

# Merit Award: North Park University Master Plan and Landscape

Chicago, Illinois



Landscape Architect: Douglas Hoerr Landscape Architecture, Inc.  
Client: North Park University  
Architect: VOA Associates  
Engineer: Gary A. Wiss  
Contractors: W.B. Olson, Otto Damgaard Sons, Inc., Jamerson & Bauwens  
Category: Commercial Design







Established in the late 1890s, North Park University is a flourishing, diverse urban university on Chicago's northwest side. As it expanded from a single Georgian Revival structure to a ten-acre campus, the University had difficulty maintaining a cohesive visual identity. Adding buildings to the campus as needed left the University without a campus "core" or a clear circulation network.

As University officials embarked on a new expansion project, they recognized a need to hire a landscape architect to create a master landscape plan that would unify various buildings and create a friendlier campus.

The landscape architect envisioned a circulation system of clear visual and physical links to bring the disparate elements of the university together into a single, unified place. This was accomplished by a series of actions which included converting a disruptive city street and parallel alley into major pedestrian corridors.

Today, North Park University has a cohesive circulation network with asphalt pathways edged in red brick. A wealth of beautiful new trees, shrubs and ornamental grasses throughout the campus spark interest during all seasons and give the campus its distinct new character. The horticultural elements manage to complement and offset each individual building while also

strengthening their relationship to one another. Key "memory places" – inviting locations that encourage conversation, study and significant events – have become central meeting areas. The landscape plan also provides flexibility for future expansion.

The project has helped increase liveliness on campus. Students and residential neighbors alike spend time enjoying the greenscape by playing frisbee or relaxing on benches. The lush landscaping has created a space that is both welcoming and functional, helping North Park to thrive and grow.