drainage and the addition of new walkways will also improve the existing open space to the west of the Chapel, known as Union Green.

The garden space between the Lynn Building and Hunthausen, which includes the Japanese-American Garden of Remembrance, offers a view into the campus and specifically to the Chapel of St. Ignatius from Madison Street and 11th Avenue. It is also an important link to the Pike Pine Neighborhood and Cal Anderson Park to the north. If the Lynn Building is demolished and a new wing is added to the Self Storage Building at the corner of 12th Avenue and Madison, this space, now somewhat of a marginal passageway, can become an important component of the open space centered around the Chapel described above.

Marion Street Campus Entrance

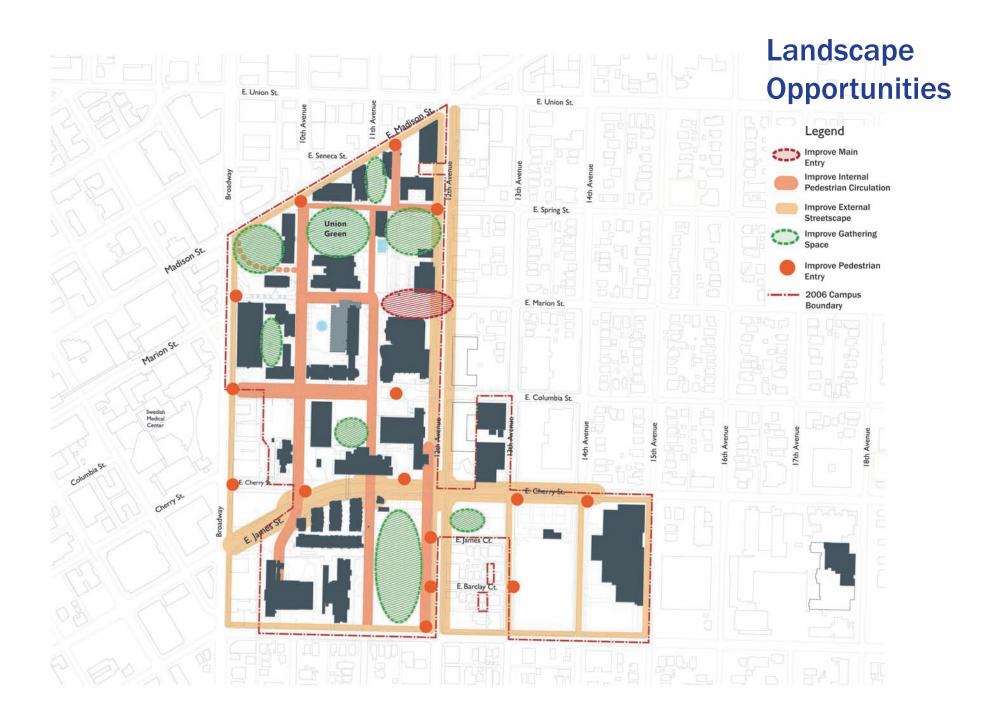
An opportunity that is already in progress is the improvement of the East Marion Street entry to campus. This is the primary access point for campus visitors but it does not present an appropriate institutional identity and suffers from a lack of clear circulation. With a new parking structure next to the Chapel, new entry monuments, lighting, banners, a permanent visitor information kiosk, paving trees and other landscape features, Marion Street can become a clear and gracious entrance to the university.



Existing landscape conditions on East Cherry Street.



Improved landscaping will provide pedestrian comfort and enhance university identity.



Pedestrian Pathways

The replacement of the old city streets presents another prime opportunity to effect highly visible physical change to the campus landscape. The existing Upper and Lower Malls still retain the appearance of streets for vehicles in most places, apart from the Chapel environs. There is a great opportunity for the campus to remove the curbs, narrow the streets and create a network of wide pedestrian pathways with ample trees, special paving and furnishings such as benches, bike racks and trash cans. Service vehicles can be restricted to offcampus deliveries at a central distribution point and the campus can become primarily a pedestrian-only precinct.

Streetscape Improvements

The external streetscape surrounding the campus also offers opportunities to improve the comfort of pedestrians and enhance the institution's identity. New street trees can be added, sidewalks can be widened and new crosswalks can be installed at many places on the campus periphery to improve safety for pedestrians. Specific opportunities where crosswalks should be priorities include East James Street (where a new crosswalk can be combined with a new entrance to the Student Center), East Madison Street, 12th Avenue and East Cherry Street. Others locations are marked on the map.

In interviews with the campus community, the planning team was asked to consider how to knit the Connolly Sports Complex into the fabric of the "core" campus. The Connolly Sports Complex is currently only 2 full blocks down 12th Avenue but feels much further because the pedestrian's

experience is marginalized by traffic, narrow sidewalks, a lack of lighting and poor crosswalks. The shrubbery along the sunken tennis courts, north of Championship Field, also detracts from the pedestrian's comfort, especially at night. The mix of private and campus ownership in the 2-block stretch has prevented the expansion of campus in that direction and the Shell gas station, light industry/ warehousing and surface parking lots detract from the feel of a campus. With a potential new housing project at East Cherry and 12th Avenue, the purchase of the 1218 East Cherry, Seaport and Qwest buildings, and the renovations of both Championship Field and the Connolly Sports Complex, there is a corresponding opportunity to improve the streetscape in these blocks.

Gardens and Open Spaces

There are a number of gardens and open spaces on campus that can be improved with associated major building projects. The first of these is the 'President's Garden', west of the Administration Building, which suffers from a lack of use since the stairs from Broadway were removed several years ago. Many students do not know that this space is open for their use and many undoubtedly feel that it is unsafe, with continued use of the overgrown slopes surrounding the garden by transients and drug users. This may be a location where the famed lushness of SU's gardens must be reduced for greater visibility and crime prevention.

The gardens behind the Casey and Loyola Buildings, underneath the looming and shading bulk of the Broadway Garage, are also little used other than by building occupants, and they present an opportunity for redesign and improvement, particularly if the garage is replaced with a new academic building.

The sloping lawn east of the Lemieux Library will be reconfigured and reduced in size when the building is expanded. This open space can become an extremely important contribution to student life so should be designed carefully to ensure it is a comfortable and durable gathering space that relates well to the adjacent Student Center and the Student Center Pavillion.

Logan Field

Logan Field is an expanse of athletic field space south of James Street. It is comprised of two softball diamonds and a broad multipurpose field used for soccer practice, track and field, and informal play. The underlying topography slopes down to the southeast, so the field is raised above street level at the intersection of 12th Avenue and Jefferson. This, combined with the campus-wide need for more land-efficient parking and the good arterial road access to the field, makes Logan Field an opportune location to build a parking structure underneath a new all-weather pitch.

Guidelines

On page 93 of the Master Plan section is a series of general landscape improvements that are recommended for implementation.



Existing view of the Lower Mall and parking lot east of the Chapel.



Potential landscape improvements to the Lower Mall and space east of the Chapel.