ARCHITECTURAL & LANDSCAPE DESIGN GUIDELINES

UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS

PREFACE:

A beautiful campus is appreciated for its architectural cohesiveness, careful attention to exterior space, and the pleasing environment it affords. It engenders pride and respect; it fosters social interaction and creates a positive and strong image for the University of New Orleans. It is perhaps the single most important element in creating the image of the institution. A beautiful campus develops incrementally and is the result of consistent and sensitive use of building and plant materials, the control of building mass and scale, the careful development of open spaces, and the attention given in both buildings and landscape.

To ensure the development of an aesthetically pleasing campus, design professionals working for the University of New Orleans must be sensitive to the campus environment in which their projects are built.

This document establishes principles of architecture and landscape architecture as design vocabularies and sets forth requirements and policies that must be adhered to by design professionals working for the University.

ARCHITECTURE VOCABULARY

CONTEXT AND CHARACTER:

The physical appearance and overall aesthetic quality of the University of New Orleans campus are community resources that should be highly valued. Although an urban university, the campus location on the south shore of Lake Pontchartrain provides the opportunity to capitalize on the natural beauty of the setting and to create a park-like atmosphere unavailable to most urban institutions.

The campus is the product of the labors of many dedicated people driven by the needs of the students and the public over the last five decades. The early concern of the builders was to create spaces to meet the needs of an increasingly large and diverse student body.

At this juncture in its history, the University must now devote its efforts to creating the aesthetic environment appropriate to an institution that has achieved an academic reputation for rigor and quality. It must seek to create a place with which those striving for excellence can identify a public institution the community can cherish, enjoy, and claim with pride. The University campus is not only a place for the current generation to study, grow, and aspire; it is a valuable legacy for future generations. As such, great care should
be taken in creating and maintaining this environment. During the 1980s, the University began to address the aesthetics of the site and to create a park-like atmosphere. Approximately 3,100 trees and more than 8,000 pieces of shrubbery have been planted on the campus, the majority during the last ten years.

A landscaping program is critical to the aesthetic development of the campus. Only when a thoughtful landscape plan is implemented and the plantings reach maturation will the full potential of the site be realized. The University will complete a landscape master plan for the campus, including a plan for modification of existing conditions, in 2014. The plan will include a schedule and funding strategy for implementation and maintenance.

**MASSING AND SCALE:**

The University’s original buildings were designed as large, two- and three-story structures, the Earl K Long Library (two story) and the Engineering Building (nine story) being the notable exceptions. A consistent scale of new development should be obtained by controlling building heights while maximizing the potential for lake views from within the buildings.

Future buildings should be kept within the pedestrian scale of the campus. Broad, flat, unarticulated building facades that look imposing to pedestrians will not be acceptable additions to the campus. Facades should be modulated in surface detail to prevent the large expanses of unbroken exterior walls. Careful attention should be paid to the detailing of the ground floor façade as it relates directly to the pedestrian. Variety in height may be required to meet future needs; however, the low rise building character of the campus should be retained. ‘Large-scale elements that give the appearance of undifferentiated massiveness and great bulk detract from the character of the campus and will not be approved. Ostentatious or overly prominent building forms and designs that are out of harmony with the environment will be carefully considered. Building forms must reflect their use, site, and surrounding environment as well as their place in time.

Large building masses should feature quadrangles, courtyards, arcades, and pocket parks. Connections between existing and new structures should be incorporated in building planning to protect pedestrians from the elements and to further enhance the pedestrian environment. Building orientation should take advantage of views of Lake Pontchartrain and campus open spaces as well as maximize energy efficiency and soften the effects of prevailing winds in winter.

**ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER**

**INTRODUCTION:**
The architectural character of the buildings and the building materials used must respect the context of the existing campus and should evoke the qualities of performance, shelter, solidity, rhythm, connection, human scale, unity, and variety without resorting to clichés.

The following criteria apply:

**BUILDING FORM:**

Due to the predominantly low height of the existing campus buildings and the University’s lakefront location, future buildings should be two to three stories high. Specifically, lower profile buildings should be developed near the campus periphery to better relate to the adjacent residential neighborhoods. Structures located on the northern side of the campus should try not to impact the view of Lake Pontchartrain from interior structures. Moreover, the University should be more intensely developed towards the center of the campus in order to support the expansion of academic activity.

The volume or bulk of the buildings should be kept in the consistent character of a predominantly pedestrian campus. Large building masses should feature quadrangles, courtyards, arcades, and pocket parks. The creation of mini-quadrangles, courtyards, and seating areas will create a pedestrian scale and encourage social interaction between individuals. Water features and outdoor art should be included.

**FAÇADE COMPONENTS:**

Facades should be modulated in surface detail to prevent large expanses of unbroken exterior walls. Curved, depressed, protruding walls and other means of creating variety in the surfaces of the structures should be incorporated into the design.

**BUILDING MATERIALS:**

While it is important to create variety in form, unity can be achieved by the cohesive use of building materials. Existing structures are predominantly brick, concrete and natural stone. Future construction should consider the use of poured or prefabricated concrete panels. Any brick incorporated into the construction of buildings should complement the structure (i.e., earth tones). The use of materials incompatible with those already in existence should be avoided.

**BUILDING ORIENTATION:**

Future buildings should be oriented to best realize the view of Lake Pontchartrain and the campus open spaces. Placement and orientation should also create an inviting atmosphere with curb appeal. Energy efficiency should be encouraged by orienting the narrow end of the structure along its north/south axis with the broader expanse of the facility facing east/west to reduce the impact of the winter prevailing winds and make best use of the
Building designs with north facing exposure must address the winter climate conditions caused from Lake Pontchartrain to ensure compliance of the University’s energy conservation policies.

**BUILDING WALLS:**

In most cases, walls should rely on materials that embody solidity, texture, and a sense of human scale and proportion. To further enhance the human scale and articulation of some buildings, the details and fenestration of exterior walls should create shadows on the façade. Wall materials designated for use include stone, concrete, stucco, or brick and must conform to the Design Standards for the University of New Orleans. Brick blends should coordinate with existing blends currently used on campus with sensitivity to buildings in the immediate vicinity. The use of alternating materials along with brick coursing techniques and subtle use of stepped massing is encouraged.

![Cove Brick](image1.png) ![Bicentennial Education Brick](image2.png)

**Cove Brick**  **Bicentennial Education Brick**
Windows and doors in exterior walls should be carefully organized or grouped as counterpoint to unbroken wall segments. The placement and proportion of windows must respect solar orientation, views, and day-lighting potentials. Glazing must be bronze-tinted (non-reflective) glass with a shading coefficient not to exceed 0.60. Operable windows must be used when feasible. Aluminum frame and hollow metal units with an anodized or fluoropolymer coating, or dark bronze is broadly used on campus. Reflective or shiny materials are usually not permitted. The use of oversized windows is encouraged on north facades and in locations that are protected against extreme solar heat gain.
Larger openings should be used to signal principal entries, gateways, or atrium features.

COVE ENTRANCE WINDOWS  NORTH CAMPUS CENTRAL PLANT ENTRANCE

HOMER L. HITT ALUMNI CENTER ENTRANCE

GLASS BLOCK:

As an architectural element and for variety in fenestrations, fixed glass block are used to allow daylight but obscure occupants.
GARDEN WALLS AND FENCES:

Garden walls and fences are used sparingly across campus. In areas where there is the need to limit or control access the use of solid stone walls, iron fences or brick and wrought iron fence combinations are acceptable.
ROOFS:

Special attention must be paid to the arrangement and design of the roofs and their various elements. Roofs must be organized and designed as carefully as the other primary elements of the building. Equipment must be integrated into the building form or placed within enclosures well integrated with the rooﬁscape. Roof materials and rooftop appurtenances must conform to the Design Standards for the University of New Orleans.

In most cases, the major roof form should be flat (low pitch with positive drainage). In recent years standing seam metal roofs with a premium polyvinylidene fluoride (PVDF) based coating system have been used where feasible. To maintain the established color palette of the University the roof panels should be selected from earth tones. Mechanical and scientific equipment must be located on roofs, but such areas must be visually unobtrusive even from the vantage points of high-rise buildings on campus.

Stacks, exhaust hoods, and vents must be grouped and incorporated into the architectural composition of the building or buildings they serve. Since they are visible from a considerable distance, it is important that they be designated with a high degree of uniformity so that the distant image is harmonious and composed.

GUTTERS, DOWNSPOUTS & ROOF FLASHING:

Gutters, downspouts and roof flashing should be stainless steel in order to combat climate conditions due to the close proximity to Lake Pontchartrain.
UNIVERSITY CENTER ROOF FLASHING

EXTERIOR BUILDING ELEMENTS:

COLOR:

In most cases the color palette should be within the range of warm earth tones already established. Walls should be light in overall color, i.e., sandstone or buff.

Over the past decades, materials and finishes have been used to the extent that they have become standard UNO colors. Those colors are specified in the Design Standards for the University of New Orleans.

CLIMATE ORIENTATION:

Buildings must be designed to make maximum advantage of microclimate factors, including sunlight and natural ventilation, to enhance user comfort and energy conservation. When possible, the following must be observed: locate outdoor activity in areas with exposures to optimize available sunshine; incorporate the use of shade devices such as sunscreens, or louvers.

Articulation and use as deciduous trees or trellises, to allow control of the sun at various times of the year.

During the design review process, a shade/shadow analysis must be submitted. The impact of this analysis must be reflected in landscaping, surrounding activity areas, and building design.

The placement and configuration of buildings, exhaust hoods, air intakes and stacks must recognize prevailing local winds as well as wind variability during the year. New construction must create open airflow paths and eliminate stagnant air pockets.

COLONNADES/PORTICOS/CANOPIES:
Colonnades must be similar in size and proportion to those already found on campus in comparable locations and must express similar rhythm and scale. Articulation or a minor break in rhythm to accommodate entry or end points is acceptable and could be desirable. For example, wider openings may be necessary to allow emergency vehicle passage. Pergolas and arbors can also be used to provide shaded connections.

KIRSCHMAN HALL ENTRANCE

ORNAMENTAL METALS (RAILINGS, LOUVERS, CANOPIES & GRILLES):

Louvers are used for mechanical purposes as well as an architectural feature for shading from the elements. Canopies are placed at entrances to buildings without a portico or a covered entry. Typical railings are either a tubular rail system or tubular rail and mesh grill insert combination. Powder coated or anodized aluminum railings, louvers, canopies and grilles are widely used across campus.
HOMER L. HITT ALUMNI CENTER RAILING

REC & FITNESS CENTER RAILING

REC & FITNESS CENTER LOUVER
MISCELLANEOUS:

HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND PLACES:

Some buildings and places are of historic importance and, as such, require special attention. In work involving these buildings and places, design professionals must satisfy the Secretary of Interior standards and the State of Louisiana standards as well as the requirements of the UL System and the University of New Orleans.

SIGNAGE/GRAPHICS:

Signage guidelines and standards have been established by the University of New Orleans to promote a positive visual environment without confusing and distracting signage to aid motorists and/or pedestrians in way finding. To allow for flexibility an architectural post and panel system has been instituted as the standard exterior signage. Way finding signage is addressed on several levels: exterior building identification, and directional signage for vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

1. PRIMARY BUILDING IDENTIFICATION
   a. 3-Dimensional letters and numbers are applied to the top of the building façade. Materials should be brass, bronze or brushed aluminum to coordinate with surrounding existing conditions.

2. SECONDARY BUILDING IDENTIFICATION
a. Freestanding post and panel sign systems are positioned at each building’s primary entrance.

3. APPLIED COPY SIGNAGE
   a. Environmental vinyl graphics used on campus should be perforated so visibility from the interior of the window is not hampered and graphics are clearly visible from exterior.

4. EXTERIOR DIRECTORIES
   a. Lockable cabinets housing campus maps with “you are here” graphics are strategically placed along primary pedestrian routes and main campus entrances.

5. DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE
   a. Post and panel systems are placed along primary pedestrian routes and major entrances and cross streets for vehicular traffic.

ARCHITECTURAL SPECIFICATIONS

See Design Standards for the University of New Orleans.

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE VOCABULARY

CONTEXT AND CHARACTER:

The University’s 288-acre campus and 35-acre Research Park are contained within approximately two thousand acres of land reclaimed from Lake Pontchartrain in the 1930s. The reclaimed are surrounding the University includes five residential neighborhoods, a marina, and the New Orleans Lakefront Airport. Approximately one-third of this area is reserved for parks and parkways.

The 188-acre Main Campus was the site of a United States Naval Air Station; the 100-acre East Campus was the location of U.S. Army Camp Leroy Johnson. The Research Park site formerly housed the historic Pontchartrain Beach Amusement Park and is bordered by a sand beach beyond the levee flood protection system. Eighteen-foot levees border East Campus on the north and Main Campus on the north and west.

One need only look at the trees of the UNO campus to accurately predict its age. Both East and West Campus sites were built solely on reclaimed land previously used as air fields and military bases. Both sites were devoid of major vegetation and topographic features. Less than two-hundred mature trees and a handful of shrubs represent the initial planting effort of thirty years ago; the great majority of plant materials have been installed during the last ten years.

Particular emphasis during the last decade has been on developing and/or redesigning new and existing spaces. These designs strongly focused on specific landscape and urban
design principles. Utilizing scale, color, convenient seating, tree canopy, accessibility to food, proximity to water, and/or other forms of social fare known as ‘triangulation,’ these spaces became popular nodes of activity. The idea of a space gaining life from its users was heavily employed.

The first trees planted were of three varieties: live oak, southern magnolia, and slash pine. For more than ten years, they represented the major landscape elements of this young campus. Today, fifty-eight varieties of trees are found at UNO.

- Major trees are live oak, drake elm, slash pine, crepe myrtle, bald cypress, Bradford pear, Savannah (and other varieties of holly), water oak, southern magnolia, cabbage palm, and ligustrum trees, which make up the primary tree statement for the campus;

- Primary shrubs are azalea (numerous varieties), cleyera japonica, nandina, shrub holly (several varieties), bridal wreath, juniper (several varieties), sago/windmill and Chinese fan palms, ligustrum, Indian Hawthorne, vibernum and abelia;

- Ground covers include Asiatic jasmine, liriope, acorus grass, and periwinkle.

Careful attention has been paid to the selection of all plants for the UNO campus. Tolerance to cold, severe winds and drought has been considered. To assist in the selection of plant material, the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service provides trees and shrub ratings for this locale.

A variety of trees and shrubs is used in planting schemes, but the consistent use of a few favored species is evident. While respecting the unique design opportunities of specific locations, the intent of the landscape plan is to blend the favored species into an overall consistent visual image.

**PLANTING:**

The planting design criteria for site improvements on campus are intended to achieve unity, avoid monotony, and complement the spatial structure established by campus architecture and circulation patterns. Elements include major outdoor plantings, informal plantings that reflect UNO’s character, and the preservation of significant existing trees. The plant materials used must reflect the climatic conditions that prevail in the region, with emphasis on low-maintenance plants.

The UNO landscape plan has six different zone types:

- seating areas with manicured plantings ad planting beds;
• semi-developed strips composed of clusters of trees and shrubs with small individual planting areas acting as buffers between open spaces, buildings, and parking lots;

• natural and wooded areas located on the periphery of the campus or in nodes and planted with a variety of hardy native and low-maintenance vegetation;

• open multi-use fields that are primarily large, grassy areas used for informal recreation;

• similar recreational fields developed for organized athletic activity; and

• small accent areas that showcase flowering plants and shrubs

In addition to the landscape plan required in the design of all new structures, a maintenance schedule will ensure the success of the plan and should be established prior to planting. Site conditions require frequent watering and fertilizing and maintenance schedules become increasingly important as the volume and age of plant material increase.

EXISTING TREE PRESERVATION:

Although there are a limited number of thirty-year-old trees on campus, they constitute a major and irreplaceable asset. These trees whether live oak, slash pine, or magnolia, should be maintained and protected. Construction projects and maintenance efforts may cause damage or require removal of these trees; however, these instances should be thoroughly evaluated and only permitted when absolutely necessary. When trees must be removed, three trees should be planted as replacement in close proximity to the removed tree. These trees should be a minimum of three to four inches in caliper and preferably of the same species as the tree removed.

TREES:

In the last decade, UNO has installed numerous species of trees. A conscious effort was made to establish a strong pattern of the use of native trees. However, many hearty non-native trees have been planted to give variety to the overall campus environment. Some of these species are dogwood, redbud, Chinese parasol, crepe myrtle, Japanese magnolia, graybeard, flowery crab apple, and parkinsonian. Trees with weak structure, poor growth habits, maintenance problems, and/or trees prone to disease are to be avoided.

Several varieties of trees have been chosen because of their rapid growth rate. In the last ten years, a concentrated effort has been made to plant trees that would have a visual impact in just a few years. However, these trees typically are not long-lived. This strategy was designed to create a temporary “quick fix” solution to produce a greener campus while
planning longer-lived trees would provide the proper image in decades to come. The strategy has been successful in the past, but should be utilized sparingly in the future.

Trees should be chosen by their scale and the function they are to perform. Accent trees are to be used as vignettes of color and contrast in the overall scheme. Small trees should be located adjacent to building entrances and pathways to give a sense of human scale to passersby. They may also act as screens and hedge rows in appropriate locations. Larger trees should be used as canopy in open spaces to produce microclimates of shade and rest as well as to serve as more formal plantings and quadrangles.

**SHRUBS:**

The selection of shrubs falls into distinct categories. Certain shrubs are selected to perform a defined task, such as screening of autos in a parking lot. However, shrubs should not be as high or dense as to create surveillance and safety problems for campus police. A selection of low shrubs might include dwarf nandina or bridal wreath. Low maintenance requirements will always be a prime consideration in the selection of shrubs. Annuals and perennials should be used only in areas of high visibility for seasonal planting, and such areas should be kept to a minimum.

**PEDESTRIAN PLAZAS:**

These small, sometimes tucked away, areas should receive special landscaping treatment. Color, texture, light, shade, contrast, pattern, and exposure are some of the prime considerations to be woven into a design solution. A carefully thought out palette of plants should be prescribed. These ‘people spaces’ can be unique, ranging from quiet simplicity to colorful complexity. The landscape should respond sensitively to the architectural façade and contribute to an integrated overall project design.
SOIL CONDITIONS:

Due to the characteristics of the campus land reclaimed from Lake Pontchartrain – average elevation is six to eight feet above sea level with a substantially lower than normal water table—the selection and placement of all plant material is crucial. The sandy campus soil tends to be porous and does not hold water well. Mixing of a topsoil and organic bark material with the existing soil composition on all newly planted material and frequent watering are required. A mulch layer on all newly planted material is also essential.

PARKING AND LANDSCAPING:

All new or reconstructed hard surface parking lots should be designed to provide tree plantings which offer thirty percent coverage (mature canopy, approximately one tree per fifteen cars). Trees should be equally distributed between automobiles and located immediately adjacent to the edge of the parking surface in a bordering format. Islands should be a minimum of nine feet in width and fifteen feet in length. Trees should not be placed closer than twenty feet from center to center.

Trees should generally be large in size, with wide spreading limbs. In most cases, deciduous trees are the most desirable. Trees should not produce an overabundance of leaves or cones.

To diminish the visual impact of parking lots, perimeter shrub screening should be employed. An optimum height on shrubs of this nature is approximately thirty inches.
Earth mounds containing plants or sod with intermittent tree planting are also effective. The height of such landscape elements must be controlled in the interest of safety and security. Lighting should always be coordinated with landscape efforts in these locations.

**PLANTING AT INTERSECTIONS:**

Vehicular intersections must be kept clear of all vegetation. An average fifteen-foot setback from the curb line to any trees or shrubs is desirable. Ground covers and low growing shrubs not more than eighteen inches in height may be used. Setbacks for secondary roadway or service lane entering a primary roadway should average ten feet from the curb line. All intersections should be free of any unnecessary visual obstructions.

**IRRIGATION:**

Currently UNO has limited irrigation systems. Extensive watering during extended periods of drought may be necessary in some areas, and these areas should have irrigation systems. Such areas may include plazas, small patio spaces, frontal facades of buildings, and intense planting beds. Future designs should provide for irrigation of these sensitive areas.

**SITE FEATURES:**

**Furnishings**

Exterior furnishings promote the use and enjoyment of the campus exterior spaces. Benches and seating ledges, outdoor tables and chairs, trash receptacles, signage, bicycle racks, kiosks, gazebos, and the like are an essential part of the usage environment. Material usage, scale, design style, and color can help coordinate this variety of elements. Selection and placement of site furnishings adjacent to buildings should be effected judiciously to avoid visual clutter. Easy maintenance should be a primary component in the selection of the finishes used for benches, trash cans and tables and chairs.
COVE FURNISHINGS

**Signage**

Signs should be properly scaled, low in profile, readable at reasonable distances, lighted where appropriate, coordinated well with other site features, and cost effective. The campus-wide signage plan and program established by the University must be adhered to in future designs. Refer to signage section of architectural guidelines for details.

**Water**

The campus is blessed by close proximity to Lake Pontchartrain, and special attention should be given to this visual amenity in all plantings and design. Other water features on campus are discouraged.

**Outdoor Art**

Art, both permanent and temporary, should be an integral part of the campus environment. The University’s Fine Arts Department should assist in the creation of proper guidelines for issuances, subject content, placement, exchange, and transportation of pieces.

The purchase of permanent works of art as part of any new construction budget for major buildings should be established. The purchase and/or lease of sculptures from local and regional arts should be encouraged.

**Lighting**
Due to UNO’s heavy commuter and nighttime use, all major feeder walkways, building entrances, plazas, and parking lots should be well lit. These areas should use a full variety of lighting types and sources to produce safe and highly visible areas. Shadows and dark spots should be illuminated, giving pedestrians and bicyclists a feeling of comfort and security.

The University meets or exceeds most of the lighting standards dictated by the Illumination Engineering Society of North America. All proposed lighting should meet the minimum standards already in place, with an emphasis on safety for the pedestrian and vehicle. This would include lights along the new loop road, in any new surface parking lots and any future parking garages.

All new luminaries and fixtures should be visually coordinated with those of recent vintage. They should render effective light, be easily maintained, and be cost effective.

**Paving**

Paving elements or flatwork consists of all walking and driving surfaces on campus, i.e., walks, paths, plazas, steps, ramps, pads for gazebos and kiosks, drives and parking areas. Because these elements are a dominant landscape feature, care in design and material choice is important. These surfaces must be integrated into each new design. The functional aspects as well as the aesthetic match must be considered.

Paving cost can be a considerable portion of any construction project. Therefore, concrete is the material of choice. Other materials may, however, be used for specific intended effects, such as to separate driveways from pedestrian walks, to slow down vehicular traffic adjacent to pedestrian ways, to break the monotony of extremely long walkways, and to announce entrances, features, or stopping points.

Several paving techniques and/or materials may be used. Some of these are unit pavers, exposed aggregate, scored or pressed concrete, asphalt surfacing, and chipped stone.

The University has adopted a pedestrian environment such that most campus circulation is foot traffic. Therefore it is important to maintain minimum widths of walkways to accommodate heavy use. With this in mind, it has been established that all primary walkways should be a minimum of 10’ wide, secondary walkways 8’ wide and tertiary walkways 6’ wide. Standard concrete design calls for all walkways to be reinforced to allow for ground movement and to keep sidewalks from sinking which causes water to puddle.
COVE PATH WITH UNIT PAVERS  ALUMNI CENTER PLAZA WITH UNIT PAVERS

LANDSCAPE SPECIFICATIONS

See Design Standards for the University of New Orleans.