Concept Design Narrative

The concept for the Burrowes Hall landscape borrows from the formality of the cloister courtyard architecture, while juxtaposing it with the lake front geography and Illinois dune landscape topography.

The courtyard is entered through the elevated patio and winged stair cases. At the bottom of the stairs is a larger cobble stone patio that serves as a formal event space, while at the same time offers intimate seat niches and spaces for contemplation.

The center axis and walk, which draws visitors toward the lake, is anchored by a half-circular seat wall on the west end. The small pool at the center could be as simple as a bird bath or small fountain. The cobble stone lotus flower mosaic echoes George Washington Maher’s motif from the open porches.

Another lotus flower mosaic is used in the northern half of the patio, this time at the crossing of the cruciform layout defined by a set of intimate, half circular seat walls. The center of the lotus flower accommodates a tree that will shelter the patio space from the elements.

A cloister courtyard is framed by arcades. In this concept, a tall-arched pergola planted with vines defines the space along the southern edge. This vine covered arcade, with its closed back and open arches facing into the yard, draws the eye away from the dominant building façade to the south and redirects it into the courtyard.

Its counterpart, the elevated arcade to the north, repurposes the existing first floor recess in the Sullivan Center. Pergola style archways with curtains of flowering vines alternate between windows into the courtyard. The second floor elevation could accommodate murals. The archways, vines and/or murals help to reduce the dominance of the Sullivan Center over the court yard.

The rigor of the cruciform path layout and crossing is softened by the gently undulating dune topography and lake shore geography that arches towards the southeast. The dune ridges gently rise from the vine covered arcade to the elevated arcade at the Sullivan Center. This gentle topography again reduces the dominance of the Sullivan façade.

The dune ridges are planted with a sea of fine-textured, native grasses. Their elegant movement in the wind and glow in the morning and evening sun will add to the soothing character of the space. The sea of grass is contrasted with a valley of flowers between the dune ridges. These plantings, using native forbs, could either be in a meadow style, or a gardenesque layout. The valley topography also would allow for stormwater retention and infiltration.

The patio at the paths’ crossing is another gathering space. It provides ample seating with its circular seat walls, offering room for contemplation as it is comfortably nested between the grasses and flowers and shaded by a tree.

The center walk offers an unobstructed axis towards the lake. It is a level walk that cuts through the dune topography. It is anchored on the east end by the lake gate, framing and focusing the visitor’s view of Lake Michigan. A similar lake gate anchors the east end of the vine-covered arcade. The elevated arcade steps down to grade at the east end, where it is flanked by a small amphitheater seating, and terminated by the north lake gate.
Burrowes Hall Landscape - Concept Plan

- ELEVATED ARCADE
- CENTER WALK
- CROSS PATHS PATIO
- PRIVATE APARTMENT BUILDING
- VINE COVERED ARCADE
- AMPHITHEATRE SEATING
- SULLIVAN CENTER