TURF BATTLE 2011

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Kieran Timberlake's sketch of the Northern view. Currently, a parking lot replaces the trees in the sketch.
EXISTING CONDITIONS

1 - Parking Lot

ATWATER TURF BATTLE
EXISTING CONDITIONS
2 - Atwater Quad
ATWATER TURF BATTLE
The current retention pond is mainly functional. Whether it is a visually pleasing pond is one's own opinion. Most students do not know the purpose of the space and often mistake it as an unattended area. This is one element of the Atwater Quad that discourages recreational use of the Quad. However, we believe that this space has potential to not only be a functional space but also a recreational space.
The main space in between the Atwater halls and south of the retention pond is a rather large but narrow space. There is high-traffic in this area. Students use this space to get back and forth from the halls; many students drive on the grass to get to Hall B. Such usage deters the grass conditions (above picture) and the field cannot be used for any other activity. Another reason students do not frequent the space for recreational reasons is the harsh wind tunnel that is formed by the two halls, especially during the academic year.
A visual axis from Pearsons to Atwater Dining Hall exists. Originally, this axis visually connected the college (from Pearsons) to the town of Middlebury and then to Chipman Hill. With the addition of Atwater Dining Hall, geographically the dining hall could have been an intrusion of this axis; but the green roof acknowledges the importance of the axis. In plan these axes are not recognized. The pedestrian paths in the Chateau Quad connect Coffin and the path from Bicentennial Hall with Atwater Dining Hall.

These paths ignore the existing axis and are not the most efficient paths, as can be seen in the result of students walking arbitrarily on the quad. Although students congregate on the exposed ledge located in the Chateau quad, the majority of the space is unused because the grass is damaged in arbitrary areas.
The oval shape of the dining hall allows for a natural shift to the East of the campus and to the Atwater houses.

EXISTING CONDITIONS
5 - Atwater Dining Hall
ATWATER TURF BATTLE
A gabion cage is composed of stone, enveloped in metal mesh. Gabion walls are used in river and highway embankments, noise control structural elements, etc. Gabion walls outline the Southern and South Eastern sides of Atwater Dining Hall. The gabion walls primarily serve as noise control elements; however, the walls are visually prominent and most students do not know the function of these walls.

Although the walls are close in proximity with the dining hall, it seems as if currently, the gabion walls are not a part of the Atwater campus.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

6 - Gabion Cage

ATWATER TURF BATTLE
Statement and Description: Our proposed site plan creates several clearly defined "outdoor rooms" between the Atwater buildings and creates a buffer between the Northern edge of campus and the Atwater parking lot and nearby Middlebury residences. The space will connect to Middlebury's main campus through a strong axis envisioned by Kieran-Timberlake as well as the incorporation of elements from campus such as gabion cages and local vegetation, while also creating unique space for the campus. The proposed landscaping softens the blasted imprint of the new Atwater dorms and integrates the commons into the surrounding vegetated landscape. Our approach to the commons is to embrace the slope of the terrain, which prevents it from becoming a "green" similar to Battell Beach, and instead create a more urban "plaza" and flexible entertainment or gathering space. This requires the breaking up of the current area into three separate spaces: a patio outside Chateau, a vegetated buffer, and a terraced seating area that looks out over a retention pond/stage/ice rink nestled into another vegetated screen. The separate areas will form more proportional spaces and create a rhythm of open and more intimate environments that complement each other and will cater to large performances as well as individual use.

The gravel patio outside of the Chateau creates a flexible seating area for Atwater events, as well as more seating for the dining hall; the gravel will allow drainage and prevent expansive muddy areas from forming and deterring visitors. A fire pit is envisioned here around which students can gather or cluster in separate groups, (we propose movable chairs and tables in all areas). We also propose a path on a strong axis from Pearson's to Atwater to articulate Kieran-Timberlake's vision of linking the new Atwater Commons to the existing campus through one strong axis.

In between the Chateau "patio" and the proposed terrace, we would like to extend the vegetation from the east side of Coffin Hall and plant trees to create a close environment that will contrast with the patio and terrace. The roots of the trees will absorb run-off rainwater and provide shade in the summer, as well as wind protection in the winter. This space will develop over time; it can be simply a new place to pass through in order to appreciate the openness of the others, (we imagine most will create their own paths between the trees), or a resting spot, with hammocks and chairs under the canopies.

The proposed main area of gathering is a series of terraces, which transform the slope in between the two dorms into a seatable space, and traps some of the rainwater. The terracing of this space also creates an outdoor auditorium and event space. It opens out to a view of the mountains and to the proposed platform/rink area, where students can perform or gather. In this space, we propose to incorporate gabion cages, already used by Kieran-Timberlake along the East side of Atwater Dining Hall, to act as retaining walls for the terrace. The cages remain consistent with the aesthetic that Kieran-Timberlake achieved, and provide an inexpensive and different way of featuring the cages. While we envision simple plantings in this area, (simple individual trees or smaller vegetation in between the steps), we also plan for this to be crushed stone as well to create a consistent clean aesthetic with the Chateau Quad, but also to allow drainage and a habitable space for more of the year, as groundcover does not seem to grow in the area, due to pedestrian use and the geology of the site. The terraces would also incorporate a ramp, (either by sloping the actual steps or wrapping it around), for limited vehicle use during specific times. As a
precedent for this area, we looked at the new entrance to Rem Koolhaas and OMA’s Wyly Theater in Dallas, where a terraced ramp separated by vegetation creates a simple elegant entrance to the theater.

The slope of the commons opens out to a proposed oval platform at the northern edge, nestled into the surrounding trees, (it currently opens into the parking lot). We envision this platform to be a flexible space: a stage for performances, a patio for Atwater Suites events, and a small ice-skating rink in the winter, (similar to precedents such as Maya Lin’s Ecliptic in Michigan). The platform could also be a retention pond, (which would cool the area in the summer), for the water that may be escaping from the current area between the suites due to the blasted bedrock. The platform would act as an anchor to the northern end of the commons as the Chateau does on the southern end. The oval platform/rink also references the Atwater Dining Hall, the only oval structure on Middlebury’s campus, complementing its shape. We hope to fill in the vegetation and trees surrounding the platform, (which were removed during the construction of the Atwater Suites), to better merge the commons with the surrounding vegetated landscape and to create an intimate space. The trees would also block the view of the parking lot while allowing for the view over them of the mountains, as well as block the wind lessen the wind tunnel effect that is extremely harsh during the winter months.

Our proposal creates several flexible comfortable spaces that provide Atwater Commons with several areas of gathering as well as a refuge for individuals. The contrasting open and closed spaces complement one another as a whole and allow for a stronger awareness of the spaces. The gabion cages and oval platform reference Middlebury’s campus while creating a unique and successful space. The proposal is viewed as a process and will be developed over several years as the trees, (and the college’s budget), grow.

**Budget:** The site plan is created to be flexible and develop over time. A very conservative estimate of the initial stages of the space puts us somewhere around $60-75,000, with 480 ft² of sidewalk, 25600 ft² of patio, gravel expenses, and around six trees. The hope is to plant as many trees as possible each year, but each area of the Commons, (the platform, the terrace, the trees, and the patio), are flexible and can be adapted to fit budgetary needs.

**Materials:** Trees, (evergreen, sugar maple, and other large local trees), gabion cages, gravel, concrete, freestanding chairs and tables.
1 - Seasonal Platform
2 - Terrace
3 - Ramp
4 - Tree Garden
5 - Gravel Quad
1. We propose a seasonal platform that will be located in the current retention pond. The seasonal platform will have different functions in the winter and summer seasons. In the winter we envision an ice rink and in the summer possible additional seating space or a summer stage. The oval shape is to relate to the oval shape of the Dining Hall and relate it with the Atwater Campus.

2. We propose a gabion wall as a backdrop for the seasonal platform. The gabion wall will serve as a backdrop for the seasonal platform, a wind shield, and a barrier blocking the view into the parking lot.

Ecliptic, Maya Lin, MI
Winter (Ice Rink)

Ecliptic, Maya Lin, MI
Summer (Terrace)
Possible gabion wall

PROPOSAL
1 - Seasonal Platform
ATWATER TURF BATTLE
PROPOSAL

1 - Seasonal Platform

ATWATER TURF BATTLE
PROPOSAL
1 - Seasonal Platform
ATWATER TURF BATTLE
We propose a ramp for vehicular access, and a terrace for a social space facing the seasonal platform.

1. The terrace will have flexible functions, it could serve as seating for an audience or a space for students to use however they see fit.

2. Although detrimental to the grass, vehicular access is an element that we would not want to keep from the students. Therefore a paved vehicular passageway would be ideal, and it would wrap the terrace.

Dee Charles Wyly Theater, OMA, TX
View of the outside terrace towards the Dallas Opera (Left & Right)
Dee Charles Wyly Theater, OMA, TX

View of the outside terrace. The Dee Charles Wyly Theater is located across from the Dallas Opera. The terrace leads people and views towards the Dee Charles Wyly Theater; however by placing benches facing the Dallas Opera at the top of the terrace (right), there isn’t a competition between the two spaces. Such detailing would be beneficial in the Atwater quad because the proposed terrace and ramp will only cover a part of the quad.
Dee Charles Wyly Theater, OMA, TX

Both the flat access path directly enveloping the terrace and the elevated access path on street level would be possibilities for the vehicular passage.
We propose a tree garden at the Southern end of the Atwater quad. The tree garden would be the most intimate space out of all of our proposed spaces. We would like the trees to be placed in possible rows or on a grid system. This way the trees may outline the boundaries of the proposed usable space, but as well as allow for other possibilities such as hammocks or tightrope walking between trees.
Possible view towards the North.
We propose a gravel field possibly with chairs and tables or gabion benches for the current Chateau Quad. The gravel field would eliminate the current gravel pathways and create a quad in which pedestrians are free to choose their own path. This would eliminate the ruined grass field, as it is apparent pedestrians do not only use the current designated path. Also, this will add social space in the quad. The current exposed ledge is the boundary for social space in this area, but the gravel quad would extend outdoor social space.
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