

# Penn State Dubois



Campus Exterior Architectural Plan  
October 2009

# Contents

Introduction and Purpose

Existing Conditions Inventory

Improvement Recommendations

*1 Site Furnishings*

*2 Lighting*

*3 Landscape*

*4 Other*

# Introduction and purpose

## Penn State's Mission:

Penn State is a multi-campus public land-grant university that improves the lives of the people of Pennsylvania, the nation, and the world through integrated, high-quality programs in teaching, research, and service.

To assist in achieving this mission, a Campus Exterior Architecture Plan, known as a CEAP, is developed to suggest ways to improve the exterior aesthetic qualities of campus with low-cost and easy-to-implement concepts that can have meaningful impacts. The CEAP is a planning tool that is an outgrowth of the campus master planning process.

The CEAP includes graphic and narrative descriptions of existing conditions on campus and approximately 15-20 improvement concepts. Positive features may also be identified as elements to emulate.

The improvement concepts are ranked or prioritized according to their visual impact and estimated cost. The concepts are not final designs. Further study and design are required prior to implementation.

# Existing Conditions Inventory

## Background:

A detailed site analysis, campus vision and future development strategy are fully documented in the campus master plan process. In addition to the analysis performed during the master planning process, a focused visual assessment of the campus exterior is conducted which establishes the foundation for the recommendations and concepts contained in this CEAP document.

## General Observations:

The campus is situated along a major arterial roadway bustling with commercial activity within the City of Dubois. This proximity to intense activity poses challenges for creating the tranquility that's conducive to academic endeavors. Despite the unavoidable challenges posed by the location the campus footprint is condensed with well defined open spaces and circulation patterns.

The exterior spaces would benefit from supplemental landscape plantings, new and more purposeful arrangement of site furnishings and upgrades/replacements/reduction in paved surfaces.

# Architecture

Existing Conditions Inventory

Major architectural modifications, additions and new construction are beyond the scope of the CEAP. However, the campus aesthetic is defined to a great extent by it's buildings.

Modern, brick structures form the academic core. Support functions are housed in converted residential structures with varying degrees of aesthetic appeal.



# Site Furnishings

## Existing Conditions Inventory

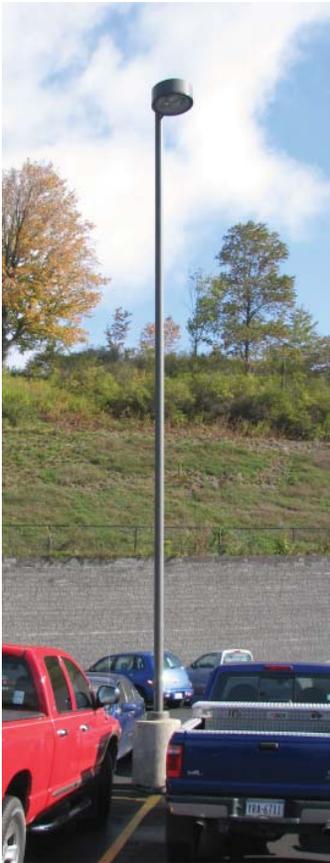
Benches, trash receptacles, tables and bike racks across the campus are varied in design, color and material. The aesthetic appeal, comfort and functionality of the furnishings is deficient.



# Lighting

Existing Conditions Inventory

A variety of exterior light fixture types are present on campus. The aesthetically unifying effect of this site amenity is not being employed to the greatest possible extent.



# Signage

Existing Conditions Inventory



Consistent design and placement of directional and identification signs is key to a unified aesthetic as well as an intuitive and clear means of way finding. Consistent utilization of Penn State graphic standards throughout the system builds the University's identity.



Signage upgrades prompted by CEAP recommendations made at other Commonwealth campuses has resulted in a complete renovation program at Dubois as well. The program is currently being implemented.



# Landscape

Existing Conditions Inventory

In addition to providing a visually pleasant and satisfying context for buildings, the campus landscape should provide numerous opportunities for congregational gatherings as well as solitary seating.



Well defined spaces exist on the campus but most lack the enhancements needed to maximize their value, function and comfort.



# Improvement Concepts

The following figures describe and illustrate possible solutions to specific aesthetic and functional shortcomings on campus, most of which are addressable through the CEAP program. In addition to the recommendations that follow, there are routine maintenance tasks that will enhance the aesthetic appeal of campus. Suggestions include:

- ▶ Mulch landscape beds annually
- ▶ Eradicate weeds and other invasive vegetation
- ▶ Fertilize lawn areas
- ▶ Re-seed lawn areas abutting sidewalks killed by deicing chemicals
- ▶ Seal and re-stripe paved areas
- ▶ Tree pruning and maintenance as recommended by University arborist
- ▶ Power wash soiled and/or stained surfaces

An implementation priority matrix has been prepared that lists improvement projects and recommends the order in which the concepts/projects could be executed. The implementation ranking is intended as a guideline for realizing the most significant impacts early in the plan implementation.

Location specific concepts/projects are keyed to the map with numbers corresponding to the listing on the matrix at the end of this report.

# 1A

## Site Furnishings Improvement Recommendation

Site furnishings designed in a style “family” are aesthetically unifying.

Overly stylized and colorful designs should be avoided because their appeal wanes before their useful life.

Freestanding landscape planters should be appropriately designed and sized for the space they occupy and be constructed of durable, quality material.



# 1B DEF Patio

## Improvement Recommendation



The opportunity for day to day informal use of the terrace outside of the DEF Building is missed because it is unfurnished.

Recommend the placement of movable cafe tables and chairs that can serve the break-out function from the conference room as well as the potential daily informal user.



The inclusion of planters on the patio will enhance the comfort of the space as well.

Consider sidewalk adjustments to accommodate foundation planting at base of patio or place planters to soften the hard edges of wall and walk.

After



Before

## Lighting

### Improvement Recommendation

Replacement of any antiquated, inefficient pedestrian walkway and parking lot lighting is recommended. Metal halide lamps in cut-off luminaires mounted to poles are recommended for pedestrian walkways. High pressure sodium lamping is acceptable for parking lot lights. Color/finish for all fixtures should be consistent campus wide. Avoid the use of bollards due to vulnerability to snow removal operations and vandalism. It is also recommended that wall mounted "utility style" fixtures be avoided.



Site Light



Parking Lot/  
Roadway Light



Wall pack fixtures should be avoided at building entrances

## Planters

### Improvement Recommendation

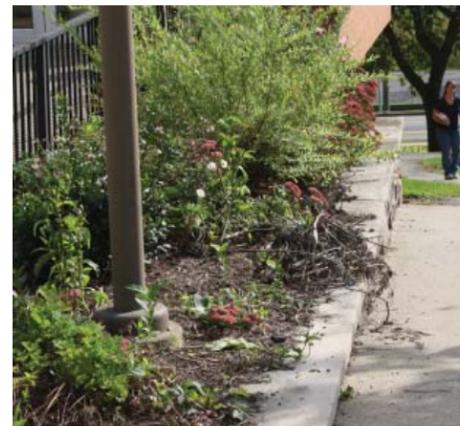
The use of perennial and annual flowering plants should be limited to high impact areas. The aesthetic value of this type of plant display peaks when the campus is least populated. Perennials and annuals also require the most intensive maintenance effort.

A more dramatic visual effect can be achieved by confining annuals and perennials to appropriately scaled containers placed strategically near building entrances and outdoor gathering spaces.

Recommend the simplification of many of the perennial/annual beds on campus and replace with shrubs and groundcovers.



Examples of container plantings designed to incorporate all types of vegetation with dramatic visual effect



Perennial and annual flower displays beyond their peak quickly become unsightly.

During most of the school year these beds are barren.



# Parking Screen

## Improvement Recommendation

The embankment supporting the north parking lot could be planted with additional trees and shrub type groundcovers eliminating the need for the river stone and re-application of bark mulch. The plant varieties illustrated here are hardy for this type of environment. The trees will mature at a height below the overhead utilities.



Gro-Low Sumac - Groundcover



Northern Bayberry - Screen shrub



Trident Maple - Small tree to 25'



After



Before

# Parking Screen

Improvement Recommendation

The first impression of the campus from an easterly approach is one of parked cars.

Recommend that the slope between the lot and the sidewalk be planted with trees and shrubs to screen and soften this first impression.



After



Before

# 3D

## Entrance Sign

### Improvement Recommendation

Landscape treatment at campus entrance signs is too dependent on perennial/annual flower displays. Recommend a simplified planting scheme consisting of shrubs and groundcovers with multiple season interest.



After



Before



Before



Before

# Swift Building Entrance

Improvement Recommendation

This entrance to Swift Building fronts on one of the most prominent open spaces in the campus core. The area immediately outside the doors is characterized by excessive pavement. The handrail along the west edge is in disrepair.

Recommend that the paved area be reduced and supplemented with permanent landscape plantings at the entrance. By reducing the width of the paving and installing the vegetated barrier the railing can be eliminated.

The renovation of Swift Building could also explore the possibility of an overhead cover at this entrance also.



Before



After



Existing rail in disrepair. Widening and planting a barrier will allow for removal.

# Smeal Building Wall

## Improvement Recommendation

The cast concrete walls at both ends of Smeal Building are unsightly and unfinished looking. This side of the building is Penn State's face to the public.

Recommend that the walls be veneered with stone to match the base of Swift Building.

Supplemental landscape plantings can soften and enhance the stark aesthetic of this prominent visual opening to Rt. 255.



After



Before

# Hiller West Patio

## Improvement Recommendation

The existing patio at the west entrance to Hiller Building is a core campus gathering space with potential for greater use.

Propose that some of the existing paved surface be removed and replaced with landscaped seating groups.

The existing seat height wall should be replaced with a new wall with integral skate board deterrent. Recommend shifting the new wall away from the building face to provide more planting area.

Relocate the existing site lights to the opposite side of the walkway.



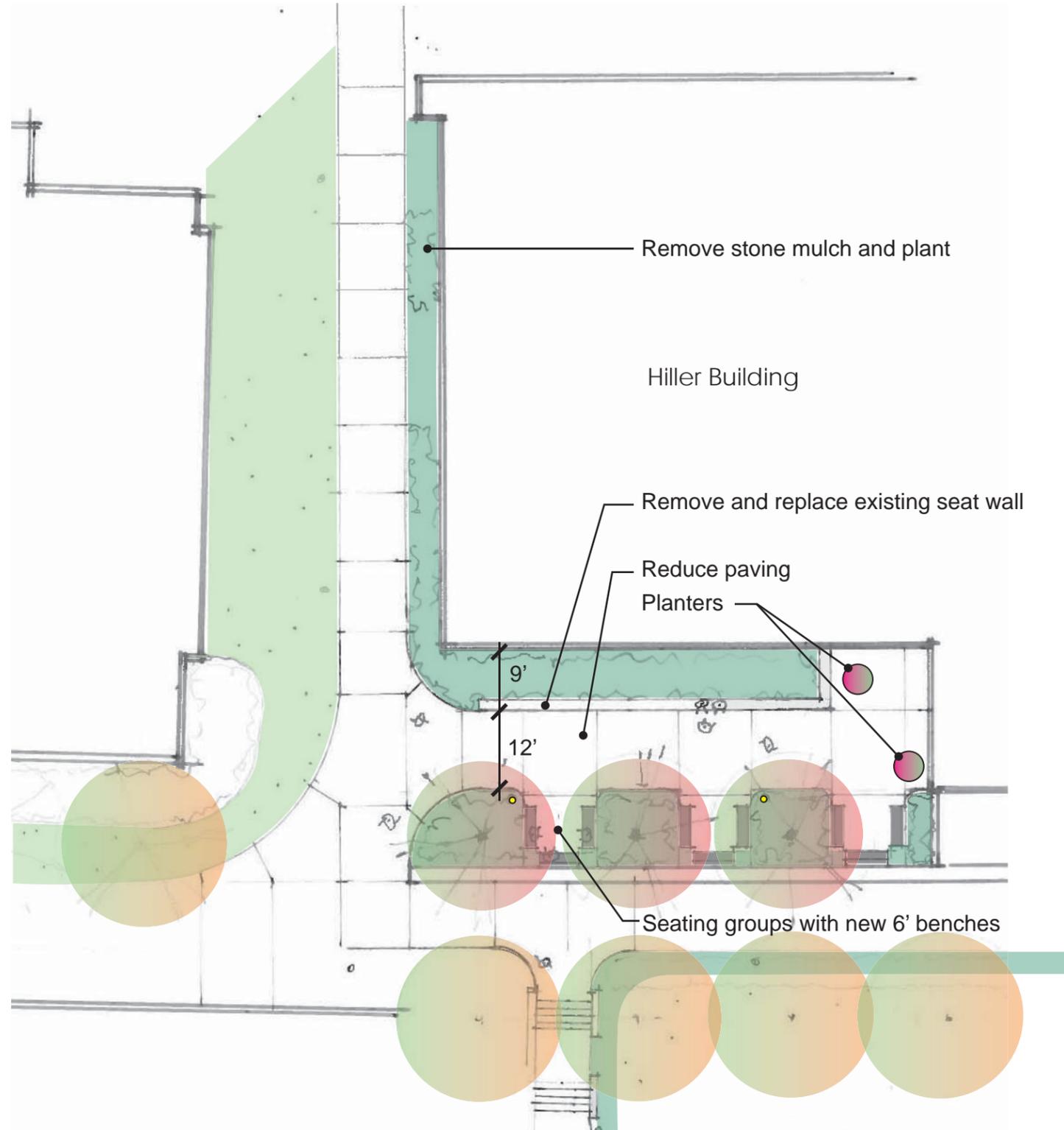
After



Before

# Hiller West Patio

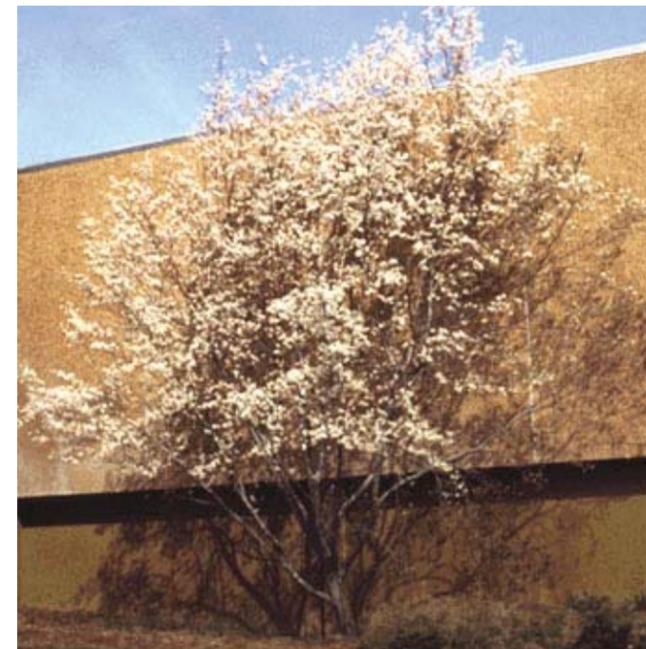
Improvement Recommendation



Trident Maple - Small tree to 25'



Oakleaf Hydrangea



Serviceberry



Nikko Deutzia



Small shade tree in existing tree pits

Remove excess paving

Screen parking



# 3H Hiller East Patio

Improvement Recommendation

This important gathering space adjacent to food service in Hiller Building could be upgraded and enhanced to be more comfortable and welcoming.

Recommend that the existing tree pits in the patio be planted to provide shade. Because the east edge of the space is exposed to parking, an evergreen barrier could be planted to segregate the space.

The concept plan shows removal of some of the perimeter paving to allow for added landscaping.

Replace existing wooden and concrete furnishings with new tables and benches in a standard design chosen for the campus.



Existing Patio

# Landscape at Gazebo

## 3I

Improvement Recommendation



Existing

The quality of the space around the existing gazebo could be improved through the installation of suitable trees, shrubs and groundcovers. The interior of the structure could be made ADA compliant by eliminating the step at the entrance.

Relocation to a location outside of the Schoch Plaza area is recommended.



Example

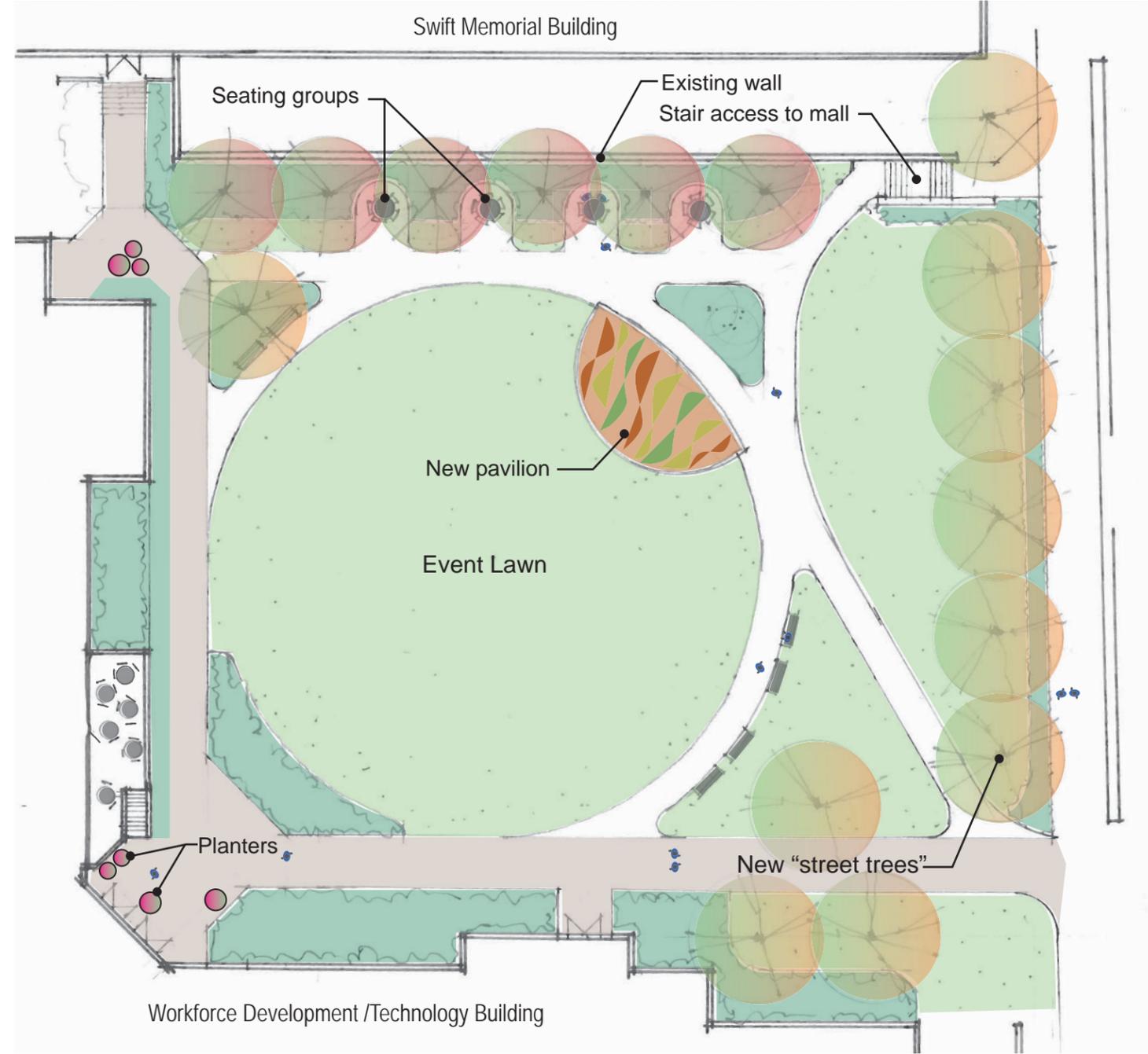
# Event Lawn

Improvement Recommendation

The existing green space between DEF, Swift and Hiller Buildings is one of two primary core campus gathering spaces. The development of the site lacks definition and a sense of purpose.

Recommend removal of the existing pavilion structure and installation of pedestrian walks including a new stair access at the northwest corner. Provide organized seating opportunities and enhanced landscape plantings. The open lawn panel at the center of the courtyard is a simple space that could be staged for formal events when required.

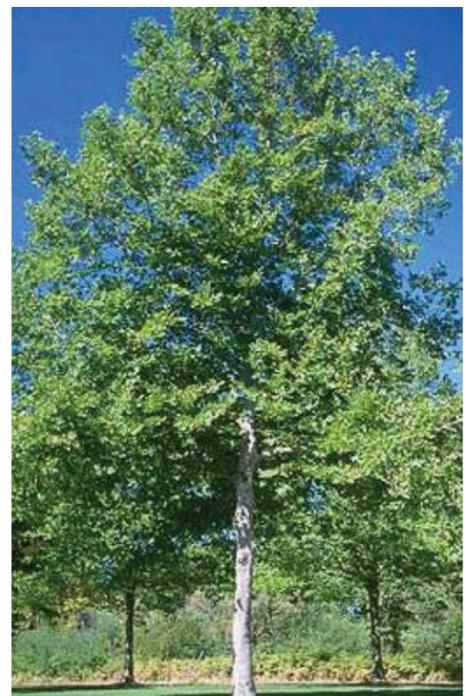
The shelter function of the wooden pavilion could be replaced by a new structure. This concept shows a green roof in keeping with Penn State's commitment to sustainable design practices.



Mugho Pine



Star Magnolia



Sycamore

# Event Lawn

Improvement Recommendation



After



Before



"Soft" gravel walkway surface



# Dumpster Screen

Improvement Recommendation

Refuse dumpsters and service dock of Hiller Building could be effectively screened by installing a gate system similar to other screening at the campus. Additional landscape plantings would supplement the screening of the area.



Screen fence similar to this example at DEF could be used to screen dumpsters.

Note that the visual boldness of the blue could be diminished by painting a more neutral color like black.



Before



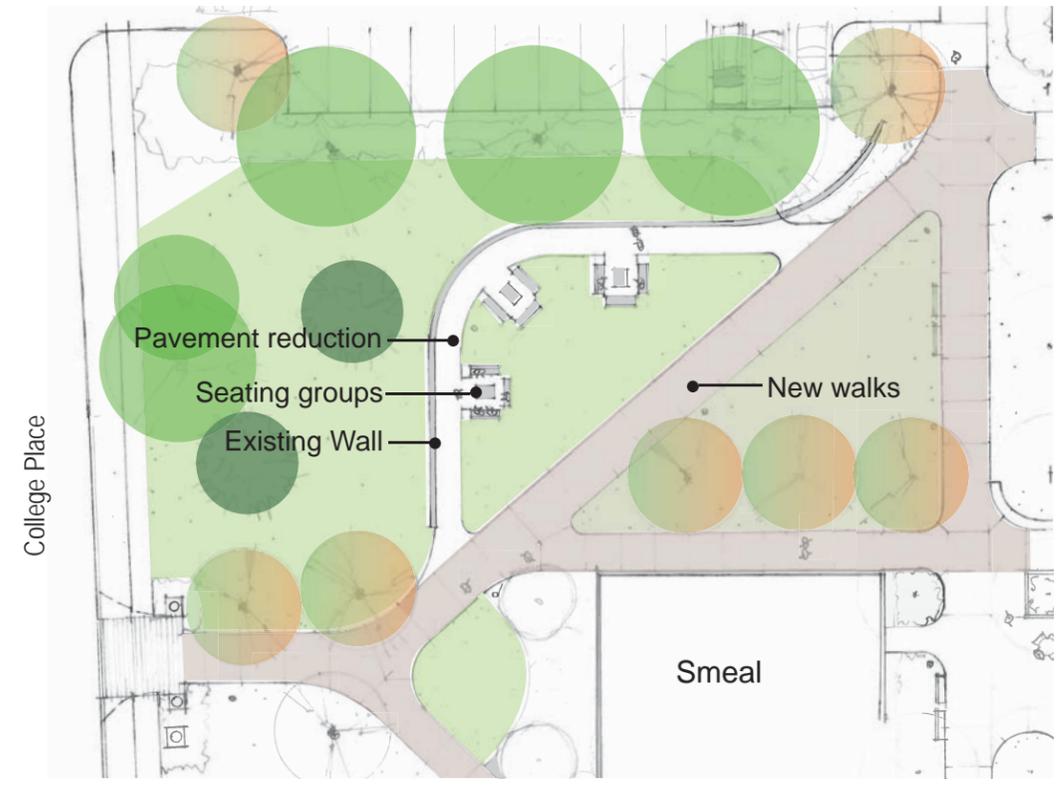
After

# Pavement Reduction and Seating

## Improvement Recommendation

Reduce paved surface adjacent to existing retaining wall and furnish for use as an outdoor gathering space.

This concept also calls for the reconfiguration of other campus walks as shown on the concept plan.



After



Before

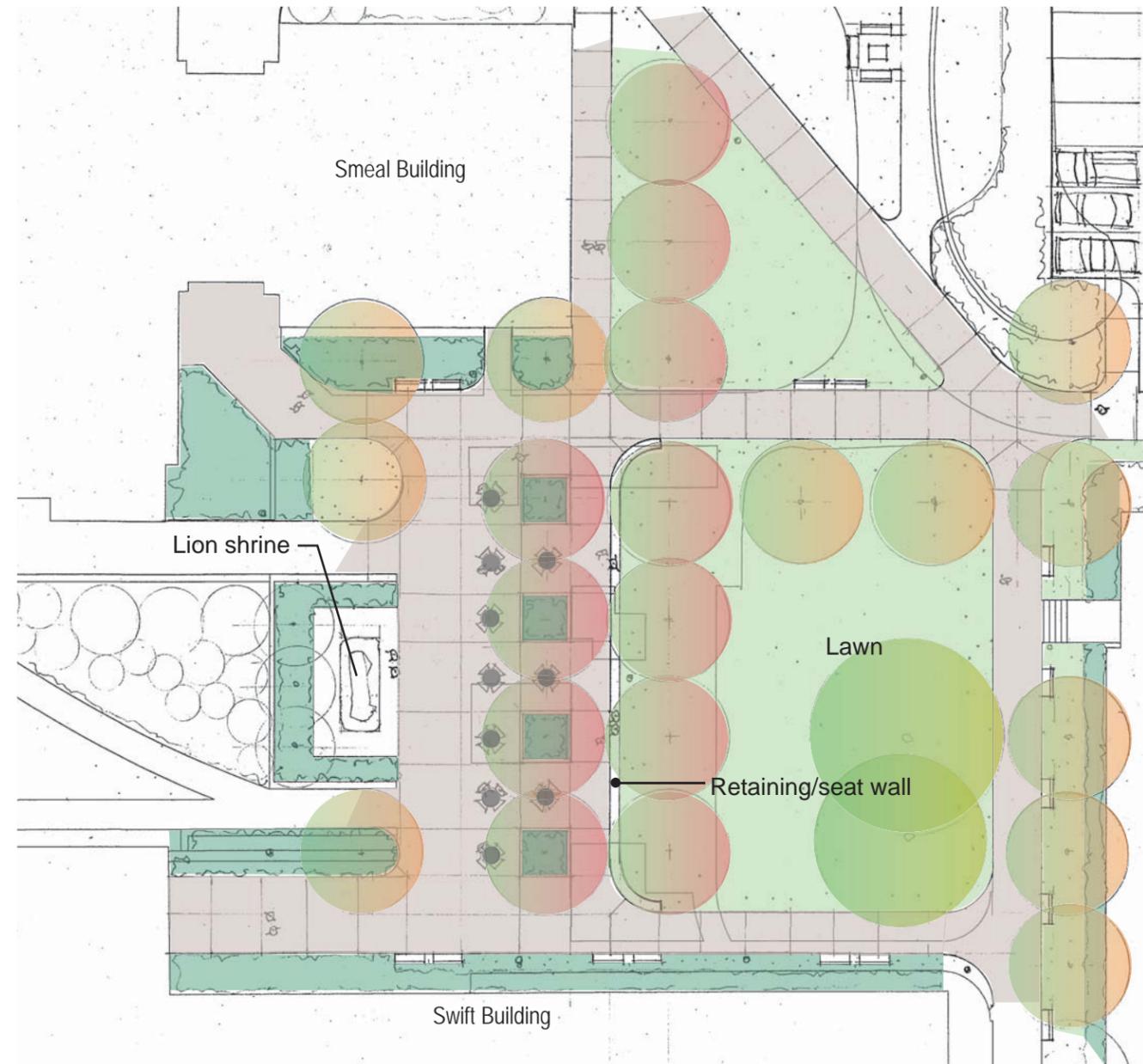
# 4c

## Schoch Plaza Renovation

Improvement Recommendation

Schoch Plaza is one of two primary core campus gathering spaces. The development of the site lacks definition and a sense of purpose.

Recommend removal of the existing concrete paving and deteriorated site furnishings. A new hardscape can be installed that integrates more logically with pedestrian circulation. By installing a seat wall, new furnishings and landscaping, the space will be more attractive and comfortable for users.



Existing

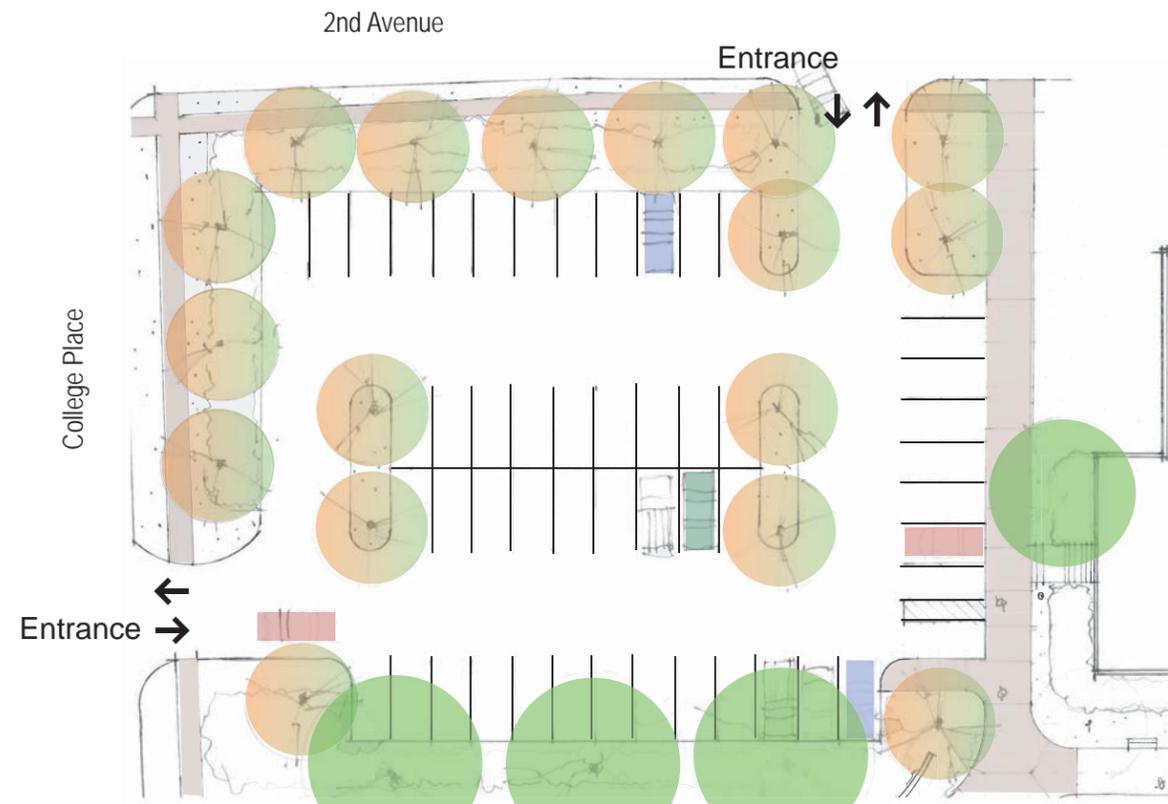
## Parking Renovation

Improvement Recommendation

The existing parking lot west of the Multi-Purpose Building is inefficient and inadequately screened.

This recommendation calls for the realignment of parking stalls, aisles and lot entrances. New parking lot lighting should be installed .

A net increase of 2 spaces could be achieved with this plan in addition to improving the appearance of this prime corner of campus.



Existing mulch bed in parking lot.



Existing

# Pedestrian Entrance

## Improvement Recommendation

This architectural remnant from the previous land use has been appropriately preserved.

Recommend that this entrance be restricted to pedestrians only. Place new curb along College Place and pave the threshold with an enhanced material to distinguish it. Plant ornamental shrubs and groundcover to further define the entrance.



Before



After

# 4F

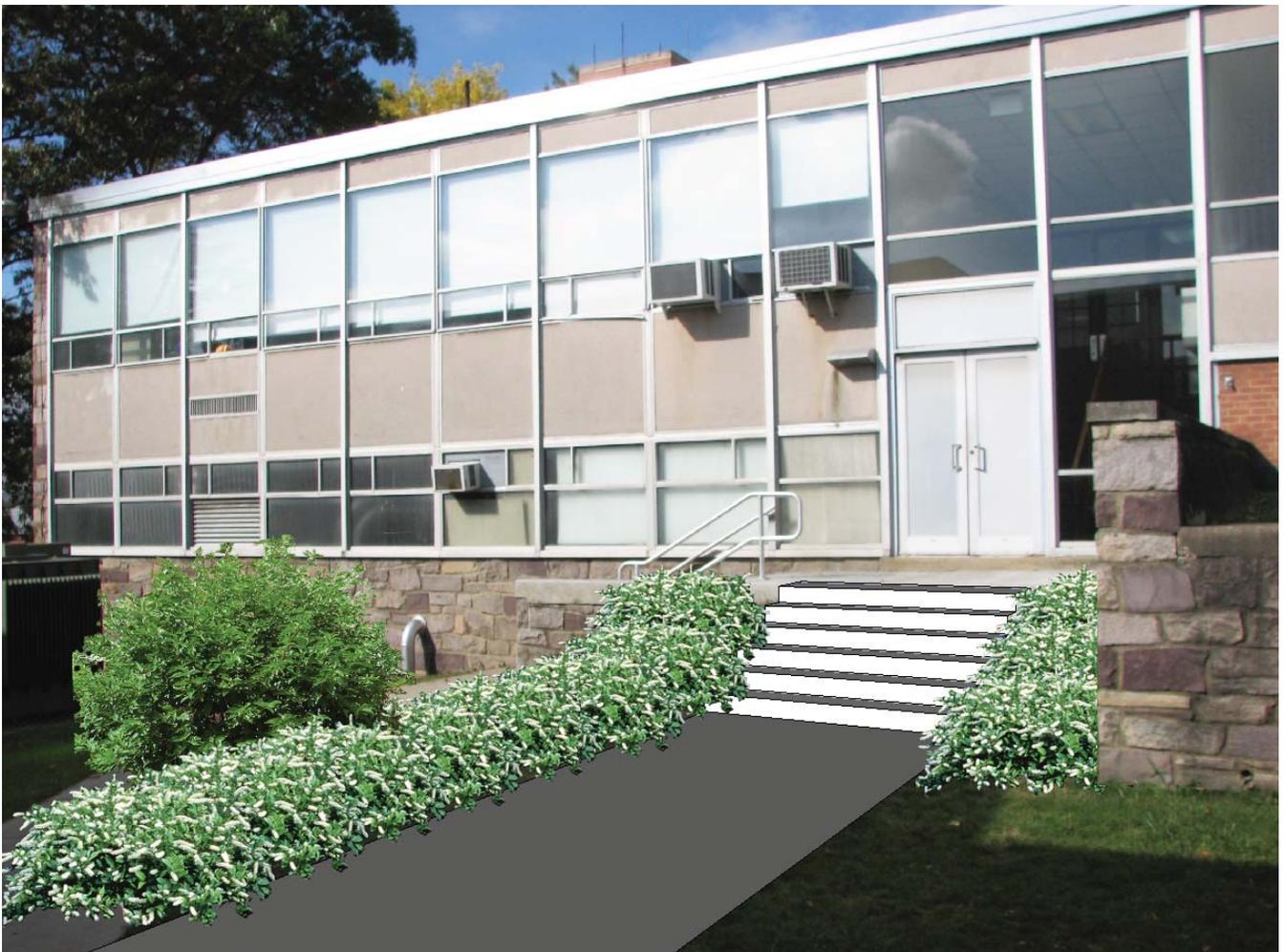
## Swift Building Entrance

Improvement Recommendation

The east entrance to Swift Building could be altered to provide more direct access by installing a new set of stairs, additional sidewalk and landscaping.



Before



After

## Pavilion

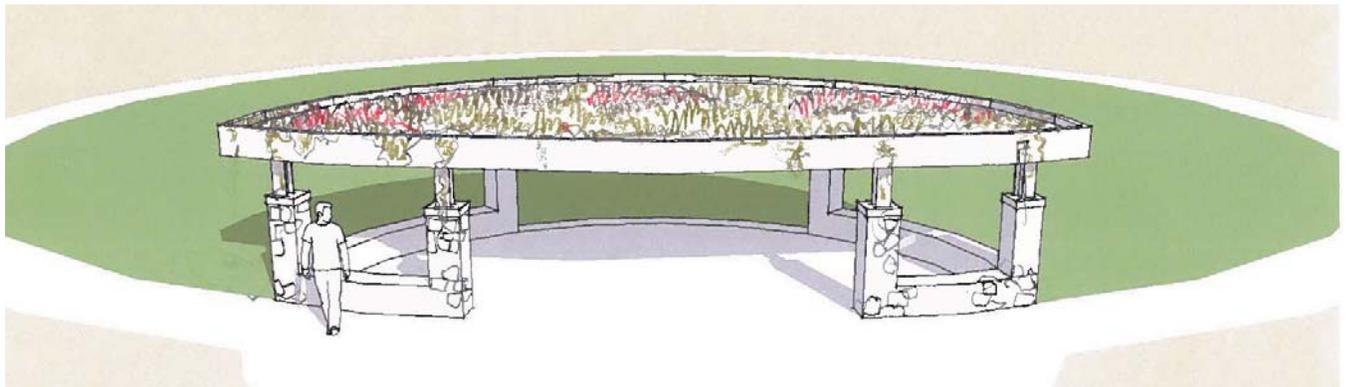
### Improvement Recommendation

This existing wooden gazebo in the landscape is in disrepair. It's character is too rustic for a university campus.



Existing

The opportunity exists to construct an improved shelter in conjunction with other improvements proposed for the event lawn space. One option is a vegetated green roof to demonstrate PSU's commitment to sustainable facilities. A variety of pre-engineered structures are available for consideration also.



Custom pavilion structure with green roof



Pre-engineered pavilion structures



# 4H

## ADA Ramp

Improvement Recommendation

The existing accessible ramp to enrollment services could be redesigned to compliment the architectural style of the building. With the purchase of the adjacent house the opportunity exists to consolidate the access, unify the facilities and enhance the aesthetic of this important first time visitor impression locale.



Existing



# 4I Fence Replacement

Improvement Recommendation

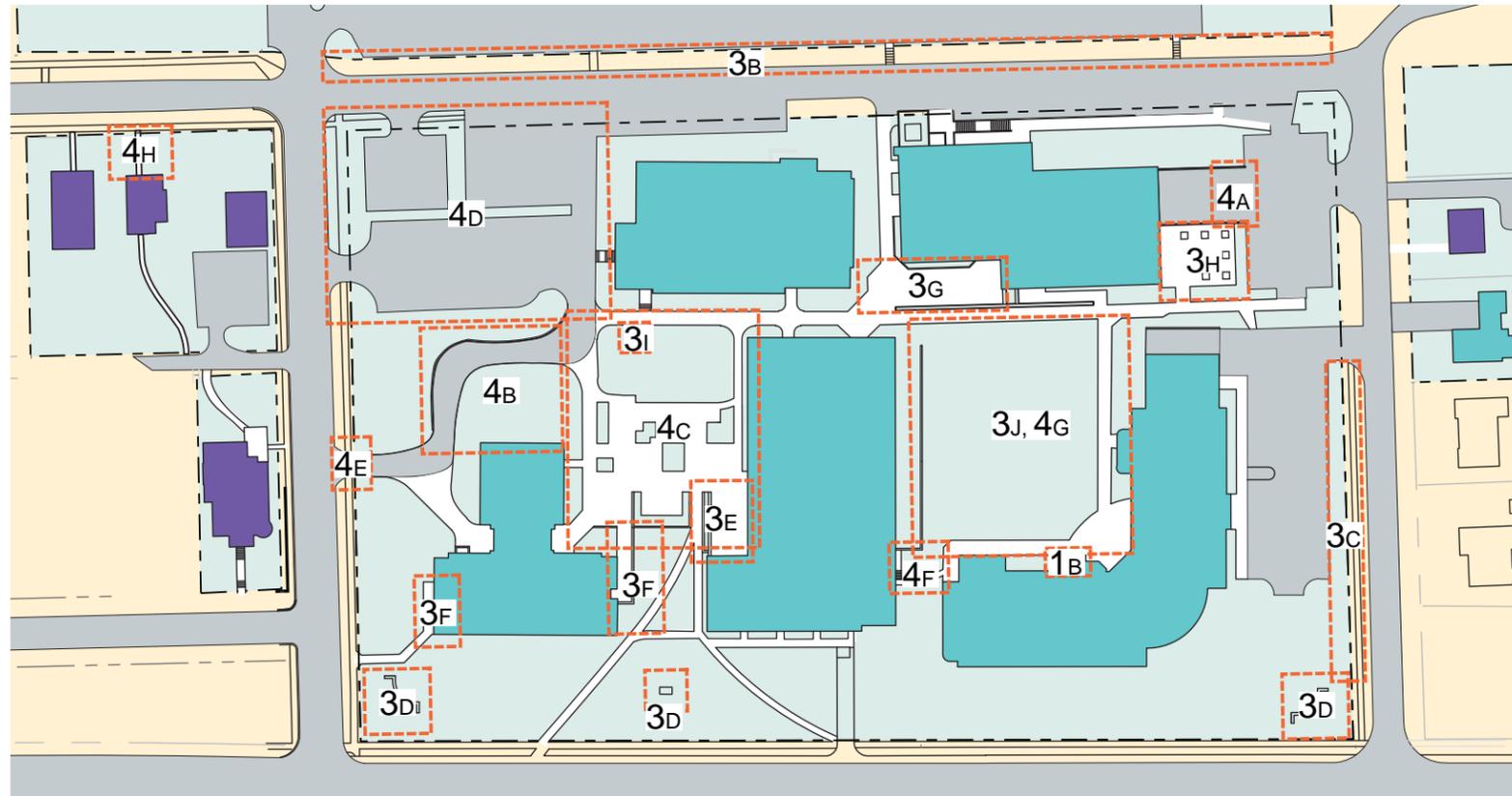


Recommended post and chain barrier where necessary

The visual character of split rail fence is not consistent with a college campus. In cases where a physical barrier is necessary it is recommended that a metal post and chain be used.



# Project Key Map



1A, 2, 3A, 4I to be implemented campus wide

## Penn State Dubois Campus Exterior Architectural Plan Project Prioritization Matrix Fall 2009

Proposed exterior improvement projects have been assessed with respect to the following criteria and assigned an implementation priority value.

Criteria include:

**Visual Impact** - degree to which the project improves the visual quality of the campus

**Cost** - level of capital investment required to implement the project (assumes no volunteer or donor contribution)

The projects with the highest numeric score should be given the highest priority for implementation

**VISUAL IMPACT**  
1 - Little or no impact  
2 - Minor Impact  
3 - Moderate Impact  
4 - Major Impact

**COST**  
1 - Greater than \$25,000  
2 - \$15,001 to \$25,000  
3 - \$5,001 to \$15,000

#	PROJECT	IMPACT				COST			SCORE
		1	2	3	4	1	2	3	
1A	Site Furnishings			X			X		5
1B	DEF Patio			X				X	6
2	Lighting			X			X		5
3A	Planters				X			X	7
3B	Parking Screen				X		X		5
3C	Parking Screen			X			X		5
3D	Entrance Sign				X			X	7
3E	Swift Building Entrance				X		X		6
3F	Smeal Building Walls				X		X		5
3G	Hiller West Patio			X			X		4
3H	Hiller East Patio				X		X		5
3I	Landscape at Gazebo			X				X	6
3J	Event Lawn				X		X		5
4A	Dumpster Screen		X				X		3
4B	Pavement Reduction and Seating				X		X		5
4C	Schoch Plaza Renovation				X		X		5
4D	Parking Renovation			X			X		4
4E	Pedestrian Entrance			X				X	6
4F	Swift Building Entrance			X			X		5
4G	Pavilion				X		X		5
4H	ADA Ramp			X			X		5

Note:

Cost ranges identified in this matrix are for planning purposes only. Actual costs will be dependent upon fully developed plans for the respective project. Some of the projects listed above can be broken down into smaller pieces and implemented in phases.