



SAN DIEGO STATE
UNIVERSITY

LANDSCAPE & SITE GUIDELINES

The foundational landscape principle of the SDSU campus is a series of clearly defined outdoor spaces that serve as “living rooms” for the campus, which are connected by multiple pathways and passages, providing a rich and varied journey through the campus. This landscape framework was strengthened in later years by axial malls that provide vistas to important buildings, and ceremonial spaces for significant campus events. Similarly, the selection of plants on campus has evolved from a simple, functional one characterized by lawns and trees, to a colorful, diverse, adapted Mediterranean palette that is emblematic of the San Diego Region.

Evolution of the Campus Landscape

FIGURE 1

Aerial rendering of original campus plan by W. K. Daniels. The plan was intentional about creating a series of linked courtyards which are framed by the buildings and arcades.

The evolution of the San Diego State University landscape mirrors the development of landscape design in Southern California. The Spanish and Islamic tradition of the garden as a haven from the harsh desert environment was brought to the early settlements only in its simplest and most functional form, the focus on growing food and providing protected outdoor spaces for working and cooking. The gardens of the early missions, on which SDSU's campus was modeled, were generally much larger and contained a wider variety of plants used for cooking, medicine, and church decoration. Many of the mission gardens included a central well or fountain, reflecting the Spanish and Islamic respect for water's scarcity and providing access to this life giving element. The Spanish maintained respect for the semi-arid environment, a principle that was largely ignored by later American Settlers.

By the time the campus on Montezuma Mesa was found-

ed in 1931, the predominant landscape design principle was to take full advantage of the mild climate and long growing season to cultivate a wide range of plants, provided adequate water was available. Most landscape design was based on creating a mythical paradise, built on the inaccurate perception that Southern California was a sub-tropical climate. This is the landscape that has come to be associated with San Diego – palm trees swaying above lawns or beds of lush bougainvillea, hibiscus and birds of paradise with the occasional colorful succulent blended in. In more recent times, extended periods of drought and increased heat have moved landscape designers to look for more water conserving approaches that provide shade and retain the image of the iconic Southern California landscape.

The foundational landscape principle of the SDSU campus was a series of clearly defined outdoor spaces that served as “living rooms” for the campus, which were



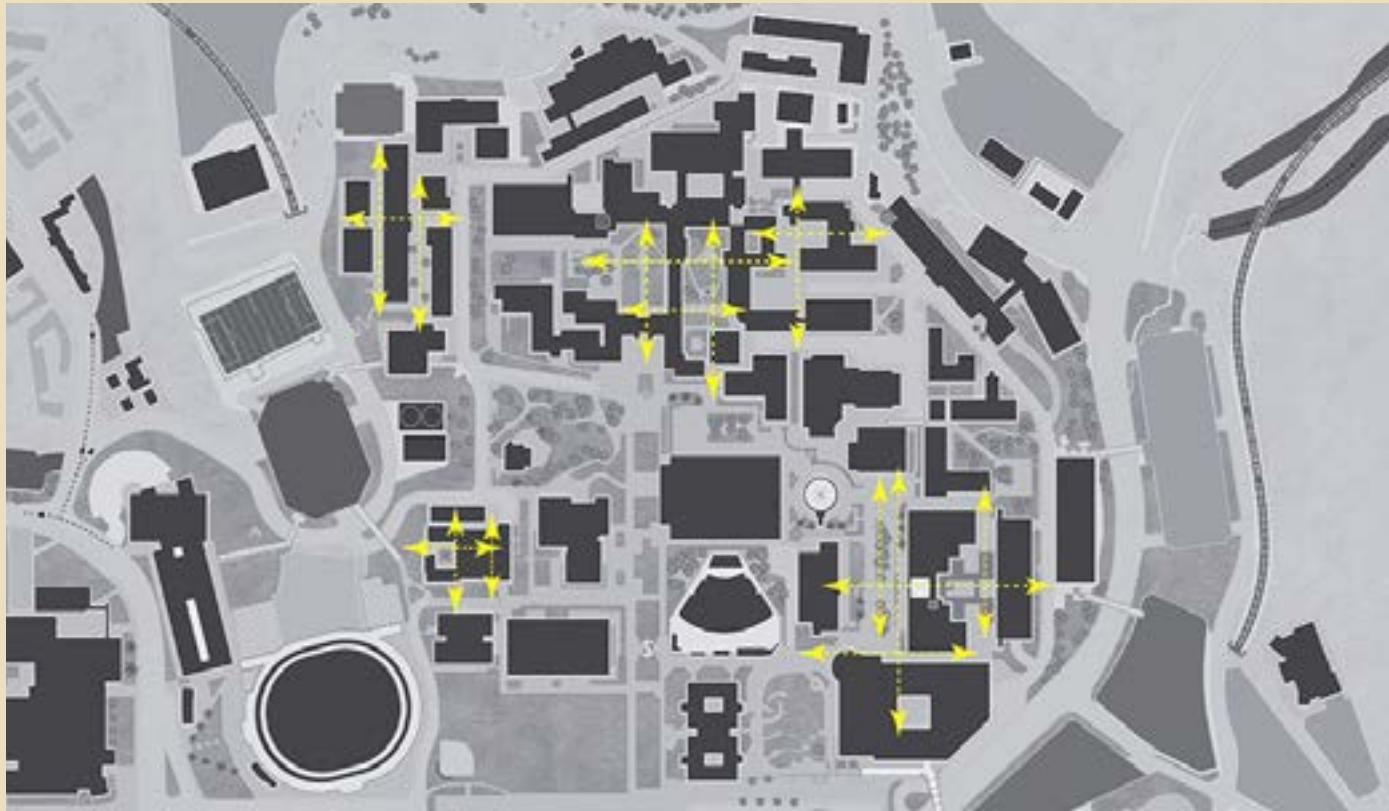


FIGURE 1
The historic core, with its series of linked courtyards is the foundation of planning and landscape design on campus. Generally, projects built from the 1950s through the 1970s ignored these concepts. In the early 1980s, the campus began to re-introduce the concept of enclosed outdoor space and connectivity through projects such as Student Services East and West. More recently, projects have fully embraced this concept. These projects include Storm Nasatir, the Conrad Prebys Aztec Student Union, and the Engineering and Interdisciplinary Science Complex (EISC).

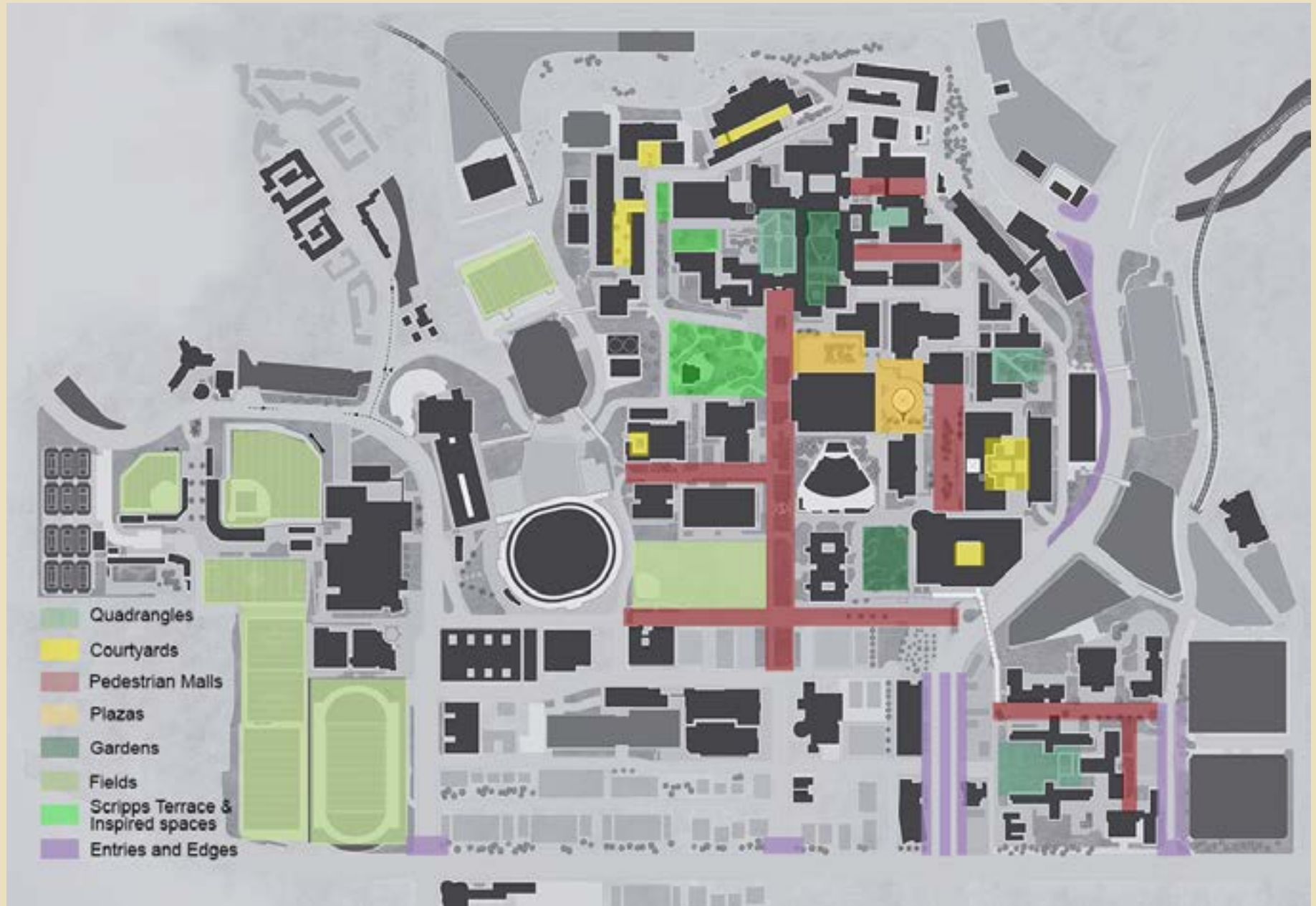
connected by multiple pathways and passages, providing a rich and varied journey through the campus. This landscape framework was strengthened in later years by axial malls that provide vistas to important buildings, and ceremonial spaces for significant campus events.

The original campus planting concept was simple, consisting of mostly lawn and paved areas. Over time plant materials adapted from similar, Mediterranean climates were introduced to the campus and some spaces took on more of a garden character. These plant materials create a rich palette that is mostly well suited to our climate, has become emblematic of San Diego, and most importantly includes trees that provide shade.

FIGURE 2
Early view of the bookstore, now the Faculty Staff Club, showing a simple plant palette of lawn, hedges and palms.



Campus Landscape Types



Quadrangles

A quadrangle is an open space, usually rectangular in plan, the sides of which are entirely or mainly occupied by parts of a building or buildings. While planted areas are not specifically part of the definition, most examples of quadrangles are primarily lawn as a ground surface. Examples of quadrangles at SDSU include Hepner Quad and the Banana Quad.



Quadrangle Guidelines:

- Enclosed on at least three sides by buildings or structural elements such as trellises, arcades, etc.
- Scale of surrounding structures should be low enough to allow some sun to enter the space.
- Plant material predominates and may include areas of lawn if needed for programmed activities, ground cover, small shrubs and trees if needed for shade.
- Furnishings – benches along the edges of circulation paths.

Courtyards

Courtyards are areas of flat ground outside and partly or completely surrounded by one or more buildings. While not strictly defined as having a paved ground plane, most images of courtyards show primarily hard ground surfaces.

Courtyard examples at SDSU include the Goldberg Courtyard at the Student Union and the open spaces between Student Services East and West.



Courtyard Guidelines:

- Enclosed on at least three sides by buildings or structural elements such as trellises, arcades, etc.
- Scale of surrounding structures should be low enough to allow some sun to enter the space.
- Hard surfaces will predominate but the space may include plant material in controlled areas such as well-defined beds and trees in grates or mulch areas.
- Furnishings will generally be in the center of the space and may include benches as well as tables and chairs.



FIGURE 1

Current view of Hepner Quad, looking northeast, showing the primary components of Quadrangles: enclosure, predominance of plant materials, and formal paths.

FIGURE 2 & 3

Historic and contemporary view of the Courtyard at Exercise and Nutritional Sciences. This courtyard exhibits several key characteristics: enclosure, significant hard surface and a central feature, in this case, a fountain.

FIGURE 4

A more recent example of a courtyard at the Conrad Prebys Aztec Student Union. In this example, hard surfaces predominate, landscape elements and the fountain are located at the edges, and the center is left open for activities and casual use.

FIGURE 1

Recent aerial view of Campanile Mall. This mall was developed as part of a master plan from the late 1960s, when SDSU joined the CSU. This and other pedestrian malls strengthened the original concept of connected courtyards. The grand scale and open design of the mall provides impressive views of the iconic Hepner Hall, but appears a bit barren and lacks shade. This mall could benefit from the addition of trees, carefully chosen and located to frame the view of Hepner.

FIGURE 2

Centennial Mall was recently redesigned to reduce water consumption by replacing turf with outdoor rooms and seating areas. The space has seen a significant increase in use since it was completed. This view is taken from the Union, which provides a focal point at the northern end of the mall.

Pedestrian Malls

In the landscape, a mall is defined as a public area designed as promenade or pedestrian walk, with a combination of plants and paved areas. The definition implies that a primary purpose of malls is movement. Examples of malls at SDSU include Campanile Mall and Centennial Mall.



Pedestrian Mall Guidelines:

- Enclosure on the two longer sides, though this may be a series of structures, not necessarily a continuous edge.
- A focal point or destination at one or both ends, which may be a building, building element, or view.
- At the edges of malls, paved surfaces will predominate to allow for circulation of large numbers of people.
- The center areas of a mall may be landscaped either as a series of rooms (Centennial) for spending time, or as lawn areas (north end of Campanile Mall) to support programmed activities. Center areas planned for more casual use should have ample shade provided by trees.
- The edges of a mall do not need to be barren and open. They should be lined with trees that are carefully chosen in size and type to emphasize and frame but not block any important views.



FIGURE 1

Hepner Hall, the architectural icon which appears on the campus seal and logo, is the focal point for Campanile Mall. The use of banners emphasizes the linear nature of the space and celebrates campus events.

FIGURE 2

The hard surface edges of Centennial Mall were maintained to accommodate pedestrian and occasional vehicular traffic as well as variety of campus events. The central spaces, formerly unused, unshaded, mounded lawns, have been redesigned as a series of outdoor rooms with a mix of fixed and moveable seating.

FIGURE 1

At Centennial Mall, benches line the edge of the walking surfaces to help delineate the paths of travel from the seating areas. Backless benches are appropriate in this location as they are intended for short term use, while the center spaces provide more comfortable seating for longer use.

FIGURE 2

Sycamore Plaza provides a large open area to the left, which is used for markets, fairs, food trucks and other events. The sycamores are grouped in a defined area to the right, providing shade without interrupting use of the open area.



Plazas

Historically, plazas were the public squares of a city or town. These spaces serve a public or civic purpose, such a place for governmental or commercial activity. On campuses, the term is employed for hard surface areas used for campus social and educational events. Examples at SDSU include the Sycamore Plaza north of the Library and the area around the Library dome entry.

- Furnishings along the edges should be for short term use only, and should emphasize and not interrupt the flow of traffic. An example is the backless benches along Centennial Mall.
- Furnishings in the center areas should provide a place to pause and linger, with more comfortable chairs and tables. These may be moveable, if adequate supervision and control is possible.

Plaza Guidelines:

- Plazas do not need as much enclosure as courtyards and quadrangles, but generally have at least one edge fronted by a prominent building.
- Plazas should be designed for high levels of activity, such as markets, food trucks and fairs, thus hard surfaces will predominate.
- Landscaped areas should be contained to a defined area to keep large open areas for activity.
- Plazas should incorporate trees for shade, but these should be placed along the edges or in compact areas.
- Paving should be broken up into a smaller scale by the use of brick or paver bands or panels. Paving must be constructed to support vehicular traffic.
- Seating should be incorporated at the edges of plazas to maximize open area for functions.



Gardens

Gardens are spaces set aside for the display, cultivation and enjoyment of plants and other forms of nature. Gardens incorporate both natural and manmade materials and may exhibit structural enhancements such as water features, fountains, statuary, arbors, trellises, etc. Gardens are usually associated with an adjacent building, but may be either enclosed or open on most sides. An example of a garden at SDSU is the Mediterranean garden which exhibits plants from Mediterranean climates across the globe.

Garden Guidelines:

- Gardens may be a variety of shapes and sizes, and if they are not well defined by buildings or other structures may be fenced for definition.
- The plant material is the primary feature of gardens, and may be ornamental or functional (edible) or a combination of both.
- Gardens generally have a theme or purpose, such as botanical education (the Mediterranean Garden), or plant type (the Fern Garden).



FIGURE 1

The Mediterranean Garden showcases plants from other Mediterranean climates including Africa and Australia.

FIGURE 2

In the Mediterranean Garden, plants are used to create outdoor rooms of varying sizes which provide different levels of sun and shade.

FIGURE 3

A new recreation field, created in a former parking lot. The field is designed to be multi-use, accommodating a variety of sports with an engineered turf surface for continued use. The fencing is required for safety and plant material is restricted to the edges.

Fields

Fields are used for programmed activities, such as athletic or recreational sports, games or other events. Most fields must meet discrete specifications, such as size, surface, orientation, marking, etc. related to the sport or sports for which they are designed. Many fields have fencing or gates to control access and contain balls from being projected beyond the play area.



FIGURE 1

The pond and stream at Scripps Terrace provide a naturalistic setting, unique among the more formal spaces that predominate on the campus. The sloping lawn areas create a sense of enclosure, and provide areas for reading and relaxing. This approach may provide inspiration for other sloped areas on campus.

FIGURE 2

Scripps Terrace provides a good mix of sun and shade. The use of ornamental trees provides seasonal color and interest. This provides a good model for other park-like settings on campus.

Field Guidelines:

- The needs of the sport or activity will be the primary drivers of the size, shape, proportion, amount and type of enclosure of the field.
- Fields may be placed in visible locations, but should not be placed where they interrupt primary circulation routes.
- The field surface will also largely be determined by its use. Some sports require natural turf, while multi-purpose fields in heavy rotation may need to be artificial turf to survive heavy demand.
- Most fields require a clear zone around the edge which may not be planted for safety and maintenance reasons.
- Where possible, shade should be provided for spectators if plants can be located where leaves or fruits do not drop on the field, causing safety hazards.
- Wherever possible, provision should be made for some spectator seating, whether formal bleachers or a flat or sloped area for placing chairs and blankets.

Scripps Terrace

Scripps Terrace is a unique space on campus. It is one of the few naturalistic landscapes, exhibiting ideas from the English Romantic school of landscape design. The character defining elements of this landscape should be preserved and enhanced. The sloping topography creates a sense of enclosure, as opposed to buildings that enclose most spaces on campus, and serves as a gentle reminder of the original topography of campus. The sloped grass areas are ideally suited to sitting, picnicking, reclining, reading and relaxing, and are frequently used for this purpose. The curving walks contrast with the more formal, rectilinear walks in other areas of campus. A mix of shade and ornamental trees provide shade and seasonal interest, but their placement allows a choice of sun or shade. The pond and stream offer a more natural looking water feature than the geometric and contained fountains on other parts of campus. Decks, bridges and a patio outside Scripps Cottage

afford locations for programmed outdoor events that are separated by topography from the rest of the space. Because it is such a special place, it is not likely that any space like this will be recreated in whole on campus. However, elements of Scripps Terrace may provide inspiration for some specific locations across campus.



Scripps Terrace Inspiration:

- The natural treatment and sloped lawn may provide guidance for sloped areas that could provide casual seating, such as the slope at the west end of PSFA.
- The space provides a good balance of sun and shade, so the amount, mix and spacing of the trees provides a model for spaces where trees provide the primary source of shade.



Entrances and Edges

In the past many campuses marked their boundaries with fences, walls, gates, signage, or building elements, such as arches, that visitors passed through in order to enter the campus proper. Since SDSU was isolated from urban development when it was established, and the original concept used structures to frame and enclose open spaces, there was no formal concept for gateways or defining edges until recently. Today, many campuses, including SDSU have expanded beyond their traditional edges and/or surrounding development has expanded toward the campus, blurring those edges. As a result, there is a renewed interest in marking the edges and entrances to campus, as evidenced by the recently completed Clay Gateway.

Entrances and Edge Guidelines:

- Gateways and entrance elements should use a combination of architecture, landscape and signage together to provide subtle, yet iconic demarcations of campus boundaries.
- Special attention should be given to the condition and appearance of structural elements and landscaping along our visible edges.

- A consistent landscape treatment and palette should be developed for all campus edges, keeping in mind that some edges have special conditions such as steep slopes.



FIGURE 1
The West Campus Gateway concept uses the smaller pylons and low walls from the Clay Gateway as well as similar plant materials to establish common symbolism for the campus edges.



FIGURE 2
The proposed East Campus Gateway marks the entrance to the east residential neighborhood with simple pylons and signage.



FIGURE 3
The proposed Campanile Mall Monument marks the south end of the main campus mall. This monument combines elements of campus architecture with signage and the University seal.

FIGURE 4
The Clay Gateway, completed in 2016, is located at the main entrance to campus at Campanile and Montezuma. This gateway uses a combination of iconic architectural elements, signage and plant materials to mark the symbolic edge of the campus.



Plant Materials

FIGURE 1

Like much of Southern California, the campus landscape has evolved to an adapted Mediterranean plant palette. Many of these plants are showcased in the Mediterranean Garden.

FIGURE 2

Plantings cover the columns and spring lines of the arches and diminish the impact of the arcade lining Hepner Quad.

FIGURES 3

Shade trees in the Mediterranean Garden.



Plant material may be used for a variety of purposes in landscaped areas to enhance and complement the architecture, provide shade and climate control, create outdoor rooms or discrete spaces, frame views or create visual interest. Plant materials should not obscure or be planted too close to character defining architectural features, unless those features are expressly designed to hold plant material, such as trellises.

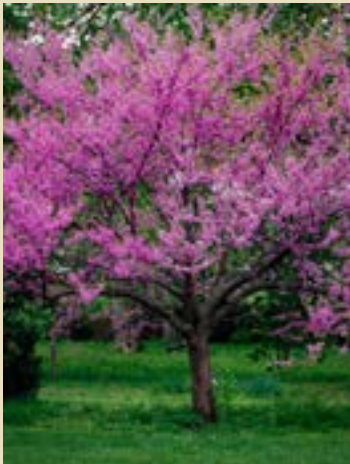


Trees will be the primary method of providing shade on campus. Tree species selected for shade must grow to an adequate height and provide a full canopy in the summer months. All landscape projects should look for opportunities to add shade through the use of trees. Some examples of shade trees well suited to San Diego include Tipu, Pepper Tree, and some Ficus (Fig) species. Most palm trees grow too tall with too small of a canopy to provide good shade.





Ornamental trees may be used to add seasonal color and accents to the landscape, but may not provide good shade. Some of these trees, such as Jacarandas create maintenance issues when they drop their blossoms. Other ornamental trees suitable to San Diego include Coral Trees, Orchid Trees, and Western Redbuds.



Plant materials should also be appropriate to their intended function. Dense shrubs, such as Star Jasmine may be used as hedges to create enclosure and a series of rooms, or to screen equipment in the landscape. Plants with more dramatic forms, such as Agaves and many succulents should be used as accent plants to create height or a focal point.

Succulents are an important part of SDSU's plant palette, but if used exclusively or spaced too far apart, will create a harsh image. Succulents should be used in combination with other types of plants, and planted densely to create a lush background, or placed in planters as accents.

Lawn should only be used where required for a specific programmed use as a playing or event surface.

FIGURE 1
Tipu trees provide filtered shade at the north end of Centennial Mall. The same species were planted at a similar spacing along the redesigned portion of the mall and when mature, will provide comparable shade.

FIGURE 2
Western Redbuds are used successfully on campus to provide color and seasonal interest.

FIGURE 3
Orchid trees at Scripps Terrace.

FIGURE 4
Coral trees are an example of a tree that provides visual interest in a variety of ways. The trees bloom in red (one of SDSU's spirit colors) around commencement, and the intricate branch and trunk structure are picturesque all year.

Paving Materials

FIGURE 1

At the large plaza in front of Hepner Hall, concrete is broken up into smaller panels with joints and brick bands.

FIGURE 2

Unit pavers used at Centennial Mall

FIGURE 3

Decomposed Granite is appropriate for areas with lower traffic or that are used for more quiet activities, such as the seating areas in Centennial Mall.

Malls, Walks and Roads

All paved areas wider than 6'-0" should be constructed to support vehicular traffic.

Concrete

The most predominant paving material on campus is concrete, which is durable, maintainable and easily replaced. Concrete walks wider than 10'-0" and large areas of concrete should be broken up with panel joints at 10'-0" on center and should have a brick or paver edge detail.

Unit Pavers

Pavers have been used across campus and provide texture and pattern and some level of water infiltration. If pavers are used in high traffic areas, where vehicular traffic is expected or the width exceeds 6'-0," the base must be prepared to avoid settlement and deterioration over time.



Decomposed Granite

Decomposed Granite (DG) provides a softer, but still stable surface which is permeable and cooler than concrete or pavers. DG is suitable for areas that will have light traffic, such as seating areas or paths where a paved alternative exists. DG should not be used adjacent to building entries where it can be tracked inside.



Fountains & Water Features

Historically, fountains celebrated the preciousness of water in arid climates, and provided cooling in the landscape. Water has been used consistently as an element of Southern California landscapes, from the times of the historic missions.

Existing water features on campus include:

- Fountain in the Goldberg Courtyard at the Conrad Prebys Student Union
- Fountain in the Mediterranean Garden
- Fountain in the courtyard at Exercise and Nutritional Sciences
- Pond/stream at Scripps Terrace



FIGURE 1
The pond and stream at Scripps Terrace, an example of a more naturalistic water feature.

FIGURE 2
The fountain at the Mediterranean Garden is a more traditional and formal example of a water feature.

Since fountains are a historic element of the campus and its mission architecture, their use may be appropriate. The focus should be on maintaining and re-activating existing, historic fountains and water features on campus, when appropriate and if water use is not restricted. New fountains may be included only in more important and iconic buildings and landscapes, such as the Student Union.

Carefully designed and attractive water features that also serve to retain and treat stormwater are always encouraged. These should be carefully designed to remain attractive in wet and dry conditions.

Shade Structures

FIGURE 1
The trellis at the Student Union provides some level of shade

FIGURE 2
The proposed trellis at the Engineering and Interdisciplinary Sciences Complex (EISC) will provide filtered shade for the roof garden. An open arcade below shades and protects the main building entry.

FIGURE 3
While these benches provide a strong edge to the Banana Quad, they also prevent access to the landscaped area.

Shade is a critical component in providing useable outdoor spaces. Wherever possible, tress should be the primary means of providing exterior shade. Structural elements that provide shade should be an integral part of the architecture of the adjacent buildings – such as arcades and trellises.



Site Furniture & Elements

University standard site furnishings and elements, and their appropriate location are outlined below. Absent written direction either in these guidelines or from the University Architect, site furniture and elements should always match adjacent installations.

Benches

Benches can be used in a variety of outdoors spaces for a variety of uses. Backless benches are more appropriate in areas which emphasize movement, such as pedestrian malls, where most people will only pause



and rest for a short time, or in areas where lingering is not encouraged such as outside of main entrances to buildings. Benches with backs will tend to encourage people to sit longer, and should be used in areas where eating or socializing are encouraged. Benches can also be used as an architectural or structural element in the landscape, creating an edge, defining a space, directing or preventing movement. Poorly placed benches may discourage or prevent use of a space by blocking access.



Two primary bench styles exist on campus: the historic WPA bench and the newer “Centennial Bench.” The original WPA wood and concrete bench is a character defining feature of the campus, originating from the 1930s and 1940s, although most of the ones that exist today are replicas. These benches consist of curved concrete ends with wood slat seats and back, secured with visible pegs. Some of the molds for the concrete ends contain a “WPA” stamp. These original benches (or replicas) should be used in the historic areas of campus, such as Hepner Quadrangle and the Banana Quad. This bench style should also be used in areas where the historic pattern and style of the campus are replicated, such as the Day Quad at the EISC.



FIGURE 1
Benches along Centennial Mall define the edge between the active pedestrian zone and the quieter seating areas. Since they are intended for short term use, a backless design is appropriate.

FIGURE 2
Historic WPA style benches should be used in the historic campus core, in areas such as Hepner Quad.

FIGURE 3
Backless concrete version of the Centennial bench. These are appropriate in areas intended for movement, such as pedestrian malls, where sitting for extended periods is not expected.

FIGURE 4
Backless Centennial bench with wood seat. Note the stamped Centennial logo in the side support panel.

FIGURE 5
Arched wood back version of the Centennial bench. This version should be used in newer areas where users are expected to sit for longer periods of time.

A newer bench style was developed around 1987 and has been dubbed the “Centennial bench.” This bench comes in several versions: Two backless versions, one with a concrete seat, one with a wood slat seat and concrete ends, and a version with an arched, wood slat back. The concrete ends of the bench are stamped with a university seal that celebrates the institution’s Centennial. These benches should be replicated in areas outside the core, particularly on centennial mall and around student Services East and West.



FIGURE 1
Campus standard pedestrian fixture with textured concrete pole and round light fixture.

FIGURE 2
Campus standard roadway and parking lot fixture.

FIGURE 3
Standard trash and recycling cans - round, textured concrete with SDSU stamp.

Tables and chairs

Tables and chairs in the landscape encourage the use of outdoor space for a wide variety of activities including eating, socializing, studying, group work or even meetings. SDSU is still evaluating the use of moveable furniture, but at present it may be used only in areas where there is adequate supervision and control, and a responsible party will monitor its location and condition.

Light fixtures



The campus pedestrian light standard is an exposed aggregate post with a round, disk shaped lamp. The campus roadway and parking lot light standard is a simple, square shoebox on a square tube pole.

Trash Cans

The campus standard trash cans are round, exposed aggregate barrels with SDSU stamped on one side. Typically, two are provided: one for landfill and one for



Fences

In the core campus, fencing should be used minimally. Where necessary, it should be black in color and a simple, vertical picket in style. Long runs of fencing should be broken up with masonry or concrete columns spaced at approximately 8 to 12 feet on center. The columns should be square in plan, with a stucco surface and should have a simple, slightly peaked cap made out of precast concrete or stone. Generally, fencing should be between 2 and 4 feet high, or as required by code. If taller fencing is required for security, as around student residence halls, it should be black square tube metal with vertical pickets only to discourage climbing.



Chain link fencing is discouraged in the core campus, and should be used only around athletic or recreational fields and utility spaces.

FIGURE 1
Low, black picket fencing suitable or shorter heights and shorter lengths.



FIGURE 2
Taller vertical picket fencing, used for security fencing above 4 feet high. The lack of horizontal elements discourages climbing.

FIGURE 3
Longer runs of picket fencing should be broken up with masonry piers located 8 to 12 feet on center.

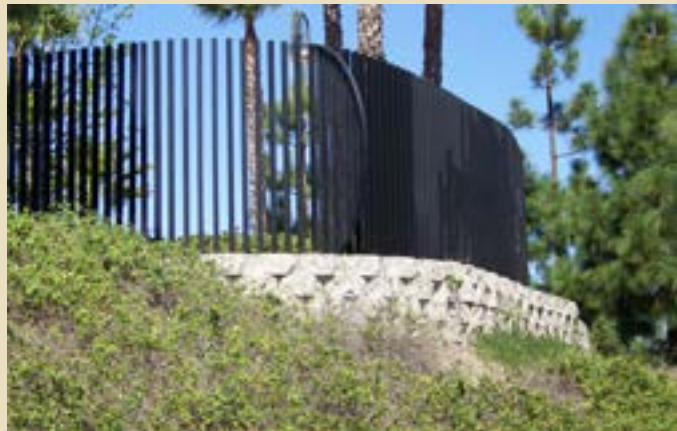


FIGURE 4
Black vinyl coated chain link fencing is appropriate for athletic fields.



FIGURE 5
Chain link fencing appropriately used at the new student recreation field.

FIGURE 6
Proposed fence/guardrail at the east side of EBA, along College Avenue showing the simple picket style with concrete and stucco columns and peaked caps. Since this fence is closely associated with a building, the teal color is used.



FIGURE 1

A simple picket guard rail and pipe handrails at the Student Union. These railings are associated with a building so they are teal in color.

FIGURE 2

Decorative picket railing at Manchester Hall.

FIGURE 3

Handrail and guardrail at ramp near Parking 7. Since this ramp is a site feature, the railing is black.

Railings

Railings should be a simple picket style, but may be more decorative on signature buildings such as Manchester Hall. If the railing is directly associated with a building, the color should be teal. If the railing is more of a site element, it may be black.

Handrails that do not also serve as guardrails may be a simple round pipe that meets all code requirements, and should be the teal color if associated with a building, and black if they are more of site feature.

