

X. SPACE

PROJECT NAME

Marquette University X. Space

LOCATION

Milwaukee, WI

CATEGORY

Unbuilt Works

The Ash Grove, previously located on Marquette University's campus in Milwaukee, WI, served as a gathering place for students to study and enjoy the natural beauty of ash trees. However, due to the removal of these trees, there was a need to create a new space that better serves the university community. Working closely with Marquette representatives and stakeholders, we developed the XSPACE through an iterative and inclusive process. This space, named to symbolize the convergence of Marquette's community, serves as a hub for conversation, belonging, and innovation. It connects different parts of the campus and fosters collaboration and creativity through intentional design, enhancing the university's sense of unity and expression.

HOLISTIC DESIGN APPROACH

This project is significant for the team's holistic approach to design: both externally and internally. From the beginning, the team advocated for greater stakeholder inclusion during visioning. Specifically, what was originally going to be a temporary design associated with the re-development of the nearby Straz Hall, became a full-fledged pre-design with a thoughtfully considered community engagement plan. The project team heard from almost 400 stakeholders through committee meetings, 5 public workshops, in-person pop-up sessions, and 2 online surveys. The result is a dramatic engagement process that found unique design solutions, invigorated campus interest in the X.Space, and commemorates the contributions of past, present, and future narratives on the Marquette University campus community.

Internally, this project is significant to our firm because it demonstrated the power of interdisciplinary design. Better design outcomes arise when we listen to each other, collaborate, and are open to innovative ideas. As a nationally recognized firm, this landscape architecture project signifies the best of what we can accomplish and should be an example of interdisciplinary collaboration in the future.

PROJECT PURPOSE & SCOPE

The purpose of the project was to replace an outdated tree grove, known formerly as the Ash Grove, with a reinvigorated and more inclusive campus courtyard. In 2019, Marquette University published a Cultural Audit of Campus Spaces report that found a lack of inclusive spaces and recommended stakeholder engagement. With the removal of several ash trees due to Emerald Ash Borer and the re-development of the adjacent Straz Hall, the time came to propose a new design for the campus courtyard that would become the X.Space.

PROJECT THEME & RESULT

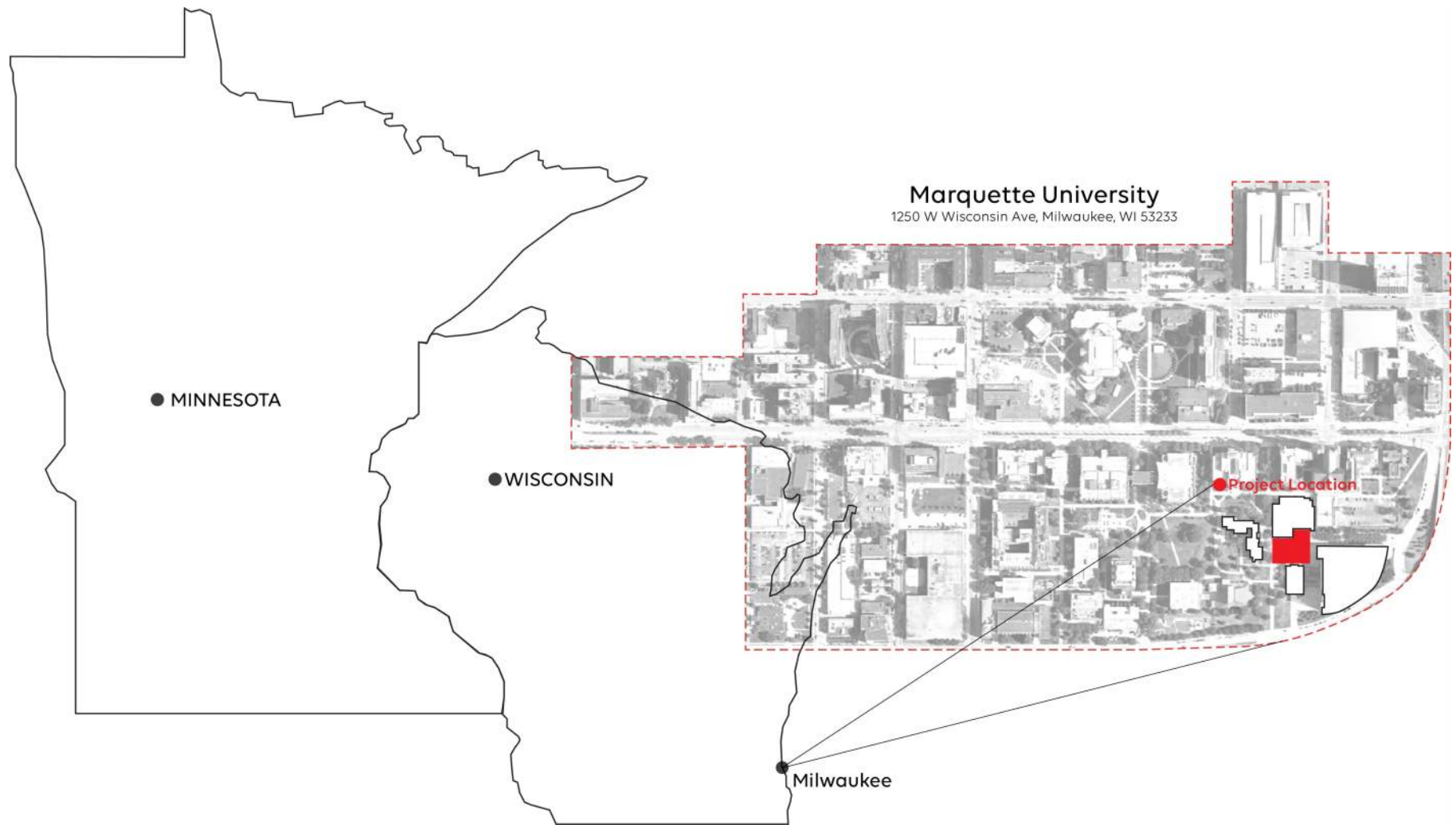
The naming of the X.SPACE references several factors that represent the intersection of multiple campus identities and embodies the guiding principles. Through serendipitous overlap, this space serves as a crossroads of conversations and as a space to gather or enjoy nature.

SPECIAL FACTORS

The project is unique for the level of trust and openness fostered amongst all stakeholders with tight budgetary constraints. Kudos to the client for their flexibility with the Straz Hall project schedule, to the community for sticking with us and offering input, to the Architect for their ongoing advocacy of the design team, and to our community engagement team that collected a wealth of feedback.

ROLE OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

The project team consisted of the client and a full-service design firm. The Architect served as the Project Manager and was instrumental in building trust and open dialogue with the client. The community engagement team crafted an engagement plan. The Landscape Architect was integral in the development of the X.Space vision and communications to internal and external stakeholders. A fundamental aspect of the Landscape Architect's role involved researching recent student advocacy around the murder of George Floyd, the desire for meaningful representation, and facilitating conversations about the spatial considerations of inclusion.



CONTEXT MAP

Marquette University, located in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, is a private Jesuit university and the first coed Catholic university. This history of both leading and responding to national social movements became a fundamental lens for understanding the design.



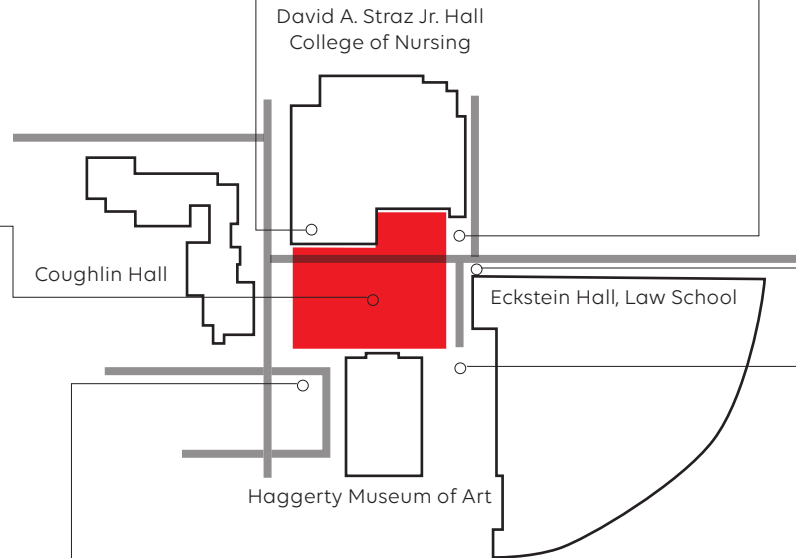
Straz Hall Addition



Existing Straz Hall



Dead Ash Tree



Law School



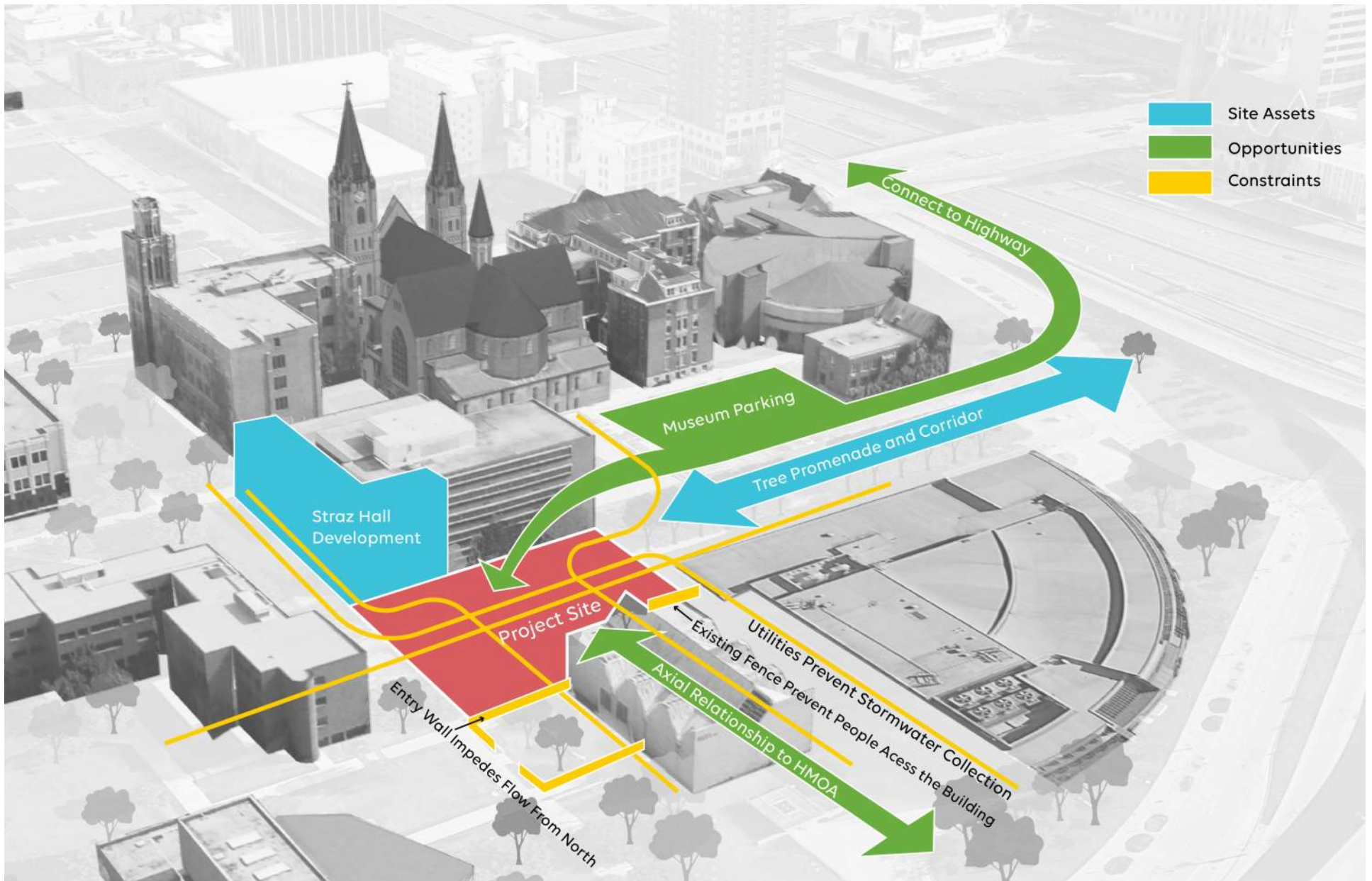
Existing Retaining Wall



Existing Fence

SITE CONTEXT & EXISTING PHOTOS

The courtyard is located on the former Haggerty Museum of Art Ash Grove. Borer-infested ash trees were removed to provide a staging space for the construction of Straz Hall to the north. A key design goal was to reinforce the approach to the museum while celebrating the post-modern façade.



SITE ANALYSIS

Adjacent to the Haggerty Museum of Art and at the intersection of prominent cardinal corridors, the future design could prove impactful to the greater campus community. Without the ash grove, the project team temporarily named the courtyard the "X" space as a stand in for its future possibilities.

STEERING COMMITTEE

MIRO FEEDBACK

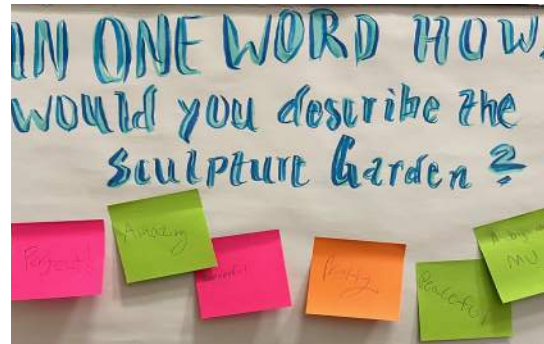


EXPERIENTIAL GUIDING PRINCIPLES



IN-PERSON & ONLINE SURVEYS

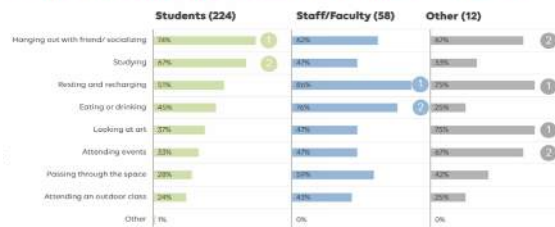
POP UP SESSION



SURVEY RESULTS

USES AND ACTIVITIES

WHAT ACTIVITIES DO YOU LIKE TO SEE IN THE RENOVATED ASH GROVE?



PUBLIC WORKSHOPS

INTERACTIVE WORKSHOP

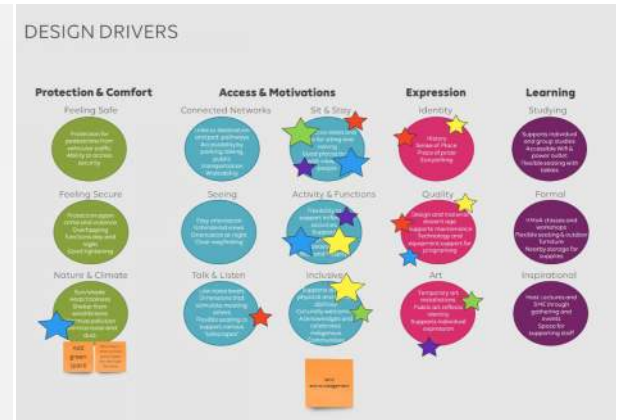
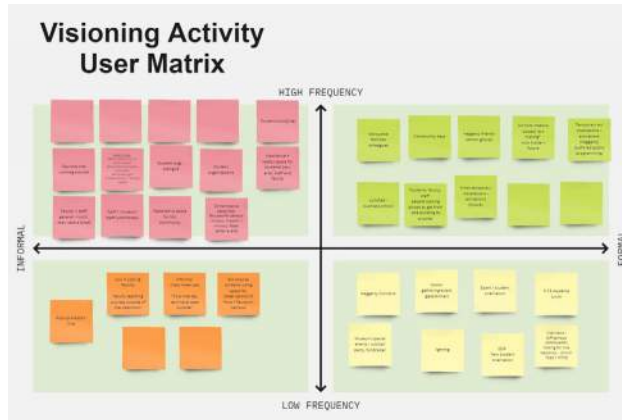


DESIGN REPORT CARD

	STAGE CROSSINGS	WINDING KNOLLS	PRAIRIE CREEK	LANDSCAPE GALLERIES
Art, Creativity, and Innovation	1.32	1.61	1.43	1.14
Respite and Reflection	0.89	1.54	1.79	1.71
Community and Conversation	1.39	1.61	1.32	1.36
Learning and Studying	1.21	1.5	1.18	1.57
Total	4.79	6.25	5.71	5.86

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The project heard from nearly 400 stakeholders through meetings, 5 public workshops, 2 pop-up sessions, and 2 online surveys. During one workshop, attendees were asked to "grade" initial design concepts against design factors derived from feedback. The design team's report card called for a radical design pivot.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES



STEERING COMMITTEE

Based on guidance from the Core Team and input from initial surveys, four guiding principles were developed for the X.SPACE: Art, Creativity and Innovation; Respite and Reflection; Community and Conversation; Learning and Studying.

ACTIVITIES / CONDITIONS CURRENT STATE

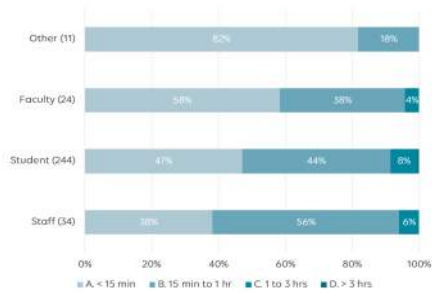
FREQUENCY OF VISIT

More than **50%** of respondents visit the space never or 1-2 times per semester.



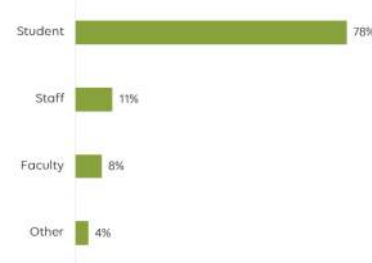
TIME SPENT

Majority of respondents use the space as a transitional one rather than a destination.



OVERALL RESPONDENT

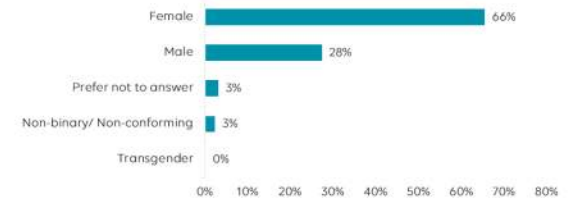
Overall Respondents Role



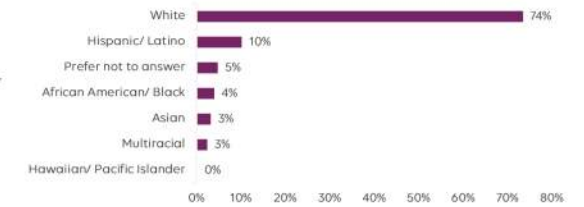
Other:

- HMA Collections Committee/Board member
- Board Member of Raynor Libraries
- HMA friend
- Alumni
- Member of public/visitor

Overall Respondents Gender



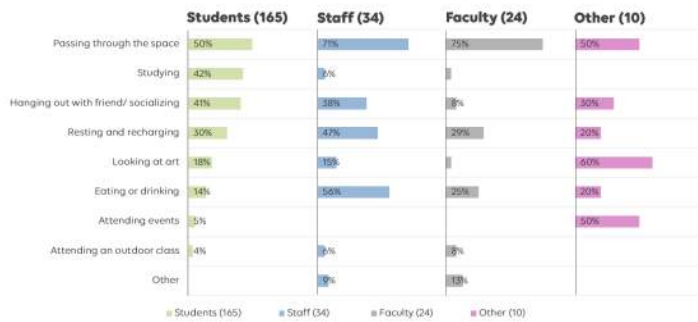
Overall Respondents Race



PURPOSE OF VISIT

I PRIMARILY GO TO THE ASH GROVE FOR...

- Different groups have different reasons for visiting the space, but they have one purpose in common:
- Passing through the space is the first reason why students, staff, and faculty visit the space, and the second reason for the other category.
- Looking at art is the top reason for respondents in the 'other' category.
- Faculty have very limited use of space



*Question included only in online surveys

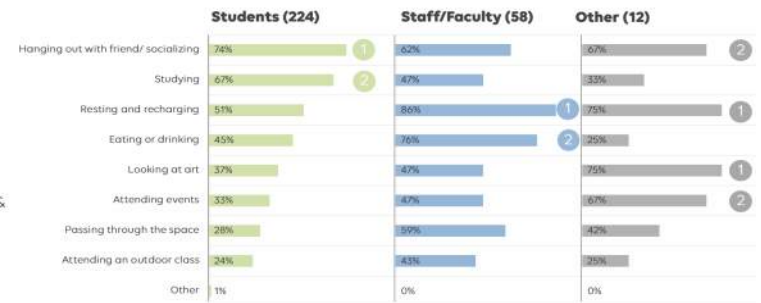
FUTURE ACTIVITIES

Main activities varies between the groups:

- Students: Socializing & Studying
- Staff/Faculty: Resting & Eating
- Other: Resting, Looking at art & Socializing, attending events

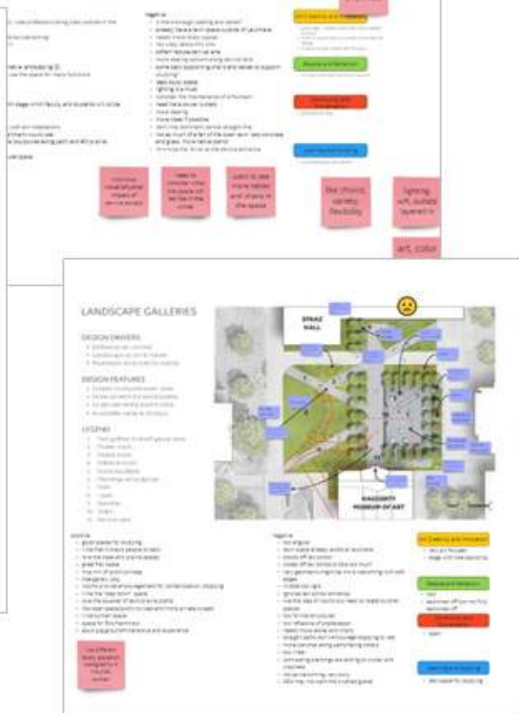
Space should be flexible enough to respond to preferred activities from all groups

WHAT ACTIVITIES DO YOU LIKE TO SEE IN THE RENOVATED ASH GROVE?

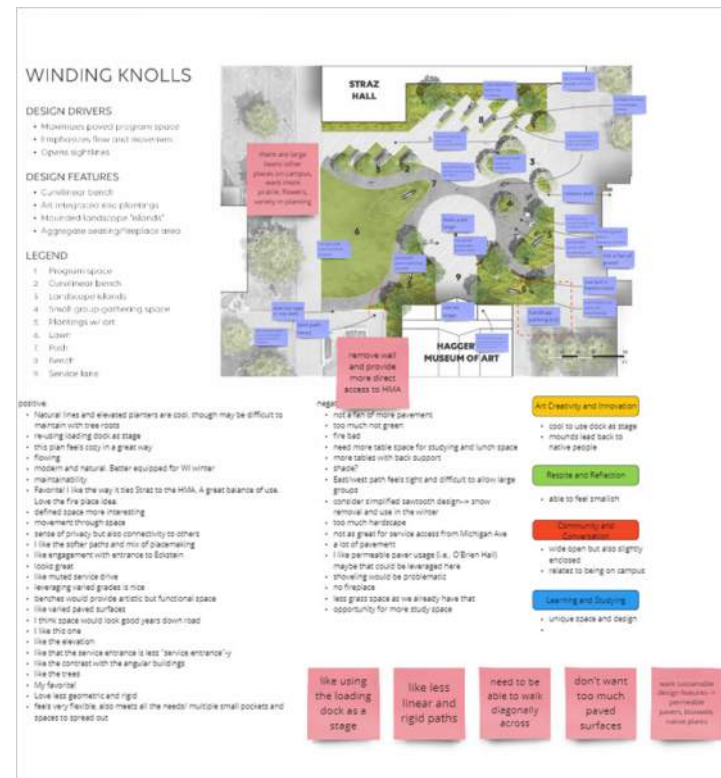


SURVEYING

Surveys were structured in three parts: current use and satisfaction, future use, and respondent demographics. Quantitative and qualitative data collected through the surveys were analyzed for overall themes and patterns by demographic groups.



How well does each design concept support each guiding principle?	Stage Crossings	Winding Knolls	Prairie Creek	Landscape Galleries
0= Does not support 1= Somewhat supports 2= Fully support				
Art, Creativity, and Innovation	1.32	1.61	1.43	1.14
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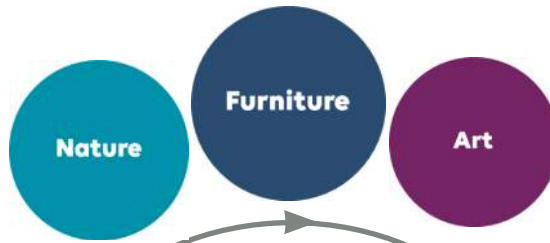


INTERACTIVE WORKSHOP ACTIVITIES

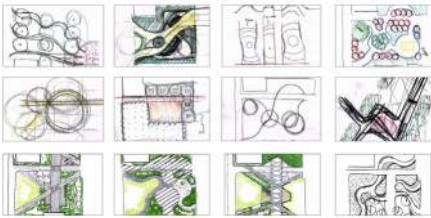
Core Team members and survey participants were invited to join an in-person workshop with the goal of collecting diverse feedback on four preliminary design concepts for the X.SPACE. All feedback collected helped refine the final design.

- like using the loading dock as a stage
- like less linear and rigid paths
- need to be able to walk diagonally across
- don't want too much paved surfaces
- walkable design features in permeable paving, permeable paved plaza

SURVEY FEEDBACK



EARLY CONCEPT SKETCHES



REFINED SKETCHES



COMMUNITY INFORMED DESIGN EVOLUTION

<p>Art, Creativity, and Innovation</p> <p>Viewing and creating art Bring in visitors</p>	<p>Respite and Reflection</p> <p>Being in nature Comfortable furniture</p>	<p>Community and Conversation</p> <p>Variety of furniture for small and large groups</p>	<p>Learning and Studying</p> <p>Variety of furniture, including tables Wifi and charging access</p>
<p>Activity and Function</p> <p>Providing space for various activities and programs</p>	<p>Sit and Stay</p> <p>Comfortable furniture for sitting and staying</p>	<p>Inclusives</p> <p>Supporting various abilities and needs</p>	<p>Quality</p> <p>High-quality materials and construction</p>
<p>Art</p> <p>Supporting art-making and display</p>	<p>Nature and Climate</p> <p>Supporting natural and climate goals</p>	<p>Talk and Listen</p> <p>Supporting various needs and preferences</p>	<p>Study</p> <p>Supporting various needs and preferences</p>
<p>Looking at Art</p> <p>Viewing art</p>	<p>Resting and Recharging</p> <p>Resting and recharging</p>	<p>Socialising</p> <p>Socialising</p>	<p>Studying</p> <p>Studying</p>
<p>Attending Events</p> <p>Attending events</p>		<p>Eating and Drinking</p> <p>Eating and drinking</p>	

EXPERIENTIAL GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Sense of Place

MISSING FACTOR

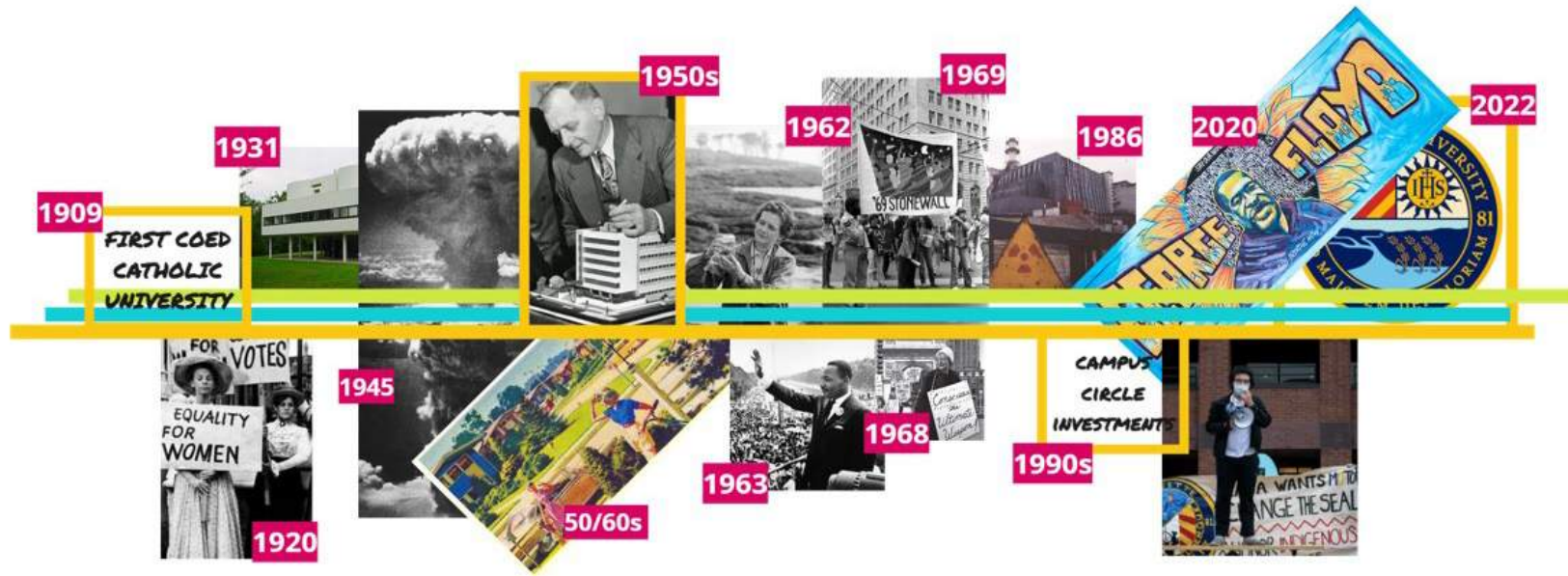
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DESIGNER'S REPORT CARD

DESIGN EVOLUTION

The design was responded to multiple forms of feedback including the guiding principles, survey feedback, and designer's report card. Despite our engagement efforts, broader socio-political movements on campus were under-represented in the design.

TIMELINE OF NATIONAL SOCIAL DISCOURSE & MARQUETTE'S CAMPUS

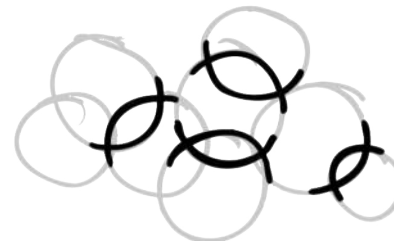
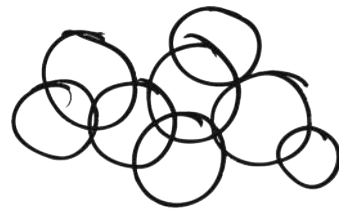


CHANGE THE SEAL | BE THE DIFFERENCE

CAMPUS AS A PLACE OF CHANGE MAKERS

CROSSROADS OF IDEAS

INFINITE POSSIBILITIES



Ash Grove

Court
Park plaza
Courtyard square
Common

Intersection

X. Space

EVOLVING PROJECT IDENTITY

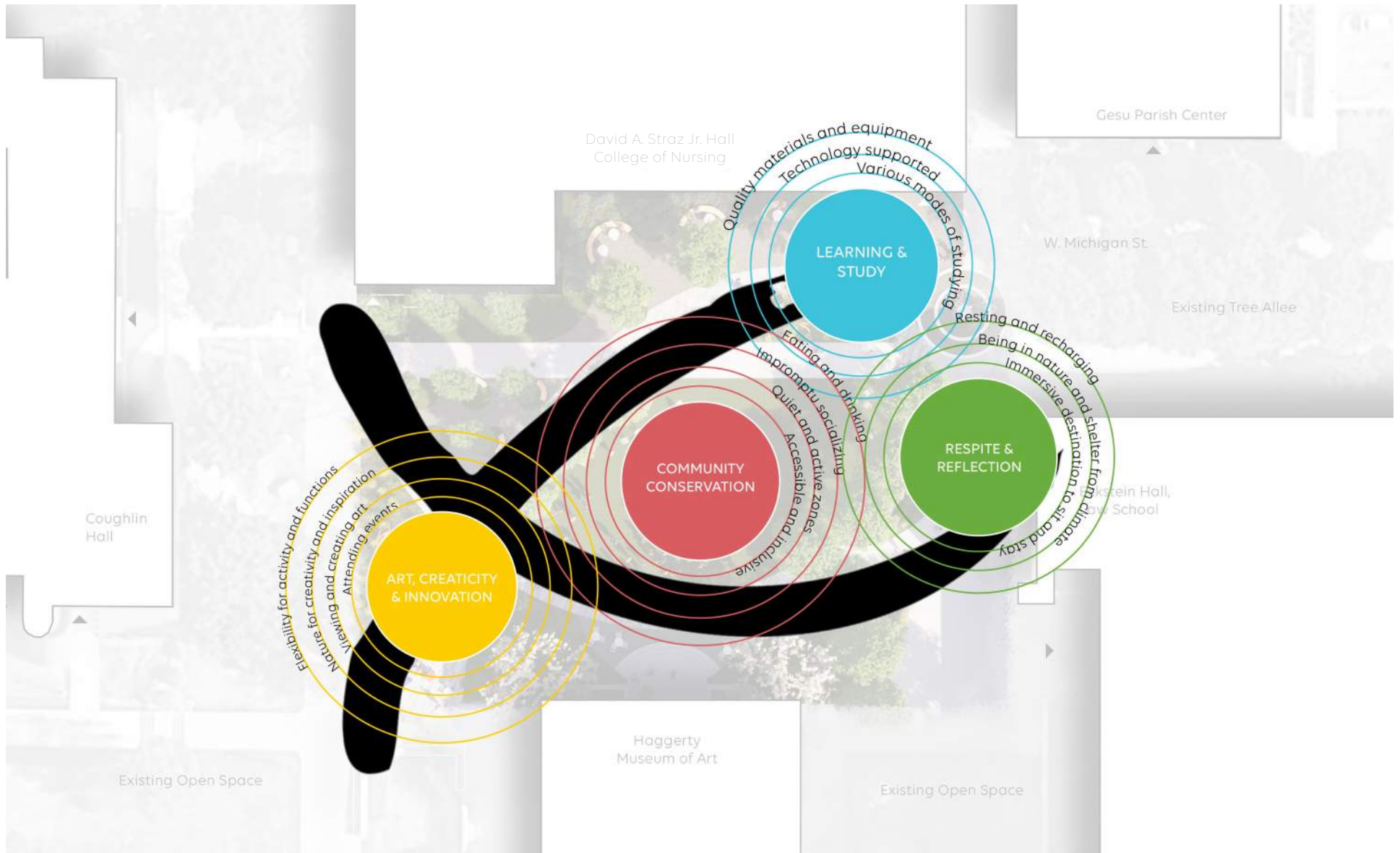
SENSE OF PLACE & IDENTITY

The design's richness paralleled the evolving project identity. The campus has participated in national social movements as seen in recent protests to change the school's seal after George Floyd's murder. It's a place of changemakers, a crossroads of ideas. This isn't JUST LANDSCAPING, its manifesting the spaces needed to tell an inclusive story .



X WALK

What was a temporary moniker, "X" space, became an armature that acknowledges the past, examines the present, and celebrates the future possibilities. The walk connects three programmatic rooms through time and uses different spatial storytelling strategies.



SPACE PROGRAMING

Once the groundwork was laid, we overlaid the Experiential Guiding Principles on top of our programmatic nodes to create distinct themes for each space.



Gesu Parish Center

David A. Straz Jr. Hall
College of Nursing

W. Michigan St.

Existing Tree Allee

Coughlin Hall

Eckstein Hall,
Law School

Haggerty
Museum of Art

Existing Open Space

SITE PLAN
LEGEND



1. Landmark art sculpture
2. Study Knolls
3. Native plantings with sculpture
4. Concrete path
5. Service entrance
6. Performance stage
7. Hammock Forest
8. Improved connectivity to museum entrance
9. Haggerty Plaza
10. Xwalk
11. Seating area with salvaged sculptural tables
12. Event lawn
13. Bike rack station
14. Law School Plaza

VR VIEW





Church of the Gesu

Marquette Hall

David A. Straz Jr. Hall
College of Nursing

Parking Lot

Eckstein Hall, Law School

Landmark art sculpture

Study Knolls

Native plantings with sculpture

Hammock Forest

Event Lawn

Performance stage

Haggerty Museum of Art

Study Knolls

Coughlin Hall

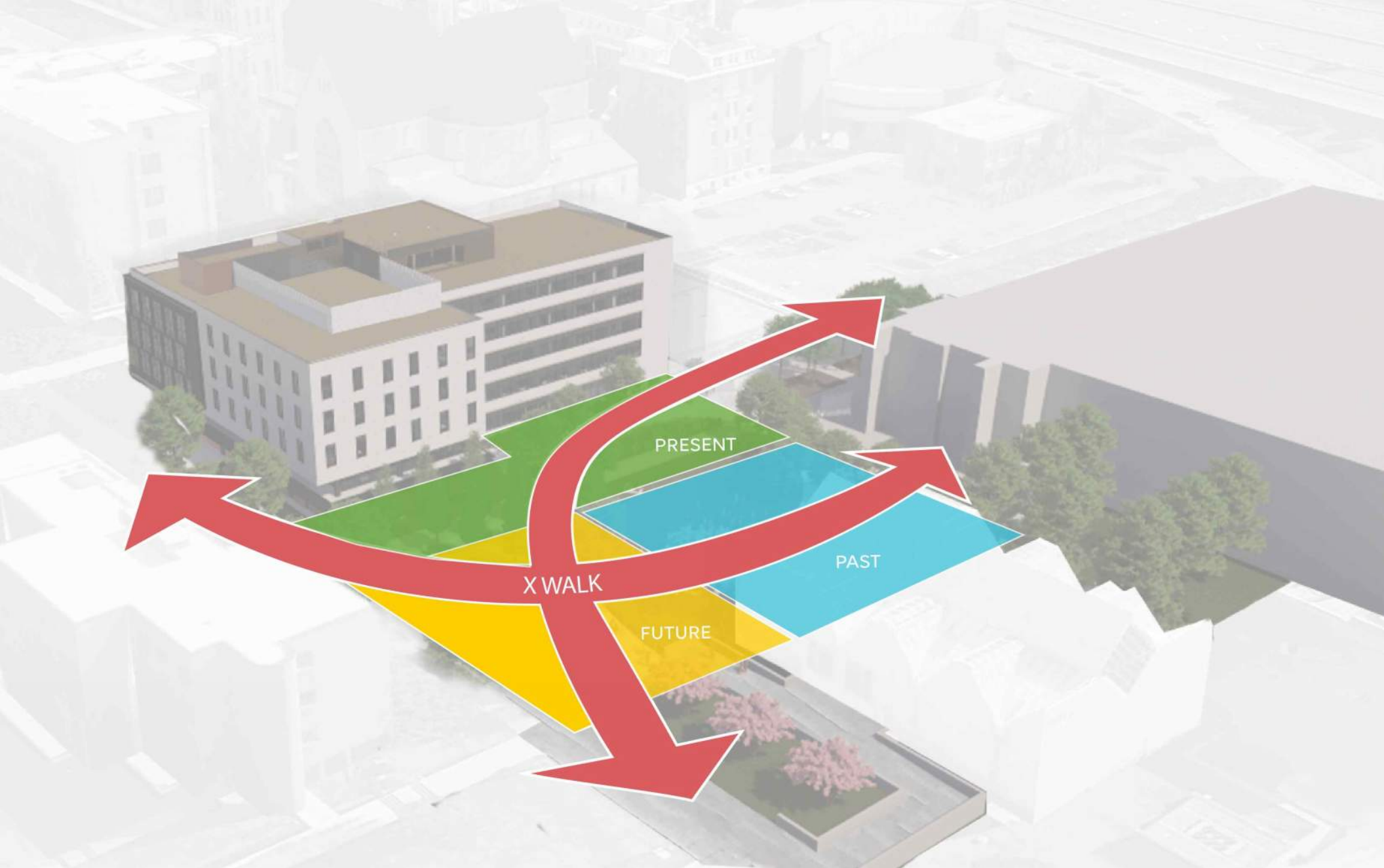
A Walk

Native plantings with sculpture

Native plantings with sculpture

Haggerty Plaza

Haggerty Entry Court



PROGRAMMATIC NODES

The XWalk connects three programmatic rooms through time that gives representation and tells a story about trailblazers that have made Marquette University a place for changemakers.



HAGGERTY MUSEUM OF ART STAGE

The design proposed transforming the museum's abandoned loading dock into a future stage, establishing a direct axial relationship to the post-modern façade. The event space is compatible for a 60' X 30' event tent.



STUDY KNOLLS

An area initially excluded from the X.Space, the Straz Hall's southern perimeter became a secluded section for small-group studies. A native-planted mound serves to provide enclosure while also being a stage for temporary art installations.



HAGGERTY MUSEUM OF ART PLAZA

The design team advocated to remove a free-standing concrete wall at the museum's entrance to improve connectivity from the parking lot for museum visitors. This move also creates a plaza open for museum activation, reinforcing the relationship between the two spaces.