Colorado State University
Campus Planning and Design Philosophy and Guidelines

September 2018
The Colorado State University (CSU) main campus is a carefully planned and executed complex of buildings and landscapes that are authentic to Fort Collins and Colorado, and are a contemporary expression of college life.

Buildings are sited to preserve views to the mountains and campus open spaces, and are expressed in a way that facilitates a connection to the outside. Barriers between inside and outside are broken down through the strategic use of vision glass, atriums, and multi-story volumes at entrances.
There is a consistent thread of local stone in building facades, which grounds buildings to the local environment and thematically ties buildings together. Planes of stone and glass bridge between inside and outside of buildings, further integrating both building and landscape.

The campus pattern results in a strong sense of campus identity to visitors and the campus community alike. They feel a sense of community and connection to the outside environment, which creates an experience unique to Colorado State University.
CSU Campus Planning Guidelines
The CSU main campus has three primary planning objectives:

1. Sense of community
2. Strong connection to outside environment through internal and external views
3. Materials and forms authentic to local environment
Sense of Community

Community is facilitated by the creation of social spaces scaled from expansive green quads to intimate areas for reflection. Quads, plazas, and courtyards are situated as events along pedestrian corridors, often as “eddy” spaces in association with rivers of pedestrian movement. The core of campus is largely devoid of vehicular movement, which allows social spaces to be safe and unencumbered. Buildings have generous plazas at entrances, creating a “front porch” that separates major pedestrian flow from building and plaza, generating social spaces at the building-landscape interface.
Connection to Outside

Some of the best spaces on the Colorado State University campus are those that “borrow” the exterior landscape of the foothills and mountains. Buildings and open spaces work together to leverage these views. Buildings and outside spaces without external views have internal views that embrace the character of the local environment through scale and materials.
Use of Authentic Materials and Form

Local stone and native plant materials are used extensively. The overall landscape is considered a learning landscape where the university initiatives in habitat creation, energy conservation, stormwater quality treatment, and alternative transportation are openly integrated and interpreted.
Guidance for China Campus

The Colorado State University campus is rooted in the local environment. However, there are fundamental aspects of the planning and its buildings that are transferable to areas remote from the Colorado campus. These design guidelines are an attempt to document the unique and authentic qualities of the CSU campus, which are embraced by our campus community and provide a consistent source of pride and connection to the university. While it would be inappropriate to directly translate the regional materials of Colorado to China, we believe there is an equally authentic expression of the CSU campus in China. This can be accomplished through the use of China’s local materials and landscape with adherence to the fundamental pattern, building composition, and underlying planning philosophy of CSU.
CSU Campus “Experience” Districts

- THE OVAL
- UNIVERSITY AVENUE MALL
- COLLEGE AVENUE ARBORETUM
- ART & FLOWER DISTRICT
- THE GREAT GREEN

Main Street
North Campus
West Lawn
CSU Campus “Experience” Districts

TO SOUTH CAMPUS

TO SOUTH CAMPUS
Buildings Placed Carefully
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- Buildings are defined primarily by pedestrian malls and plazas; secondarily by streets and services areas.
- Buildings are placed and to leverage views to the campus and to the mountains and landscape beyond.
- Buildings are horizontal in design, not vertical, to help preserve these.
Circulation Emphasizes Pedestrians and Bicycles
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- Core of campus is devoted to bike and pedestrian traffic
- Alternative transportation is actively embraced and integrated throughout the campus:
  - Bike racks and covered bike shelters are prominently located close to high traffic areas and are not hidden
  - Transit centers and bus stops are integrated into the campus
- Service functions are separated from pedestrian zones
- Vehicular circulation and parking are placed on the edge of campus
Social Spaces are Critical Campus Elements
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Education Building
53 m

Courtyard Buffer
13 m

Center Avenue
Pedestrian Mall
8 m

Building Buffer
Zone
13 m

Behavioral Sciences Building (BSB)
85 m
Social Spaces are Critical Campus Elements

Building Buffer 9 m

Monfort Quadrangle 58 m

Building Buffer 12 m
Social Spaces are Critical Campus Elements

- Social exterior spaces of different scales are integrated into the campus: pedestrian malls, plazas, courtyards, and seat walls.
- These spaces provide an opportunity for students and staff to interact and relax outside.
- These spaces are animated by water and art.
Natural Transitions from Outdoor Public Spaces to Indoor Spaces
Natural Transitions from Outdoor Public Spaces to Indoor Spaces
Natural Transitions from Outdoor Public Spaces to Indoor Spaces

• Buildings have an identifiable, pedestrian-scale front door
• Buildings have a “front porch” – a place for gathering and interaction at main entrances
• Seat walls, trees and landscape bring a pedestrian scale to large buildings
Campus Edges are Park-like
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- Edges of campus are more park-like than urban: wide building setbacks, open grass areas, trees and paths
- Promotes an open interface with the surrounding neighborhoods and community
- Creates a sense of friendliness and permanence
Housing as "Villages"
Housing as “Villages”
Housing as “Villages”
Housing as “Villages”
Housing as “Villages”

- Buildings clustered around an internal pedestrian way activated by uses
- Buildings vary in height and orientation
- Establish internal “mid-block” social outdoor spaces
- Create a welcoming sense of arrival and strong indoor-outdoor connections
- Native plants and local materials create a true sense of place
Recreation and Open Space Separate Housing and Academics
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“The basic idea was to use the west half of campus for housing and the east half for classrooms and work areas. If the typical student spent his time walking back to the dormitory to get out in the weather, this would be good exercise for him.”

- CSU President William E. Morgan, discussing CSU campus planning during the 1950’s

• Recreation facilities are located between student housing and the academic buildings.

• Recreation facilities are located to preserve views to surrounding landscape
A Learning and Sustainable Landscape
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A Learning and Sustainable Landscape

• Wetlands incorporated into the landscape
• Permeable paving
• Pollinator gardens
• Green roofs
• Campus planning around the floodplain
Signage and Wayfinding Provide a Sense of Identity
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• Gateway monuments help define campus edges and entries
• A variety of signage and wayfinding provide campus information while expressing the campus “brand”
CSU Campus Architectural Design Guidelines
CSU Campus Architectural Vision

- Evolution of the Aesthetic Guidelines
- Existing Mid-Century Modern to inform the current design aesthetic for the new developments
- Master Plan and Opportunity Analysis
- Inclusive, collaborative design and development
- Sustainable building initiatives – High performance buildings
- Use of Building Information Modeling (BIM)
- Campus design coherency and continuity
- Using the work and the campus as a laboratory for classroom instruction/experiential learning
Large Classroom (BSB Building OL = 360)
Small Classroom (BSB Building OL = 85)
North Atrium (BSB Building OL = 130)
Teaching Laboratory (BSB Building OL = 25)
Stone Wall from Outside to Inside (Biology Building)
Housing and Dining Exteriors
Student Housing Common Spaces (Laurel Village)
Student Housing Room Types (Laurel Village)

- **Community-Style Double**: Double room with a community bathroom down the hall.
  - Dimensions: 12' x 20' 6" (3.7 x 6.2 m)

- **Suite-Style Double with Private Bathroom**: Double room with a private bathroom.
  - Dimensions: 11' 11" x 11' 11" (3.6 x 3.6 m)

- **Community-Style Single**: Single room with a community bathroom down the hall.
  - Dimensions: 8' 6" x 12' 2" (2.6 x 3.7 m)

- **Suite-Style Single with Private Bathroom**: Single room with a private bathroom.
  - Dimensions: 10' x 12' (3.0 x 3.7 m)

- **Suite-Style Single**: Two single rooms that share a connecting bathroom.
  - Dimensions: 11' 11" x 11' 11" (3.6 x 3.6 m)

- **Suite-Style Single in Quad**: Four single rooms with a common room and bathroom (separate rooms for shower and toilet).
  - Dimensions: 10' x 12' (3.0 x 3.7 m)

- **Community Bathroom**: Community bathroom.
  - Dimensions: 8' 6" x 12' 6" (2.6 x 3.8 m)
Campus Architectural Fabric
Over the years, dating back to the founding in 1870, the campus has evolved in many different directions. The eclectic nature of this progression is demonstrated using some of the more compelling examples of campus architecture through the “CSU Campus Character” website.

The website site is organized with compelling examples of architecture from five distinct eras with a photographic eye for select design details. Details can then also be assembled into a kit-of-parts and begin to influence future design and development.

www.fm.colostate.edu/character/home.htm