

PLANNING, PRINCIPLES, AND PROCESS

FIGURE 1
Early sketch for the UTSA Main Campus
(courtesy O'Neil Ford Archives
at the Alexander Architectural Archives,
The University of Texas at Austin)

Managing growth and maintaining the quality of the campus environment requires three linked efforts: campus planning, principles, and process. This chapter deals with those three issues, since they pertain to all three UTSA campuses.

PLANNING

Campus Master Plans at UTSA

Prior to this 2009 Campus Master Plan, UTSA has had the following master plans:

1. The original 1604 (Main) Campus Plan—1970
2. The 1604 (Main) Campus Plan—1993
3. The Downtown Campus Plan—1995
4. The 1604 (Main) Campus Master Plan Update Phase 1 Report—2000
4. The Downtown Campus Plan—2001
5. The ITC Campus Plan—2001
6. The 1604 (Main) Master Plan and Planning Guide—2004

Master plans need to be flexible because no one can predict the future with certainty. If they are flexible, they must also be interpreted. This requires agreement with the objectives, an understanding of the principles (both architectural and planning), and a process for supportive decision making. Otherwise, even a carefully considered plan cannot be achieved. In this regard, a review of the UTSA Plans is revealing—especially for the Main Campus (previously referred to as the “1604 Campus”).

The Original 1970 Concept Plan

O'Neil Ford of the architectural firm Ford, Powell & Carson, with Bartlett Cocke & Associates, began work on a master plan for the new campus in 1970. Utilizing the Spanish custom for the organization of cities in the New World—Philip V's *Law of the Indies*—Ford

and his team organized the academic facilities around a central plaza containing a large covered area called the Sombrilla. Pedestrian Paseos, or walkways, radiated from the plaza and terminated in spectacular views of the Hill Country landscape, integrating the campus with its setting. Smaller spaces opened onto the Paseos, which were intended to contain trees, seating areas, places to eat or study—essentially functioning as a village street. Most buildings around the Sombrilla Plaza and along the Paseos contained loggias that provided pedestrians with protection from the elements.

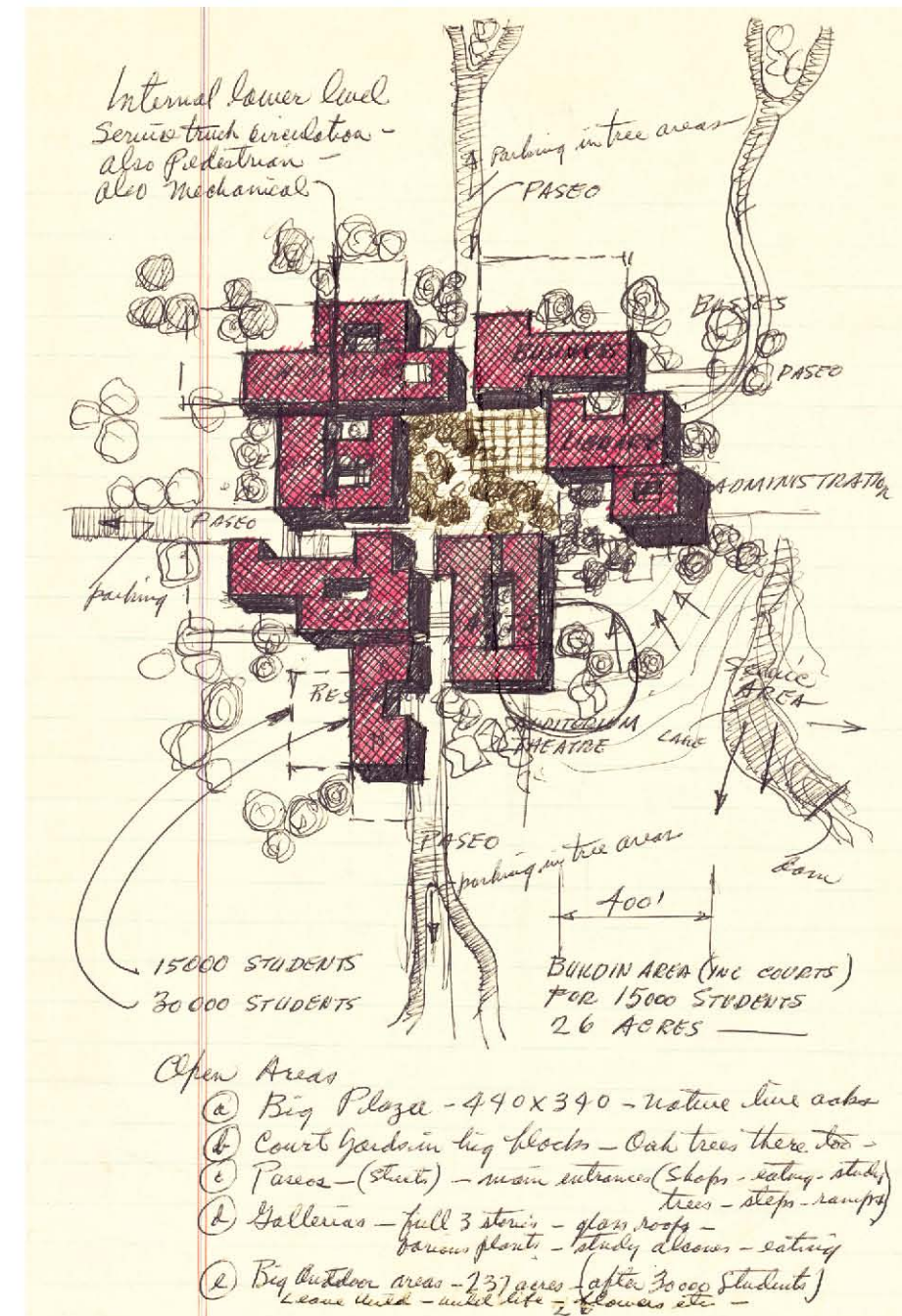
The plan was urban in character. It was intended to maximize the density of the academic complex and retain as much of the natural setting as possible. The plan separated pedestrians from vehicular traffic through the placement of parking at the perimeter of the campus, providing service access one level below pedestrian access.

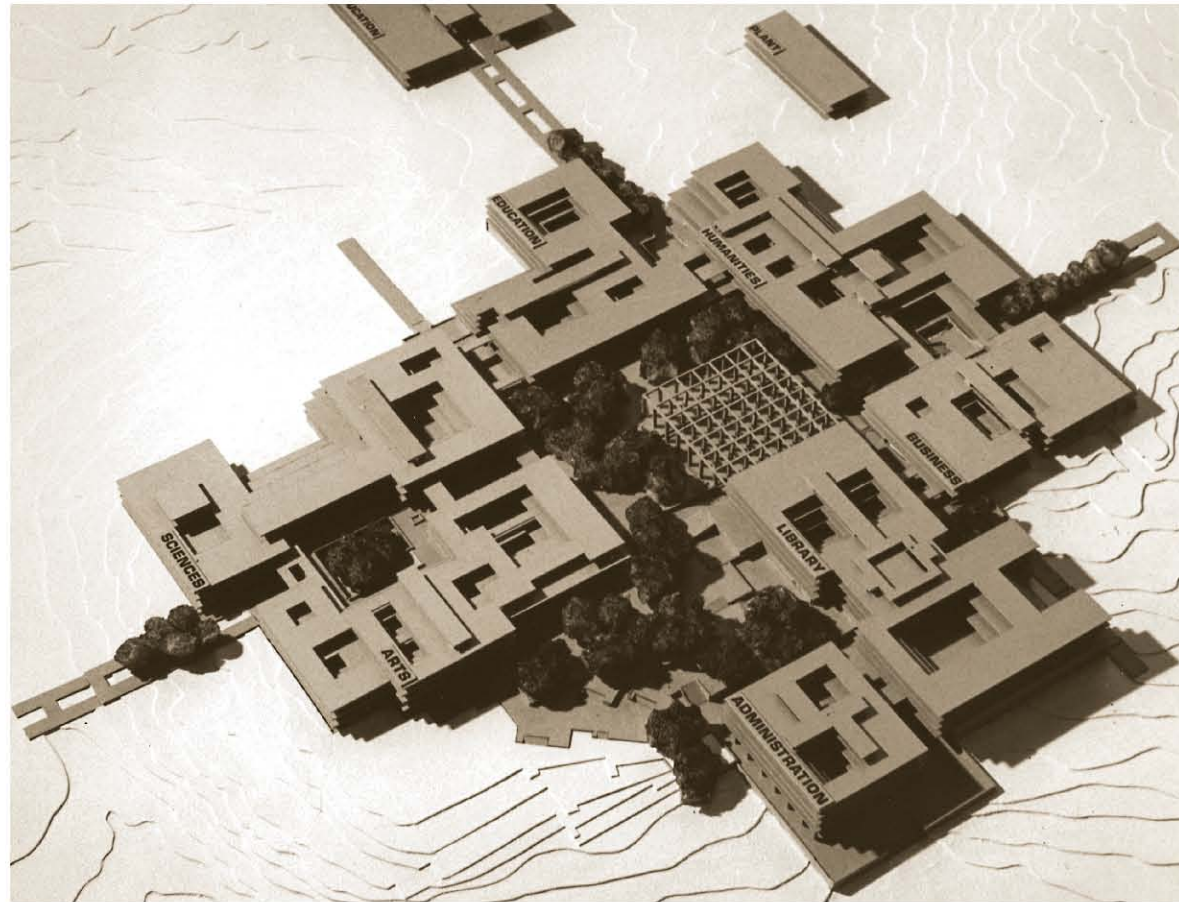
The principles of the urban concept are lucid in the original sketch:

1. A large central plaza
2. Landscaped courtyards in big blocks
3. Paseos (streets) radiating from the center
4. Gallerias (skylit internal streets) in buildings
5. Large outdoor areas left wild

Architecturally defined space organizes the complex and interconnects its parts at every scale. The buildings are so strongly dedicated to the definition of space that it is impossible to conceive of one of them separately from the whole.

Perhaps due to explosive growth, budget constraints, and other factors, these original principles were not adhered to in the subsequent development of the campus.





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The Original Concept vs. the Built Campus

There is a notable difference between the model of the original concept and the built version of the original campus, but the basic principles remained intact. The model illustrates a more continuous building fabric, more spatial closure, and a greater number and variety of courtyards. In the actual campus as built out in 1980, the buildings are more discrete, but the spaces are defined, and there is some variety of courtyards. This evolution may be due to the pragmatic constraints of programs and phasing. Continuity was seemingly assured, however, as the same firm developed the actual plan and all the buildings.

With the completion of the Multidisciplinary Studies Building, the original campus was nominally complete in 1980. At this stage, the campus offers a holistic vision of what the campus could and should be. Public space—the Sombrilla Plaza and the Paseos—is fundamental. The connectivity of systems is paramount: not only spaces and pedestrian circulation, but also service, utilities, and building structure. Yet the

scheme is also flexible—as long as buildings support and define the primary spaces of the campus, their specific forms can adjust, grow, and adapt to accommodate programs. Indeed, the architectural character of the buildings could change, provided that the buildings continued the transition of defining public space established in the original campus.

The 1993 Campus Master Plan continued the principles of the original plan, aside from its recommendation to develop to the east of the Leon Creek tributary. In this plan, the buildings had large footprints and defined both interior and exterior public spaces—most notably courtyards and gallerias—and they fostered the development of plazas at intervals along the Paseos. Many of the buildings that followed were located in accordance with the 1993 Plan, but generally did not follow the architectural and urban principles of the original 1970 Plan. These newer buildings generally do not define public space or engage it. The integrated, urban character of the original campus should be reestablished.



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FIGURE 2
Model of original scheme for the UTSA Main Campus

FIGURE 3
The UTSA Main Campus, early 1980s

FIGURE 4
The Sombrilla



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FIGURE 1

Preliminary scheme for the 1970 Main Campus Master Plan, by Ford, Powell & Carson and Bartlett Cocke & Associates



FIGURE 2

Actual plan of the Main Campus in 1993. The original buildings, completed by 1983, are darker in tone; buildings added between 1983 and 1993 are in lighter tone: Chisholm Hall, University Center I, and Engineering Building



FIGURE 3

The 1993 Main Campus Master Plan, by Ford, Powell & Carson, illustrating adherence to the original master planning tenets and provision for significant growth, as well as proposed building in the wooded area of the East Campus

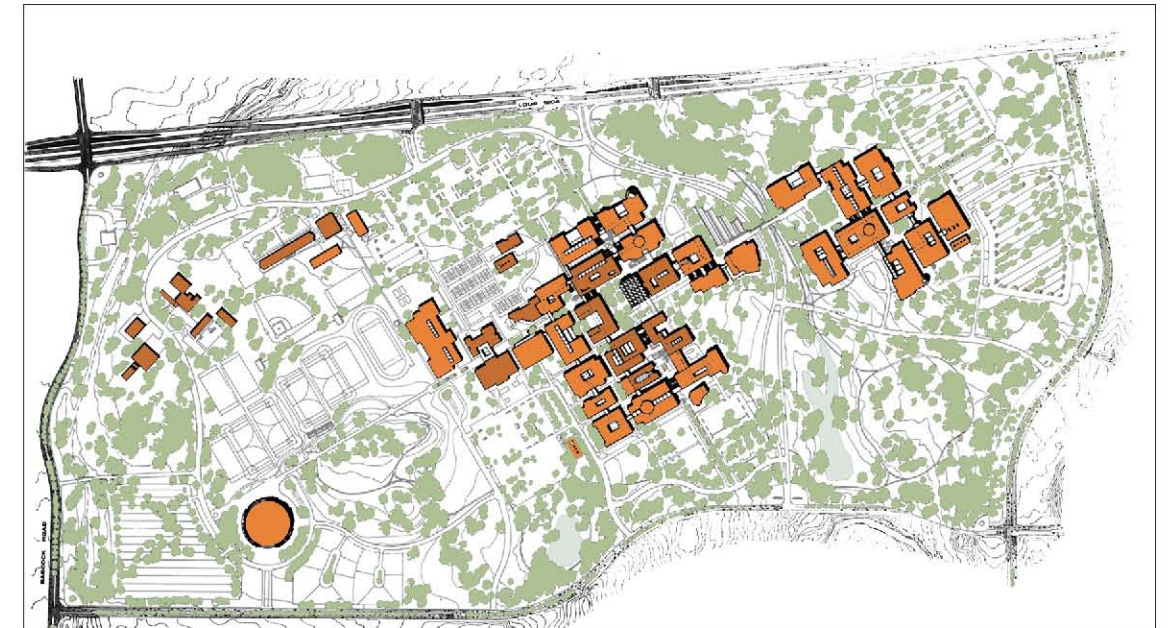


FIGURE 4

Actual plan of the Main Campus in 2004, illustrating departure from the architectural and urban principles of the 1993 Master Plan. Buildings constructed during this period include Chapparal Village, the University Oaks Apartments, and several new buildings in the academic core



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FIGURE 5
The 2004 update of the 2001 Main Campus Master Plan, by Ford, Powell & Carson, illustrating proposed building in the wooded area of the East Campus, and some adherence to the principles of the previous two master plans

FIGURE 6
The actual plan of the Main Campus in 2009, illustrating very little adherence to the 2004 Master Plan

FIGURE 7
Phase 3 of the Campus Master Plan for the Main Campus, illustrating the reestablishment of the urban principles of the earlier Ford, Powell & Carson plans

This plan represents the amount of building area needed to adequately accommodate a student population of 30,000.

FIGURE 8
The Long Range Plan for the Main Campus, illustrating the reestablishment of the urban principles of the earlier Ford, Powell & Carson plans, and the accommodation of significant growth without expanding into the wooded East Campus area

PRINCIPLES

The following principles establish the terms by which the University adopts the basic parts of the Campus Master Plan: the Long Range Plan, the Guidelines for particular systems and components of the campuses, and the Process for implementing and managing the Plan.

Principle 1: Mission and Goals

The University acknowledges the importance of the relationship between the campus environment and the academic mission of the institution, as well as the relationship to the surrounding community. To achieve this, the University affirms the following goals for all of its campuses:

COMMON UTSA CAMPUS GOALS

- 1 *Implement a long-term strategy to accommodate more academic and research space.*
- 2 *Define campus open space through architectural and landscape design.*
- 3 *Provide a substantive structure for and variety of open spaces.*
- 4 *Provide for more on-campus amenities.*
- 5 *Improve campus circulation and clarify campus entrances.*
- 6 *Improve campus wayfinding.*
- 7 *Enhance the identity of the individual campuses, and the shared identity between them.*
- 8 *Enhance transit and communication capabilities between campuses.*
- 9 *Promote relationships with the surrounding context.*
- 10 *Implement a planning component and process.*

Principle 2: Civic Structure

The civic structure of the campuses consists of their primary public spaces: the interconnected quadrangles, streets, playfields, parks, and major interior spaces. UTSA will clarify and improve the spaces that make up the civic structure of its campuses and strengthen the interconnections between them.

Principle 3: Green Reserve

The University will seek to protect its existing open spaces by adopting a permanent Green Reserve. The Green Reserve is intended to remain free of major buildings and parking lots.

Principle 4: Development Densities

The University will seek to conserve campus open space by maintaining appropriate density in built-up areas.

Principle 5: Circulation, Transportation, & Parking

The University supports the concept of pedestrian-oriented campuses. The University will develop a long-term transportation strategy that shifts from a reliance on individual automobiles to alternative modes of transportation and from surface parking lots to parking garages.

Principle 6: Amenities

The University will encourage the creation of mixed-use neighborhoods—combining retail, office space, parking structures, and residential space—on or adjoining its campuses.

Principle 7: On-Campus Housing

The University will increase the number of students living on campus and expand the amenities and options for housing.

Principle 8: Community Interface

The University will cooperate with the City and with private developers in the areas around their campuses to promote high-quality, pedestrian-friendly urban

development that contributes to a sense of a larger community and promotes a university setting.

Principle 9: Architecture

The University acknowledges that the quality of its architecture is a public statement of its aspirations to excellence and a permanent expression of its commitment to the quality of the public realm in which education occurs. The University will conform to the planning and architectural principles and guidelines of the Board of Regents' Rules and Regulations and of the Campus Master Plan.

Principle 10: Landscape

The University acknowledges the importance of the campus landscape as a resource, as an element of campus civic structure, and as an ecological system. The University will develop a proactive, resource-efficient, and regionally consistent landscape development program in conformance with the landscape plan, principles, and guidelines of the Campus Master Plan.

Principle 11: Sustainability

The University will seek to improve the sustainability of the campus and its operations.

Principle 12: Planning

The University will seek to establish and nurture a cooperative culture of planning on campus. As part of a revised process and new planning culture, the University may develop specific District Plans from time to time to expand the Campus Master Plan and to guide decision making.

Principle 13: Process

An augmented and empowered administrative planning component will guide development of the UTSA campuses. The University will adopt revised processes for implementing and monitoring conformance with the Campus Master Plan. These will include the establishment of a campus review committee and consideration of a Campus Architect/Planner.

PROCESS

INTRODUCTION

This section addresses the process for implementation and management of the Campus Master Plan.

The intent of the Campus Master Plan is to bring the campus into alignment with the University's mission through growth management and an improved physical environment. Achievement of this goal will require a commitment to an effective process for campus planning, design, and management.

There are four major process issues: 1) project identification and initiation; 2) project definition and feasibility; 3) architect selection; and 4) design control.

PROJECT IDENTIFICATION AND INITIATION

The University should establish a committee to play a central role in the identification of building programs in support of UTSA's strategic plans and programs. This committee should be comprised of individuals with experience with one or more of the various facets of UTSA. These include the Strategic Plan, *A Shared Vision UTSA 2016*, especially the Implementation Plan; facilities plans and activities; University Advancement programs and opportunities; University administration plans and activities; and student programs and plans.

The committee should serve as the central authority for the creation of building initiatives. These may include new construction, major renovations, major landscaping or infrastructure projects, site development, and acquisition of leased or purchased real property. The committee's primary function is to review Vice President-sponsored requests for development in support of a program or strategic initiative. The committee should review these requests, put them into the context of the Strategic Plan and the Campus Master Plan, solicit input from the Service Organizations for potential support issues, and verify funding.

The committee should then either work with Facilities Planning and Development to develop a project or series of projects to support the requested program, or recommend further development of the program requirements from the Vice President requesting the program. Once receiving committee support, the recommended projects should be forwarded through Facilities Planning and Development to Facilities Engineering and Project Management for execution.

PROJECT DEFINITION AND FEASIBILITY

Site, Program, and Budget

For each new project, a siting study should be done, not only to determine feasibility, but also to determine the guidelines for the building's campus role that should be written into the building program. Each potential site should be studied for its characteristics and capacity before any specific program is identified for it. Major development guidelines may then be identified and made part of whatever program is identified for the site. The specific program can then be developed and tested on the site.

Site requirements are as important as functional requirements in the development of a facility program if an individual building's contribution to a good physical environment is to be achieved. A building's civic role should be a fundamental part of the facility program and should not be compromised to enhance building area.

The best approach is to perform programming, site selection, budgeting, and conceptual design as an integral process. The goal should be to make the best possible campus environment. This means that the interior and exterior public spaces of buildings need to be adequately designed and funded.

ARCHITECT SELECTION

Architect selection may be the single most important factor in the successful implementation of the Campus Master Plan. Better architects generally make better buildings, and the best architects make buildings that

relate to others to form a community of buildings. Any architect working on the campus should have an understanding of both public and private issues. Many architectural firms are "service firms"—firms that are adept at serving the client—but may not be adept at designing buildings and spaces for the public realm. Other firms promote themselves as "specialists" in a particular building type. This has an understandable appeal to users of that building type, and yet such firms may have no credentials at all in the design of buildings in context. Special effort should be made to solicit good architects, and the actual selection should be made by people qualified to evaluate them. This means that user-representatives should play a role in the selection process, but the decision should not be made by the users alone.

The Campus Master Plan acknowledges conformance to Board of Regents Rules and Regulations with regard to architect selection, but stresses that University input should be maximized.

DESIGN CONTROL

Strong design control is required to achieve a high-quality campus environment and implement the intent of the Campus Master Plan. There are many ways of accomplishing this. Design review may be the function of an individual, a group of individuals, or a committee. Often, this function is comprised of a University Architect and a Design Review Committee. These entities are concerned with the long-term viability of a project, and the promotion, development, and maintenance of the quality of the public realm. They play a significant role in the development of plans and guidelines, in architect selection, and in the design review of individual projects.

An effective process for design control also requires the active participation and cooperation of four institutional entities: the Users, the UT System Office of Facilities Planning and Construction (OFPC), a Development Committee, and the Architect. Each of these partici-

pants has a focused role or agenda, and each must be involved with all phases and accept responsibility for the implications and effects of their individual agendas.

University Architect

A University Architect is professionally responsible for the qualitative development of the campus and for the implementation, monitoring, and evolution of the Campus Master Plan. This requires vested authority from the University, and design judgment. The most important duties of the University Architect are: to sponsor and guide the development of District Plans; to guide the program/site/budget/conceptual design phase; to participate in architect solicitation and selection; and to be a leading participant in design review.

Design Review

Design review of projects has two primary goals:

1. *To monitor and ensure that projects comply with the intent of the Campus Master Plan; to interpret the plan and guidelines; to allow exceptions when appropriate; and to recommend modification or development of the Campus Master Plan as required.*
2. *To evaluate projects to ensure that they meet the highest qualitative standards.*

The design review process is the guardian of campus development and requires qualified professional judgment. All major planning, landscape, and architectural projects should be reviewed. Projects should be presented by the Project Committee and the Design Team for review. After every review, clear recommendations should be provided. Project reviews should occur at the start of design, at conceptual design, at schematic design, and at design development. The design review process should be carefully integrated into the University administration, especially as it relates to project initiation and campus development.