INTRODUCTION

This district section is one of ten portions of the Aesthetic Guidelines for Campus Development of the University of Maryland and focuses on issues particular to the district. Descriptions of the overall Campus, University-wide issue and solution discussions, and Urban Design, Landscape Architecture and Architecture principles are included in the first section, entitled Campus. It is intended to be used in concert with this volume. Where topics are shared by adjacent districts, such as at district edges, those district sections should be referenced for supplemental information.
PROLOGUE

This District is in the process of being completely modified with new construction for sports events. The Comcast Center and ancillary parking garage occupy prime locations above and adjacent to the Campus. Land in the 100-year flood zone, currently used for parking, is scheduled to be converted into sports fields.

DISTRICT DEFINITION

DESCRIPTION

The North District has recently undergone substantial modification from a rural / agrarian condition to the built and paved situation one sees today. Per the FACILITIES MASTER PLAN (FMP), parking lots which encroach on the forest buffer along Paint Branch Creek are slated to become sports / recreational fields and a large parking garage serving sports and academic functions in the NORTH and NORTHWEST districts. The Comcast Center and its parking garage sit on land formerly used for pasturing animals of the agricultural program: of the 420 acres of farmland provided by Charles Bennett Calvert for the foundation of the Campus, precious little remains. The Greenhouse site, currently under construction, was carved from the wooded hillock decimated by tornadoes in September 2001. Tornado damage is also evident along Campus Creek adjacent to University Boulevard. University facilities thin out as one approaches University Boulevard, and an insubstantial gateway is located at the intersection of Paint Branch Drive and University Boulevard.
aeTHeTic guideLines for campus development

reDering of proposed district

fig. n-3a  rendering of north district in 2020
**DISTRICT DEFINITION**

**TOPOGRAPHY**
- Fig. n-4b: Topographic contours
- Fig. n-4c: 225 Np building, north elevation
- Fig. n-4d: Paint Branch trail
- Fig. n-4e: Golf course

**ADJACENT BUILDINGS & FEATURES**
- North Hill residences (Refer to the Northwest District)
- Campus Recreation Center (068) and Health and Human Performance Building (255)
- The Golf Course
- Campus Creek Natural Area
- Paint Branch Creek Natural Area

**DISTRICT BUILDING TYPES**
- Structures within the North District include two major types: Sports complexes and Service buildings.

**BOUNDARIES (Fig. n-4e)**
- Properties bordering the University along University Boulevard / Maryland Route 193 on the North;
- Properties bordering the University along Paint Branch Creek and Baltimore Avenue / US Route 1 on the East;
- The Northeast and Northwest Districts (Campus Creek) on the South;
- University Boulevard on the West.
URBAN DESIGN

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

As recently as ten years ago, this District was pastureland for the Campus Farm. A small segment of this pasture remains at the base of the Comcast Center and the Arena Parking Garage. Parking lots spread over the plain. Edges of the District are determined by roadways and Campus and Paint Branch creeks; the forest cover continues past District and Campus borders. Recent construction has sited buildings as individual elements, with little relationship to each other; they appear to float in the landscape and they encroach on the wooded hillock on the west side of the District. The buildings are too disjoint to form effective edges. The front yard and primary entrance to the Comcast Center dominate district approaches from the Campus to the south.

Actual siting of the sports complexes proposed in the FMP should be reviewed and organized to create and accentuate spaces determined by the interplay of facilities as well as access to existing structures and other features. Since the facilities in this district will be comprised primarily of playing fields, the structures will have to be sited carefully and the landscape modified in order to define spaces and axes, due to their limited quantity and size. Edges should be reinforced to establish definition of both the University and District boundaries. The wooded hillock provides an opportunity to be re-created as a natural laboratory and parkland: tornado damage on the hillock should be removed and this amenity of the Campus enhanced. The processional route along Regents Drive culminating with the Comcast Center should be developed as a major connector: the NORTH, NORTHWEST, and HISTORIC CORE districts all partake of this route.
CONTRIBUTING FEATURES

• Comcast Center complex
• Campus Creek Natural Area
• Paint Branch Creek Natural Area

NON-CONTRIBUTING FEATURES

NEUTRAL
• Sports fields (some are under construction)

UNSYMPATHETIC
• Buildings without clear relationship to each other
• Surface parking lots

UNDER-DEVELOPED
• Processional Route along Regents Drive commencing at Comcast Center’s Monumental Staircase and connecting with the "M" traffic circle
• Edges of the District, especially along University Boulevard
• The Paint Branch Drive gateway
• Wooded hillock
• Axial connections and edges of buildings
aesthetic guidelines for campus development
Recent construction has removed large portions of the wooded area crowning the hillock dominating this area and the pastureland that extended over its slopes. Parking lots cover much of the gently rolling floodplain. Second-growth forest buffers straddle Campus and Paint Branch creeks: the land was cleared for farming prior to the founding of the University and none of the "wild" or natural condition remains.

Campus and Paint Branch creeks are scheduled to be rehabilitated and returned to a more pristine natural condition. Tornado damage along the western border woodlands should be removed, invasive species eliminated, and the forest cover restored. The hillock should be enhanced as a visual and physically-accessible amenity for the University. Public spaces and axial connections between facilities and along roads and should be developed and planted: trees would provide needed shade for spectators and participants in sporting events.
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CONTRIBUTING FEATURES

- Wooded hillock [Rural]
- Campus Creek Natural Area [Rural]
- Paint Branch Creek Natural Area [Rural]

NON-CONTRIBUTING FEATURES

NEUTRAL

- Sports fields (some are under construction) [Contemporary]

UNSYPATHETIC

- Surface parking lots [N/A]

UNDER-DEVELOPED

- Connections between buildings [Remnant]
- Gathering and other public spaces adjacent to buildings and sports facilities [N/A]
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Fig. n-10a  sq. We retention pond (rural)

Fig. n-10c  arena garage retention pond (rural)

Fig. n-10b  softball stadium retention pond

Fig. n-10d  parking lot retention pond

Fig. n-10g  rain garden

Interventions
Water Features

N-10

LANDSCAPE INTERVENTIONS

university of maryland college park
Aesthetic guidelines for campus development

North District

Yards
Creeks

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Fig. n-11g. Paint branch trail bridge

Fig. n-11d. Pedestrian bridge over campus creek

Fig. n-11f. Pedestrian bridge over campus creek

Fig. n-11e. Regent drive bridge

Fig. n-11b. Regent drive bridge

Fig. n-11a. Regent drive bridge

Fig. n-11c. Pedestrian bridge over campus creek

Fig. n-11h. Paint branch trail bridge

Fig. n-11g. Regent drive bridge

Fig. n-11f. Pedestrian bridge over campus creek

Fig. n-11e. Regent drive bridge

Fig. n-11b. Regent drive bridge

Fig. n-11a. Regent drive bridge

Fig. n-11c. Pedestrian bridge over campus creek

Fig. n-11h. Paint branch trail bridge
ARCHITECTURE

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Comcast Center, a contemporary-styled mammoth structure with façade elements recalling other Campus buildings (such as the entry to the Cole Student Activities Building and former stadium structures), clearly sets the tone for this District. Its ancillary garage and the adjacent service buildings are semi-concealed on the wooded western side of the District. The new softball field (matches the Comcast Center), the research greenhouses, and the Chesapeake Building are scattered along Paint Branch Drive leading to University Boulevard.

The FMP proposes the addition of another large parking structure and many sports / recreation facilities: auxiliary structures for bleachers, restrooms, storage and concessions should contribute to the overall organization and appearance of the district, and link disparate existing structures to the whole.

CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS

SIGNIFICANT
• None

IMPORTANT
• Comcast Center (360 — 2002) [Contemporary]
Aesthetic guidelines for campus development

**North District**

- **Softball Stadium** (409 – 2002) [Contemporary]

**Non-Contributing Buildings**

**Neutral**
- Softball Stadium (409 – 2002) [Contemporary]

**Unsympathetic**
- Recycling Trailer (107 – 1988) [N/A]
- Residences: 8903 Azalea Lane (331 – 192x), 8901 Azalea Lane (384 – 192x) [Craftsman]
- Anastasia Building / North Campus Office Annex (332 – 1961), Azalea Lane Office Annex, 8905 Azalea Lane (333 – 193a) [Folk Colonial Revival]
- Chesapeake Building (338 – 1991) [Minimal Contemporary]
- Research Greenhouses (398 – 2003) [Contemporary]
- Arena Parking Garage (403 – 2001) [Minimal Contemporary]

Facility demolition

- Proposed demolition

- Facilities to be demolished

- Proposed facility demolition

Architectural diagram showing the layout and proposed facilities for the North District.
ISSUES: URBAN DESIGN & LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Facilities Master Plan Modifications to the District

- The FMP calls for the completion of current construction: Arena Parking Garage, the research greenhouse, the softball stadium and the iconic Comcast Center. Furthermore, the Master Plan has long-term building plans for an additional parking garage, a baseball stadium to replace Shipley Field, a soccer/track stadium to replace the Kehoe/Ludwig facility, a tennis court complex, and an addition to Chesapeake Building. The FMP forecasts sweeping landscape changes, such as the conversion of current surface parking lots into athletic fields, while retaining and improving the wooded hillock. Landscaping strategies include revitalization of neglected natural areas, reinforcing paths, defining spaces, creating thresholds, and enhancing architecture.

- The Paint Branch Drive Gateway (fig. n-14c) at University Boulevard does not celebrate the arrival to the University of Maryland. The scale of the Gatehouse is dwarfed by the width of the road (2 lanes enter and 3 lanes exit). The gateway should be of a similar scale to the Founders' Gate, where large brick piers integrated with the gatehouse structure physically denote the threshold; the pavement also changes from asphalt to precast concrete pavers at Founders' Gate. Currently, the eastern forest edge does not abut Paint Branch or University Boulevard, thereby not defining the edges of the road or the edge of the campus. Bringing the edge of the forest closer to the intersection would mask adjacent non-University buildings, increase the clarity of the gateway, and heighten one's awareness of entering the campus.

- Paint Branch Drive's importance to the Campus and the North District should be expressed rather than remain a utilitarian form of circulation. The Drive has the potential to be a grand boulevard (fig. n-14i), celebrating the procession from University Blvd to athletic events or to the center of campus and vice-versa. Mature street trees should be planted adjacent to Paint Branch Drive, and in the median, reinforcing the road's continuity and uniformity. Standardized lighting figures should be installed for safety as well as adding rhythm to the road. In addition, bike lanes and sidewalks should be separated from the roadway by a landscaped barrier or pathway due to the quantity and speed of automobile traffic.

Proposals & Remedies: Urban Design & Landscape Architecture

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The gateway to Terrapin Trail (fig. n-14f) at University Boulevard provides a major access to spectators for sporting events, particularly at the Comcast Center. It should be enhanced to celebrate and welcome visitors.

Tree-lined parkways and sidewalks on each side of Terrapin Trail from the Arena Parking Garage to University Boulevard will help to knit this cut in the wooded hillock into the surrounding natural area, as well as to provide a safer pedestrian access to University Boulevard.

Terrapin Trail from Paint Branch Drive to the Arena Garage (fig. n-14d) should have a unified streetscape (similar to Paint Branch Drive) enhancing the clarity of the passage to the arena while masking less desirable utilitarian architecture (Research Greenhouse and Facilities Management depot). Landscaping and marquees (more permanent signs) can terminate the short axes leading to the Comcast Center and Arena Garage.

An east-west pedestrian connection (fig. n-15e) from the Arena Garage through the Monumental Stair Plaza, past the playing fields and the proposed track and field stadium, to the field hockey stadium (currently in design) will help interconnect these facilities, and should provide public spaces for each sport facility it passes.

The east-west portion of Regents Drive along Campus Creek should be reconfigured with sidewalks and parkways, and provide interaction with the Campus Creek Natural Area. [Refer also to Streets and Walks section.]

The green wedge of lawn (fig. n-15a) between the lower entrance to the Arena Garage and the service road adjacent to the garage deserves better landscaping. Public art or colorful landscaping should serve as a visual destination for those coming up the pathway from Campus Creek or from University Boulevard via automobiles making this place a more inviting and safer point of arrival and departure from the campus.
The plaza and existing parking lot at the base of Comcast Center’s monumental staircase on axis with the Memorial Chapel’s spire should become more associated with the processional route to the arena (fig. n-16i). Currently, this significant north-south axis can only be visualized from the plaza at the summit of the stairs. As one descends to the base, the axis becomes unrecognizable and the processional route abruptly terminates at the curb of the parking lot. The parking lot should be reconfigured to allow further pedestrian movement along this axis. At the lower plaza level, a visual (i.e. vista on axis) or physical (i.e. bridge on axis) connection should span Campus Creek, thereby reaffirming this north-south axis and Comcast Center’s connection with the Campus. (The development of the remainder of the processional route is discussed in the Northeast and Northwest District articles and the Streets and Walks section.)

A north-south pedestrian path (fig. n-16a), commencing with the Comcast Center’s Monumental Stair Plaza and passing the curving wall of the arena and the playing fields, should not only connect the playing fields with the arena, but should become a major pedestrian path from Paint Branch Drive to Regents Drive continuing the processional route. The character and the narrative of the path should reflect on the sporting achievements of the University of Maryland. Small plazas for the softball stadium, playing fields, and proposed track and field and baseball stadia should celebrate each sport and welcome spectators to events.

A bicycle path should connect the athletic fields, Comcast Center and the nearby CRC with the Paint Branch Hiker / Biker Trail. This connection would promote bicycle ridership to and from sporting and recreational events, enhance and increase the availability of safe paths for joggers and recreational bikers, and promote alternative forms of commuting. Lighting should be considered for the portion of this path connecting campus and regional roadways.

Rehabilitation of Paint Branch Creek (fig. X in the Northeast District section) and the adjacent natural area, co-inciding with property development along the US Route 1 corridor, should be co-ordinated with that of Campus Creek. The proposed pedestrian bridge linking the development to the Campus will provide a much-needed connection to the Paint Branch Trail and constituents dwelling northeast of campus. [Refer to the Northeast District article for further information.]

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The landscape of the hillside below the Research Greenhouse (figs. n-15g) should help tie this facility into its surroundings, and conceal its service entrance and parking lot. The landscape should help push the eastern edge of the greenhouses towards the developed areas to the east. At the street intersection below the northeastern corner of the greenhouse the landscape should help push the corner of the hill and mask the steep grade.

Currently the Arena Garage and outlying surface parking lots in this district serve as a nodal point of transportation for commuters. ShuttleUM buses ferry commuters to other campus destinations. Bicycles locked to signposts and railings indicate that some commuters transfer from car to bicycle to traverse the campus. Well-planned bicycle racks and shuttle bus stop shelters should be available at parking garages and lots, further encouraging alternative means of circulation. [Additional information can be found in the Transportation section.]

The Campus Creek Natural Area rehabilitation (fig. n-18a) should commence soon, to remove damaged and felled trees and the subsequent growth of invasive species due to the September, 2001 tornadoes. The streambed should be repaired to prevent further erosion due to campus stormwater run-off. A stabilized pathway system should be installed affording access to constituents for a meandering, relaxing east-west means of circulation, and furnished spaces should be provided for meditation or the contemplation of nature. The current foot-bridges should be integrated into this system.

The wooded hilllock in the west of the District should be stabilized and enhanced to enable it to become a prime natural campus amenity in lieu of a residual or developable site. This second-growth forest area was devastated by the September, 2001 tornados, and invasive species have infiltrated the ground plane: deadwood and deleterious materials form a major fire hazard and prevent access to the hilltop. Pathways from the Northeast and Northwest districts could culminate in a natural public space, available as an outdoor classroom, theatre, or memorial. These pathways can connect with north-south processional routes, and activities at the public space could be interwoven into university rituals, such as the commencement of classes, the installation of officers, and graduation exercises.

The edge of the University along University Boulevard is not readily identifiable. Consistency in the treatment of gateways and enhancement of the natural condition along the roadway would help delineate this border and inform passers-by of the University’s presence in a strong but subtle, positive manner.

The landscape guidelines for campus development
Proposals & Remedies: Architecture

- The proposed baseball stadium south of the Chesapeake Building will enable a cleaner definition of the secondary road and the lawn between Paint Branch Drive and the Chesapeake Building, will help mask the greenhouse complex, and promote a more idiosyncratic baseball stadium (i.e. similar to Camden Yards in Baltimore). Additional office space for the baseball team or a home for a baseball booster club (with views onto leftfield) could complete the complex.

- The relocation of the Kehoe Track and Ludwig Field facility will enable construction of bleachers and service buildings that will contribute architectonic elements to the eastern portions of the district. They should demark corners and edges, and help create a festive spirit commemorating UMCP victories and events.

- Multiple tennis courts are proposed for the northernmost clearing in the forest cover adjacent to Paint Branch Creek; service facilities should be combined with those of the field hockey stadium to the south.

- A 1,600-car parking garage is slated to replace a surface parking lot at the southeast corner of the District, adjacent to the juncture of Campus and Paint Branch creeks. The open nature of the garage should not interfere with creek flood conditions. Post-construction landscaping should contribute to the rehabilitation of the creek natural areas and conceal the bulk of this large structure from adjacent districts and neighbors.

- An addition to the Chesapeake Building should be encouraged to assist in addressing Paint Branch Drive as well as organizing the northern regions of the District and the Paint Branch Gateway.

Summary

- The North District will be converted into the prime sports / recreational area of the Campus with the installation of additional facilities: a complete transformation from its agricultural roots. These complexes should be linked closely with the Campus through visual and physical axial connections and organizing elements. Spectators and participants should be reminded of UMCP sports glories and teamwork even as they contribute to ongoing University history.

- While this development progresses in the valley, the hilltop and creeks should be revitalized to fill their potential as prime natural amenities. As the University enjoys the riches of propitious weather in all seasons, those who reside, study and work here should be able to avail themselves of the refreshing and educational benefits of Nature.