

New Towns from Gowns:  
Urban Form and Placemaking at College Campuses

by

Amanda C. Stout

B.A. in History and Environmental Studies  
Williams College  
Williamstown, Massachusetts (2004)

Submitted to the Department of Urban Studies and Planning  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

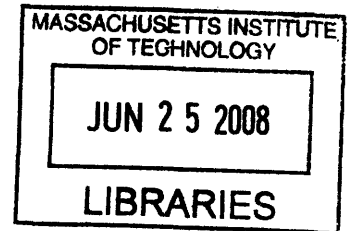
Master in City Planning

at the

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

JUNE 2008

© 2008 Amanda C. Stout. All Rights Reserved



**ARCHIVED**

The author hereby grants to MIT the permission to reproduce and to distribute publicly paper and electronic copies of the thesis document in whole or in part.

Author \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Department of Urban Studies and Planning  
May 22, 2008

Certified by \_\_\_\_\_

✓ \_\_\_\_\_  
Professor John de Monchaux  
Professor of Architecture and Planning, Emeritus  
Thesis Supervisor

Accepted by \_\_\_\_\_

✓ \_\_\_\_\_  
Professor Langley Keyes  
Chair, MCP Committee  
Department of Urban Studies and Planning



New Towns from Gowns:  
Urban Form and Placemaking at College Campuses

by

Amanda C. Stout

Submitted to the Department of Urban Studies and Planning  
On May 22, 2008 in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of Master of City Planning

**ABSTRACT**

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, colleges and universities have realized that they need to have more than a well-planned campus and top-ranked academic programs to attract students and faculty. Rather, they need to have a complementary “town/gown” relationship with their host community. The “college town” – a quintessentially American ideal city form – can provide a very high quality of life, both for students of college-age and for faculty, alumni, and retirees who choose to live in these towns. But what if the existing town falls short? In recent years, several universities in North America have sought to remedy perceived deficiencies in their “college towns” by going into the town planning business – planning new neighborhoods, new commercial centers, or even whole new towns adjacent to their campuses. They are quite literally engaged in “placemaking” and they are developing these new neighborhoods and communities in the shadow of fundamentally place-based institutions. Furthermore, as universities seek to expand their physical campuses, they often find themselves entering the field of real estate development – buying up land, developing it, and trying to find the optimal fit between the existing campus, the existing town, and new development.

This thesis explores this new phenomenon through profiles of four projects: The Ohio State University and the South Campus Gateway (Columbus, Ohio), the University of Connecticut and Storrs Center (Storrs, Connecticut), Hendrix College and The Village at Hendrix (Conway, Arkansas), and Simon Fraser University and UniverCity (Burnaby, British Columbia). These cases represent a small liberal arts college and flagship public universities located in rural, small city, and large city environments and they are representative of the range of cases of new college towns. In addition to the factual profiles, a comparative analysis of the urban design components and planning processes of the projects reveals patterns that can be applied to other similar projects. Finally, these new college town projects are symptomatic of a wider trend in city planning: that universities have become a powerful force in planning, designing, and developing the built environment. This phenomenon – of gowns and towns planning together and exploring the paradigm of the “college town” – is poised to have a significant effect on the way that planners, urban designers, architects, public policy-makers, and educators think about the form and character of American cities.

Thesis Supervisor: John de Monchaux  
Title: Professor of Architecture and Planning, Emeritus



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Professor John de Monchaux for his dedication and support as my thesis advisor and for his thoughtful insights on campuses and new towns—a subject we discussed both in the context of this thesis and of the Bratislava urban design studio. Professor Dennis Frenchman provided a helpful critique of my draft and has encouraged me in my studies in urban design for the past two years. Professor Julian Beinart helped me to clarify my thoughts on the relationship between college campuses and good city form. Professor Sam Bass Warner brought wisdom and humor to our thesis prep class.

I am most appreciative of the six representatives of the case studies with whom I conducted telephone interviews: Adam Dickinson (Traditional Neighborhood Development Partners, LLC), M. Dolan Evanovich (Vice Provost for Enrollment Management, University of Connecticut), Lee Gavel (Chief Facilities Officer and University Architect, Simon Fraser University), Gordon Harris (President and CEO, SFU Community Trust), Stephen Sterrett (Director of Community Relations, Campus Partners for Community Urban Revitalization, The Ohio State University), and Cynthia Van Zelm (Executive Director, Mansfield Downtown Partnership). They provided me with invaluable information and documents and shared with me their enthusiasm for their projects. I got the sense from all of them that they believe that they are doing good, important, and unprecedented work, which reinforced to me the significance of this topic. I look forward to visiting their projects in the future and to continuing my work on this topic in my professional career.

I am grateful to my family and friends for all of their support. Mom and Dad, thank you for your unconditional love and faith in me—as well your editorial assistance and willingness to chat about campus planning. I could not have asked for a better cohort of classmates to spend the past two years with at MIT. I am thankful for the thoughtful conversations and good times that we've had in 10-485 at all times of day and night.

Finally, thank you to the late Professor J. Mark Schuster for inspiring my classmates and me in our scholarly pursuits in city planning. He will be deeply missed.



## CONTENTS

<b>Chapter 1 - The University as Urban Planner</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Chapter 2 - The American "College Town" as an Ideal City Form</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Chapter 3 - Creating College Towns in North America: A New Phenomenon in Four Case Studies</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Case 1: The Ohio State University and the South Campus Gateway</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Case 2: The University of Connecticut and Storrs Center</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>Case 3: Hendrix College and The Village at Hendrix</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>Case 4: Simon Fraser University and UniverCity</b>	<b>98</b>
<b>Chapter 4 - Comparative Study 1: Mapping the Town/Gown Relationships of the Four Cases</b>	<b>121</b>
<b>Chapter 5 - Comparative Study 2: Analyzing the Processes of the Four Cases</b>	<b>143</b>
<b>Chapter 6 -Placemaking on Campuses and in Communities</b>	<b>161</b>
<b>Works Cited</b>	<b>173</b>





“College? Americans constantly say: ‘At college...’ It reflects the presence in their hearts of a great and fine period—the fine period in their lives.... Colleges and universities, then, have a very particular character. Everything in the interest of comfort, everything for the sake of calm and serenity, everything to make solid bodies. Each college or university is an urban unit in itself, a small or large city. But it is a *green city*. Lawns, parks, stadiums, cloisters, dining halls, a whole complex of comfortable quarters. Often the style is Gothic—that’s the way it is!—rich, luxurious, well made....The American university is a world in itself, a temporary paradise, a gracious stage of life.”

- Le Corbusier, “Everyone an Athlete,” in *When the Cathedrals Were White*, 1947

~~~~~

“The American campus possesses qualities and functions different from those of any other type of architecture or built environment. One of its most important qualities is a peculiar state of equilibrium between change and continuity. As a community, it is like a city—complex and inevitably subject to growth and change—and it therefore cannot be viewed as a static architectural monument.

But it is not exactly a city; it requires a special kind of physical coherence and continuity.”

- Paul Venable Turner, *Campus: An American Planning Tradition*, 1984



## Chapter 1 - The University as Urban Planner

“As more campuses become more integrated into the urban fabric, we will see hybrid forms of town and gown where borders are dissolved. The institutional mandate as an agent of social and economic change will surely intensify in the knowledge-based economy of the twenty-first century, as will the interdependencies between town and gown.” – M. Perry Chapman<sup>1</sup>

~~~~~

### **“Town and Gown”**

There are certain idiomatic phrases in the English language that can clearly capture the essence of complex social relationships. One such phrase is “town and gown” – which refers to the relationship between a city or town and the college or university in its borders.

Although there are congenial relationships between universities and their host communities, the phrase “town and gown” generally connotes a sense of tension and friction that often exists between these parties. To some, the phrase might suggest a medieval European university, where cerebral students and scholars study in an ivory tower, isolated physically and socially from the regular citizens of the town. To others, it might suggest the conflicts that arise when young, raucous college students live in the same residential neighborhood as families and others not associated with the college. Perhaps a greater source of tension arises when universities expand their physical campuses beyond their historic boundaries and into these towns and neighborhoods. As the authors of *Mission and Place: Strengthening Learning and Community through Campus Design* note, the host city or town often “resents the tax-exempt status of the institution, whose non-taxed land is increasing every year. Most academic institutions, especially in confined cities and towns, are on a constant quest for space and land, a threatening reality to most neighbors.”<sup>2</sup> Likewise, a university might feel that it is being held back by its community; a city or town that is perceived as unsafe or as unwelcoming to the university community detracts potential students and faculty.

By the beginning of the twenty-first century, however, many colleges and universities have concluded that it is highly desirable to have a complementary town/gown relationship with their host communities.

---

<sup>1</sup> M. Perry Chapman, *American Places: In Search of the Twenty-first Century Campus* (Westport, CT: American Council on Education and Praeger Publishers, 2006), 146.

<sup>2</sup> Daniel R. Kenney, Ricardo Dumont, and Ginger Kenney, *Mission and Place: Strengthening Learning and Community through Campus Design* (Westport, CT: American Council on Education and Praeger Publishers, 2005), 225.

## **“Town/Gown” Relationships Today**

It is very difficult to generalize about town/gown relationships in American cities, as the “towns” range from rural villages to neighborhoods in Manhattan and the “gowns” range from elite liberal arts colleges with 1,000 students to flagship state research universities with over 40,000 undergraduate and graduate students. It is the precise mix of town and gown, and the unique history, traditions, and character of each, that shapes the place and gives it a sense of distinction.

In the report *Communities of Opportunity: Smart Growth Strategies for Colleges and Universities*, Jim Wheeler, President of the firm Ayers | Saint | Gross, notes that college campuses “traditionally followed smart growth patterns to create connected, compact, and coherent campuses.”<sup>3</sup> He suggests that these values were lost during the latter half of the twentieth century, but that they are now coming back into fashion: “But now, colleges and universities are returning to strategies that created some of the best-loved campuses and college towns to the benefit of students, faculty, staff, and community members.”<sup>4</sup> Although his terminology beautifully articulates a fundamental aspect of well-planned campuses—that they are “connected, compact, and coherent”—Wheeler’s point does not tell the whole story. While universities do seem to be trying to improve themselves to become more connected, pedestrian-friendly, green, and in other ways to embrace many of the tenets of smart growth, they are also realizing the necessity of looking outwards to the community and the world around them. Richard Freeland, a former president of Northeastern University in Boston, agrees that, since the 1960s, “interactions between campuses and surrounding communities have greatly intensified, raising interesting questions about how the evolving character of campus-community relations should be expressed in architectural terms.”<sup>5</sup>

Freeland posits two very important reasons for the shifts in town/gown relations in recent decades. First, the “democratization of higher education” has meant that many more Americans are attending institutions of higher education than ever before in American history.<sup>6</sup> The U.S. Department of Education estimates that 3,176,000 students graduated from American

---

<sup>3</sup> Ayers | Saint | Gross, *Communities of Opportunity: Smart Growth Strategies for Colleges and Universities* (National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO), August 16, 2007), 6.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 6

<sup>5</sup> Richard Freeland, “Foreward,” *American Places: In Search of the Twenty-First Century Campus*, M. Perry Chapman, ix.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, ix.

high schools in 2006, a figure up 26% since 1995, and that college and university enrollments have increased 24% in that decade and are projected to rise another 15% by 2015.<sup>7</sup> Financial assistance from the federal government and from the universities, the growing importance of a college degree in the job market, and other factors have changed the character of the college experience as well as the demographics of the student population. Increasingly, colleges prepare students for the “real world,” through many practical, professionally-oriented programs. A college education is no longer reserved for wealthy young people who wish to study esoteric subjects on campuses with Gothic buildings. As the notion of a college education broadens to include more people of different ages, backgrounds, and interests, some of the town/gown barriers will dissipate. Freeland observes that both the increase in the number of Americans attending college and the increased call for colleges to prepare students for careers “have led to a dramatic increase in the role that off-campus experiences of many kinds – internships, cooperative education, service learning – play in undergraduate education, and this change has inevitably eroded the traditional psychic barrier between the world of the campus and the world outside.”<sup>8</sup>

Shifts in American higher education have made colleges and universities more accessible to more students. This trend has put new pressures on the universities to meet the needs of an increasing number of students. These pressures manifest themselves in the physical form of the campus. To cope with a growing student body and the demands that they place on the campus, colleges must provide more than just lecture halls, seminar rooms, and dormitories. Indeed, it seems that universities across North America are in the midst of perpetual building booms – constructing new science centers, performing arts complexes, athletic and fitness centers, libraries, and a variety of other temples devoted to enhancing some special area of academic or extra-curricular life on the campus. According to the *Communities of Opportunity* report, “40% of all colleges and universities are engaged in new construction, renovations, and retrofitting projects on or near campus.”<sup>9</sup> A recent article in *The Economist* elaborated on the physical expansion of American college campuses, citing a survey by the trade magazine *College Planning & Management* that calculated that \$15 billion of building took place at American colleges and universities in 2006. This figure represents a 260% increase since 1997 and shows

---

<sup>7</sup> “Just add cash: The great expanding American university,” *The Economist*, December 1, 2007, 44.

<sup>8</sup> Freeland, x.

<sup>9</sup> *Communities of Opportunity*, 9.

no sign of slowing. The article also cites a 2006 Standard & Poor's report that "described the university construction boom as an 'arms race' – implying that it was tangential to their educational mission." This characterization "with its inherent accusation of wastefulness" is one that university administrators are quick to disregard, as they argue that their facilities are long-term investments for students, faculty, and, arguably, for their neighboring communities.<sup>10</sup> Universities are also discovering that they now need facilities for new academic areas that they would never have dreamed necessary – as evidenced by MIT's newly constructed Brain and Cognitive Sciences Complex and planned David H. Koch Institute for Integrative Cancer Research, both of which have very specific spatial needs.

Perhaps the most important factor driving campus building programs is the need for colleges to remain competitive and to differentiate themselves from other schools. Prospective students and faculty are an increasingly savvy populace, and types of facilities, quality of architectures, and the elusive "sense of place" all have a very powerful effect on shaping the way people feel about a campus and about a university. This use of the physical campus to help recruit students and faculty is not a new idea. While planning the campus for the University of Virginia, a place that has come to be equated with the quintessential American college campus, Thomas Jefferson expressed concern for the young college's future should the campus plan not be completed as he had laid it out. Jefferson wrote: "Had we built a barn for a college, and log huts for accommodations, should we ever have had the assurance to propose to [a] European professor...to come to it? To stop where we are is to abandon our high hopes, and become suitors to Yale and Harvard for their secondary characters."<sup>11</sup>

As universities seek to expand their physical campuses, they often find themselves entering the field of real estate development – buying up land, developing it, and trying to find the optimal fit between the existing campus, the existing town, and new development. In their important book published by the Lincoln Land Institute *The University as Urban Developer: Case Studies and Analysis*, David C. Perry and Wim Wiewel seek to broaden the academic and professional discourse on the relationship between universities and real estate development,

---

<sup>10</sup> "Just add cash: The great expanding American university." Of the University of Connecticut, the article notes "The university has also teamed up with regional officials to construct a brand-new 'college town' of dense commercial and residential properties (a mock-up includes Parisian pavement cafes) in the otherwise rural north-east of the state."

<sup>11</sup> Cited in Blake Gumprecht, "The Campus as a Public Space in the American College Town," *Journal of Geographical History*, 33 (2007): 99-100.

primarily in urban settings. They explain that, although the traditional American conception of the college campus revolves around the pastoral, often rural, “campus,” “the notion of campus is changing.”<sup>12</sup> Scarcity of space and available land for expansion and the conflicts that inevitably arise when a university is located within a city or town offer part of the explanation for this change—any projects undertaken by the university or the city will likely impact the other to some extent. Perry and Wiewel offer another, more nuanced explanation for the change, which points to the changing nature of the type of projects that are being pursued by universities:

“University capital requirements increasingly dictate that real estate development projects be mixed-use in nature—blurring the edge of the old campus and the purposes of new buildings, creating projects that are part academic and part commercial, and making the traditional notion of the campus more a thing of the past.”<sup>13</sup>

While the “town/gown” relationship takes a myriad of different formats, it is clear that what happens at these “blurred edges” and the manner in which these events and purposes are manifest in the physical form of the campus is critically important for developing the sense of place both in the campus and in the community surrounding the campus.

### **A New Phenomenon: Creating “College Towns” at the Intersection of “Town and Gown”**

The idea of the “college town” is a quintessentially American one and one that is intrinsically linked to the idea of the pastoral campus. It is certainly possible to conceive of the modern campus as an isolated arcadia of scholarship, where students go to surround themselves with smart people and cultivate the life of the mind. Many universities market themselves in this way—showing images of students reading books under trees, walking beneath neo-Gothic arches, and even participating in small seminar classes held outside in Adirondack chairs on a grassy quadrangle. These same colleges and universities, however, do not pretend that students will live the monastic lives of medieval university students. Rather, the universities heavily market the more social, less academic aspects of the campus place—the playing fields and swimming pool, the performing arts complex and the student center, and, significantly, the town. College towns are also famous for providing a very high quality of life, both for students of college-age and for faculty, alumni, and retirees who choose to live in these

---

<sup>12</sup> David C. Perry and Wim Wiewel, ed. *The University as Urban Developer: Case Studies and Analysis*, (Cambridge, MA: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy; Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2005), 8.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 8-9.

towns. In addition to cultural activities and sporting events on-campus, the authors of *Mission and Place* posit, “perhaps the largest social benefit that a college or university can offer its community is its youthful energy and idealism.”<sup>14</sup> The idea of the “college town” will be discussed more fully in Chapter 2.

Thus, it might be possible for university administrators and city planners and officials to conclude that a positive town/gown relationship, bolstered by a college town that welcomes university students, faculty, and staff, as well as town young professionals, families, and retirees, would be an asset for all. It would improve the quality and reputation of the college, which would in turn improve the quality and reputation of the town. But what if the town falls short? What if, for instance, the university was founded in a rural area surrounded by farms or mountains? There might be a small residential community and a few shops and services, but a “college town” does not exist. Or, what if the university is located in a city, but there is no physical connection between the commercial and residential areas and the campus? Could something be done to bridge this physical divide? Or, finally, what if neither the university nor the town exist? Could they be founded in tandem, with a symbiotic relationship between town and gown formed at the outset?

In recent years, several universities in North America have sought to remedy perceived deficiencies in their “college towns” by going into the town planning business – planning new neighborhoods, new commercial centers, or even whole new towns adjacent to their campuses. Often, these projects embrace the tenets of New Urbanism and Traditional Neighborhood Development, as they emphasize mixed-use, pedestrian-scale qualities of traditional main street districts. These cases are examples of a new phenomenon: universities and cities that want to design and build positive town/gown relationships. Furthermore, since most of these cases currently lack a substantive town/gown relationship, they generally are not saddled with the baggage of decades of hostility. They are starting with a fairly clean slate and developing a town/gown relationship that suits the institutional and physical needs of the campus and of the town.

Alan Finder discussed this phenomenon in a *New York Times* article written in February 2007, noting,

---

<sup>14</sup> Kenney, Dumont, Kenney, *Mission and Place*, 68.



“many officials at such institutions have decided that students today want something completely different: urban buzz....At the same time, officials have realized that a more urbanized version of the ideal campus could attract a population well past its college years – working people and retiring baby boomers – if there is housing to suit them. And so a new concept of the college campus is taking root: a small city in the country that is not reserved for only the young.”<sup>15</sup>

Finder mentions Hendrix College in rural Conway, Arkansas which is in the process of constructing “The Village at Hendrix:” “a large urban-style village on the 130 acres of ball fields and woods that the college owns across the street from the main campus, with stores, restaurants and offices.”<sup>16</sup> While the development will include amenities for college students, it will also have a residential component with single-family homes, town houses, loft-style condominiums, and rental apartments. Finder also discusses the case of the University of Connecticut’s flagship campus at Storrs. The “Storrs Center” development is currently being planned by the Mansfield Downtown Partnership, a coalition of the university and the Town of Mansfield. The university’s Vice Provost for Enrollment Management, M. Dolan Evanovich, observed, “We’re never going to be Boston...But having a quintessential New England town with 100 businesses and a town green will be the missing link for us.”<sup>17</sup>



**Figures 1.1 and 1.2: The photograph on the left (1.1) appeared in Finder’s article with the caption: “At Hendrix College in Conway, Ark., ball fields and woods that the college owns near the main campus will be replaced by an urban-style village.” The photograph on the right (1.2) shows the commercial strip across the street from the University of Connecticut. These new projects want to replace pizza parlors and parking lots with multi-story buildings that front the street and offer a broader range of amenities for the college and town communities. (Sources: Finder; photograph by the author)**

<sup>15</sup> Alan Finder, “Rural Colleges Seek New Edge and Urbanize,” *New York Times*, February 7, 2007.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

How is this phenomenon different from other town/gown building projects? As has been mentioned, universities across the country are in the midst of ambitious building programs, many of which include master plans for large areas of the campuses. There is something fundamentally different, however, between Princeton University's newly published Campus Plan—which includes plans for an “arts neighborhood,” better transit and pedestrian connections, and thoughtful consideration of urban design and sustainability—and the plans for the Village at Hendrix and Storrs Center.<sup>18</sup> These new town/gown plans are not master plans for the university, nor are they traditional urban revitalization schemes. They are attempts to create college towns—or at least college town neighborhoods—where none exists today. They involve the imposition of a new urban form and the transformation, rather than rehabilitation, of a site near the college. There are many qualitative differences between the colleges and universities and between the scope and scale of the projects.

One way of thinking about town/gown development projects is by categorizing them according to whether their primary goal is to improve the university or to improve the town as a means to improving the university. For example, university projects in this first group primarily involve constructing or acquiring buildings in nearby neighborhoods or on vacant land to make the university campus larger or to add another whole campus. This categorization is not meant as a criticism. The university will presumably do what it can to mitigate the negative effects on the surrounding community and will work with city planners to make the projects more amenable to the needs and interests of the town, but the primary purpose of the project is to improve the university, rather than the lives of the people in the community. Current examples of such projects include:

- **Harvard University** is building a new campus in Boston's Allston neighborhood, across the Charles River from the Cambridge, Massachusetts campus. The 250-acre new campus will include a science center, arts complex, and public spaces.
- **Columbia University** is developing a 17-acre site in the West Harlem neighborhood of New York City into a mixed-use academic center known as Manhattanville. With planning and design work by Renzo Piano Building Workshop and Skidmore Owings and Merrill, the project aims to comprehensively develop the site and enhance connections between the university and the community.

---

<sup>18</sup> Princeton Campus Plan. <http://www.princeton.edu/campusplan/archive/index.html>

- **Massachusetts Institute of Technology** has a long history of buying parcels of vacant land, industrial land, and former factory buildings near the Cambridge, Massachusetts campus for conversion to campus property. Some of this land is developed for dormitory and academic uses, but other land is developed into mixed-use areas, such as the University Park project, or leased as office space.

The second group, in contrast, is comprised of projects that are primarily aimed at improving the town – whether it is existing or new. These projects can be characterized by the term “enlightened self-interest,” which was used in an article by David Dixon and Peter Roche to describe the South Campus Gateway project at The Ohio State University. In this case (which will be discussed in depth later in the thesis), “the university’s recognized needs for a ‘crime-free,’ ‘vital’ community that would ‘enhance the quality of student life’ and help ‘attract top students and faculty’ represented the real drivers of development.”<sup>19</sup> For a variety of reasons, the universities in this second group felt the need to improve the communities around their campuses as a means to the end of improving the university. These projects tend to have a more cooperative, proactive relationship with local municipal officials than do those in the first group.

There are an increasing number of examples of town/gown projects that fit into this new phenomenon. In April 2007, the School of Architecture at the University of Notre Dame held a symposium entitled “Creating a 21<sup>st</sup> Century College Town.” The symposium explored this trend, observing,

“Good college towns realize considerable revenue in property and sales taxes while creating the less tangible, but equally important value of another vibrant neighborhood that serves the varied needs of its citizens. Understanding how campuses and towns have interacted successfully in the past, and are doing so again today, is essential to defining strategies and goals for new college town projects.”<sup>20</sup>

The program highlighted the project that is currently under development just south of the Notre Dame campus. The South Bend, Indiana university “has just spent millions of dollars to assemble 21 acres on both sides of a five-block stretch of Eddy Street, a moribund commercial

---

<sup>19</sup> David C. Perry and Wim Wiewel, eds., *The University as Urban Developer: Case Studies and Analysis* (Cambridge, MA: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy; Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2005), 18.

<sup>20</sup> “Creating a 21<sup>st</sup> Century College Town,” Symposium presented by the University of Notre Dame School of Architecture and AIA Northern Indiana, April 13-14, 2007. Quotations from symposium flyer. See website: [http://architecture.nd.edu/news\\_and\\_events/symposium\\_college\\_towns.shtml](http://architecture.nd.edu/news_and_events/symposium_college_towns.shtml)

strip leading right to the main entrance of its campus” and is working to develop the site into a mixed-use district.<sup>21</sup> The symposium also included representatives of the Hendrix College and University of Connecticut projects. Other examples of new college town projects, some of which are merely concepts and other that are fully built, include:

- **University of Pennsylvania** has long worked to redevelop its West Philadelphia neighborhood. Since 1996, when Penn started planning its Sansom Commons project under President Judith Rodin, the university has worked to improve safety, built a large Barnes & Noble bookstore, and developed a six-block retail strip with a grocery store, movie theatre, and restaurants.<sup>22</sup> Penn’s current project, known as “Penn Connects,” aims to enhance the university’s connections across the Schuylkill River to center city Philadelphia. An article in *The Wall Street Journal* quoted Penn President Amy Gutman: “The future of Penn depends on the future of Philadelphia. If we don’t take on the challenge of helping to redevelop our part of the city, nobody else is going to do it as well as we are going to do it.”<sup>23</sup>
- **University of Maryland at College Park** is redeveloping a 38-acre tract of industrial land into a shopping district in an attempt to improve a run-down stretch of Route 1 in suburban Maryland.<sup>24</sup> According to project planner Douglas M. Duncan, “We’ve actually lost some [potential] faculty who have driven down Route 1 and said, ‘We’re not going to move here.’”<sup>25</sup>
- **Widener University** in Chester, Pennsylvania aims to complete its University Crossings development by Fall 2008. Several mixed-use buildings for commercial and residential uses are being built in a three-block area at the intersection of the campus, a nearby

---

<sup>21</sup> Steven Litt, “Big Man Off Campus: Universities are revamping their college towns in an effort to stay competitive,” *Planning* (August/September 2005): 43.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>23</sup> See Penn Connects website [www.pennconnects.upenn.edu](http://www.pennconnects.upenn.edu). Nick Timiraos, “Colleges Teach ‘Urban Development 101:’ Involvement in Projects Reflects Need to Upgrade Schools’ Surroundings,” *The Wall Street Journal*, February 27, 2008.

<sup>24</sup> Information on this project can be found on the weblog “Rethink College Park” which aims at “helping imagine a great college town for a great university.” <http://www.rethinkcollegepark.net/blog/>; accessed March 3, 2008.

<sup>25</sup> Timiraos, “Colleges Teach ‘Urban Development 101.’”

medical center, and a technology park, aiming to “help revitalize Chester by attracting businesses and jobs to the city.”<sup>26</sup>

- **University of California, Davis** is working with a private partner to build a mixed-use community with affordable housing options. The “West Village” project has involved extensive community outreach as part of the project to be built west of the core campus and south of nearby residential neighborhoods.<sup>27</sup>
- **Jackson State University**, a historically-black university in Jackson, Mississippi is building homes and redeveloping neighborhoods adjacent to the campus that have suffered from disinvestment. Additionally, a new master plan focuses on developing pedestrian-scale places within the campus.<sup>28</sup>
- **University of Cincinnati** has transformed its campus through a building boom involving individual buildings designed by high-profile architects, as well as a “main street” public space within the campus.
- **Case Western Reserve University** is redeveloping a Cleveland, Ohio neighborhood that many students and faculty consider unsafe into an arts and retail district.<sup>29</sup>
- **The College of New Jersey** in suburban Ewing, New Jersey has begun to consider the possibility of creating a college town center across the street from the public university. College spokesman Matt Golden explained that the idea is still conceptual, but “We are examining the possibility of partnering with the Ewing community, local developers, and the township to enhance quality of life by creating a small-scale town center.”<sup>30</sup>
- **University of British Columbia** is located on a peninsula in Vancouver, British Columbia and is working on physically integrating private residential areas with the campus. As one planner noted, this fine-grain mixing produces a situation where a particular building “could be an apartment or it could be a chemistry building.”<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>26</sup> Widener University – University Crossings.

<http://www.widener.edu/civicmission/universitycrossings.asp>; accessed March 3, 2008.

<sup>27</sup> *Communities of Opportunity*, 22.

<sup>28</sup> *Communities of Opportunity*, 18.

<sup>29</sup> Timitraos, “College Teach ‘Urban Development 101.’”

<sup>30</sup> Robert Stern and Alex Zdan, “College town center envisioned for Ewing: TCNJ considers long-term use for school property along Carlton Avenue,” *The Times (Trenton, New Jersey)*, March 17, 2008.

<sup>31</sup> Lee Gavel, Chief Facility Officer and University Architect, Simon Fraser University. Interview with the author, April 8, 2008. Gavel explained that he thinks that the model of deliberate spatial distinction between the campus and private residential uses that they are using with the UniverCity project has been more successful than the UBC model so far.

- **Ave Maria University** is a brand new university that opened in 2002 and was developed jointly with the new Town of Ave Maria, Florida, which is near Naples. The university is the first new Roman Catholic university founded in the U.S. in the past 50 years, and it serves as an important example of the synergistic creation of a college town and its college.

The goal of this thesis is not to catalog all of the examples of this phenomenon or to define a hard boundary between projects that are and are not creating new college towns. Rather, this thesis aims to explore this issue through a thorough analysis of four particular cases. The four cases were selected because they represent different types of places and different scales. The project at **The Ohio State University** represents a targeted effort to create a college town environment in a very urban setting, while the project at the **University of Connecticut** aims to create an urban village in a very rural setting. The project at **Hendrix College** is a new mixed-use community on a greenfield in a small city, while the project at **Simon Fraser University** is a sustainable mixed-use community in a mountaintop setting. Although they differ significantly, these four projects are ambitious, well-advanced, and are influencing the urban form of their communities. Furthermore, this thesis argues that this inclination of universities to form partnerships with towns, to develop mutually beneficial projects, and to take thoughtful approaches to urban design and economic development is a positive sign and that the resultant projects are good for communities. These town/gown projects are putting new urban forms on the ground in a variety of settings and hold the promise of creating exciting places that will be valuable models for American planning and design.

### **Placemaking and the New College Town**

Frances Halsband, an architect who has worked and written extensively on campus projects, commented on this phenomenon in a 2006 article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. Halsband articulates an important question: even if these new projects are successfully built at the intersection of town and gown, what will they mean for our traditional understanding of campuses and of towns? She notes, "We must question if these will be real campuses, places that encourage interaction and exchange of ideas, or simply extensions of downtown as we

know it.”<sup>32</sup> That is, will the new development be primarily of and for the university, with a gesture toward the town, or, conversely, will it be primarily a downtown shopping street, with a gesture toward the university? This fundamental duality will be explored through the case studies of this thesis.

One way to think about this duality, Halsband suggests, is to “consider both the elements that make memorable campuses – lest those fragile spatial and cultural forms that we take for granted disappear through inattention – along with the elements that make great cities, to measure what might be achieved.”<sup>33</sup> Some of these characteristics of campuses will be discussed in Chapter 2. Furthermore, some of these characteristics will be revealed in the discussion and comparative analysis of the four cases in Chapters 3, 4, and 5. The analysis will address the policy component of the projects – the processes, partnerships, and financing strategies that lead to implementation – as well as the urban design component. Chapter 6 will offer a synthesis of this information and consider what this phenomenon means for urban planning. Campus planner M. Perry Chapman noted, “Planners and urban designers have a critical place at the table as these alliances unfold, because such joint endeavors can significantly affect that shape and character of the localities in which they are taking place. ...Identifying and building on community character and essence in town-gown projects around the country is among our most urgent tasks as community planners.”<sup>34</sup> Why have these universities undertaken these efforts to create new towns and new places? What have they achieved? What can they teach planners, policy-makers, designers, and university administrators about the creation of “place,” in general, and about how to achieve a complementary and congenial fit between town and gown, in particular? This thesis aims to answer these questions and to use the cases of new town/gown planning projects to illuminate the importance of placemaking on campuses and in communities.

---

<sup>32</sup> Frances Halsband, “Living and Learning: the Campus Redefined,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 28, 2006.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> M. Perry Chapman. “Viewpoint,” *Planning* (March 2008): 62. Chapman is a principal at Sasaki Associates in Watertown, MA and the author of *American Places: In Search of the Twenty-First Century Campus*.





## Chapter 2 - The American "College Town" as an Ideal City Form

"That the average student is more likely to use the campus as a place to take a nap between classes, and few faculty have time to sit under an oak tree in quiet introspection, is no matter, because it is these older ideas that still shape campus planning today. We expect a college campus to look different than other places." – Blake Gumprecht<sup>1</sup>

~~~~~

During his visit to the United States in the 1940s, Modern architect and urbanist Le Corbusier visited several American colleges and universities. He spoke to young male architecture students at Princeton University and female students at Vassar College, and later noted that the lives of American students were much different than those of their European counterparts. While Parisian university students were "in poor shape physically, ill fed, living in the promiscuity of alleys and dark stairways," American students seemed liberated by the pastoral environments of their campuses. As quoted at the outset of this thesis, he wrote that many Americans consider college "a great and fine period – the fine period in their lives" and that this experience is profoundly shaped by the physical form of the American campus that makes it "a temporary paradise, a gracious stage of life."<sup>2</sup> Many college-educated Americans would certainly agree with the idea that their own college or university days represented a "great and fine period" in their lives.

Numerous architects, urbanists, educators, and historians have studied and written about the form, character, and historical development of college campuses and the relationship between the built environment and the college experience. As the role of higher education in our society has changed over the decades, however, universities have realized that they need to have more than a well-planned campus and top-ranked academic programs. The American and Canadian colleges and universities that are part of this new phenomenon of planning new college towns are quite literally engaged in "placemaking" – they are developing these new neighborhoods and communities in the shadow of fundamentally place-based institutions. This new phenomenon can be analyzed through the lens of the "college town." This chapter will

---

<sup>1</sup> Blake Gumprecht, "The campus as a public space in the American college town," *Journal of Historical Geography* 33 (2007): 97.

<sup>2</sup> Le Corbusier, "Everyone an Athlete," in *When the Cathedrals Were White: A Journey to the Country of Timid People*, trans. Francis E. Hyslop, Jr. (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1947), 134-135. For a longer version of the quotation, see page 9 of this thesis.

consider this quintessentially American ideal form through three lineages of urban theory. First, the college town is intrinsically linked to the traditional form of the pastoral campus as a special place. Second, the college town represents an edge condition between “town” and “gown,” and planning at this edge is a significant part of university planning and outreach efforts today. Third, the phenomenon of new college towns must consider the pattern of other intentional communities – both the historical tradition of utopian planning and “new towns” and the more recent strain of New Urbanist and master-planned communities. Although college towns take many different spatial and social forms, reflecting differences in the environments and missions of their “gowns” and of their “towns,” it can be argued that all of these places serve a similar function and all of them aspire to a similar ideal of urbanism.

### **Traditional Forms of the Campus and the College Town**

The “sense of place” of a college or university is related to the idea that learning is somehow linked to place and that great places are memorable. The university can also anchor a place and provide it with a sense of identity – or *genius loci* – that exceeds its functional role.

The European university tradition provides a fundamentally urban lineage. As Thomas Bender observed in his book about the cultural history of the urban university, *The University and the City: From Medieval Origins to the Present*, “We in the United States have been so captured by the tradition of Anglo-American academic pastoralism that we forget how much more common has been the tradition that associates universities with great cities.”<sup>3</sup> While much has been written about the medieval origins and historical patterns of development around European universities, the current state of these urban campuses has also been an area of study for scholars. Leo Van den Berg and Antonio Russo’s 2004 book *The Student City: Strategic Planning for Student Communities in EU Cities*, for example, explains that although European universities are strongly associated with urban communities, it can be a challenge for many to “find the right balance between universities’ needs and policies targeting the resident population.” The book discusses town/gown issues and strategies that are being implemented to create “student-friendly cities” around universities in the UK, France, the Netherlands, Italy, and Finland. As with their North American counterparts, European colleges and universities

---

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Bender, “Introduction,” in *The University and the City: From Medieval Origins to the Present*, ed. Thomas Bender, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 3.

are now seeking to maintain their competitive position and anticipate emerging trends in the globalizing market of higher education.<sup>4</sup>

Among the most universal characteristics of universities around the world is that they are place-based. Although it is possible for colleges to “go out of business” or move to a new location and for students to study at colleges that have a presence only on the internet rather than in physical space, it remains true that most universities are wedded to their locations. Van den Berg and Russo say that universities are “firmly embedded in the local socio-economic environment” and suggested that both the town and the gown must work to ensure that this relationship is one with positive synergies, rather than with negative tension.<sup>5</sup>

Although they are rooted in this European tradition, the iconic American college campus represents a distinct and recognizable form. Paul Venable Turner begins his treatise on American campuses, entitled *Campus: An American Planning Tradition*, at the logical starting point of Thomas Jefferson’s plan for the University of Virginia. Jefferson coined the term “academical village” for the iconic centerpiece of the campus, the grassy lawn surrounded by academic and residential buildings with the Neo-Classical white domed building at the end of an axis. Turner describes this terminology as emblematic of an emerging American conception of the colleges and universities – “as communities within themselves” – that still holds true for 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century American campuses.<sup>6</sup> He continues:

“This reflects educational patterns and ideals which, although derived from Europe, have developed in distinctively American ways. As a result, the physical forms of American colleges and universities – their buildings, grounds, and spaces – are different from anything elsewhere, and thus they provide an excellent opportunity to examine the ways in which architectural design is shaped by the character of a particular type of institution.”<sup>7</sup>

Turner suggests that the term *campus* “more than any other term, sums up the unique physical character of the American college and university.” From the Latin for “field,” the term was first used in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century to describe the green and open grounds at Princeton University. The term gradually came to assume its current meaning, which encompasses the entire property of a university – whether field-like or urban. Turner says, “*Campus* sums up the distinctive

---

<sup>4</sup> Leo Van den Berg and Antonio Russo, *The Student City: Strategic Planning for Student Communities in EU Cities* (Hants, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2004), 3, 8.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>6</sup> Paul Venable Turner, *Campus: An American Planning Tradition* (New York: The Architectural History Foundation; Cambridge, MA and London: The MIT Press, 1984), 3.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

physical qualities of the American college, but also its integrity as a self-contained community and its architectural expression of educational and social ideals.”<sup>8</sup> Today, the term is evocative of a place and a stage of life.

Many colleges and universities already have—or claim to have—college towns and it is important to examine the function that these places serve as a compliment to the built environment of the campus. For some schools, the town is small and fully integrated into the life of the college. This is the case with Williams College in Williamstown, Massachusetts, where admissions literature notes that the tiny Spring Street, which encompasses the “downtown,” includes “an art house cinema; Indian, Thai, Chinese and Mexican restaurants; Zagat-rated bistros...a buzzing coffee house with wireless access...shops for outdoors enthusiasts; two national-caliber art museums,” and that “Williamstown has been called the nation’s best college town.”<sup>9</sup> The idea of the college town is so central to the undergraduate collegiate experience that even urban universities feel the need to market this aspect of their campuses. If Williams offers the best of both worlds in the form of mountainous natural beauty near the Appalachian Trail, plus a college town, Columbia University offers this promise in a different way in the form of the quintessentially urban energy and diversity of New York City—plus a college town. Admissions literature for undergraduates interested in Columbia explains that the Morningside Heights neighborhood is “Traditionally collegiate. A college town in New York City, unlike any other in the world. Morningside Heights is a vibrant intellectual community, surrounded by three public parks and seven leading institutions of higher education. Students...feel the Bohemian buzz of the neighborhood that once brought together Allen Ginsburg, Jack Kerouac and Langston Hughes.”<sup>10</sup> Is it possible for undergraduates at these two colleges to both feel that they are living in “college towns?” While one needs to take a measured view of admissions office literature that is aimed at selling the school to prospective students, there is clearly something to the near-universal equation of the college town with “good place.” Although Spring Street in Williamstown and the Morningside Heights neighborhood in Manhattan take very different forms, they function in many of the same ways. They provide a sense of place and identity to the students, as well as faculty, staff, and visitors

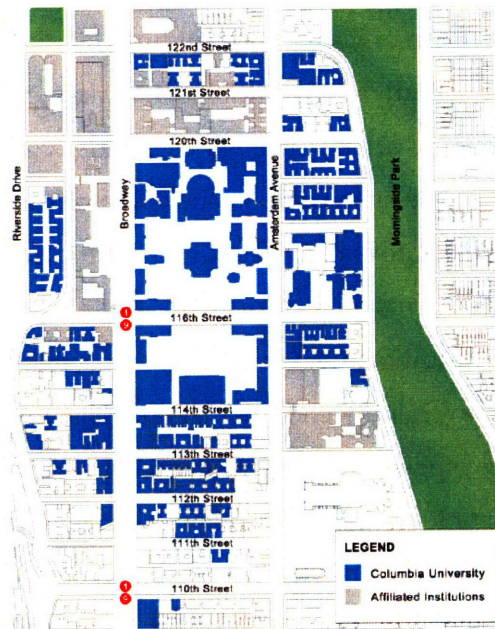
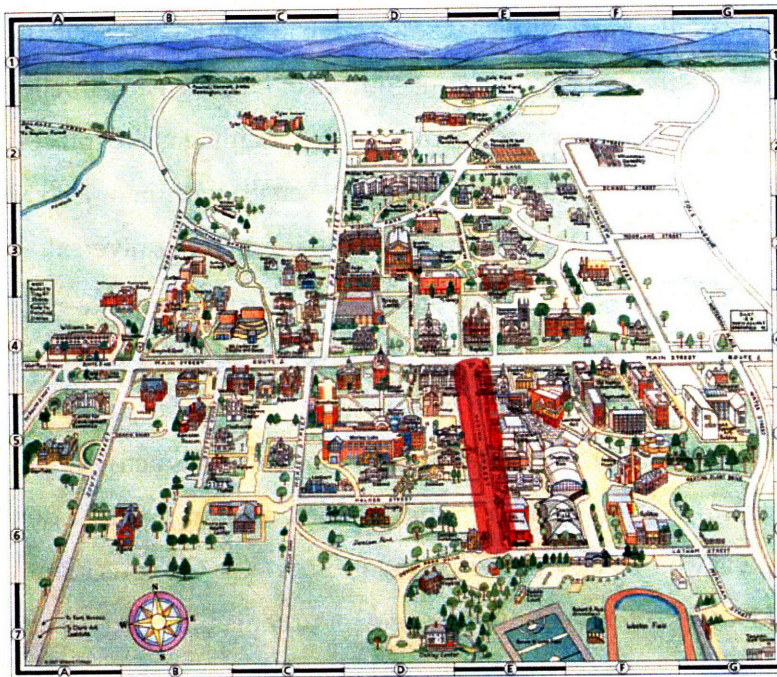
---

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>9</sup> Williams College Admissions website. <http://www.williams.edu/admission/location.php>

<sup>10</sup> Columbia University Office of Undergraduate Admissions website. <http://www.studentaffairs.columbia.edu/admissions/university/newyork/>

to the campus, that signals that this area of “town” is somehow affiliated with and has a special relationship with the “gown.”



*Figures 2.1 and 2.2: The campus maps of Williams College (2.1, the author marked Spring Street in red) and the Morningside Campus of Columbia University (2.2) illustrate the differences between these two places. Just comparing the hand-drawn and lettered illustration with grass, mountains, and winding roads in Williamstown to the city blocks and building footprints in Morningside Heights shows that these two so-called “college towns” present students with different experiences. (Source: Williams website: <http://www.williams.edu/home/campusmap/>; Columbia website: [http://www.columbia.edu/about\\_columbia/map/](http://www.columbia.edu/about_columbia/map/))*

Colleges and universities are perhaps the only land uses that can use their environment to engender such a universally positive image—a connotation of scholarship, nostalgia, and vigorous health. Hospitals, for example, are also large institutional uses that occupy sprawling “campuses” of land and that act as significant sources of employment, intellectual capital, and economic return. They do not, however, evoke any sort of image of a “place” or a “community” or an urban experience. Other land uses, such as a baseball stadium or a city hall, can certainly evoke these positive notions of place, but this reaction is far from universal. This sense of place is something on which a university can capitalize.

Even if it is found in a very rural and remote corner of a state, the “college town” is a fundamentally “urban” idea. It can be a way to add a glimpse of urbanity to a rural campus, it can make a commuter school into a residential community that is active at night and on the weekend, and it can provide a reason for undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, and their families to spend time at the university. In his essay “On Campus Planning,” architect and professor Michael Dennis offered a different sense of urbanism, noting, “Campus design is urban design, and urban design is the design and management of the public realm; of public spaces more than the private realm of individual buildings.”<sup>11</sup> Sometimes, however, it is through the act of locating these individual buildings that planners can help campus life to spill into the downtown. Sometimes, as at The Ohio State University and the University of Pennsylvania, it means moving the main campus bookstore off-campus to a central location where it can serve both the collegiate and community markets. Sometimes, it means building mixed-use buildings, where residents on the upper stories provide a built-in set of consumers for the café on the first floor. Additionally, the “campus” is traditionally a fundamentally pedestrian-scale and pedestrian-friendly enclave. The “college town” tends to be walkable, as well, though some towns face bigger hurdles in managing parking than others.

As Americans are living longer, there is a demographic shift in which more people wish to retire in environments that provide intellectual and social stimulation, two things that a college town can offer in abundance. A recent *New York Times* article discusses this trend in the context of Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire, offering, “Education, as the saying goes, may be wasted on the young. But who says the same has to hold true for college towns?” While alumni are often attracted to the idea of living in or retiring in their college towns, where

---

<sup>11</sup> Michael Dennis, “On Campus Planning,” *Towards a Civil Architecture in America*, *Modulus 23*, The Architectural Review at the University of Virginia (1995): 113.

they can attend football games and look back fondly on their college days, it is becoming increasingly common for people not affiliated with the college to move to these towns, as well. Retirees and vacation-home buyers are drawn to Hanover “by many of the same perks as students – first-rate facilities, a commitment to the arts and spirited night life, all folded into a pitch-perfect rural New England landscape of inns, general stores, and clock-tower churches.” The article notes that community members can use the Dartmouth library and gym, enroll in adult-education classes, and buy passes to the Dartmouth Skiway. In fact, the only “cons” that the article mentions for moving to Hanover are the impossibility of parking downtown and the harsh New England weather.<sup>12</sup>

College towns, of course, also stimulate the economy. Although the colleges themselves do not contribute to the local tax base – which can be a source of friction, particularly as universities continue to expand and gobble up land – they are often a significant source of employment and of intellectual capital. If a college were to ever leave – which is a rare occurrence – it would be a significant blow to the community. In some cases, such as Williamstown, one could simply not exist without the other. Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio might serve as a test case for understanding what happens when a college leaves. Antioch, which has fewer than 200 students in the Spring 2008 semester, is closing at the end of the school year.<sup>13</sup> While communities are often concerned when an institution pursues its interests and acquires land too aggressively, how do they react when institutions are too passive?

### **Giving Form to the “Town/Gown” Edge**

At a panel discussion in early 2008 at Princeton University, several prominent university planners and architects weighed in on Princeton’s ambitious plans for new construction over the next decade, much of which would blur the line between town and gown. Neil Kittredge, a partner with Beyer Blinder Belle Architects & Planners, observed that, in contrast to traditional, inward-looking campuses, campuses today are “becoming much more open to the outside because education is becoming much more open.” Denise Scott Brown, of Venturi, Scott Brown and Associates, suggested that over time society requires that campuses shift back and forth from open to closed and, thus, “It’s a wise campus plan that allows for both.” Campus planners

---

<sup>12</sup> C.J. Hughes, “An enclave of Dartmouth opens up,” *New York Times*, February 8, 2008.

<sup>13</sup> Patricia Cohen, “The college that would not go gently,” *New York Times*, April 20, 2008.

must always be cognizant of edges – where the campus looks out, where it looks in, and where it blurs the edges.<sup>14</sup>

Indeed, one method of examining the town and gown relationship is by understanding the spatial dependence between the two areas – the degree of mixing and the character of the “edge” between town and gown. At some New England colleges – such as Dartmouth College, Williams College, and Amherst College – there is a very fine-grain mixing between town and gown such that a visitor to Hanover, New Hampshire or Williamstown or Amherst, Massachusetts might have difficulty identifying this blurry edge. Which creates more friction: a fine grain mix or a clear separation? For example, there is a difference between locating a coffee shop or newsstand at the town/gown edge with the presumption that members of all communities will share it and the idea that the university library, fitness center, and other often “closed” facilities will be shared. Cambridge’s Harvard Square offers a clear illustration of this concept. Harvard Square is the physical manifestation of the intersection of a high-income city, a carefree youth culture, a prestigious university with international scholars, and a crowded transit stop that serves the subway and bus systems. The Widener Library, the university’s main library with an imposing temple front, is located in Harvard Square and its front steps are covered with students and tourists on sunny days. The interior of the library, however, is only open to those who carry Harvard ID cards. This edge – the campus is “open” but many of its facilities are “closed” to those not affiliated with the university – shows one way that a university can anchor a bustling, diverse, mixed-use community while remaining separate from it. Some universities have natural edges that separate them from their communities, such as the University of Pennsylvania, which is separated from center city Philadelphia by the Schuylkill River. Other universities have hard edges, such as highways, railroad tracks, and industrial areas that form the seam between the city and the campus. MIT, for example, is separated from Boston by the Charles River, but the far greater physical and metaphorical seam is the industrial land between the campus and the rest of Cambridge. Frances Halsband has written that when the edge conditions of campuses are examined they “seem to indicate that different types of campuses exhibit different potentials for development. In particular, some edges seem to invite incremental expansion, while others seem to demand a more radical leapfrogging to distant sites.” Furthermore, “Many American university campuses began as open land outside

---

<sup>14</sup> Robert Stern, “Campus growth plan melds town with gown: Panel discusses relationship in Princeton,” *The Times (Trenton, New Jersey)*, February 27, 2008.



developed areas, but our cities have now grown to envelop them, complicating the distinction between 'town' and 'gown.'"<sup>15</sup>

Michael Dennis argued that a degree of urbanism is critical to creating a campus community:

"The civic responsibilities of both buildings and people increase exponentially as they come into closer proximity. A rural campus with widely spaced buildings, such as the University of California at Santa Barbara, may achieve almost complete independence of buildings, but in so doing it becomes more like a summer camp or a resort than an academic community. To be a community requires density and proximity; that is, it requires urbanity."

He suggests that successful American campuses express this urbanity either by having a campus that mimics a city or by having a campus that is a continuous piece of an existing city fabric.<sup>16</sup> To what extent does the urban form of the university affect the place outside its boundaries? An urban university located in the midst of a large city would have a very different relationship with its host community than a small college in a rural village or a public university in the suburbs that is primarily a commuter campus. At the conclusion of his analysis of several cases, Thomas Bender theorizes that, although the university and the city "share a number of formal sociological similarities," they remain "very different social constructs."<sup>17</sup> He continues:

"I propose that we understand the urban university as *semicloistered heterogeneity* in the midst of uncloistered heterogeneity (that is to say, the city, especially after the walls come down). Because of this difference, relations between the two are necessarily tense, and they cannot be assimilated into one another."<sup>18</sup>

One way of bridging this chasm without complete assimilation is through the idea of the "college town" – in some ways a middle-ground between messy urbanism and controlled separation.

### **Placemaking, Intentional Communities, and New Towns**

Both campuses and new college towns can be considered under the rubric of intentionally planned communities – a form that has been expressed in different ways at different periods in history.

---

<sup>15</sup> Frances Halsband, "Campuses in Place," *PLACES* 17.1 (Spring 2005): 11.

<sup>16</sup> Dennis, 111-112.

<sup>17</sup> Thomas Bender, "Afterword," in Bender, 290.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 290.

In the chapter “Between Heaven and Hell” in *Good City Form*, Kevin Lynch explains that some American utopian communities were engaged in important explorations of the relationship between the physical environment and social ideals. The Shaker communities, for example, which were the longest-lived of the American utopian experiments, “paid great attention to their architectural setting. The world was literally to be transformed into heaven, a perfect architecture of environment and society.” Lynch suggests that this “careful environmental practicality,” including detailing the layouts, color, and spatial arrangement of buildings, “were crucial factors in the longevity of these communities.”<sup>19</sup> Dolores Hayden echoed this sentiment in her study of Shaker villages in her book *Seven American Utopias*. She notes that the Shakers founded twenty-five settlements from Maine to Ohio between 1780 and 1826. That they were able “to produce a satisfactory communitarian environment, wherever they chose, provides the ultimate proof of their full mastery of the design process.” Hayden concludes that the Shakers’ complex, orthogonally-planned systems are so important because they were replicable and “could be recreated anywhere that new members gathered to form a ‘living building.’”<sup>20</sup> Although American college life is very different from Shaker life, the towns associated with each have certain recognizable – and replicable – forms.

The power of narrative and nostalgia – the ability of places to tell stories and evoke memories – are critical to campus planning and are an important element of the lineage of post-war “new town” planning in the U.S. and Great Britain. For example, Harlow, one of the post-war British New Towns, was described by Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter as “deliberately nostalgic” designed with “randomness” that was “intended to suggest all the casual differentiations which might have been brought about by accidents of time.” They suggest that the design of the town center as an “English market place” was both “absolutely of the moment (the moment being the 1950s)” and “also a product of all the accumulations and vicissitudes of history.” Rowe and Koetter further relate the Harlow town center to the sugar-coated “Main Street” in Walt Disney World, a place they describe as “where all the associations of the Brave Olde Worlde are made new. Is this the *reductio ad absurdum* of townscape?” Although Rowe and Koetter consider the prepared, earnestly nostalgic town centers to be merely stage sets – “a

---

<sup>19</sup> Kevin Lynch, “Between Heaven and Hell,” in *Good City Form* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1981), 68-69.

<sup>20</sup> Dolores Hayden, “Heavenly and Earthly Space,” in *Seven American Utopias: The Architecture of Communitarian Socialism, 1790-1975* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1976), 100.

Main Street of musical comedy” – rather than real lived-in places, the designers of such new town centers argue that they are trying to bring a sense of life and community to the new place by using commonly understood symbols.<sup>21</sup> Curiously, an article about one of the new college town projects currently underway (the Storrs Center project at the University of Connecticut) compared the current sparse strip-malls to “a makeshift set for a Hollywood western” implying that the new development will be somehow more authentic and genuine.<sup>22</sup>

Some master-planned communities built in the United States since the 1990s specifically play upon this sense of nostalgia and narrative. The Disney World reference is not far off, as evidenced by the community of Celebration, Florida that was developed by The Walt Disney Company in a style that is reminiscent of an early 20<sup>th</sup> century small town. Often, such new towns are developed under the banner of New Urbanism – and new college towns are no exception. Many of the new college town projects use New Urbanist principles, such as making places that are pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use, and organized around public spaces. Some of them also use New Urbanist planning tools, such as form-based codes and architectural pattern books.

In their well-known book *Suburban Nation: The Rise of Sprawl and the Decline of the American Dream*, Andres Duany, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, and Jeff Speck define the closely related concepts of “New Urbanism” and “neotraditionalism.” In theory, New Urbanism advocates these principles:

“In order to promote community, the built environment must be diverse in use and population, scaled for the pedestrian, and capable of supporting mass transit as well as the automobile. It must have a well-defined public realm supported by buildings reflecting the architecture and ecology of the region.”<sup>23</sup>

Although these tenets seem straightforward, the authors of *Suburban Nation* qualify these principles with the idea of “neotraditionalism,” which they define as a non-ideological tradition that advocates “whatever works and looks best.” Furthermore, they suggest: “As is often the case, what seems to work best is a historic model – the traditional neighborhood – adapted as necessary to serve the needs of modern man.”<sup>24</sup> As a result, New Urbanist new towns, such as

---

<sup>21</sup> Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter, “Collage City,” *The Architectural Review* Vol. CLVIII, No. 942 (August 1975): 74-76.

<sup>22</sup> Jane Gordon, “UConn Decides to Build Its Own College Town,” *New York Times*, August 9, 2006.

<sup>23</sup> Andres Duany, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, and Jeff Speck, *Suburban Nation: The Rise of Sprawl and the Decline of the American Dream* (New York: North Point Press, 2000), 258.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 259.

Duany Plater-Zyberk and Company's Seaside project in Florida, emphasize front porches, picket fences, mixed-use buildings, and the ability of urban design to affect people's sense of place by recalling an earlier time. Neotraditional urban projects are explicitly developed to be the antithesis of the Modernist urban projects of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. The Congress for the New Urbanism was even modeled on the CIAM (Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne) conferences that were held from 1928 to 1959 and which shaped 20<sup>th</sup> century urbanism in profound ways. Although one critique of New Urbanism is that it is so rooted in the past and consumed with historical repetitiveness that it does not respond to the needs, challenges, and context of the present day, it was developed as a response to the decontextual, dominating Modernist aesthetic. Advocates of New Urbanism argue that communities desire a softer, more human response and so people choose to live in places with walkable streets, public parks, and apartments above retail and they favor the soft-focus watercolor renderings of new urbanism to the black-and-white line drawings and heavy sterile concrete of Modernism.

Related to the idea of nostalgia in physical places is the idea that places can be developed according to "themes." The philosophy of Looney Ricks Kiss, a New Urbanist design and development firm with offices in several American cities, includes the idea of building new residential developments in the "generic neotraditional" style. Rather than try to fit everything into one theme and be stylistically accurate, it is sometimes preferable to take an eclectic, if anachronistic, approach to architectural style. Architecture critic Witold Rybczynski writes about one such project:

"This is neither theming nor eclecticism. At first glance, 'generic neotraditional' sounds wishy-washy, but on reflection I realize this is what American developers have always done....[houses] have stone walls and steep roofs, porches and dormers, but little, if any, historical detail. There may be a pediment over the front door, but that hardly makes them Classical."<sup>25</sup>

Do these same rules and theories of real estate and homebuilding for master planned developments apply to town/gown college town situations? If you need to have a "theme" for new development (and neo-traditional development in particular), is "college town" merely a theme? As has been discussed above, one can argue that the concept of the "college town" is more than just branding or marketing, although it can conveniently be used for this purpose.

---

<sup>25</sup> Witold Rybczynski, *Last Harvest: How a Cornfield Became New Daleville: Real Estate Development in America from George Washington to the Builders of the Twenty-first Century and Why We Live in Houses Anyway* (New York: Scribner, 2007): 154-155.

In an article for the *Financial Times* about the historical and contemporary development of new and ideal cities, Edwin Heathcote observes, “The theme has become the central motif of contemporary town planning. To attract people to live in a new town there has to be a big idea, a brand, something that makes that city different, better, from everywhere else.”<sup>26</sup> Heathcote suggests that the New Urbanist developments, such as Seaside and Celebration in Florida and Poundbury in the UK, were themed responses to the attempts at creating new towns that took place in the 1950s and 1960s. He suggests that these earlier places, such as Milton Keynes and Harlow in the UK, Almere in the Netherlands, and Brasilia in Brazil, have not held up well to contemporary sensibilities and that the New Urbanist new towns likewise will not stand the test of time. It is difficult to predict what factors will determine the success or failure of a new town. Some of these places lack sufficient employment opportunities, some were built around the car without sufficient planning for transit, and some have too much concrete or too many matching front porches and they appear out of fashion. One method of significantly lowering the level of risk when creating a new town is to associate it with an institution that is inherently place-based – such as a college or university. In addition to all of the positive associations described above, attaching a new town to a college gives the new place a sense of legitimacy. Heathcote cites urban theorist Richard Sennett’s observation that one reason for the failure of many new towns is that they seem to appear immediately out of nowhere: “Networks are what make cities work, why people want to be in them and these take a long time to develop. A city that ‘ripens’ slowly accommodates the best networks and that is why people like long-established places better.”<sup>27</sup> Although universities occasionally appear immediately (as Simon Fraser University did in suburban Vancouver in 1965), they usually grow by accretion and are often imbued with an innate sense of history. Furthermore, when a new neighborhood is built as an appendage to a college, it can take advantage of many overlaps in both the physical design of the new place and in the planning and development process.

Of course, in a university setting the power of the sense of place is augmented by nostalgic attachments to a college – attachments which colleges certainly hope to cultivate in their alumni and neighbors. As Paul Venable Turner wrote in *Campus: An American Planning Tradition*, “As a kind of city in microcosm, it [the campus] has been shaped by the desire to create an ideal community, and has often been a vehicle for expressing the utopian social

---

<sup>26</sup> Edwin Heathcote, “Urban outfitters,” *Financial Times*, June 29, 2007.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

visions of the American imagination. Above all, the campus reveals the power that a physical environment can possess as the embodiment of an institution's character."<sup>28</sup>

Thus, the American "college town" can be considered as one template for placemaking and urban design in our communities. These places are imbued with the positive and nostalgic associations that come with being linked to a college. They are also intentionally planned and are explicitly designed to represent an ideal notion of a good place. Kevin Lynch suggested that utopic (and dystopic) experiments are often forgotten, but that planners and designers would be well-served to let such projects inspire them: "They are valid expressions of deep human needs and feelings, and so they can be guideposts to environmental values...Moreover, they often connect with spatial features in a very concrete way." He proposed that straightforward and dull plans could be enlivened if only the planners were reminded of the higher ideals of urbanism: "Effective policy (or effective design) works on the boundaries between dream and reality, linking deep needs and obscure desires to open experience and test."<sup>29</sup> The college town is a very real project that is being explored in communities across the U.S. But it is also an ideal project. Indeed, professionals who are working on planning projects that are associated with colleges and universities have the unique opportunity to push the envelope, explore new form models and regulatory tools, and use the resultant places to inspire and educate other communities.

---

<sup>28</sup> Turner, 305.

<sup>29</sup> Lynch, 70.

### **Chapter 3 - Creating College Towns in North America: A New Phenomenon in Four Case Studies**

There are several examples of American and Canadian colleges and universities that are actively involved in creating new main street and college town developments. Four such cases will be profiled in this chapter:

- 1. The Ohio State University and South Campus Gateway**
- 2. University of Connecticut and Storrs Center**
- 3. Hendrix College and The Village at Hendrix**
- 4. Simon Fraser University and UniverCity**

This quartet of cases includes a small liberal arts college and flagship public universities located in rural, small city, and large city environments. Although the processes and outcomes may differ, these four cases are representative of the range of cases of new college towns.

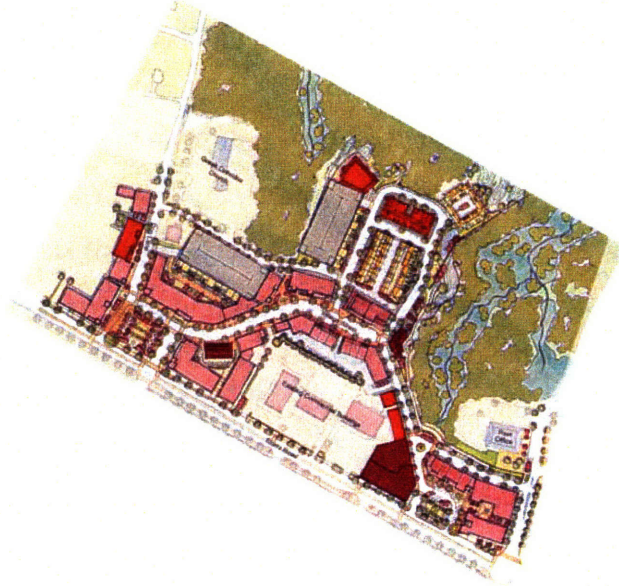
Furthermore, these cases are all grappling with many of the same issues. Some of these issues, such as dealing with town/gown tensions and developing an understanding of the role of higher education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, are relatively specific to planning situations that occur in the context of universities. Other issues, such as a desire to plan sustainably, an interest in using the tenets of New Urbanism to create walkable communities, a need to update Modernist buildings and plans to fit a more contemporary setting, and an interest in organizing development around public places and main street settings, are applicable to a wide variety of planning contexts.

These profiles are a factual background of these four diverse cases, and their stories help to ground the discussion of the new trend of college town development. Chapters 4 and 5 will take a more critical view of the cases, achieved through a comparative analysis of the urban design components and planning processes. Finally the information in these cases will provide the raw material for a discussion of the role of these new college towns in the professional and academic discourse on placemaking.

The Ohio State University + South Campus Gateway



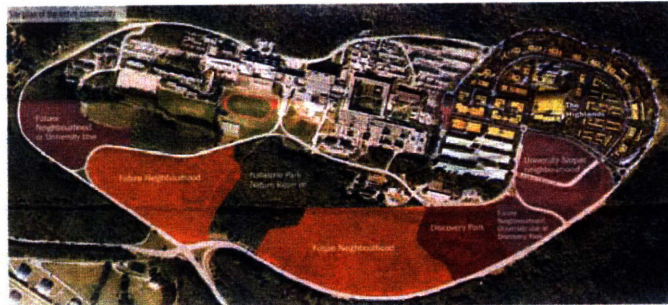
University of Connecticut + Storrs Center



Hendrix College + The Village at Hendrix



Simon Fraser University + UniverCity



**Figure 3.1:** The site plans for the four projects that will be profiled in this chapter, all oriented with north at the top.



## Case 1: The Ohio State University and South Campus Gateway

“Ask how Ohio State University influences off-campus development, and the first answer is usually ‘South Campus Gateway.’” – *Business First*, February 15, 2008<sup>1</sup>

“Gateway is a catalyst for High Street to reach its potential as a great collegiate market.” – *Campus Partners*, October 2007<sup>2</sup>



### **The Gown and the Town**

The Ohio State University was founded as a land-grant college in 1870, and it remains the state of Ohio’s primary public, comprehensive teaching and research university. The main campus is located in the state capital, Columbus, on a grassy 1,756-acre campus just north of the downtown. In 2007, the Columbus campus enrolled over 39,000 undergraduate and over 10,000 graduate students, though, on gameday, the Buckeye football team ensures that the population vastly increases. Ohio State has a particularly strong impact on the University District, the term given to the three square miles of urban neighborhoods located around the campus. The University District includes approximately 10,000 students living on-campus, 8,500 living off-campus, and 21,000 permanent residents, including a neighborhood that is predominately low-income, minority residents, many of whom live in a large Section 8 public housing development.<sup>3</sup> Ohio State’s history as a flagship, land grant state university with an agricultural heritage and civic duty to the people of Ohio has at times been at odds with the very urban issues that face the Columbus campus. Ohio State’s responses, particularly with the South Campus Gateway project, are illustrative of a changing town/gown relationship.

---

<sup>1</sup> Carrie Ghose, “Domino effect: OSU investment driving off-campus development,” *Commercial Developers Resource*, supplement to *Business First*, Columbus, Ohio, February 15, 2008.

<sup>2</sup> “Campus Partners’ accomplishments: 1995-2007,” *Campus Partners*, October 2007.

<sup>3</sup> Figure from 2004. Stephen A. Sterrett, *Campus Partners*, “The University on Main Street: Commercial Revitalization in the Campus Community,” poster presentation, October 3-5, 2004.



Figure 3.2: Ohio State's iconic "oval" is a remnant of the campus' 1904 Beaux Arts plan. This image is facing west, with the Wexner Center for the Arts in the foreground, and High Street just off the bottom edge of the photograph. (Source: OSU website: <http://www.osu.edu/download/gallery.php?img=9>)

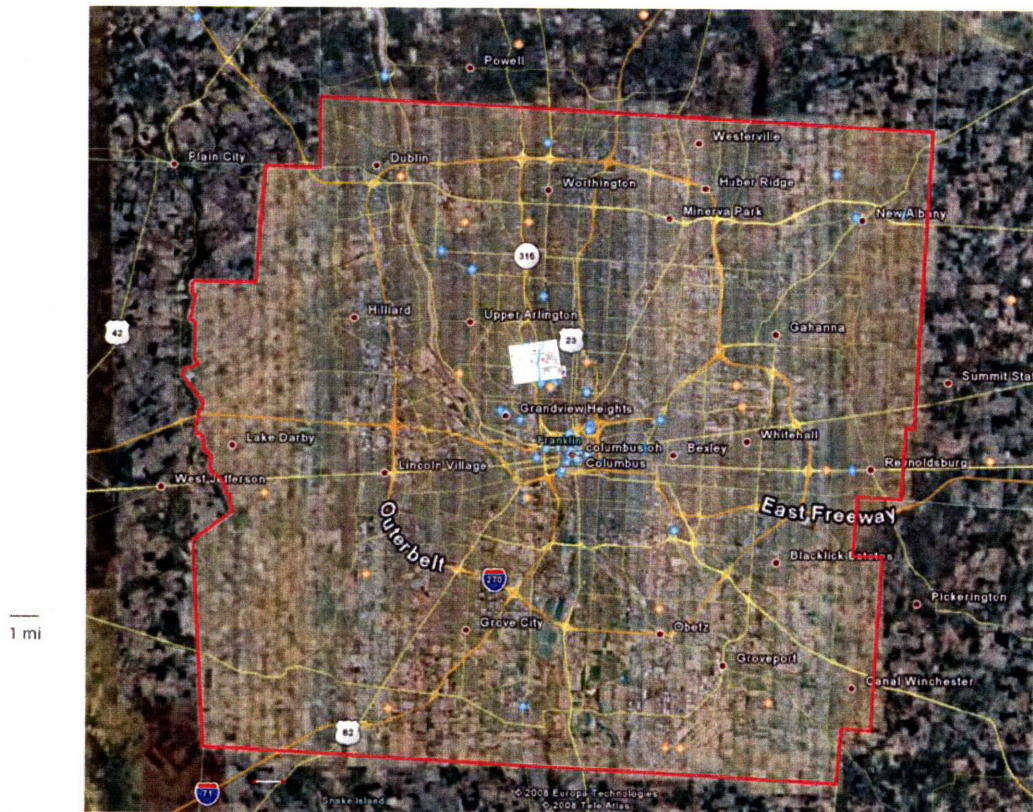
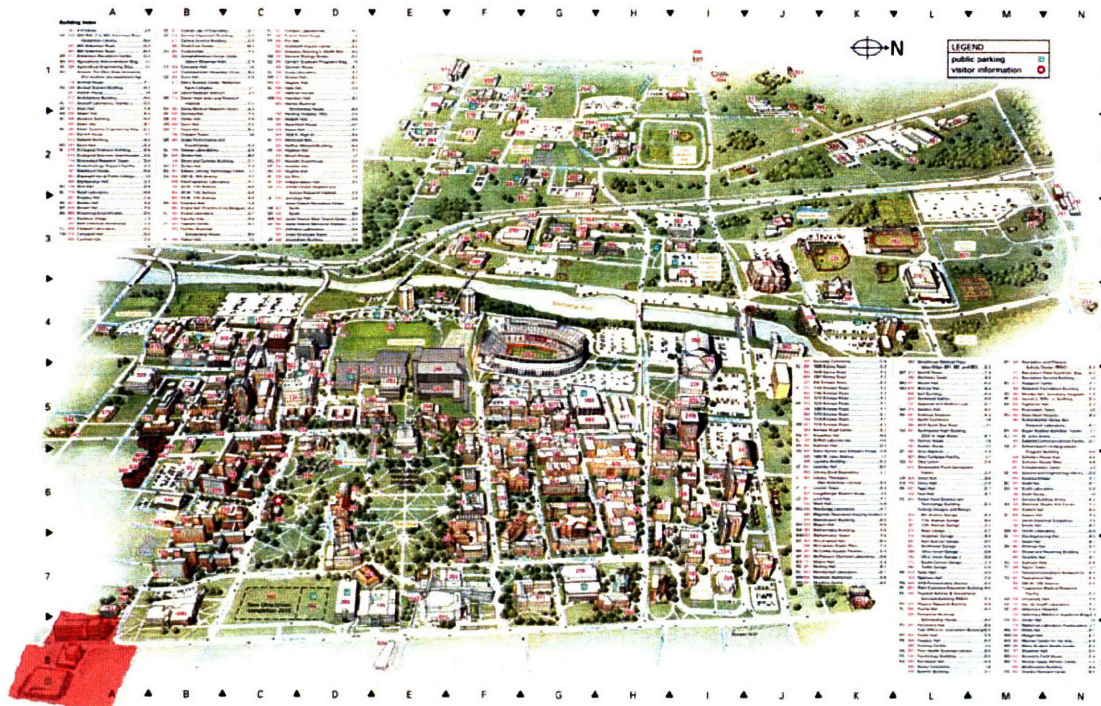


Figure 3.3: This context map shows the location of The Ohio State University within the City of Columbus (pink line). The South Campus Gateway is immediately adjacent to the campus. (Map by the author, with aerial photograph from GoogleEarth)



**Figure 3.4:** *The official campus map for The Ohio State University faces west. High Street is at the bottom of the image, the massive horseshoe-shaped football stadium dominates the center of the plan, and the Olentangy River and College of Agriculture facilities are at the top of the plan. The author has marked the location of the South Campus Gateway in red. (Source: OSU website: <http://www.osu.edu/map/>)*

As a land-grant college, Ohio State belongs to the lineage of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century movement in higher education that, through Senator Justin Morrill’s Land Grant College Act of 1862, allotted each state a share of government land on which to establish a college for agricultural and mechanical education. Paul Venable Turner wrote of the origins of these colleges, which also include Cornell University and the University of Minnesota: “the early land-grant schools shared certain basic goals, including the promotion of practical education, the right of education for all social classes, and the freedom of students to choose their own courses of study.” At the same time, landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted developed his theories for the spatial layout of egalitarian campuses.<sup>4</sup>

The 1995 Campus Master Plan, by Sasaki Associates with Michael Dennis Associates and Moody Nolan Limited, sheds some light both on the historical development of the Ohio State campus and on the problems and priorities that faced the university at the end of the twentieth

<sup>4</sup> Paul Venable Turner, *Campus: An American Planning Tradition*, 140.

century. The Master Plan reveals that the university's 19<sup>th</sup> century development was shaped by both of the two poles that pulled most campus planning at the time: the naturalistic, Olmstedian campus planned around open space and the formal, Beaux Arts-inspired campus planned around an imposing "old main" building. The 1904 plan, which embraced the latter, introduced the now-famous "Oval" which connected the campus to High Street. The 1995 plan notes, the "concept of a formal axis linking a new 'University Hall' to the main campus entrance at 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue lasted until the 1990s, when the Wexner Center was built, and [the] definition of a large, open, oval-shaped central space still remains as the most carefully protected component of the campus."<sup>5</sup> In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Ohio State expanded the campus west towards and then beyond the Olentangy River, building facilities for the College of Agriculture, other buildings, and its massive horseshoe-shaped football stadium. The plan cites Turner's book on the relationship between the sports movement and land-grant universities: "As athletics became fully accepted into colleges, so were its buildings. The state land grant institutions had by (the early 1900's) outgrown the modest aims of their early years, and Olmsted's rural village was superseded by the monumental stadium as the symbol of their ambitions."<sup>6</sup> The postwar development of the campus was shaped by a different tension – between the formal Beaux-Arts campus and the functional Modernist campus – and a new sort of monumental architecture took hold. A 1962 Master Plan aimed to unify the campus, but, in keeping with the tenets of Modernist planning, it separated vehicular and pedestrian systems, took a stance on surrounding neighborhoods "closer to the urban renewal policies," and added functional, Modern buildings.<sup>7</sup> The 1995 plan, which was charged with updating the campus for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, observes that by the 1990s, the Modernist plan looked as old-fashioned and out-of-touch as the Olmstedian plans once looked to the Beaux-Arts campus planners.<sup>8</sup>

The 1995 Master Plan is a Long Range Concept Plan that developed a framework for Ohio State's development over the next thirty years, focusing on managing growth and density, preserving open space, reinforcing the vehicular circulation system that ties the campus grid to

---

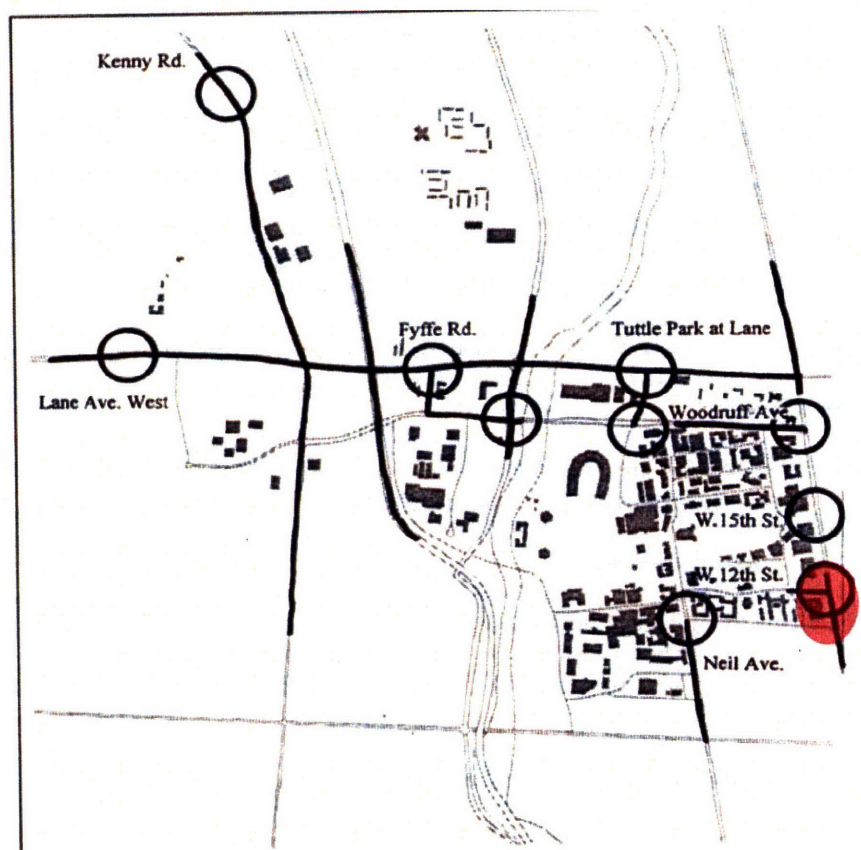
<sup>5</sup> *The Ohio State University: a framework for change and improvement: the campus master plan*, Interim Planning Advisory Committee with Sasaki Associates, Inc., Michael Dennis Associates, and Moody Nolan Ltd. Inc. 1995, 7.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

the neighborhood grid, and linking the campus with the surrounding community.<sup>9</sup> While the university needed to be able to change and grow, unchecked growth or development that took away from the fundamentally urban character of the campus district would be detrimental and there was a conscious effort to preserve the essential spatial and formal elements that gave the campus its sense of history and place. Thus, the 1995 Master Plan includes a variety of studies and diagrams that compare different aspects of the campus and ways that it might grow. The plan also takes into account the High Street edge and the main gateways to the campus.



*Figure 3.5: This diagram from the 1995 Campus Master Plan shows the main entrances and gateways to the campus. The author added a red circle at the W. 12<sup>th</sup> Street gateway to show the location of the South Campus Gateway. (Source: 1995 Master Plan, p. 48)*

### Why Create a New Town?

In addition to urban decline in the City of Columbus— which was not very different from the disinvestment and blight that plagued other American cities in the wake of post-war urban renewal and suburbanization— Ohio State turned its back to these problems for many years. The campus became increasingly disconnected from the surrounding neighborhood and

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., Volume II, p. 1-2.

by the mid-1990s “more than 60% of undergraduate and graduate students lived outside the university district.”<sup>10</sup> One reason for this shift was that, as the student body became increasingly more affluent, more students had personal vehicles that enabled them to live farther from campus. This decreased the potency of the student-centered areas and led to a softening of the rental housing market.<sup>11</sup> Thus, one goal of the revitalization efforts was to improve the competitiveness of the University District. David Dixon, of Goody Clancy and Associates, which later authored an urban design study for the area, has noted that Ohio State metaphorically and physically closed itself off from High Street. He observed that the “most symbolic and devastating” action was the closing of 15<sup>th</sup> Street – “traditionally the front door to the campus” – to locate Peter Eisenman’s Wexner Center for the Arts and, thus, impede the “visual connection between the campus, High Street, and the university district beyond.”<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, the City of Columbus turned High Street into an arterial roadway, removing on-street parking and closing off small connecting streets. These deliberate actions and the general inaction of the university in relation to its surrounding community led to a significant decline of the University District.

During his first term as president of Ohio State from 1990-1997, Gordon Gee observed the disconnect between the scenic campus with its grassy oval and hallowed football stadium and the surrounding neighborhood.<sup>13</sup> Gee later recalled, “I realized the university had a very serious problem east of High. We created a student ghetto and we created a lot of off-campus problems.”<sup>14</sup> By the mid-1990s, it was clear that the university needed to step in and significantly revitalize the University District. Although the housing stock and the quality of life in the neighborhoods were important and would later come to be an important part of the town/gown project, Ohio State started with the commercial street at the eastern edge of campus: High Street. A 2004 “white paper” that discusses the history and challenges of the project clearly explains the reasons for this focus on High Street:

---

<sup>10</sup> David Dixon, “Campus Partners and The Ohio State University: Transforming a Failing Commercial District,” *PLACES* 17.1 (Spring 2005): 46.

<sup>11</sup> Stephen Sterrett, Campus Partners, Director of Community Relations. Interview with the author, April 7, 2008.

<sup>12</sup> Dixon, 46.

<sup>13</sup> Gee returned as OSU president in 2007 after serving as president of Brown University from 1997-2000 and as chancellor of Vanderbilt University from 2000-2007. Gee has previously served as president of the University of Colorado at Boulder and West Virginia University.

<sup>14</sup> Ghose, 4.

“One essential element of the overall strategy for neighborhood revitalization is the effort to reinvigorate and strengthen the traditional ‘Main Street’ commercial district which serves the university community and establishes the eastern edge of campus. High Street is the traditional ‘Main Street’ of Columbus and of the University District, and it is the front door to the university campus and the adjacent neighborhoods. Historically, it has been the primary retail and entertainment zone of the University District, and it is the major transportation corridor from downtown. Like most American ‘Main Streets,’ it has lost its market share to big-box retailers and suburban shopping centers...High Street lacks the range and critical mass of quality goods and services to serve well the many segments of the University District market. It has too much litter and graffiti – and too little parking. With the presence of Ohio State, however, this portion of High Street has tremendous untapped market potential.”<sup>15</sup> Thus, Ohio State and the City of Columbus decided to work together to revitalize the town/gown edge. It has been noted that Ohio State went into this effort with a sense of “enlightened self-interest.” That is, the university’s goal was to improve the quality of life in the University District, stabilize the neighborhoods, and help to check the problems of poverty and disinvestment – and thereby improve the quality of life at Ohio State.<sup>16</sup>

## **How to Create a New Town**

### **1. Implementation + Financing**

The “South Campus Gateway” development is the most tangible, compact physical representation of Ohio State’s revived town/gown edge. The Gateway, however, is only one part of the redevelopment of High Street, which is, in turn, just one part of the work of the Campus Partners organization. Thus, in order to understand the importance of the Gateway, it is necessary to clarify the history and work of the Campus Partners.

In 1994, President Gee and the Mayor of Columbus authorized a University Area Improvement Task Force. This group was assigned to visit various urban campuses throughout the country, as well as the neighborhoods in the University District. The task force concluded that with students leaving the area and a high concentration of poverty, the district was headed in the wrong direction. The two principal results of the task force were the creation of the non-profit organization Campus Partners for Community Urban Revitalization and the development of a Comprehensive Implementation Plan.<sup>17</sup> The State of Ohio designated

---

<sup>15</sup> Stephen A. Sterrett, Campus Partners, “The University on Main Street: Commercial Revitalization in the Campus Community,” poster presentation, October 3-5, 2004.

<sup>16</sup> Stephen Sterrett, interview with the author, April 7, 2008.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

Campus Partners as a “community urban redevelopment corporation. It is funded by the university, but it was designed to be separate enough “both to shield Ohio State from potential controversy and to inspire community acceptance.”<sup>18</sup> It was also important, however, that the Campus Partners organization take advantage of the university’s credibility and its alumni connections “who constituted much of the political, business, and civic leadership in Columbus and central Ohio.”<sup>19</sup>

In 1995 and 1996, Campus Partners, together with the design firm EDAW, led a community-based planning process that resulted in a document which would serve as a roadmap for future work: *University Neighborhoods Revitalization Plan: Concept Document*. This focused revitalization effort on High Street, which is the north-south main street in Columbus and of Ohio State, forming the eastern edge of the campus proper. The EDAW plan suggested that the most appropriate pattern of development for the University District portion of High Street was as a series of nodes. Rather than expecting a constant row of 3-5 story buildings, it would make more sense to concentrate these taller buildings, with areas of 2-3 story buildings in between. The three suggested nodes, which run from south to north on High Street, were 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue and North High Street, 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue and North High Street (the historic entrance to the campus, on axis with the main oval), and Lane Avenue and North High Street (the northern boundary of the campus). The traditional campus entrance at 15<sup>th</sup> and High is also the area with the highest pedestrian traffic in the area. Since it would have been prohibitively expensive for Campus Partners to acquire land for a new mixed-use district at 15<sup>th</sup> and High – and since this node was already fairly bustling – Campus Partners decided to develop the South Campus Gateway project at the 11<sup>th</sup> and High intersection. This choice would also serve to extend the zone of campus activity farther south along High Street.<sup>20</sup>

On May 2, 1997, the University Trustees approved the EDAW revitalization plan. In addition to support for revitalization efforts, this action physically moved the project along, as it authorized Campus Partners to spend \$1.39-million to purchase the Columbus Bakery Company building at the corner of 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue and High Street, an intersection that had been “identified in the plan as being in serious need to revitalization.” Additionally, the Trustees

---

<sup>18</sup> Dixon, 47.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>20</sup> Stephen Sterrett, interview with the author, April 7, 2008. There is currently a smaller redevelopment project taking place at the Lane and High Street intersection.



authorized a total of \$15 million to be spent on purchases in the area and \$500,000 as seed money to help attract homeownership.<sup>21</sup> A few weeks later, on June 30, 1997, Campus Partners got further symbolic and political support when the Columbus City Council unanimously voted to adopt the revitalization plan “as the official guideline for public and private improvements, investment, and redevelopment in the University District.”<sup>22</sup> This city buy-in also allowed for the possibility that land could be acquired by eminent domain, though the Campus Partners noted at the time that this step would not be taken without the completion of an urban design study and a financial agreement with the city.<sup>23</sup> In 1999, the City of Columbus declared that the South Campus Gateway area to be “blighted.”

One challenge faced by this project was that none of the land in the proposed site for the South Campus Gateway was owned by the university. In an interview with the author, Stephen Sterrett, Director of Community Relations for Campus Partners, explained that 25 of the 31 parcels were assembled through private negotiation and the city exercised its power of eminent domain for the remaining six parcels.<sup>24</sup>

Perhaps the most unique and commendable aspect of the Ohio State project is the degree of buy-in – both theoretical and literal, in form of direct financial support – that the project received from the university, the city, and even the state and federal governments. These contributions can be summarized as follows:

- **Ohio State University** – backing and organization support for Campus Partners non-profit; Trustees authorized \$20 million for land acquisition;
- **City of Columbus** – backing for Campus Partners non-profit; assisted in land acquisition; committed \$6 million for infrastructure improvements; approved tax-increment financing district that enabled the construction of a parking garage;
- **State of Ohio** – appropriated \$4.5 million in capital funds to subsidize the parking garage;
- **U.S. government** – Campus Partners was granted \$35 million in tax credit allocations under the New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC) program. This program was designed to

---

<sup>21</sup> “University trustees vote to accept Campus Partners’ plan,” May 2, 1997. Campus Partners News Archive. <http://campuspartners.osu.edu/trustvot.htm>

<sup>22</sup> “Columbus City Council adopts revitalization plan,” June 30, 1997. Campus Partners News Archive. <http://campuspartners.osu.edu/citycoun.htm>

<sup>23</sup> “University trustees vote to accept Campus Partners’ plan,” May 2, 1997. Campus Partners News Archive.

<sup>24</sup> Stephen Sterrett, interview with the author, April 7, 2008.

“stimulate investment, growth, and job creation in low-income communities,” and according to the 1990 census, 59% of residents in the neighborhood around the South Campus Gateway had incomes below poverty level. The site is within the federally designated Columbus Empowerment Zone and the Small Business Administration-designated “Historically Underutilized Business” zone.<sup>25</sup>

In addition to this support, Campus Partners has played a pivotal role as the third-party non-profit organization to organize and implement the revitalization efforts. In their literature, Campus Partners has explained their role: “With the backing of Ohio State, Campus Partners has been the catalyst to develop a common vision for High Street. Campus Partners has helped to put in place the public policies which, in turn, will encourage the private investment required for sustained revitalization.”<sup>26</sup>

With the non-profit organization to manage the project, a revitalization plan to guide it, and the financing and approvals in place, it was time to develop a more concrete vision of what could be accomplished at the town/gown edge at High Street. In 1997, Terry Foegler replaced the first Campus Partners president. Mr. Foegler decided to broaden the level of community-based planning and to “step back from a district-wide approach and proceed with a series of sequential projects that could be more readily backed by nonuniversity stakeholders.” In July 1997, Campus Partners hired Goody Clancy & Associates, a Boston-based architecture, planning, and urban design firm, to develop an urban design plan and comprehensive development strategy for High Street. After working on a visioning process with an advisory committee and stakeholders, Goody Clancy produced its plan in 2000: *A Plan for High Street: Creating a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Main Street*. The chief result of this document, which was adopted by the Columbus City Council in 2002, was the beginning of the South Campus Gateway project.

Results of the High Street plan include:

- Campus Partners “worked with property and business owners on planning and support for a special improvement district (SID) to provide a higher level of clean and safe services on High Street;”<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup> “Campus Partner Selected to Receive \$35 Million in New Market Tax Credits,” March 14, 2003. Campus Partners News Archive.

<sup>26</sup> Sterrett, “The University on Main Street: Commercial Revitalization in the Campus Community,” poster presentation, October 3-5, 2004.

<sup>27</sup> “Campus Partners’ accomplishments: 1995-2007,” Campus Partners, October 2007.

- Campus Partners “prepared urban development and design guidelines for High Street” as “a companion to the urban zoning overlay for High Street;”<sup>28</sup>
- A city-sponsored program was implemented to provide grants and low-interest loans for façade improvement for buildings on High Street.
- High Street property owners submitted a petition to create a business improvement district (BID).
- The city and university funded a streetscape improvement study for High Street.
- The plan aimed at “Re-creating the historic 15<sup>th</sup> Street gateway between the campus and the community through mixed-use development and a new University Square public space.”<sup>29</sup>
- The city and university would assist in building structured parking. It is noteworthy that the lack of parking was repeatedly mentioned as a concern along High Street and that a 1,200 space parking garage became an essential element of the redevelopment project.

## 2. Commercial Development

The South Campus Gateway is the lynchpin of the Campus Partners’ plan to revitalize High Street and the University District.<sup>30</sup> The 7.5-acre site is located on three blocks on either side of High Street, just south of the campus. The land assembly was completed in 2002, building construction began in 2004, and the mixed-use development opened in autumn 2005. The development is comprised of 225,000 square feet of entertainment, restaurant, and retail space, 88,000 square feet of office space (used for university and non-university uses), 184 apartments, and a 1,200-space parking garage.<sup>31</sup> Since free or low-cost parking is necessary for retail to survive in Columbus, the Gateway Garage became an important component of the South Campus Gateway project. Furthermore, Campus Partners decided to build 300 more spaces than were deemed necessary, viewing the garage as a strategic economic investment that would benefit businesses throughout High Street.<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Dixon, 49.

<sup>30</sup> For the South Campus Gateway portion of the Campus Partners work, CB Richard Ellis is the property manager, Jones Lang LaSalle was the development management advisor, and Elkus/Manfredi Architects of Boston was the project architect.

<sup>31</sup> “Fact Sheet” Campus Partners, January 2007.

<sup>32</sup> Stephen Sterrett, interview with the author, April 7, 2008.

# EVERYTHING THE SOUTH HAS TO OFFER

### FOOD & ENTERTAINMENT

**B6 Caribou Coffee**  
Fresh, craft-roasted beans create a smooth, lasting cup of coffee. Add a relaxing brew, phone: 294-0830

**C6 Cold Stone Creamery**  
Mix and match... just like when you were a kid. phone: 798-1528

**D4 Drexel Gateway Theater**  
See the new stuff! The latest stuff. Grab a bite, have a drink, sit while you enjoy stadium seating. phone: 342-2244

**B10 Eddie George's Grille 27**  
DGA's favorite bar returns. And brings us the style we've come to rely upon. From food to stage entertainment. phone: 421-2727

**D5 Mad Mex (1st Floor)**  
California-Mexican style food served in a contemporary, fun and funky atmosphere. phone: 584-4087

**C7 McFadden's Restaurant & Saloon**  
Enjoy the food. Enjoy the jazz. And the always hospitable company. phone: 294-3736

**A9 Panera Bread**  
Shops, sandwiches, salads and a fresh bakery. All the good stuff. phone: 297-6882

**B3 Pesto Creative Italian Bistro**  
Choose your ingredients. Create your own pasta, pizza, sandwiches or salad. phone: 294-2156

**B4 Potbelly Sandwich Works**  
Good as fast-food eatery. Tasty sandwiches, soups and fresh-baked milkshakes. phone: 299-5177

**D3 The Happy Greek**  
Upside-down Greek restaurant that lives up to its reputation of excellent food. phone: 297-3773

**C2 The Skye Bar**  
The VIP establishment is revamped for dances, party rooms, and people who just want to hang out. phone: 421-5543

**D6 Ugly Tuna Saloons (2nd Floor)**  
Tasty, casual seafood restaurant and bar with live music. phone: 297-9822

### SHOPPING & SERVICES

**C10 Barnes and Noble**  
The Ohio State University Bookstore. phone: 247-2200

**A4 Cingular Wireless**  
Get connected... and get what you need to stay that way. phone: 291-2530

**A8 EB Games**  
Conquer something new. One of the nation's leading retailers of video games and PC hardware, software and accessories. phone: 299-3770

**B9 Finish Line**  
Athletic, outdoor and other apparel, guaranteed to fit anyone and any style. phone: 299-0437

**A5 Gateway Residential Leasing Office**  
phone: 291-9550

**C9 Lave**  
Handcrafted bath products. phone: 344-9975

**C11 The Ohio State University Department of Human Resources (3rd & 4th Floor)**  
phone: 292-1866

**B5 Revul**  
A reproduction in various construction. Recast the workplace establishment. Refuse to be silent or to sign any contracts. It's true freedom of speech. phone: 427-1040

**C8 Sky Bank**  
Good money. Good money. SCG's newest full-service financial center. phone: 521-8777

**D1 Sunflower Market**  
Fresh, organic, wholesome foods that are affordable to anyone. phone: 294-1414

**C5 Y Boutique**  
Young women's designer fashion and accessories. phone: 294-2188

ON NORTH HIGH STREET  
BETWEEN CHITTENDEN AVE. & NINTH AVE.  
WITH PARKING EAST ON 9TH & 11TH AVE.

South Campus Gateway

WWW.SOUTHCAMPUSGATEWAY.COM

Figure 3.6: The advertising flyer for the South Campus Gateway shows the plan for the development, oriented with west at the top, and illustrates how the new buildings are located within the existing Columbus street grid. 12<sup>th</sup> Street is just north of Chittenden Avenue, so this gateway is located slightly south of the location suggested in the 1995 Master Plan. (Source: Campus Partners)

Shortly before the 2005 opening of the South Campus Gateway, the Campus Partners announced some of the first retail tenants. The tenants include: Eddie George's Grille 27 (owned by former Ohio State football player and Heisman Trophy winner Eddie George), The Skye Bar dance club, a variety of locally-owned and national-chain restaurants, and The Finish Line athletic specialty store. The primary retail anchor for the South Campus Gateway is the Barnes & Noble bookstore, which will combine the existing Ohio State University Bookstore and other university bookstores into one superstore at the prominent southeast corner of High Street and East 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The primary entertainment anchor is the 8-screen Drexel Gateway Theatre, which shows first-run, independent, and art and foreign films. Pleased with the commercial development, Terry Foegler observed,

"The array and blend of locally owned, regional, and national businesses has been a major foundation of the merchandising plan since its inception. A number of these establishments are not found elsewhere in central Ohio... These tenants also will help ensure that Gateway's offerings will appeal to both students and other interested in this unique form of urban retail and entertainment... The 'destination quality' of our anchors will generate substantial vitality at Gateway throughout most of the day, all through the year."<sup>33</sup>

The idea that this new district will act as a "destination," as opposed to merely providing daily services for the university and residential communities, is an important attribute of this plan (and of most of the other cases) that distinguishes these "new town" projects from previous town/gown projects. While cleaning up litter and restoring trust are admirable goals, Campus Partners has been far more ambitious in its aims.

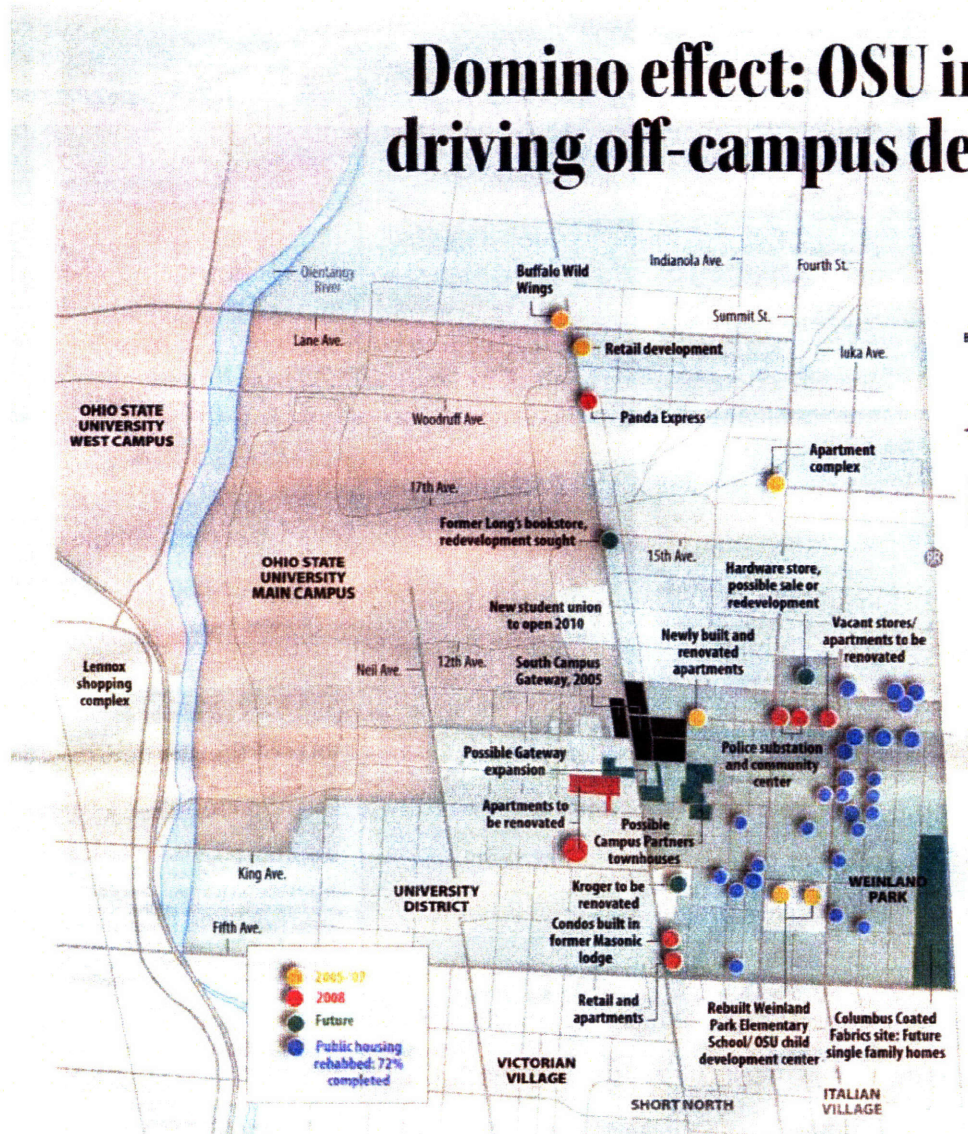
In Spring 2008, 80% of the retail spaces are leased, 100% of the 184 apartments are leased, and the office space is in negotiations to be fully leased. Sterrett noted that the retail spaces had been slower to lease than had initially been expected because some of the national and regional retailers were unsure about whether they should target a "campus" market or a "main street" market.<sup>34</sup> With 50,000 students at Ohio State, there is clearly a market for commercial development that focuses on students. It is also important to High Street retailers, however, to develop a market around permanent, 12-month residents. Adequate parking and transit access are important components of this. The South Campus Gateway also enhances its appeal to a non-undergraduate population with the apartments in the development. The 184

---

<sup>33</sup> "Campus Partners announced retail tenants for South Campus Gateway," May 4, 2005. Campus Partners News Archive.

<sup>34</sup> Stephen Sterrett, interview with the author, April 7, 2008.

apartments are rented primarily to graduate and professional students, particularly those at the law school which is the closest part of campus to the development. A focus on the under-served graduate student market is an important part of the urban revitalization strategy and provides a balance to an area that is otherwise populated with 19 and 20 year olds. Housing that wraps two sides of the parking garage includes three-bedroom units that are available to undergraduates.



*Figure 3.7: This map shows that Campus Partners' projects in the University District extend beyond the South Campus Gateway to include the rehabilitated public housing in the Weinland Park neighborhood and other retail and residential development projects. The caption reads: "Domino effect: OSU investment driving off-campus development. (Source: Commercial Developers Resource, supplement to Business First, Columbus, Ohio, February 15, 2008)*

### 3. Architecture + Urban Form

As was already discussed, the choice to focus revitalization efforts on High Street and, specifically, at the intersection with 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue, was a deliberate decision, based on the spatial relationships between the campus and the city. High Street forms the eastern—and very urban—edge of the Ohio State campus. The western edge, which is west of the Olentangy River and near the 315 Expressway, is much more suburban. Sterrett noted that most university maps direct visitors to enter the campus from this western edge, which makes sense from a perspective of automobile circulation. High Street, however, is the area where “people gravitate” and, the South Campus Gateway project and the revitalization efforts on High Street are helping to reinforce the sense of this road as “main street.”<sup>35</sup>

Early on in the process, a decision was made to use an “eclectic” architectural style for the High Street redevelopment in the University District. The area south of the University District and north of Downtown, known as “Short North,” is characterized by late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings and an appealing array of art galleries and boutiques. The University District, however, did not have the same set of historic buildings to preserve. Rather, the focus came to be on preserving the urban fabric and developing new buildings that can contribute to the sense of place and urbanity, but without the requirements associated with recreating an historic district. Elkus/Manfredi, the Boston-based firm hired as the project architects for the South Campus Gateway, worked within this desire for eclecticism.<sup>36</sup> For example, the new buildings do not hide the fact that they are large buildings, but they also maintain a comfortable rhythm of storefront bays set 25-30 feet apart.<sup>37</sup> The buildings employ a variety of materials to create a variety of surfaces and textures. Furthermore, each retailer builds its own storefront, which is designed to create a deliberate sense of variety. As Sterrett noted, the project architecture seeks “not to recreate the past, but to reflect the past.”<sup>38</sup>

---

<sup>35</sup> Stephen Sterrett, interview with the author, April 7, 2008.

<sup>36</sup> Elkus/Manfredi won a 2007 Honor Award for Urban Design or Planning Projects from the American Institute of Architects Ohio for the design.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.



*Figure 3.8: This rendering by Elkus/Manfredi of the Barnes & Noble campus bookstore at the South Campus Gateway shows that this project has an urban, and somewhat sterile and generic, aesthetic. (Source: Elkus/Manfredi website: <http://www.elkus-manfredi.com/>)*

#### **4. Housing**

The commercial development at the South Campus Gateway has “had a domino effect, spurring new construction and redevelopment up and down High Street.” A supplement to the February 15, 2008 edition of *Business First*, a weekly business newspaper in Columbus, contained six pages of stories about South Campus Gateway and other projects undertaken in the University District or by Campus Partners. The paper noted that one developer, Robert “Skip” Weiler, Jr., is planning to spend \$2 million to renovate 250 apartment units, noting “I didn’t know Gateway was going to be as nice as it is.” Weiler also commented on the changing demographics in the University District. As “dive bars and slums” are replaced by higher quality apartments and retail—and as Ohio State as increased its admissions standards—student renters have become more demanding: “The kids are smarter and they’re not going to rent junk any more.” Another developer, Ronald Ratner, commented: “The buying power of the students and faculty of this institution is staggering.” Efforts to improve public safety in the University District have also been instrumental in restoring confidence in the neighborhood. For example, one developer was convinced to invest in the neighborhood “because a new community policing station will open this year around the corner on 11<sup>th</sup>—a project half paid for by the university.” Additionally, Campus Partners is working to encourage High Street



property owners to join the Special Improvement District, which would use additional taxes to pay for graffiti and litter removal and provide extra police patrols.<sup>39</sup>

With its focus on cleaning up poor areas and making them trendy and student-oriented, the redevelopment of the University District may seem to veer towards gentrification. The lines are blurring between the Ohio State student areas and the adjacent Short North neighborhood: "the city's hipster central."<sup>40</sup> One of Campus Partners' most recent projects attempts to counteract this by focusing on crime-ridden, low-income public housing in a nearby neighborhood. As a reporter for the *Business First* supplement noted: "Far from the wheatgrass juice and the handmade soaps in its splashy South Campus Gateway development on North High Street, Ohio State University's development arm also has worked behind the scenes in the Weinland Park neighborhood southeast of campus."<sup>41</sup> Since 2001, Campus Partners has worked with private and non-profit partners to acquire 1,335 units of Section 8 subsidized housing with the intention to rehabilitate the properties and improve their management. Campus Partners and the City of Columbus worked with local stakeholders to produce the *Weinland Park Neighborhood Plan*, which was adopted by the City Council in 2006, and they are also working on redeveloping a 17-acre brownfield site. Although these projects are not directly related to the South Campus Gateway, or even to the revitalization of High Street, *per se*, they are examples of the university-founded non-profit organization playing an increasingly dominant role in the wider community surrounding Ohio State. Furthermore, when these projects are done carefully, with thoughtful attention to detail, thorough citizen participation, and high-quality results, they become great sources of pride for the neighborhood and go a long way toward establishing trust between the town and the gown.

### **The Relationship between the New College Town and the University**

One result of the work of Campus Partners has been a very successful homeownerhsip incentive program. Over 90 Ohio State faculty and staff members have purchased homes in the University District with the support of this program.<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>39</sup> All information from paragraph from: Ghose, "Domino effect: OSU investment driving off-campus development."

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Carrie Ghose, "Campus Partners' work behind the scenes yields equal benefits," *Commercial Developers Resource*, supplement to *Business First*, Columbus, Ohio, February 15, 2008.

<sup>42</sup> "Campus Partners' accomplishments: 1995-2007," Campus Partners, October 2007.

When Gordon Gee returned as president of Ohio State in 2007, he was greeted with a “welcome home” event with a local high school marching band as the South Campus Gateway Event Place. The event “was stylish and upbeat and underscored Dr. Gee’s and the university’s continuing commitment to work with neighbors to improve community life.”<sup>43</sup>

In Campus Partners and Ohio State publications, there has recently been a good deal of rhetoric about the relationship between the university’s community outreach work and the university’s historic and academic calling. For example, a 2004 “white paper” that outlined the history and challenges of Campus Partners, notes that Ohio State’s involvement with Campus Partners is “integral to the university as a ‘good neighbor’ and a key institutional stakeholder,” but that this community involvement also stems from Ohio State’s academic foundation. “As a 21<sup>st</sup> century land-grant university, Ohio State believes that outreach and engagement are central to learning and service.” Ohio State sees a mutually beneficial relationship, in which community outreach can provide research, learning, and service opportunities for students.<sup>44</sup> On April 15, 2008, President Gee reinforced this theme through his lecture entitled “Securing the Future: Envisioning the Role of Land-Grant Universities” for the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual James F. Patterson Land-Grant University Lecture.<sup>45</sup> Thus, while some universities are guided by a religious affiliation or a founding mission, Ohio State feels rooted in its history as a university for the people of Ohio.

---

<sup>43</sup> News from Campus Partners, October 26, 2007.

<sup>44</sup> Stephen A. Sterrett, Campus Partners, “The University on Main Street: Commercial Revitalization in the Campus Community,” poster presentation, October 3-5, 2004.

<sup>45</sup> Patterson Lecture, [http://outreach.osu.edu/patterson\\_lecture.php](http://outreach.osu.edu/patterson_lecture.php)



*Figure 3.9: This photograph of the pedestrian-friendly retail and entertainment district at South Campus Gateway shows that the development is trying to create an energetic and collegiate sense of place. (Source: Jeff Stahl, "The Urban Mixed-Use Campus," Urban Land, Urban Land Institute, August 2007.)*

### **The Relationship between the New College Town and the Existing Community**

In their article in *The University as Urban Developer: Case Studies and Analysis*, David Dixon and Peter J. Roche refer to the relationship between Ohio State and its surrounding Columbus community as a case of "enlightened self-interest." That is, the university's determined efforts to improve the University District were an attempt to improve the quality of life on-campus, as well as the off-campus neighborhoods. They note that this story of Campus Partners and Ohio State demonstrates that "the potential rewards of community-based development can be substantial – and may not always be defined in dollars. In the short term, meaningful investment in internal development capacity and a sincere engagement with local communities can yield extraordinary financial and political leverage."<sup>46</sup>

---

<sup>46</sup> Dixon and Roche, "Campus Partners and The Ohio State University: A Case of Enlightened Self-Interest," in *The University as Urban Developer: Case Studies and Analysis*. Perry and Wiewel, ed., 2005. 281.

Certainly, Campus Partners likes to see itself as a model for other university-community partnerships. In a March 2008 factsheet, Campus Partners refers to its role in the Weinland Park public housing project as just such a model. This model includes community-based planning, the formation of multiple partnerships, market-based revitalization with both public and private investment, and engagement with all aspects of the university. The sheet acknowledges:

“For neighbors, the hard work in building trust and a partnership with a large, often confusing, Hydra-like university can be worth it. As an ally, the university – with its status and political power in the community – can be instrumental in building credibility for the partnership and in bringing stakeholders – government, businesses, institutions, foundations – to the table to help address the issues of urban revitalization.”<sup>47</sup>

### **Where Are They Now?**

With a flashy website and graphic images aimed at the student market, the South Campus Gateway has been very successful in the past few years. Although there have been setbacks (such as closure of the grocery store anchor in early 2008), there are still many tenants and plans to expand. Cross-promotional events between the South Campus Gateway, Campus Partners, Ohio State’s Wexner Center for the Arts, Ohio State’s College of the Arts, and the University Community Business Association are working to promote the University District as a destination for arts, entertainment, education, and shopping, including hosting holiday events and festivals.<sup>48</sup>

---

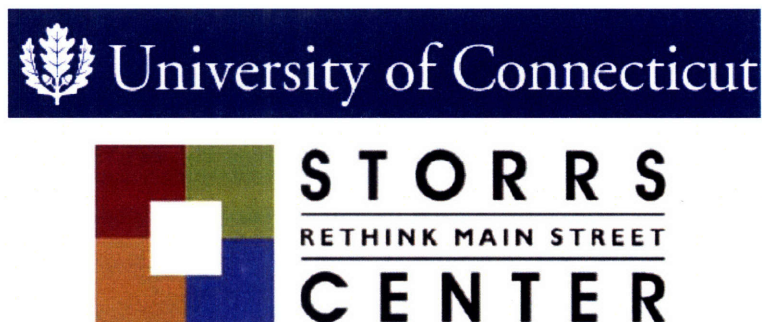
<sup>47</sup> “The Ohio State University’s engagement in Weinland Park: A model for university-community partnership,” Campus Partners, March 2008.

<sup>48</sup> News from Campus Partners, December 19, 2007. The same news update also mentions the disconcerting fact that automobile thefts had risen in the University District, possibly attributed to the fact that many students had left town for the winter break.

## Case 2: The University of Connecticut and Storrs Center

“There isn’t a better example of the kind of ‘smart growth’ development Connecticut needs.”  
- *Hartford Courant*, January 7, 2007<sup>49</sup>

“We are creating, in physical reality as well as metaphor, a center appropriate to the heart of a great American college town.” - Philip E. Austin, former president, University of Connecticut<sup>50</sup>



### **The Gown and the Town**

Founded in 1881 as the Storrs Agricultural School, the University of Connecticut has grown to become the state of Connecticut’s flagship public university, enrolling over 24,000 undergraduate and graduate students on ten campuses across the state. As “New England’s top-ranked public university,” with a growing academic reputation to match its famously successful men’s and women’s basketball teams, UConn is in the midst of a large capital building project that seeks to improve the physical facilities on campus. The main campus, which is home to over 16,000 undergraduates, is located 25 miles from Hartford in the small rural village of Storrs, one of several rural villages in the Town of Mansfield. Near the intersection of Storrs Road (US Route 195) and South Eagleville Road, is the small village downtown with a post office, Mansfield Town Hall, E.O. Smith Regional High School, and a few small strip commercial centers. A 2006 *New York Times* article described the “meager downtown” as looking “more like a makeshift set for a Hollywood western than a New England college center.”<sup>51</sup> Indeed, Storrs and UConn are often thought of as one in the same, but the small offerings of this village center do not match what many people expect of a “college town,” especially not one befitting of a well-regarded university nestled in a rural New England

---

<sup>49</sup> Quoted in Mansfield Downtown Partnership, 2006-2007 Annual Report.

<sup>50</sup> Philip E. Austin, “The Importance of a New Main Street,” *Storrs Center: A Vision for Storrs Center*, Volume I, 2006.

<sup>51</sup> Jane Gordon, “UConn Decides to Build Its Own College Town.” *New York Times*, August 9, 2006.

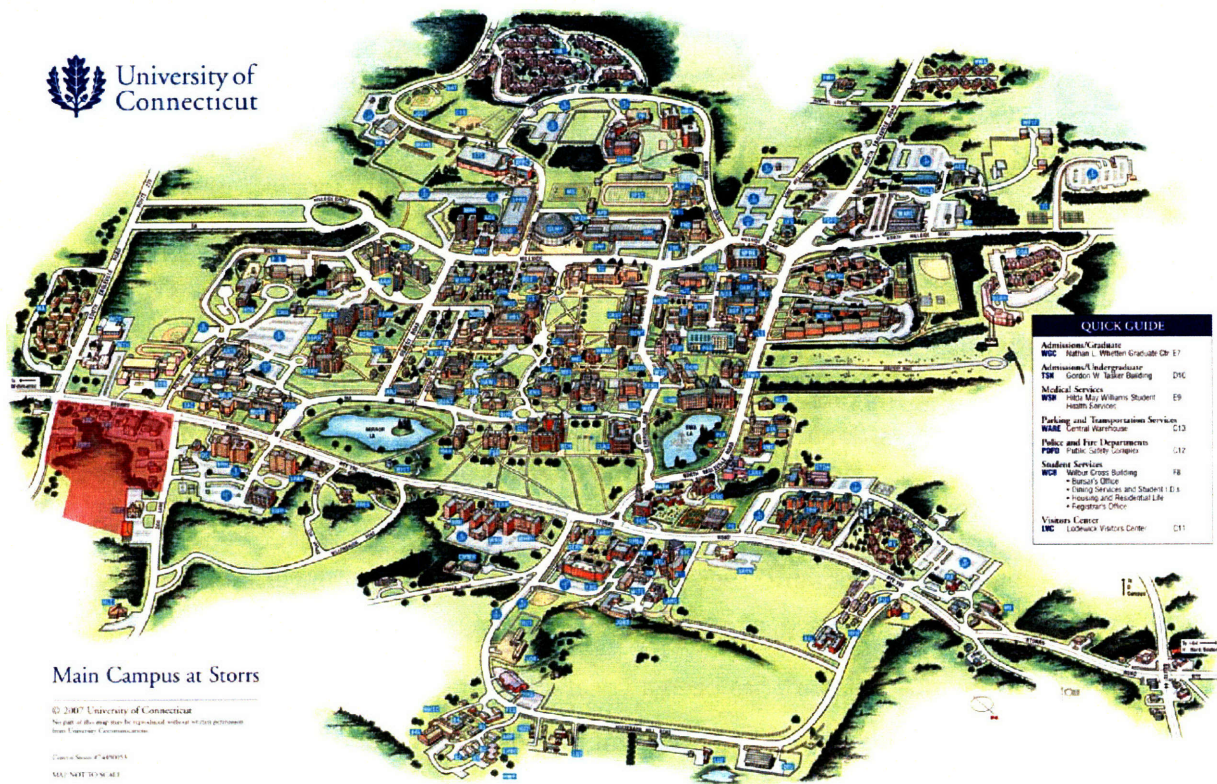
village. The desire to create such a “college town” in the form of the Storrs Center development is an example of the new wave of town/gown development projects.



*Figure 3.10: The University of Connecticut campus in winter (photograph by the author).*



*Figure 3.11: This context map shows the location of the University of Connecticut within the Town of Mansfield (pink line). Storrs Center is the small colored area at the southeast corner of the campus. (Map by the author, with aerial photograph from GoogleEarth)*



**Figure 3.12:** The official campus map of the University of Connecticut faces southwest and shows that most of the campus buildings are west of the Storrs Road spine. The author has marked the location of Storrs Center in red. (Source: UConn website: <http://www.uconn.edu/campuses/pdf/wholemap.pdf>)

### Why Create a New Town?

Mayor Betsy Paterson, a former bursar at UConn and four-term mayor of Mansfield, explained that since the 1960s “there has been talk of how the town needed a core, a place where people can come together and enjoy certain amenities.”<sup>52</sup> Despite the fact that people from both the town and gown sides saw the need for a physical heart of the town and that, eventually, “both sides contributed immensely to the progress toward a new Storrs Center,” the project took some time to get off the ground.<sup>53</sup> Initially, the impetus came from the university.

Two recent pieces of legislation have provided the University of Connecticut with large sums of money for capital improvements on campus. In 1995, the UConn2000 plan appropriated \$1 billion for capital investment in the physical infrastructure, and in 2005, the 21<sup>st</sup>

<sup>52</sup> Betsy Paterson, “The Evolution of a New Town Center.” *Storrs Center: A Vision for Storrs Center*, Volume I, 2006.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

Century UConn bill appropriated an additional \$1.3 billion.<sup>54</sup> The university is completing master plans, renovating buildings, and improving its academic reputation. Former UConn President Philip E. Austin observed: "Public investment coupled with private support is making it possible for the University of Connecticut to fulfill its mission with an extraordinary level of distinction. We are demonstrating to the people of the State the exceptional value of a great 21st century public university."<sup>55</sup> Tom Condon, a columnist for the Hartford Courant, wrote of the campus:

"The campus is walkable and looks wonderful. The core campus is now almost entirely restricted to pedestrians. Several key roads have been closed, and new public spaces created. Traffic is being pulled to perimeter roads and parking garages. A series of pathways connect the various campus neighborhoods. New buildings pick up the color and spirit of the graceful prewar structures."<sup>56</sup>

Despite these achievements, there was a sense among the administration, faculty, and students at UConn that something was missing from Storrs. M. Dolan Evanovich, the Vice Provost for Enrollment at UConn, has been a vocal advocate for the Storrs Center project, attributing the need for the project to enrollment figures. Evanovich's goal is to attract "the best and the brightest" students to attend the university and, once they matriculate, to ensure that they stay and graduate. Due to extensive surveying, there is direct evidence between enrollment metrics and the physical isolation of the Storrs campus. In an interview with the author, Evanovich explained that the university has a decade's worth of surveys from admitted students that shows that, while prospective students are consistently impressed by the quality of the education, faculty, and on-campus activities, the primary reason cited among those students who decline admission offers is dissatisfaction with the off-campus activities and the surrounding area. In an increasingly competitive market for higher education, smart students who have options about which college to attend are "looking for the entire package." That is, they want to be able to walk—not drive—to a town with restaurants, bars, bookstores, and shops. This dissatisfaction with Storrs as a "college town" is also seen in data from freshmen who voluntarily choose to leave after their first year (about 200 students each year or 5% of the class). Zack Walter, a 2005 graduate of UConn who was involved with the Mansfield Downtown Partnership, explained the dilemma: "In my sophomore year, I took a girl on a date

---

<sup>54</sup> M. Dolan Evanovich, Vice Provost for Enrollment Management, University of Connecticut, interview with the author, April 3, 2008.

<sup>55</sup> Vision: 21<sup>st</sup> Century UConn, <http://www.uc2000.uconn.edu/vision/vision14.html>

<sup>56</sup> Vision: 21<sup>st</sup> Century UConn, <http://www.uc2000.uconn.edu/vision/walkvis.html>



to the dining hall. I felt kind of stupid but there was no place else I could take her. Without a car, you're sunk. I love UConn, but there is one main drawback: there is no downtown."<sup>57</sup> According to Evanovich, by the mid-1990s, the UConn administration had accumulated enough statistical – and anecdotal – evidence to feel confident that the problem that needed to be solved was the lack of a college town.<sup>58</sup>

This desire to have a college town is also bound up with the symbolic ideal of a college located in rural New England. While other parts of the country have their own associations with small towns and college towns, in New England, there is a very specific ideal notion that generally revolves around a central town green. Evanovich has explained that UConn is specifically interested in creating “a quintessential New England town that will be a destination.”<sup>59</sup>

The lack of a quaint town has not been lost on the approximately 10,000 non-university-affiliated residents of Storrs, either. The village of Storrs is physically centered on the intersection of Storrs Road (US Route 195) and South Eagleville Road (Route 275), which is abutted by the Post Office, E.O. Smith Regional High School, the Mansfield Town Hall, and a few small strip commercial centers – as well as the university. There is a feeling among residents that the area needs more retail establishments, so that residents do not need to drive to other towns. According to Cynthia van Zelm, Executive Director of the Mansfield Downtown Partnership, Mansfield has excellent public schools, open space, and other amenities, but the lack of a real downtown represents the real “missing piece.”<sup>60</sup> The significant capital improvements on-campus have made the lack of a college town even more obvious. Additionally, both Evanovich and van Zelm have noted that there is a market to support commercial development. Between the year-round residents, faculty and staff of the university, the students, and the many visitors who come to the campus, UConn is “sure we could create a town with the density needed” to support 60-80 businesses.<sup>61</sup>

---

<sup>57</sup> Quoted in *Storrs Center: A Vision for Storrs Center*, Volume I, 2006.

<sup>58</sup> M. Dolan Evanovich, interview with the author, April 3, 2008.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Cynthia van Zelm, Executive Director, Mansfield Downtown Partnership, interview with the author, April 7, 2008.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

## How to Create a New Town

The twelve-page Storrs Center newsletter that was published in 2006 includes articles written by representatives of the university, the town, the developer, and other consulting firms, many of which point – with great optimism – to the challenges and unprecedented nature of the Storrs Center project. Philip Lodewick, president of the Mansfield Downtown Partnership’s Board of Directors, noted, “This process of creating a new town center where none existed before is without much precedent in this area.”<sup>62</sup> Macon Toledano, vice president of the LeylandAlliance, explained, “Our task really is to create a place that is as wonderful as the vision shared by the town, the university, and the citizens of Mansfield.” He added, “So, just how do you create a new town center and main street with this as your context? If this sounds to you like a monumental undertaking, I certainly agree!”<sup>63</sup>

### 1. Implementation + Financing

Historically, the residents of Storrs and Mansfield have been resistant to development in the municipality – which explains why a college town had yet to be developed. In the past, proposals have been submitted to build a business park and a pharmaceutical office complex on open space sites near the university. Such proposals have been met with a great deal of resistance, since many area residents have been opposed to development and the planning and zoning commissions have historically been rather conservative about development.<sup>64</sup> It has also been noted that this opposition is rooted in the fact that the community is very environmentally conscious. Evanovich noted, “There was a lack of interest and desire for any type of development,” and that the “tree-huggers” did not want to sacrifice any green space for the sake of development – even if it would improve the college and improve the town.<sup>65</sup> A growing disparity between the rising status of the university and the middling condition of the strip mall commercial district, combined with national trends toward more “smart growth” development models, contributed to an awareness in Storrs and Mansfield that the time had come to improve the quality of the town.

---

<sup>62</sup> Philip Lodewick, “An Everyone Project: The Mansfield Downtown Partnership Unites University, Community, Business.” *Storrs Center: A Vision for Storrs Center*, Volume I, 2006.

<sup>63</sup> Macon Toledano, “Sharing a Vision for a New Storrs Center.” *Storrs Center: A Vision for Storrs Center*, Volume I, 2006.

<sup>64</sup> Cynthia van Zelm, interview with the author, April 7, 2008.

<sup>65</sup> M. Dolan Evanovich, interview with the author, April 3, 2008.

Michael Schor, a former mayor of Mansfield, has been credited with spearheading the project that came to be known as Storrs Center—a project 20 or 30 years in the making.<sup>66</sup> In 1995, the University-Town Relations Committee’s Storrs Green Task Force completed a study on the viability of a town green, and recommended that an organization be formed to move forward with this plan. The process was accelerated when the Mansfield Town Council retained the national planning firm of HyettPalma to develop an “enhancement strategy for the revitalization of Mansfield’s commercial areas.” The chief recommendation of the study was the formation of an organizing committee of town, university, and local businesses that would carry out the recommendations to revitalize Storrs. In 1999, Mayor Schor and members of this organizing committee traveled to other college towns, including Princeton, New Jersey, Ann Arbor, Maryland [sic], Northampton, Massachusetts, and Athens, Georgia. According to an article in *Architecture Magazine*, “From each community, they extracted what they found to be principles of good design, which have become part of their guidelines for the development of Storrs Center.”<sup>67</sup>

In 2001, the Mansfield Downtown Partnership was formed.<sup>68</sup> In 2008, the Partnership is headed by Executive Director Cynthia van Zelm and has an 18-member Board of Directors. The university has the power and money—and ownership of the land at the center of Storrs—such that it could have moved forward with the plan to build a town center development without much support from the town. The decision to use the partnership, however, made the project more amenable to the community and it also meant that the academic institution could pass off the business end of the project to another entity.

In May 2002, the Town Council appointed the Mansfield Downtown Partnership as the Municipal Development Authority for Storrs. At the same time, the Mansfield Downtown Plan was published, including a comprehensive overview, a relocation plan for businesses that will be displaced, and land use plans. There has been tremendous community support for this plan.

The project site was selected for the university-owned land on Storrs Road across from the high school and adjacent to Dog Lane. Since the civic municipal uses are all located near this intersection, it made sense to locate the new town/gown development here. Since UConn

---

<sup>66</sup> Cynthia van Zelm, interview with the author, April 7, 2008.

<sup>67</sup> “Sustaining a University and a Town,” *Architecture Magazine* (August 17, 2006), Cited at: [http://www.storrscenter.com/news\\_article.html?id=28](http://www.storrscenter.com/news_article.html?id=28).

<sup>68</sup> Mansfield Downtown Partnership, Inc. Fact Sheet, March 2008.

could not spend its capital funding on this project (it was earmarked for on-campus projects), the university donated the 47.7-acre site to the project. Additionally, as a means of controlling growth and developing a fairly dense urban form, only 17 acres of the site are to be developed, with the remaining 30.7 acres preserved as open space. Three existing commercial buildings—the two buildings that make up Storrs Commons (which contains a Starbucks Coffee, People’s United Bank, and other stores) and the University Plaza building—are privately owned and will remain in situ. The Storrs Marketplace strip is owned by the university—and will be demolished and replaced by the Storrs Center development. It currently contains some vacant storefronts, a pizza parlor, a convenience store, and a florist, and, at the back of the building, a used-book store, a hair salon, a barbershop, and a tattoo parlor.



***Figures 3.13-3.14: The Storrs Commons shopping center (3.13) is not owned by the university, so the site plan for Storrs Center was developed to allow these three buildings to remain in situ. The Storrs Marketplace (3.14) will be demolished and replaced with multi-story, mixed-use buildings that meet the streetwall. (Photographs by the author)***

The Mansfield Downtown Partnership has worked with several planning, design, and development consultants over the course of the visioning and development of Storrs Center. In 2003, the planning and design firm Looney Ricks Kiss conducted a visual preference survey at a community charrette. The charrettes, community meetings, and willingness of van Zelm and the Partnership to talk with residents and business owners have greatly helped the project get community buy-in.

In 2004, the Partnership made a conscious decision to reject two mainstream shopping center developers and to select Leyland Alliance LLC as the master developer for Storrs Center. Although there is a team of other consultants and advisors, Leyland, a New Urbanist

development firm based in Tuxedo, New York, has been working very closely with the Mansfield Downtown Partnership on the plans. In 2005, all of the necessary local and regional government entities, as well as the UConn Board of Trustees approved the Storrs Center Municipal Development Plan (MDP). In 2006, the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development approved the Storrs Center Municipal Development Plan. Also in 2006, the Mansfield Planning and Zoning Commission approved the first building of the project—a building on Dog Lane that was designed to accommodate many of the businesses that will be displaced from their current locations in the Storrs commercial area.<sup>69</sup> On June 18, 2007, after four nights of public hearings, the Mansfield Planning and Zoning Commission granted approval to designate the Storrs Center site as a Special Design District, which allows for housing and mixed-use development on the site. The Commission reviewed a detailed Master Plan, phasing plan, and “particular attention was given to issues such as building scale and massing, traffic patterns, parking requirements, architectural detailing, water and sewer infrastructure, and sustainable development practices.”<sup>70</sup> Since the area was currently not zoned for residential use, this is a crucial step in ensuring that the development can take on characteristics associated with a small town, rather than merely a shopping district. Mayor Betsy Paterson observed that this approval was “a significant vote of confidence for the Storrs Center vision.”<sup>71</sup>

---

<sup>69</sup> Storrs Center Concept Plan and Timeline, Mansfield Downtown Partnership and Leyland Alliance, most recent version dated February 2008.

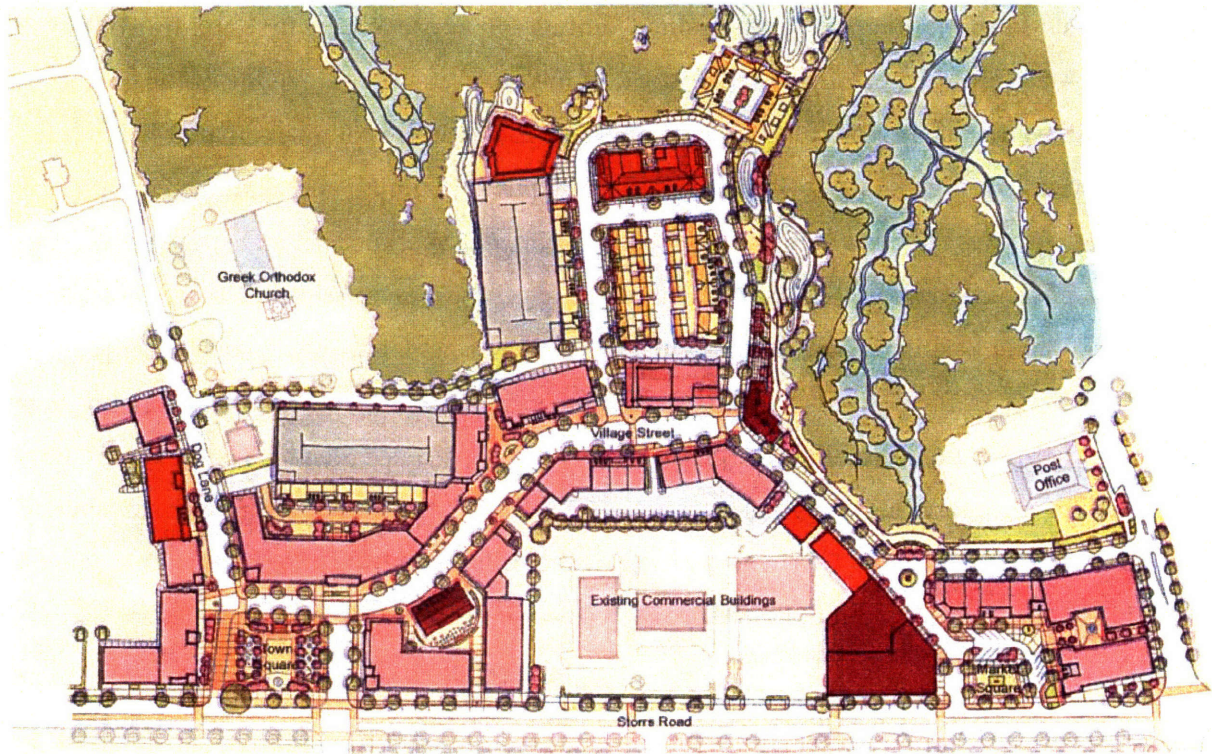
<sup>70</sup> “Storrs Center Zoning Applications are Approved by Mansfield Planning and Zoning Commission,” Mansfield Downtown Partnership, Inc. and LeylandAlliance, LLC, June 18, 2007.

[http://www.storrscenter.com/news\\_article.html?id=43](http://www.storrscenter.com/news_article.html?id=43)

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.



## Concept Plan and Timeline



February 2008

[www.storrscenter.com](http://www.storrscenter.com)

(Timeline on reverse)

*Figure 3.15: The Storrs Center site plan, dated February 2008 and facing north-east, is drawn in a clear and appealing manner that is easily readable by the public. The plan shows ample public spaces, an interior main street with mixed-use buildings, and residential buildings in yellow at the top of the plan. (Source: Mansfield Downtown Partnership)*

## 2. Residential + Commercial Development

As illustrated in the site plan (the most recent version is dated February 2008), the 17-acre Storrs Center will be developed on land fronting Storrs Road and bordered by Dog Lane and Hanks Hill Road. According to the project Fact Sheet, the development will include mixed-use and residential areas: “The mixed-use zone combines retail, office, restaurant, and residential uses in a variety of forms to create a vibrant main street environment. A residential zone will be located just outside of the mixed-use district and will serve as a buffer between the

more intense mixed-use activity and the conservation area to the east.”<sup>72</sup> The only buildings that are currently on the site that will remain are the three commercial buildings that front Storrs Road, the Post Office, and a Greek Orthodox Church. The Town of Mansfield stands to benefit from the expanding tax base generated by adding new commercial locations on the site. At full build-out, the estimated additional net tax benefit is \$2.5 million annually, with approximately 895 new permanent jobs.<sup>73</sup>

The projected mix of development for the 17 developable acres includes:

- Market Rate Rental: 200-300 units
- For Sale Residential: 400-500 units
- Retail/Restaurant: 150,000-200,000 square feet
- Commercial (office): 40,000-75,000 square feet
- Civic and Community: 5,000-25,000 square feet

The inclusion of residential development is a critical component and one that distinguishes the project from being merely a “main street” type project. Evanovich noted that one hundred people—including he and his wife—have signed up expressing strong interest in buying one of the condominium units when they are built.<sup>74</sup> The demand for a more urban lifestyle and housing typology—even in the midst of a rural area like Storrs—is symptomatic of a larger demographic trend in the U.S. Furthermore, the relationship and physical proximity between the development and the university will be a draw for those who live there.

### 3. Architecture + Urban Form

The Mansfield Downtown Partnership has been working to create a development that will meet the specific design goals of the town and the university. There seems to be agreement that the Storrs Center should be a walkable and cohesive place with the feeling of a college town, rather than a suburban strip mall. Additionally, it has been emphasized that the place should serve as a “destination” in that it should be the place where people come when they are in Storrs.

Herbert S. Newman and Partners P.C. is the New Haven, Connecticut-based architecture firm working on the architecture and master plan for Storrs Center. The master plan is based around the concept of the “main street” and “the principles of the street as the organizer and collector of community life.” As such, the plan includes a network of one-way and two-ways

---

<sup>72</sup> Storrs Center Fact Sheet.

<sup>73</sup> “Storrs Center Zoning Application are Approved by Mansfield Planning and Zoning Commission.”

<sup>74</sup> M. Dolan Evanovich, interview with the author, April 3, 2008.

streets, many with on-street parking, within the site. "A new street, parallel to Storrs Road, will create a neighborhood for retail and commercial activity" and the new grid of streets is designed to connect to roads in the existing Mansfield street network.<sup>75</sup> The architecture of the project will be governed by the Storrs Center Design Guidelines, which were written by Looney Ricks Kiss after their visual preference survey. Preliminary renderings of Storrs Center reveal an architectural style that is New Urbanist in style and overtly based on the classical, idyllic image of a New England college town, with two- and three-story mixed-use buildings, cafes and coffee shops, and street trees and wide sidewalks. LeylandAlliance also hired Urban Design Associates to create a "Pattern Book" to aid in the site design. Urban Design Associates explain, "The design is inspired by New England college town centers" and that it "creates a variety of outdoor venues for dining, celebrations, festivals, markets, concerts, and informal gathering" and a variety of residential units, including "urban lofts, apartments, condominiums, and town houses."<sup>76</sup> One challenge the project team faces is trying to create a town with the charm and history of a place that has grown by accretion over decades or centuries, but to create it of a piece at one time. Toledano noted, "We don't have that 300 years to create a place that has that organic quality," but that they are trying to thoughtfully craft a place with the virtues of "more seasoned college towns."<sup>77</sup> LeylandAlliance is also working with the Montreal-based firm Live Work Learn Play on programming for each phase of the project, as there are very deliberate plans to market the different aspects of the project.

---

<sup>75</sup> Richard Munday, Herbert S. Newman and Partners, "Behind the Storrs Center Master Plan." *Storrs Center: A Vision for Storrs Center*, Volume I, 2006.

<sup>76</sup> "Storrs Pattern Book," Urban Design Associates. Website:

[http://www.urbandesignassociates.com/pdfs/activeprojects/MixedUse/Storrs\\_printonly.pdf](http://www.urbandesignassociates.com/pdfs/activeprojects/MixedUse/Storrs_printonly.pdf)

<sup>77</sup> Justin Pope, "Needed in Storrs: A College Town. UConn launched a plan to build one from scratch," *The Associated Press State and Local Wire*, December 25, 2006.





*Figures 3.16-3.17: These renderings of pedestrian-oriented streets, public spaces, and mixed-use buildings in Storrs Center help people to imagine what this new college town will look like. The images evoked and the watercolor style of the vignettes is in keeping with the New Urbanist planning and design of the project. (Source: Storrs Center fact sheet)*

Civic uses and public spaces, “including landscaped streets, sidewalks and outdoor terraces, small parks, and the new Town Square” will add to the “viability and sustainability” of the new community.<sup>78</sup> The Town Square, located at the northwest of the development at the intersection of Storrs Road and Dog Lane, is planned to be one of the principal public spaces for Storrs Center. Van Zelm explained to the author that there is currently a lack of public places in Storrs—it is a very auto-oriented area with a lot of surface parking lots and few places to sit outside and eat lunch, let alone facilitate town/gown interaction. The Town Square is designed to supplement the open spaces on campus and to fill this void. Furthermore, the design for the

<sup>78</sup> *Storrs Center Fact Sheet*. <http://www.storrscenter.com/pdf/sc-factsheet.pdf>

Town Square is designed to open up the area between the Storrs Center development and the university, particularly the School of Fine Arts that is located closest to the site.<sup>79</sup> Additionally, a Market Square at the southeastern end of the development will add to the symmetry of the project. The Market Square is located near the Post Office and is planned to have a small grocery store nearby. Van Zelm explained that Urban Design Associates, the firm hired by LeylandAlliance to create a Pattern Book and do some of the preliminary site planning, placed the squares in these locations to create views between the civic buildings and down the walkways into the new Storrs Center development.<sup>80</sup>

Additionally, since the conservation of the woods and wetlands at the back of the site was an important community goal, the master plan “calls for the limited connection of sidewalks and pedestrian areas within the town center to quiet, low impact paths in the upland portion of the conservation area, offering local residents and visitors the opportunity to enjoy this natural preserve.”<sup>81</sup>

### **The Relationship between the New College Town and the University**

Although the project has not yet been built, there is great support for Storrs Center from UConn administration, as well as from the campus community. An article in the 2006 Storrs Center newsletter notes that the retail, restaurant, and public space options provided by the development will provide a place for students, faculty, community members, and visitors to gather before and after university events. Visitors who flock to The Jorgenson Center for the Performing Arts, the William Benton Museum of Art, and other cultural attractions will have cafes, restaurants, and shops to visit. Additionally, the UConn “Huskies” sports teams are a big draw. “And it’s always the same dilemma: Where can you go before a game, to gather to watch an event, and to celebrate when the Huskies score another victory? The game plan is that Storrs Center will provide some options.”<sup>82</sup>

UConn’s School of Fine Arts is located across the Storrs Road from the Storrs Center site. The School is currently involved in design and planning for a new Fine Arts Center to unite the school which is to be designed by architect Frank Gehry and Herbert Newman and Partners.

---

<sup>79</sup> Cynthia Van Zelm, interview with the author, April 7, 2008.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> “UConn: Academics, Arts, and Athletics.” *Storrs Center: A Vision for Storrs Center*, Volume I, 2006.

During the 2003 design competition that he later won, Gehry toured the campus and noted, “You drive around, and you realize there isn’t much to it, architecturally. They could really use a hit.”<sup>83</sup> The future of Gehry’s building is uncertain, as the university is still raising funds for the project. Nonetheless, plans for Storrs Center include street and sidewalk treatments that will tie the two projects together.<sup>84</sup>

### **The Relationship between the New College Town and the Existing Community**

Van Zelm and the Mansfield Downtown Partnership have been working tirelessly to ensure that the residents of Storrs and of Mansfield continue to support the project. The Partnership holds monthly “Open House” meetings and sponsors special events, such as the “Winter Fun Day” each February and the “Festival on the Green” each September. The Storrs Center development is acutely aware that, in addition to the university student market, the development is adjacent to a regional high school and has a captive audience from its students and faculty. Van Zelm noted that it is fairly unusual to have a high school across the street from such a development and located so closely to a university. Since high school seniors have “open campus” privileges, they, as well as teachers, may be patronizing the shops, particularly at lunchtime.<sup>85</sup>



***Figures 3.18 and 3.19: The UConn marching band performs (3.18) while families enjoy the Mansfield Downtown Partnership’s annual “Festival on the Green” held in September 2007 in the parking lot that will become Storrs Center. Figure 3.19 is looking southeast, with the Storrs Commons shopping center straight ahead. The brick building on the right is Storrs Marketplace, which fronts Storrs Road and will be demolished. (Source: Mansfield Downtown Partnership website [http://www.mansfieldct.org/town/departments/downtown\\_partnership/](http://www.mansfieldct.org/town/departments/downtown_partnership/))***

<sup>83</sup> Fred A. Bernstein, “Audition for Architects: Please, No Red Brick,” *New York Times*, May 4, 2003.

<sup>84</sup> M. Dolan Evanovich, interview with the author, April 3, 2008.

<sup>85</sup> Cynthia Van Zelm, interview with the author, April 7, 2008

### **Where Are They Now?**

Although the project has not yet broken ground, Storrs Center is getting national attention and recognition. Van Zelm has lectured and spoken on panels, at such events as the Congress for the New Urbanism and the symposium "Creating a 21<sup>st</sup> Century College Town," which was hosted by the University of Notre Dame School of Architecture in April 2007. There have also been several articles in the *New York Times*. In May 2008, the Mansfield Downtown Partnership received the 2008 Community Consensus-Building Award for the Storrs Center project from the Connecticut Main Street Center. The award is given to a project that has succeeded at "facilitating dialogue" and "efforts to engage the community in issues and initiatives that are intended to improve how the district looks and operates."<sup>86</sup> The Partnership is in the process of securing financing for the parking garage, which they are hoping to begin constructing on Fall 2008. Additionally, the Partnership is working through the environmental permitting process and is hoping to secure funding for traffic calming measures on Storrs Road, which is a state highway. Planners hope that Phase 1 of the project, which includes the transition of current retail tenants, will open in Fall 2009 and that development will be completed in five to eight years.<sup>87</sup>

---

<sup>86</sup> "Connecticut Main Street Center Announces 2008 Awards of Excellence," <http://www.ctmainstreet.org/PDF/2008%20Awards%20of%20Excellence.pdf>

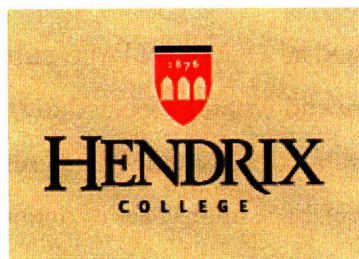
<sup>87</sup> Cynthia Van Zelm, interview with the author, April 7, 2008; and Dolan Evanovich, interview with the author, April 3, 2008.

### Case 3: Hendrix College and The Village at Hendrix

“We have the opportunity to be the cool, quirky, artsy town that Central Arkansas doesn’t have.” – Jamie Gates, City of Conway<sup>88</sup>

“Conway stands to gain a lot from the village because it will offer a second downtown area...[it] will offer two separate downtown areas with a college linking them. Who wouldn’t want to walk through that?” – Mark Hengel, Hendrix College ‘06<sup>89</sup>

“The board has considered many proposals for use of this property over the last 10 years, and we determined that the most significant proposal that will positively impact Hendrix and the Conway community is the creation of a ‘college town’ that complements Hendrix and adjoining neighborhoods.” – R. Madison Murphy, Chair of Hendrix Board of Trustees<sup>90</sup>



#### **The Gown and the Town**

Hendrix College is a small, private, liberal arts college affiliated with the United Methodist Church and located in central Arkansas. Founded in 1876 in Altus, Arkansas, the college moved to Conway in 1890 and enrolls approximately 1,200 undergraduate students each year. The 160-acre Hendrix campus is a self-contained enclave with Gothic buildings and quadrangles located a 5-minute walk from downtown Conway.

Conway, a city of 50,000 people is located about 24 miles, or a 20-minute drive, from Little Rock and is also home to the University of Central Arkansas (the state’s fourth-largest public university) and the private Central Baptist College. As a result, this Ozark city has a disproportionately young and well-educated citizenry.<sup>91</sup> Mayor Tab Townsell explained that Conway has the third highest percentage of college graduates of any city in Arkansas,

---

<sup>88</sup>“Conway gets cool: A vision for a creative college town,” *Arkansas Times*, November 18, 2004.

According to the article, Gates works for Conway Mayor Tab Townsell.

<sup>89</sup>“What People Think,” The Village at Hendrix website: <http://www.hendrix.edu/village/>

<sup>90</sup>“Hendrix board approves plan for urban development.” May 5, 2006.  
<http://www.hendrix.edu/village/>

<sup>91</sup> According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the median age in Conway is 27.3 years (compared to the U.S. average of 35.3 years) and 36.0% of the population over age 25 holds at least a Bachelor’s degree (compared to the U.S. average of 24.4%). <http://factfinder.census.gov>

elaborating: “The colleges have been a huge influence on us. Considering they started here when Hendrix came in 1890...We don’t know what we’d be if it wasn’t for our colleges....You have to credit the colleges for our levels of education in our population.”<sup>92</sup> Conway is the county seat of Faulkner County, which is a “dry county,” meaning that alcohol can only be served at private clubs with special licenses. Downtown Conway is bisected by a very active railroad line that carries approximately 20 trains each day. The railroad, which was once considered an asset to the downtown, is now a detriment as it prevents the feel of a quintessential “main street.” Combined with some traffic engineering decisions that have divided the downtown land uses, these transportation features have hampered coherent downtown development and Conway instead flourished as a source of large, suburban-style retail destinations – including a Lowes’ hardware store and what is reported to be the nation’s highest-grossing Wal-Mart.<sup>93</sup> Although Conway is a retail destination with significant big box development and the downtown core is starting to come back after years of deterioration, Hendrix saw the need for and opportunity to add a significant retail and residential neighborhood on a swath of open space adjacent to the campus. The story of the nearly seamless interaction between the college and the town provides another lens on the development of college town projects.

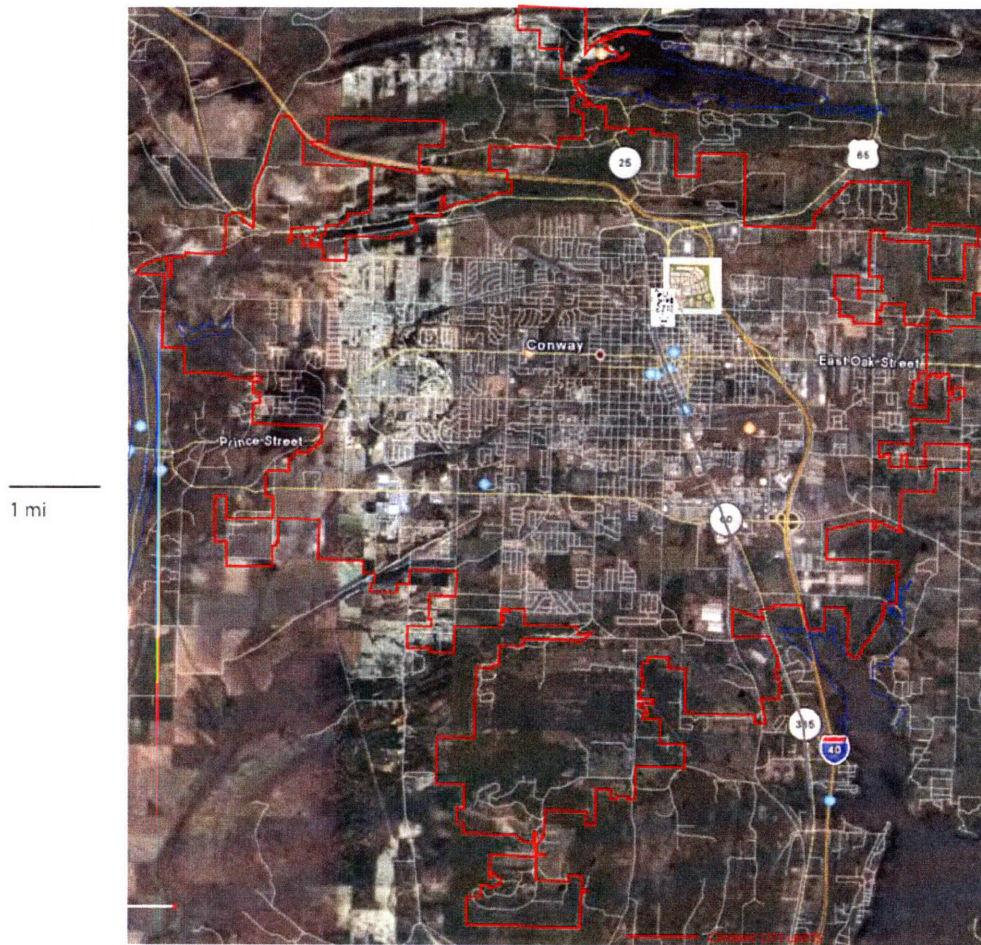


**Figure 3.20: The clocktower on the red brick Hendrix College campus. (Source: Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company)**

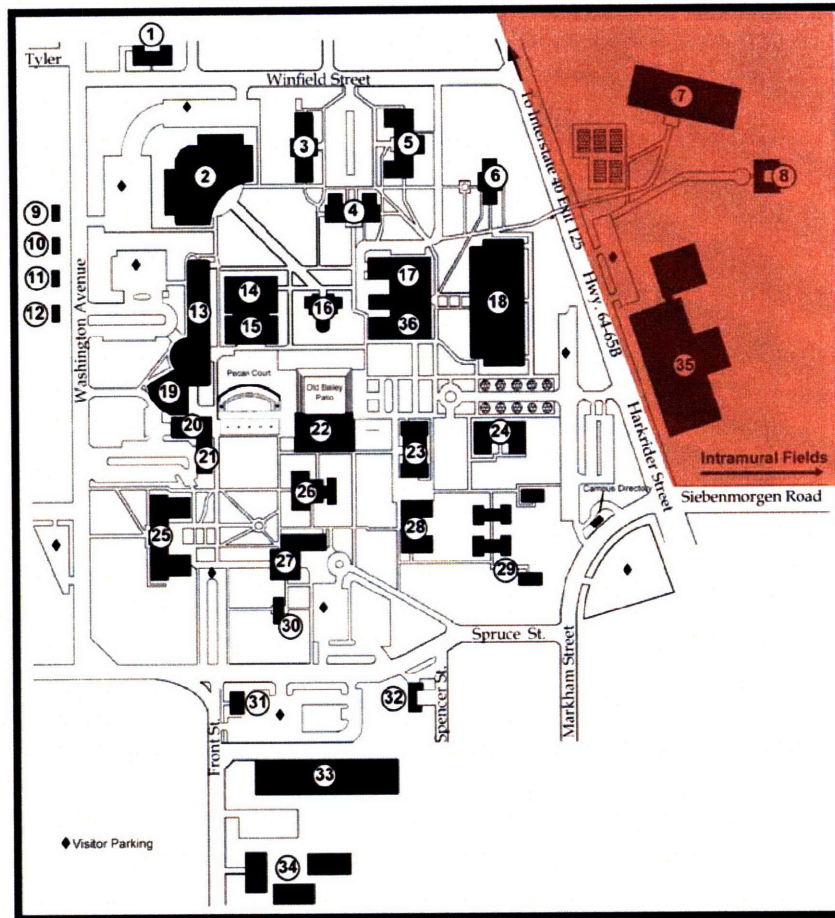
---

<sup>92</sup> Tammy Keith, “Young, smart, progressive: Conway mayor sums up fast-growing Faulkner County.” In *Where We Live 2007*, advertising supplement to *Arkansas Democrat Gazette*. (accessed on website April 2008; no longer available online; <http://www.arkansasonline.com/wherewelive/>)  
[http://www.arkansasonline.com/wherewelive/young\\_smart.html](http://www.arkansasonline.com/wherewelive/young_smart.html)

<sup>93</sup> Adam Dickinson, Traditional Neighborhood Development Partners, LLC, interview with the author, April 3, 2008.



**3.21:** *This context map shows the location of Hendrix College within the City of Conway (pink line). The Village at Hendrix is the colored box immediately to the northeast of the campus. (Map by the author, with aerial photograph from GoogleEarth)*



*Figure 3.22: The official Hendrix College campus map shows that the compact campus is traditionally composed of scattered buildings around quads. The author has marked the location of The Village at Hendrix in red; the size of the Village project is best reflected in Figure 3.23. (Source: Hendrix College website: <http://www.hendrix.edu/>)*

### Why Create a New Town?

In contrast to some town/gown planning projects, the impetus for The Village at Hendrix came from both the local officials, who were looking to implement more progressive policies that would raise the quality of the downtown and of the neighborhood near Hendrix, and from the college, which was looking to upgrade its profile on the increasingly competitive stage of American higher education.

In 1995, the well-known urban designer Andres Duany came to Hendrix to conduct a charrette as part of a new campus master plan. At that time, there were five new buildings about to be constructed and the college administration was concerned with “maintaining the coherence and beauty of the campus.” After meeting with students, faculty, staff, and



community members, Duany and his Miami, Florida-based firm Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company (DPZ) developed a master plan that strengthened the existing campus pattern of quadrangles and courtyards, reinforced the main east-west and north-south axes, and sited the five new buildings “to form exterior spaces of the highest urban quality.” Additionally the plan reconfigured the parking lots to enhance the campus’ pedestrian core. Since Hendrix anticipated needing additional student housing, DPZ proposed a new duplex-style building, as an alternative to traditional dormitories.<sup>94</sup>

A decade later, Duany returned to Hendrix to develop the Hendrix College 2015 campus master plan. Written in 2005, this ten-year plan sought to update the campus to prepare it for a period of significant anticipated growth in the student population. In addition to plans for the campus, both of DPZ’s plans laid the foundation for the mixed-use development adjacent to the college that eventually came to be known as The Village at Hendrix. Hendrix literature notes that a 1995 charrette introduced the Hendrix community to the idea that a walkable neighborhood with residential and commercial uses could be built on college-owned land east of Harkrider Street that was currently used for intramural sports fields. DPZ explains the project for “the creation of a ‘college town’ on 129 acres to the east of Harkrider Street” as:

“With a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly town attached to the campus, Hendrix will be able to offer a more complete and varied college experience to a wider pool of prospective students and faculty members. Outside of the immediate Hendrix community, the town could draw summer conventions, which could share facilities with the College when classes are not in session, and senior citizens who are seeking a walkable environment and intellectual stimulation in their retirement years. The town center will contain: a grocery store with parking hidden behind linear buildings; a cinema, which can double as a theater and lecture rooms; a hotel, which can serve as student housing during the academic year; the College’s wellness center; a bookstore; and a coffeehouse....Both the campus proper and the attached town will have multiple connections to Conway to the south. Proposals have been made to work with the City to improve frontages to create, ultimately, a seamless and lively urban environment between Hendrix and Conway.”<sup>95</sup>

The idea of planning the new college town as a part of the campus master plan, and of incorporating so many buildings, public spaces, and other facilities that can do double-duty and function for the needs of the town and the gown, is a very distinctive one.

---

<sup>94</sup> *Hendrix College Master Plan 2004*. Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company, 1995.  
<http://www.dpz.com/pdf/9540-Project%20Description.pdf>

<sup>95</sup> *Hendrix College Master Plan 2015*. Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company, 2005.  
<http://www.dpz.com/pdf/0430-ProjectDescription09-24-07a.pdf>

The college notes, "In 1995, the idea was ahead of its time. But when Duany returned in 2005 to update the College's master plan, he made the suggestion again and this time the idea caught fire."<sup>96</sup> Additionally, in the intervening decade, Hendrix had raised its profile academically. It is listed as one of forty "Colleges that Change Lives," in the influential book by Loren Pope, and is known for providing a high-quality education at a great value.<sup>97</sup> Hendrix president J. Timothy Cloyd has been instrumental in supporting The Village at Hendrix project, noting that it should assist with recruitment and retention of students and faculty, as well as continuing to build the brand of the college. Currently, about half the Hendrix student body comes from Arkansas and about half is from out-of-state. One way it would like to raise its profile with both in-state and out-of-state students is by being better able to compete with some of its rivals that boast slightly more urban environments, such as Millsaps College in Jackson, Mississippi.<sup>98</sup> Hendrix has already received prominent mention in local and national publications—including the February 2007 *New York Times* article—specifically because of the Village project.

Duany's 1995 visit to Conway also ignited the interests of local officials in creating compact, coherent, walkable districts. In an interview with the author, Adam Dickinson, of Traditional Neighborhood Development Partners, LLC (the developer of The Village at Hendrix), explained that during this visit Duany took a walk around Conway's downtown with some local officials. The contingent discussed the past, present, and future of the area, and Duany made some suggestions about things the officials could do to help revitalize the downtown and make it more vibrant and lively—in spite of its railroad line and taking advantage of its young, educated populace. Dickinson noted that soon after this visit, the city started implementing some of these suggestions and that this timing was "not a coincidence."<sup>99</sup> Thus, since the local government and business owners were so enthused about this type of smart growth, urbanistic development and have seen its positive results, it was easier for them to understand and be supportive of Hendrix's project. As Dickinson said, "Good design and development is not a zero-sum game" and the revitalization of the downtown according to the

---

<sup>96</sup> "The Village at Hendrix," Hendrix College website. <http://www.hendrix.edu/Village/village.aspx>

<sup>97</sup> Colleges That Change Lives. <http://www.ctcl.com/colleges/hendrix/>

<sup>98</sup> Adam Dickinson, interview with the author, April 3, 2008.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

theories and techniques of New Urbanism and the Village at Hendrix project should be mutually beneficial.<sup>100</sup>

### **How to Create a New Town**

The site selected for The Village at Hendrix was a 130-acre undeveloped parcel of land to the northeast of the compact Hendrix campus. The land, which was being used for intramural playing fields and had a few dilapidated college buildings on it, is surrounded by a drainage ditch that had been heavily ruined by nearby big box development projects and by the US Route 40 highway on the north and east. Since the entire parcel is owned by the College, there was no need to assemble or take other parcels, and since there was no residential community adjacent to the site, there was very little resistance during the planning process. The project developers credit the ease of the planning and development process to the singular control of the property.<sup>101</sup> Additionally, the College is funding the project through an alternative investment class in the institution's endowment.

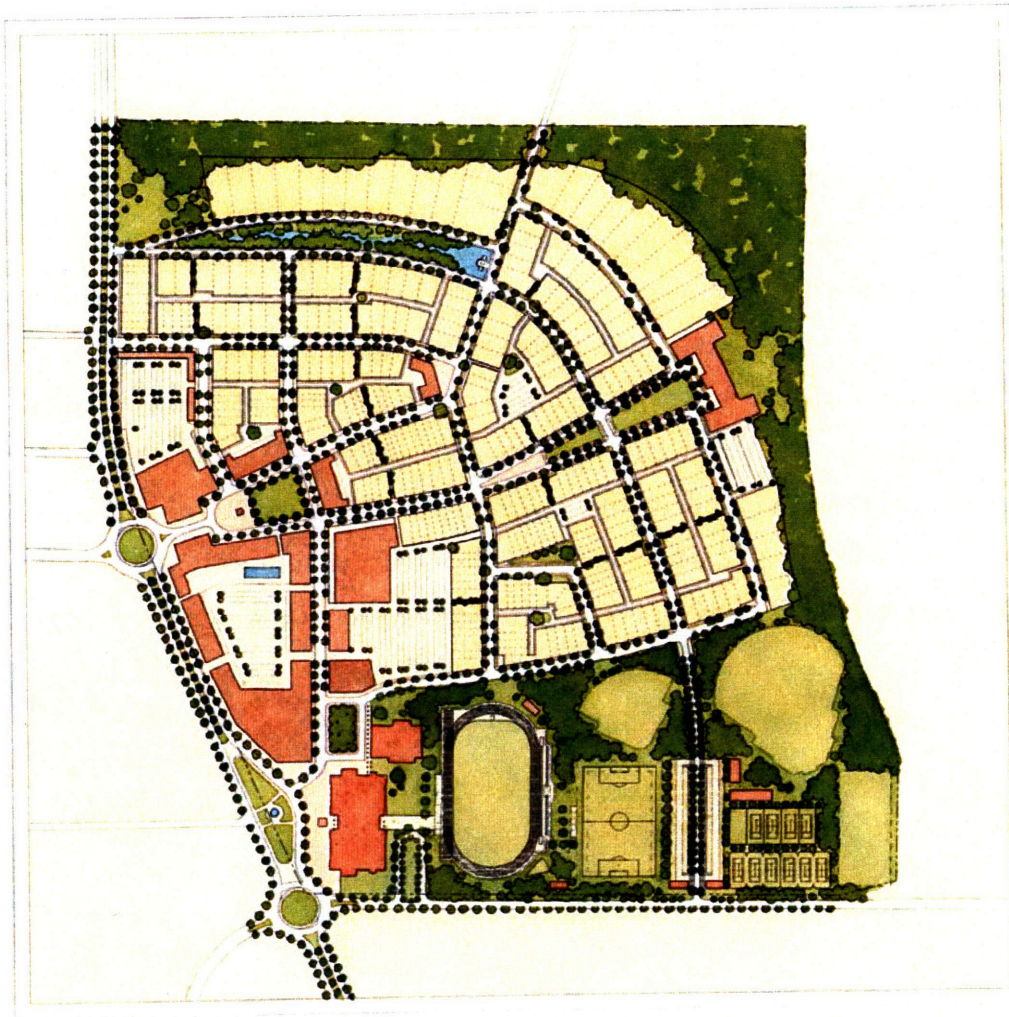


***3.23: This diagram from the 2005 campus master plan shows the relationship between the Hendrix campus, at lower left, and the new Village at Hendrix, at upper right. There is a nice symmetry of the two forms, connected by Harkrider Street. (Source: Hendrix College Master Plan 2015. Dunay Plater-Zyberk & Company, 2005)***

---

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.



*Figure 3.24: The site plan for The Village at Hendrix (with north at the top) reveals a very compact and coherent community. There is an internal street network, with a hierarchy of roadways and alleys, buildings front the street, and parking is primarily inside the block. Some of the brown buildings are college facilities, such as the Wellness Center, or are shared civic and commercial spaces. The beige areas are single-family and multi-unit residential buildings. The site will continue one of its existing uses by having playing fields and greenspace. (Source: The Village at Hendrix TND Plan)*

### **1. Implementation + Financing**

When the Hendrix College administration decided to move forward with the plan to create a town adjacent to the college, it decided to continue with the New Urbanist philosophy and techniques suggested by Andres Duany and DPZ. In May 2006, the Hendrix College Board of Trustees voted to move forward with Phase I of construction for The Village at Hendrix. At the same time, the College hired Traditional Neighborhood Development Partners, LLC

(TNDP), a Durham, North Carolina-based developer that is closely aligned with DPZ and the principles of New Urbanism.<sup>102</sup> Thus, the project began under the auspices of The Village at Hendrix, LLC, the organizational entity composed of Hendrix College and TNDP, with consulting design assistance from DPZ. Robert Chapman, III, a partner at TNDP enthused, “It’s a chance to build a place that will help change the course of development from suburban sprawl to compact, friendly, and walkable neighborhoods. By uniting great architects and dedicated builders, we can recreate the magic of America’s fine small towns. It’s also going to be a lot of fun.”<sup>103</sup>



*Figure 3.25: Conway residents gave their input to the project team at a charrette held by Traditional Neighborhood Development Partners in September 2005. (Source: The Village at Hendrix website: <http://www.hendrix.edu/village/>)*

Although the College was providing the land and there was little resistance from stakeholders, a project of this scale must pass muster with the city officials and citizen commissions in order to move forward. Fortunately, the city officials—who had been so impressed by Duany that they used some of his principles to help revitalize downtown Conway—were enthusiastic supporters of the project. Just as the citizens of Conway are overwhelmingly young and well-educated, the city officials mirror this demographic. These officials were interested in progressive policies, such as replacing conventional Euclidian zoning with form-based codes and special overlay districts.

---

<sup>102</sup> This is not TNDP’s first project adjacent to a college campus; they developed Trinity Heights which revitalized a blighted neighborhood near Duke University.

<sup>103</sup> “Hendrix board approves plan for urban development.” May 5, 2006. <http://www.hendrix.edu/village/>

TNDP realized that, before proceeding with plans for the Village, they needed to lay the groundwork with revisions to the Conway zoning ordinance. DPZ has pioneered such a system in 2003 in the form of the “SmartCode.” SmartCode is a “model transect-based development code available for all scales of planning, from the region to the community to the block and building. The code is intended for local calibration to your town or neighborhood. As a form-based code, the SmartCode keeps towns compact and rural lands open, while reforming the destructive sprawl-producing patterns of separated use zoning.”<sup>104</sup> The template can be modified and applied to neighborhoods or to entire municipalities.

As part of the planning process, TNDP and Hendrix planners discovered that it would make more sense to write a new overlay ordinance for the Village site than to make tedious, line-by-line changes to the current Euclidian zoning ordinance. They decided to move forward with a self-imposed “*TND Overlay*” – a SmartCode-style form-based zoning ordinance that would be applied just to the new Village at Hendrix site and would emphasize the principles of “traditional neighborhood development” (TND). Once approved by the city, the *TND Overlay* would supercede all underlying uses for the site, creating a single reference point.

Since the Conway officials were so receptive to the development of a form-based overlay code, the TNDP developers were able to “give it to them straight” and have a serious and fruitful discussion about the merits of this New Urbanist planning process. The TNDP developers recalled that the openness and support of the mayor and planning department were critical to the development of the overlay district. Furthermore, Adam Dickinson noted that TNDP advocates for New Urbanist and smart growth planning processes because this type of planning aims to help communities “make something great,” whereas working with conventional zoning and regulatory schemes, which aim merely to “prevent something bad,” makes the process slower and more cumbersome.<sup>105</sup> Although some American communities have adopted such planning schemes, form-based zoning is still an unknown and daunting proposition for many cities and towns. As a result, it was advantageous that the SmartCode overlay method could be in some manner “tested out” on the non-threatening, College-owned site near the highway. The *TND Overlay* was developed by TNDP at no cost to the city – it was part of the College’s planning process – and so it has served to educate the officials and citizens of Conway.

---

<sup>104</sup> SmartCode. <http://www.smartcodecentral.com/>

<sup>105</sup> Adam Dickinson, interview with the author, April 3, 2008.

In October 2006, the City of Conway adopted *The City of Conway TND Zoning Overlay* into law. This sixty-page document is an adaptation of the SmartCode template to the context of Conway and of the Village site. This zoning overlay is important because it uses land use regulations to firmly establish The Village at Hendrix as a “Traditional Neighborhood Development.” As defined in the document, a TND is:

“A Community Type based upon a Standard Pedestrian Shed oriented toward a Common Destination consisting of a mixed-use center or corridor, and having a minimum developable area of 40 acres. A TND may be comprised of a partial or entire Standard Pedestrian Shed or more than one Standard Pedestrian Shed (Syn.: Village, Urban Village).”<sup>106</sup>

A “Standard Pedestrian Shed” is defined as:

“An area, approximately circular, that is centered on a Common Destination. A Pedestrian Shed is applied to determine the size of a Neighborhood. A Standard Pedestrian Shed is ¼ mile radius or 1320 feet, about the distance of a five-minute walk at a leisurely pace. It has been shown that provided with a pedestrian environment, most people will walk this distance rather than drive. The outline of the shed must be refined according to actual site conditions, particularly along thoroughfares. (Sometimes called a ‘walkshed’ or ‘walkable catchment.’)”<sup>107</sup>

These lines provide a powerful declaration about the aims of this development. It is designed to be walkable and pedestrian-friendly, but it also codifies and quantifies these attributes. The zoning ordinance states that the purposes for declaring a TND Overlay District include creating more compact, pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use neighborhoods, reducing the length of automobile trips, creating a range of housing types and price levels, conserving natural resources, and creating a range of public open spaces.<sup>108</sup>

After the *TND Overlay* was approved and applied to the site, the owner or developer of the parcel must submit a Master Plan to the city, subject to Planning Department staff, Planning Board, and City Council approval.<sup>109</sup> According to the provisions of *The City of Conway Zoning Overlay*, a complete TND Plan requires a Regulatory Plan in addition to the Master Plan. The Regulatory Plan relates the “transect” concept to the Master Plan. These two elements are contained in the second document, *The Village at Hendrix TND Plan Submittal*, which was submitted to the City on November 14, 2006 and approved by the Conway Planning Department Staff, Planning Board, and City Council in December 2006.

---

<sup>106</sup> *The City of Conway TND Zoning Overlay*, 2006, 58.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 57-58.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>109</sup> Adam Dickinson, email correspondence with the author March 20, 2008.

The *TND Plan* includes the Master Plan and Phasing Plan (discussed below) and the “Thoroughfare Network” that discusses the classification scheme for roads within the site. The *TND Plan* also utilizes two concepts that are central to New Urbanist planning – the “Transect” and the “pattern book.” The plan explains the Transect in the Village context:

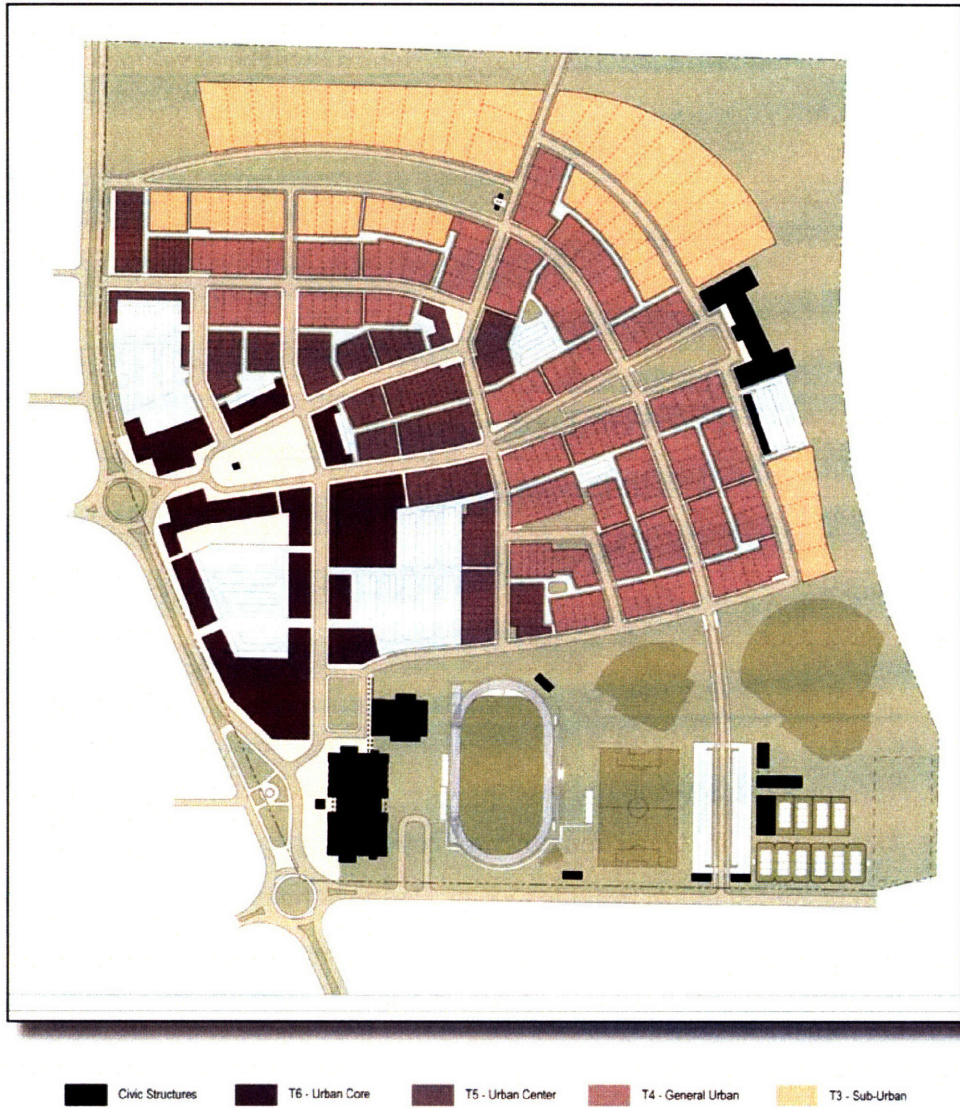
“The Conway TND Overlay is organized on the urban-to-rural Transect, a tool that is used to create internally consistent environments of varying urban intensity. For example, an area in the Urban Center zone would have taller buildings that would be spaced closely adjacent to one another to form a pedestrian-friendly street wall, with wider sidewalks and more intensive downtown streetscape, while an area in the Urban General zone would be composed on low rise, detached buildings and possess a more residential character.”<sup>110</sup>

The plan continues, “Clearly, an instrument is needed to distribute these different Transect zones in an organized fashion throughout the downtown; and this instrument is the Regulating Plan.” A version of the site plan is color-coded by intended transect and the acreage, parking area, buildable area, and density figure is given for each zone – from T-3 Sub-Urban to T-6 Urban Core. Less dense, more rural transect categories T-1 and T-2 are not found in the Village.

---

<sup>110</sup> TNDP, *The Village at Hendrix TND Plan Submittal*, Approved by Council November 14, 2006. Section 3, page 1.





*Figure 3.26: The Village at Hendrix Regulating Plan relates the site plan to the transect concept. As the legend shows, the black buildings are civic structures and college buildings (at the lower left is the Hendrix fitness center), dark purple is T6-Urban Core, light purple is T5-Urban Center, pink is T4-General Urban, and yellow is T3-Sub-Urban. These transect zones are explained in the TND Overlay zoning and they correspond to the height, density, parking area, and buildable area allowed in each area. (Source: The Village at Hendrix TND Plan, section 3, page 1)*

## 2. Residential + Commercial Development

As illustrated in the *TND Plan*, The Village at Hendrix will be developed according a five-part phasing plan:

|                                          | Phase I | Phase II | Phase III | Phase IV | Phase V | Total   |
|------------------------------------------|---------|----------|-----------|----------|---------|---------|
| Single Family Detached Houses            | 52      | 15       | 34        | 45       | 49      | 195     |
| Garage Apartments                        | 52      | 15       | 34        | 45       | 49      | 195     |
| Townhouses & Live Works                  | 62      | 40       | 19        | 10       | -       | 131     |
| Apartments/Flats                         | 75      | 51       | 33        | -        | -       | 159     |
| Loft-Style Condos                        | -       | -        | 30        | -        | -       | 30      |
| Retail/Office (sq. ft.)                  | 86,200  | -        | 50,536    | -        | -       | 171,267 |
| Hotel (sq. ft.)                          | -       | 76,268   | -         | -        | -       | 76,268  |
| Theatre/Performance Flex Space (sq. ft.) | -       | -        | 65,681    | -        | -       | 65,681  |
| Off-Street Parking Spaces                | 152     | 480      | 17        | 17       | 41      | 809     |

The garage or attic apartments are an important part of the residential options in this development. This practice, in which homeowners convert part of their residence into an apartment that can be rented out to provide income for the homeowner and affordable housing options for in-laws, young couples, or, especially in a college town, students, is not allowed under Conway’s conventional Euclidian zoning codes. This practice is allowed, however, under the new SmartCode TND overlay zoning that has been applied to the site and it is becoming more common in North American communities that are looking to revise their conventional zoning practices. Adam Dickinson estimated that this conversion project might cost the homeowner \$29,000 to convert a home for such an apartment. If the debt service is \$180 per month and the apartment is rented for \$400-\$500 per month, then this would be a very good return on investment for the homeowner and would truly serve as a “mortgage helper.”<sup>111</sup> Additionally, this practice will aid in the mixing the student, faculty, and non-Hendrix-affiliated residential populations. Hendrix President J. Timothy Cloyd explained another flexible option for the intermingling residential and commercial uses: “An interesting feature of the dwellings in the village will be the creation of what will be live/work units – a three-story structure where

<sup>111</sup> Adam Dickinson, interview with the author, April 3, 2008.

a person could live in the top two stories, and the nice thing about that is, they could rent out retail space on the first floor.”<sup>112</sup>

Demolition and site construction for Phase I, which covers the northwestern portion of the site, began in spring 2008. Infrastructure for this phase should take 6 to 9 months and building pads for single-family homes will be sold in fall 2008.<sup>113</sup> The single-family houses and townhome buildings will be built by builders selected from a closely monitored pool of contractors. The mixed-use buildings to the north and east of the Village Square, which will be developed by TNDP, will have retail on the ground floor and student apartments on the second through fourth floors. According to Adam Dickinson, these buildings must be completed by Fall 2009 because Hendrix is anticipating needing these residences to house a growing student population.<sup>114</sup> The fine grain integration of commercial and residential uses is a fundamental aspect of The Village at Hendrix. The college website notes that, while specific details and amenities will be determined at a later date, “we anticipate that residents of The Village will enjoy a neighborhood where they can walk to a grocery store; have coffee and browse for books and movies; have recreational facilities to utilize; play tennis; go for walks; enjoy nature; attend lectures, plays, and other performances at the college; and eventually have a number of dining options, including Hendrix’s highly regarded cafeteria.”<sup>115</sup> The *TND Plan* also notes that a site has been retained for an elementary school in the Village. It will “provide a place a for local children to attend school, allowing them to walk to school. The plan provides sufficient density and walkable streets to help facilitate the ‘neighborhood school.’”<sup>116</sup>

Another piece of Phase I is the construction of the Village Square, a public common area located off the northernmost roundabout that is planned to serve as the geographical and social center of the new community. It is oriented so that, from the square, there are views into the village. The TND Plan provides for a variety of types of open space and public space. Some of

---

<sup>112</sup> Tammy Keith, “College-town mania: Conway boasts three colleges, all growing.” In *Where We Live 2007*, advertising supplement to *Arkansas Democrat Gazette*. (accessed on website April 2008; no longer available online; <http://www.arkansasonline.com/wherewelive/>)

<sup>113</sup> Adam Dickinson, interview with the author, April 3, 2008.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> “FAQ,” Hendrix College website: <http://www.hendrix.edu/village/>

<sup>116</sup> TNDP, *The Village at Hendrix TND Plan Submittal*, Approved by Council November 14, 2006. Section 1, page 1.

these places, such as the green space in the boulevard median on the north side of the Village near I-40, provide for natural drainage and stormwater run-off.<sup>117</sup>

### 3. Architecture + Urban Form

The architectural style of The Village at Hendrix is closely monitored by the “Preliminary Architecture & Landscape Patternbook” that is included in the *TND Plan*. The “pattern book” concept, which has its roots in 18<sup>th</sup> century English domestic architecture, is an important component of New Urbanist planning. As explained in the TND Overlay for The Village at Hendrix, the Patternbook is “a book showing the Architectural Design Standards such as building design, style, materials and colors; and Landscape Standards such as trees, plans, and layout that the development in the TND must adhere to.”<sup>118</sup> Once the final version of the Patternbook is approved by the city planning staff (which has not yet occurred), the Conway Design Review Board will use compliance with the Patternbook as a criterion for approval of building permits. Examples of the stringent design criteria in the Patternbook include: sample floor plans for single-family detached houses, sample elevations for commercial buildings, “do’s” and “don’ts” related to columns, windows, eaves, and gutters, lists of acceptable building materials, and eight pages of lists of recommended plants. Both in the Patternbook and in community meetings, TNDP have been able to cite examples of well-loved, historic architectural styles that can still be found in Conway, Little Rock, and other nearby places.

---

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> *The City of Conway TND Zoning Overlay*, 2006, 16, 56.

# GREATER LITTLE ROCK AREA ARCHITECTURE

The following architectural styles have a strong presence in the greater Little Rock area:

## CRAFTSMAN

- low-pitched, gabled roof
- wide, unenclosed front overhang with exposed roof rafters, as well as tapered square columns or pedestal porch supports; most of the larger versions of this style were built in brick, stucco and stone
- narrow weatherband
- brick and stone wall cladding
- triangular braced supports
- battered foundations
- multi-pane over single-pane window sash

## BUNGALOW

- set low to the ground
- use of rustic materials on exterior
- organic, nestles into and becomes part of its environment
- low-pitched, hipped roof with wide eaves or cross-gabled roof (California style)
- incorporates Craftsman details

## QUEEN ANNE

- steep, multi-plane roofline with a dominant front-facing gable
- decorative wood shingles, often scalloped
- wrap-around porch with delicate, fanciful spindlework
- irregular plan
- decorative finights
- turret-like projections

## COLONIAL REVIVAL

- steep hipped roof with front-facing cross-gable with a Palladian window in its gable end
- large, front-facing hipped roof dormer
- narrow, horizontal wood siding
- oval or gable-end windows, double hung sashes with a multi-pane upper sash hung above a single-pane lower sash
- Ionic wooden porch columns supporting a full entablature with dentiled molding
- semi-shaped balconies on a wrap-around porch
- accentuated front door

## AMERICAN FOUR-SQUARE

- simple, square or rectangular two-story plans
- low-pitched hipped roof
- one-story, full-width porches
- often contain Colonial Revival, Craftsman or Prairie-style decorative details

## ENGLISH REVIVAL

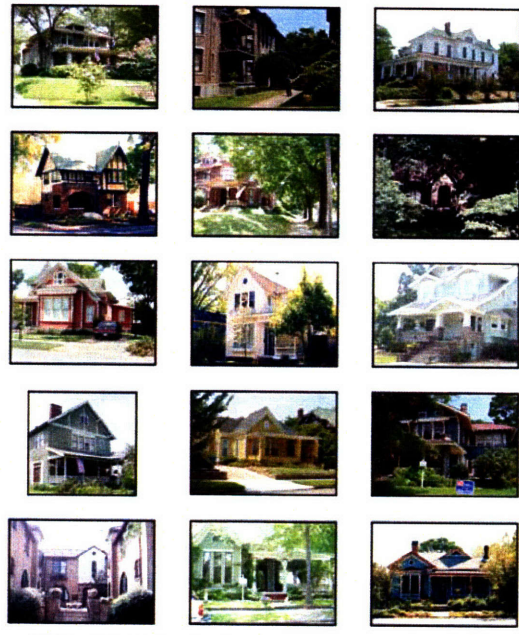
- steeply pitched gable roofs
- mix of materials such as stone (often fieldstone), stucco, and brick
- exposed rafter ends and knee braces
- prominent, front-facing gabled bay
- half-underging
- bands of decorative diamond-shaped leaded glass casement windows
- smaller versions typical of the English Revival style are best characterized as "English Cottages"

## PRAIRIE

- low-pitched hipped roof
- wide overhanging boxed eaves
- broad, horizontal emphasis
- casement windows
- emphasis on the upper story

## GREEK REVIVAL

- Greek-inspired columns and pilasters
- bold, simple moldings
- pedimented gables
- horizontal transoms above entrances



NOTE: Several of the local architectural examples shown above contain elements from multiple architectural styles.

Copyright © 2006 Traditional Neighborhood Development Partners, LLC. SECTION 3, Page 2

**Figure 3.27:** This page from the *Preliminary Architecture & Landscaping Patternbook* shows some of the local vernacular architecture that will serve as inspiration for the design of *The Village at Hendrix*. (Source: *The Village at Hendrix TND Plan*, section 5, page 2)

According to TNDP, the Village is the first site in Conway to which the *TND Overlay* will be applied, but they hope that other sites will adopt the overlay in the future. As a result, there was a clear sense of duty from both TNDP and Hendrix College that they were setting a precedent that could have dramatic consequences for future development throughout the city. One method of ensuring that they were serving as a model development was to apply very rigorous standards for architectural and landscape design. Adam Dickinson clarified that neither TNDP nor future developers of other *TND Overlay* parcels will be held to the strict guidelines as laid out in the "Preliminary Patternbook" in the *TND Plan*. Nonetheless, since it is important for developers to improve the financial, social, and ecological well-being of a site, TNDP wanted to ensure that the Village project met the highest possible standards. Furthermore, it is possible for future developers to follow the letter of the *TND Overlay* zoning without honoring its spirit. Dickinson explained that TNDP "went to extra lengths because we knew that we were setting a precedent."<sup>119</sup>

<sup>119</sup> Entire paragraph: Adam Dickinson, interview with the author, April 3, 2008.

**SAMPLE FLOOR PLANS: Single-Family, Detached Houses**

**NEW URBANIST DESIGN**

TOT SQ FOOTAGE — 3048  
 First Floor — 1948 sf  
 Second Floor — 1000 sf

OVERALL DIMENSIONS  
 Width — 32'  
 Depth — 47'

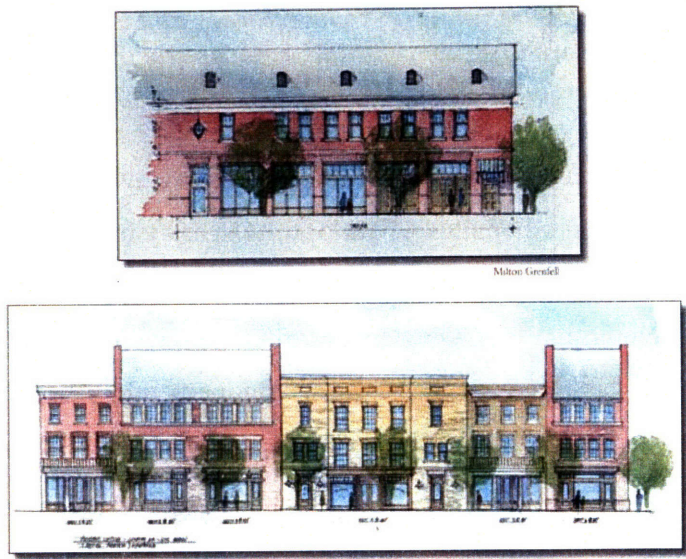
**TND**  
**Stunning Front Porch**  
 Plan # LRK-90148

Specifications  
 Site: Country  
 Country: Craftman  
 Neighborhood: Neo-traditional  
 Bedrooms: 3    Front sq. ft. 1799  
 Baths: 2    Front sq. ft. 882  
 Garage/Bath: Yes/No    Total: 2682  
 Master Bath: First  
 Laundry: First  
 Foundation: Slab

Architectural drawings including a perspective view of a two-story house with a front porch, a technical drawing of the house, and floor plans for the first and second floors. The first floor plan shows a garage, family room, breakfast room, kitchen, dining room, and master bedroom. The second floor plan shows three bedrooms, a bathroom, and a linen closet.

Copyright © 2006 Traditional Neighborhood Development Partners, LLC SECTION 5, Page 3

**SAMPLE ELEVATIONS: Live-Work Units**



Copyright © 2006 Traditional Neighborhood Development Partners, LLC SECTION 5, Page 11

**Figures 3.28-3.29: These two pages from the “Proposed Building Styles & Landscaping” section of the Preliminary Architecture & Landscaping Patternbook show the rather prescriptive recommendations for residential and mixed-use architecture. The patternbook includes several pages of sample floorplans, as well as a few pages of watercolor renderings. The project team has explained that these are guidelines, rather than mandates, but they nonetheless present a strictly New Urbanist and neo-traditional view of the village’s architecture and design. (Source: The Village at Hendrix TND Plan, TNDP, section 5, pages 3, 11)**

### **The Relationship between the New College Town and the College**

Hendrix College has spearheaded The Village at Hendrix project, so there is great support for the project from the administration. President J. Timothy Cloyd discussed the college's "construction of an academic village" in a recent newspaper article about the progressive projects and demographic changes in Conway and Faulkner County:

"There's nothing else like it in the state....It will be a seamless connection between the village, the Hendrix campus, and downtown Conway. It creates a great synergy opportunity for us, and students love it. The energy that students want is kind of an urban feeling. By building this village, we are creating a deeper sense of urbanism around the campus."<sup>120</sup>

Presumably, one advantage of locating the Village adjacent to the college and for encouraging a fine grain mixing is to enable residents to share some facilities—such as the library, fitness center, art museum, and even classes—with the students, and there seem to be many shared facilities planned for the Village. The primary shared facilities are marked as "civic structures" on the Regulating Plan (Figure 3.25).



*Figure 3.30: This rendering shows the proposed view down Harkrider Street, which forms the new town/gown edge. (Source: Hendrix College Master Plan 2015. Dunay Plater-Zyberk & Company, 2005)*

### **The Relationship between the New College Town and the Existing Community**

In addition to supporting the College on the Village plan, the City of Conway seems to have been converted, to some extent, to the practice of planning according to New Urbanism. On October 10, 2006, the City Council passed an Ordinance creating an "Old Conway Design Overlay District" "for the purpose of enhancing and protecting the aesthetics, sustainability,

---

<sup>120</sup> Keith, "College-town mania: Conway boasts three colleges, all growing."

and the historic nature of Old Conway.” The area in question is immediately south and west of Hendrix and the Village, and it includes some of the older residential areas of the city, but does not include the previously designated historic district within it.<sup>121</sup> At the same time, the Planning Department and City Council approved an *Urban Design Guidelines Pattern Book* specifically for the Old Conway Design Overlay District. Similar to those for the Village, this *Pattern Book* is based on the Transect and includes a variety of specifications for set-backs, site design, alleys, architectural styles, additions to homes, and other design criteria.<sup>122</sup> Additionally, in April 2007, the City published additionally Design Guidelines for the area governing, with recommended treatments for everything from off-street parking to street performers and sidewalk vendors.<sup>123</sup> The City seems poised to continue using the techniques of form-based overlay zoning, the Transect, and the Patternbook in their municipal planning efforts.

### **Where Are They Now?**

In February 2007, plans for Phase I, which contains approximately 20 acres were approved by the City of Conway. The remaining phases of development will require separate formal actions by the Hendrix Board of Trustees. According to the College website, “The Board and administration will be mindful of any expansion needs of the college, and the college has sufficient land for future expansion of the academic and student-support programs.”<sup>124</sup> In September 12, 2007, an Ecological Restoration Plan was developed for the damaged wetlands at the northern and eastern periphery of the site. In Spring 2008, construction began on Phase I and planning and permitting continue for the additional phases of The Village at Hendrix.

---

<sup>121</sup> *Old Conway Design Overlay District, Ordinance.*

[http://www.conwayplanning.org/pdfs\\_and\\_docs/ords/Old\\_Con\\_Overlay\\_Ord\\_Amended\\_5-2007.pdf](http://www.conwayplanning.org/pdfs_and_docs/ords/Old_Con_Overlay_Ord_Amended_5-2007.pdf)

<sup>122</sup> *Old Conway Design Overlay District: Urban Design Guidelines: Pattern Book*

[http://www.conwayplanning.org/pdfs\\_and\\_docs/ords/OCDOD%20Pattern%20Book%205-2007.pdf](http://www.conwayplanning.org/pdfs_and_docs/ords/OCDOD%20Pattern%20Book%205-2007.pdf)

<sup>123</sup> *Old Conway Design Overlay District: Part Three: Urban Design Guidelines – Draft, revised April 12, 2007.*

<http://www.cityofconway.org/pdfs/Urban%20Draft.pdf>

<sup>124</sup> “FAQ,” Hendrix College website: <http://www.hendrix.edu/village/>





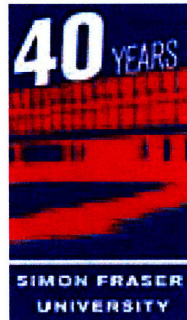
*Figure 3.31: This photograph was taken in May 2008 and appears on The Village at Hendrix website with the note: "Preliminary street construction is expected to take place at The Village at Hendrix this week. Most of the clearing and grubbing of The Village site is completed. Crews are now expected to begin cutting the streets and performing backfilling, which will show the outlines of the streets inside The Village. Additionally, utility work at The Village is expected to begin by the end of the week. Area residents will now begin to see significant construction on the site." (Source: The Village at Hendrix website: <http://www.hendrix.edu/village/>)*

#### Case 4: Simon Fraser University and UniverCity

“...a mountain top was no place for a traditional campus.” - Arthur Erickson, SFU architect<sup>125</sup>

“Above all. A community by design.” - UniverCity tagline

“If there is any distinction between old and new, it is that the pre-existing campus demonstrates a 1960’s academic monumentalism while the new community builds on the environmental imperative of the new millennium.” - *Urban Design & Master Plan for UniverCity*<sup>126</sup>



#### **The Gown and the Town**

Simon Fraser University, a public university founded in the 1960s atop Burnaby Mountain in suburban Vancouver, British Columbia, is not a typical campus. Named for an eighteenth-century Scottish explorer, the well-regarded university is intrinsically shaped by its unique natural setting. The campus is located 340 meters above sea level at the top of the mountain, surrounded by 510 hectares of land preserved in the Burnaby Mountain Conservation Area. It is located in the City of Burnaby, a suburb within the 2.5-million person metropolitan Vancouver area. SFU has been called the “Instant University,” since it opened its doors to 2,500 students on September 9, 1965—just eighteen months after construction began and just 30 months after it was proposed. The members of the first graduating class in 1969 were dubbed the “charter students.”<sup>127</sup> Celebrating its 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2006, the university now has over 25,000 students, with satellite campuses in downtown Vancouver and Surrey.<sup>128</sup> The rapid progress from idea to construction to reality and the close attention to the sense of

---

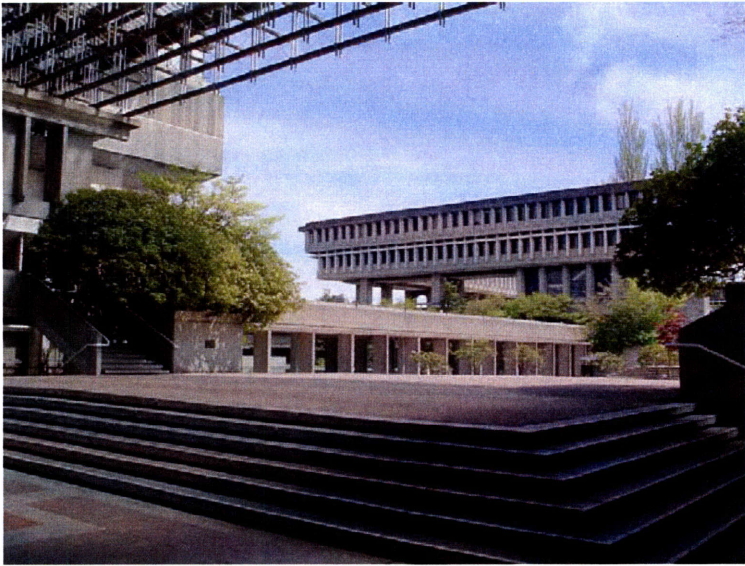
<sup>125</sup> Quoted in: Lee Gavel, “Improving the vitality of campus life: New buildings and renovations have been designed to cultivate the interaction of people and ideas,” *Simon Fraser News*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (June 18, 1998), <http://www.sfu.ca/philosophy/swartz/gavel.htm>

<sup>126</sup> *Urban Design & Master Plan for UniverCity: The Community at Simon Fraser*, Hotson Bakker Boniface Haden., 2003, 1

<sup>127</sup> *UniverCity News*, Number 03 (Summer 2005): 1.

<sup>128</sup> There are about 12,000 full-time equivalent students. Simon Fraser University website. <http://www.burnaby.sfu.ca/about/index.html>

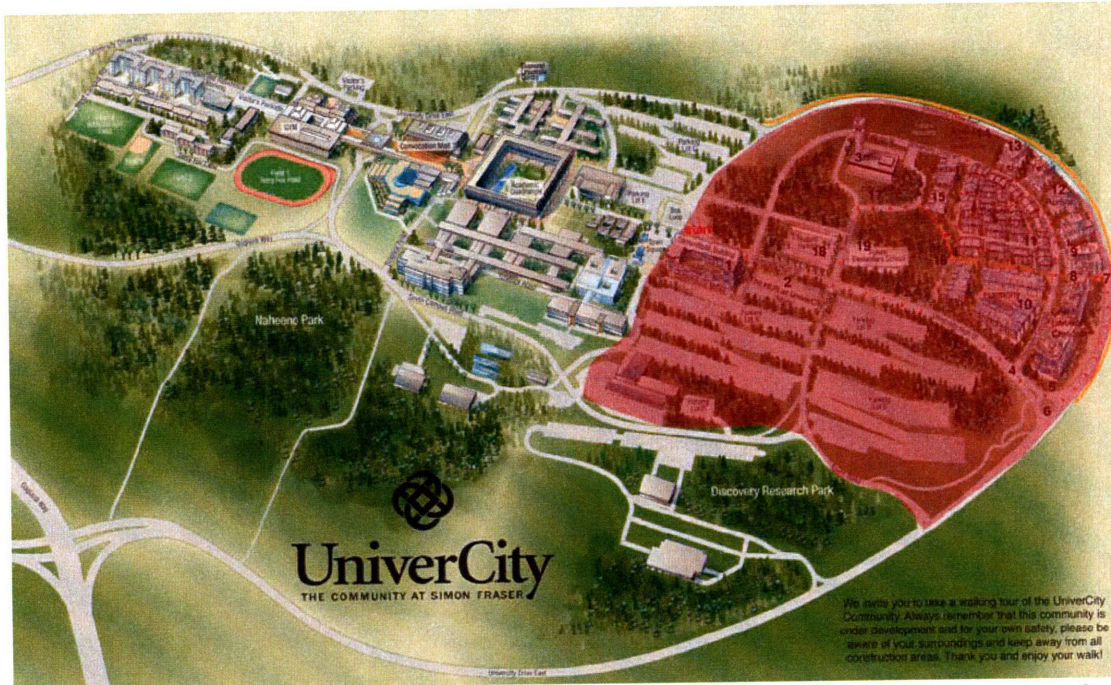
place, as articulated in architecture, in public spaces, and especially in the natural environment, have been hallmarks that continue with the university today.



*Figure 3.32: This photograph of the Simon Fraser University campus shows that it is dominated by imposing concrete forms and Brutalist architecture. (Source: Arthur Erickson Architect website: [http://www.arthurerickson.com/p\\_sfu.html](http://www.arthurerickson.com/p_sfu.html))*



*Figure 3.33: This context map shows the location of Simon Fraser University within the City of Burnaby (pink line) which is part of the Vancouver metropolitan region. UniverCity and SFU are isolated together within the “ring road” atop Burnaby Mountain, with the rest of the city below. (Map by the author, with aerial photograph from GoogleEarth)*



*Figure 3.34: It is noteworthy that that the official campus map of Simon Fraser University is currently the same as a map of UniverCity. The author has marked the primary UniverCity area in red. As will be shown later in this profile, there are plans to extend UniverCity, SFU, or some combination thereof to develop almost all of the land within the ring road. (Source: SFU website: <http://www.sfu.ca/about/maps.html>)*

In his book *The Postwar University: Utopianist Campus and College*, Stefan Muthesius situates the construction of the SFU campus in its historical context. Canadian universities belong to a different tradition than American colleges: the former is less tied to historical, prestigious, residential universities, there is no “strong division between ‘higher’ and ‘lower’ institutions,” and universities are heavily subsidized by the provincial governments – more akin to American “public” universities than “private” ones. By the 1960s, Muthesius explains, the Canadian university system was poised to “combine expansion of numbers, Modernity, and all the European and American pedigrees of academic and teaching excellence.”<sup>129</sup> Sensing a growing demand for university spaces in Vancouver, in 1963 the government decided to develop a new university. A competition was held for local designers to develop a campus for a site at the top of Burnaby Mountain, in the nearby City of Burnaby. The winning design, by Arthur Erickson and Geoffrey Massey, had a linear plan that focused on integrating a variety of

<sup>129</sup> Stefan Muthesius, *The Postwar University: Utopianist Campus and College* (New Haven: Published for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art by Yale University Press, 2000), 187.

spaces and uses into one unified form, connected by a series of covered public spaces, known as the Mall. The form is punctuated by the imposing Academic Quadrangle; faculty offices and teaching spaces from a variety of departments are situated around the green space. Perhaps the most remarkable feature of the campus is its mountaintop location, and Erickson's plan responds to this topography—in contrast to many other Modernist complexes that are designed to sit on platforms.<sup>130</sup> Erickson described this approach as follows:

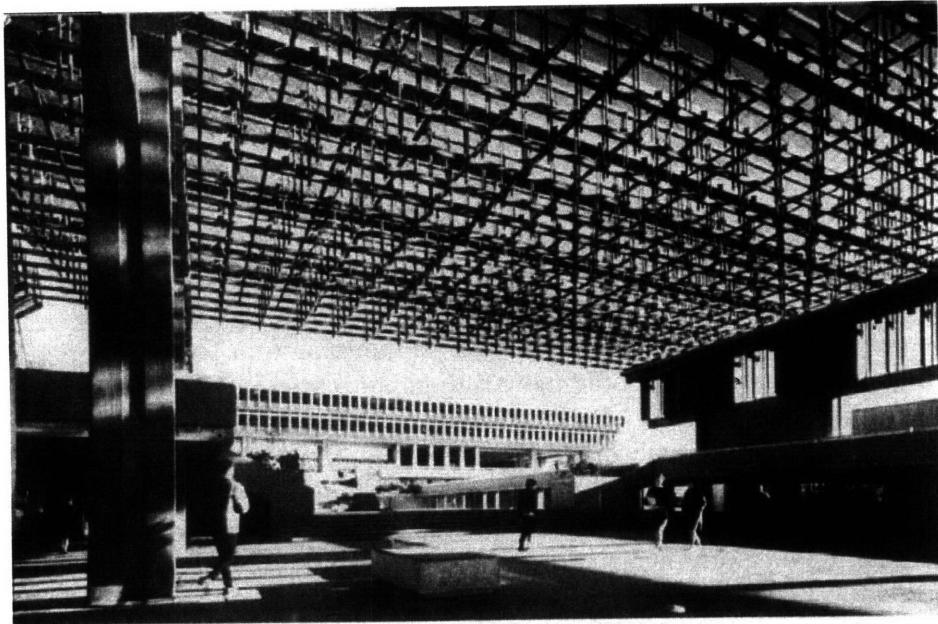
“It seemed presumptuous to put towers on a mountaintop. To build horizontally close to the contours seemed not only more fitting, but more practical because it allows for easy inexpensive expansion. Parking lots and playing fields had to be cut into the site as terraces and the buildings were allowed to follow the contours on terraces as well, so that the 'terrace' became the predominant formal idea of the university. This allowed the buildings to become part of the mountaintop and extend quite naturally and easily down the slope. Thus, the usually scattered university campus was compressed into a single campus building.”<sup>131</sup>

The geometry of the continuous terrace gives the campus the ability to expand easily, if needed, while remaining physically and intellectually centered around an integrated academic core. This form, as well as the reliance on a heavy, concrete aesthetic, mark the SFU campus as part of the lineage of Modernist campuses that were built in Canada (as well as England and, in a few instances, the U.S.) in the 1960s.

---

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 192. Muthesius compares the campus with Edward Durrell Stone's design for the State University of New York at Albany from the same period. Both campuses take the form of “a long series of large squares with repetitive detail,” but Stone's “sits geometrically flat on a plane” while Erickson's is terraced with the topography.

<sup>131</sup> “Simon Fraser University,” Arthur Erickson Architect official website, 2000.  
[http://www.arthurerickson.com/p\\_sfu.html](http://www.arthurerickson.com/p_sfu.html)



3.7 Simon Fraser University, view of mall with teaching quadrangle in the background. (*A&A* no. 137, 4/5-1968, p. 88)

*Figure 3.35: This photograph shows the dramatic forms of the mall and academic quadrangle of the new campus in 1968. (Source: Muthesius, p. 194)*

Lee Gavel, university architect and SFU alumnus, reflected on the unique campus in a 1998 opinion piece in the *Simon Fraser News*. Gavel noted that the “acropolis of concrete” worked well on sunny days, but that, “given the extreme winter climate” much of the year, students and professors tended not to loiter on the chilly concrete concourses that were intended as public gathering spaces. “The universal reaction to this annual retreat leads to complaints of cold, wet, grey, depressing concrete, soulless, spare interior spaces, and a lack of natural light.” What is most interesting in Gavel’s reflection, however, is his defense of this campus. In the decades since SFU was built, some of the campus spaces have been modified, brightened, and modernized within the university’s context and within its financial means – which often meant veering toward the aesthetic of an airport rather than oak-paneled academe. His point sheds some light on the reasons behind the creation of the UniverCity project. Furthermore, although the project was just beginning at the time, Gavel noted, “The proposed development of a residential community on Burnaby Mountain may help provide the economic viability to shape us into a more well-rounded community capable of supporting formal and informal spaces which contribute greatly to the vitality of campus life.” The unique context of

SFU – its topography, climate, architecture, and spectacular, yet isolated, setting – directly led the university to its town/gown planning project.<sup>132</sup>

### **Why Create a New Town?**

Although the original 1965 vision for Simon Fraser University included a residential community atop Burnaby Mountain, a lack of funds prevented such a development and the “Instant University” remained an isolated, primarily commuter campus. Instead of Erickson’s proposed mega-structural residential buildings, a few individual buildings were built as traditional dormitories to house about 5% of the student population.<sup>133</sup> There was extremely little evening and weekend activity on campus, as even the nearest store or pub required a bus or car ride down the mountain. SFU has never suffered a lack of enrollment due to its location, but the university determined that it would be an asset to have more activity on the campus.

The new development, however, was forced upon the university by actions taken by the City of Burnaby. When the campus was built in the 1960s, the city gave the university 14 acres of land, which was essentially the entire mountain. When the city later wanted the land back, the university was unwilling to give up its valuable asset and the land was contended for the next 20-30 years. In the mid-1990s, the city involved the premier of British Columbia who forced SFU to sell the land back to the city.<sup>134</sup> As a result of negotiations, in November 1995, SFU President John Stubs and City of Burnaby Mayor Doug Drummond signed a Memorandum of Understanding for a land transfer to enable such residential development to finally occur on the mountain. SFU agreed to transfer 320 hectares of university-owned property to the City of Burnaby. This was to be combined with an existing 186 hectares of parkland to form the Burnaby Mountain Conservation Area. In exchange, the university received \$15 million and revised zoning and development rights for land within the “ring road” atop the mountain. The city and university agreed to work together to develop a *Development Plan Concept* (which was completed in February 1996) and regulations to enable residential development in the area within the ring road. In September 1996, the City approved the *Official Community Plan* and Zoning Bylaws that allowed for up to 4,536 residential units plus

---

<sup>132</sup> Information in paragraph from Gavel, “Improving the vitality of campus life.”

<sup>133</sup> Lee Gavel, Chief Facility Officer and University Architect, Simon Fraser University. Interview with the author, April 8, 2008.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

commercial and community facilities, with a population of up to 10,000, on approximately 65 hectares of land adjacent to the campus. This “density transfer” was among the first steps that signaled that this new project was to be consciously developed with a focus on minimizing its environmental footprint – rather than a standard sprawling suburban development, a high-density, urban-style development would be built on 20% of the land and 80% would be conserved.<sup>135</sup>

In this compromise solution, SFU was allowed to develop the land within the Ring Road and the rest of the mountain would be preserved in perpetuity. According to UniverCity literature, the two primary objectives of UniverCity are:

1. “to create a complementary community with housing, shops, services and amenities, to complement the university,” and
2. “to create an endowment fund and other revenue sources to support a variety of university purposes.”

Thus, an explicit motivation behind creating this “new town” was to raise money to help fund the university. According to those involved in the project, Stubbs asserted that the project should “provide leadership in sustainable development” and that it would bring acclaim to both the city and the university.<sup>136</sup> He championed the development of a complete and sustainable community that would set a precedent for a new way of doing development.

The SFU Community Trust, formerly known as the Burnaby Mountain Community Corporation, was incorporated in 1999 to manage the planning and development of the UniverCity community according to the above two principles. This separate legal entity is governed by a board of directors and advised by a Community Advisory Committee composed of SFU faculty, staff, and students, as well as residents and experts on planning and development. From 1997 to 2006, Michael Geller was the president and CEO of the Trust and “the face of the project,” and Gordon Harris, an urban planner and real estate developer, has been president and CEO since 2007.<sup>137</sup> The Community Trust brings financial and legal support to the project, as well as the interest of private developers who might not otherwise have expressed interest in the project.

---

<sup>135</sup> *Urban Design & Master Plan for UniverCity: The Community at Simon Fraser*, 3.

<sup>136</sup> Gordon Harris, President and CEO, SFU Community Trust. Interview with the author, April 9, 2008.

<sup>137</sup> *UniverCity News* Number 05 (Summer 2007).



## How to Create a New Town

In literature about UniverCity, there is repeated mention of the need to ensure that the new development appropriately reflects the character of Simon Fraser University, specifically in regard to the university's famous architecture and its dedication to the natural environment. For example, the *Development Plan Concept* notes, "The public open space network and the provision of recreation facilities are integral components of the campus concept, both in terms of the functional program and the image of Simon Fraser University. With regard to public open space, the Academic Quadrangle, the Meadow and Terry Fox Field are key images of the campus."<sup>138</sup> Ray Spaxman, former director of planning for the City of Vancouver, remarked that the UniverCity planners consciously dealt with "the conceptual challenge of imagining a place that is a community growing out of a spectacular piece of architecture in a very special setting."<sup>139</sup> Although residential uses for Burnaby Mountain had been discussed in the past, it seems that there was legitimate wariness about the process of actually realizing the scheme. Furthermore, there seems to have been a great deal of concern from the university community and from others involved in the planning process that this new development is done in a responsible manner. Once the decision to embark on the UniverCity project was made, there was a feeling that the project must be undertaken with the highest level of excellence. Spaxman and others questioned: "What sort of character does a community have to have sitting next to this monument of architecture? What do we build that doesn't interfere or look wrong?"<sup>140</sup> These questions and concerns were answered in terms of the division of the site into neighborhoods with deliberate mixes of housing types, the attention to developing an architectural style that complemented the existing campus, and, most notably, the commitment to developing UniverCity as a laboratory for the most current practices in sustainable residential development.

With the intention that this would be a new and different kind of community that would be both consistent with and separate from the university, Geller and the SFU Community Trust held a competitive design charrette with three firms in 1999. The scheme by the Vancouver-

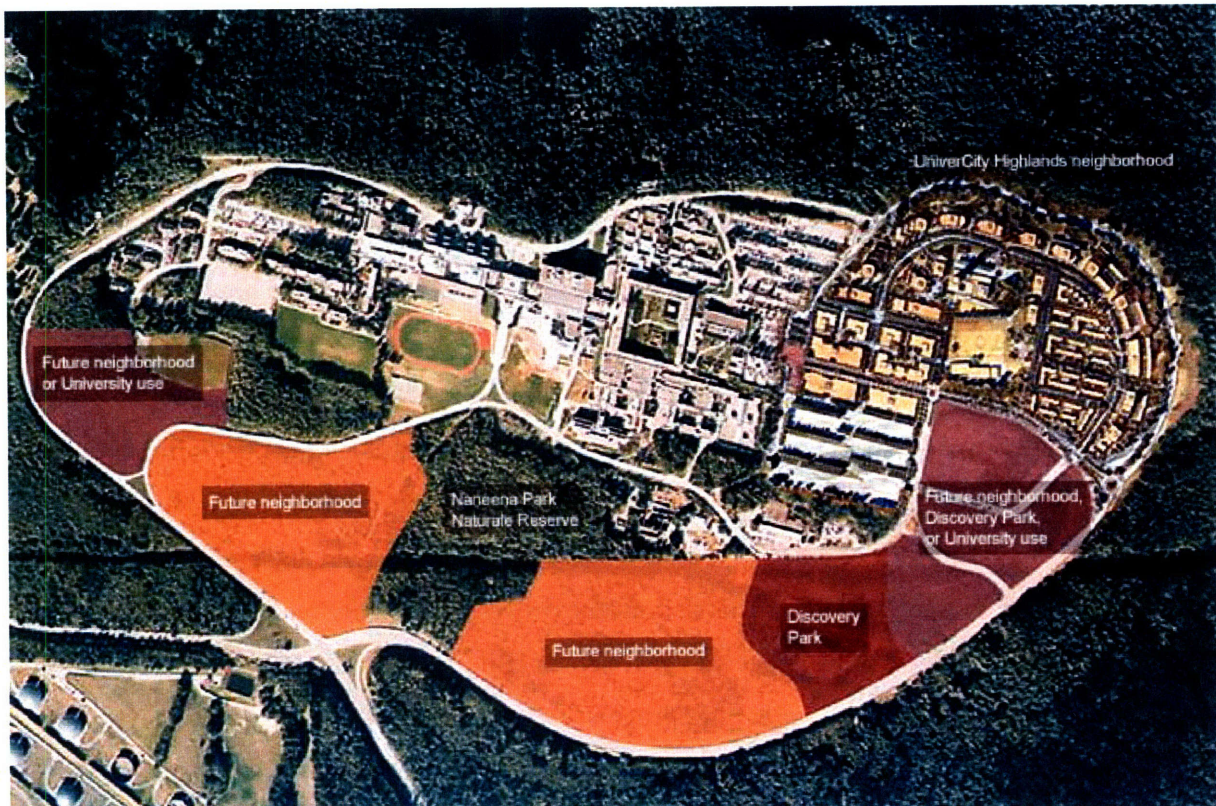
---

<sup>138</sup> *Development Plan Concept*, UniverCity website, <http://www.univercity.ca/>

<sup>139</sup> Christine Hearn, "UniverCity: Where Town Meets Gown," *aq: The Magazine of Simon Fraser University*, May 2002.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*

based firm Hotson Bakker Boniface Haden Architects+Urbanistes was selected, and the firm was retained to develop the project master plan.<sup>141</sup>



*Figure 3.36: The UniverCity site plan shows the existing campus and natural landscape (with aerial photography) and the early phases of UniverCity (detailed in the upper right corner). The red and orange shaded areas are slated for future development by the community, the university, or some combination thereof. Except for the Naheeno Park Natural Reserve near the middle, the entire area within the ring road is planned to be developed—a situation that makes sense, since the rest of the mountain is part of a conservation area. (Source: Urban Design & Master Plan for UniverCity: The Community at Simon Fraser)*

## 1. Neighborhoods

The Official Community Plan includes specific provisions for different areas within the Ring Road:

- University Enclave (81 ha/200 acres) – only University development allowed, provide for expanding student population
- Discovery Park (5.3 ha/13 acres) – continue as a research area
- Naheeno Park (12 ha/28.7 acres) – remain undeveloped

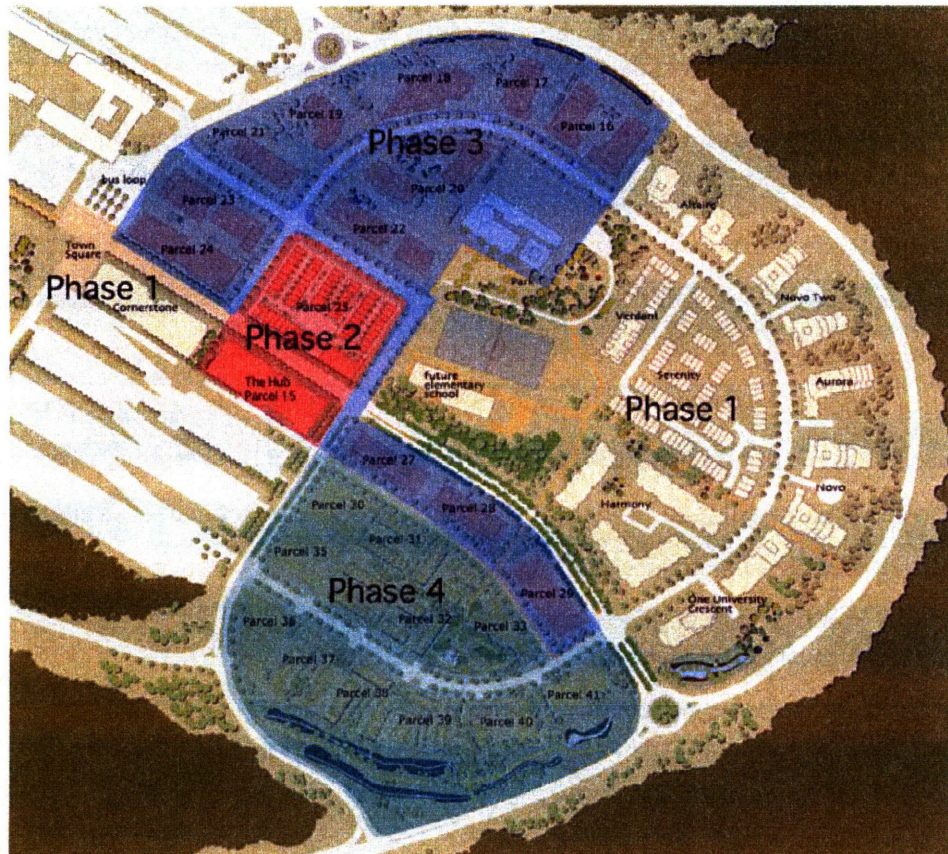
<sup>141</sup> Gordon Harris, interview with the author, April 9, 2008. The firm remains involved in the project. Norm Hotson led the recent rezoning for Phase 3, and he serves as the one-man design panel for UniverCity.

- Two Residential Neighborhoods (65 ha/160 acres) – one east of campus and one south of campus, total of 4,536 housing units, some land was designated as “swing” areas, which could be developed for University or community uses as needed. These areas are important because they ensure that there will be a minimum community on these sites, but that there is a decision point when the Community Trust can decide whether the land should be devoted to academic or residential purposes.<sup>142</sup>

Of the residential neighborhoods, the area east of campus, “The Highlands,” is the first to have been developed (Phase 1). At build-out, it will contain 2,000 residential units in several neighborhoods, including the University Crescent precinct, Harmony, Serenity, Verdant, and Altaire. Phase 2 includes 23,000 square meters of commercial area along High Street and the Town Square. Phase 3 will include additional residential uses in the West Highlands precinct. Phase 4 of development will take place in the “South Slopes” Precinct, an area south of campus that is currently occupied by surface parking but which will be developed to include 750 residential units in a European hill-town style development.

---

<sup>142</sup> *Urban Design & Master Plan for UniverCity: The Community at Simon Fraser*



## East Neighbourhood

*Figure 3.37: The phasing plan for UniverCity reflects the most current progress on the project. As of Spring 2008, Phase 1 has been built, Phase 2 (the commercial buildings and High Street) has been built, Phase 3 (West Highlands) is in the regulatory process, and Phase 4 (South Slopes) has not yet been built. This plan presents the project far more legibly than other plans, but it minimizes the connection—either physically or metaphorically—with the iconic campus. (Source: provided to author by Nancy McCuaig, SFU Community Trust)*

A *New York Times* profile also highlights the important urban planning choices that have been made by the development team, noting that UniverCity is unique both because it is associated with a university and because it employs “a slate of policies not typically associated with a suburban development.” UniverCity lead architect Norm Hotson noted,

“It’s an urban style development in a suburban development. Every good project has to have a really big idea behind it. To decide to build a whole new community on top of a mountain, next to a university, that’s an innovation.”<sup>143</sup>

Additionally, the zoning code for UniverCity was written to allow for some practices that are often prohibited by traditional zoning regulations. The *Urban Design & Master Plan* refers to the

<sup>143</sup> Linda Baker, “A Community Comes to the University,” *New York Times*, May 7, 2006.

“adaptive management strategy” that the City has put in place to allow for flexibility and affordability in housing over time. These progressive strategies included legalized “secondary suites,” which allow homeowners to rent out parts of their residences to students or in-laws, housing areas with rental, cooperative, and condominium models, and municipal reductions in parking requirements for housing aimed at those who commute to SFU.<sup>144</sup>



*Figures 3.38-3.39: These images of a model of the UniverCity project clearly show the way the development responds to the topography of the mountaintop. While Erickson’s campus plan was terraced into the mountaintop and emphasized horizontality, the UniverCity plan takes more liberties with towers and adds an element of verticality to the site. The development is also designed to fit closely within the confines of the ring road. (Source: Urban Design & Master Plan for UniverCity: The Community at Simon Fraser, p. 23)*

## 2. Architecture + Urban Form

The architectural integrity of the new development is addressed in the 1996 *Development Plan Concept* and in the 2003 *Urban Design & Master Plan*. SFU will develop Design Guidelines for non-university uses on the mountain with the knowledge that the university has “a design integrity that must be maintained.” The Plan quotes the 1990 *Master Plan Update*, eloquently written by the original architect of the campus, Arthur Erickson:

“The original master plan incorporated a very clear response to the major natural features on the site. The main circulation axis was aligned along the ridge of the hill... The most important university buildings were to be organized along the primary east-west axis, defining its major public spaces, while the fabric of the subsidiary, more anonymous buildings extended off either side of the main axis... Instead of simply

---

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

sitting on the mountain top, the university was to become part of it, by following the contours and creating successive terraces of building and earth.”<sup>145</sup> The *Development Plan Concept* elaborates that planned residential development should be built according to an “Architectural language for the Residential buildings which are expressive of their use, but which relate appropriately to the existing campus Architecture.” Mixed-use, commercial buildings to be developed at the blurred edge between university and residential uses “might prove to be a mediating element which would facilitate the co-existence of the two Architectural Statements.”

Since each UniverCity neighborhood is being built by a different developer yet is designed to be a part of a singular cohesive community, it is necessary that the Community Trust set and impose guidelines for the form and scale of the building projects. In addition to ensuring that the different neighborhoods fit with each other, the new UniverCity construction also needs to maintain a sense of harmony with the Brutalist concrete existing university and with the spectacular natural environment of the mountain. SFU University Architect Lee Gavel explained to the author that one part of his job is to see that the physical campus and Erickson’s vision for the aesthetic consistency of the campus are maintained.<sup>146</sup> Thus, one challenge presented by the UniverCity project was the need to translate this vision into complementary neighborhoods. University buildings have very different floor plates and spatial requirements than private residential buildings. Nonetheless, it is possible to take Erickson’s “use of concrete as ‘bones’” and of flat roofs and update them for the new UniverCity development.<sup>147</sup>

Nigel Baldwin, an award-winning architect who designed the buildings in the “Aurora” neighborhood for Polygon Homes has noted that the “strong horizontal lines” were a “very deliberate” choice to ensure that the condominiums would blend with Erickson’s campus design.<sup>148</sup> Additionally, the residences in Aurora and in other neighborhoods are designed to maximize the number of units with views to the mountains, natural light, balconies, and other amenities. The “Altaire” development, also designed by Baldwin for Polygon Homes, features a lot of concrete and glass, to mimic “a sense of ‘columns’ and ‘beams’ prevalent in the SFU campus architecture.” UniverCity will not be entirely concrete; brick has been instituted as a design requirement for the town homes in the University Crescent area, “which results in a

---

<sup>145</sup> Arthur Erickson, 1990 Master Plan Update, quoted in *Development Plan Concept*.

<sup>146</sup> Lee Gavel, interview with the author, April 7, 2008.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> *UniverCity News* Number 03 (Summer 2005).

more coordinated and cohesive streetscape.”<sup>149</sup> Deliberate choices were made to develop a stylistic scheme that complemented the existing campus, but that felt more domestic and more current.

It is important to note that “the most prominent critic” of UniverCity has been Arthur Erickson. A 2004 article in the *Vancouver Sun* explained that the architect had originally proposed possible housing for the west end of campus rather than the east end where UniverCity is beginning, and that he believed that this new development – particularly the presence of condominium towers – would threaten his original vision.<sup>150</sup> Michael Geller recalled that “Arthur was not amused” by the changes to his original vision.<sup>151</sup> Nonetheless, Geller, Gavel, and other representatives of UniverCity have defended their choices of architectural character for the new town and are cognizant of developing in a manner that is complementary to and respectful of the horizontality of the campus, with appropriate transitional spaces and forms.

### 3. Sustainability

The role that the natural environment has played in the history of the university and in the development of UniverCity is perhaps its most outstanding feature; the commitment to sustainable site design and green building is unparalleled. The *Urban Design & Master Plan* by Hotson Bakker Boniface Haden makes it clear that UniverCity was “conceived as a complete community based on principles of sustainability.”<sup>152</sup> Furthermore, the plan explains that, while the UniverCity plan plays homage to the existing campus form, this new development explicitly seeks a more harmonious relationship with the natural environment than was sought in the 1960s: “The architecture of Simon Fraser University saw landscape as something that could be aesthetically manipulated, or ‘landshaped,’ whereas the environmental considerations of the new plan demand that physical interventions into landscape mimic natural systems.”<sup>153</sup>

---

<sup>149</sup> *UniverCity News* Number 04 (Summer 2006).

<sup>150</sup> Doug Ward, “Mountaintop Fourth Avenue: There will be nothing of the suburban mall look to SFU’s new UniverCity community,” *Vancouver Sun*, April 27, 2004

<sup>151</sup> Trevor Boddy, “‘Arthur was not amused,’ Breaking with a theme laid down for Simon Fraser University by master designer Arthur Erickson, Michael Geller has used strategic thinking to get the UniverCity community up and running,” *Globe and Mail*, November 24, 2006.

<sup>152</sup> *Urban Design & Master Plan for UniverCity: The Community at Simon Fraser*. 1.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

Integration of the existing university facilities, the new community facilities, and the existing fragile natural environment on Burnaby Mountain is of utmost importance to the UniverCity plan. The document notes, “A sense of place can occur and can be enhanced by careful compliance with the City of Burnaby Planning and Design Principles for Environmentally Sensitive Areas.”<sup>154</sup> In an environment like Burnaby Mountain, “sense of place” is clearly equated with design principles that work with the natural environment. The sustainable features of the UniverCity plan include:

- **Green building** – in 2000, UniverCity published green building guidelines that were written by the firm reSource Rethinking Building Inc. According to Gordon Harris, building on a tree-covered, isolated mountaintop was a challenge for developers and it was made even more challenging by setting these guidelines. In 2007, with green building gaining currency throughout North America, UniverCity revised its guidelines to become green building *requirements*. Burnaby is reportedly the first North American city to have green building requirements in its zoning code. Harris noted that the requirements have more credibility since they are enforced by the city.<sup>155</sup>
- **Advanced stormwater system** – the first system in North America that treats stormwater at its source (rather than waiting until it has accumulated) to protect the downstream fish habitat.<sup>156</sup>
- **Parking** – underground lots with vegetative roofs; pricing and allocation modified to match demand; on-street parking with pervious paver construction
- **Transportation** – plans developed in concert with needs of SFU; shuttle service to SkyTrain station and connections to Greater Vancouver Regional District transit; comprehensive bicycle network; roundabouts, curb bump-outs, and other traffic calming measures; transit pass system; cooperative car-sharing program with hybrid cars
- **A walkable community** – many pedestrian amenities, including wide sidewalks, continuous weather protection, ground-floor retail; internal streets connected to extensive trail network in Burnaby Mountain Conservation Area
- **Energy** – the Verdant neighborhood with faculty and staff housing is 70% “off the grid.” The SFU Community Trust employed an innovative financing scheme whereby the occupants pay for the difference in energy cost through their condominium fee, instead of paying the regular utility payments associated with conventional development. One their mortgages are paid off in approximately 10 years, the residents’ energy costs will drop by 75%. According to Harris, this is good for occupants as well as developers, because it solves the problem of paying for green development.<sup>157</sup>

---

<sup>154</sup> *Development Plan Concept*.

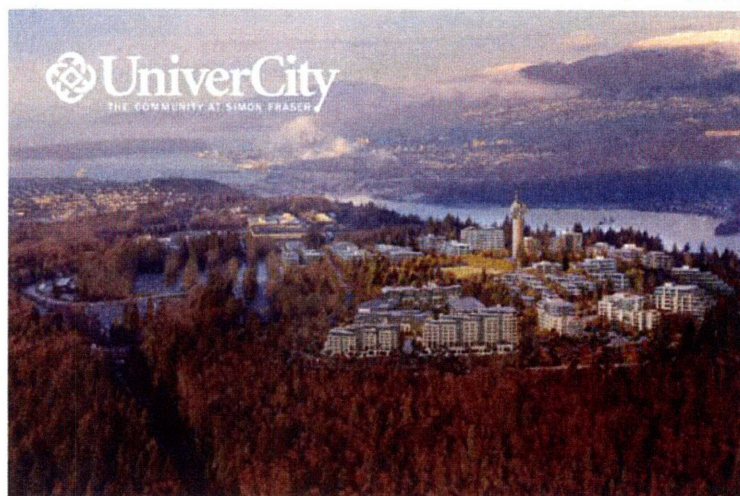
<sup>155</sup> Gordon Harris, interview with the author, April 9, 2008.

<sup>156</sup> *Urban Design & Master Plan for UniverCity: The Community at Simon Fraser*. 3, 7.

<sup>157</sup> Gordon Harris, interview with the author, April 9, 2008.



The extreme awareness of the environmental impacts associated with the UniverCity development can be attributed to several sources. The greater Vancouver area is famous for its progressive policies about planning, sustainability, and environmental awareness. Michael Geller, former president and CEO of the Trust, has noted that there are also strategic reasons for this focus. Building new development and adding potentially 10,000 new people on what is essentially a greenfield location at the top of a mountain in a suburb might not seem terribly eco-conscious. A 2006 *New York Times* article on UniverCity cites Geller's point that the "focus on sustainability" began "as a tactical approach to address the concerns of people opposed to the project, which has so far razed 20 acres of cedar and spruce forest."<sup>158</sup> Nonetheless, the fervent commitment to sustainable design and green building has become an overarching goal and commitment of the UniverCity project. Lee Gavel commented that, although green features help with marketing, the sustainable features were primarily put in place because the UniverCity planners felt that it was the right thing to do. Sustainability "leads the aesthetic nature of the design and the way it functions."<sup>159</sup>



**Figure 3.40:** This postcard shows UniverCity's dramatic setting atop Burnaby Mountain in the Vancouver metro area. The tallest tower in the photograph is the water tower that was existing before the UniverCity project.

### **The Relationship between the New College Town and the University**

As it sets new precedents and very high standards in the areas of sustainability and green building and as it explores urban style development in a suburban and environmentally

<sup>158</sup> Linda Baker, "A Community Comes to the University," *New York Times*, May 7, 2006.

<sup>159</sup> Lee Gavel, interview with the author, April 7, 2008.

fragile landscape, UniverCity could well serve as a case study for many planning studies. As it relates to this thesis, however, UniverCity is also an important example of planning at the intersection of town and gown. According to an article in the magazine of SFU, *aq*, there was skepticism amongst students about the UniverCity project. Geller notes that the UniverCity planners were able to combat some of the “cynicism and concern” of the student body by working closely with the Simon Fraser Student Society and by deliberately considering the relationship between the campus and residential communities.<sup>160</sup> Student and faculty representatives on the SFU Community Corporation Board of Directors have urged the UniverCity development to focus on issues of specific concern, such as the environment, affordable housing, and the wildlife that lives on the mountain.

The fact that the residential community was planned to provide funds to the university is a very significant part of this intimately connected town/gown relationship. In the Summer 2007 issue of *UniverCity News*, Harris noted the fiduciary relationship between community residents and the university. He explained that, while UniverCity has deservedly been lauded for its environmental standards,

“What’s less recognized is that every cent of net income generated by the Trust flows directly to SFU in support of teaching and research. In essence, everyone who becomes part of the community at UniverCity is not just ‘buying into’ a unique development but also helping to sustain a major university.”<sup>161</sup>

One theoretical benefit of developments that are anchored by a university is the ability to share resources, and the residents that are “buying in” to UniverCity do receive privileges commensurate with living adjacent to a university. In the *Development Concept Plan*, SFU planned to provide community members with access to the Art Gallery, Archaeology Museum, athletic events, day and evening credit and non-credit courses, guest lectures, children’s programs, the University Library, indoor and outdoor recreation programs, bicycle and pedestrian paths, and “interaction with the University in general.”<sup>162</sup> Gordon Harris noted that an advantage of this sharing of resources, aside from the fact that students and residents can interact at these places, is that the facilities do not need to be duplicated for the community.<sup>163</sup> The relationship between education and the community is further echoed by the new elementary school that is slated for the High Street area. An existing SFU building is to be

---

<sup>160</sup> Hearn, “UniverCity: Where Town Meets Gown.”

<sup>161</sup> *UniverCity News* Number 05, Summer 2007.

<sup>162</sup> *Development Plan Concept*.

<sup>163</sup> Gordon Harris, interview with the author, April 9, 2008.

retrofitted into an elementary school to end the practice of busing children down the mountain. Harris said that the school was approved in April 2008 and aims to open in September 2010. It will help make UniverCity “a real community” rather than “just another suburb.” Also helping in this regard, a 23,000 square foot grocery store is set to open in June 2009.<sup>164</sup>

As one of its marketing devices, UniverCity has developed a logo that reflects the “Four Cornerstones” on which the development is based. The cornerstones take the oft-cited three tenets of sustainability – environment, equity, and economy – and adds a fourth: education. The fact that education, defined in this context as “a community focus on lifelong learning” is included among the principles of a community that is “sustainable” – in the truest senses of the term, including not just green buildings techniques, but meaning a community that can maintain itself in the long-term – is significant.<sup>165</sup> The university is interwoven into the name “UniverCity,” into the Celtic knot logo, and into the most basic premise of the new community. Additionally, the *Urban Design & Master Plan* shows this intertwined relationship as a Venn diagram composed of four interlocking circles (this will be discussed further in Chapter 6).

Among the ten working principles that are included in the Urban Design & Master Plan, several of the points relate to the relationship between the new UniverCity community and SFU. For example, the UniverCity development aims to “Enhance university life, academic structures and activities” by encouraging interaction between town and gown, building on the strengths and repairing the weaknesses of the existing campus plan, providing room for the university to grow in areas adjacent to the new community, and encouraging students and faculty to be involved in the life of the community. Plans for UniverCity also make it apparent that the impressive array of sustainable and green features are meant to be inspirational as well as educational to residents and to the many visitors and experts who will look to UniverCity as a model sustainable community. In this sense, this new development will serve as a “laboratory” that can be shared with the university and with the world.<sup>166</sup>

Development occurs along an east-west spine within a highly constrained ring road. Geometrically, it looks like the new development is completing a circle that started with the university. The pieces fit together and are joined – and they are isolated on a mountaintop surrounded by conservation land. The relationship between UniverCity and SFU is expressed

---

<sup>164</sup> Ibid.

<sup>165</sup> “4 Cornerstones,” UniverCity website.

<sup>166</sup> *Urban Design & Master Plan for UniverCity: The Community at Simon Fraser*, 4.

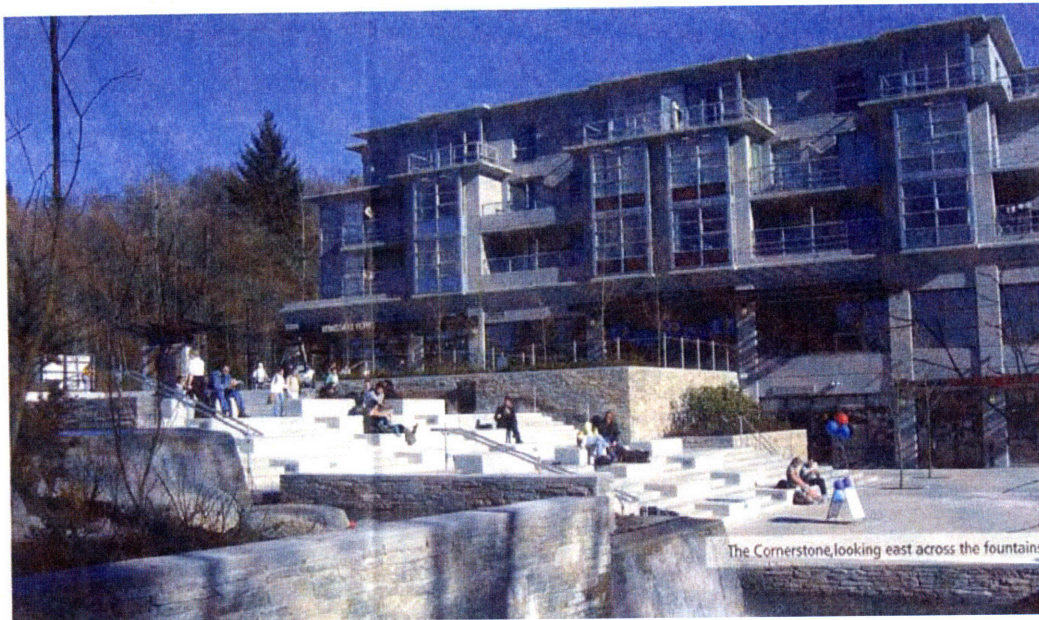
in the physical layout of the place and in the words that are used to describe these places. Two specific sites that highlight this town/gown relationship are the UniverCity High Street and the Town Square. The High Street is the location of the Cornerstone and all other commercial and retail uses. In both form and intention, it extends the campus plan into the UniverCity community. The High Street extends the linear axis of the SFU campus, forming one east-west spine that connects the campus to the town. Additionally, the High Street can be closed for special events, which is a function that is often played by a quad or a commons in a university campus. Using a street as the important public place in a community is not a new concept—it is the traditional role of a High Street or a Main Street—but it is one that is an essential part of walkable, urban-style communities. Just as the campus' Main Mall is punctuated by the Academic Quadrangle, the High Street is punctuated by the Town Square, which is sometimes referred to as the "Town and Gown Square." The *Urban Design & Master Plan* emphasizes this site as the focus of the UniverCity community "where 'town meets gown.'" Bordered by mixed-use university/community buildings including "public-oriented" university buildings, such as a conference center, the square also contains a bus stop, performance spaces, restaurant patios, and a prominent water feature.<sup>167</sup> In 2007, the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects awarded the "Town and Gown Square and Streetscape Public Realm" project, designed by PWL Partnership Landscape Architects, an award of National Merit.<sup>168</sup> The competition jury commented, "The design, complemented by night lighting, adds to the quality of the campus."<sup>169</sup>

---

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>168</sup> <http://www.csla.ca/csla-professional-awards-of-excellence.php>

<sup>169</sup> SFU Campus Planning and Development website, <http://www.sfu.ca/cpd/news/TownAndGownSquare.html>, accessed March 16, 2008.



***Figure 3.41: The Town Square, in the foreground, and The Cornerstone mixed-use building, in the background, represent the primary public spaces for town/gown interaction. Based on the stories and images in the community newsletters, one can conclude that this area has been well-used so far.***

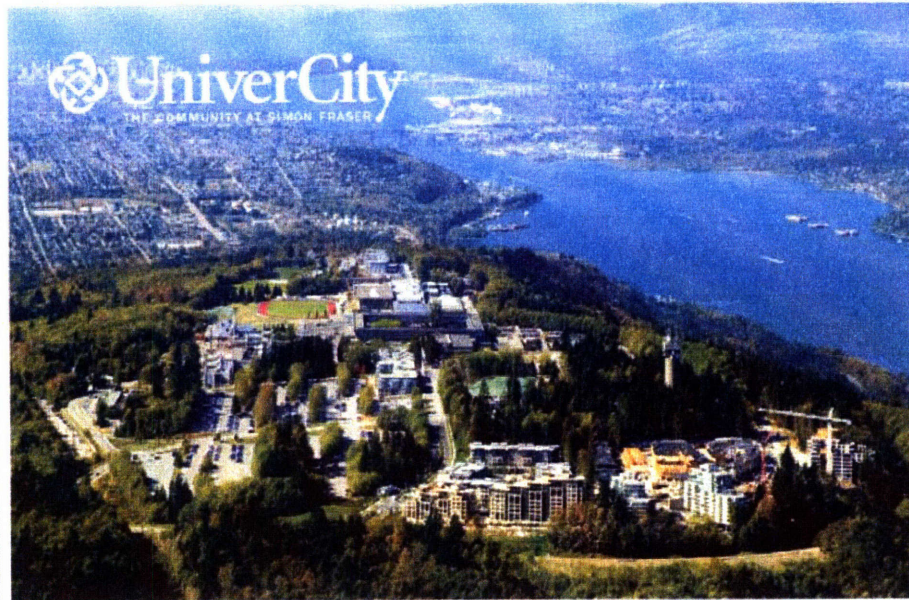
### **The Relationship between the New College Town and the Existing Community**

The isolated location of SFU and UniverCity atop Burnaby Mountain makes it very difficult to draw broader lessons about the project implementation. There was certainly conflict in the 1960s between the City of Burnaby, which wanted the mountain land back, and the university, which wanted to keep its valuable asset. After the negotiations and land swap agreement in the mid-1990s, however, there has been very little resistance from the Burnaby community. The fact that there was no existing community on the mountain and that everyone who moves to UniverCity knows what they are getting when they move there, is a crucial part of mitigating town/gown friction.

### **Where Are They Now?**

At the beginning of 2008, a community of “charter residents” lives in UniverCity, including SFU President Michael Stevenson and his wife who bought a condominium in the One University Crescent neighborhood. The Cornerstone Building has been built and is occupied by a variety of small independent business owners. As Michael Geller, former president of the SFU Community Trust explained, “There was a belief that unique businesses

would contribute to a unique place.”<sup>170</sup> UniverCity has also won several major awards, including the 2008 National Planning Excellence Award for Innovation in Green Community Planning from the American Planning Association. Additionally, an active Community Association has been established to provide social activities and services for residents. The Community Update newsletters, full of photographs of children trick-or-treating and building snowmen reveal UniverCity to be a vibrant community atop Burnaby Mountain.



*Figure 3.42: This postcard offers another view of UniverCity, as it overlooks the Burrard Inlet in Vancouver. This photograph provides a good perspective of the grade changes between the UniverCity project in the foreground and the SFU buildings and playing fields that are terraced behind them.*

---

<sup>170</sup> *UniverCity News* Number 03 (Summer 2005).

# UniverCity

THE COMMUNITY AT SIMON FRASER

November 2007

## Community Update

### President's Message

I'd like to start by thanking everyone for your patience as we continue to grow UniverCity. I'd also like to encourage everyone to use caution when walking in construction traffic areas, especially along High Street where the visibility can be rather poor when the fog rolls in.

House, Bamboo, and a licenced family restaurant which will overlook the Town Square. I am very pleased to tell you that UniverCity was recently awarded the "Innovations in Creating a More Livable and Sustainable Region" award from the Urban Development Institute. This

Construction on 'The Hub at UniverCity' is well underway, as are unit sales. If you are interested in learning more about the project, please visit Liberty Home's sales centre located next to the site, on the Mews level of the Cornerstone building. As many of you know, The Hub will be home to our community grocery store, the opening of which is slated for early 2009. I am pleased to report that over the next few months the Cornerstone will offer a wider variety of food services. Many of you are already enjoying meals at the Crisp Salad Company, and soon you'll have the Noodle

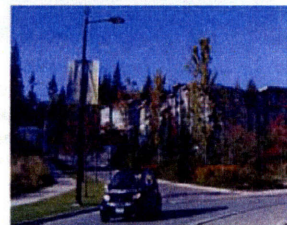


award is granted to the development which, including its urban public spaces, has made a significant and innovative contribution to advancing metro Vancouver's objectives of protecting the Green Zone,

achieving a compact region, promoting complete communities, increasing transportation choices for transit, pedestrian and cyclists and enhancing the overall quality of urban development.

Sincerely,

Gordon Harris  
President & CEO  
SFU Community Trust



ABOVE ALL, A COMMUNITY BY DESIGN.

Figure 3.43: The images and words on the first page of this November 2007 newsletter illustrate the character of UniverCity.





## Chapter 4 - Comparative Study 1: Mapping the Town/Gown Relationships of the Four Cases

“It is about creating walkable places that are sustainable and gratifying on a human scale.” – Robert Chapman, Traditional Neighborhood Development Partners<sup>1</sup>

~~~~~

The Ohio State University, the University of Connecticut, Hendrix College, and Simon Fraser University are very different universities, with different histories and missions, student bodies and academic specialties. Columbus, Storrs, Conway, and Burnaby are very different places, lying at different places along the rural to urban spectrum and located at both coasts and in the middle of the North American continent. Although it is these different contexts that imbue cities, towns, campuses, and neighborhoods with their unique sense of place, it is possible to compare these cases across contexts, revealing the differences and surprising similarities between the developments of their “new college towns.” What does the urban design of these new “college towns” tell us about these places?

The report *Communities of Opportunity: Smart Growth Strategies for Colleges and Universities* by Ayers | Saint | Gross and NACUBO suggests a helpful list of “smart growth development strategies” at college and university campuses. These strategies can be applied to new “college town” developments that are built at the town/gown edge. The four general strategies are:

- “Creates enduring, vibrant, and accessible places;”
- “Realizes fiscal benefits for both the institution and the community;”
- “Fosters greater cooperation between the institution and the community;” and
- “Contributes to a healthy and sustainable campus.”<sup>2</sup>

The focus in this chapter on the physical qualities of the developments and the urban design of the places reflects the first strategy and, to some extent, the fourth strategy. The second and third strategy will be discussed in Chapter 5.

The report proposes that colleges should make a conscious choice to “pursue a program to build enduring, memorable places that seek to meet multiple institutional goals,” rather than simply the most basic and functional buildings. Furthermore, the report notes, “Buildings as well as the physical space between buildings – streets, sidewalks, plazas, parks, or greens –

---

<sup>1</sup> Chapman is developing The Village at Hendrix. Quoted in Alan Finder, “Rural College Seek New Edge and Urbanize,” *New York Times*, February 9, 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Ayers | Saint | Gross, *Communities of Opportunity: Smart Growth Strategies for Colleges and Universities* (National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO), August 16, 2007), 15-31.

contribute greatly toward what makes campuses, cities, and towns memorable throughout the world” and posits a list of ten design principles that such college-related projects should adopt:

1. Form: Well-defined outdoor “rooms” or “corridors” should add to the existing campus and the surrounding community.
2. Unity: New development should physically connect to and strengthen the existing campus forms.
3. Completing the Existing: Infill buildings on difficult sites should complete outdoor spaces. Completion of such spaces supports the campus as an expression of the college’s identity.
4. Reuse Old Buildings: The combination of old and new adds vibrancy and interest to the campus.
5. Mixed-Use Building: Buildings that support a variety of uses create vibrant places, can help connect campus and community, and help solve transportation challenges.
6. Interconnections: As appropriate, the campus should provide for connections with surrounding communities.
7. Uniqueness of Place: New construction should acknowledge and build upon attributes such as materials and building forms that make the campus unique and recognizable.
8. Compactness: Campus should develop at densities and with a mix of uses that add to campus life and provide environmental benefit by preserving natural areas.
9. Mobility: Campuses are unique in their ability to accommodate pedestrian and bike circulation as a means to contribute toward the resolution of transportation challenges. Access to transit and shuttle services help relieve pressure to accommodate the automobile.
10. Sustainability: Institutions should take advantage of sustainable building technology and siting, as exemplified by the LEED rating system.<sup>3</sup>

Likewise, the *Urban Design and Master Plan for UniverCity* at Simon Fraser University, completed by the Vancouver-based firm Hotson Bakker Boniface Haden, suggests ten working principles as a framework for the project:

1. Enhance university life, academic structures, and activities.
2. Create a model sustainable community that educates and inspires.
3. Maximize the long term value of the endowment fund.
4. Encourage opportunities for community economic development.
5. Create a healthy, safe, livable, and complete community.
6. Provide an appropriate mix of housing types and tenures.
7. Provide a full range of transportation choices.
8. Preserve and improve the natural heritage of Burnaby Mountain.
9. Design buildings and public spaces that respond to the local context.
10. Provide sustainable, low-cost resource infrastructure and buildings.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 16.

<sup>4</sup> Hotson Bakker Boniface Haden, *Urban Design & Master Plan for UniverCity, The Community at Simon Fraser*, 2003.

Based on these two sets of principles – and the author’s study of the four cases – a set of six new design principles for new college towns has been generated. They are a lens through which we can analyze the four cases and better understand their role as “placemaking” projects.

1. Fit the new college town to the scale and character of the campus and the existing community.
2. Adopt an appropriate town/gown edge condition.
3. Use public spaces and main streets as organizing attributes.
4. Develop an architectural style and design principles that reflect the language of the existing place.
5. Plan with sensitivity to the natural and human environment of the place.
6. Serve as a model.

The first four design principles are arranged in descending order: first considering the overall spatial relationship between the new town and the campus and the edge between the two, and then, the organization of streets and public spaces and the architectural style and design principles of the built form. The last two principles concern the ways in which the mission and goals of the projects are reflected in their physical forms – the concern with sustainability and fitting into the natural and human environments and the desire to develop projects that can serve as models for future town/gown planning efforts. These principles will help planners to evaluate the extent to which the form and character of the new project matches that of its campus and its town.

#### **1. Fit the new college town to the scale and character of the campus and the existing community.**

The first and most important quality that a new college town should possess is an intimate relationship with its context, that is, with its college campus. When the spatial relationship between the new projects and their adjacent campuses are considered most broadly, it should be possible to discern that the new town is related to the campus. One way to consider this attribute is to examine the location and size of the project relative to the campus. The diagrams on the following pages (Figures 4.1-4.4) show each new college town project inserted into a plan with the campus map and some of the existing street grid. The final diagram (Figure 4.5) shows all four plans at the same scale.



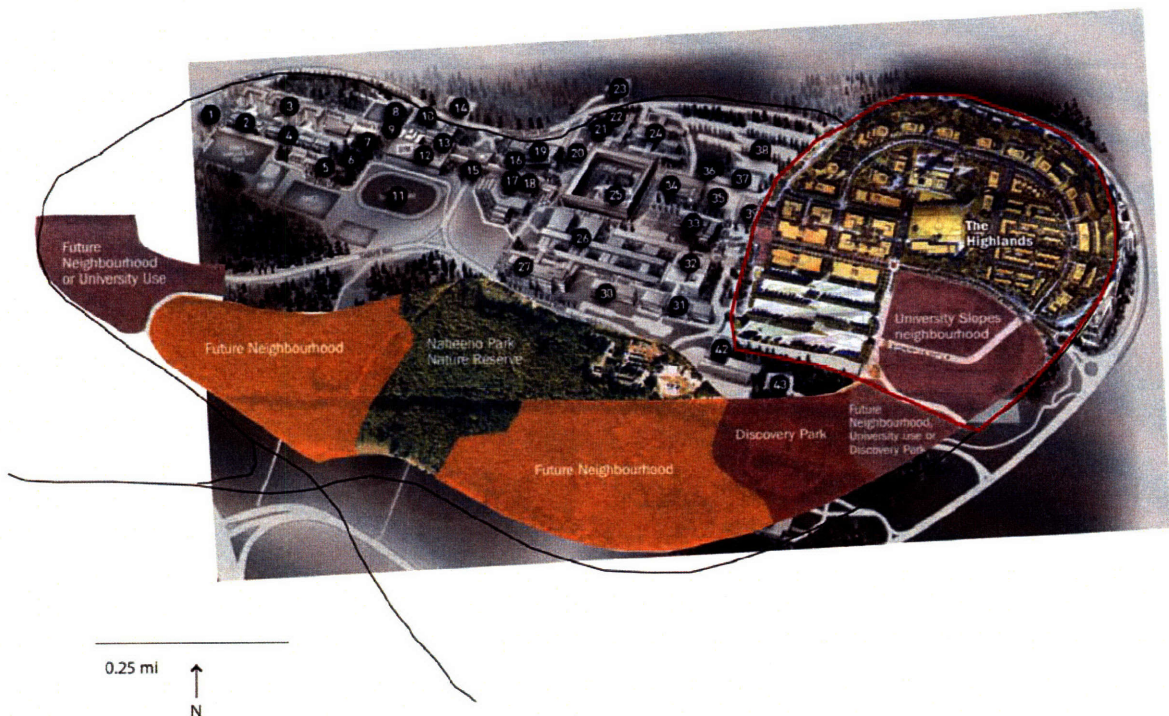
**Figure 4.1:** *The plan of the South Campus Gateway (color) inserted into a plan with The Ohio State University campus (grayscale) reveals that the “new college town” is really only a small district adjacent to the campus. Although it is a stretch to consider it a “town,” the development on the four city blocks is strategically located at the southern edge of the High Street corridor, suggesting that development might spread north a few blocks to the main campus entrance. (Diagram by the author, with campus map and project site plan)*



*Figure 4.2: The plan of Storrs Center (color) inserted into a plan of the University of Connecticut (grayscale) shows that the new project is located across Storrs Road from most of the campus. By siting the project directly across from the public high school and near the Post Office and Town Hall, the planners are reinforcing the idea that the new village center belongs both to the campus community and to the town community. (Diagram by the author, with campus map and project site plan)*

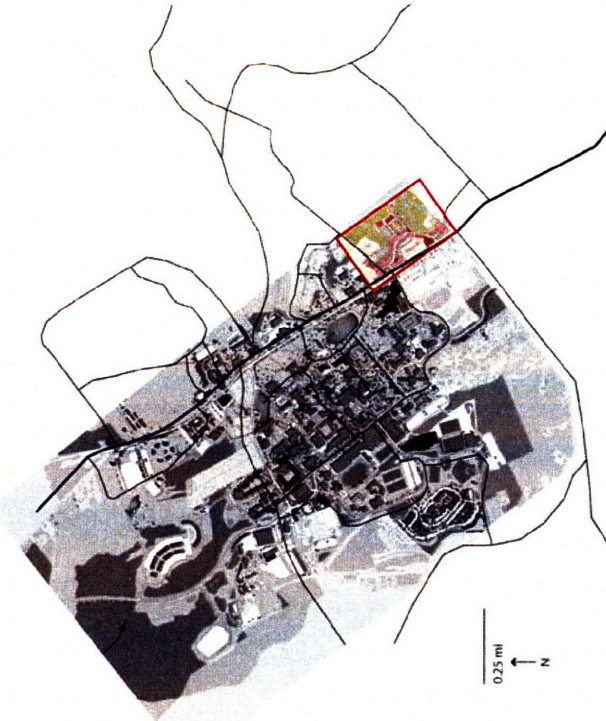


*Figure 4.3: The plan of The Village at Hendrix (color) inserted into a plan of the Hendrix College campus and the existing street grid of Conway clearly reveals that the new village is about the same size as the campus. The campus and the village have a nice symmetrical relationship with a clearly defined edge at Harkrider Street. Both the campus and the village connect to the street grid, yet they remain separate from it with internal networks of streets and quadrangles. (Diagram by the author, with campus map and project site plan)*

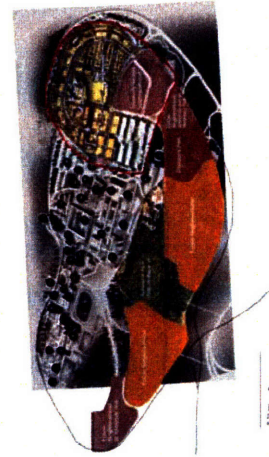


**Figure 4.4:** *The plan of UniverCity (color) inserted into a plan of the Simon Fraser University campus (grayscale) illustrates the symbiotic relationship between the two projects that are located within the ring road atop Burnaby Mountain. The new community is physically separated from the campus and a more fine grain mix between the two might have been beneficial in this case. (Diagram by the author, with campus map and project site plan)*

University of Connecticut + Storrs Center



Simon Fraser University + UniverCity



The Ohio State University + South Campus Gateway



Hendrix College + The Village at Hendrix



**Figure 4.5: When all four diagrams (4.1-4.4) are drawn at the same scale, the differences in size between the four campuses and the four new projects become obvious. Each college and town pair has designed a new project that meets its needs, given the size of the campus and, particularly, given the character of the town. (Diagram by the author)**



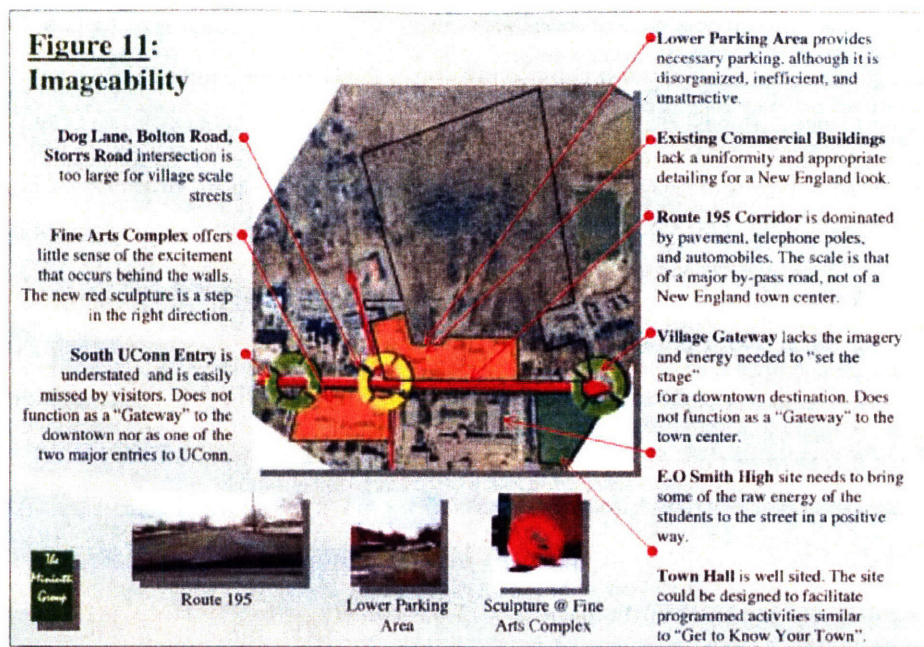
It is clear from these images that at Ohio State and UConn, the new college town is small relative to a campus that takes up a large area of land. The South Campus Gateway project at Ohio State particularly stands out as being a much smaller-scale project than the others. Since the South Campus Gateway is intended to be just one part of the revitalization of High Street, it is to be hoped that this piece will not be freestanding but that it will jump-start a corridor-wide “college town” area. Furthermore, the main reason that the Storrs Center is so small is because the project proponents wanted to ensure that most of the land on the site is preserved and left undeveloped. It is possible, however, that if the Storrs Center project is successful, that it might expand to include some of this open space or other outlying parcels on the eastern side of Storrs Road, thus ensuring that the town is more physically entwined with the campus. At Hendrix and Simon Fraser, the new college towns are essentially the same size as their much more compact campuses. The second *Communities of Opportunity* principle suggests, “New development should physically connect to and strengthen the existing campus form.”<sup>5</sup> Although the projects each “complete” their campuses by filling in a perceived gap in the way of a college town, the UniverCity project quite literally completes the existing form by completing the circle of development within the ring road.

## **2. Adopt an appropriate town/gown edge condition.**

The next principle refers to the edge and linkages between the campus and the new town. Considerations of the town/gown edge should also have been considered in the early site selection and planning processes.

---

<sup>5</sup> *Communities of Opportunity: Smart Growth Strategies for Colleges and Universities*, 16.



**Figure 4.6: This image from the 2002 Downtown Mansfield Master Plan shows the consideration for "imageability" and the advantages and disadvantages of the location along Storrs Road in the early stages of the Storrs Center project. (Source: Downtown Mansfield Master Plan, p.11)**

The sixth *Communities of Opportunity* principle suggests this need for interconnectedness: "As appropriate, the campus should provide for connections with surrounding communities."<sup>6</sup> Although fine-grain mixing is not appropriate for every campus/town interaction, it is important that these projects are very conscious of the extent to which they do or do not knit together with the existing street grid at every opportunity. The South Campus Gateway is within a well-established grid system in Columbus, and it responds to this context. The Village at Hendrix is also effective at connecting with the grid system in Conway. The other two projects are far more isolated and do not have much of a road system with which to connect.

These projects also make an effort to connect the new development to the existing context through transportation systems. The ninth *Communities of Opportunity* principle posits: "Campuses are unique in their ability to accommodate pedestrian and bike circulation as a means to contribute towards the resolution of transportation challenges. Access to transit and shuttle services help relieve pressure to accommodate the automobile."<sup>7</sup> Similarly, the seventh

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

UniverCity principle suggests that the projects “Provide a full range of transportation choices.” Techniques for this include: “Create a multi-modal transportation system;” “Create spaces that are pedestrian-oriented and automobile tolerant;” “Minimize land consumption due to transportation;” “Create a pedestrian and bicycle oriented transportation system within the Ring Road;” and “Develop physical linkages between Burnaby Mountain and neighboring residential areas.”<sup>8</sup> Storrs Center, The Village at Hendrix, and UniverCity all appear to make a special effort to make places that are pedestrian-oriented, so that it is possible for people to park their cars and then walk around the “college town” and the campus.” All of the projects are in walking distance of the campuses. Although the South Campus Gateway is part of the much larger Ohio State campus and a parking garage was an important factor in the development, it is located along the important High Street corridor along which several city bus routes run. As was discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, the form of the town/gown edge can play a significant role in the college town. The fine-grain mixing and sharing of campus facilities and resources that is especially prominent at The Village at Hendrix and Simon Fraser seems to be the most effective means to facilitating a cohesive place where students and faculty as well as community members feel a sense of ownership.

### **3. Use public spaces and main streets as organizing attributes.**

The arrangement and distribution of buildings and public spaces is one way that a new college town can reflect the spirit and intention of the campus without actually matching it. These new places are neither campuses nor are they integral parts of the town; they are a sort of hybrid and their public spaces are one way to manifest this condition. Thus, the public spaces that tie the project together, particularly at the edge, are important formal attributes of these new places. The first *Communities of Opportunity* principle suggests that the project focus on “form,” defined in this case as: “Well-defined outdoor ‘rooms’ or ‘corridors’ should add to the existing campus and the surrounding community.”<sup>9</sup> A similar concept is taken up in the UniverCity principle #5—“Create a healthy, safe, livable, and complete community”—and it also mentions the need to “Bring life to streets and public spaces all hours of the day;” “Enhance

---

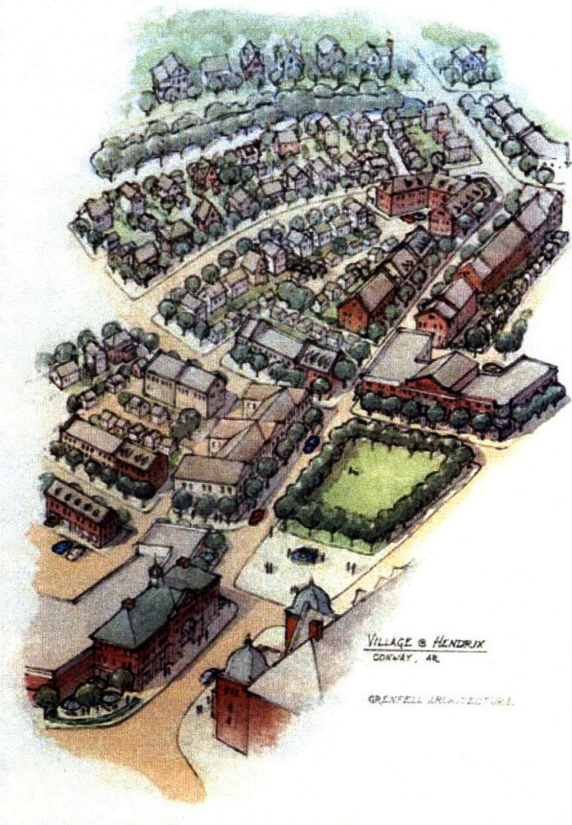
<sup>8</sup> *Urban Design & Master Plan for UniverCity, The Community at Simon Fraser.*

<sup>9</sup> *Communities of Opportunity: Smart Growth Strategies for Colleges and Universities, 16.*

personal safety and security of property through design;” “Provide new park spaces and schools;” and “Incorporate design features that contribute to a distinctive sense of place.”<sup>10</sup>



4.7



4.8

<sup>10</sup> Urban Design & Master Plan for UniverCity, The Community at Simon Fraser.



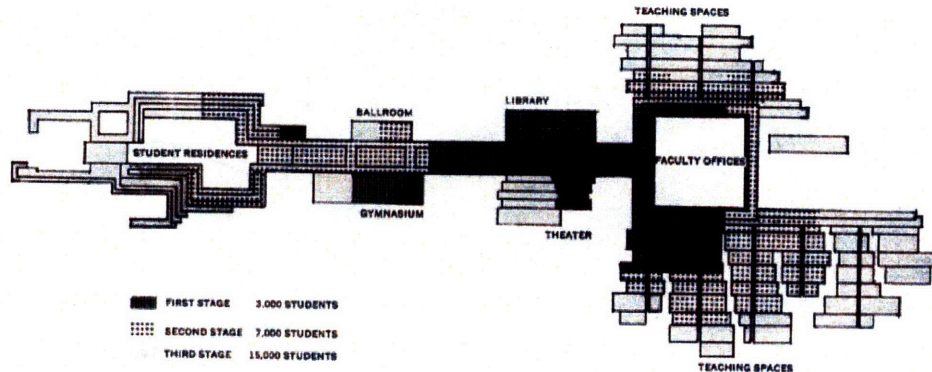
4.9



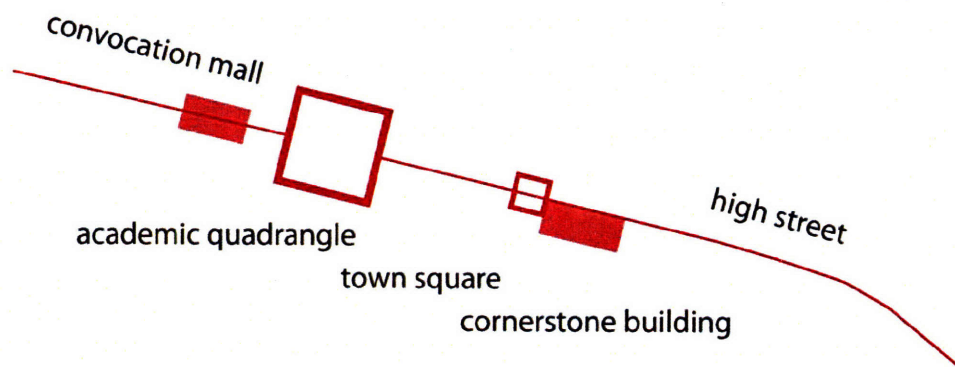
4.10

*Figures 4.7-4.10: These renderings illustrate the primary public spaces that are planned for the new projects. The image of the pedestrianized street at the South Campus Gateway (4.7) is a vibrant and urban one, while the watercolor images of the public space at the Village at Hendrix (4.8) and the Village Square at Storrs Center (4.9) reflect a more intimate, traditional view of a small town. The Town Square at UniverCity (4.10) specifically shows members of the town and the gown interacting at this central public space. (Sources: Dixon, "Campus Partners and The Ohio State University," p.46-47; Storrs Center newsletter; The Village at Hendrix TND Plan, p. 2; Urban Design & Master Plan for UniverCity)*

The public spaces and forms of the campus are sometimes mirrored in the plan for the new “college town.”



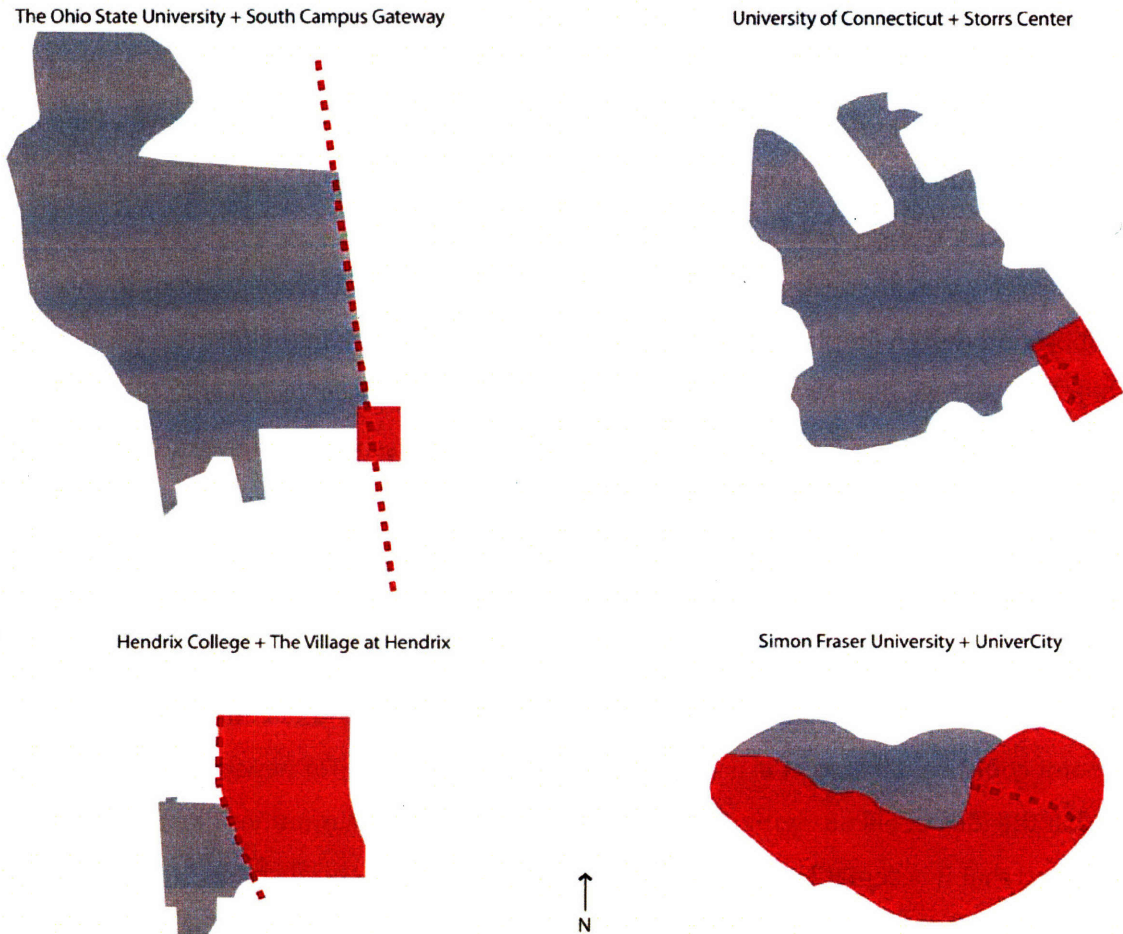
3.5 Simon Fraser University, Burnaby/Vancouver (B.C.), plan by Arthur Erickson (Erickson and Massey); quadrangle (Faculty Offices) by Zoltan Kiss. (*AFor* 12-1965, p. 13)



*Figures 4.11-4.12: Erickson and Massey’s plan for Simon Fraser University (4.11) shows the linear form of the campus punctuated by the large Academic Quadrangle. Diagram 4.12 illustrates how the campus spaces are echoed in form and intention in the plan for UniverCity. (Sources: Muthesius, p. 192; diagram by the author)*

In addition to the organization of the public spaces within the plan, sometimes the public realm is organized around a main street. The South Campus Gateway at Ohio State is clearly conceived of as one piece of a larger “main street” district—the University District portion of Columbus’ High Street. None of the other three plans focus on a “main street” concept in the sense of tying the “college town” project into a larger linear district. The other three plans, which are all based around a village concept, have an internal main street of some sort, around which much of the development is organized and on which the mixed-use and commercial buildings are centered. The fifth *Communities of Opportunity* principle even suggests a particular emphasis on “Mixed-Use Building”: “Buildings that support a variety of uses create vibrant places, can help connect campus and community, and help solve transportation

challenges.”<sup>11</sup> In the UniverCity plan, this internal main street is also called “High Street” and at Storrs it is called “Village Street.”



*Figure 4.13: These diagrams of the four projects, all at the same scale, show the land area of the campuses (in gray) and of the new college towns (in red). Additionally, the internal or external “main streets” of the projects are shown in red. (Diagram by the author)*

**4. Develop an architectural style and design principles that reflect the language of the existing place.**

Defining the architectural style of buildings and the physical character of spaces is an important part of creating a new, master-planned neighborhood. The look and feel of towns shapes the way residents and visitors think about their communities, and design guidelines are one way to codify this style. Many communities, old and new, use design guidelines as part of their zoning ordinance to help enforce basic elements of urban form—such as building height

<sup>11</sup> *Communities of Opportunity: Smart Growth Strategies for Colleges and Universities*, 16.

and density, the distance buildings can be set-back from the street, and rules on signage and paint colors. Cities and towns sometimes enforce design guidelines through location-based overlay districts. Cambridge, Massachusetts, for instance, has separate guidelines for Harvard Square, Central Square, and University Park at MIT. A pragmatic reason for utilizing design guidelines for new communities is that the design and construction of the buildings is often completed by several different firms of architects and builders. The project planners want to ensure that residential and commercial properties look different, but that they all “fit” into the overall look of the new place.

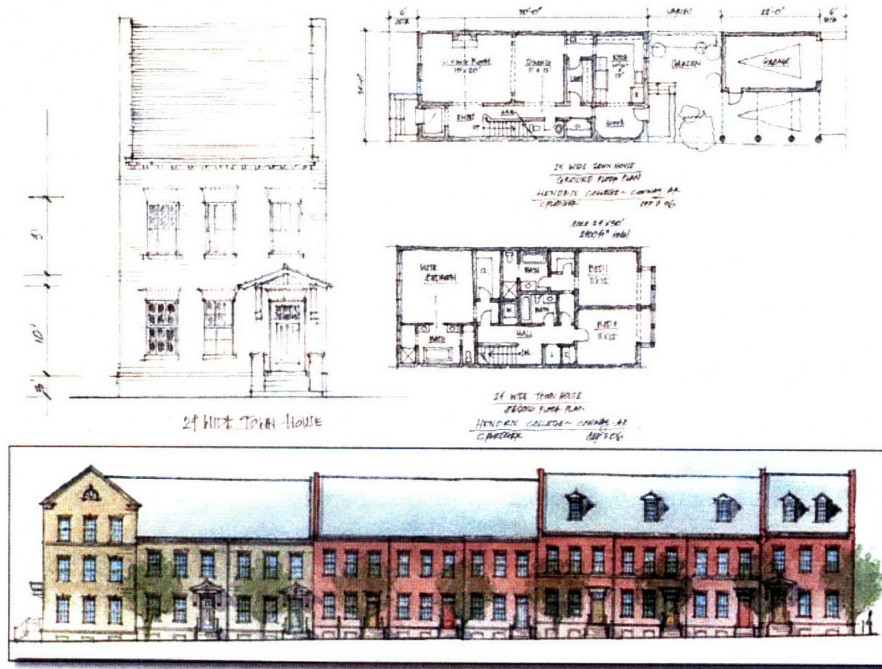
Projects that are designed according to the tenets of New Urbanist and traditional neighborhood design employ strict design guidelines, sometimes in the form of a pattern book. In their treatise *Suburban Nation: The Rise of Sprawl and the Decline of the American Dream*, Andres Duany, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, and Jeff Speck address the issue of design guidelines that impose traditional architecture, noting “it is the architectural style of most Traditional Neighborhood Developments that causes them to be dismissed as ‘nostalgic’ by much of the design profession.” They defend the use of design codes by suggesting that Modernist buildings are not well-adapted to typical American residential uses, so they use traditional architecture to avoid the worst extreme of all – “the middle ground of compromise.” Although this point could be debated, it is useful to point out the audience for new towns. The authors note that the idea of encouraging Americans to live in dense communities like this is a big hurdle and that it acceptable to stick with more familiar architectural styles: “It is hard enough convincing suburbanites to accept mixed uses, varied-income housing, and public transit without throwing flat roofs and corrugated metal siding in to the equation.” Consequently, the two case study projects that are most distinctly New Urbanist – Storrs Center and The Village at Hendrix – both employ pattern books and design standards based on neotraditional design.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> Andres Duany, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, and Jeff Speck, *Suburban Nation: The Rise of Sprawl and the Decline of the American Dream* (New York: North Point Press, 2000), 209-211.



**SAMPLE FLOOR PLANS: Townhouse**



Copyright © 2006 Traditional Neighborhood Development Partners, LLC SECTION 5 Page 10

**Figure 4.14:** This sheet from *The Village at Hendrix Preliminary Architecture & Landscaping Patternbook* shows sample floorplans and facades for townhouses that are distinctly neotraditional in style. (Source: *The Village at Hendrix TND Plan, TNDP, section 5, page 10*)

The SFU Community Trust has been very cognizant of the architectural style of UniverCity, primarily because the residential community will be juxtaposed with a landmark of Modern architecture. In this case, the project planners wrote a set of design principles that will guide the architectural character of the project, even as it is built by different firm over a period of time. The *Urban Design and Master Plan for UniverCity* notes, “Building form is compatible with the linearity and horizontality of the campus, allowing for individual expression in new projects, while the overall development reads as a ‘family of buildings.’”<sup>13</sup> The South Campus Gateway is much smaller in scale than the other projects, so there was no need to develop a style for an entire neighborhood. The project was designed and built as a unified whole in an eclectic style, but without design guidelines.

For these projects at the edge of a campus, it is of particular importance that the character of the new place relates to the character of the campus. As mentioned above, UniverCity has specifically tried to develop a style for the dense urban community that is in

<sup>13</sup> *Urban Design & Master Plan for UniverCity, The Community at Simon Fraser.*

concert with the campus, since the campus and the town exist in isolation on the mountaintop. The UniverCity architecture does not attempt to replicate the Modernist aesthetic of the historic campus, but the design favors concrete and glass, towers and terraces more so than might be welcome in other communities. The Village at Hendrix, which has developed a pattern language based on beloved residential neighborhoods in Conway and Little Rock, Arkansas, is being designed as a rather traditional American village. This design fits with the scale and urban form of the small, residential liberal arts college next door. Similarly, it makes sense that the pastoral New England campus at the University of Connecticut would emulate the urban design principles of the rural New England village. Using a similar scale and massing of development and variety and density of landscaping are tools that can help these new neighborhoods acquire a “sense of place” that resonates with the spirit of its college campus.

Although the level of detail prescribed by The Village at Hendrix patternbook seems extreme, it is nonetheless necessary to prescribe the architectural style of these college town projects. The need to develop an architectural style for new college town projects also extends to the fact that the new place acts in some ways as an expression of the college’s identity. For example, if The Village at Hendrix were built according to the land use and regulatory plans, but the buildings were not “neo-traditional” or similar to the vernacular architecture of Conway and Little Rock, Arkansas, then the entire village would look out of place. That is, the need for the new project to “fit” within its context extends to three dimensions.

If the new projects were merely appendages to the campus, then they would not realize the full potential that is possible with the creation of a college town. For example, the seventh *Communities of Opportunity* principle posits, “New construction should acknowledge and build upon attributes such as materials and building forms that make the campus unique and recognizable.”<sup>14</sup> Thus, the university has an opportunity with the new project to capitalize on using the “college town” to both reflect its unique sense of place and, if it so desires, to redefine itself by redefining its physical design. American college campuses in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are in a constant state of construction—so much so that alumni may find their alma mater’s campus nearly unrecognizable behind its shiny new science center, student center, arts center, and other development. The difference with these four projects and those like them—and also why these projects are evidence of a new phenomenon—is that the new town is designed to enhance the

---

<sup>14</sup> *Communities of Opportunity: Smart Growth Strategies for Colleges and Universities*, 16.

quality of life on the campus without actually intervening in the physical form of the campus. Thus, there is an opportunity to use an architectural style, organizing principles, and fabric of this new place to create a look and a feel that complements both the campus form and the town form, but that is not necessarily matching with either.

##### **5. Plan with sensitivity to the natural and human environment of the place.**

Context is important for all planning projects, which must relate to and respect their natural surroundings and the communities around them. To some extent, this is reflected in the physical planning for the projects. The most obvious community to which the plan must relate is the college or university. The list of UniverCity principles includes several points related to this idea: “Enhance university life, academic structures, and activities;” “Ensure the community has a heart which serves both the university and its residents;” “Encourage interaction between the town and gown community;” “Build upon the strengths and repair the weaknesses of the existing campus design;” “Leave room for the university to grow adjacent to the existing campus and residential areas;” and “Encourage student/faculty involvement in issues related to the new community.”<sup>15</sup>

The new college town is also obligated to be planned in a manner that is sensitive to its non-university neighbors. Ohio State has the most obvious case of needing to relate to its neighboring communities, since it is in the most urban area. The primary way that these relationships are realized through the physical space of the plans is through the placement and programming of the public spaces. As mentioned above, each project features a village square, pedestrian-friendly street, or similar space that is designed to facilitate interaction between people from all backgrounds who come to the college town. It will be important to find out the extent to which these places actually serve as neutral meeting places for a variety of users. In addition to Ohio State’s challenge due to its urban location and neighboring public housing projects, UConn must be prepared for the Storrs Center to serve not just the university and town populations, but also the teenagers who attend high school across the street from Storrs Center.

Additionally, the four projects address the broad concept of “sustainability” in several different ways. While this theme will be explored further in Chapter 6, there are a few specific

---

<sup>15</sup> *Urban Design & Master Plan for UniverCity, The Community at Simon Fraser.*

ways that concerns for sustainable development are revealed in the physical form of these projects. The tenth *Communities of Opportunity* principle further refers to sustainability: “Institutions should take advantage of sustainable building technology and siting, as exemplified by the LEED Rating system.” Additionally, the eighth *Communities of Opportunity* principle, “Compactness,” refers to the idea that the “Campus should develop at densities and with a mix of uses that add to campus life and provide environmental benefit by preserving natural areas.”<sup>16</sup> The eighth UniverCity principle refers to a similar concept: “Preserve and improve the natural heritage of Burnaby Mountain.” The UniverCity plan suggests ways to do this: “Manage storm water flows to mimic natural drainage and protect fish habitat on reaches of Stoney Creek and other watersheds;” “Support riparian corridors and urban wildlife habitat;” and “Protect environmentally sensitive areas.”<sup>17</sup> The Burnaby Mountain site is a rather special case in that it is located in a pristine natural landscape, the decision had already been made to intensely develop the top of the mountain in exchange for preserving the rest of the mountain in a conservation area, and the Vancouver region is a tremendously environmentally conscious area. In an interview with the author, Gordon Harris, President and CEO of the SFU Community Trust, suggested that the precedents of UniverCity could indeed be extrapolated to other contexts with less dramatic natural environments. For example, Harris explained that, although most college campuses are not located on mountaintops, there are many places that are located at the heads of watersheds and that must be particularly conscious of their impact on regional water systems. In the case of UniverCity, the Stony Creek watershed (referred to in the principle) starts at the top of Burnaby Mountain and the project team has made a commitment to a very high standard – that water leaving the hilltop must be of better quality than it was pre-development.<sup>18</sup> Both Storrs Center and The Village at Hendrix were explicitly designed to preserve a portion of the land on their sites as natural areas. Storrs Center is only building on 35% of the 47.7-acre site, allowing the remaining 30.7 acres to be preserved as open space. Since the site in Conway is in rather poor ecological condition, The Village at Hendrix is not conserving as much land and the project team has developed an Ecological Restoration Plan to restore some of the wetlands at the edges of the site.

---

<sup>16</sup> *Communities of Opportunity: Smart Growth Strategies for Colleges and Universities*, 16.

<sup>17</sup> *Urban Design & Master Plan for UniverCity, The Community at Simon Fraser*.

<sup>18</sup> Gordon Harris, Interview with the author, April 9, 2008. According to Harris, the impressive storm water system that allows the project to meet this high standard has been studied around the world.



**Figure 4.15:** *The Village at Hendrix Ecological Restoration Plan was developed by the firms Eco and Larson Burns Smith in September 2007. The plan aims to restore the polluted waterways at the edges of the site. (Source: Provided to author by Adam Dickinson, TNDP)*

## 6. Serve as a model.

The sixth and final design principle for new college town projects is based upon the idea that the physical design (as well as the planning processes) of the project should itself serve as a paradigm of this new type of development. UniverCity aims to serve as a model through its focus on sustainability. Its second principle is “Create a model sustainable community that educates and inspires.” This point is further explained with these points: “Use the community development as a research opportunity to ‘go tell it on the mountain;’” Provide information on innovative features to students, faculty, residents, and visitors;” “Educate suppliers, design teams, and contractors;” and “Involve neighbors in the planning of the new community.”<sup>19</sup> Hendrix College aims to inspire the rest of Conway, and other colleges and cities as well, through its focus on New Urbanism. Adherence to a rather strict pattern book, described above, is the chief method by which the planners at The Village at Hendrix are trying to set a precedent for future development. Storrs Center and the South Campus Gateway are also often discussed as setting precedents and blazing trails.

<sup>19</sup> *Urban Design & Master Plan for UniverCity, The Community at Simon Fraser.*

These principles are achieved by these four diverse projects in a variety of ways, both spectacular and mundane. For example, UniverCity has put substantial resources into its sustainability efforts. Creating a place with the highest-quality and most technologically advanced green and sustainable features is central to the project's ethos and marketing. In a more subdued manner, Storrs Center has also developed a plan for a community that practices sustainable development: all of the development is located on a dense and walkable site, while a large portion of land is preserved as open space. Likewise, while The Village at Hendrix is very consciously trying to serve as a model to other communities and to develop usable public space, the South Campus Gateway also accomplishes these goals, but it does so more subtly. The South Campus Gateway uses its process and partnership organization, more than its physical design, to inspire other projects. Some of the principles merely measure "appropriateness," which is difficult to quantify, but incredibly important. New college town projects must complement the scale and character of both the town and the campus and develop an edge condition that fits into the context. Understanding the extent to which and the manner in which new college town projects meet these principles will help planners to create places that exist better independently and as a part of the town/gown environment.

## **Chapter 5 - Comparative Study 2: Analyzing the Processes of the Four Cases**

“In the end, successful university-community partnerships don’t simply solve problems. They create new and more productive relationships among the people in our neighborhood, the city, and the university.” – Campus Partners for Community Urban Revitalization; The Ohio State University<sup>1</sup>

~~~~~

At the October 24, 2005 meeting of the Mansfield, Connecticut Town Council, the nine members of the Council had an opportunity to express their opinions on the Storrs Center Municipal Development Plan. Although the Council voted unanimously in favor of a resolution that supported the project, the members expressed some reservations about the development. Some of them had lived in the town for many years and raised their children there, and they wanted to make sure that the project would fit with the character of Storrs. Others noted concerns about water and traffic policies, but concluded that these matters could be studied later and that it was important to approve the Municipal Development Plan to keep the project moving forward. Councilman Gregory Haddad, who continues to serve on the Council and currently serves as Deputy Mayor, offered a particularly eloquent statement, noting that in his six years on the Council, he had followed the project from its inception with the HyettPalma report through all of the efforts at consensus building that aimed to ensure that the new downtown would meet the needs of different aspects of the community. Haddad said,

“It is a leap of faith like a bungee cord jump. The bungee cord is the six years of planning, the careful analysis in the MDP [Municipal Development Plan] and the creation of the Downtown Partnership and the careful environmental studies, retention plan, streets and walkways. Since the land will change hands from the University to the developer, for the first time it will be subject to local approvals and local permitting process. We have confidence in the Planning and Zoning commission and other responsible people that we have in town who judge these projects. It takes a leap of faith, you need to trust what you’ve done so far, and although I have never bungee jumped, but I will vote yes today, and I have faith that this will turn out just as we hoped.”<sup>2</sup>

This Mansfield Councilman’s observation about the “leap of faith” required by the Storrs Center project might mirror that of representatives of the towns and gowns of the other cases, as well.

---

<sup>1</sup> Stephen A. Sterrett, Campus Partners, “The University on Main Street: Commercial Revitalization in the Campus Community,” poster presentation, October 3-5, 2004.

<sup>2</sup> Regular Meeting, Mansfield Town Council, October 24, 2005.

[http://www.mansfieldct.org/town\\_files/\\_archive/agendas\\_minutes/town\\_council/2005/20051024\\_minutes.htm](http://www.mansfieldct.org/town_files/_archive/agendas_minutes/town_council/2005/20051024_minutes.htm)

Throughout the author's interviews, people involved in these projects emphasized the unprecedented nature of their projects. Although the number of these town-and-gown "college town" projects is on the rise, there remains a sense that those who are involved in them are trailblazers. None of these developments has reached its present status without significant outreach efforts, compromise, and hard work. Understanding the planning processes—the timelines, institutional structures, funding systems, land acquisition methods—and comparing the motivations for and challenges within the projects is useful to other places that are contemplating blazing their own trails in their own college towns.

## **1. Institutional Structure**

### **Comparative timeline**

The timelines of the four projects are compared in the chart on the following page. It is significant to note that all four projects started in 1995. In that year, Campus Partners was founded and a campus master plan was written at Ohio State, the Storrs Green Task Force began studying the viability of a college town project at the University of Connecticut, Duany Plater-Zyberk and Company wrote the master plan for Hendrix College that first suggested a college town, and Simon Fraser University and the City of Burnaby agreed to the land swap that would later enable the creation of UniverCity. Although the four projects have followed different trajectories, they all started at the same point: with the realization by the university and town communities that a new college town project would be mutually beneficial. It is unclear why the projects were all initiated in 1995. One could hypothesize that this correlation is partly due to demographic trends that have led to increasing enrollments at and increasing competition amongst American colleges and universities in the 1990s and 2000s. As these four colleges sought to improve their status among current and prospective students and to reinforce ties with their host communities, they each became a part of the process of hiring consultants, developing master plans, forming partnerships, setting aside land, and other steps that would lead to new college towns. Understanding these processes—which have on the whole been remarkably successful—will help educate other colleges and communities who seek to follow their lead.



|                                                     | 1870-1890                    | 1960s                        | 1995                                                           | 1996                                                                              | 1997                                                                           | 1998 | 1999                                                  | 2000                                                                       | 2001                                  |
|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Ohio State University + South Campus Gateway</b> | land grant college founded   |                              | Campus Partners founded; Campus master plan (Sasaki)           |                                                                                   | University Neighborhoods Revitalization Plan: Concept Document (EDAW) approved |      |                                                       | A Plan for High Street: Creating a 21st Century Main Street (Goody Clancy) |                                       |
| <b>University of Connecticut + Storrs Center</b>    | agricultural school founded  |                              | Storrs Green Task Force study on the viability of a town green | HyettPalma develops enhancement strategy                                          |                                                                                |      | Mayor Schor & committee travel to other college towns |                                                                            | Mansfield Downtown Partnership formed |
| <b>Hendrix College + The Village at Hendrix</b>     | liberal arts college founded |                              | Campus master plan (DPZ)                                       |                                                                                   |                                                                                |      |                                                       |                                                                            |                                       |
| <b>Simon Fraser University + UBC City</b>           |                              | "Instant" university founded | Land swap enables SFU to develop on site                       | Development Plan Concept (Moodie Consultants) and zoning approved for development |                                                                                |      | SFU Community Trust incorporated                      |                                                                            |                                       |

|                                                         | 2002                                                                                                                               | 2003                                                      | 2004                                                                          | 2005                                                             | 2006                                           | 2007                                    | 2008                                                                                                                | 2009                                        | 2010                              |
|---------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>The Ohio State University + South Campus Gateway</b> | City Council approved High Street Development + Design Guidelines (Goody Clancy); Land assembly completed for South Campus Gateway |                                                           | Building construction began for South Campus Gateway                          | South Campus Gateway opened                                      |                                                | Gordon Gee returns as OSU president     | 80% retail leased, 100% residential leased                                                                          |                                             |                                   |
| <b>University of Connecticut + Storrs Center</b>        | MDP appointed as the Municipal Development Authority                                                                               | Looney Ricks Kiss study                                   | Leyland Alliance hired                                                        | Storrs Center Municipal Development Plan approved by town + univ |                                                | Special Design District zoning approved | Break ground on parking garage                                                                                      | Phase I planned to open                     |                                   |
| <b>Hendrix College + The Village at Hendrix</b>         |                                                                                                                                    |                                                           |                                                                               | Campus master plan (DPZ)                                         | Phase I, TND Overlay Zoning, TND Plan approved |                                         | Construction on Phase I begins                                                                                      | Phase I mixed-use buildings planned to open |                                   |
| <b>Simon Fraser University + UBC City</b>               |                                                                                                                                    | Urban Design + Master Plan (Hotson Bakker Boniface Haden) | "Charter residents" move in to first neighborhood; Cornerstone building opens |                                                                  |                                                |                                         | Wins APA National Planning Excellence Award for Innovation in Green Community Plannin; Phase III in zoning hearings | Grocery store planned to open               | Elementary school planned to open |

### **Who initiated the project?**

In all four cases, the town and the gown administrations, as well as the stakeholders of both communities, now appear to be behind the projects. They have not always enjoyed such widespread support and it is critical to understand what person or organization provided the impetus to get the projects started. Ohio State President Gordon Gee spearheaded the revitalization of Columbus' High Street and University District, of which the South Campus Gateway has been the first and most visible element. As David Dixon and Peter J. Roche explain in their chapter about the project in *The University as Urban Developer: Case Studies and Analysis*, Gee came to Ohio State after serving as a senior administrator at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island (Gee later served as president of Brown and is currently in his second stint as president of Ohio State). Gee had seen the "renaissance" of Providence's College Hill neighborhood and the way that this resurgence had helped both the downtown and the universities. Dixon and Roche note that Gee "launched a series of discussions and was instrumental in bringing about early decisions that set the stage for the formation of Campus Partners." Although many people in the community, city, and university saw the need for such revitalization, "no leadership for this effort had emerged." Furthermore, "To address this lack, the president advocated that the university form a partnership with the city, with the university taking the lead in planning and funding. Gee worked with community leaders, many of whom were deeply suspicious of the university's motives and who were quick to point to a record of community removal rather than revitalization."<sup>3</sup>

In Connecticut, it seems that everyone—the administration and students at the University of Connecticut and the leadership and citizens of the Town of Mansfield—had long recognized the need to improve the character and commercial viability of the tiny Village of Storrs. The leadership that spearheaded the Storrs Center project came primarily from Mansfield's mayors. Michael Schor, who was mayor from 1997-1999, organized the initial task force that researched the viability of creating a "college town" in Storrs and developed the Mansfield Downtown Partnership. Mayor Elizabeth Patterson, who has been mayor from 1999 to the present, has continued Schor's leadership in getting the project through its early phases.

---

<sup>3</sup> David Dixon and Peter J. Roche, "Campus Partners and The Ohio State University: A Case of Enlightened Self-Interest," In *The University as Urban Developer: Case Studies and Analysis*, ed. David C. Perry and Wim Wiewel, 268-282, (Cambridge, MA: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy; Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2005), 271-272.

In both the Ohio and Connecticut projects, the leaders who created the partnership organizations (Campus Partners and the Mansfield Downtown Partnership, respectively)—which have subsequently taken the mantle of their projects—can be credited with igniting the processes that led to the mixed-use projects.

Both The Village at Hendrix and UniverCity were driven by their universities, which were trying to improve the stature, off-campus amenities, and endowments of their institutions. At Hendrix, the plans for the Village grew out of master plans for the campus, and the college began to see real potential for developing a mixed-use town on its playing fields. In this case, Andres Duany might be considered the catalyst, as his firm was hired to write the campus master plans in 1995 and in 2005 and he introduced the Hendrix and Conway communities to the ideas of a New Urbanist development. Although the City of Conway leadership has been supportive of the project, the initial motivation for the project came from the College and its president, J. Timothy Cloyd.

Similarly, SFU President John Stubbs championed the UniverCity project. According to the author's interview with Gordon Harris, the current President and CEO of the SFU Community Corporation, the "why?" was that the university wanted to create an endowment to enhance its teaching and research and the "how?" was through the creation of a sustainable community. Harris said that Stubbs had the notion of building "a complete community and a sustainable community" and that this project would be better than anything like it.<sup>4</sup> The City of Burnaby made UniverCity possible—through the initial land swap and subsequent zoning and regulatory measures—but the inspiration and efforts to make the project happen have always been led by the university itself or its subsidiary, the SFU Community Trust.

### **What is the institutional structure of the project?**

Each of these projects is the result of a complex partnership between a university administration and a municipal government, often with the participation of university stakeholders and community stakeholders, and with the interest of state or provincial governments. In order to build the project, land needed to be acquired, funds needed to be set aside, and developers, architects, and planners needed to be hired. In three of the four cases, a

---

<sup>4</sup> Gordon Harris, interview with the author, April 9, 2008.

third party “partnership” organization was formed to handle these logistics and to serve as a buffer between the university and the community, should any conflicts of interest arise.

Campus Partners for Community Urban Redevelopment, the partnership formed at Ohio State, is now an established and fairly well-known community organization that works on a variety of physical planning and social welfare projects in the University District. According to the chapter in *The University as Urban Developer*, President Gee set up a task force to determine the best institutional structure to lead the planning and funding of the revitalization efforts for High Street and the University District. The task force recommended the formation of Campus Partners “under an Ohio statute that confers on ‘community redevelopment corporations’ a wide range of public powers—most notably eminent-domain takings.”<sup>5</sup> Ohio State would provide all of the funding for the organization and would appoint the majority of the board, which would also include city and community representatives. In 2008, Campus Partners has a staff of five—who are all Ohio State employees—and it is governed by a Board of Directors that includes six “university directors,” who are officers or employees of OSU, and five “public directors,” who are not officers or employees of OSU. The governance structure was reconceived in 2006 to enable the Board of Directors to provide a more engaged presence and more direct oversight over the work of Campus Partners.<sup>6</sup>

In 2001, as a key part of the process that led to the Storrs Center, Mayor Schor and the Town of Mansfield formed the Mansfield Downtown Partnership. According to the project Fact Sheet, the MDP is “the municipal development agency charged with the development of Storrs Center on behalf of the town on Mansfield, CT.”<sup>7</sup> Although it is “an independent, non-profit organization,” it was set up by the town and reaches out to include the university—rather than the other way around. Additionally, the MDP is also now charged with coordinating the enhancement and revitalization of two other commercial areas in Mansfield, King Hill and Four Corners. As the “municipal development agency” for the Storrs Center project, MDP hired the master developer (LeylandAlliance) and other planning and design consultants for the project. The 2006 Storrs Center newsletter noted that the MDP “has resulted in over 280 paid individual, business, and organizational memberships” and that Executive Director Cynthia van Zelm holds regular meetings with residents, government officials, University personnel, and

---

<sup>5</sup> Dixon and Roche, 272.

<sup>6</sup> Campus Partners website, <http://campuspartners.osu.edu/trustees.htm>.

<sup>7</sup> *Storrs Center: Rethink Main Street* Fact Sheet.

students, maintains a website, publishes a biannual newsletter, and has worked to maintain open communication among all parties. The MDP is also a membership organization, and individuals and businesses can pay annual dues to receive voting privileges in the organization. There are six committees – Advertising and Promotion, Business Development and Retention, Finance and Administration, Membership Development, Planning and Design, and Nominating – in addition to the Executive Committee that advise the Partnership.



*Figure 5.1: Logos for Campus Partners for Community Urban Redevelopment, Mansfield Downtown Partnership, and SFU Community Trust at UniverCity.*

Hendrix is, in this regard, the outlier, since it does not have a third-party partnership. The Village at Hendrix project has required close collaboration between the college and the City of Conway, but they were able to achieve this without a partnership organization. In this case, Hendrix College owned the land and had the funds to hire the developer (Traditional Neighborhood Development Partners). Additionally, since it was on college-owned property that was not especially valuable as preserved open space and that had few residential neighbors, it seems that there was very little community resistance to the project. This case is certainly not symptomatic of all town/gown projects, but it shows that it is possible for a small liberal-arts college to undertake a large project like this on their own – with the support of municipal officials but without a large institutional structure. Additionally, the Village at Hendrix is a discrete project, whereas in some of the other cases, the partnership organizations

have responsibilities beyond the projects in questions, and they are now working on broader revitalization efforts. As a small private college, rather than a flagship public university, Hendrix has a smaller purview. Hendrix is responsible for land in its backyard, but not for the revitalization of the city – although the Village project has turned out to have far-reaching effects and has inspired New Urbanist projects in other areas of the city.

At Simon Fraser University, the university set up a third-party organization in 1999 to manage the planning and development of UniverCity. Originally called the Burnaby Mountain Community Corporation, this organization, which is a wholly owned subsidiary of the university (not an independent non-profit), is now called the SFU Community Trust. The dual goals of the Trust are to create the UniverCity community and to “establish an Endowment Fund and other sources of revenue” to support the university. In this case, the initial impetus for the project came from the university – which wanted both to develop a residential community to enhance life on the mountaintop and to make money to support the academic needs of the university. According to the author’s interview with Gordon Harris, President and CEO of the Trust, the Trust allows the development of UniverCity to take place at arm’s length from the university. SFU is not directly developing the land, but rather a team of professionals with experience in land development, community development, and real estate are in charge of the project. Additionally, the Trust can act more quickly and is more responsive than a large university. The Trust, which has a staff of ten, invests its net proceeds in the SFU endowment.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Gordon Harris, interview with the author, April 9, 2008.

|                               | <b>Ohio State University + South Campus Gateway</b>                                                                          | <b>University of Connecticut + Storrs Center</b>                                                            | <b>Hendrix College + The Village at Hendrix</b> | <b>Simon Fraser University + UniverCity</b>                        |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Partnership</b>            | Campus Partners for Community Urban Revitalization                                                                           | Mansfield Downtown Partnership                                                                              | n/a                                             | SFU Community Trust                                                |
| <b>Partnership founded</b>    | 1995                                                                                                                         | 2001                                                                                                        |                                                 | 1999                                                               |
| <b>Partnership started by</b> | University                                                                                                                   | Town                                                                                                        |                                                 | University                                                         |
| <b>Status</b>                 | Non-profit                                                                                                                   | Non-profit                                                                                                  |                                                 | Wholly owned subsidiary of SFU                                     |
| <b>Special status</b>         | Community urban redevelopment corporation                                                                                    | Municipal development agency - charged with development of Storrs Center on behalf of the town of Mansfield |                                                 |                                                                    |
| <b>President</b>              | Terry Foegler (President)                                                                                                    | Cynthia van Zelm (Executive Director)                                                                       |                                                 | Gordon Harris (President & CEO)                                    |
| <b># full-time staff</b>      | 5                                                                                                                            | 2                                                                                                           |                                                 | 10                                                                 |
| <b>Board of Directors</b>     | 6 "university directors" who are officers or employees of OSU; 5 "public directors" who are not officers or employees of OSU | 18 members, reps of community, local businesses, town, UConn                                                |                                                 | 13 members, inc. university administration, faculty, student, reps |

|                                                          | <b>Ohio State University + South Campus Gateway</b>                                                                | <b>University of Connecticut + Storrs Center</b>                                                                                     | <b>Hendrix College + The Village at Hendrix</b> | <b>Simon Fraser University + UniverCity</b>                                                               |
|----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Other bodies</b>                                      |                                                                                                                    | MDP is a membership organization - individuals and businesses pay annual dues to have voting privileges; 6 committees advise project |                                                 | Community Advisory Committee advises the Board; including community, faculty, staff, student, alumni reps |
| <b>Role of students</b>                                  | Student Advisory Board meets regularly and advises Campus Partners                                                 |                                                                                                                                      |                                                 | 1 student rep on Board; 1 student rep on Community Advisory Committee                                     |
| <b>Primary role in project</b>                           | Authorized to spend money to buy land; hired consultants for planning efforts                                      | Build consensus and organize all interested parties; hire developer and consultants                                                  |                                                 | To manage the planning and development of the project                                                     |
| <b>Other work (in addition to the town/gown project)</b> | Setting up a Business Improvement District (BID); redeveloping Section 8 housing; other community development work | Revitalization of other commercial areas in town                                                                                     |                                                 | None - focused on UniverCity project                                                                      |
| <b>Funding for Partnership</b>                           | Employees paid by OSU                                                                                              | 2007-2008 budget - Town contribution: \$125,000<br>University contribution: \$125,000<br>Membership dues: \$19,000                   |                                                 | SFU                                                                                                       |



The Hendrix project seems to be working well without the aid of a partnership organization, but, compared to the other projects, it is a significantly smaller college (both in terms of enrollment and the physical size of the campus). Although the scale of The Village at Hendrix is quite large, since it is attached to a much smaller institution and is built on college-owned land, there has been less of need for a non-profit to acquire real estate or to act as a mediator between town and gown communities. In general, it seems that some form of the partnership model is useful both for arbitrating disputes and deals and simply to get the job done. As several project representatives explained to the author, colleges and universities are generally not used to being in the real estate development business. Their bureaucracies often move slowly and are more focused on campus matters, rather than off-campus plans. Thus, the partnerships allow for professionals in planning, real estate development, design, and community organizing to take leadership roles in these projects and to work with consultants to develop high-quality places that meet the needs of different constituencies. Especially in contentious situations, perhaps where the university has made unwanted advances in the past, it is useful to put the university in the backseat behind an organization charged with considering the full scope of the project and of the wider community. In addition to these arguments, when Ohio State set up Campus Partners, it was explicitly set up as a “community redevelopment corporation.” Dixon and Roche explain this aspect of the organization:

“Finally, Campus Partners would need to live up to private-sector expectations by playing the dual role of the redevelopment authority (assembling land and handling relocation, demolition, and environmental cleanup) and the source of ‘patient capital’ (taking early risks related to planning and market studies, land purchases, etc.).”<sup>9</sup>

Thus, although the legal rights granted to a partnership organization vary depending on the demands of the project, the partnership can play a critical role by insulating the university from a certain measure of risk and improving credibility and consensus around the new project.

## **2. Land**

### **Who owned the land on the project site?**

The site location for a college town project is closely tied to the motivations for undertaking the project. At Ohio State, the university was interested in stimulating the old urban neighborhoods of the University District, and so they had to work within the confines of

---

<sup>9</sup> Dixon and Roche, 273.

these city blocks. One advantage to this situation is that the basic urban infrastructure—from the street grid to the sewer system—was in place. This context added complexity to the project as there were non-university neighbors, including the Section 8 public housing project, abutting the site. The greatest site-related challenge, however, is that Ohio State did not own the land when it decided to undertake the South Campus Gateway project. The land was assembled through a process of private negotiation and eminent domain takings (discussed below).

In the other three cases, the university owned most of the land prior to the start of the project and the sites were primarily underutilized, undeveloped land. The University of Connecticut owned the vacant land surrounding the Storrs Center site (much of which will be preserved as green space, since the developed area will be so densely developed) and several of the commercial buildings. The properties that they own will be demolished and some tenants will be relocated to other temporary locations along the adjacent Dog Lane. Hendrix College owns the entire corner parcel that will be developed and Simon Fraser University owns all of the land within the ring road, as a result of the land swap with the City of Burnaby. When the university owns all of the land on the site, it removes a significant step in the development process.

If the sites are on undeveloped fields, however, it adds to the challenge, time, and expense of the project, because the project team must provide for urban infrastructure—like the streets and sewers that the Columbus, Ohio site already had—as well as complete environmental permitting and other regulatory procedures. Furthermore, when the site is on a greenfield, the project will likely have to counter opposition, at least in the early stages, from those who would prefer to see the land remain undeveloped forever. UniverCity had already accounted for this in the land swap—the land in the ring road will be developed by Simon Fraser University in exchange for the City of Burnaby ensuring that the rest of the mountain will remain protected as a conservation area, with only hiking and mountain biking trails. The Storrs Center project also needed to counter resistance from anti-development, pro-environment residents, and 65% of the site will remain as a preserved natural area. The Hendrix site was apparently already in a degraded state, due to its proximity to the highway and a large big box retail development, so there was not a push for this type of preservation.

|                                           | <b>Ohio State University + South Campus Gateway</b> | <b>University of Connecticut + Storrs Center</b>                      | <b>Hendrix College + The Village at Hendrix</b> | <b>Simon Fraser University + UniverCity</b>                                                    |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Project size (acres)</b>               | 7.5                                                 | 17 (plus 30.7 open space)                                             | 130                                             | 160 (65 hectares)                                                                              |
| <b>Landowner (before project started)</b> | Private businesses                                  | University + private businesses                                       | University                                      | City of Burnaby, transferred to University                                                     |
| <b>Method of Acquisition</b>              | Private negotiation + eminent domain takings        | n/a (private businesses are remaining with project built around them) | n/a                                             | Memorandum of Understanding led to land transfer; university allowed to build within ring road |

**What special zoning was required for the project?**

New zoning codes or overlay ordinances were required by most of the projects. Storrs Center, The Village at Hendrix, and UniverCity are all built on nearly vacant, greenfield land, which was not zoned for mixed-use or residential development. This is the most likely scenario for other colleges, particularly those in non-urban settings that are looking to create “college town” developments. The zoning codes of most American municipalities are rooted in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Euclidian zoning that aimed to separate institutional uses (such as a university), residential uses, and commercial uses. Since the project planners needed to apply to the city planning and zoning boards, some of them took the opportunity to try out more progressive zoning policies, such as the secondary suite/attic apartment policy that is included in both The Village at Hendrix and UniverCity zoning codes. The Hendrix project took innovative zoning to the farthest extent by applying a form-based overlay zoning ordinance in the form of the *TND Overlay*, which is based on the New Urbanist SmartCode.

As discussed in Chapter 3, Adam Dickinson, of Traditional Neighborhood Development Partners, explained that The Village at Hendrix is explicitly trying to serve as a model. In an interview, he explained to the author that the project team “went to extra lengths because we knew that we were setting a precedent.”<sup>10</sup> Innovative zoning codes and other regulatory

---

<sup>10</sup> Adam Dickinson, interview with the author, April 3, 2008.

measures are one way that these projects are serving as models, both for other developments in their communities and for other communities that wish to create large-scale developments. Such changes to the zoning ordinances are not unique to projects associated with colleges, but rather, they are transferable to a variety of mixed-use development projects. The secondary suite concept is particularly well-suited to a college town environment, since these attic or adjacent apartments can be rented out to undergraduate or graduate students, but they would also be applicable to other settings – homeowners might rent the apartments out to young professionals or to their own aging parents as trends show that a growing mix of people are drawn to living in walkable, mixed-use environments with an urban feel.

|                               | <b>Ohio State University + South Campus Gateway</b> | <b>University of Connecticut + Storrs Center</b>         | <b>Hendrix College + The Village at Hendrix</b>                                                                                     | <b>Simon Fraser University + UniverCity</b>                                                                       |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>New zoning</b>             | n/a                                                 | Special Design District                                  | TND Overlay                                                                                                                         | New zoning code                                                                                                   |
| <b>Benefits of new zoning</b> | n/a                                                 | Allows for residential and mixed-use development on site | Form-based (SmartCode-based) zoning emphasized traditional neighborhood development; allows for secondary suites (attic apartments) | Allows for secondary suites; allows for rental, cooperative, and condominium housing; reduces parking requirement |

**Was eminent domain used?**

Eminent domain – the “takings” clause of the Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution by which municipalities or designated agencies have the right to “take” land from private landowners for “public use” in exchange for “just compensation” – plays a contentious role in some land use planning situations. When Ohio State set up Campus Partners as a “community redevelopment corporation,” this was a significant power that was granted to the non-profit organization. As Stephen Sterrett, community relations director for Campus Partners explained to the author, 25 of the 31 parcels of land at the site selected for the South Campus Gateway were obtained by private negotiation between Campus Partners and the landowners, while the

remaining 6 parcels were obtained by eminent domain. When the parcels were taken for the project, they were non-residential properties that were part of a section of High Street that had been declared as “blighted” by the City of Columbus in 1999.<sup>11</sup> It is interesting that the other case in which the university did not own the entire project site – the University of Connecticut/Storrs Center project – eminent domain was not invoked by the town. The Storrs Center project was designed around the three commercial buildings that will remain along Storrs Road. It is not known whether the project planners considered taking the properties via eminent domain – even if the Mansfield Downtown Partnership did not have this power, the Town of Mansfield would have the power – or if they simply tried and failed to negotiate an agreement with the current land owners. Eminent domain is a controversial policy, and the State of Connecticut recently made national news on this issue with the *Kelo vs. New London* case.<sup>12</sup> Thus, it is conceivable that, since negotiations failed, the university did not want to squander the good will that it was acquiring with the project on an acrimonious court case.

### 3. Legacy

#### **How have the residential and student communities responded to the project?**

In addition to the town administrations and the university administrations, it is critical that projects like these, which ultimately aim to unite entire neighborhoods, are inclusive throughout the planning processes. Residents of university communities are often wary of institutions flexing their muscles and taking over neighborhoods and private property. These projects speak to the value of community involvement in the town/gown planning process. For example, the Mansfield Town/University Relation Committee is a group of town, university, and citizen representatives who meet monthly with the Mansfield Downtown Partnership Executive Director to discuss town/gown issues.

Conversely, students and faculty might be concerned about their institutions spreading themselves too thinly and reaching too far into the community. What is happening to the students’ tuition dollars and what are they getting out of the projects? For example, the residential portions of the Storrs Center, Village at Hendrix, and UniverCity projects are not

---

<sup>11</sup> Stephen Sterrett, interview with the author, April 7, 2008.

<sup>12</sup> *Kelo vs. New London* (2005) was a case that challenged whether the right of eminent domain could be upheld if a municipality wanted to take the land and use it for “economic development” as a permissible “public use.” The Supreme Court ruled in favor of the City of New London, Connecticut.

primarily designed for students. Some of the apartments at the Village at Hendrix will be dedicated to student housing and the apartments at the South Campus Gateway are almost entirely occupied by law students and other graduate students at Ohio State. Both the Village at Hendrix and UniverCity provide for secondary suite apartments, which are aimed at students. The primary benefit that students will receive in these projects, however, lies in the non-residential amenities. In all four cases, students are not dissatisfied with the on-campus facilities – on which the universities have been dedicating vast sums of money – but with the off-campus environment. With these new “college town” projects, students will have coffee shops in which to study, bars in which to watch basketball games, and green spaces to visit. Project planners hope that the fine grain mixing of students, faculty, staff, and town residents of all ages and backgrounds at the library, fitness center, and art gallery will be a benefit to all.



*Figure 5.2: A kiosk at the future location of the Storrs Center provides helpful wayfinding maps of the current town center, as well as information and plans about the future development of the site. (Photograph by the author)*

### **Who is the champion?**

In large projects that are developed over the course of several years and that require the cooperation and support of many entities, it is imperative to have people who champion the causes. As administrations change, institutional memory fades, and various consulting firms write reports, it is necessary for someone to stick with the project and keep it alive. These people, who stick with the projects through thick and thin, are not necessarily the same people who initiated the projects. In many cases, these people are so impassioned about their project, that they also spend a lot of time writing and speaking about the project in hopes of spreading

the message to other communities. The following people can be considered as the champions of these projects:

- **South Campus Gateway** – Gordon Gee, President of The Ohio State University, and Terry Foegler, President of Campus Partners. During his first tenure as university president, Gee initiated the effort to revitalize Columbus' University District and founded Campus Partners and, since his return to Ohio State in 2007, he has resumed his encouragement of the projects along High Street. Foegler has been a constant presence on the project since he became president of Campus Partners in 1997.
- **Storrs Center** – Cynthia van Zelm, Executive Director of the Mansfield Downtown Partnership. Van Zelm has worked to build consensus around the project, improve the sense of community in Storrs, and spread the word to other university communities.
- **The Village at Hendrix** – J. Timothy Cloyd, President of Hendrix College. Cloyd has been involved with the project from its origins with the 1995 campus master plan to its present state of construction.
- **UniverCity** – Michael Geller, former President and CEO of the SFU Community trust. Geller, who was the president of the Trust from its inception in 1997 until 2006, has been described as the individual most closely with the UniverCity project. Gordon Harris, who now holds Geller's position, is continuing to champion the project.





## Chapter 6 - Placemaking on Campuses and in Communities

“The models for the future, then, include campuses disguised as extensions of the adjacent city, pieces of campuses constructed by commercial builders, satellite campuses of rented space, and Starbucks everywhere... Amidst such a collision of new ideas, however, it is important to continue to ask about obligation, and the opportunity, that only an academic institution can bring to a city.” – Frances Halsband<sup>1</sup>

“I came away thinking that universities today are like the great aristocratic families of the past—like the Dukes of Bedford, say, who in the 18<sup>th</sup> century developed their London estates into the neighborhood we call Bloomsbury. Universities today are working at that same kind of grand scale.” – Robert Campbell<sup>2</sup>

~~~~~

New residential developments, revitalized urban corridors, and retrofitted suburbs are not radical propositions in the U.S. and Canada. These urban projects are built all the time, and many of them are admirable projects with thoughtful attention to smart growth planning principles, good urban design, and a community-based public process. The prospect of creating a new college town, however, is significantly more daunting. If a college or university and their host city or town decide that they share the goal of creating a “college town,” how can they realize that goal? And, perhaps more importantly, how do they know when they have achieved it? It is far easier to recognize a successful place when one is there than it is to create such a place from scratch. As was noted at the beginning of this thesis, there are many American colleges and universities and municipalities that are working on similar college town projects. What can these other projects learn from the stories of the four cases studies presented here? There are tools, principles, and measures of success that can be used to help evaluate and understand these projects. Furthermore, this phenomenon—of creating new college town places at the intersection of town and gown—has implications for understanding the role of higher education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century city and for planners, designers, and policy-makers who are working to effect change in this city.

The profiles in Chapter 3 served to document the stories of four cases in which new college town development is taking place. In each case, a university has grown over the decades and has established itself as a prestigious and well-respected academic institution, but

---

<sup>1</sup> Frances Halsband, “Campuses in Place,” *PLACES* 17.1 (Spring 2005): 11.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Campbell, “Universities are the new city planners,” *The Boston Globe*, March 20, 2005.

one that was, in some way, missing a “college town.” Each of these new projects has tried to create a place that is worthy of its institution and that has a distinctly urban condition. The comparative studies in Chapters 4 and 5 teased out the significant details of the four projects to help detect whether there are any trends that can be seen as leading to successful projects. Finally, this chapter will take some of these patterns that have been detected and that can be extrapolated to other cases. For example, how can these cases and other examples of this phenomenon help planners to design better cities, campuses, and places?

During the author’s interview with Gordon Harris, the President and CEO of the SFU Community Trust, he explained the “why” and “how” behind the UniverCity project. Harris’ characterization of that project can be applied to the other cases, as shown in the chart below, revealing that the new college town projects were the method – the “how” – that led each campus and community to try to achieve a particular end goal.

	<b>Ohio State University + South Campus Gateway</b>	<b>University of Connecticut + Storrs Center</b>	<b>Hendrix College + The Village at Hendrix</b>	<b>Simon Fraser University + UniverCity</b>
<b>Why?</b>	To revitalize the image of, improve safety in, and bring students back to the University District.	To make the off-campus environment attractive to the university and non-university communities.	To utilize vacant land to improve the university and set a precedent for the community.	To create an endowment fund for teaching and research.
<b>How?</b>	By creating a mixed-use node at the southern edge of High Street.	By creating a New England village center.	By creating a residential and commercial neighborhood adjacent to the campus.	By creating a sustainable community. <sup>3</sup>

The Campus Partners at Ohio State propose a similar “why” and “how” model their 2004 white paper *The University on Main Street: Commercial Revitalization in the Campus Community*. The paper suggests, “any university which considers a neighborhood revitalization project should be clear about why it is getting involved and how it will carry it off.” They suggest, not

<sup>3</sup> The phrasing for the UniverCity section of this table comes directly from the author’s conversation with Gordon Harris; the other phrasing is the author’s terminology.

surprisingly, that the establishment of the Campus Partners organization was a critical part of “how” Ohio State carried out the project. As was discussed in Chapter 5, the formation of such partnership organizations is a significant part of implementation of these projects.

### **The “College Town” as a Template**

Whether it is new or old, urban, rural, or suburban, a “college town” is a co-mingled place that is designed to host the people and the places of the town and the university in a seamless fashion. Its express purpose is to foster a “sense of place,” to make people feel that this community is somehow different because it is linked to a college. The idea of the college town is the basic ordering principle for the four cases profiled in this thesis and for many similar projects. In each case, the college town illustrates the power that the physical environment has to shape an institution’s—and a community’s—character.

An important facet of the identity of the college town lies in its ability to take on the positive characteristics and sense of place of the college. This also holds true for situations in which a college is developing a satellite campus, such as Harvard University’s planned Allston campus. Nathalie Beauvais, principal architect for the Allston Development Group, elaborated on this point at a February 2008 lecture about the project. She explained that one question that has been on the minds of project planners is “how are we going to know that it’s Harvard?”<sup>4</sup> That is, what attributes does this new place borrow from the existing university? The Allston campus will not have brick Georgian buildings that are found framing the colonial Harvard Yard, but even if it does not match in architectural style, the designers are working to fit in other quintessentially “Harvard” attributes in this new place. For example, some of the spatial layout, such as the network of paths and open spaces, and the trees and landscaping of the new campus will mirror these aspects of the Cambridge campus. A separate but related point is whether the architectural style, height and density of buildings, and scale and character of public spaces and open spaces will mirror the existing context. That is, if this new place is going to be imbued with aspects of “Harvard-ness,” will it also be instilled with aspects of “Allston-ness?” This is an important consideration for new college town projects, especially those that are located in urban areas with established qualities of the built environment.

---

<sup>4</sup> “Where We’ve Been. Where We’re Going. Can Crimson Turn Green?” Presentation by Nathalie Beauvais, sponsored by the Committee on the Concerns of Women at Harvard, Harvard Graduate School of Design, February 6, 2008.

It can be easy to equate the idea of the college town with the traditional, pastoral, New England college town. These places were laid out with a great sense of clarity and logic. They are places where the white steepled-church is located on the town green and the symbolic college building is located on a prominent axis. They are places with a lot of grass, trees, and sidewalks and with a high degree of coherence. Even if the lines between the college and the town are blurred, it is possible for a newcomer to locate the important buildings and places. Of course, not every place tries – or should try – to mirror the college towns of rural New England, but it is necessary for other college towns to replicate some of the coherence of these places.

### **The New Urbanist College Town**

The relevance of smart growth and neo-traditional design is another important consideration for these new places, as there appears to be a trend toward the development of what might be called “The New Urbanist College Town” or perhaps “The Traditional College Town.” New Urbanism is organized under the group the Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU). According to their 1996 Charter,

“The Congress for the New Urbanism views disinvestment in central cities, the spread of placeless sprawl, increasing separation by race and income, environmental deterioration, loss of agricultural lands and wilderness, and the erosion of society's built heritage as one interrelated community-building challenge. We stand for the restoration of existing urban centers and towns within coherent metropolitan regions, the reconfiguration of sprawling suburbs into communities of real neighborhoods and diverse districts, the conservation of natural environments, and the preservation of our built legacy. We recognize that physical solutions by themselves will not solve social and economic problems, but neither can economic vitality, community stability, and environmental health be sustained without a coherent and supportive physical framework.”<sup>5</sup>

Many new “college town” projects use either explicitly New Urbanist techniques – such as Storrs Center and, especially, The Village at Hendrix – or at least develop towns that are pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use, organized around parks and public spaces, and imbued with a “sense of place.”

During the course of the author’s interviews with representatives of the four projects, it became clear these planners had specific conceptions of the types of projects where New Urbanism can be helpful and those where it is less so. Adam Dickinson, of Traditional Neighborhood Development Partners, explained that it was the zoning, regulatory, and

---

<sup>5</sup> “Charter of the New Urbanism,” *The Congress for a New Urbanism*. <http://www.cnu.org/charter>

procedural aspects of New Urbanist planning that were particularly attractive to the Hendrix College administration and the City of Conway. He said that the progressive city government in Conway liked the idea of developing the form-based overlay zoning rather than making tedious changes to the existing zoning ordinance.<sup>6</sup> The team that is creating The Village at Hendrix is consciously trying to make the project a model for other projects in Conway and in other communities, and they chose to accomplish this by using New Urbanist techniques and templates, including the SmartCode zoning and architectural pattern books, that could be easily transferred to other places. Although the Storrs Center project has not developed the same type of overlay zoning and the project's pattern book is an internal document intended to guide the project team, rather than a piece of the public plan, this project is also attentive to the theories of New Urbanism. Cynthia van Zelm, executive director of the Mansfield Downtown Partnership, observed that the Mansfield community is very concerned with the environment, public space and smart growth principles—even if the lay planners who serve on the Partnership board do not couch these ideas in the language of New Urbanism.<sup>7</sup> Lee Gavel, the university architect at Simon Fraser University, explained that the UniverCity project espouses many of the same social values as the New Urbanist philosophy, but that the tools had to be modified to fit the unique context of the project. For example, Gavel suggested that New Urbanism fundamentally addresses the single-family, suburban condition and then works to make that context more walkable and sustainable. UniverCity does not have any single-family homes and notions of street connectivity must be reframed given the mountaintop setting.<sup>8</sup> Likewise, the South Campus Gateway project needed to restructure the New Urbanist tools for the site that was developed within the context of an existing urban fabric with a clearly defined main street. Stephen Sterrett of Campus Partners proposed that projects that are designed in an open condition, where the planners have a blank canvas and need to create a framework—unlike the existing conditions at Ohio State—might be better suited to New Urbanist style planning. As Sterrett said, there was “no need to apply the theory because they already had the practice in place.”<sup>9</sup> Thus, if there is a strong pre-existing physical framework in place, then the project

---

<sup>6</sup> Adam Dickinson, interview with the author, April 3, 2008.

<sup>7</sup> Cynthia van Zelm, interview with the author, April 7, 2008.

<sup>8</sup> Lee Gavel, interview with the author, April, 7, 2008. Gavel noted that New Urbanism is also better suited to flat terrain. Planning for UniverCity must take topography into account and consider layers and planes.

<sup>9</sup> Stephen Sterrett, interview with the author, April 7, 2008.

planners can focus more on the relationships between the physical, institutional, and social aspects of a place.

These examples reveal that a degree of walkability, density, mixed-use, and concern for the natural environment and public spaces is a prerequisite for an American (or Canadian) college town. Communities that already have this “bone structure” – such as Columbus, Ohio – can build upon it, while those that arise in open conditions must create this structure. The tools and techniques of New Urbanism – such as the SmartCode zoning, pattern book concept, neotraditional architectural design, and grid system of streets – are just that: tools that communities can use to help them create their college towns. It is entirely possible to create a new college town neighborhood without these tools; projects do not necessarily need pattern books or zoning changes. It can be argued, however, that it is not possible to create a new college town that does not adhere to the spirit of New Urbanism and smart growth.

### **The Sustainable College Town**

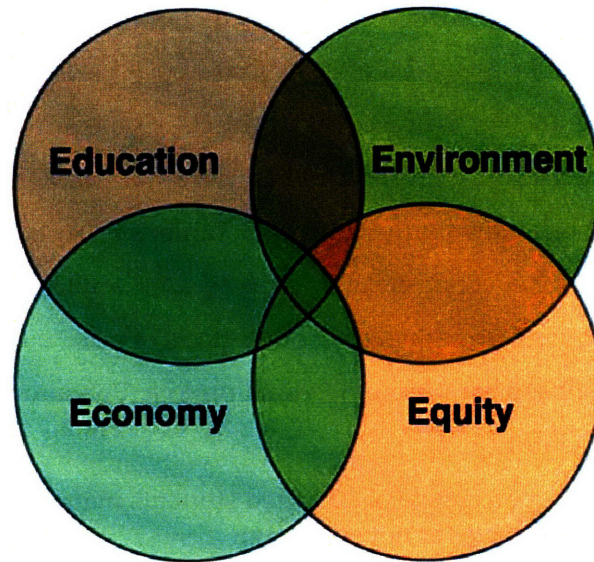
Another standard around which many new college towns are being developed is sustainability. As discussed in Chapter 4, this can include the preservation of open space and restoration of stream banks around the site. However, the concept of sustainability is broader than simply conserving the natural environment. The generally recognized definition of sustainable development was coined in 1987 by the World Commission on Environment and Development (the Brundtland Commission): “Sustainable Development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”<sup>10</sup> In 1992, the “Declaration of Rio on Environment and Development” first suggested that sustainable development could be conceived of as a balance of three dimensions: environmental protection, economic growth, and social development.<sup>11</sup> The *Urban Design and Master Plan for UniverCity* makes the interesting suggestion of adding a fourth tenet to this triumvirate: education. These four tenets are reflected in the plan in a Venn diagram of overlapping circles.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> United Nations NGO Committee on Sustainable Development.

[http://www.unngocsd.org/CSD\\_Definitions%20SD.htm](http://www.unngocsd.org/CSD_Definitions%20SD.htm)

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.



*Figure 6.1: The Venn diagram used to describe UniverCity can be applied to all new college town projects. (Source: Urban Design & Master Plan for UniverCity, The Community at Simon Fraser, 2003)*

These concepts can be taken one step further to suggest four aspects of the relationships between a new “college town” project and the existing town/gown context. The four cases presented in this thesis – as well as other similar projects – might be measured according to how they fall into four categories that are based upon this embellished version of sustainability. A “college town” project should strive to meet these goals:

- **Education** – enhances the academic experience of students; educates residents of the community
- **Environment** – preserves and responds to the local context
- **Economy** – fiduciary relationship between the project and the university; increases the tax base for the town
- **Equity** – creates a mix of housing types and price ranges; fosters a healthy, safe, and livable community

### Measures of Success

Although they are located in very different environments, there are certain criteria to which all new college town projects should subscribe; measures of success that university administrations and city governments can use to guide their processes. Of course, it is difficult to measure the abstract concepts of college towns – qualities such as building community and creating a sense of place. Nonetheless, there are some specific ways to judge these places.

One method of measuring such projects is with quantitative data. Most of this data would not be obtainable until a few years after the project has been completed, so it was not possible to obtain these figures for the case study projects. Some projects that have been completed for a while, such as the University of Pennsylvania's earlier efforts at revitalizing the West Philadelphia neighborhood with the Sansom Commons project, probably have quantitative evidence of their success. As more projects are completed – and as yet more commence – a thorough quantitative analysis of the effects of new “college town” projects on their surroundings would be make a useful research project. Pre- and post-construction data that might be analyzed include:

- Student enrollment – percentage of admitted students matriculating, reasons non-matriculating students give for not enrolling;
- Real estate values – commercial rents, residential home prices;
- Safety and security – decline in violent crime, fewer injuries to pedestrians as a result of calming traffic and making the areas safer for people.

In their 2004 white paper *The University on Main Street: Commercial Revitalization in the Campus Community*, the Campus Partners include a valuable list of their own “measures of success” for the South Campus Gateway project. Some of these measures are listed below. The words “Gateway,” “High Street,” and other context-specific words have been omitted to make the list more generic, since these measures can, in fact, be applied to all of the projects.

- The project’s “success will be measured by the vitality it brings to the rest of” the district and “the extent to which it fulfills the larger goals of the revitalization plan.”
- The project “sets a higher standard” in the community for “quality, urban design with retail activities oriented toward the street, wide sidewalks with outdoor dining, and a strategic mix of uses which give 24-hour vitality to the area.”
- “Although the market begins with students,” the project will “develop a broader cross-over appeal for the diverse segments” of the market, particularly meeting the “needs of university faculty and staff, neighborhood residents and other people” in the region “who are attracted to the special urban environment found only around a major university.”
- “A vibrant, safe and successful” project “adds to the livability of the area and is one important reason that students and other citizens choose to live in” the area near the university.<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> Stephen A. Sterrett, Campus Partners, “The University on Main Street: Commercial Revitalization in the Campus Community,” poster presentation, October 3-5, 2004.



One goal of new college town projects planned at the town/gown edge is—or should be—the creation of a complementary and congenial fit between the college and the town. That is, just as it is necessary to have a healthy, working relationship between town and gown administrations, the people who make up both communities and the old and new spaces that they inhabit must also correspond. It is particularly intriguing that most projects that are part of this new college town trend include a specific physical space that is designed for such interaction. The “Town Square,” “Village Square,” internal “Main Street,” or other similar park or plaza is typically located on a site at the town/gown edge and it serves as a spatial facilitator for the co-mingling of the different types of people in the community. It will be interesting to see the degree to which these public spaces live up to their intention. Anecdotal evidence and photographs show that the “Town Square” at UniverCity has already been successful in this regard, serving as a gathering place for students, faculty, and residents of all ages.

#### **Universities as Agents of Change in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century City**

At the conclusion of her 2006 article “Living and Learning: The Campus Redefined” (which was quoted in Chapter 1), Frances Halsband posits that, although town/gown projects can be difficult and require a lot of money, effort, and mutual trust, they also offer a great deal of promise.

“Once united, they have the opportunity to create environments of benefit and value, places that celebrate human endeavor and encourage new ways of learning and living. It may well be that the creation of these places will come to be seen as a principal activity of the university, an act of leadership, and a demonstration of the value of higher education in civic life.”<sup>14</sup>

The fact that these new college town projects will be an important force to consider in the context of city planning is beginning to be understood by professionals in many industries that interact with and influence the built environment of the city. These projects affect the way planners, urban designers, and architects understand urban form, since these new communities cause a rethinking of the traditional notion of the physical space of the “campus.”

Reinterpreting the interface between town and gown and designing in a manner that is appropriate to both sides of this blurry edge is a challenge that the design professions will need to meet.

---

<sup>14</sup> Frances Halsband, “Living and Learning: the Campus Redefined,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 28, 2006.

Real estate developers also see a future in this field. An article in *Urban Land*, the journal of the Urban Land Institute, presented several examples of mixed-use development at the intersection of town and gown noting, "Colleges and universities increasingly are thinking entrepreneurially and seeing a future that is more urban in feel, presenting new opportunities to developers with vision and creativity." The article, by designer Jeff Stahl, also suggests that the private sector "might develop parcels adjacent to campuses to enhance the urban edge, blurring the boundary between town and institution." Furthermore, "schemes for carbon sequestration trading could allow developers to finance improvements to open-space reserves on campus in exchange for open-space or carbon credits for nearby private development."<sup>15</sup> Similarly, an article in the *Vancouver Sun* mentioned the UniverCity project as well as a new community that is being developed at the Vancouver-based University of British Columbia. The article observed: "New mixed-use communities complete with on-site commercial and recreational amenities are quickly re-shaping the two institutional campuses, making them model communities where people can live, work, learn and play."<sup>16</sup> The concept of developing these complete communities where people can "live, work, learn, and play" is a theme that is repeated in each of the four projects profiled in this thesis, as well as in many similar projects.

These new college town projects are symptomatic of a wider trend in city planning: that universities have become a powerful force in planning, designing, and developing the built environment. Rosalind Greenstein, who chairs a research group at the Cambridge, Massachusetts-based Lincoln Institute of Land Policy called "The City, Land, and The University," wrote in her foreword to Perry and Wiewal's book *The University as Urban Developer*:

"Factories have left the cities. Regional department stores have been replaced by national chains...The suburbs are growing faster than the cities and are rapidly increasing their political clout. Urban universities, however, rarely abandon their cities."<sup>17</sup>

While universities have a long-term interest in their cities and towns and they have significant funds to undertake daunting building programs, a parallel phenomenon has taken place in that

---

<sup>15</sup> Jeff Stahl, "The Urban Mixed-Use Campus," *Urban Land* (August 2007): 99.

<sup>16</sup> Bob Ransford, "Campus Builders Take Lead in Responsible Development," *Vancouver Sun*, April 17, 2004.

<sup>17</sup> Rosalind Greenstein, "Foreword," in David C. Perry and Wim Wiewel, ed. *The University as Urban Developer* (Cambridge, MA: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy; Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2005).

American cities and towns have been *hampered* from undertaking such projects due to lack of funds. Robert Campbell, the architecture critic for *The Boston Globe*, wrote of a 2005 conference in which he moderated a panel discussion on “Universities as Urban Planners.” He explains, “Cities used to be planned by professional city planners,” but, due partly to a lack of federal funding, many city agencies are “underfunded and weak.” This dismal situation leaves the opportunity for planning to be done by large, wealthy landowners and employers—which can be universities. Furthermore, since colleges and universities have an enduring interest in their environments, it is to be hoped that the grand projects they undertake will be carried out with the interests of the community in mind. In this regard, the city planners often act as enforcers of the public interest and of regulatory codes. Like Greenstein, Campbell likens universities to “the industries of today... education is today’s equivalent of the production line. It’s an economic boon to any city.”<sup>18</sup>

### **A New Paradigm**

This phenomenon—of gowns planning for towns and of gowns and towns planning together through the ideal form of the college town—is poised to have a significant effect on the way that planners, urban designers, architects, public policy-makers, and educators think about the form and character of American cities. The fact that these four cases—which are all well-developed proposals that have been built or are under construction—all echo each other in process and in form tells us that there is indeed a new paradigm emerging. These projects and others like them all have the same “DNA” and the same intent. They represent ways for colleges and universities to improve the “college experience,” which is becoming an increasingly important factor in attracting prospective students and faculty and in maintaining the happiness of current students and faculty. University administrators are realizing that it is not enough to simply provide high-quality academic and on-campus offerings. Moreover, it is not enough to just be located near a town or in a district of a major city. Rather, the college needs to have its own distinct place—a college town of some form—that is recognizable as being associated with the college but which is also identifiable as being a place where non-students feel welcome. This is a high standard to achieve. The four cases profiled in this thesis have all accomplished this goal. They have designed places that create a deliberate and

---

<sup>18</sup> Campbell, “Universities are the new city planners.”

seamless fusion with the campus, but they are also places that take an urban form that is more town-like than campus-like. In this regard, the projects that are the most town-like—such as The Village at Hendrix and UniverCity that have significant residential components, internal street networks, and plans for elementary schools—are symptomatic of the future of this trend. These projects are extending the narrative and form of an existing college or university campus and using these to foster the creation of a new place; they are truly exercises in “placemaking.”

## WORKS CITED

### INTERVIEWS

Dickinson, Adam (Traditional Neighborhood Development Partners, LLC). Interview with the author, April 3, 2008.

Evanovich, M. Dolan (Vice Provost for Enrollment Management, University of Connecticut). Interview with the author, April 3, 2008.

Gavel, Lee (Chief Facilities Officer and University Architect, Simon Fraser University). Interview with the author, April 8, 2008.

Harris, Gordon (President and CEO, SFU Community Trust). Interview with the author, April 8, 2008.

Sterrett, Stephen (Director of Community Relations, Campus Partners for Community Urban Revitalization, The Ohio State University). Interview with the author, April 7, 2008.

Van Zelm, Cynthia (Executive Director, Mansfield Downtown Partnership). Interview with the author, April 7, 2008.

### PRIMARY SOURCES and PLANS

Beauvais, Nathalie. "Where We've Been. Where We're Going. Can Crimson Turn Green?" presentation sponsored by the Committee on the Concerns of Women at Harvard, Harvard University Graduate School of Design, February 6, 2008.

"Creating a 21<sup>st</sup> Century College Town." Symposium presented by the University of Notre Dame School of Architecture and AIA Northern Indiana, April 13-14, 2007. [http://architecture.nd.edu/news\\_and\\_events/symposium\\_college\\_towns.shtml](http://architecture.nd.edu/news_and_events/symposium_college_towns.shtml) (accessed May, 9, 2008).

#### *The Ohio State University*

*Campus Partners* website: <http://campuspartners.osu.edu>.

"Campus Partners' accomplishments: 1995-2007," Columbus, Ohio: Campus Partners for Community Urban Revitalization, October 2007.

*Campus Partners News Archive*. <http://campuspartners.osu.edu>. Items cited in footnotes.

"Fact Sheet." Columbus, Ohio: Campus Partners for Community Urban Revitalization, January 2007.

"The Ohio State University's engagement in Weinland Park: A model for university-community partnership." Columbus, Ohio: Campus Partners for Community Urban Revitalization, March 2008.

*The Ohio State University: A Framework for Change and Improvement: The Campus Master Plan.* Interim Planning Advisory Committee with Sasaki Associates, Inc., Michael Dennis Associates, and Moody Nolan Ltd., Inc. October 6, 1995.

Sterrett, Stephen A. "The University on Main Street: Commercial Revitalization in the Campus Community." Campus Partners for Community Urban Revitalization, poster presentation, October 3-5, 2004.

### ***University of Connecticut***

"Connecticut Main Street Center Announces 2008 Awards of Excellence,"  
<http://www.ctmainstreet.org/PDF/2008%20Awards%20of%20Excellence.pdf>

*Downtown Mansfield Master Plan*, for Mansfield Downtown Partnership, by The Milone & MacBroom Team in conjunction with the Miniutti Group, Harrall-Michalowski Associates, Johnson Land Design, and Dr. Norman Garrick, May 2002.

*Mansfield Downtown Partnership, 2006-2007 Annual Report.*

*Mansfield Downtown Partnership Fact Sheet*, March 2008.

Meeting Minutes, Regular Meeting, Mansfield, CT Town Council, October 24, 2005.  
[http://www.mansfieldct.org/town/current/agendas\\_minutes/town\\_council/2005/20051024\\_minutes.htm](http://www.mansfieldct.org/town/current/agendas_minutes/town_council/2005/20051024_minutes.htm)

*Storrs Center: A Vision for Storrs Center*, Newsletter, Volume I, 2006. Individual articles are cited in footnotes.

[www.mansfieldct.org/town/departments/downtown\\_partnership/storrs\\_center\\_newsletter.pdf](http://www.mansfieldct.org/town/departments/downtown_partnership/storrs_center_newsletter.pdf).

*Storrs Center Concept Plan and Timeline*, Mansfield Downtown Partnership and Leyland Alliance. Most recent version, February 2008.

[http://www.mansfieldct.org/town/departments/downtown\\_partnership/planning\\_documents/current\\_plan\\_timeline.pdf](http://www.mansfieldct.org/town/departments/downtown_partnership/planning_documents/current_plan_timeline.pdf)

*Storrs Center Fact Sheet.* <http://www.storrscenter.com/pdf/sc-factsheet.pdf>

"Storrs Center Zoning Applications are Approved by Mansfield Planning and Zoning Commission." Mansfield Downtown Partnership, Inc. and Leyland Alliance, LLC, June 18, 2007.

[http://www.storrscenter.com/news\\_article.html?id=43](http://www.storrscenter.com/news_article.html?id=43)

*Storrs Pattern Book*. Urban Design Associates.

[http://www.urbandesignassociates.com/pdfs/activeprojects/MixedUse/Storrs\\_printonly.pdf](http://www.urbandesignassociates.com/pdfs/activeprojects/MixedUse/Storrs_printonly.pdf)

Vision: 21<sup>st</sup> Century UConn, <http://www.uc2000.uconn.edu/vision>

### ***Hendrix College***

*The City of Conway, Arkansas TND Zoning Overlay*. 2006. (This is the “SmartCode” zoning overlay that has been applied to The Village at Hendrix).

*Hendrix College Master Plan 2004*. Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company, 1995.

<http://www.dpz.com/pdf/9540-Project%20Description.pdf>

*Hendrix College Master Plan 2015*. Dunay Plater-Zyberk & Company, 2005.

<http://www.dpz.com/pdf/0430-ProjectDescription09-24-07a.pdf>

*Old Conway Design Overlay District: Ordinance O-06-139*.

<http://www.cityofconway.org/pdfs/Old%20Con%20Overlay%20Ord%20Final%2010-10-2006.pdf>

*Old Conway Design Overlay District: Part Three Urban Design Guidelines*. Draft, revised April 12, 2007. <http://www.cityofconway.org/pdfs/Urban%20Draft.pdf>

*Old Conway Design Overlay District: Urban Design Guidelines Pattern Book*.

[http://www.conwayplanning.org/pdfs\\_and\\_docs/ords/OCDOD%20Pattern%20Book%205-2007.pdf](http://www.conwayplanning.org/pdfs_and_docs/ords/OCDOD%20Pattern%20Book%205-2007.pdf)

*The Village at Hendrix* website: <http://www.hendrix.edu/village/>

*The Village at Hendrix Ecological Restoration Plan*. Eco; Larson Burns Smith. September 12, 2007.

*The Village at Hendrix TND Plan Submittal*. Traditional Neighborhood Development Partners, 2006 (Approved by Council November 14, 2006).

### ***Simon Fraser University***

*Simon Fraser University Campus Planning and Development* website: <http://www.sfu.ca/cpd/>

*UniverCity* website: <http://www.univercity.ca/>

*UniverCity Development Plan Concept*, Moodie Consultants, 1996. <http://www.univercity.ca/>

*UniverCity News*, Number 03, Summer 2005.

*UniverCity News*, Number 04, Summer 2006.

*UniverCity News*, Number 05, Summer 2007.

UniverCity newsletter, November 2007.

*Urban Design & Master Plan for UniverCity: The Community at Simon Fraser.* Hotson Baker Boniface Haden architects+urbanistes, 2003. <http://www.univercity.ca/>

## SECONDARY SOURCES

Ayers | Saint | Gross. *Communities of Opportunity: Smart Growth Strategies for Colleges and Universities.* National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO), 2007. [http://www.nacubo.org/documents/81470500\\_FINAL\\_SmartGrowthReport\\_081707.pdf](http://www.nacubo.org/documents/81470500_FINAL_SmartGrowthReport_081707.pdf)

Baker, Linda. "A Community Comes to the University." *New York Times*, May 7, 2006.

Bender, Thomas, ed. *The University and the City: From Medieval Origins to the Present.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.

Bernstein, Fred A. "Audition for Architects: Please, No Red Brick." *New York Times*, May 4, 2003.

Boddy, Trevor. "'Arthur was not amused,' Breaking with a theme laid down for Simon Fraser University by master designer Arthur Erickson, Michael Geller has used strategic thinking to get the UniverCity community up and running." *Globe and Mail (Toronto)*, November 24, 2006.

Campbell, Robert. "Universities are the new city planners." *The Boston Globe*, March 20, 2005.

Chapman, M. Perry. *American Places: In Search of the Twenty-first Century Campus.* Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, American Council on Education Series on Higher Education, 2006.

----- . "Viewpoint." *Planning*. Vol. 74, No. 3 (March 2008): 62.

"Charter of the New Urbanism," *The Congress for a New Urbanism*.  
<http://www.cnu.org/charter>

Cohen, Patricia. "The College that would not go gently." *New York Times*, April 20, 2008.

Colleges That Change Lives. <http://www.ctcl.com/colleges/>

Columbia University Office of Undergraduate Admissions website.  
<http://www.studentaffairs.columbia.edu/admissions/university/newyork/>; accessed February 22, 2008.

"Conway gets cool: A vision for a creative college town," *Arkansas Times*, November 18, 2004.



Dennis, Michael. "On Campus Planning." In *Towards a Civil Architecture in America: Modulus 23, The Architectural Review of the University of Virginia*, 108-127. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1995.

Dixon, David. "Campus Partners and The Ohio State University: Transforming a Failing Commercial District." *Places*. 17.1 (Spring 2005): 46-49.

Dixon, David and Peter J. Roche. "Campus Partners and The Ohio State University: A Case of Enlightened Self-Interest." In *The University as Urban Developer: Case Studies and Analysis*, edited by David C. Perry and Wim Wiewel, 268-282. Cambridge, MA: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy; Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2005.

Duany, Andres, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, and Jeff Speck. *Suburban Nation: The Rise of Sprawl and the Decline of the American Dream*. New York: North Point Press, 2000.

Finder, Alan. "Rural colleges seek new edge and urbanize." *New York Times*, February 7, 2007.

Gavel, Lee. "Improving the vitality of campus life: New buildings and renovations have been designed to cultivate the interaction of people and ideas." *Simon Fraser News*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (June 18, 1998), <http://www.sfu.ca/philosophy/swartz/gavel.htm>

Ghose, Carrie. "Campus Partners' work behind the scenes yields equal benefits." *Commercial Developers Resource*, supplement to *Business First (Columbus, Ohio)*, February 15, 2008: 9.

----- . "Domino effect: OSU investment driving off-campus development." *Commercial Developers Resource*, supplement to *Business First (Columbus, Ohio)*, February 15, 2008: 3-7.

Gordon, Jane. "UConn decides to build its own college town." *New York Times*, August 9, 2006.

Gumprecht, Blake. "The Campus as a Public Space in the American College Town." *Journal of Geographical History*. 33 (2007): 72-103.

Halsband, Frances. "Campuses in Place." *Places*. 17.1 (Spring 2005): 4-11.

----- . "Living and Learning: The Campus Redefined." *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 28, 2006.

Hayden, Dolores. *Seven American Utopias: The Architecture of Communitarian Socialism, 1790-1975*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1976.

Hearn, Christine. "UniverCity: Where Town Meets Gown." *aq: The Magazine of Simon Fraser University*, May 2002. <http://www.sfu.ca/aq/archives/april02/univercity.html>

Heathcote, Edwin. "Urban outfitters." *Financial Times*, June 29, 2007.

Hughes, C.J. "An enclave of Dartmouth opens up." *New York Times*, February 8, 2008, Travel section.

"Just add cash: The great expanding American university." *The Economist*. December 1, 2007: 42-44.

Keith, Tammy. "College-town mania: Conway boasts three colleges, all growing." In *Where We Live 2007*, advertising supplement to *Arkansas Democrat Gazette*. (accessed on website April 2008; no longer available online; <http://www.arkansasonline.com/wherewelive/>)

———. "Young, smart, progressive: Conway mayor sums up fast-growing Faulkner County." In *Where We Live 2007*, advertising supplement to *Arkansas Democrat Gazette*. (accessed on website April 2008; no longer available online; <http://www.arkansasonline.com/wherewelive/>)

Kenney, Daniel R., Ricardo Dumont, and Ginger Kenney. *Mission and Place: Strengthening Learning and Community through Campus Design*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, American Council on Education Series on Higher Education, 2005.

Le Corbusier. *When the Cathedrals Were White: A Journey to the Country of Timid People*. Trans. Francis E. Hyslop, Jr. New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1947.

Litt, Steven. "Big Man Off Campus: Universities are revamping their college towns in an effort to stay competitive." *Planning*. Vol. 71, No. 8 (August/September 2005): 42-45.

Lynch, Kevin. *Good City Form*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1981.

Muthesius, Stefan. *The Postwar University: Utopianist Campus and College*. New Haven: Published for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art by Yale University Press, 2000.

Penn Connects. <http://www.pennconnects.upenn.edu>

Perry, David C. and Wim Wiewel, eds. *The University as Urban Developer: Case Studies and Analysis*. Cambridge, MA: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy; Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2005.

Pope, Justin. "Needed in Storrs: A College Town. UConn launched a plan to build one from cratch." *The Associated Press State and Local Wire*, December 25, 2006.

Princeton Campus Plan. <http://www.princeton.edu/campusplan/archive/index.html>

"Rethink College Park." <http://www.rethinkcollegepark.net/blog/>

Rowe, Colin and Fred Koetter. "Collage City." *The Architectural Review*. Vol. CLVIII, No. 942 (August 1975): 66-91.

Rybczynski, Witold. *Last Harvest: How a Cornfield Became New Daleville: Real Estate Development in America from George Washington to the Builders of the Twenty-first Century and Why We Live in Houses Anyway*. New York: Scribner, 2007.

Sabin, Warwick. "Conway gets cool: A vision for a creative college town." *Arkansas Times*, November 18, 2004.  
<http://www.arktimes.com/Articles/ArticleViewer.aspx?ArticleID=fd93fc0c-bbdb-4b8f-b41a-94f3eb96d3b0>

"Simon Fraser University," Arthur Erickson Architect official website, 2000.  
[http://www.arthurerickson.com/p\\_sfu.html](http://www.arthurerickson.com/p_sfu.html)

SmartCode. <http://www.smartcodecentral.com/>

Stahl, Jeff. "The Urban Mixed-Use Campus." *Urban Land*. Vol. 66 No. 8 (August 2007): 94-99.

Stern, Robert. "Campus growth plan melds town with gown: Panel discusses relationship in Princeton." *The Times (Trenton, New Jersey)*, February 27, 2008.

Stern, Robert and Alex Zdan. "College town center envisioned for Ewing: TCNJ considers long-term use for school property along Carlton Avenue." *The Times (Trenton, New Jersey)*, March 17, 2008.

"Sustaining a University and a Town." *Architecture Magazine*. August 17, 2006 (cited at: [http://www.storrscenter.com/news\\_article.html?id=28](http://www.storrscenter.com/news_article.html?id=28))

Timiraos, Nick. "Colleges Teach 'Urban Development 101': Involvement in projects reflects need to upgrade schools' surroundings." *The Wall Street Journal*, February 27, 2008.

Turner, Paul Venable. *Campus: An American Planning Tradition*. New York: The Architectural History Foundation; Cambridge, MA and London: The MIT Press, 1984.

United Nations NGO Committee on Sustainable Development.  
[http://www.unngocsd.org/CSD\\_Definitions%20SD.htm](http://www.unngocsd.org/CSD_Definitions%20SD.htm)

United States Census, 2000. <http://factfinder.census.gov>

Van den Berg, Leo and Antonio Russo. *The Student City: Strategic Planning for Student Communities in EU Cities*. Hants, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2004.

Ward, Doug. "Mountaintop Fourth Avenue: There will be nothing of the suburban mall look to SFU's new UniverCity community." *Vancouver Sun*, April 27, 2004.

Widener University, University Crossings.  
<http://www.widener.edu/civicmission/universitycrossings.asp>

Williams College Admissions website. <http://www.williams.edu/admission/location.php>; accessed February 22, 2008.

