



DESIGN NARRATIVE

As a result of English Professor Jill Davis' "Pay It Forward On Campus" campaign, her English class adopted the historic MSU Iris Garden for revitalization. As the space has been neglected for many decades, it has become a dark, overgrown, dangerous, underutilized and unsightly place on campus. The area is now literally an obstacle which pedestrians must go around as evidenced by the desire-line paths in the turf surrounding the garden. Historically the Iris Garden was a focal point on campus, so significant that there were actually commencement ceremonies held on the site.

This design proposal is the culmination of 6 months of efforts on behalf of the Project Iris Garden Team, New West Landscapes and MSU Facilities. When Project Iris Garden began, surveys of students were taken about what they wanted to see on their campus. Then the Project Iris Garden Team worked with MSU Facilities and did a charrette on ideas and options for the space. Shortly thereafter, Project Iris Garden contacted New West Landscapes who has listened to their goals and objectives and has worked with them since to help make their vision a reality. After several meetings with the Project Iris Garden Team and MSU Facilities, New West Landscapes prepared schematic designs to share with University President Gamble, University Facilities, the Project Iris Garden team, the University Sustainability Coordinator, and the Alumni Association.



Upon listening to concerns and recommendations from all of these parties, New West Landscapes developed the designs further to acknowledge all of the input, refine the space and continually improve the aesthetic and longevity of the space. One major factor of this design is how it relates to the Alumni Plaza which is currently being built on campus. As President Gamble noted and encouraged, this plaza is similar to the Alumni plaza in its circular forms and inclusion of a Bobcat sculpture. He would like to see 2 additional plazas in the campus masterplan which acknowledge the 2 other cardinal directions and continue the theme unifying campus further.

The masterplan includes revitalization of the Iris Garden as well as creation of an outdoor amphitheater/gathering area which could include such festivities as the Shakespeare Festival, Drama Plays, Capstone Architecture Presentations, the MSU Film Festival, Music, Sustainability Events, Weddings, and more. The sky is the limit with the creation of this space. The design of the amphitheater radiates off of the same point as the historic Iris Garden gesturing a ripple, symbolic of the efforts of the student class who gave the gardens as a gift to the university initially and then the reverberations of the efforts almost a century later as well as the potential which exists in future classes. The ripple is also symbolic of the campus as a place of extension and which gives back to society. As precedent, Tanner Fountain on Harvard University's campus is depicted to show the aesthetic quality of a similar gesture of stone while also displaying its appropriateness and usefulness as a campus space. When showing this to MSU Facilities, I was informed that Tanner Fountain actually won a National Heritage Award from the American Society of Landscape Architects and that MSU competed for the same award with the Duck Pond Revitalization Project.

Although relatively cheap in terms of cost of amphitheaters, the design would incorporate local stone from the historic mines of the Butte area. As the precedent images show, this stone is of great aesthetic and functional value as benches. As a fundraiser and a way to engage students, the Project Iris Garden team proposes to have the Art program create a bronze plaque which could be reproduced, sold, engraved and attached to the stone benches. The amphitheater will also create a textural, dynamic feel to Danforth Park in the winter months, a major consideration in Bozeman when there are the most people on campus.

To the North, remains the walls of a cage in which a live bobcat was housed. What a great opportunity. This place should house a sculpture of a bobcat with a plaque interpreting the historic significance of the now odd-seeming wall and bench which seem to have no rhyme or reason for being there.

At the Iris garden scale, we have celebrated the historic feel of the spatial composition, opened up and cleaned up an unsafe space on campus, opened the space to more users, crated several pedestals to host sculpture, turned an obstacle into a destination and a beautiful, school-spirit rich plaza through which pedestrian traffic can move and enjoy. To do this we extended the walk to the East. It is our intent for the sculpture pedestals host rotating student sculpture through the art program, but it is worth considering yet another permanent bobcat sculpture in the central focal area to relate strongly to the Alumni Plaza.

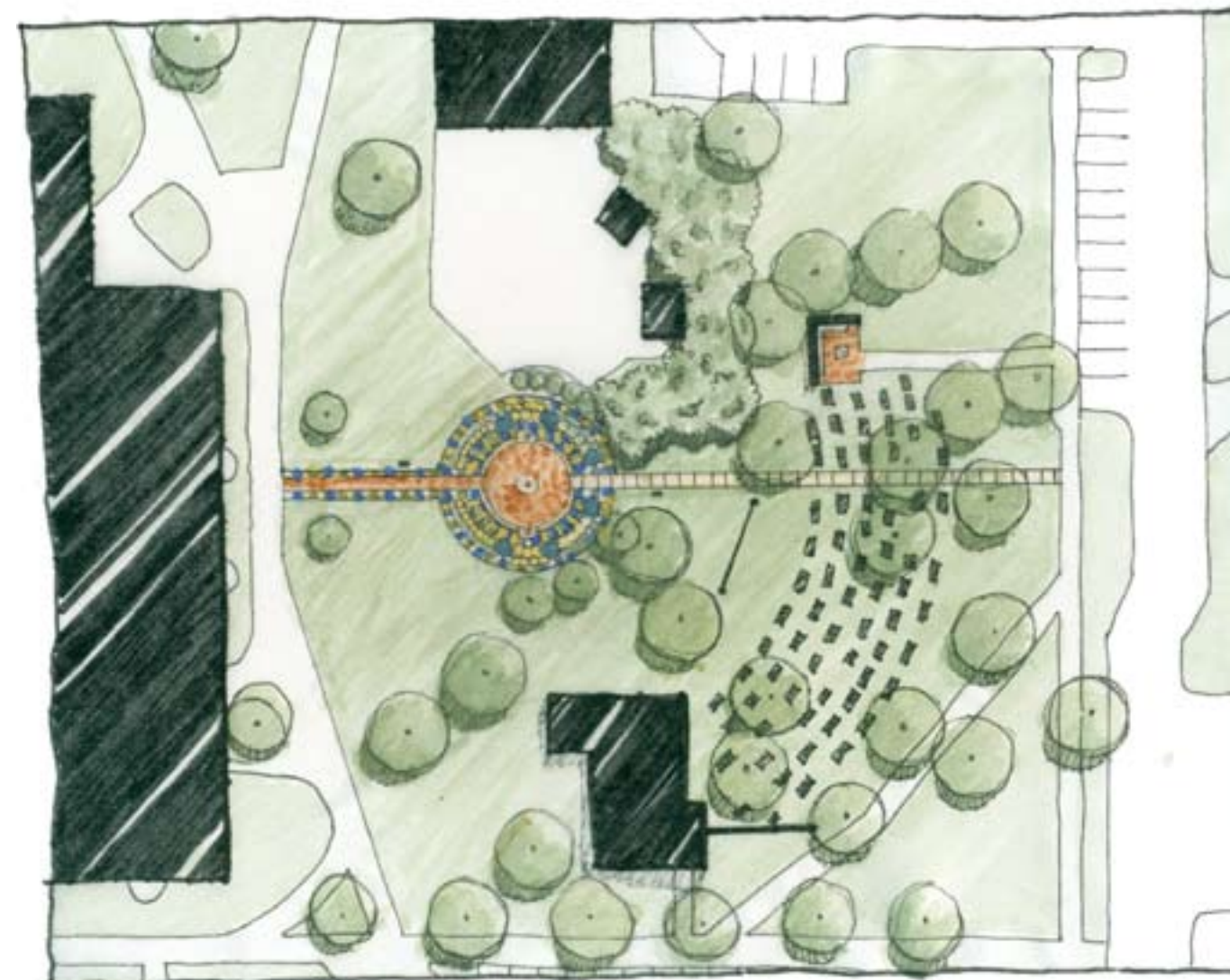
Planting was designed to be low in maintenance, maintain a beautiful, blue and gold textural space through the winter months and maximize on blue, gold and white flowers and berries to celebrate the university's colors throughout the seasons. Planting was also designed to emphasize the historic nature of the irises in the space. Although the garden is designed to be low in maintenance, it is known that this will require some. We propose that the Iris gardens would be an ideal outdoor classroom and teaching environment for a horticulture professor to adopt and teach their class while tending the garden.

We intend to utilize seat walls to emphasize the circular form, invite people, protect the gardens and relate to the rest of campus including the Mall and the Alumni Plaza. We also plan to keep and repair the existing plaza which includes the original stone that was brought to the place and set by students who gathered somewhere along the Gallatin River. Other compositional elements to remain in the Iris garden are the lamps which have beautiful dry lichen that speaks to their historic nature. These will require some retrofits for current electric codes as well as new lamps.

With approval from the necessary groups and the current energy we've created on campus we are ready to begin phase one of this project while continuing rising funds and planning the future phases.



MASTERPLAN



PROJECT IRIS GARDEN

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY, BOZEMAN

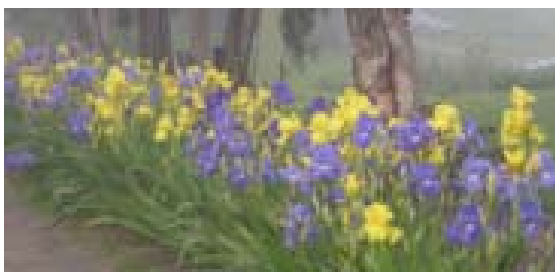
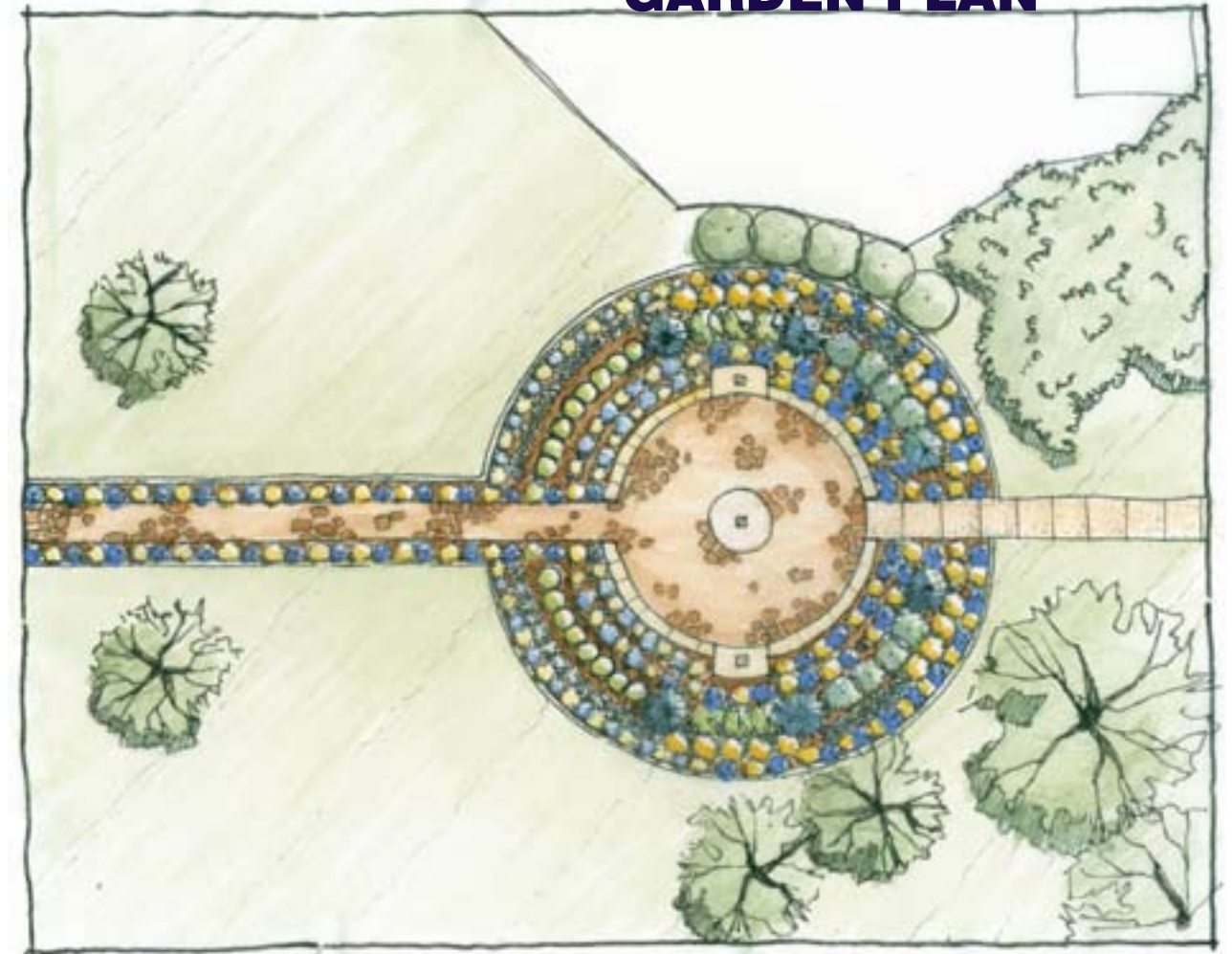
AUTUMN 2009





GARDEN PERSPECTIVE

GARDEN PLAN



PROJECT IRIS GARDEN

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY, BOZEMAN

**AUTUMN
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