
BENNINGTON COLLEGE

Bennington, Vermont

Landscape Master Plan

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Landscape Architecture

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In 2003, a generous gift made possible—for the first time in its history—the comprehensive study of the Bennington College campus landscape. From the school's founding in the 1930s until 2004, the school's enrollment grew from 300 to over 600 students. The first significant development of the campus was in the 1960s when there was urgent need for housing, academic facilities, and common spaces. The New Houses, built in 2000 to respond to the growing student population, represented the most recent building on campus.

Reed | Hilderbrand was commissioned to evaluate components of the landscape in conjunction with a facilities master plan by Kyu Sung Woo Architects. These studies included an assessment of existing conditions, identification of opportunities for development, and consideration of the management of the landscape's future as a valuable resource.

The master planning began with meetings of the design teams, administration, staff, faculty, and students. These meetings provided the venue for individuals to voice their ideas for improving use of the campus systems and preserving and developing the character of the landscape. Members of the design team researched historical sources and investigated the site to gain an understanding of the physical makeup of the land and the culture of the College. Some components, including American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and signing, resulted in the recommendation for further study by specific consultants.

This document outlines the overall concept of the master plan, identifies improvements by area, and provides design standards for implementing projects. All of the recommendations can be phased according to need and budget.

Reed | Hilderbrand wishes to thank to the following people who comprised the project team for the College and provided individual support and guidance:

Penny Wilson, Board of Trustees

Elizabeth Coleman, President

Joan Goodrich, Vice President for Planning and Special Programs

William Morgan, Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration

Rebecca B. Stickney, Special Assistant to the President

Donald Sherefkin, Faculty Member / Architecture

Kerry Woods, Faculty Member / Biology and Ecology

William Tronsen, Director of Facilities Management

Ernie Paquette, Director of Security

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INTRODUCTION



Original barn

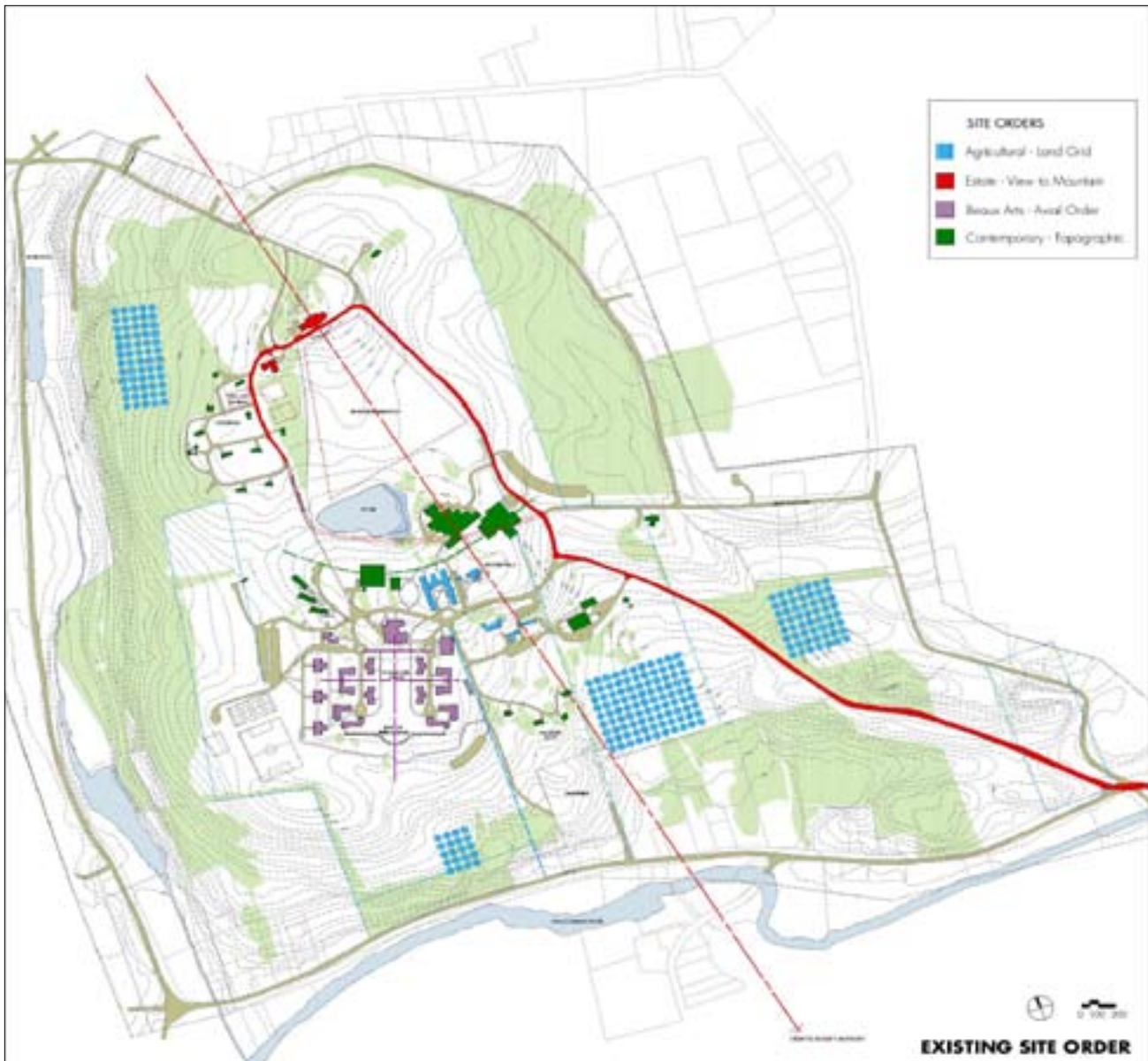


Beaux-Arts campus plan and rural pattern



Crossett Library

In the early 20th century, Jennings' estate was developed into the Bennington College campus. The site incorporated agricultural fields, an adjacent 19th century farmstead, tree-lined drives, and lawns, and took full advantage of the high aspect, rolling topography, and views of distant mountains.





Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA)



Barnes Houses



New Houses

Four distinct eras of development have contributed to the unique character of Bennington College. When the College was founded in the 1930s, the Jennings estate house and farm buildings were adapted as part of the new college. A Beaux-Arts plan for residential houses and Commons — a building for classrooms, performances, and dining — was situated on the southwest side of a hill oriented to the surrounding landscape, and organized around a great lawn. In the 1960s and 70s the library and large-scale modern classroom buildings and houses were sited in relationship to the hilltop topography and distant views. The most recent structures, the New Houses, built in 2000, were sited on a west-facing slope, again to take advantage of the site's prospect over the rural Vermont landscape.

These four eras have left a composite imprint on the land — site orders that are evident in the physical fabric of the campus. Today these four orders encompass the fields, hedgerows, drives, views, groves, lawns, and buildings of the College. These components coalesce into an organically and casually organized set of destinations established on two hilltops with Commons serving as the heart of college life. Fundamentally, the preservation of this evolved historical character, with its roots in rural Vermont traditions, overlaid with modern structures, guides much of the actions proposed for improvements.

SUMMARY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

An analysis of existing conditions forms the foundation of the master plan concept and recommendations. A summary of findings follows. Diagrams of existing conditions are found in the Appendix starting on page xx.



The entry drive has an appropriate rural character — narrow, no curbs, or lighting.



The small campus arrival area lacks an appropriate and memorable image.



Wide roads and curbs favor vehicles over pedestrians and are suburban rather than rural in scale and materials.

Vehicular Circulation

- The existing drive, built as part of the Jennings Estate, has a rural character and should serve as model for any future road development on the campus.
- The primary drive divides the campus core by cutting between Academic Hill and Commons.
- Roads terminate in dead-end parking lots at the Ohio parking lot and the Orchard, or in cul-de-sacs at Welling House and Franklin House.
- Provisions for parking on campus are inadequate for current and future demands.
- Pedestrians are forced to walk on drives throughout much of the campus, creating unsafe conditions particularly at night and in winter.
- Large service vehicles drive through campus for daily deliveries to the kitchen and the post office at Commons. Tractor-trailers frequently line the central college drive waiting for access to the loading bay.
- Drives with granite curbs, 25' road widths, and cul-de sacs, dominate the rural character of the campus.
- Student parking is concentrated on the west side of the campus at the Ohio lot generating a large volume of traffic across the campus.
- Parking is limited in areas of highest demand such as the Barn and VAPA.
- The College lacks a place with a clear sense of arrival.
- The main campus drive alignment lacks clarity for the first-time visitor.



Brick and asphalt paths are appropriate for the campus core.



Daily deliveries and dumpsters at Commons are in conflict with the pedestrian experience.

Pedestrian Circulation

- **The existing network of pathways — made up of brick, asphalt, gravel, or packed earth trails — lend an informal and valued character to the campus.**
- **The core of the campus is compact allowing students to walk from their houses to classes and dining through the seasons.**
- The campus lacks a coherent and comprehensive systems of walks.
- Pedestrians and vehicles share roads in many areas.
- Some paths are in a state of disrepair.
- Accessible routes have not been evaluated.
- Primary pedestrian routes often pass through service areas and parking lots.



Groves of mature canopy trees are models for the character of Academic Hill.



Some areas of campus, like the Barnes Houses, lack a defined character.

Character Zones

- **Varied landform, distinctive architecture, dramatic off-site views, and diverse plant communities create zones of character on campus that altogether provide the identity of the college.**
- **The outlying large fields and meadows surrounding the College establish a precedent for the scale of character zones within the campus proper.**
- Various features detract from the legibility of these areas such as:

Overgrown vegetation and invasive plants which surround the pond preclude views of the pond and Jennings Meadow.

The central drive through campus detracts from the coherence of a compound of academic buildings set on and around a hill.

Evergreen plantings block views within the campus and views of the larger landscape.

- Due primarily to overgrown and invasive vegetation, the proposed Academic Hill has developed into a space that separates Jennings Hall, Jennings Meadow, and the pond from Commons and its surrounding residential areas.



Distant and panoramic views are integral to the Bennington experience.



Many views are blocked by evergreen trees.

Views

- **The visual connection of the campus to the larger Vermont landscape forms an integral part of the identity and culture of the College and the experience of its students.**
- The hill-top site provides multiple views of the surrounding mountains and valleys as well the potential for dramatic views across campus from the high points of Jennings Hall and Academic Hill.
- Views have been obfuscated over time by several factors. Invasive plants block views of the pond area and Jennings Meadow. Evergreen trees planted to screen parking lots have reached maturity forming solid walls dividing the campus. Other areas of planting used for screening — particularly behind VAPA — have compromised the integrity of the architecture and its relationship to the site.



Mature native canopy trees are an important part of the landscape structure.



Overgrown plantings should be removed.

Planting

- **Impressive groves of Beech, Sugar Maple, Birch, and Black Locust form a distinctive part of the character of Academic Hill and should serve as a model for future plantings on campus.**
- Evergreens planted at building corners and entrances are over-mature and prevent the flow of continuous space.
- Ad-hoc volunteer plantings dot the campus.
- A comprehensive plan for the planting and maintenance is lacking.
- Invasive species of shrubs and vines have created barriers that divide the campus, render areas unusable, and threaten the health of native species.
- Trees and shrubs that are badly damaged should be removed.
- Areas such as the Lawn and its adjacent residential areas, and the Orchard, have strong character defined by planting and clear design intent. However, the original plan has become obscured due to a loss of canopy trees and overgrown shrubs.
- Bennington College has a history of gardens and garden rooms related to Jennings Hall and Cricket Hill — all of which are in decline.



New light standard for paths and drives.

Lighting

- New lights at the Meyer Recreation Barn, the New Houses, and at Cricket Hill are contemporary, subtle, and serve as a standard for other areas.
- Lighting should be implemented for pedestrian safety but used with discretion in areas such as Jennings Meadow and Stickney Observatory, where visibility of the night sky enhances the rural character and is preferred.
- The lack of a comprehensive lighting plan has led to the ad hoc placement of lights to address specific problems. There is no standard method or fixture for lighting pedestrian and vehicular areas.
- Floodlights mounted on buildings are the primary method of lighting pedestrian areas. This creates a condition of intense blinding light interspersed with areas of near darkness.
- Lights in parking lots are too bright for adjacent residential areas and the the Stickney Observatory.
- Maintenance of lights that are mounted high on buildings or poles is difficult and expensive.
- Lighting at the main entrance is required.



Building-mounted lights provide inconsistent lighting.



Signing at the New Houses is appropriate for the architecture – clear and contemporary.

Signing

- Building signs at the New Houses are contemporary, discrete, and can be used as model for a future system.
- The entrance sign at Route 67A is generic and does not establish a unique identity and image for the College.
- The directional signs at the primary decision point for arriving vehicles form a chaotic collection that is difficult to read.
- The campus lacks a standard signing language. The type of signs employed have a temporary quality.
- Major destinations for visitors, particularly VAPA and Admissions, are not clearly identified.
- Building entrances are often difficult to locate and lack proper identification.



The first major intersection into campus is confusing and littered with signs.





MASTER PLAN

Design Concept
Vehicular Circulation and Parking
Pedestrian and Service Circulation
Character Zones
Views
Planting
Lighting
Signing



Existing campus drive



Proposed campus drive as pedestrian / service path

Features

Establishes a main drive loop extending around Jennings Hall and Orchard Houses to the Ohio parking lot.

Creates a clear and attractive point of arrival.

Increases parking spaces by 249 – from 666 spaces to 915 spaces.

Captures most parking on the east side of campus.

Disperses parking to avoid large, monolithic parking areas.

Removes car traffic from the campus core.

Small delivery and service vehicles are limited to 9' pedestrian paths

Relocates a new dining facility and post office on a new arrival green located on the south side of Academic Hill.

Develops a new service access that connects to the new dining facility and the Alabama parking lot.

Expands the core of the campus to include Jennings Meadow and Pond.

Note: Location of security booth will be part of future vehicular circulation design development.

The plan proposes a coherent walkway system that includes two principal circuits — one linking Academic Hill and residences to Jennings Hall and one joining VAPA to Commons, Crossett Library, and the new student center and dining facility. A trail system provides another circuit around the outlying campus.





Features

Trucks and cars are taken out of the campus core to provide a pedestrian zone.

8' pedestrian paths provide emergency routes as well as access for small service vehicles.

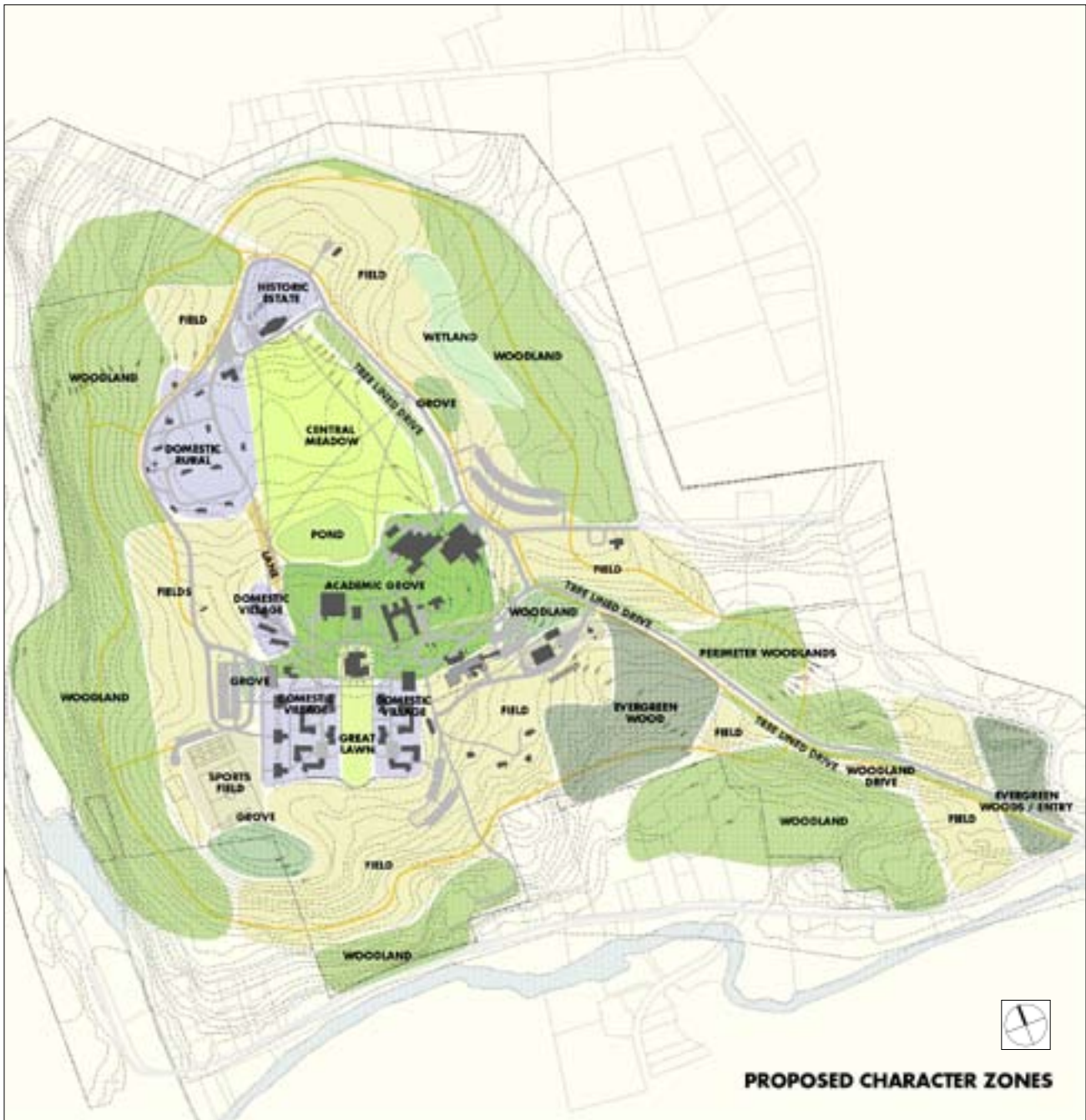


The outlying campus trail system provides safe walkways that parallel roads currently shared with pedestrians.

A system of trails around campus will provide connections to North Bennington and Bennington. They can also be used for hiking, biking, and cross-country skiing.

The plan proposes a vocabulary of pedestrian pathways and widths that define the character and function of different areas.

The plan proposes developing nine character zones to emphasize the unique spatial qualities of the landscape defined by land form, vegetation, views, and function. Character zones also provide the framework for future development.





Academic Hill



Commons Lawn



Domestic Village



Example of meadow



Pond



Domestic Cottages



Domestic Estate



Fields



Woodlands

Features

Academic Hill encompasses the core of the campus currently comprised of several small pockets of disparate character. This area will feature high canopy trees and lawn.

Commons Lawn will be restored to the original design intent including peastone or stonedust paths and lines of canopy trees that frame views beyond End-of-the-World .

Domestic Village defines an intimate character of student houses featuring ornamental trees and shrubs.

Jennings Meadow will be incorporated into the heart of campus by providing a diverse mix of wildflowers and grasses that are in contrast to the surrounding agricultural fields and by developing a path through and around the meadow.

The Pond will become the visual focus of the campus proper when invasive vegetation is removed from its edges.

Domestic Cottages describes the Orchard Houses and will retain the original expression of the site's agricultural heritage. Plantings include fruit trees and ornamental shrubs.

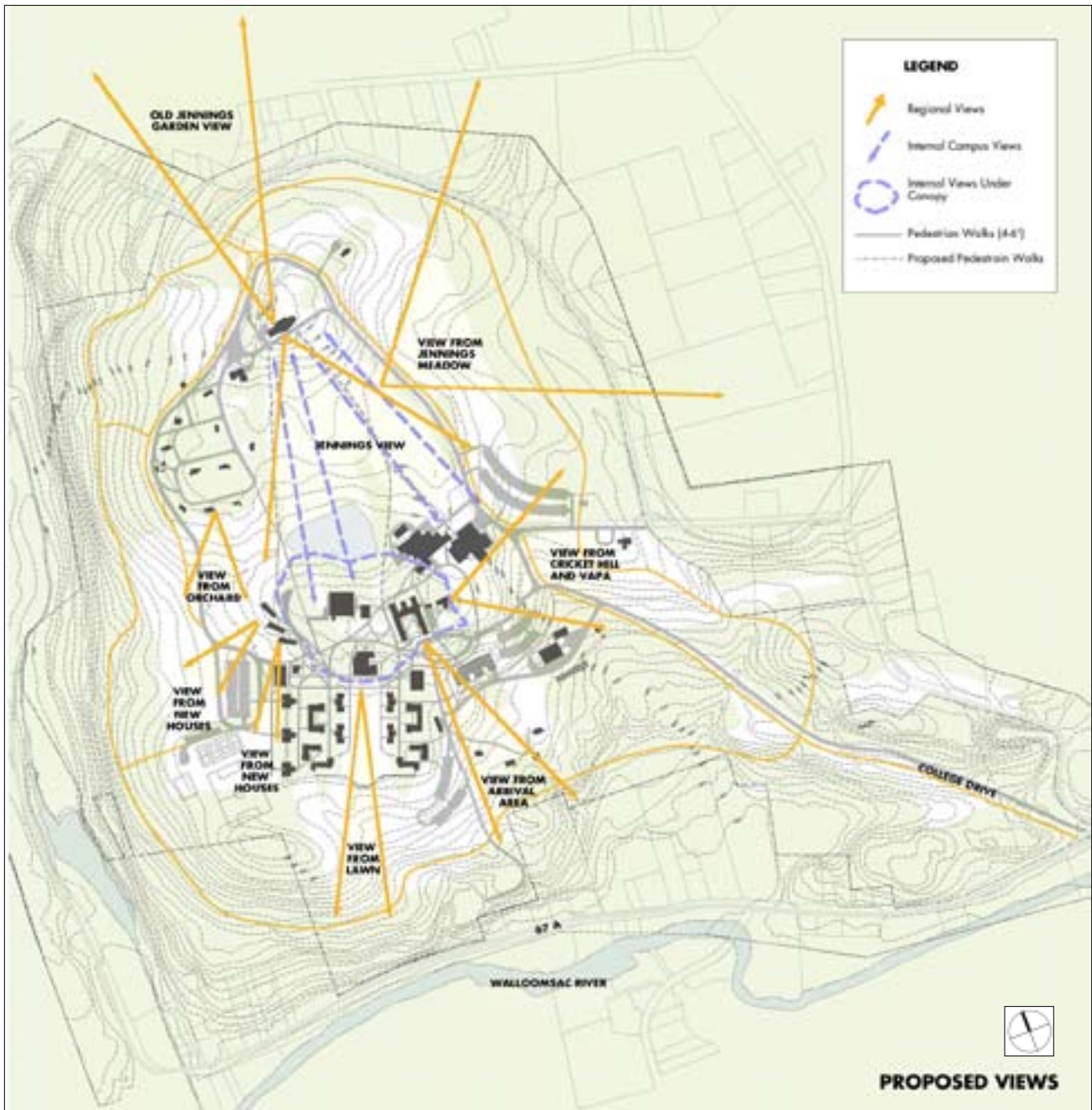
Domestic Estate (Jennings) will be rehabilitated to include its original gardens and views to the regional landscape.

Fields surrounding the campus will retain their original agricultural function managed by local farmers.

Woodlands will be managed and incorporate a pedestrian trail system circumnavigating the campus.

LANDSCAPE MASTER PLAN

Jennings was sited to take advantage of views south to Mount Anthony and east to the Green Mountains. Subsequent campus development also sited buildings for panoramic views — some of which are obscured. By opening distant views and by clearing views within the campus, the original intention of orienting buildings to the landscape will be accomplished.





Overgrown plants obscure views to the pond



Potential view across the pond from VAPA

Features

Interior Views

Opens views from Academic Hill to Jennings and from VAPA to Jennings currently blocked by invasive plants and pine trees.

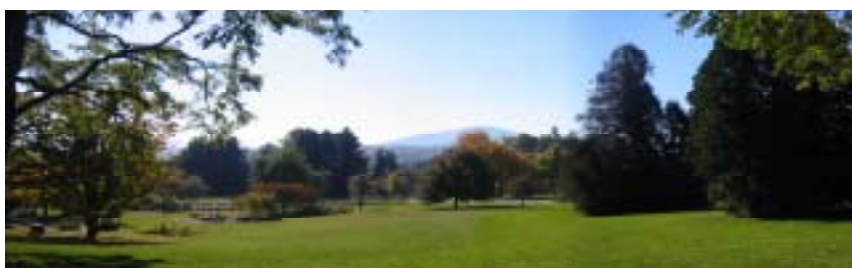
Opens views across fields from Orchard and New Houses.

New native trees will be deciduous to allow views under a high-canopy.

Regional Views

Reinforces views from the Barn to Mount Anthony.

Plantings will be selectively removed to recapture views east to the Green Mountains and south to Mt. Anthony.



Existing view from the Barn to Mt. Anthony closing in with vegetation



Proposed view created by replacing evergreen trees with canopy trees



Existing view from Cricket Hill to the Green Mountains



Proposed view from Cricket Hill created by eliminating overgrown hedgerow

Historical archives document the early intention of campus planting — canopy trees in lawn throughout the campus core with drives and paths lined with trees — all set within agricultural fields, hedgerows, and meadows that were surrounded by woodland. Selective plant removal is part of each project area and includes invasive plants and some evergreen trees.



Aerial view of campus with mature native canopy trees, c. 1960.





Existing canopy trees on Academic Hill



Example of high canopy and lawn

Features

Native canopy trees provide the unifying structure to the campus. Deciduous trees are used as specimen trees in lawn, in groves encompassing large areas, or in lines along drives.

Evergreen trees provide winter interest and frame views. They are also used for study.

Understory trees define the character of residential areas where the scale is more intimate and the areas more protected.

Orchard trees structure new parking lots, creating a matrix within which the lots are sited.

Mown lawn defines the core areas and paths around and through a more diverse Jennings meadow.

Existing fields are preserved around the campus.



Evergreen trees used as parking screen



Grove of evergreens used for botanical studies



Understory grove of birches



Example of ornamental trees



Example of flowering shrub for residential areas



Shrub garden at Cricket Hill



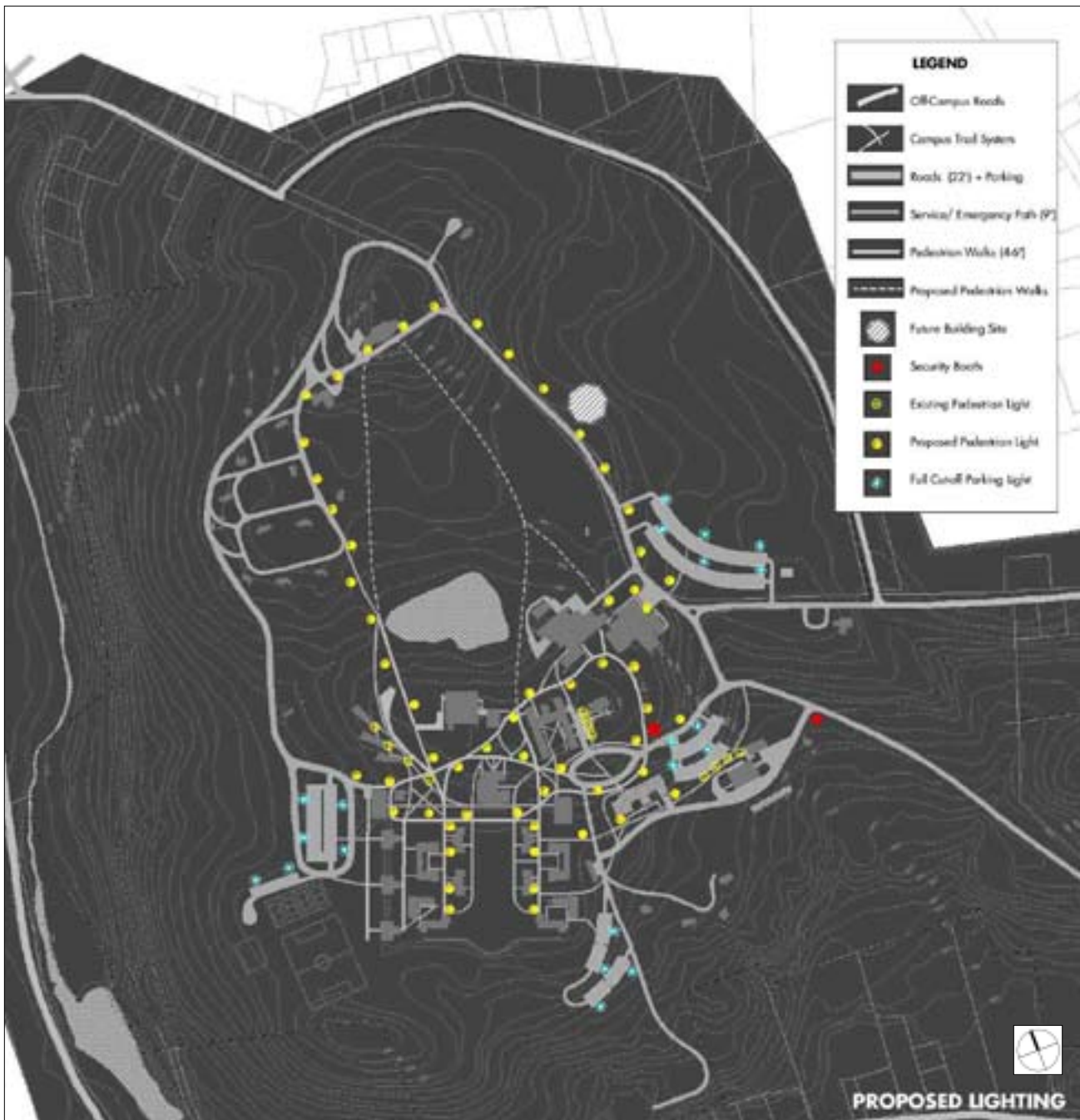
Mown lawn at Commons



Example of mown paths through meadow

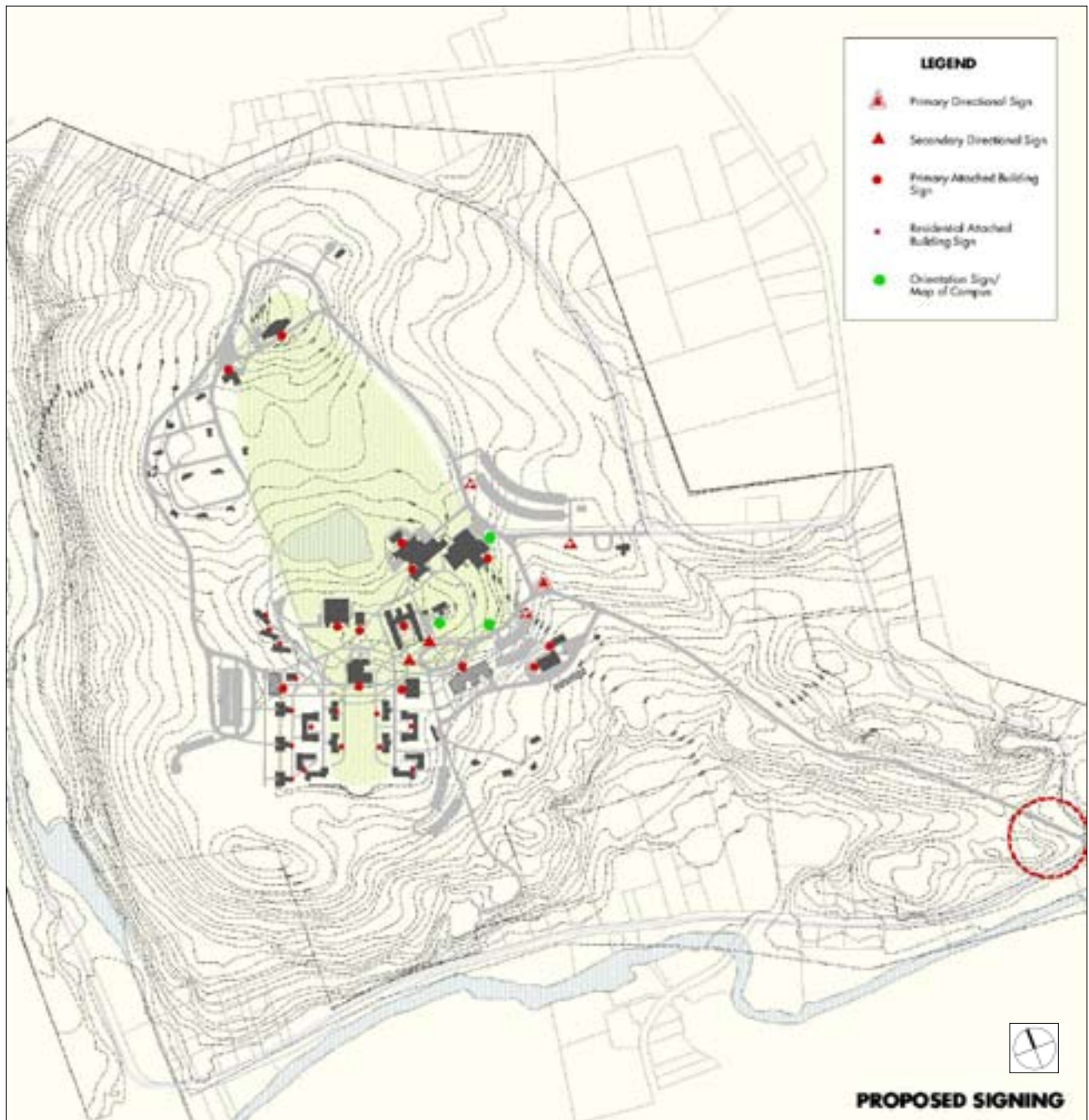
The existing campus lighting is an ad-hoc collection of fixtures primarily mounted on building that creates a pattern of over- and under-illuminated areas. This plan proposes the use of a standard lighting fixture throughout campus to create visual unity and reinforce the pedestrian path network. This system of lighting will provide an even level of illumination throughout the campus core and encourage use of the campus in

the evening. Care will be taken to retain highly valued dark areas of campus such as Jennings Meadow and Stickney Observatory. Parking areas will be illuminated with fixtures that minimize light pollution to outlying and residential areas. Professional services of a lighting consultant will be required to determine exact specifications for campus lighting.



The analysis of the sign system at Bennington College indicated that further study was required by a professional environmental graphic designer. Contemporary approaches to wayfinding include fewer signs that reinforce circulation and also provide a positive and organized impression of the campus.

Jon Roll & Associates, Inc., an environmental graphic design firm specializing in campus signing and wayfinding, has been hired by Bennington College to evaluate the existing signage on campus and to prepare a Signage Master Plan.







CAMPUS IMPROVEMENTS BY AREA

Orchard Drive
South Service Access
Academic Hill
New Arrival and Dining Center
Meadow, Pond, and Meadow Drive
Commons Green and Houses
Jennings Hall Grounds
The Orchard
Entry Drive
Early Childhood Center
Additional Parking
Woodlands, Fields, and Trails

CAMPUS IMPROVEMENTS BY AREA



Historic photograph showing loop drive connecting the west campus to Jennings



Photograph showing proposed character of Orchard Drive



Analysis

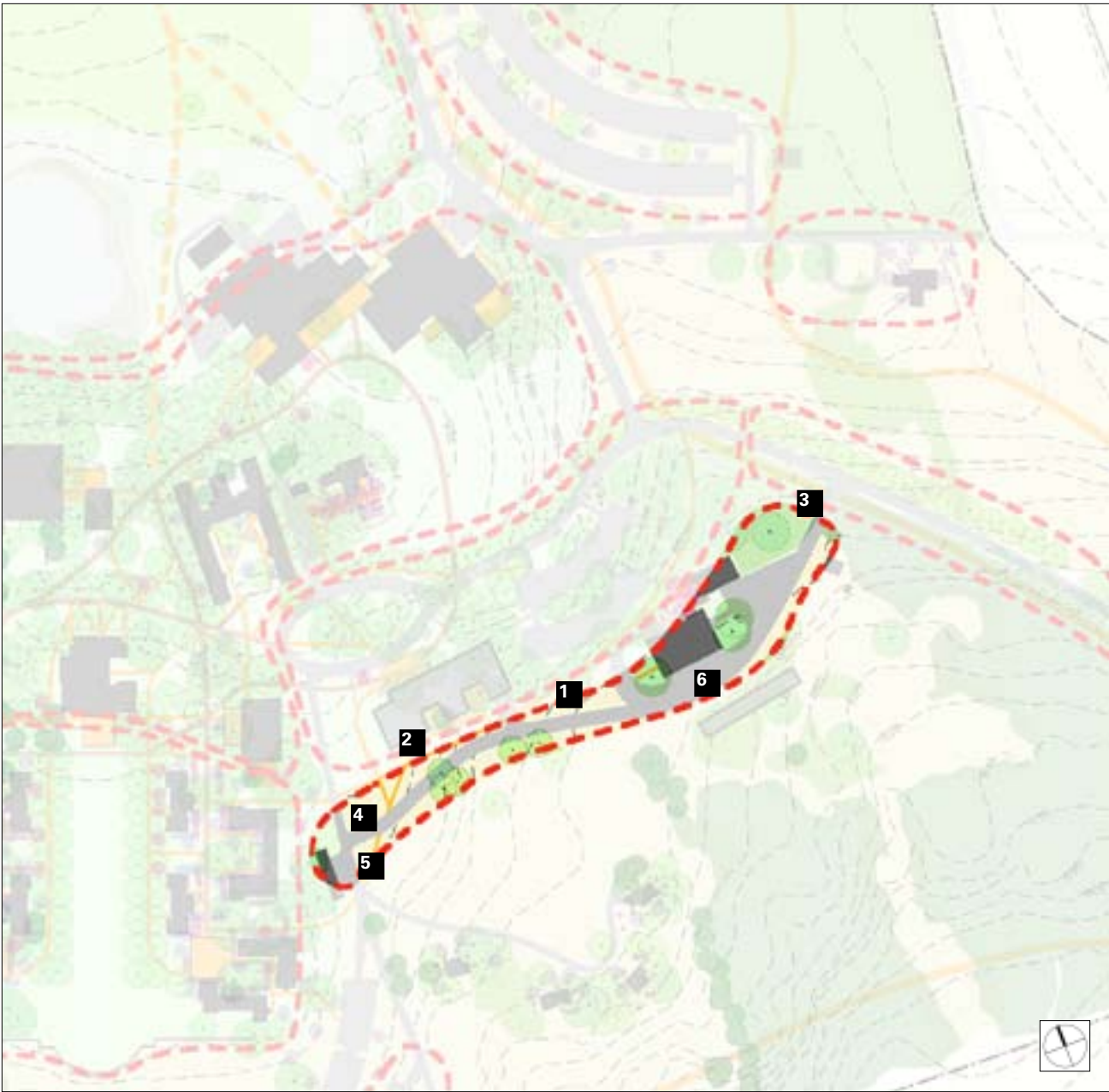
When Bennington College was founded in 1932, a tree-lined loop road connected the newly built campus to Jennings Hall. Silver Maples that lined the road are still evident along the southern edge of the pond. Historic photos show this drive and serve as a precedent for a new link, Orchard Drive. This link extends the drive behind the Davis Alumni House and the Orchard Houses to the Ohio parking lot.

This link—the most important addition to the circulation pattern on campus—frees the center of campus from vehicular traffic by rerouting vehicles around the campus to park.

The character of Orchard Drive with its views, land form, forest, fields, and meadows will provide an experience of Bennington’s distinct landscape.

Recommendations

- 1** Designate the drive in front of Jennings as a pedestrian / service path.
- 2** Utilize the existing woodland drive at the back of Jennings to access the parking lots that serve Jennings and the Carriage Barn and link it to the new Orchard Drive.
- 3** Develop a drive around the Orchard Houses and Davis Alumni House that is buffered from faculty houses with newly planted trees. Extend this road south through the meadow to the Ohio Lot and to a service area for the new student center.
- 4** Reconfigure the Ohio lot circulation and provide improved lighting according to the design standards and to the low-light requirements of the Stickney Observatory.



Analysis

Currently, students must drive their cars through the center of campus to park in the Ohio or Alabama lots. Tractor-trailers travel through the center of campus to deliver the supplies to the Commons kitchen where they frequently line up along the drive. In addition, the industrial dumpsters used for the kitchen sit outside the loading dock in full view of diners and pedestrians.

A new south service access provides a route for vehicles going to an expanded Alabama lot and to the new dining facility, thereby removing all large truck deliveries from the center of campus.

When the dining hall is completed the south service access can also be used to access a central delivery location for the College where large deliveries are deposited and dispersed to other parts of the campus by smaller college vehicles. A portion of this drive could be gated in the evening to maintain controlled access to the campus.

Recommendations

- 1** Extend the existing facilities drive to meet the south service access road and the Alabama lot.
- 2** Work with the appointed architect of the new dining hall to develop a comprehensive plan for servicing the new facility without disrupting distant views or pedestrian travel corridors.
- 3** Provide adequate signs to direct vehicles to destinations and gated control points.
- 4** Install a comprehensive system of pedestrian paths separate from the drive, and tie into the larger pedestrian circulation network.
- 5** Provide lighting to make this area safe and inviting.
- 6** Provide parking for maintenance, dining, and the Meyer Recreation Barn staff

CAMPUS IMPROVEMENTS BY AREA



Example of road dominated by vehicles



Example of transformation of the same view to a pedestrian pathway



Analysis

The heart of education and creative life on campus, Academic Hill is a long crescent shaped ridge with Commons, the Barn, and Crossett Library set into its south facing slope; VAPA and Dickinson set into its bowl-shaped north slope; and Cricket Hill at its highest point, facing east. From the original horse barn and homestead of the 1800s, to Commons, to the contemporary Crossett Library and classroom spaces built in the 1960s, this area of campus has evolved in discrete ways with each successive phase of architecture adding a unique language of forms and relationship to the landscape. The unchecked growth of vegetation obscures views across campus and vistas to the surrounding mountains. The system of pathways and roads privileges cars and delivery trucks.

Recommendations

- 1** Remove drive and replace with a 8' service path that provides a portion of the walk around Academic Hill.
- 2** Expand and clarify pedestrian paths to create a coherent network of walkways
- 3** Furnish paths and gathering spaces with benches and lighting to make it safe and inviting.
- 4** Establish identity of the hill-top by selectively removing shrubs, some evergreens, and understory trees currently blocking views and obscuring the landform and buildings.
- 5** Remove diseased and damaged canopy trees and begin an aggressive campaign to plant native canopy trees such as Sugar Maple, American Beech, Hickory, Red Oak, and American Elm to create a continuous grove throughout area.
- 6** Open views to Jennings and Jennings Meadow by removing invasive vegetation such as buckthorn, honeysuckle, and fragmites at the edge of the pond. Establish a new habitat along the pond edge.
- 7** Implement a distinctive system of lighting and signs to guide visitors to admissions and to present a unified identity to the area – the arrival point and first impression of the campus core.

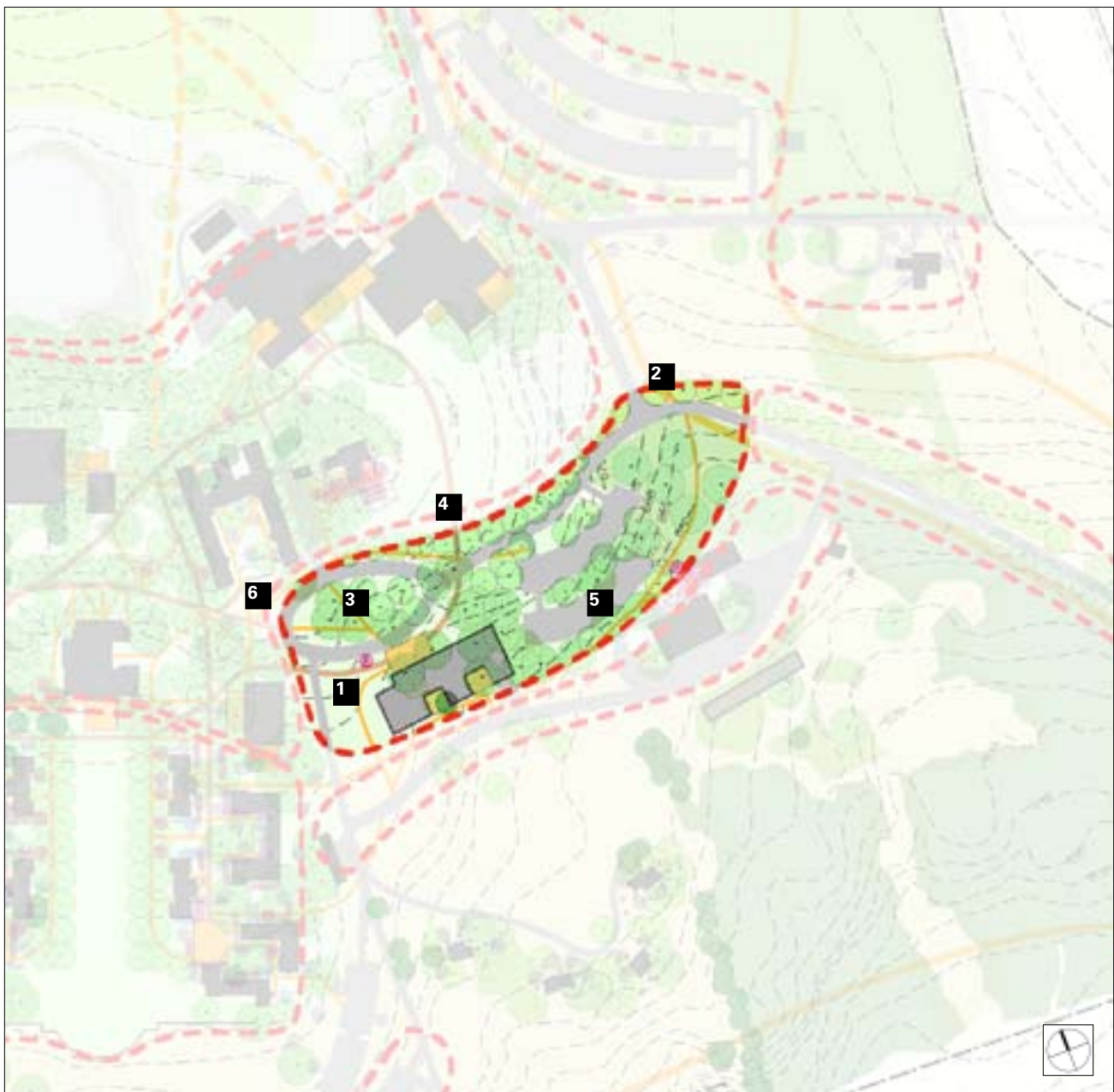
CAMPUS IMPROVEMENTS BY AREA



Existing campus arrival point



Proposed character of new arrival area



Analysis

Visitors approach the College and reach a confusing decision point to turn right toward VAPA and Jennings, or left to the rest of the campus. By continuing left towards Admissions, the first impression of the campus core is a small traffic loop and security booth that sets the tone for the arrival at the College.

The master plan recommends developing this area into an active and vibrant arrival green that includes the new dining center and connects to the Barn, Crossett Library, and Academic Hill. The relocation of the dining hall will also limit vehicular intrusion into the campus by rerouting the largest service requirements to the south of the new building. The site also takes a advantage of the most dramatic vistas on campus, and creates a new identity for the College's arrival.

Recommendations

- 1** Relocate Early Childhood Center (ECC) to Shingle Cottage.
- 2** Reconfigure the intersection below VAPA to direct visitors to the arrival area and Admissions.
- 3** Develop a new vehicular arrival by creating a large loop around a green to include the new dining center. Provide an area for special events, sculpture exhibitions, etc. Plant this area with native canopy trees such as Sugar Maple, Red and White Oak, American Beech, and American Elm. Enhance vistas through selective plant removal.
- 4** Relocate security to control campus access and maintain a close proximity to the central campus.
- 5** Increase and improve visitor and staff parking at the Lower Barn parking area by terracing a new lot into the hillside above the athletic barn.
- 6** Install a comprehensive system of pedestrian paths separate from the drive that includes signage and lighting.

CAMPUS IMPROVEMENTS BY AREA



The pond will become the focus of views and a destination.



Example of proposed character of mown and rough lawn for the meadow



Analysis

As seen in an aerial photograph or plan, the pond is located in the center of the campus core. However, when on campus, the pond is practically invisible and not easily accessible.

Jennings Meadow and the pond combine to make a powerful and memorable landscape. Both are tied to Jennings Hall, which is perched at the northern high point of the campus, affording panoramic views. By selectively removing invasive plants and evergreen trees at the edges of the meadow and pond, views can be opened — thereby connecting Jennings Hall and Academic Hill — and providing a new center of campus.

Recommendations

- 1** Evaluate the health of the pond including its water quality and invasive plants. Develop a plan for restoring the pond and initiate a regulatory approval process. Prioritize removal of invasive plants within the pond and at the edge, and, if possible, dredge to maintain its present water level. Establish a new habitat and plant community at some edges.
- 2** Remove invasive plants that block views to the pond from the drive along the meadow.
- 3** Plant the southern edge of the pond with canopy trees to replace declining Silver Maples. Use trees associated with wetland areas such as Red Maples.
- 4** Determine the feasibility of occupying the edge of the pond. Develop a plan for the edge that provides paths and destinations areas.
- 5** Introduce mown paths and native wildflowers into the existing meadow.
- 6** Install a system of pedestrian paths, including a new path from VAPA to Jennings Hall to connect Academic Hill with Jennings Meadow and the pond.
- 7** Minimal lighting along paths is recommended for this area to preserve the night sky.

CAMPUS IMPROVEMENTS BY AREA



Original tree-lined paths



Analysis



Area dominated by vehicular roads

Photographs of the campus taken around 1960, show the buildings set within a canopy of trees with tree-lined drives and paths that reinforced the Beaux-Arts plan. This image has eroded over the years because trees have died and the introduction of understory shrubs and trees has mitigated the sense of a continuous canopy.

Commons Lawn and the Houses are residential and have a scale and geometry distinct from any other place on campus. The original paths and ornamental plantings are depleted.

Vehicular drives and cul-de-sacs detract from the rural character of the area.

Lights on the buildings offer a disproportionate amount of light and darkness and a lack of well-lit pedestrian corridors.

Recommendations

- 1** Reinforce domestic character with ornamental plantings like shad and crab apples, lilacs, and hydrangea. Remove overgrown shrubs and damaged trees.
- 2** Reinstate the paths that define Common Lawn. Where original trees no longer exist on either side of the paths, fill in with American Elms or Sugar Maples.
- 3** Provide a large terrace in front of Commons with gracious steps that lead to the lower lawn.
- 4** With the exception of lights at doorways, remove lights on buildings and replace with standard campus fixtures that will provide adequate lighting for pedestrians.
- 5** Remove curbs and reduce the width of the drives to 8' pedestrian/service paths. Redesign the cul-de-sacs as pedestrian courts.
- 6** Identify each house with a small sign on the door.

CAMPUS IMPROVEMENTS BY AREA



The Jennings estate house set within canopy of native trees, c. 1930s.



Analysis

Jennings Hall appears to be a significant destination because of its commanding presence at the highest point on campus. Early photographs show the Jennings estate set within stately Elms. A framework of walls and hedges evoke the large gardens that once existed.

Jennings Hall houses the music program which requires relatively little traffic to this impressive venue. It is isolated from the social activities of academic life which occur in other parts of campus.

By rehabilitating the garden, Jennings Hall would become a destination and a provide a distinct venue for campus events.

Recommendations

- 1** Remove drive in front of Jennings and replace with pedestrian / service path and terrace.
- 2** Remove trees, shrubs, and understory to restore views.
- 3** Replant canopy trees.
- 4** Rehabilitate garden.
- 5** Develop appropriate lighting for paths and outdoor spaces.
- 6** Develop new paths across the meadow to connect Jennings Hall to other parts of the campus.

CAMPUS IMPROVEMENTS BY AREA



Existing orchard



Walled garden



Garden rooms



Analysis

The faculty residential area, called the Orchard, is nestled within an old orchard, the extent of which is documented in historic photographs. This scale of planting — appropriate to this rural area — can be maintained with the strategic addition of ornamental trees and shrubs. An arborcultural maintenance program and the replacement of damaged and diseased trees is also essential.

Included in this area is the Deane Carriage Barn for the original Jennings estate, which is used for performances, classes, and special meetings. The Davis Alumni House, a well-visited location, serves as a meeting place and an inn for alumni.

There is also a unique walled-garden and a large garden room framed with Hemlocks that provided productive and ornamental gardens. Restored, they can provide additional destinations for gathering, performances, and exhibitions.

Recommendations

- 1** Remove damaged and diseased plants.
- 2** Provide additional canopy trees planted in a rural manner such as shade trees for the houses, or specimen trees in open areas.
- 3** Replant fruit trees such as apple and cherry.
- 4** Incorporate ornamental shrubs such as viburnum and hydrangea near houses.
- 5** Rehabilitate walled garden and hedge room.
- 6** Provide proper lighting for the houses, parking, drives, and paths.
- 7** Renovate paths and parking lights at the Deane Carriage Barn. Establish an outdoor component for this building to expand its capacity for college functions.
- 8** Expand and define parking areas for Deane Carriage Barn and Davis Alumni House.

CAMPUS IMPROVEMENTS BY AREA



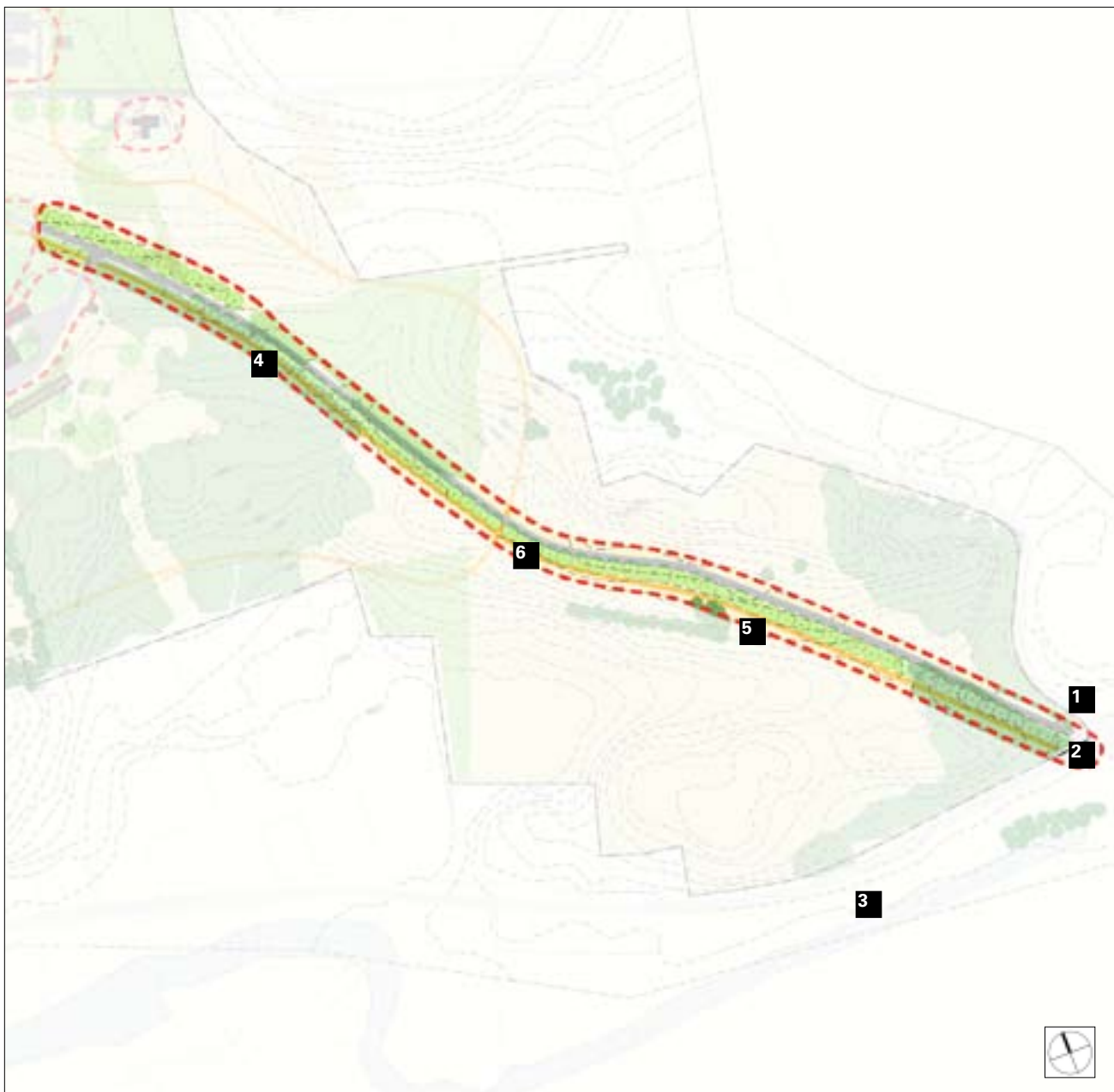
Original tree-lined drive with open views



Existing entrance showing lack of legible signs



Stands of evergreen trees encroach on the meadow and interrupt deciduous edge.



Analysis

The entrance to Bennington College along Route 67A consists of a small temporary sign in addition to stone gate posts — neither of which signals the main campus entrance. Finding the College at night is difficult because the entry lacks sufficient lighting.

The long, winding drive is memorable as it climbs the gentle hills and weaves through woods and open fields. Photographs of the original drive show it lined with American Elms.

The lack of a pedestrian / bike path along the drive forces pedestrians to walk on the road.

Recommendations

- 1** Update the stone gate-posts to include a sign appropriate to the scale and image of the College.
- 2** Install appropriate lighting at the entry.
- 3** Determine if signage from the town of Bennington and along Route 67A would facilitate finding the College for first-time visitors.
- 4** Provide a narrow path in the meadow parallel the drive for pedestrians and bikers.
- 5** To preserve its rural quality, lighting is not recommended for the drive, however, lighting should be used discretely for the pedestrian path.
- 6** Plant canopy trees on one side of the drive.

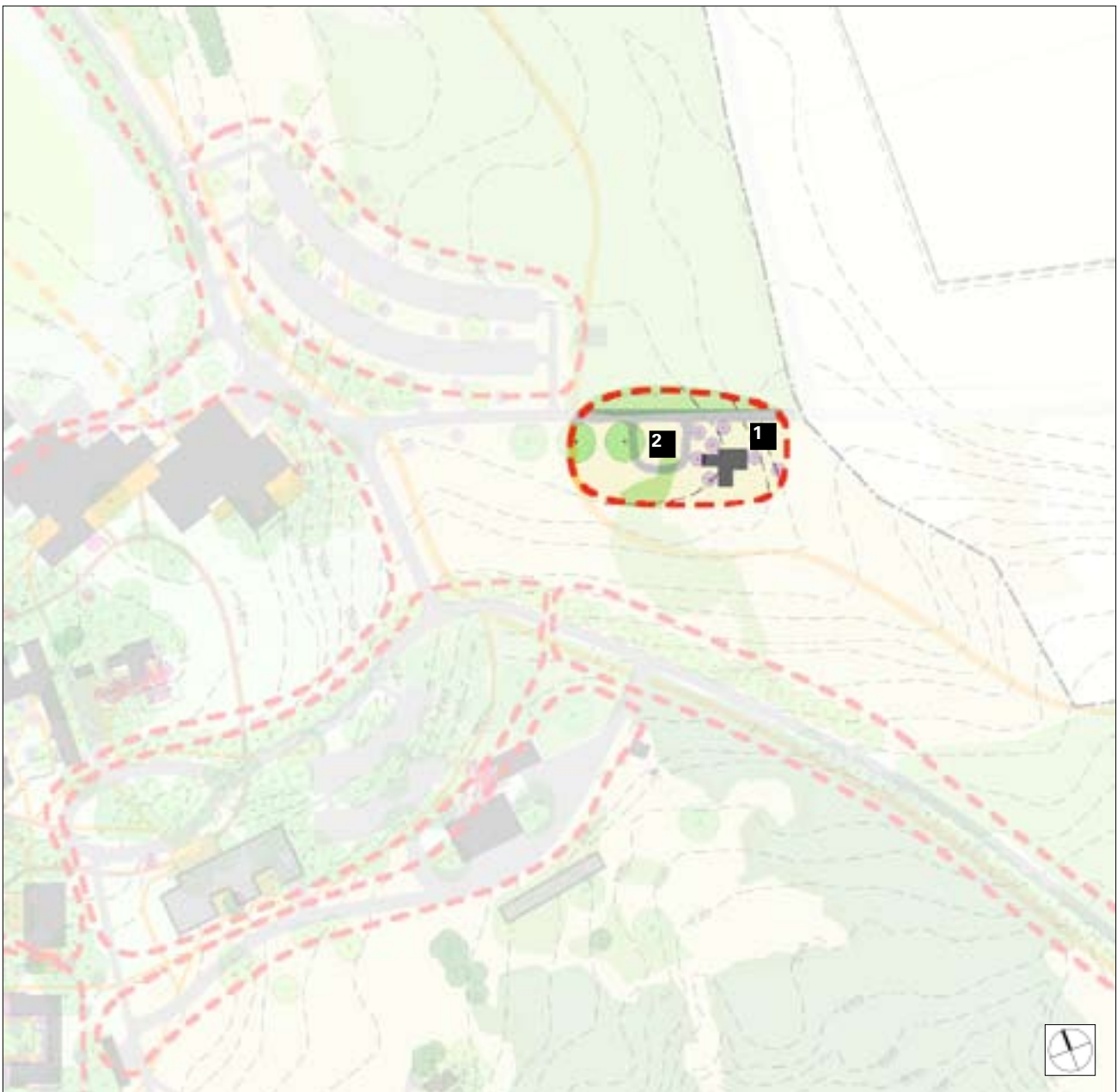
CAMPUS IMPROVEMENTS BY AREA



Existing entrance to ECC is through high-traffic maintenance and facilities area



Shingle Cottage



Analysis

The current location for the Early Childhood Center (ECC) is next to the campus facilities and maintenance buildings. Access for dropping off and picking up children is through a heavily-used drive and facility service area.

The ECC occupies a strategic location for the proposed new dining center. The site provides the opportunity to fit the building into the hillside and to orient it to panoramic views to the south.

The plan recommends moving the ECC to Shingle Cottage. The new site will provide an ideal location for outside activities associated with child care and for vehicular circulation in and out of the center.

Recommendations

- 1** Develop the area around Shingle Cottage for use as a child care center and move ECC to this new location.
- 2** Create a turnaround and drop-off area for the ECC.



Ohio lot



VAPA lot



Alabama lot



Lower Barn lot

Analysis

Inadequate or inconvenient parking was a major issue concerning students, instructors, and staff. The master plan increases parking by 249 spaces—from 666 to 915.

Additional parking will require careful mitigation to minimize its impact on the landscape. Parking is dispersed to avoid monolithic lots. In all cases, existing lots have been expanded instead of building new lots.

Recommendations

- 1** *The Ohio lot has adequate parking and will be refurbished as necessary with the construction of the new Orchard Drive.*
- 2** *The lot by Dickinson will be replaced with the new student center*
- 3** Increase East VAPA lot by 200 spaces.
- 4** Increase the Alabama lot by 50 spaces.
- 5** Increase Lower Barn lot by 50 spaces.
- 6** Develop pedestrian path systems to and from existing and new parking areas. Provide lighting for parking lots and paths as recommended in the design standards.

CAMPUS IMPROVEMENTS BY AREA



Open fields surrounded by woodland and fields is the primary landscape matrix for the college



Woodland, especially evergreen, need to be managed to preserve views



A pedestrian trail system will link the woodland areas around campus



Analysis

Much of the rural quality of the Bennington campus derives from its setting of woodlands and fields.

A pedestrian trail around the campus is a long-time goal of the College and has been partially completed. This path will provide access to areas of topographic and botanical interest, and function as a path for running, walking, biking, and cross-country skiing.

Recommendations

- 1** Provide classroom opportunities for the College's environmental studies.
- 2** Maintain the edge of the woods that are close to road, paths, or buildings by removing invasive species.
- 3** Open views by selective removal of evergreen trees.
- 4** Rotate fields with hay, alfalfa, and corn, etc.
- 5** Extend the trail circuit around the areas of campus that offer the greatest experience of the site and can be maintained for year-round use.



DESIGN STANDARDS

Campus Drives and Parking
Service Roads and Pedestrian Paths
Planting
Lighting



Primary



2.5" bituminous binder course with a medium-sized aggregate
1.5" wearing course with fine granite aggregate rolled into asphalt [20'] width

19' drive width
2' gravel shoulder each side
1" loam and seed

Lawn swale preferred option for drainage on crowned roads

French drain, yard drains, swale of crushed stone, and catch basins where required

Planting varies, up to the edge of gravel shoulder

Secondary



2.5" bituminous binder course
1.5" wearing course [19'] width

19' drive width
2' gravel shoulder each side
1" loam and seed

Lawn swale preferred option for drainage on crowned roads

French drain, yard drains, swale of crushed stone, and catch basins where required

Trees and shrubs vary, planted up to the edge of gravel shoulder

Parking



Parking surface is gravel

60' overall width in double loaded lot

Parking layout accommodates gaps for preserved trees and rock outcropping to retain a rural, woodland character

Parking areas should fit into contours and avoid runs of 10 or more vehicles without an island for a tree

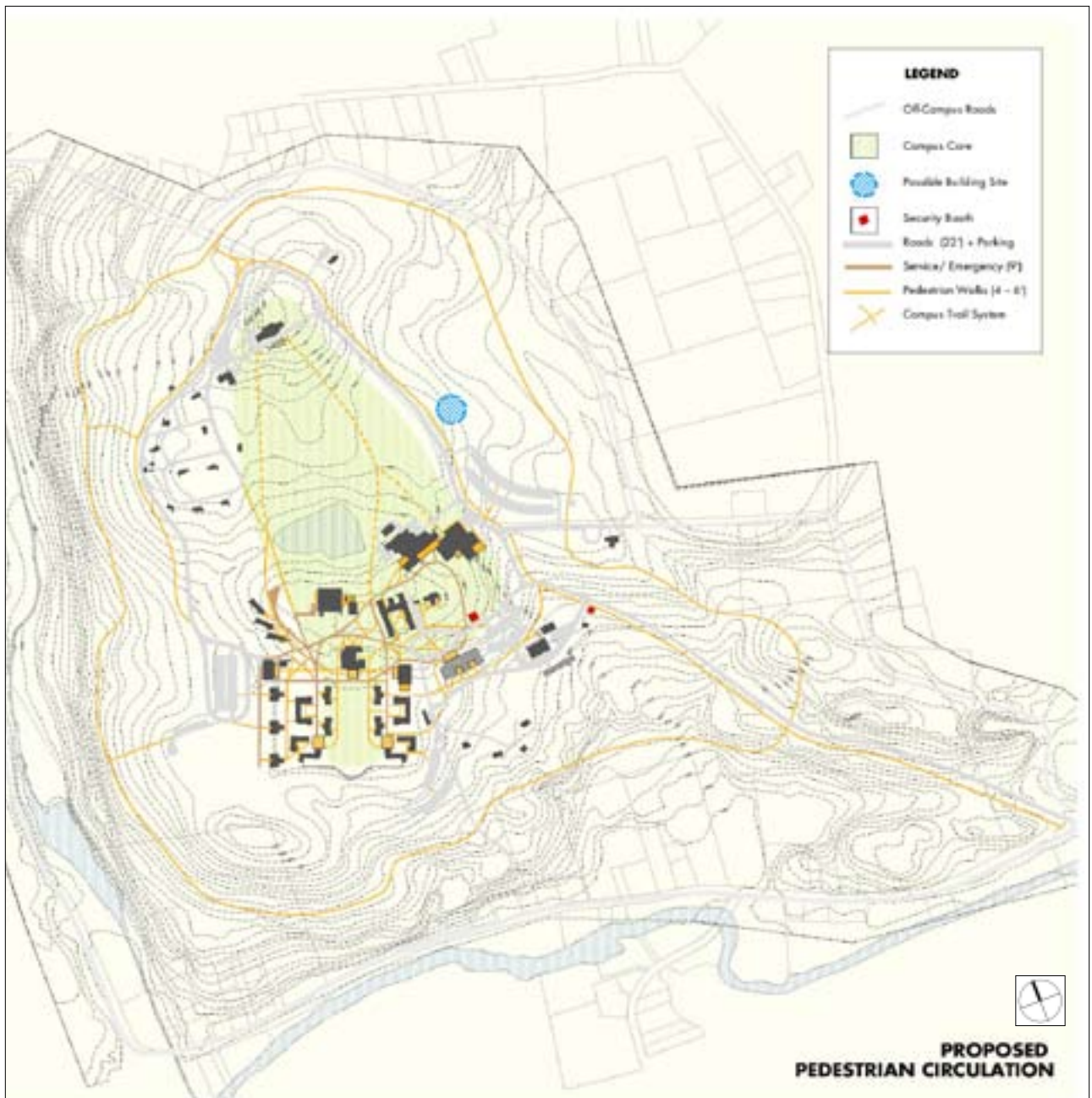
Provide seeded gravel overflow parking areas for special events — locations to be determined

Provide well-lit, accessible, pedestrian-only paths from all major parking areas to campus

Standard wooden 10" x 10" bollards to delineate limits of parking in selected areas

See planting guidelines for trees in parking areas.





Service / Emergency Paths



- 1.5" Bituminous wearing course
 - 2" Binder course
 - 8' Width
 - 2' Gravel shoulder with 1" of loam and seed
- Lawn swale preferred option for drainage

Primary Pedestrian Paths



- 1.5" Bituminous wearing course
 - 2" Binder course
 - 5' Width
 - 2' Gravel shoulder with 1" of loam and seed
- Lawn swale preferred option for drainage

Pedestrian Walks



- Brick to match existing paths
- 6" Gravel base
- 5' Width

Campus Trail System

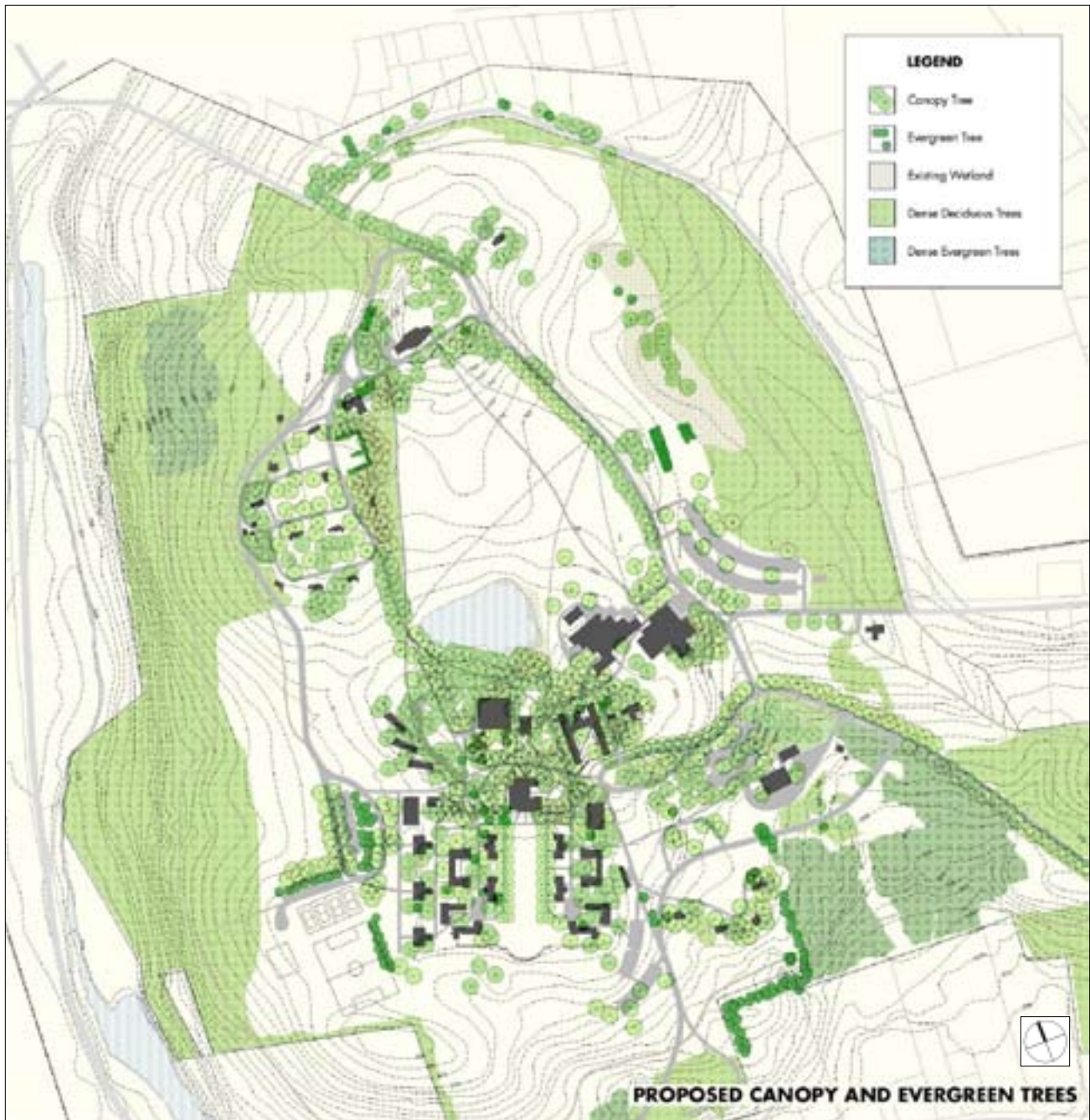


- Compacted earth or shredded bark
- Mown lawn in meadow
- 2'- 4' width

Pedestrian Gathering Spaces



- ALT 1 Brick to match existing terraces (VAPA)
 - 2" Sand setting bed
 - 6" Compacted gravel
- ALT 2 Concrete unit pavers
 - 8" compacted gravel (New Houses)
- ALT 3 Bluestone paving
 - 2" Sand setting bed
 - 6" Compacted gravel



**Academic Hill, Jennings Hall,
Domestic Village, Parking Areas**

Trees should be planted in groups so that crowns will merge together in maturity, or as individual specimens. When establishing groves, plant 4-5 hardwood trees in loose groups. Plant trees 20'-35' apart to allow reasonable lawn underneath.

Canopy trees

Acer rubrum
Acer saccharum
Betula lenta
Carya ovata
Carya glabra
Fagus sylvatica
Fraxinus pennsylvanica
Gleditsia triacanthos inermis

Juglans nigra
Liriodendron tulipifera
Quercus alba
Quercus cocinea
Quercus macrocarpa
Quercus rubra
Robinia pseudoacacia
Tilia Americana
Ulmus Americana

Entry Drive

Clear evergreens and diseased and damaged trees along the drive. Plant in long continuous lines (20 min.) of single species at xx feet apart on the west side of the drive.

Canopy trees

Acer saccharum

Quercus rubra
Ulmus Americana

Commons Lawn

Remove damaged and diseased trees. Limb-up and thin healthy trees. Evaluate existing crabapples and in-fill with new trees. Re-establish double rows of high canopy trees along the paths.

Canopy trees

Acer saccharum
Gleditsia triacanthos inermis

Quercus alba
Ulmus Americana

Evergreen Groves

Preserve selected pines groves. Thin groves to allow enough light to reach the floor for a new generation of pine to be reseeded.

Gradually replace Scotch Pine with White Pine and Norway Spruce of mixed ages that are 6'-12' in height. Clear understory of invasive shrubs and preserve open ground plane.

Woodland Edge

Manage edges of the forest to prevent invasive species from clogging the zone between the cultivated landscape and the woodland. Clear zone of all invasive woodland vines and shrubs, as well as damaged, or hazardous, or overmature Pines.

Removals / Trees and Shrubs

Acer negundo
Acer platanoides
Ailanthus altissima
Bamboo sp.
Lonicera tatarica
Polygonum cuspidatum
Rhamnus sp.

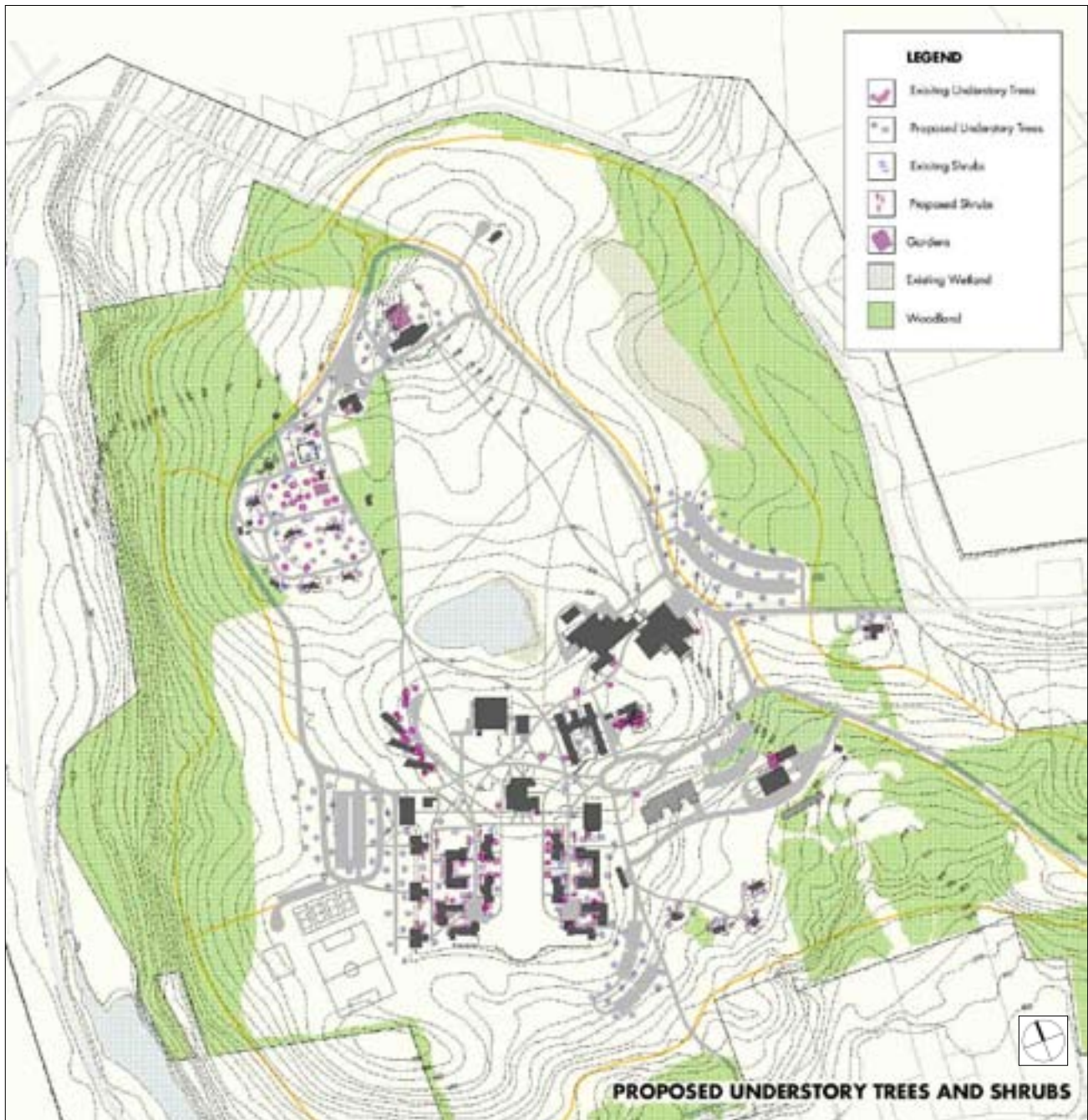
Removals / Invasive Vines

Akebia trifoliata
Celastrus scandens
Hedera helix
Lonicera japonica
Rhus radicans
Smilax rotundifolia
Wisteria sp.

Additions / Canopy trees

Acer rubrum
Acer saccharum
Carya glabra
Carya ovata
Fagus sylvatica

Fraxinus pennsylvanica
Fraxinus americana
Juglans nigra
Quercus alba
Quercus rubra



UNDERSTORY TREES AND SHRUBS – PLANTING

Academic Hill

Ornamental trees should be used sparingly and only high branched species should be selected. Damaged and low branches on existing trees should be removed. Shrubs should be removed from this area.

Malus (crabapple)
Upright varieties only such as
'Sugar Tyme' or 'Winter Gold'

Betula papyrifera
Cornus kousa – single trunk
Cercis canadensis – single trunk

Domestic Village

Ornamental trees should be associated with dooryards and interior courts leaving pathways open. Evaluate declining trees and replace over time.

Amelanchier arborea
Cold hardy varieties such as
'Autumn Sunset' or 'Princess Diana'
Cercis canadensis-single trunk
Cornus kousa

Creataegus x mordensis 'Snowbird'
Malus (crabapple)
Upright varieties only such as
'Sugar Tyme' or 'Winter Gold' or
rounded such a 'floribunda' or
'Snowdrift'

The following shrub should be retained.

<i>Deutzia</i>	<i>Hydrangea</i>	<i>Viburnum</i>
<i>Forsythia</i>	<i>Spirea</i>	<i>Wiegelia</i>
<i>Hybiscus</i>	<i>Syringa</i>	

Commons Lawn

Most of the Crabapples on the lawn are in decline and should be removed. The value of understory trees and shrubs should be carefully evaluated. If replacement ornamental trees are planted they should be large specimens of high branching species.

Malus (crabapple)
Upright varieties only such as 'Sugar Tyme' or 'Winter Gold' or rounded forms such a 'Floribunda' or 'Snowdrift'

Parking Lots

Parking lots located in the surrounding fields such as Alabama, East VAPA, and Ohio should be planted in loose orchard grids of Crabapples. The trees should be planted 40'-60' on center. A single species of Crabapple should be used at each lot.

Malus (crabapple)
Upright varieties such as 'Sugar Tyme' or 'Winter Gold' or large rounded forms such as 'Floribunda' ;'Snowdrift', 'Donald Wyman', or 'Zumi Calocarpa'

Parking lots located in wooded area such as the Lower Barn Lots should be planted native understory trees mixed randomly with native woodland trees.

Amelanchier arborea
Multi trunk-cold hardy varieties
such as 'Autumn Sunset' or
'Princess Diana'

Betula papyrifera – multi-trunk
Cercis canadensis – multi-trunk
Chioanthus virginicus
Hamamelis virginiana

**Note for all areas:
Volunteers such as *Lonicera*,
Berberis and *Multiflora rose* which
grown into older ornamental
shrubs should be removed.**

Shrubs should not be used in the parking areas except in cases where needed to block headlights. In all cases shrubs should be used as little as possible in parking areas because they have the potential to make outlying areas feel isolated and unsafe.



Academic Hill	The central area should be maintained as lawn mown on a weekly schedule. Peripheral areas to the east of VAPA and adjacent to the pond should be maintained as rough lawn on a bi-weekly mowing schedule. Maximum lawn height 6”
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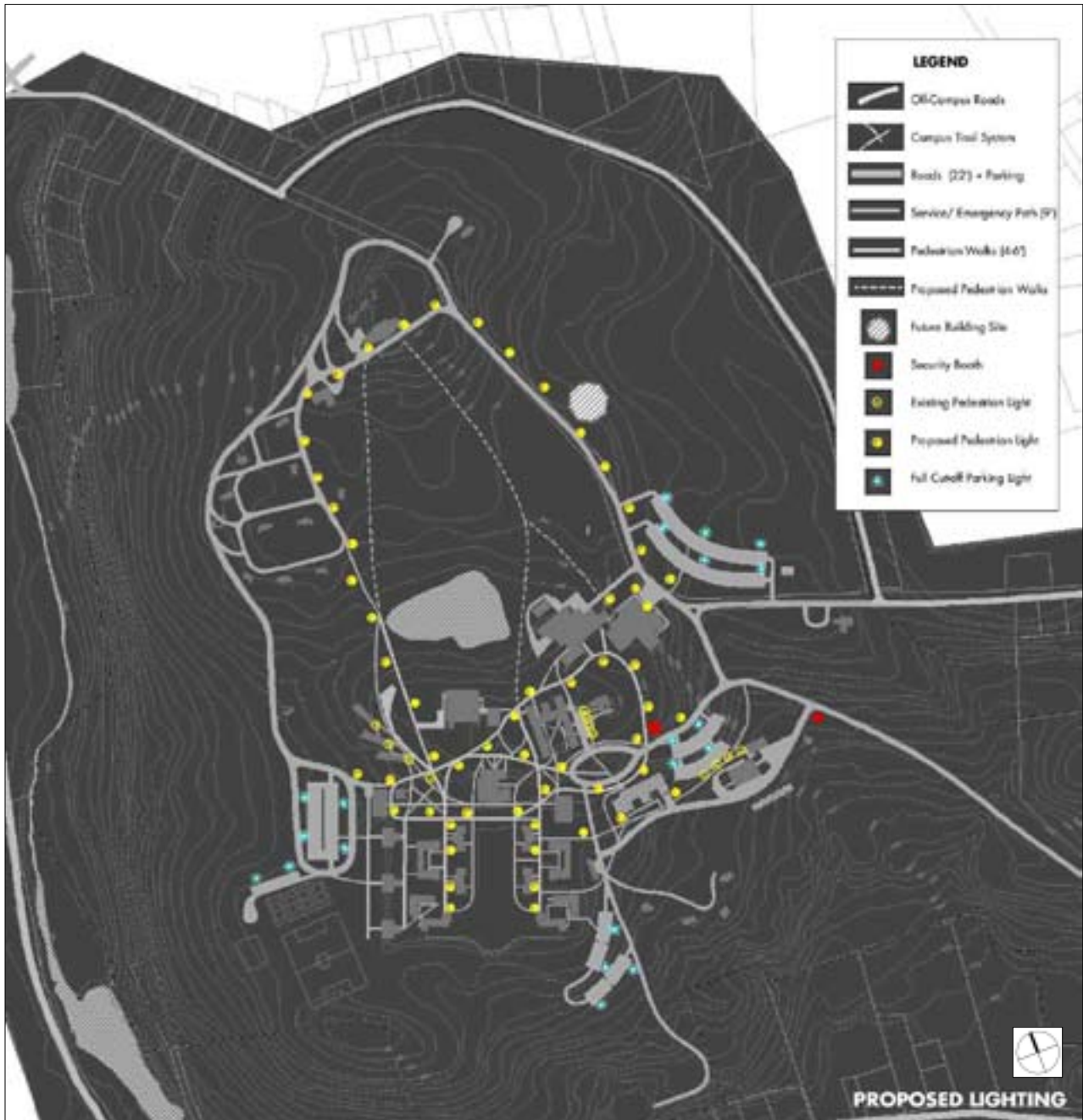
Commons Lawn	This area should be maintained as fine lawn. Weekly mowing and a high level of maintenance should be employed to insure that this area serve as the central public room of the campus.
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Domestic Zones	Maintain all areas as lawn on a weekly mowing schedule. The Orchard Houses area should be maintained as rough lawn with bi-weekly mowing. Maximum lawn height 6”
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Central Meadow	The central area should be maintained as a wildflower meadow and should be mowed once in the spring and once in the fall to remove woody invasives. This mowing should be timed to encourage the development of native wildflowers and to protect bird-nesting areas. The perimeter of the meadow should be maintained as rough lawn on a bi-weekly schedule. Maximum lawn height 6”
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Playing fields	Maintain on a weekly mowing schedule during active sports seasons.
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Fields	Employ farmer(s) to utilize perimeter areas as crop and or hay fields.
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Standard Light Fixture



A standard pole-mounted fixture has been employed in a number of recently developed areas on campus including Cricket Hill, the New Houses, and the Meyer Recreation Barn. This fixture will gradually replace all other exterior lighting on campus.

Saturn 3 by Se’Lux
 Distributed by:
 Charron Inc.
 Manchester, NH 03107
 (Tel: 603-624-4827)
 Pole mounted- 11’ ht pole
 Color: Steeple Gray

Lighting standards vary by area and the need. Lighting standards are specific to the following four areas and uses.

Pathways on Academic Hill and in the Domestic Villages Areas

Pole lights should be spaced between 70’ and 100’ apart in these zones to provide pools of lights along all major pedestrian paths and low level of light through out the area. Lights shall be located at all exterior stairs and major decisions points.

Paths around Jennings Meadow

Pole lights should be spaced between 140’-160’ apart along the paths on the eastern and western edges of Jennings meadow to provide beacons for pedestrians and to keep the overall level of light in the meadow at a low level.

Buildings

Lighting should be employed at building entrances and porches for safety and pedestrian orientation. Sconces and other fixtures attached to building should appropriate to the architecture. Lighting of path and pedestrian areas should not be done by means of spotlights or floodlights mounted. Where exterior lights are mounted on buildings they should be low enough to be easily maintained and should be l amped with incandescent bulbs.

Parking

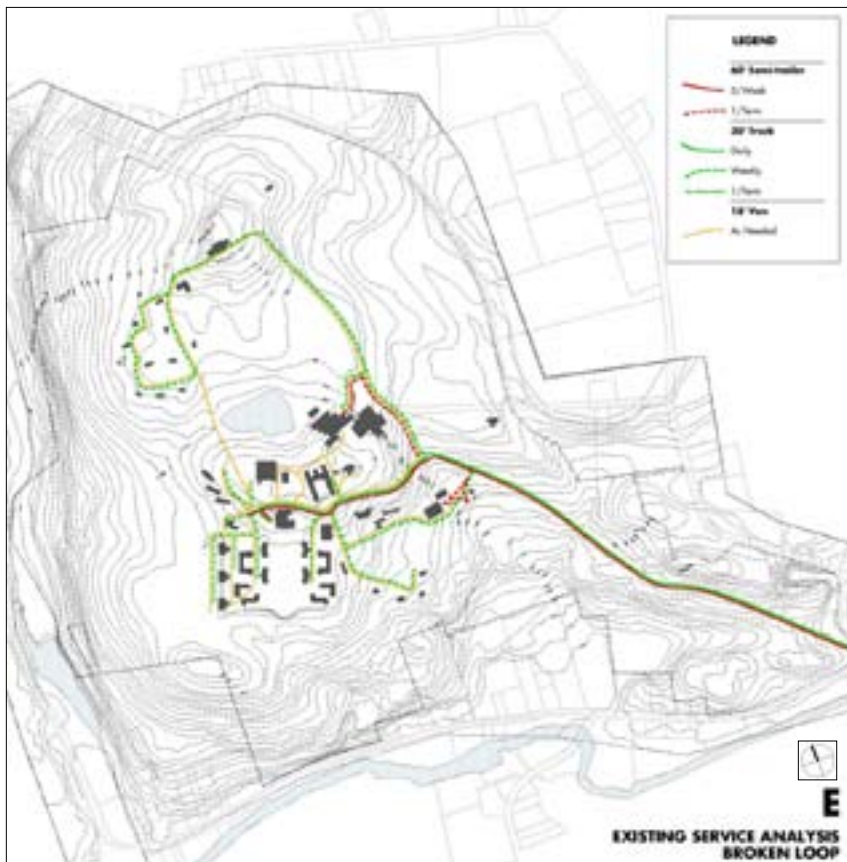
The standard pole light should be used for smaller internally located parking lots such as Cricket Hill and the Lower Barn Lot. In these lots pole lights should be spaced 40’ o.c. on both sides of a double loaded lot. In outlying large lots such as Ohio, Albama, and the VAPA lots full cut-off pole lights should be employed. Fixtures and heights should be evaluated to reduce light pollution to outlying areas, the observatory and student housing.

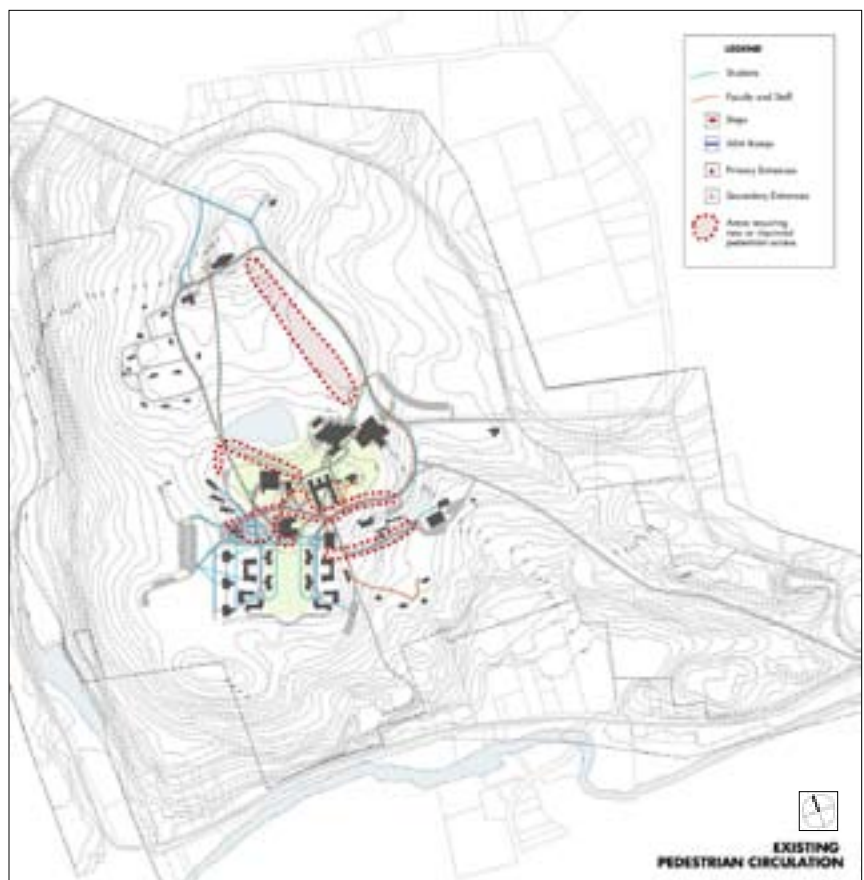
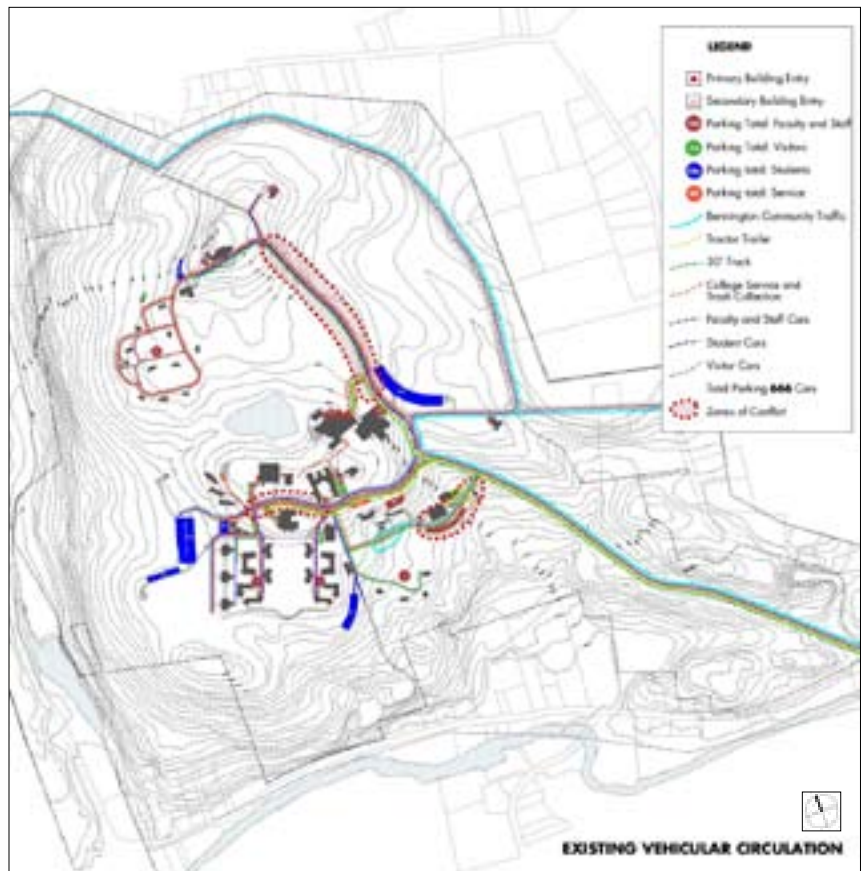


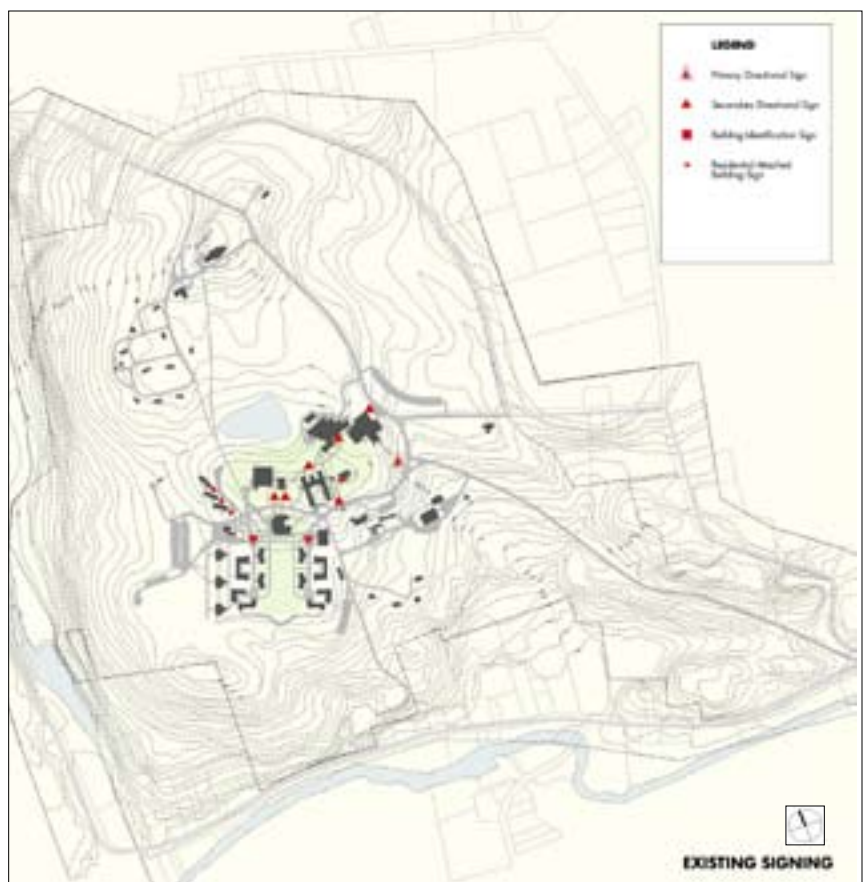
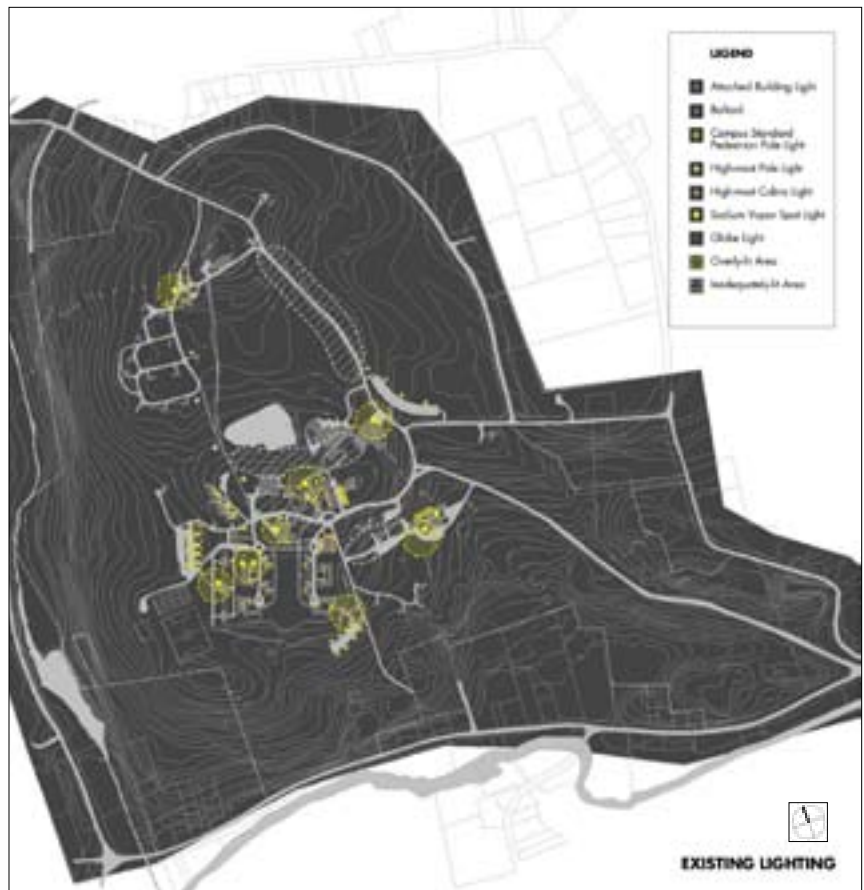


APPENDIX — EXISTING CONDITIONS DIAGRAMS

Vehicular Roads
Service Analysis
Vehicular Circulation
Pedestrian Circulation
Character Zones
Views
Lighting
Signing
Planting
Canopy and Evergreen Trees
Understory Trees and Shrubs
Groundcover
Land Form
Slope
Aerial Photograph 1999
Regional Context









APPENDIX

