

The
Vistas
of
Princeton University

*Gardens, landscaping,
and courtyards of the campus*





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Princeton's beautiful campus is the product of creative minds and countless hours of labor. When first planted, the natural materials that give form and interest to today's campus only hinted at the vision that guided their selection. But tended with care and patient expectation, they have matured into an environment of uncommon verdancy.

James McCosh, president of the University from 1868 to 1888, was instrumental in transforming an austere campus, into arboretum of native and rare plant species. McCosh, a Scot and lover of the informal English garden, delighted in planning new buildings and pathways. It was McCosh who recommended hiring Princeton first landscape gardener, Donald Grand Mitchell. Ik Marvel, as he was known, was responsible for planting many trees in front of Nassau Hall and for landscaping the original Dickinson Hall.

Much of Princeton's present beauty is the work of Beatrix Jones Farrand. Commissioned in 1912 to work with architect Ralph Adams Cram at the new Graduate College, Farrand was appointed University consulting landscape architect in 1915. Her work at the Graduate College was an auspicious beginning at a 30-year association with the University. Farrand's work (and that of her head gardener James Clark, who served from 1928 to 1962) survives today almost in its entirety at the Graduate College and in remnants throughout the main campus. Still evident are her basic design principles -to emphasize rather than conceal the architectural lines of the buildings, to simplify and unify by avoiding random planting, and to consider the seasonal

use of the campus in selecting plants. Her style is exemplified by the more than 90 varieties of shrubs and trees espaliered against the towering walls of the Graduate College and main campus, the evergreen materials on buildings and in borders, her judicious selection of deciduous trees, and the huge splashes of cascading forsythia on Holder Hall, hydrangea in the courtyards of the Graduate College and at Lockhart Dormitory, and white and purple wisteria throughout the campus.

The nursery Farrand started also survives. It was not only a means of saving money but also expressed fundamental ideas about landscape design. Landscaping, Farrand thought, should not impose a design upon a space but should shape it using indigenous materials. The University nursery supplied plants grown in the soil and climate of their eventual home.

It served an educational purpose too, for the nurseries Farrand established at the three campuses where she worked (Princeton, Yale and Chicago) shared the results of horticultural experiments as well as their surplus plants. Although Yale's and Chicago's nurseries no longer exist, the Princeton nursery continues to



supply some plants for the grounds. Landscape architect Diana Balmori plants to draw from the nursery for landscaping the University's new swimming pool complex.

Farrand respected the noble and monastic character of University life, and her creations were consonant with this vision. "Pettiness of detail" was inappropriate at an institu-

tion of learning, and her landscapes were both grand and dignified. Few would call Princeton a monastic community today. More recent designs for planting reflect the diversity of modern university and consider the more mundane problems of traffic, air pollution, budgets and security, as well as the University's increasingly diversified architecture. The landscaping by Clarke and Rapuano of Firestone Plaza and the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs illustrates the more urban feel of the modern campus. The architectural values inherent in the newer buildings are extended into the landscape. The result is a hospitable, beautiful setting in which people mingle and carry on the exchange of ideas that is the essence of University life.



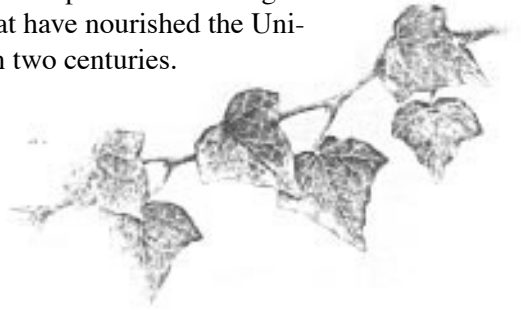
If contemporary landscaping efforts are less grand in concept and scope than in Farrand's time, they nevertheless serve a similar end. In an article in the Princeton Alumni Weekly (June 9, 1926) Farrand stated goal this way:

Although the Princeton university plantings have been designed primarily as appropriate settings to various buildings, there has also been a second object...We all know education is by no means a mere matter of books, and that aesthetic environment contributes as much to mental growth as facts assimilated from a printed page. No life is well-rounded without the subtle inspiration of beauty... Beauty brings it to refreshment and renewal ...[The] gardening organization at the University is trying its

best to make the dwellers in and around the campus demand beauty in their daily life as a part of their right and essential to their development.

Each of the sites featured here serves a different need. There are places to congregate, to meditate, and to appreciate nature. There are places where one can simply escape from the noise of the daily life. This little book is an invitation to view Princeton from the perspective of its natural, albeit planned surroundings. Refreshed and renewed by this beauty, one acquires a deeper understanding of the intellectual ideals that have nourished the University for more than two centuries.

-S.C.J.





Graduate College

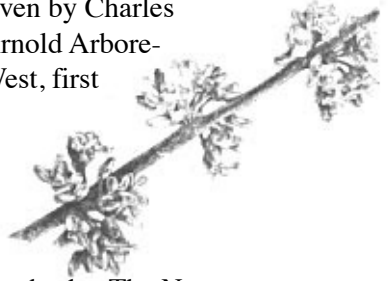
The graduate College was Beatrix Farrand's first Princeton project, and it is the site where her work is best preserved. One enters the College via a curved road planted with Douglas fir, Norway spruce, white pine, and hemlock. Groups of tulips, oaks, and gum trees lighten the effect of the evergreens, while dogwood and forsythia add color in the spring. A low wall, built at Farrand's direction in order to give visual support to the vertical lines of the building, borders the road and forms the entrance court at the base of Cleveland Tower. This wall continues around south side of the building forming a terrace that provides a lovely vista of the grounds. Viewed from the golf course, the English yews and stately American elms that grow here frame the building and relate it to the natural setting. The wisteria and English and Boston ivy that twine up the walls do not overpower the structure but emphasize its elevation and illustrate one of Farrand's landscaping principles for the Collegiate Gothic campus: Windows are unobstructed; "salient angles" are emphasized; nothing must distract the eye from the soaring verticality of the architecture. Visible at the west end of the terrace is Wyman House, the dean's residence. The gardens behind Wyman House were also Farrand's creation and have been restored through the efforts of Dean Theodore Ziolkowski and his wife, Yetta. The terraced gardens feature roses, perennials, and a pleached alley of hornbeam.





Old and New Quadrangles

The two inner courtyards of the Graduate College represent an interesting contrast. In the Old Quadrangle (south) the two graceful cedars of Lebanon given by Charles Sprague Sargent (founder of the Arnold Arboretum in Boston) to Dean Andrew West, first dean of the Graduate College, dominate the courtyard. In the spring the quadrangle is fragrant with white wisteria (over the arcade at the north end), climbing hydrangea, and other flowering shrubs. The New Quadrangle(north) is more intimate, less uniform in architectural detail, and thereby permits a livelier landscaping treatment. Except for the magnificent redbud tree at one corner, the courtyard is open in the center. On the perimeter of the courtyard planted English holly, a southern magnolia, which flourishes in the protected courtyard, and a poncirus covered in spring with orange-like fruit. Espaliered against the walls are several varieties of ivy; feathery, pink tamarisk; and purple-leaved plum, whose foliage accentuates the purplish stones in the walls' predominantly gray mosaic. The witch hazel, which begin blooming during warm spells in the winter, and the purple wisteria, climbing hydrangea, oriental bittersweet, and honeysuckle, which follow in the early and late spring, contribute to the year-round beauty of this courtyard.





Blair Walk

The walkway from the dinky station to the heart of the main campus gave Beatrix Farrand ample space in which to demonstrate her talent, and it was a project in which she took particular pride. The vista from the west side of Pyne Dormitory up toward Blair Tower is pleasing in any season, but it is breathtakingly beautiful in spring.

Blair Walk was designed as a major entrance to the University. In fact, the path parallels the former site of train tracks the once brought travelers to the foot to Blair Tower. Near the present train station on University Place the walkway is bordered by closely pruned Japanese yews. The formality of the dark yews is softened by the saucer magnolias and two towering white pines that grow on University Place.

On the southwest corner of Pyne stands an enormous southern magnolia. Although *magnolia grandiflora*, with its glossy leaves and five-inch, cream-colored blossoms, usually grows best in warmer climates, several dot the Princeton grounds, where they seem to flourish in protected corners.



As one passes through Dodge Memorial Gateway, which marks the entrance to the courtyard between Henry and 1901 dormitories, the planting changes. Yellow jasmine blooms on 1901's southwest façade in the winter. Widely

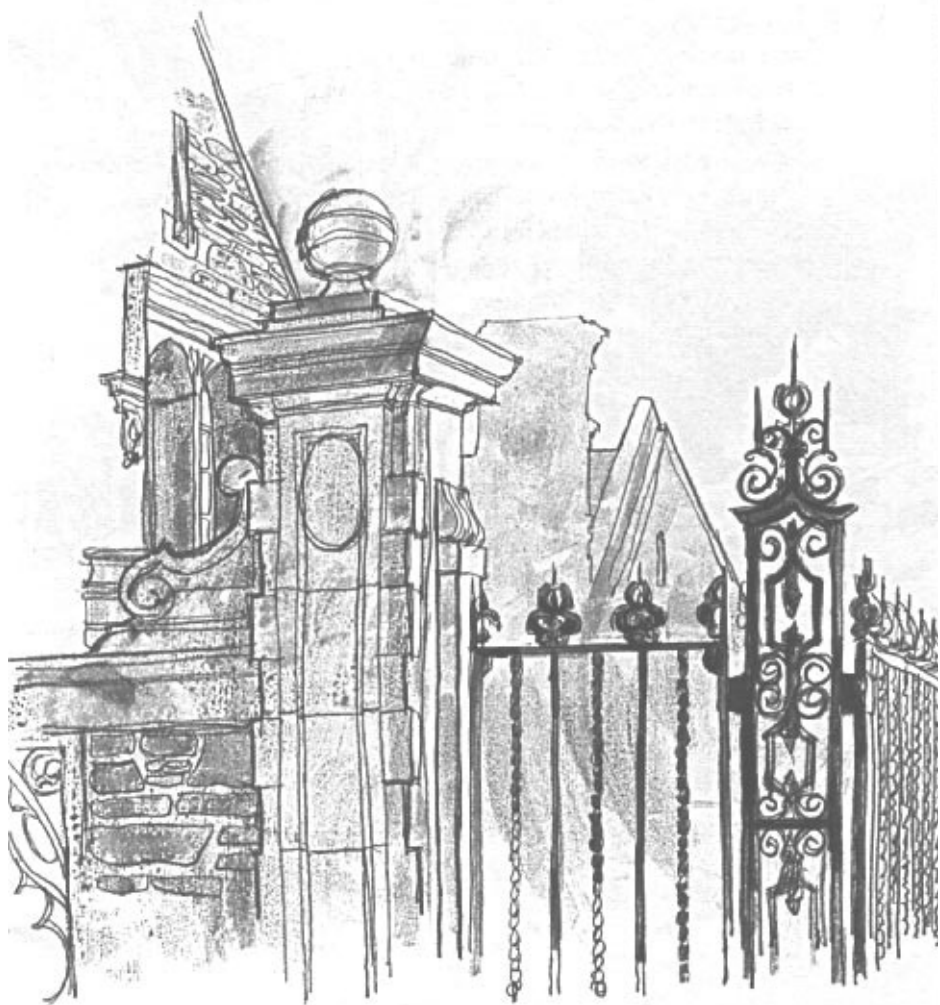
spaced elms, Kentucky coffee trees, and the espaliers on the stone walls (including cornus kousa, tamarisk, magnolia, kobus, climbing hydrangea, and winter honeysuckle) preserve the sense of spaciousness and simplicity within the courtyards while adding to their beauty. White and purple wisteria grow on the east side of Henry and Foulke. A

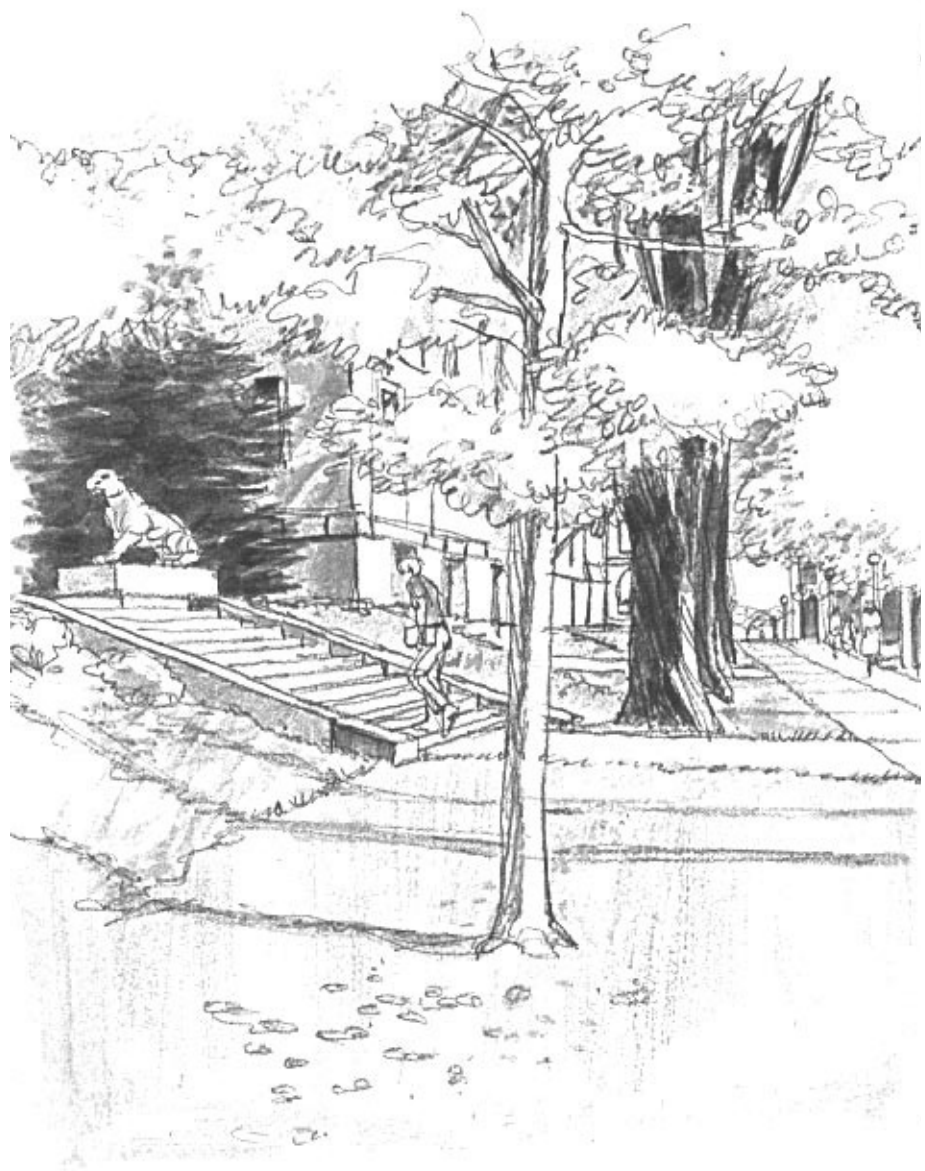


weeping Japanese Cherry gracefully frames the middle entrance of Henry.

On Laughlin and 1901's west side the original planting of orange-berried pyracantha still clings to the stone walls. With

Blair Tower's imposing form rising in the distance, the quiet dignity of these courtyards makes a fitting introduction to the University.





McCosh Walk

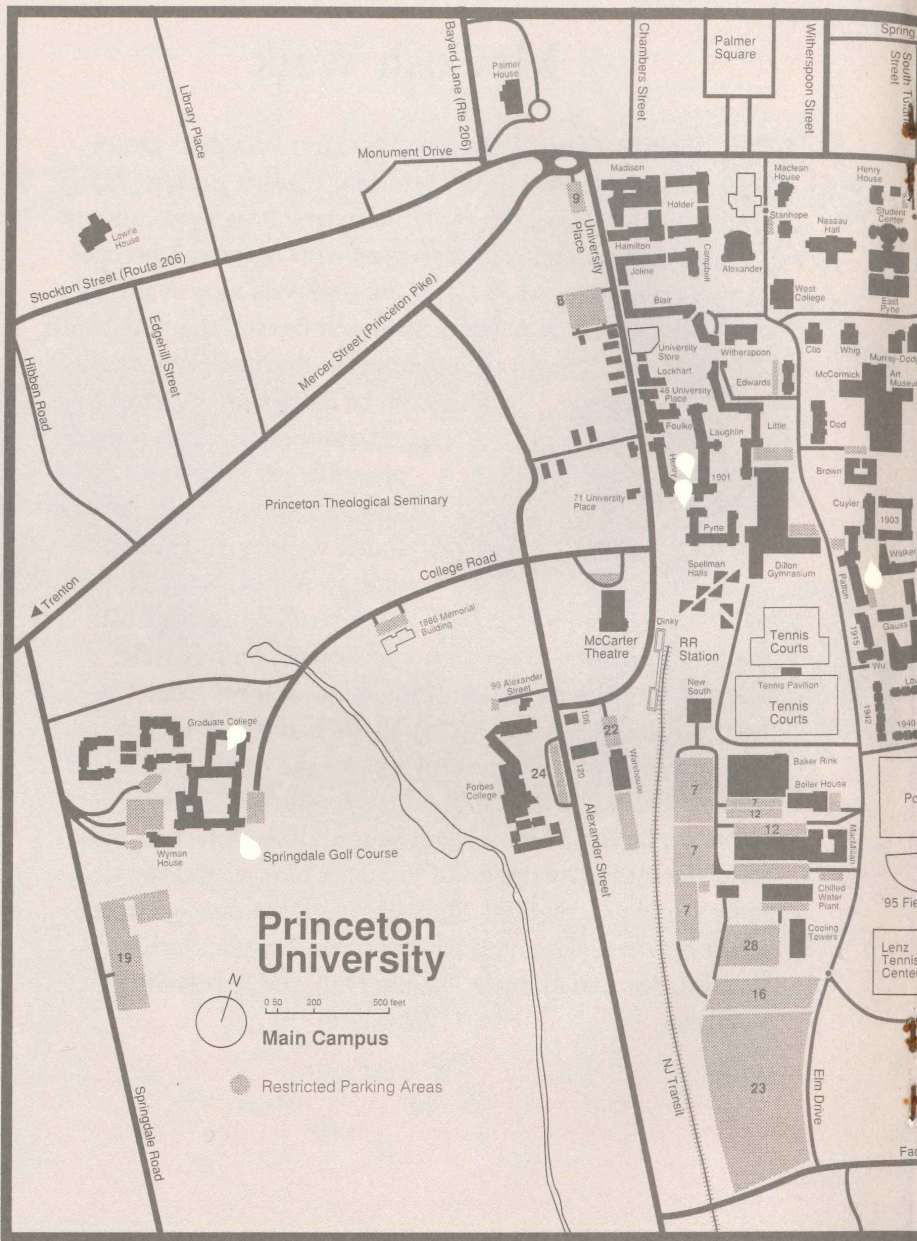
Tree-lined McCosh Walk is named after President James McCosh, whose love of the informal English garden played an important role in the evolution of Princeton campus.

The American elms interspersed with American beeches form a green colonnade along the east-west axis of the campus. The University planted the beech trees in the mid-1960s

on the assumption that the elms would fall victim to Dutch elm disease. An aggressive injection and pruning program has halted the disease's spread, and the handsome, well-formed elms continue to thrive.



A stroll along McCosh walk is interesting from an architectural point of view. cutting through the heart of the main campus from Washington Road to University Place, the path takes the visitor past a wealth of architectural styles -the eclecticism of the High Victorian Witherspoon Hall on the west, the modern styles of the Art Museum and School of Architecture buildings, the Italianate design of Prospect House, and the Collegiate Gothic of McCosh Hall. Through the tiger-guarded plaza between Whig and Clio's Greek Revival marble façade, one can glimpse Nassau Hall, the University's oldest building.



Stockton Street (Route 206)

Mercer Street (Princeton Pike)

Princeton Theological Seminary

Princeton University

Main Campus

● Restricted Parking Areas

0 50 200 500 feet



Springdale Road

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Wyman House

Graduate College

Springdale Golf Course

College Road

1886 Memorial Building

McCarter Theatre

Forbes College

99 Alexander Street

Alexander Street

146

22

150

191

71 University Place

Spellman Hall

Dillon Gymnasium

Pyne

Laughlin

Faulke

University Place

Lockhart

University Store

Edwards

Whiterspoon

Blair

B

University Place

Hamilton

Johne

Holder

Madison

Palmer House

Monument Drive

Bayard Lane (Rte 206)

Chambers Street

Palmer Square

Witherspoon Street

Spring

South Terrace

Henry House

Shaker Center

East Pyne

Nassau Hall

West College

Cio

Whig

Murray-Dodge

Art Museum

McCormick

Dod

Brown

Cuyler

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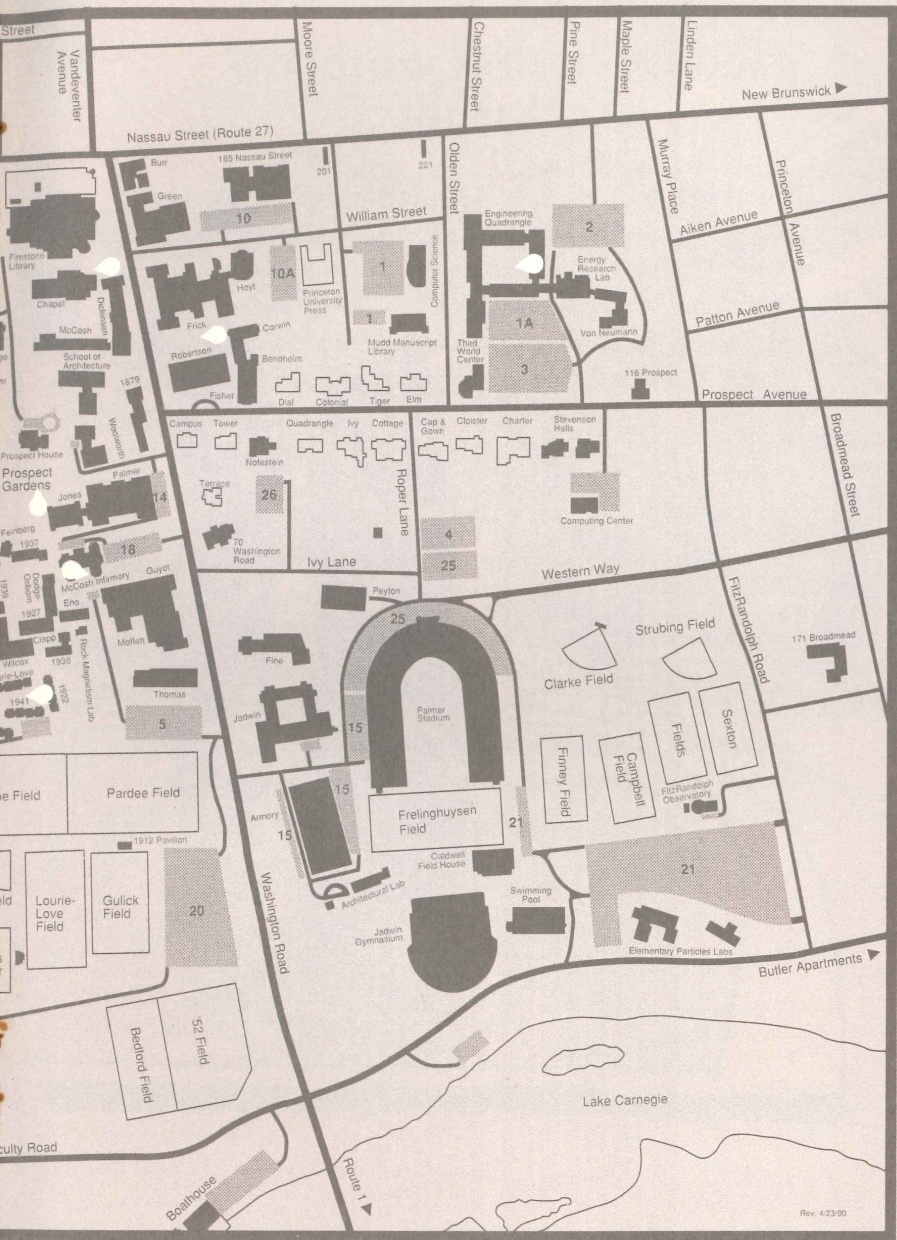
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Woodrow Wilson School

Scudder Plaza

Robertson Hall, home of the Woodrow Wilson School, and the plaza in front of it form a self-contained unit on the edge of central campus. The formal and spacious court, recently named Scudder Plaza, reinforces the symmetry and classical proportions of the architecture. The row of saucer magnolias, which are surrounded by a bed of English spreading yew, echoes the rhythm of the soaring quartz-covered pillars on the northwest façade of the building. In winter their delicate branches, with buds borne like candles on the tips, are a foil to the elegant, slender pillars. In spring the trees provide a spectacular show of pink blossoms under which students study and socialize. The reflecting pool, with its bronze sculpture “Fountain of Freedom” by James Fitzgerald, provides a popular respite from the heat of midsummer for students and visitors alike.





Voorhees Courtyard

With its diversity of flora and its sculptural forms, the Voorhees Courtyard at the Engineering Quadrangle, is a bold composition. Named after Stephen Voorhees '00, University consulting architect, the enclosure is a spacious outdoor sculpture gallery showcasing the works of Naum Gabo, Masayuki Nagaro, and Dimitri Hadzi. The courtyard is bordered by flagstone paving, and the sculptures anchor three distinct landscaping units. A sweeping, white gravel path unifies the three areas. The perimeter of the courtyard is planted with shade-loving species - azaleas, bayberry, and andromeda.

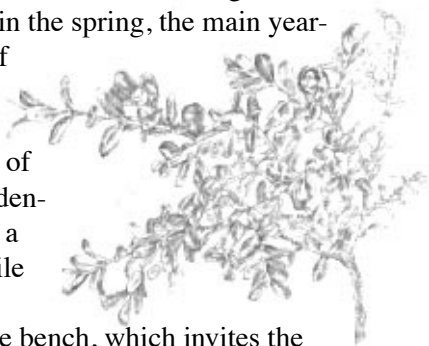


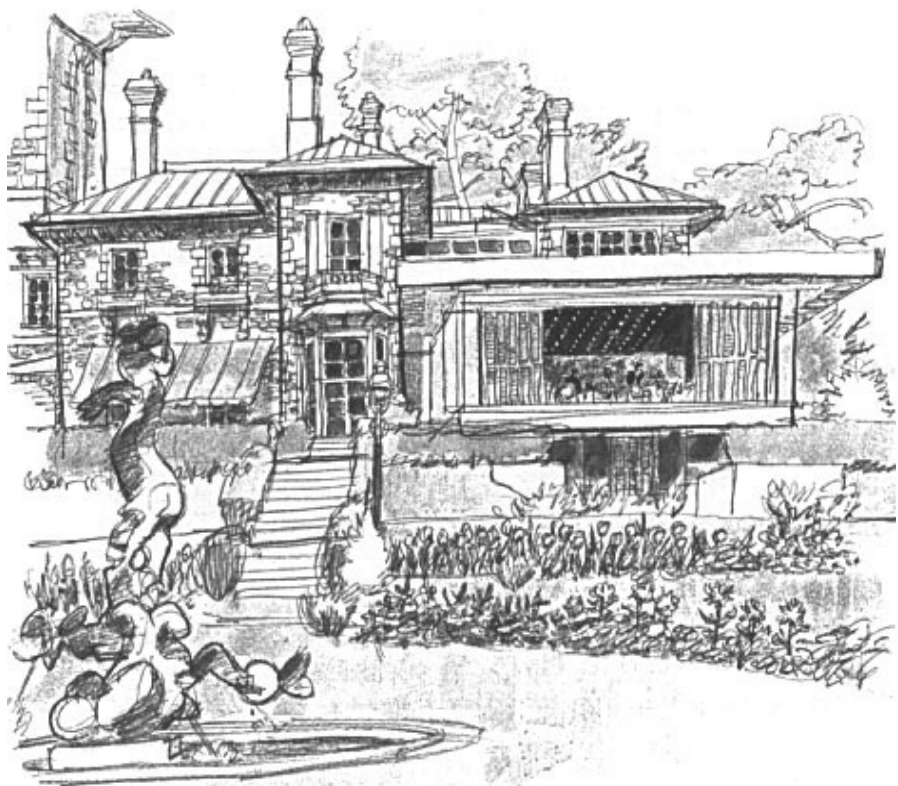
Serviceberry trees, with their gray, striated bark, bloom in spring with small fragrant, white flowers and produce berries that attract birds to the courtyard in the fall. Birches accent the total picture, while the tall white pines provide sense of scale in this huge space. Native dogwood blooms in May. Near Gabo's *Spheric Theme* and overhanging the reflecting pool stands a lovely Japanese threadleaf maple. The harmony here between nature and works of art is very satisfying and makes this courtyard a peaceful shelter.



Hibben Garden

The small alcove on the north façade of the chapel illustrates how landscaping can transform mere space into a place. The garden is a memorial to John C. Hibben, president of the University during the chapel's construction. Dean Mathey '12, a trustee for more than 30 years, funded the project, with landscape architect H. Russell Butler, Jr., designed. Although white azaleas bloom in the spring, the main year-round interest is the interplay of textures. The elegant, sculptured boxwood contrast with the lighter, coarser foliage of the azaleas and the large rhododendrons. The Japanese holly adds a pleasing ornamental accent while providing a sense of privacy. A narrow path leads to a limestone bench, which invites the visitor to "Come ye yourself apart into a lovely place and rest awhile." From this quiet spot one can contemplate the small but perfect composition of the garden.





Prospect Gardens

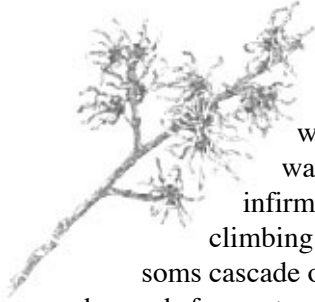


Now a social center for faculty and staff, Prospect House was once the residence of Princeton's presidents. Mrs. Woodrow Wilson (Ellen) planned the presents gardens after her husband had a fence installed around the grounds in 1904 to cut down on student traffic. The park-like setting of the Florentine-style house invites visitors to enter the main gate. Here rare and native plants grow side by side. The main garden in the back of the house is semicircular with paths radiating from the center. The evergreen curtain of hemlocks and rhododendrons in the background provides a dark contrast to the riotous display of color in spring, when tulips, daffodils, anemones, and hyacinths bloom. In early summer candytuft, iris, foxgloves, delphiniums, and peonies begin their bloom, followed by brightly colored petunias, zinnias, and other annuals in midsummer. The chrysanthemums planted by the gardening staff in August and September provide color into the late autumn. On the west side of the house and visible from the gardens is the cedar of Lebanon planted by an Englishman named Petrey in 1846. With its huge, sinuous branches, which resemble entangled arms, and its canopy-shaped foliage, the tree is a striking specimen.

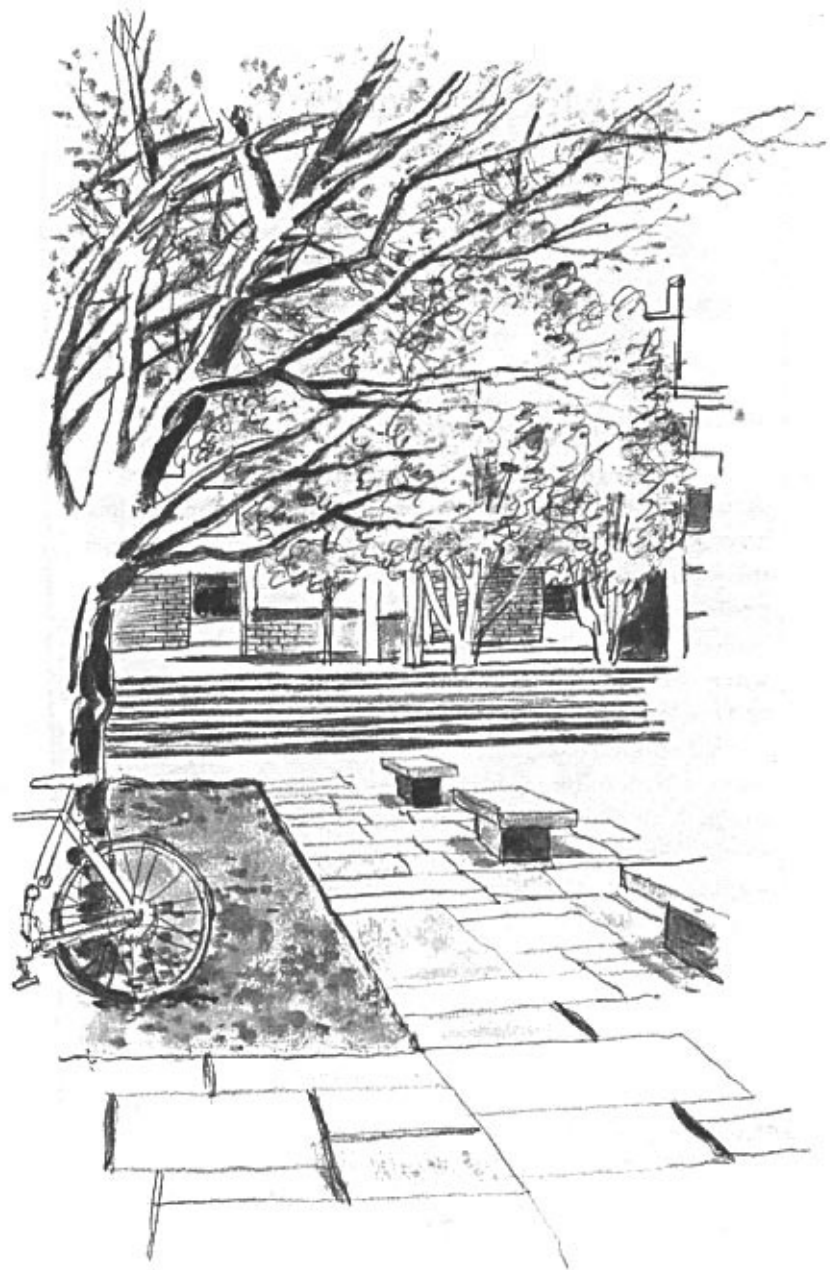


L.H.M.

McCosh Infirmary Garden



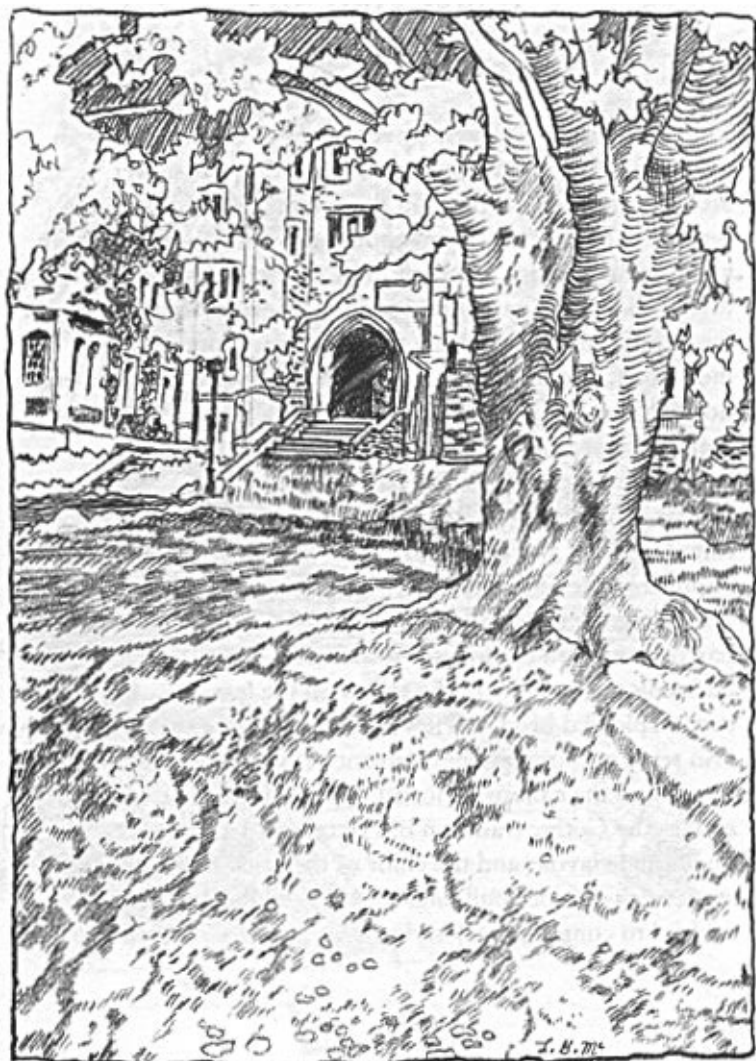
Literally off the beaten path is a small garden behind McCosh Infirmary. Hidden behind a brick wall covered in English ivy, the garden was intended for the enjoyment of the infirmary's patients and staff. After climbing a slight incline where jasmine blossoms cascade over a wall in the late winter, one descends from a terraced area, where two saucer magnolias grow, to the garden itself. Here several species grow against the walls: a southern magnolia, English holly, Chinese photinia, and nandina, whose foliage and red berries are brilliant in the fall. On the east and west walls in Chinese witch hazel. (Crush its bright yellow flowers in midwinter and the lovely fragrance provides an intimation of the coming spring). The center flower bed blooms in spring and summer with tulips, daffodils, irises, geraniums, daylilies, and perennial hibiscus. The serenity and beauty of this secluded spot illustrate the restorative effect careful landscaping can have on both body and spirit.



Class of 1941 Court

The plaza between Lourie-Love and 1941 dormitories is an example of the urban landscapes formed by the newer architecture and plantings on the campus. The formal repetition of pink saucer magnolias provides a visual rhythm and a sense of place and scale. The regularly spaced benches invite students to gather and socialize. Several steps at the west end of the plaza divide the large space, preventing monotony, and lead to an upper terrace shaded by thornless honey locusts (a favorite urban landscape designers), Washington hawthorns, and Japanese parrotias. The lacy-leafed locusts form an open crown, which filters the light and casts a lovely dappled shade on the terrace. The foliage of the smaller parrotias next to the locusts adds color, especially in the fall when the leaves turn a splendid bronze. Viewed from the plaza they also serve as a transitional element between the magnolias below and the canopy of locust foliage above. The courtyard evokes the Gothic tradition of Princeton's past -in its quadrangle layout and the color of the brick that recalls the stonework of older buildings nearby -while remaining faithful to contemporary style.





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