

# Overview of the History of the University of Cincinnati

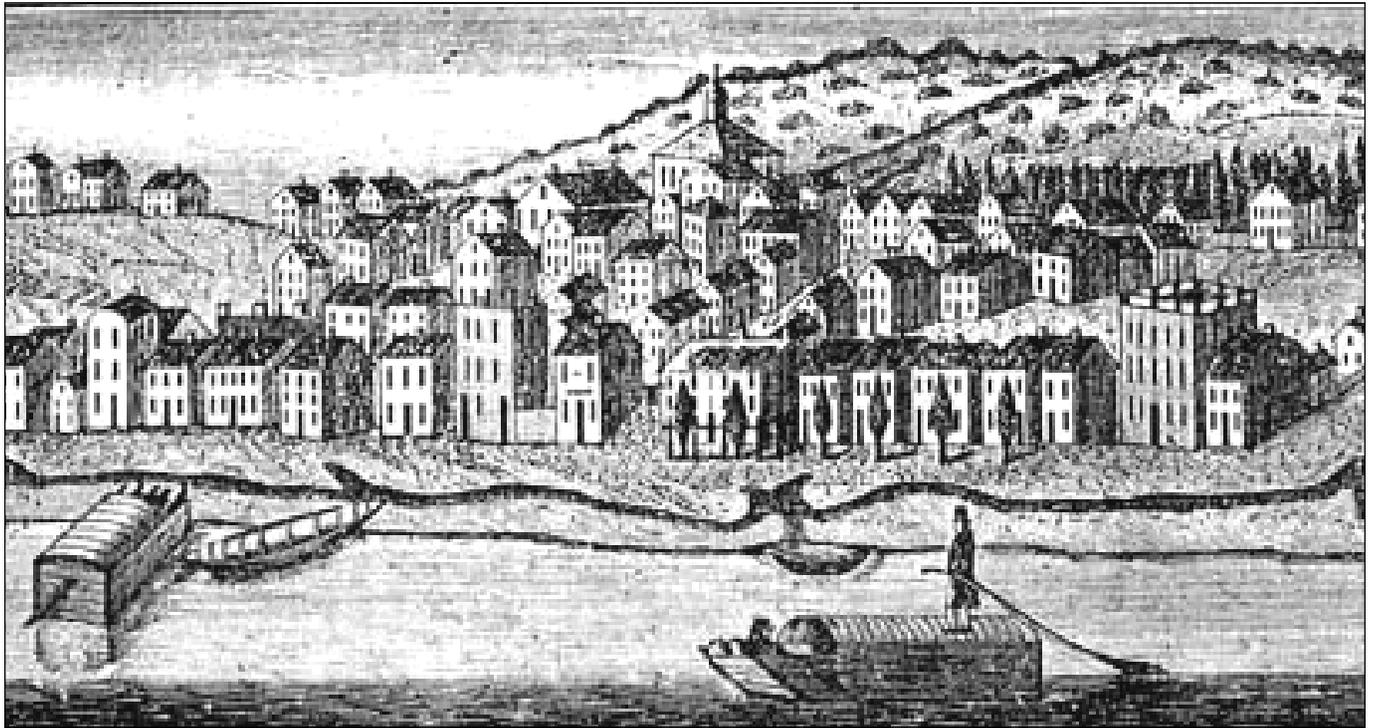


Above: *Cincinnati College, 1816, destroyed by fire 1844.*

## Establishing a College (1819-1899)

Cincinnati in the late 18th century was a thriving trading center, strategically located on the northern banks of the Ohio River. Surviving on the fringe of western settlement, its inhabitants needed protection. A garrison, Fort Washington, was built to provide security from the warring Indians of the Ohio Valley. By 1792, nearly 1,000 residents had settled in the central river basin of land surrounded by steep topography on the north, west, and east. Commerce flourished, with mills, tanyards, and foundries. In 1802, the City of Cincinnati was incorporated.

Cincinnati residents, realizing the need for an institution of higher learning in their new city, created a school association in 1806 and planned to open a college financed through a lottery system. Despite the construction of the first university building and the formation of the Cincinnati University, the economic depression of 1807 and a tornado in 1809 hindered further development of the college.<sup>1</sup>



The Cincinnati Lancaster Seminary was formed with a state grant in 1815 and housed in a building at Fourth and Walnut streets. The school thrived for a few years but did not fulfill the city's needs for a university.

The idea of the university found its next champion in Dr. Daniel Drake, scientist and physician, who succeeded in gaining charters from the State of Ohio for the Cincinnati College and the Medical College of Ohio in January 1819. That fall, classes began for what is now the University of Cincinnati, the second oldest municipal university in the nation.<sup>2</sup> (First was the University of Charleston, founded in 1770.)<sup>3</sup>



Opposite page top: *Cincinnati in 1800, (engraving).*  
 Middle: *Cincinnati in 1810, (woodcut).*  
 Right: *Cincinnati in 1856, (engraving).*  
 This page left: *Cincinnati in 1841, (lithograph).*

Although both Cincinnati College and the Medical College of Ohio had rough beginnings and unfortunate failings, their original charters would later be used to establish the academic departments of today's university.

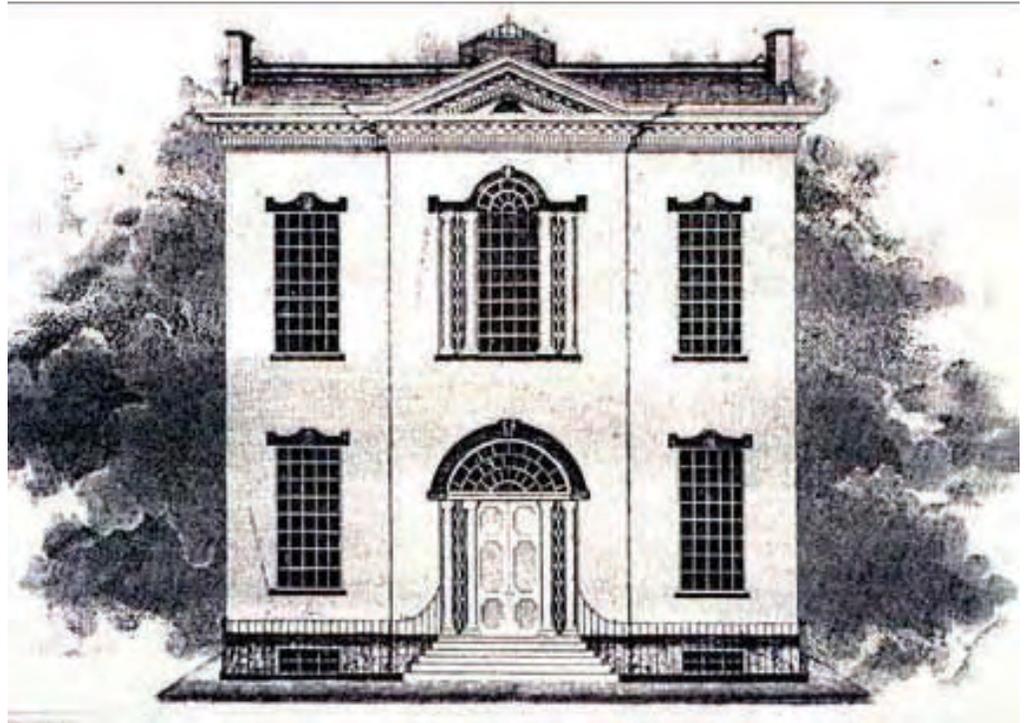
Cincinnati College was housed in the Lancaster Seminary building on Fourth and Walnut Streets; its first president, the Reverend Elijah Slack, also taught classes in mathematics, philosophy, and chemistry. After four commencements, the college experienced a fire and declining admission due to competition from nearby Miami University.<sup>4</sup> Classes were suspended for a time.

The Cincinnati Law School was established in 1833 and became a department of Cincinnati College one year later. In 1835, Dr. Drake established a Medical Department under the charter of Cincinnati College. In 1836, the Reverend William Holmes McGuffey was appointed the new president of the College and subsequently revived the Academic Department (also termed the College of Liberal Arts).



Top: *Daniel Drake (1785-1852)*

Right: *Medical College, 1826.*

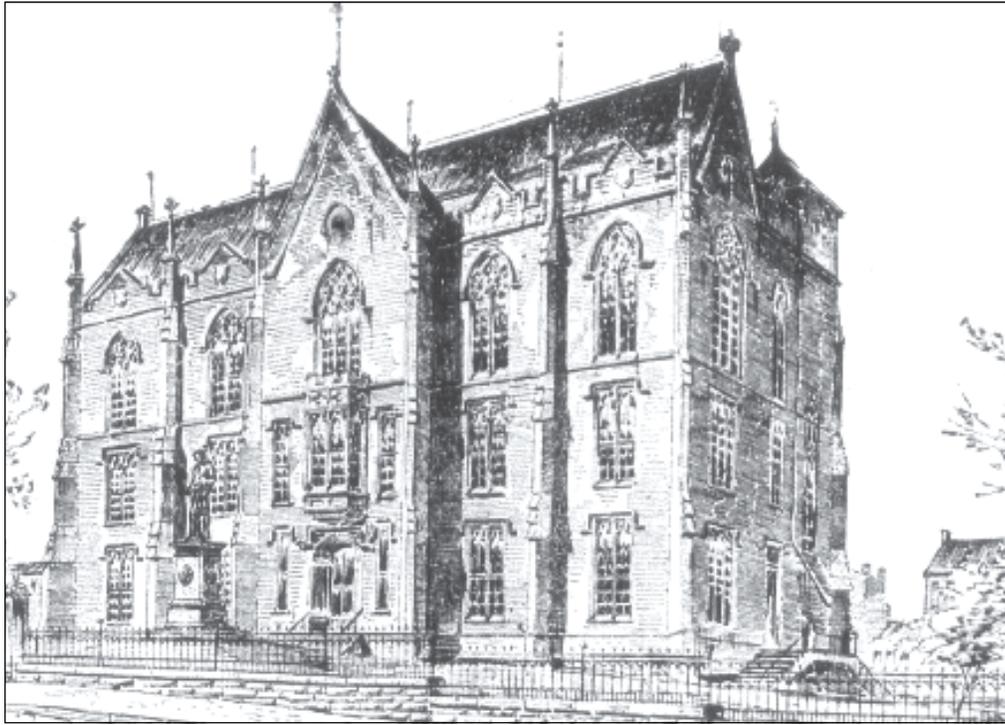


During this era, higher education opportunities began to be offered elsewhere in the city at the Ohio Mechanics Institute, founded in 1828 (housed in the former Bazaar department store and literary salon); the Cincinnati Observatory in Mt. Adams, founded in 1842; the Cincinnati College of Pharmacy, founded in 1850; the Conservatory of Music, founded in 1867; and at the College of Music, founded in 1878.<sup>5</sup>

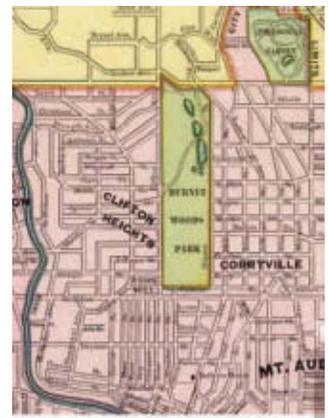
All of these schools would eventually coalesce as the modern University of Cincinnati. A common location and funding were needed to unify the institution. These needs appeared to be fulfilled by the bequest of Charles McMicken (1782-1858), a wealthy businessman, who had cherished a dream of endowing a university.

McMicken bequeathed \$1 million to the City of Cincinnati upon his death but the endowment was diminished by the poor economic conditions caused by the Civil War, leaving the university in an untenable position by the late 1860s. The City of Cincinnati's decision to intervene, entwined the future of the university and the city for the next 100 years. After consolidating funds from the Cincinnati Board of Education and the McMicken endowment, the city chartered the University of Cincinnati, in 1870. Classes were initially held in the Woodward High School building on Twelfth Street, and in 1875, they moved to the McMicken estate on Clifton and Vine Streets.<sup>6</sup>

For 20 years the university occupied the McMicken estate, a narrow strip of land on a steep hillside that offered no room for expansion and abutted industrial environment that was not conducive to higher education. After Jacob Donelson Cox was inaugurated as university president in 1885, he immediately initiated changes in the institution that led to the incorporation of several existing small colleges into one school.<sup>7</sup> Cox oversaw the assimilation of colleges specializing in medicine, pharmacy, and dentistry. Cox forged an urban university that would give back to the



Top: Charles McMicken (1782-1855)  
 Left: Woodward High School, ca. 1874. Site of first classes held under the name University of Cincinnati.



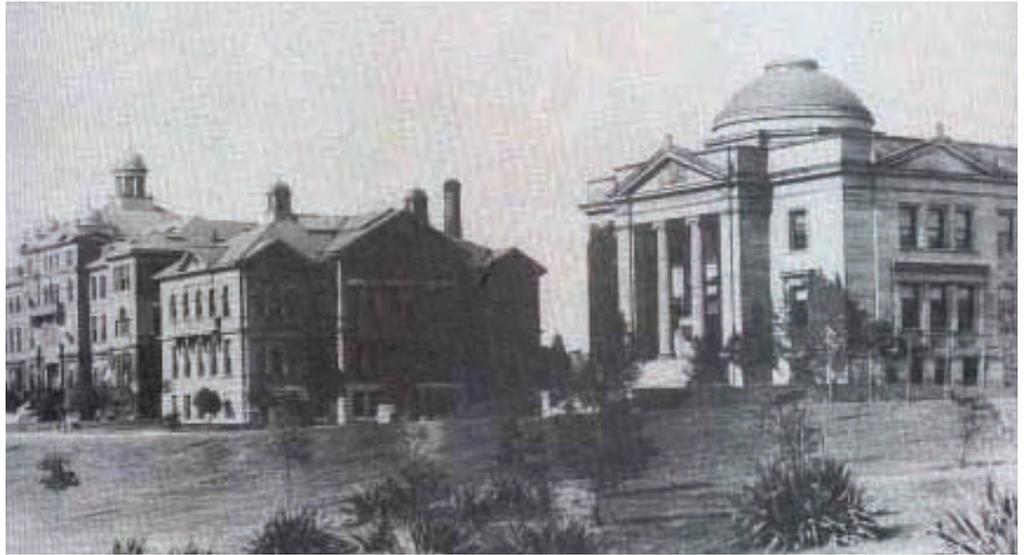
Top: Burnet Woods in 1897.  
 Left: The first university building is visible under the "R" in the word "Christian" (Christian Moerlein Brewery promotional lithograph)

community in service, production, and leadership.<sup>8</sup> To accommodate the new collection of colleges, President Cox negotiated with the City of Cincinnati in 1889 to move the university from the McMicken estate, to a more bucolic setting on 43 acres at the southern end of Burnet Woods Park.



*Above: McMicken Hall*

*Top right: Van Wormer Library, ca. 1900 (right), Cunningham Hall (center), and McMicken Hall (left).*

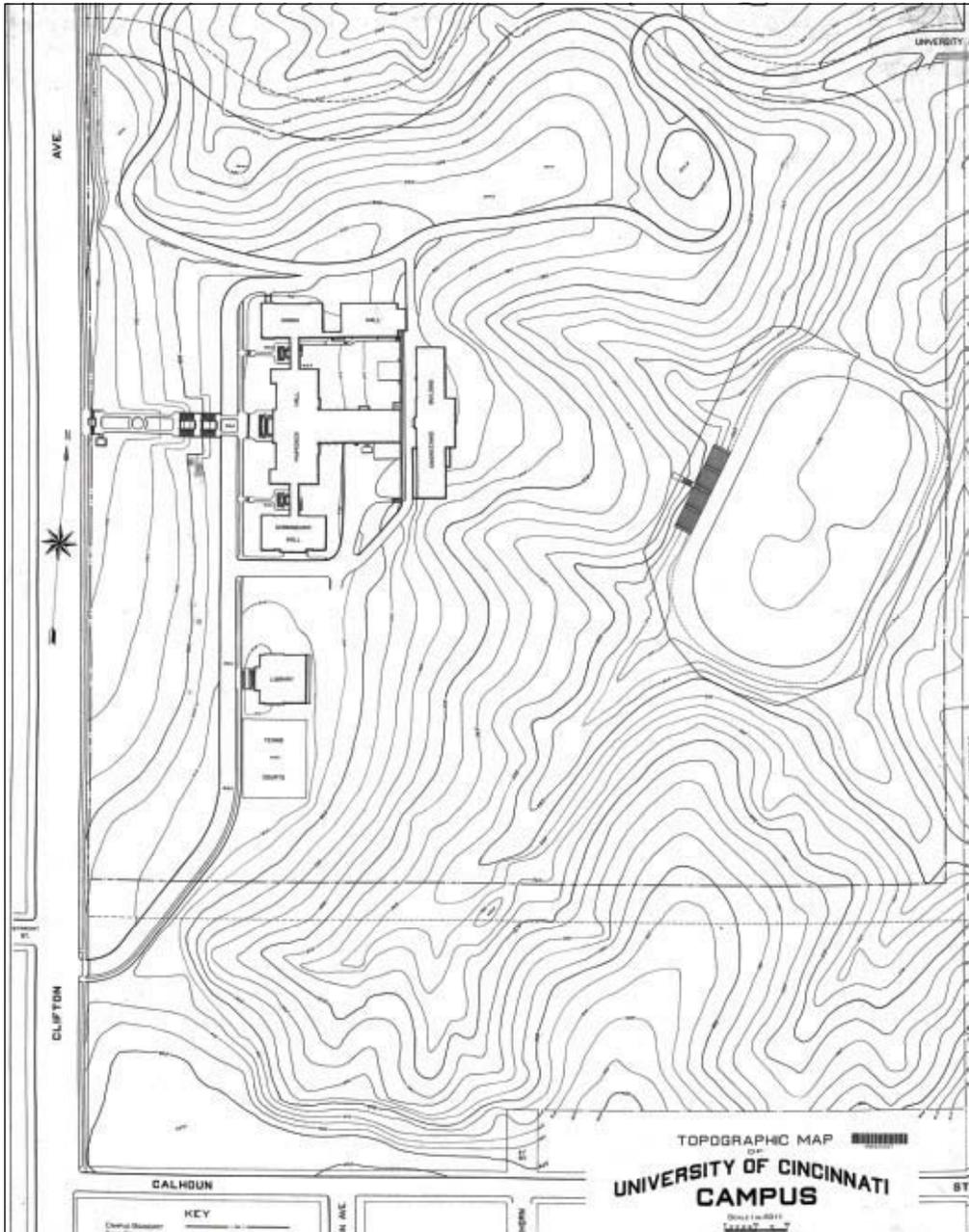


*Bottom right: View of the university from Snake Road and Clifton Avenue. Hanna Hall (left), McMicken Hall (center) and Cunningham Hall, (right)*



The new site was well situated geographically between the city and the surrounding suburbs on high ground with an unimpeded outlook on the west toward the hills above the Mill Creek Valley. Northward stretched the remaining undulating woodland acres of the city park.<sup>9</sup>

Having escaped the congestion of the city, the fledgling university built a campus. In 1894, six architects submitted plans for the proposed site, which would consist of three related buildings to be made of stone or brick with stone trim. In 1895, Samuel Hannaford won a competition with five other architects for the first college building — McMicken Hall and the subsequent additions of Hanna and Cunningham halls, connected to either side. Hannaford's campus plan placed the buildings along a ridge within the park above the McMicken estate facing Clifton Avenue and the streetcar line. The classical aesthetic referenced in the new buildings suggested the university's desire to be considered simultaneously worldly and inherently American.<sup>10</sup> The linear plan was functional but unusual among college campuses of the time being laid out in quadrangles centered



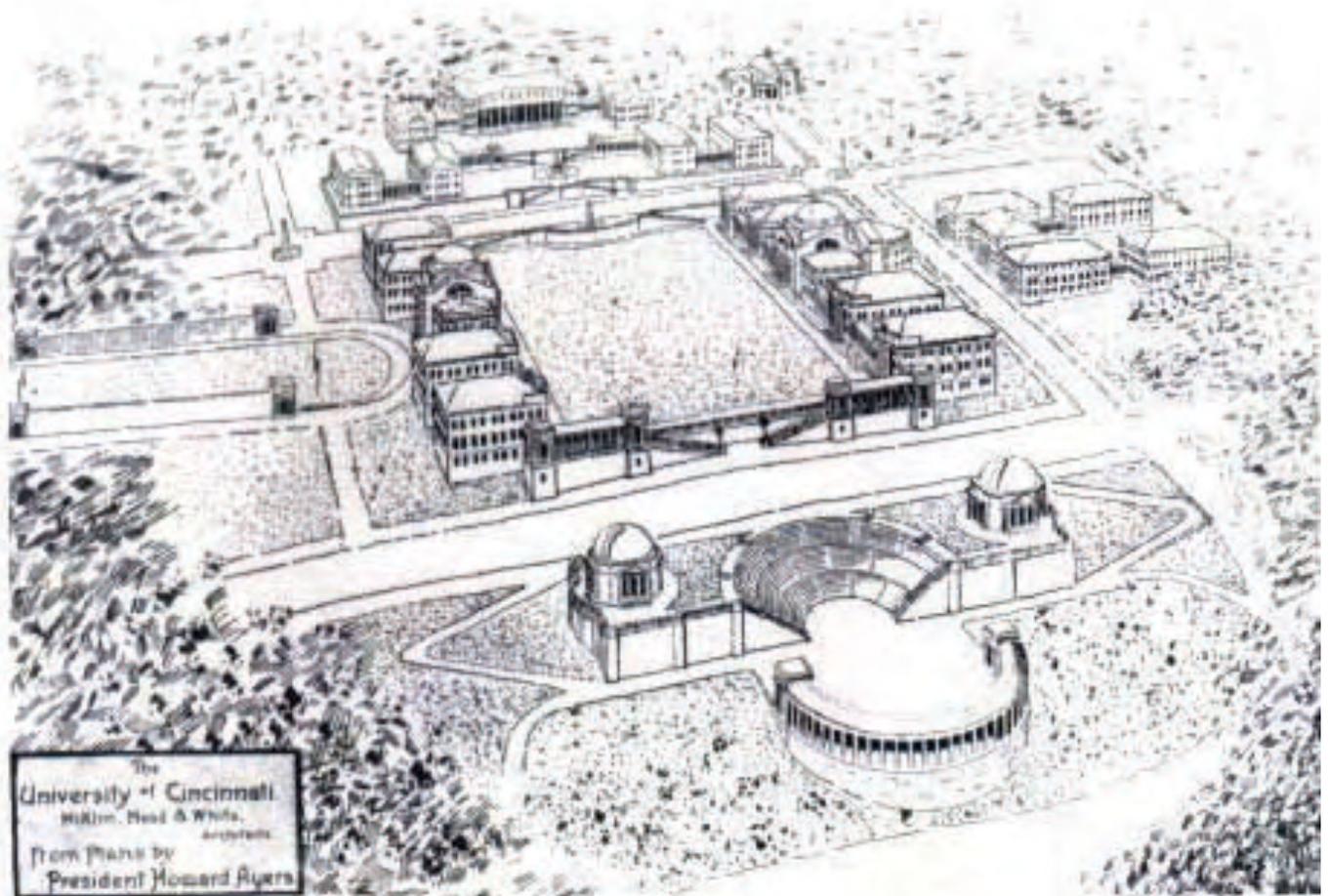
Top: Men's football team at the turn-of-the-century

Bottom: Women's basketball team, 1898.

Left: Campus topographical map 1909.

on common green courtyards.<sup>11</sup> Commuting students arriving by streetcar along Clifton Avenue defined the university's identity as a municipal commuter school which would set the pattern for further campus development.

In this new park setting, athletics became highly popular and competitive during the 1880s and 1890s. A lowland area behind the "academic ridge" became the logical site for constructing a stadium. Taking advantage of the bowl-like terrain, rows of concrete bleachers were built, then an entire stadium. As the university continued to grow, the stadium was positioned to be at the heart of the west campus.



### **Campus Growth (1899—1950)**

In 1899, Howard Ayers became president of the university. By the end of his tenure in 1904, the university had grown. Van Wormer Library, designed by Samuel Hannaford, was built with a gift of street railroad stock from Asa Van Wormer in memory of his wife.<sup>12</sup> The gift was made in 1899, and the library officially opened in 1901. The College of Engineering was established in 1900. Summer and evening classes offered, added academic opportunities to students.

By 1904, the university's growth had prompted President Ayers to hire noteworthy campus planners and architects McKim, Mead and White to propose a new campus plan. The University of Cincinnati plan they presented strongly adhered to Beaux Arts traditions, with symmetry of form and strong axial alignments composed of hierarchical spaces surrounding a central quadrangle. The plan did not reflect the rolling topography of the park setting and barely acknowledged the existing buildings on the ridge above Clifton Avenue (possibly referenced in the grouping of structures at the right side of the rendering). Although never realized, the plan beautifully embodied the ambitions of the University of Cincinnati and laid the groundwork for the plan of the Engineering Quadrangle to follow.<sup>13</sup>

Charles W. Dabney followed President Ayers in 1904. During his tenure (1904–1920),<sup>14</sup> the colleges of Education, Commerce, Home Economics, and Graduate Studies were created. Dabney strengthened the university's connection with the city and elicited the support of Cincinnati citizens setting the stage for more creative approaches to education.



In 1906, Dean Herman Schneider of the College of Engineering introduced the revolutionary concept of cooperative education to a class of 27 students. The “co-op” program allowed students to alternate classes at the university with quarters of paid employment. The program became synonymous with the University of Cincinnati and contributed to its international reputation as a leading institution. By 1907, the number of students applying to the program increased to 800. Naturally, this increased enrollment created a need for more facilities.

Opposite page: *McKim, Mead & White proposed campus plan, 1904*  
Above: *Engineering Quadrangle*  
*reprinted from 1921 Cincinnati.*

In 1910, a power-generation plant was built to supply coal-powered heat and electricity to the campus buildings on the ridge. Following the strong axis of the power plant and Carson Field, Schmidlapp Hall (later named Dieterle Vocal Arts Center) was built in 1910. The axis along the lowland area created the alignment for the field, the first rise of concrete seating surrounding the field, the new power plant, and, later, Memorial Hall (1924).

The architects of the power plant, Teitig & Lee and Garber & Woodward, were also responsible for Baldwin Hall, the new home for the College of Engineering, which followed in 1911. Breaking with the tradition of siting buildings in a linear manner along the ridgeline to develop the campus along a subsidiary axis determined by the hilly terrain, the new Engineering Quad may have drawn some inspiration from McKim, Mead, and White’s plan.<sup>15</sup> In the following years, two complementary buildings, Old Chemistry and Swift Hall, would flank Baldwin Hall to the south and north, creating the traditional green space presently known as Herman Schneider Quadrangle.

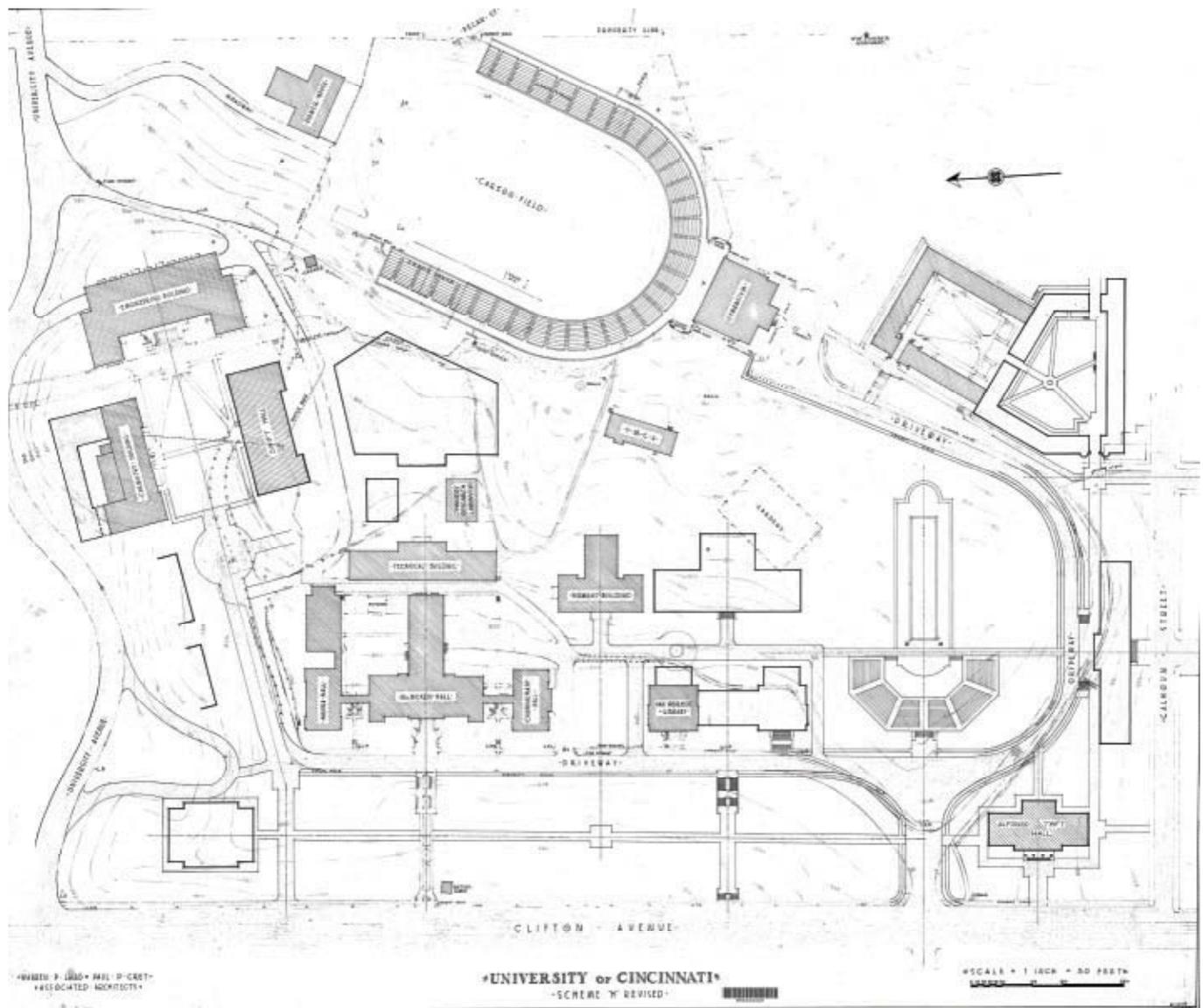


Above: *University of Cincinnati College of Medicine and the Cincinnati General Hospital.*

Also in 1911, the Samuel Hannaford & Sons-designed College of Medicine, was built in the Avondale neighborhood together with a new General Hospital, forming the core of what today is known as the East Campus. The massive new complex comprised 24 buildings, including a power plant, an administration building, a pathological institute, a school of nursing and health building, a surgical building, a medical reference library, a medical college building, and dormitories.<sup>16</sup>

In 1920, economics professor Frederick Hicks became interim president. By the time he retired in 1928, increased enrollment, prompted construction of a number of additional buildings. These included Beecher Hall (1916), Nippert Stadium (1916), Old Chemistry (1917), Swift Hall (1925), Memorial Dormitory (1924), Taft Hall (1925), and Tanner's Laboratory (1924). Aerial views of the campus from 1910 to 1920 show the progression of buildings as initially developed in a linear pattern along the ridge being shifted by the terrain.

Dean Herman Schneider was named university president in 1928, in part because the co-op program he created had succeeded so brilliantly. Schneider held the presidency until his retirement in 1932. His devotion to teaching and a dedication to producing cultured, practical, and service-minded graduates characterized Schneider's presidency. The co-op program had inaugurated a method of connecting theory with practice that has since influenced various departments, and helped to form important relationships between students and the community "in music through performance, in classics through archeology, in the arts through design and in the life sciences through medicine."<sup>17</sup>



Above: *University of Cincinnati Campus Plan Scenario, c. 1930.*

Left to right: *Old Chemistry Building (Tietig & Lee, 1917); Memorial Hall (Harry Hake, 1924); Swift Hall (Harry Hake 1924)*

Schneider also envisioned establishing a series of academic and residence hall quadrangles on campus, each encompassing a separate college although the plan never materialized as he had hoped. One of Schneider's notable gestures was to supplant Van Wormer Library (1899) with a new larger Main Library designed by Hake and Kuck in 1930 (now called Carl Blegen Library), to accommodate the burgeoning collection. The Art Deco style of the building included decorative reliefs that celebrated the history of the printed word, featuring notable printers through the ages as well as printers' marks. The symbolism drew attention to those who spread the written word to a wider public audience.<sup>18</sup>



Above: *President Herman Schneider's vision for the campus, 1920.*

In 1930 a new Teachers College, designed by Garber & Woodward, was built along the academic ridge. To the east, a natural sciences building, Dyer Hall, also designed by Garber & Woodward, was built in 1931. These two buildings would be connected in 1958, creating a green space traditionally used as a quadrangle. Schneider's tenure also saw the construction in 1930 of the University branch YMCA, designed by Zettel and Rapp.

Raymond Walters was inaugurated as president upon Schneider's retirement. Walters' 23-year presidency, although clouded by the difficulties of the Great Depression, provided stable governance and sustained the university to commitment to community service, research, and medical discoveries. During Walters' tenure, UC received worldwide recognition for Carl Blegen's archeological excavations and George Rieveschl's formulation of the antihistamine Benadryl.

With enrollment declining as the Depression grew, Walters was forced to implement pay cuts and dismissals. Faculty and staff found additional income through Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal programs. The Works Progress Administration (WPA) provided funding for the construction of the Student Union building (Tangeman University Center).

After World War II, the G.I. Bill brought new students — veterans — to the campus in numbers so great that the university hastily built new housing facilities and classrooms to accommodate them. Temporary housing and classroom facilities in the area adjacent to McMicken Hall were so conspicuous that they were collectively dubbed "Vetsville". By 1949, two-thirds of the students graduating were veterans.<sup>19</sup>



Top photo: *Military exercise within McMicken Circle during Word War II.*

Bottom photo: *"Vetsville," temporary housing and classrooms, adjacent to McMicken Hall.*



### **Post-War Expansion and the Automobile Campus (1950–1984)**

The university's enrollment continued to grow, reaching a total of 13,783 students in 1950. Of these, about 7,000 attended evening programs. This growth placed a great deal of pressure on the physical campus as the student population outgrew the site. During the mid-1940s, the university made several unsuccessful attempts to acquire an additional 22 acres of land for the campus within Burnet Woods Park. In 1952, City Council approved expansion of the campus to the north of University Avenue (now Clifton Court). In that same year, Alms Memorial Hall, home at that time to the College of Applied Arts (later to become the College of Design, Architecture, Art, and Planning [DAAP]), was dedicated on a hilltop in Burnet Woods. The topography of the Corryville neighborhood on the east side of the campus behind Nippert Stadium was considerably altered by the construction of French Hall dormitory and James C. Allen's 8,000-seat Armory Fieldhouse (completed in 1954), and the nature of construction at the university took a new direction. Buildings were no longer grouped around open space; rather, open space became the leftover edges.

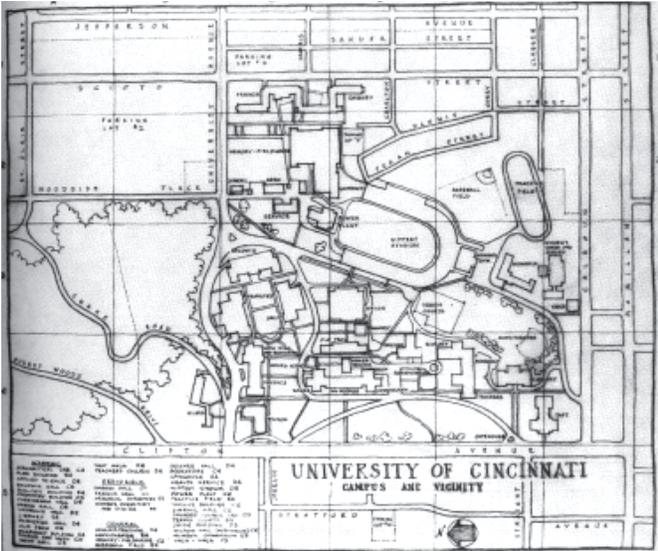
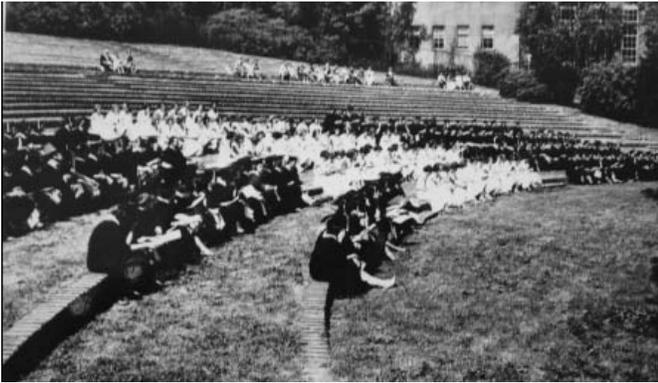
In 1955, Walter C. Langsam became university president, serving until 1971. Langsam's tenure was characterized by vast changes in both the physical character and the academic and social culture of the university. His stewardship straddled the "street-car college," Cold War, and Vietnam years. Amid these external social forces, the university felt new growing pains. The university again expanded by adopting several colleges that previously had been independent, while continuing to develop new programs of its own. The College of Pharmacy merged with the university in 1954; the College of Music and the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music were allied in 1962; and the Ohio College of Applied Science (or 'OCAS,' previously the Ohio Mechanics Institute) was brought into the fold in 1969.



Opposite page: *The Armory Fieldhouse and surrounding area, 1956. Physical Plant building is the brick structure behind “hangar” building in background. Power Plant smokestack visible at center of picture just beyond Armory Fieldhouse lobby. Tangeman University Center to left of smokestack; McMicken Hall (1950) to right of smokestack, Swift Hall visible above roofline of Physical Plant.*  
*Left: Interior of the 8,000 seat Armory Fieldhouse.*

OCAS remained at its downtown location but, on campus, the construction of buildings like the CCM complex in former open spaces was dramatically altering the university landscape. The grass lawn amphitheater in the ravine behind the university library, once used for graduation exercises, became the site and form-giver for the fan-shaped Patricia Corbett Theatre.<sup>20</sup> As the number of students driving to campus continued to rise, parking lots and high-rise residential buildings surrounded by parking changed the fabric of the Corryville neighborhood and established the outlines of a campus “superblock” which can be seen to be emerging in a campus map from 1962.<sup>21</sup>

As new growth strained the university’s finances in the mid-1960s, the administration sought a closer alliance with the state to ensure the institution’s survival. In 1967, an agreement was reached that provided an influx of state funds while keeping the university under city ownership, although city funding had dwindled to a trickle. The university was on the road to becoming a full-state institution. Even as public funding lagged behind ever-increasing enrollment buildings continued to be built, introducing new building patterns.<sup>22</sup> Beginning in 1964 with the “Three Sisters” (Sawyer [demolished 2005], Scioto, and Morgens Halls) at the eastern edge of the block and continuing with Calhoun Hall along the southern boundary, large-scale high-rise buildings edging open space (in this case, much of it temporary parking) followed a pattern similar to high-density housing in cities being reshaped by Urban Renewal.



Top left photo: *The grassy, open amphitheatre behind the university library was the place where graduation occurred prior to construction of*  
 Map: *Campus map, 1962 “superblock” of west campus is starting to form.*  
 Top right photo: *Sander Hall*

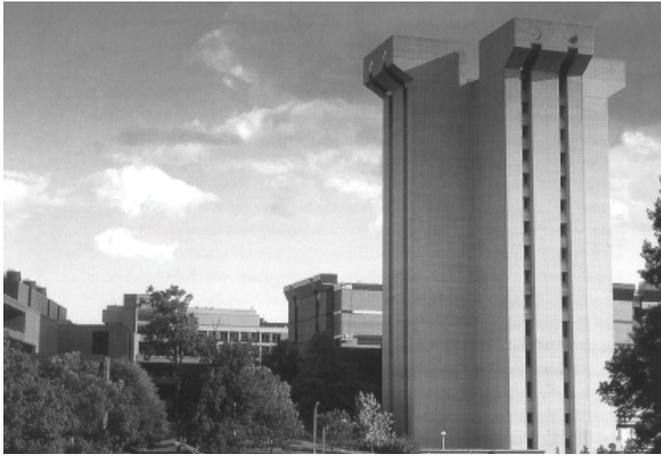
Opposite page, clockwise, top left: *View from Martin Luther King Jr. Drive. Brodie Science Complex: Rhodes Hall (center), Rieveschl Hall (middle) and Crosley Tower.*  
 Top right: *Walter C. Langsam Library, ca 1979 (right), Crosley Tower (center), Rieveschl Hall (left), Rhodes Hall (left foreground).*  
 Bottom right: *East façade of James A. Rhodes Hall and site of the Engineering Research Center. Construction debris and trailers indicate construction had begun. ERC was completed in 1995.*  
 Bottom left: *Rieveschl Hall.*



When it was built on the east side of the campus superblock in 1971, the 27-story Sander Hall topped the Hughes High School tower as the most visible skyline feature on the hill. Sander was designed to house 1,300 students in 5-bedroom suites, which were meant to foster interaction and small-group community-building. However, the high-rise architecture did not meet later building codes and was considered both unsafe and too costly to upgrade. Sander Hall was imploded in 1991.

Crosley Tower, Rhodes Hall, Rieveschl Hall, and Zimmer Hall—components of the Brodie Science Complex—were built in 1969 and 1970 at the end of President Langsam’s tenure, filling in the north side of the West Campus adjacent to DAAP. Langsam Library, conceived as part of this development, followed 10 years later in 1979.

Throughout the late 60’s and 1970’s, the College of Medicine and the General Hospital continued to grow. The area around General Hospital expanded into the University Medical Center. In 1960 the City of Cincinnati granted the university executive control of the Cincinnati



General Hospital (renamed University of Cincinnati Hospital in 1982).<sup>23</sup> New wings or additions were added to the Pavilions (1916) and Kettering Lab (1930). The College of Pharmacy was established and housed in Wherry Hall (1959), and a new home for the College of Nursing, Procter Hall, was built in 1968.

Student and community engagement continued in the 1960s with an idea envisioned by DAAP students, called “Operation Resurrection.” The students put into motion the recovery of roughly 150 stone pieces from the Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce building (designed by the late architect H. H. Richardson), which had burned down in 1911. The park board donated one-fourth of an acre on the north side of St. Clair Street (Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive) to DAAP for the purpose of siting the monument.<sup>24</sup>

Warren G. Bennis, a noted theorist in the field of organizational design and leadership, was inaugurated as university president in 1971. The presidency changed again in 1977 at a seminal moment in the University of Cincinnati’s history, when the university became a full-state institution. Henry R. Winkler, became the first president to have graduated from the university, took the helm. The administration developed a new vision for the university’s future, but lacked commensurate funding for new buildings. In 1980, a new facility for the College of Law was constructed around the 1925 Taft Hall, rather than creating an entirely new building. Nippert Stadium, was renovated instead of constructing a new facility. After 13 years in an off-campus facility, the university basketball team received a new home, Shoemaker Center, in 1989.

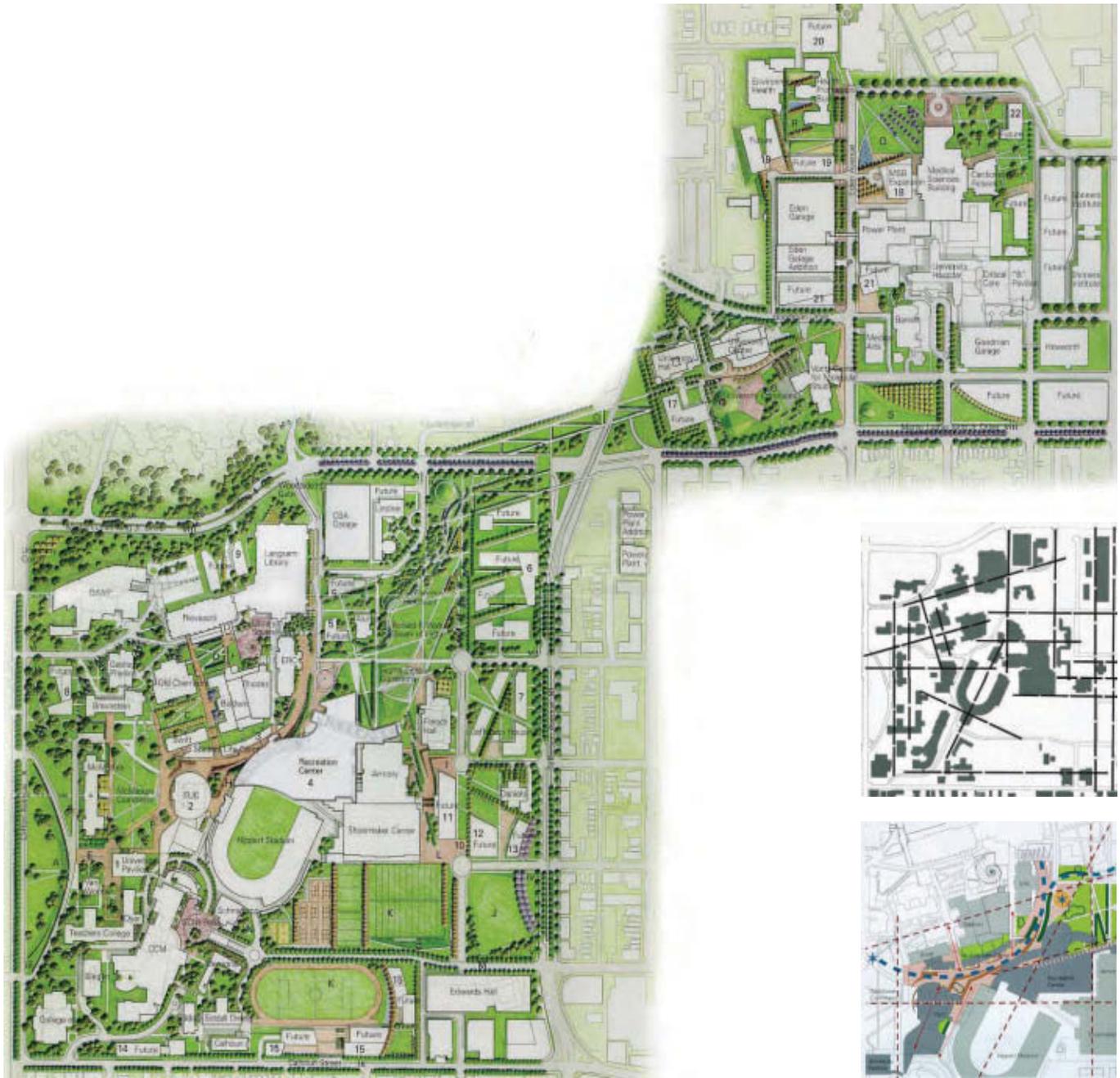


This page: *Architecture students from DAAP recovered stone artifacts from the 1911 Chamber of Commerce Building (designed by H.H. Richardson). Using a site in Burnet Woods, donated by the park board, students designed an inviting open space to view the detailed columns and lintels.*



## **Creating the Architectural Dialogue Within a Holistic Vision (1984-2000)**

In 1984, Joseph A. Steger succeeded Dr. Winkler as president. At the outset of his tenure, Steger expressed dissatisfaction with the character of the campus. Steger sought to change the school's direction and image, and, with support from the administration, he launched a search for a visionary planner. The importance of a master plan to establish a direction for university physical growth and evolution was recognized as paramount. The office of landscape architect George Hargreaves was selected for its recognition of the need to establish a sense of connection throughout the campus, and to create a sense of place, or specific character, that would serve the various needs of the university's population. Hargreaves presented a vision that looked beyond individual works of architecture to the total environment and imagined a strong interaction between buildings and landscape. His concept was derived from Frederick Law Olmsted's 19th-century plan for Boston's parks, the "Emerald Necklace;" in fact, Hargreaves' plan was dubbed the "string of pearls."<sup>25</sup>



One problem of the “streetcar” campus was its lack of evening activity once commuters left for the day. The campus would need functional and vibrant places where students could gather and participate in social and scholarly activities, including outdoor restaurants, cafes, and theaters, enveloped by architecture.<sup>26</sup> Hargreaves sought to replace the remaindered open spaces and parking lots that occupied the center of campus with a series of designed open spaces and activated places. The identification of “force fields” provided a basis for analyzing the conflicting lines of orientation that had developed. Hargreaves’ plan suggested using buildings to infill, but in a way that permitted the creation of open space through courtyards or plazas, as in an urban environment. Hargreaves thought of the buildings as a means to carve and shape space, connecting with the landscape in a sculptural way. His landscape design encompassed molded landforms, sparse plantings, and non-Euclidean walkways. It was intended to function as a unifier between buildings and outdoor spaces, to make visual connections, and to create a sense of place through activities shared across the campus community.<sup>27</sup>



Above: Hargreaves plan concepts and analysis drawings.

Top: University Avenue approach to Renton K. Brodie Engineering Complex, ca. 1977-1978. Rhodes Hall (left), Zimmer Auditorium (center), Rieveschl Hall and Crosley Tower (right). (Excavation site at right foreground is where Langsam Library was later built.)

Bottom: McMicken Commons, ca. 2000, looking north toward Braunstein Hall (Hanna Hall to left, Baldwin Quad to right, Crosley Tower in background).



Hargreaves' master plan began to make an impact beginning with the construction of a broad, fan-shaped lawn, designed in 1993, between McMicken Hall and Tangeman University Center, where Old Commons, Old Tech, Tanners Laboratory, and Beecher Hall had previously stood. This green immediately completed the previously unrealized central portal of McMicken Hall and introduced the concept of walkability into the campus. University Avenue also provided a ceremonial-like space that became a major thoroughfare between buildings.<sup>28</sup>

Under the leadership of Jayanta (Jay) Chatterjee, new architecture was included in the master plan to accommodate the growth of the DAAP program. Dean Chatterjee's advocacy for the selection of "signature" architects to design the master plan's new buildings and spaces would greatly influence the new visual character of the university landscape.



*Vera Clement Edwards Center provides the first link to the “force field” alignment introduced in the Master Plan. The placement and angle of the top five floors of the building reflect the 30 degree angle that dictates the alignment for open space, in-fill buildings and walkways within the Master Plan.*

One technical issue of the state-owned university’s obligation to employ local architects was accommodated by first engaging a local “architect of record” who then participated in the selection of a nationally or internationally recognized designer to be part of the project team.<sup>29</sup> Between 1991 and 2000, some of the world’s most renowned architects designed works for the University of Cincinnati, including Peter Eisenman, Michael Graves (a UC DAAP graduate), David Childs, Henry Cobb, Frank Gehry, Rudolfo Machado and Jorge Silvetti. Design firms influential both before and after 2000 were the Cambridge Seven; after 2000, Leers Weinzapfel Associates and Gwathmey Siegel & Associates Architects contributed to design at the University of Cincinnati.

The first of the signature architect-designed buildings was the Edwards Center, built in 1992 from a design prepared by David Childs of Skidmore Owings & Merrill. Although not as dramatic as some of the later signature buildings, the Edwards Center provides one of the most obvious interpretations of the campus master plan and a direct nod to the “force field” organizational system. Named for Vera Clement Edwards, one of the first black women to earn a master’s degree from and teach at UC, the building expresses the two conflicting orientations of the campus.<sup>30</sup>

In 1995, Michael Graves was selected to design the post-modern Engineering Research Center, located at the main approach to campus from the east. A colonnade marks the main entry to the building, and a public passage leads to the rest of campus. A more unusual building, which immediately struck a different note on campus, was the Aronoff Center for Design and Art, a building that provided library, exhibition, and office space as well as classrooms, studios, and lecture halls. The Aronoff Center, designed in 1996 by Peter Eisenman in association with Lorenz and Williams, acts as a link between Wolfson Hall (1976) by Tweddel Wheeler Strickland and Beumer; the Alms Building, (1952) by George Rath and James E. Allen; and the DAA building (1958). The Aronoff Center both confused and astonished UC students and visitors, but it functioned as a catalyst for future change. Its construction began a



Above photo: *Engineering Research Center (Graves)*  
Bottom photo: *Aerial of Martin Luther King Drive, DAAP on the right edge, ERC on the left.*

trend that suggested architecture was intended to challenge the intellect, work together with the landscape to create a sense of movement through the campus grounds, and provide significant spaces within which activity could occur. Frank Gehry's Vontz Center for Molecular Studies, constructed in 1999, offered further indications of the new dynamic forms that provided living and work space, and offered alternative ways in which buildings could function together with the landscape.

The addition of further buildings contributed to the creation of groups or complexes that provided new active spaces connecting related activities while acknowledging the campus's past. The College-Conservatory of Music (CCM), for example, occupies "CCM Village" and consists of several buildings, including Memorial Hall and the Dieterle Vocal Arts Center (formerly Schmidlapp Hall), Mary Emery Hall, and the Corbett Center for the Performing Arts. The Center incorporates several 1970s structures, such as the Patricia Corbett Theatre and Corbett Auditorium, the new Werner Recital Hall, and a studio theater. The theater is set into a hillside and echoes its amphitheater form; a low brick dance studio wing runs around

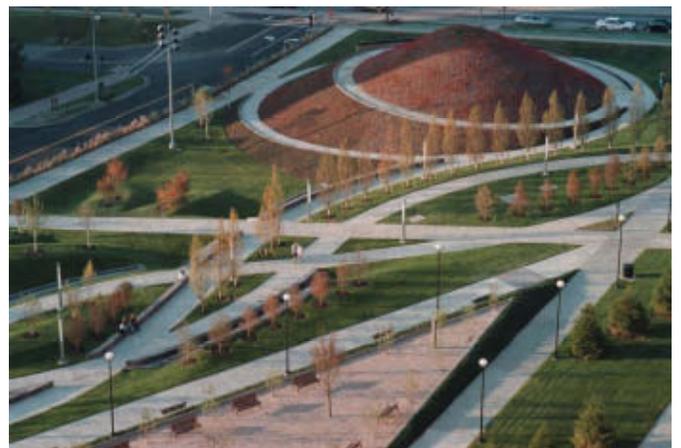


part of the exterior, forming a system of small courtyard gardens that wrap around the eastern side. The gardens were designed by Laurie Olin, known for his work on Bryant Park in New York City. In 2000, Henry Cobb unified these buildings and gave them a center with a long brick wing, Mary Emery Hall, punctuated along its roofline by distinctive pyramidal luminaries. The complex makes less of a splash than some of the successive signature buildings, but is, in fact, considered a masterpiece of highly sensitive interior and intelligent siting. It plays a central role in the master plan, connecting spaces at the intersection of the CCM Village, the old academic ridge, and the new MainStreet project.<sup>31</sup>

*Above top: Aronoff Center, exterior and interior photos (Eisenman).*

*Above bottom: Vontz Center, exterior and interior photos (Gehry).*

Green spaces, together with dramatic buildings, provided connections along which the student could walk through the university grounds. Separate but not isolated individual spaces, such as the Library Square designed by Hargreaves in 1995 and Sigma Sigma Commons (1998), give texture and character to the place, enriching the more traditional green represented by the Clifton Avenue and Herman Schneider [formerly Baldwin] Quadrangle.



Signature landscapes, from top:  
*University Commons, Mews,  
Campus Green, and Zimmer Roof  
Garden.*



## Fulfillment of the Cohesive Landscape Vision (2000-present)

In 2000, construction of the University Commons on the East Campus and of Hargreaves Associates' Campus Green, located on the site of parking lot No. 1, furthered the master plan's concept of individual and connected spaces situated within a pleasant and walkable landscape. McMicken Commons, which was initially constructed in 1990 as the first open space completed under the master plan, was opened in 2004 after renovation of the Tangeman University Center.

Also in 2004, Moore Ruble Yudell Architects created an open-space corridor called The Mews running between the Steger Student Life Center and Swift, Baldwin, and Rhodes halls. This landscape of terraced spaces draws connections to the campus's past from architectural fragments of earlier buildings. On the other side of the Steger Center, Hargreaves' plan for MainStreet suggests the ways in which he envisioned the landscape functioning. Bearcat Plaza was constructed in 2004 as part of MainStreet, and in 2006 Hargreaves completed the Zimmer Roof Garden above Zimmer Hall. After 2000, signature architecture that continued to dramatically change the look of the



Above top: CCM Village

Middle: Campus Recreation Center and MainStreet.

Bottom: Nautilus and Library Square.



campus included Gwathmey Siegel Associates' reworking of the Tangeman University Center (1935) in 2003–2004 and Moore Ruble Yudell Architects' Joseph A. Steger Student Life Center in 2004. In 2006, Bernhard Tschumi's design for the Richard E. Lindner Center, created the nucleus of the new Varsity Village athletics complex.

In 2006, Morphosis Architects designed the highly geometric, multi-purpose Campus Recreation Center. The building maximizes its location along the sloping main street, and offers 350,000 square feet for team sports and personal fitness, as well as space for learning, dining, and living. The Center for Academic Research Excellence (CARE), designed by Studios Architecture, was completed in 2008. Each of these buildings has been highly publicized, bringing the University of Cincinnati to the forefront of design visibility that reflects 20th- and 21st-century concerns both for accommodating students' physical needs and for raising the university's "brand" appeal.<sup>32</sup> Whether the buildings successfully address the social, personal, and contemplative needs of the student continues to be a matter of discussion.

Many accolades have been written praising the highly visible aesthetic statement achieved by the new buildings. The *New York Times*, for example, referring to the new building campaign, described the University of Cincinnati as "one of the most architecturally dynamic campuses in America;" the *Washington Post* called it "an experiment worth watching." Students, too, have begun to assign names to some of the new buildings. Gehry's Vontz Center, for example, is referred to as a "sculpture" and jokingly as the "marshmallow building."<sup>33</sup>

The University of Cincinnati began as a small college whose departments were housed in separate buildings across the city, lacking any unified sense of place. It has since emerged as a comprehensive research university and an international leader in campus planning and design. Over a 15-year period of master plan implementation, the university has established a cohesive campus, with walks and open spaces leading faculty, staff, students, and visitors through views of architecture and landscape architecture developed by master designers at the heights of their careers. These designed buildings and landscapes attempt to provide



Opposite page, clockwise from top: TUC/Bearcat Plaza (Gwathmey and Siegel), Campus Recreation Center (Morphosis), MainStreet, and Steger Student Life Center (Moore, Ruble, and Yudell)

Above photos: Richard E. Lindner Varsity Village and Richard E. Lindner Center (Bernhard Tschumi).



interior and exterior places in which to gather, study, and relax, and an environment that is conducive to intellectual growth, social interaction, and civic purpose.

In 2003, Nancy L. Zimpher — the University of Cincinnati’s 25th president, and the first woman to hold the position — articulated this goal in the UC|21 Academic Plan by seeking to imbue the newly built environment with “a sense of ‘place’” and “a sense of belonging for students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends”.... “where members of the campus community and the community at large want to spend time — learning, living, playing, and staying,” to promote collaboration among people and programs.<sup>34</sup>

Above: *Center for Academic and Research Center / Crawley Building, (Studios Architecture).*



## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Kevin Grace, and Greg Hand, *The University of Cincinnati* (Montgomery, AL: Community Communications, 1995), 2.
- <sup>2</sup> Grace and Hand, *The University of Cincinnati*, 3; It is to this time that the University currently dates its founding. Previously, university seals used the 1870 date.
- <sup>3</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Municipal\\_college](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Municipal_college).
- <sup>4</sup> Miami, Located 35 miles from Cincinnati in Oxford, Ohio.
- <sup>5</sup> Grace and Hand, *The University of Cincinnati*, 5. The Conservatory of Music is described as catering mainly to “well-bred ladies” and a Southern constituency. The College of Music, located downtown, had a “diverse student population, primarily masculine.” Page 86.
- <sup>6</sup> Grace and Hand, *The University of Cincinnati*, 5.
- <sup>7</sup> Grace and Hand, *The University of Cincinnati*, 36.
- <sup>8</sup> Grace and Hand, *The University of Cincinnati*, 30.
- <sup>9</sup> John B. Shotwell, *A History of the Schools of Cincinnati* (Cincinnati, Ohio: The School Life Company, 1902), 190.
- <sup>10</sup> Grace and Hand, *The University of Cincinnati*, 41.
- <sup>11</sup> Paul Bennet, *The Campus Guide: University of Cincinnati* (New York, NY: Princeton Architectural Press, 2001), 3-5.
- <sup>12</sup> John B. Shotwell, *A History of the Schools of Cincinnati* (Cincinnati, Ohio: The School Life Company, 1902), 244.
- <sup>13</sup> Bennett, *The Campus Guide: University of Cincinnati*, 3-5.
- <sup>14</sup> Grace and Hand, *The University of Cincinnati*, 69.
- <sup>15</sup> Bennett, *The Campus Guide: University of Cincinnati*, 5-6.
- <sup>16</sup> Author Unknown, *University of Cincinnati College of Medicine and the Cincinnati General Hospital Views and Descriptions*, 1914.
- <sup>17</sup> Grace and Hand, *The University of Cincinnati*, 68, 95, 99-101.
- <sup>18</sup> Grace and Hand, *The University of Cincinnati*, 107.
- <sup>19</sup> Grace and Hand, *The University of Cincinnati*, 130.
- <sup>20</sup> Grace and Hand, *The University of Cincinnati*, 157.
- <sup>21</sup> Bennett, *The Campus Guide: University of Cincinnati*, 10.
- <sup>22</sup> Bennett, *The Campus Guide: University of Cincinnati*, 10-11.
- <sup>23</sup> <http://health.uc.edu/aboutus/History/history.cfm>
- <sup>24</sup> Patrick Fox, *University of Cincinnati News Record*, February 27, 1967.
- <sup>25</sup> Bennett, *The Campus Guide: University of Cincinnati*, 12.
- <sup>26</sup> Bennett, *The Campus Guide: University of Cincinnati*, 12.
- <sup>27</sup> Bennett, *The Campus Guide: University of Cincinnati*, 15.
- <sup>28</sup> Grace and Hand, *The University of Cincinnati*, 203; Bennett, *The Campus Guide, University of Cincinnati*, 95.
- <sup>29</sup> Bennett, *The Campus Guide: University of Cincinnati*, 11.
- <sup>30</sup> Bennett, *The Campus Guide, University of Cincinnati*, 70.
- <sup>31</sup> Bennett, *The Campus Guide, University of Cincinnati*, 70, 80.
- <sup>32</sup> Several articles devoted to building campaigns across the country refer to the trend for universities to update their identity through the latest architectural designs.
- <sup>33</sup> “*The Renewal of Campus*,” *University of Cincinnati Magazine*, online at <http://www.magazine.uc.edu/> accessed February 2, 2007.
- <sup>34</sup> University of Cincinnati website, online at <http://www.uc.edu/uc21/ataglace.html>.

## Photography

All photography for Chapter 2 was supplied courtesy of the following entities:

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