

The Evolution of MSU Landscape: Looking into the Center of Campus

What began as 676 acres of dense woodland would eventually develop into what we know today as Michigan State University. The campus has evolved both physically and socially over its 156 year history. By looking at these physical and social changes, one can follow the migration of the location of the “heart”, or the center of campus. It is important to look at the center of campus both physically and socially for it helps decipher reasons behind landscape change and growth and students’ perception of campus. By looking at physical changes, such as location of building construction, land use, and placement of monuments, as well as social changes such as traditions, academic structure, and student events, we can gain a better understanding of the evolution of Michigan State’s campus landscape. This research has been divided into six time-based phases. The Campus Archaeology Program has established the first four, while the last two are constructed based on the information found relevant to this research. The phases are as follows: Phase I: 1855-1875, Phase II: 1875-1900, Phase III: 1900-1925, Phase IV. 1925 – 1955, Phase V: 1955 – present era, Phase VI: future. Over the course of the University’s history, we have seen the physical and metaphorical “heart” of campus shift to various locations around campus. Throughout this paper, the physical and social changes occurring in each phase will be examined in relation to how they have shaped the evolution of the center of campus.

The mid-1800s in the United States continued a period of industrial and agricultural development. As the growth of science and in particular, agricultural science, was beginning to expand, the state of Michigan saw a need for an agricultural college. On February 12, 1855, the Michigan Legislature passed an act enabling the government to establish a State Agricultural

College. The act, signed into law by Governor Kinsley Bingham, mandated that the proposed site be within ten miles of Lansing, between five hundred and one thousand acres, and not to exceed the price of fifteen dollars per acre (Michigan State Legislature Session Laws of 1855). The legislature decided on Burr Farm, located 3.5 miles east of Lansing to be developed into the college campus. The 676.57 acre land was purchased for \$10,148.55. Overtime, this farm would be transformed into Michigan State University.

At the time of the purchase, the land was primarily a heavily wooded forest. In addition to two small clearings, there existed a cabin and fields belonging to Robert Burcham, located west-northwest of the current music practice building, and the Smith Farm, located between present day Bogue Street and Collingwood Street. When deciding on where to begin construction for the future buildings, it was a natural oak opening that gave way to the construction of the first building on campus, College Hall. College Hall was the first building in America erected for instruction in scientific agriculture (Kuhn 1955:13). Madison Kuhn, one of the first historians at Michigan State explains, “The hill where Beaumont Tower stands [the past location of College Hall] was chosen as a building site because it was not only central and elevated, but it was an oak opening whose scattered trees gave it a park-like quality” (Kuhn 1955:12). It was a man named John Holmes who was instrumental during the beginnings of the conception of these buildings. He had no official connection with the college or board, but was the co-founder of the Michigan State Agriculture Society. Based on his knowledge of agriculture, he was asked to submit a design for the buildings that would become Michigan State. Due to the unique nature of this revolutionary institution, the different course of study would determine the nature of the buildings. Kuhn adds, “The board recognized that the simple lecture-recitation rooms of a classical college would not suffice for a school of science and agriculture” (Kuhn 1955:13).

Holmes, along with the College Board, developed a plan that once completed would yield the first “campus” of Michigan State University.

The Agricultural College of the State of Michigan opened its doors on May 13, 1857. On opening day the land occupation was concentrated on the north side of the Red Cedar River between the river and Lansing-Howell Plank Road (present day Grand River Avenue). On opening day, the college campus looked very different than it does today. The landscape consisted of the following: three faculty houses, a brickyard, Burcham Cabin, Smith House, College Hall dormitory and barn, Jipson’s woods, and an Indian encampment on the south side of the Red Cedar River (Map. *Michigan Agricultural College on Opening Day May 13, 1857*). Within the first twenty-five years of the college, two more buildings would be added to this campus: Saints Rest (1856) and Williams Hall (1870). Saints Rest served as the only dormitory on campus until Williams Hall was built in 1870. In addition to rooms for the students, there were parlors, living rooms, and a large dining room. Due to the poor condition of the road between Lansing and the College, it was impossible for students to live in the city and attend college classes; this issue required all students to live in Saints Rest (Beal 1915:267). This structure served as the central location for all students attending the university at this time. Williams Hall was opened for use in 1870 and housed 80 male students. The basement dining room made this building the central location during meal times, for every student would gather here to partake in their meals. College Hall was perhaps the most important of these three. College Hall is where classes took place, events were held, and where students socialized. The use of the building transformed it into the social center of campus. One of the main features attributed to this structure was the bell that “rang the students out of bed, sounded alarms, [and] hailed athletic victories. It [also] invited pranks, such as filing it with water to drench the bell-

puller, or stealing the clapper to throw classes and work schedules out of kilter” (Wolverine Yearbook 1955:64). This chiming of the bell became the staple of the student’s life at MAC. At this time, the College Hall area of campus was not only the literal geographical center of campus but it served as the social center as well.

Trends in land use serve a very important purpose in determining where the social center of campus was located at this time. As the university was beginning to decide how to structure their curriculum, the administration was faced with a problem. The concept of an agricultural college was new, and therefore there was an issue in figuring out how to teach a scientific agriculture based program. Laboratory practices and manual labor would serve as the most important aspects of the students’ academic curriculum. Laboratory practices became a staple to every student’s training. In the early stages of the university, all of the laboratory practices were taught in College Hall (the other buildings designed to house the labs were not yet erected). Another staple to the student’s programs were the requirements to perform manual labor. The administration thought it was important to apply concepts learned in the classrooms to real life. The manual labor focus of the curriculum determined the irregular school year that was set up at this time. This irregular school year, with the break taking place in the winter months, allowed for the farming schedule. The farms were located on the south-eastern part of campus where the present day Natural Science building, Giltner Hall, Snyder-Philips Halls, Kresge Art Center, and the Auditorium are located. This practice of manual labor would continue until the late 1800s. Although a primary portion of their days were spent in the fields working, these areas did not serve as a center of social life. Rather, they were where work took place. It was the three primary buildings, Saints Rest, Williams Hall, and College Hall, that served as social centers for students.

Social life of the students during the first phase of the university from 1855-1875 was concentrated around the College Hall area. Due to the lack of development of the campus at this time, there was not many activities for the students to engage in besides their curriculum and time spent in their dormitory. When students moved to MAC they quickly found out that all student activity took place in their new dormitory. Keith Widder explains, “Within their newly adopted four walls, each student studied, argued with roommates, slept, plotted pranks, complained, composed essays, read, created disturbances, kept diaries, and wrote letters to friends and families back home” (Widder 2005:287). Throughout this time period, student social life revolved around three buildings.

During this first phase of the university, from 1855 to 1875, it can be argued that the center of campus appears to be located around the College Hall, Saints Rest, and Williams Hall area. This can be seen through physical indicators such as the deliberate choice in building location for these structures. They were built on a hill with a natural oak opening and built within close proximity of one another. It was the location of these first few buildings that would establish the landscape planning for any building construction in the future. The social center of campus also seems to be located in this same area. This becomes evident through the observation of the location of student activities. Although the academic curriculum was were split between laboratory/classroom work and labor in the fields, the majority of student interaction and social activities took place within the dormitories. As we progress into the second phase of MSU’s history, from 1875 to 1900, we continue to see the College Hall area serve as the center of the university both geographically and metaphorically.

During the years encompassing the second phase of the university, from 1875-1900, we see campus changing drastically both physically and socially. There is a rapid growth in new

building construction. Many of these new buildings erected during this phase would serve as extremely important structures in campus development. Furthermore, we see the first campus plan emerge with the establishment of the Committee on Buildings and College Property. Adam Oliver, a landscape gardener from Kalamazoo was hired to provide the initial scheme for roads, walks, and building sites (Stanford and Dewhurst 2002:10). This period was also the first time that the campus was described as a college park. Theophilus Abbott, the University president of the time, coined the term. This reference would be used throughout history and also transcend into present times. This period of campus development is “when student enrollment and teaching staff were growing to the level of a mature college, and the curriculum was expanding to meet new educational needs, MAC grew physically, slowly at the beginning, then with significant gains in momentum” (Wolverine Yearbook 1955:54). Despite these changes, the center of campus does not shift away from the location of the College Hall area.

The campus underwent radical physical changes with the construction of various new buildings that would prove to be very important structures. Five major buildings were erected during this time. The Chemical Laboratory, known as the “Chem Fort” by students was built in 1869. This structure was the first laboratory on campus and would serve as a central academic building until its leveling to make way for the present day library. After Saints Rest burned down in 1876, the university saw a need for a new dormitory. The first Wells Hall was erected in 1878 and named for the board president Hezekiah G. Wells (Kuhn 1955:83). Wells Hall at this time was the building on campus capable of housing the most students and therefore became an integral part of student social life. Linton Hall was another important structure established during this time period. Erected in 1881, and still standing today, Linton Hall was the home of the library, museum, and the offices of the president and secretary. In 1886, the Armory,

perhaps the most influential building, was erected. This structure was built to be used as an assembly room, and have military, drill, armory, and lecture purposes. As years progressed the Armory would continue to serve as the home for school dances, a large aspect of student life outside of academics. Finally, Abbott Hall was built in 1888. This was the third dormitory on campus in addition to Williams and Wells halls and was planned to be smaller than the other two to avoid the revelry that was a regular occurrence in the larger halls (Kuhn 1955:145). The decision on choosing a location to build these new buildings was deliberately planned. The settlement pattern of these new structures indicates where the administration believed the most central area of campus was located.

The social changes that were occurring during this time period changed student life outside of the classroom in a way that the university had not seen before. 1896 marked the year that the women's program at Michigan Agricultural College was established. Even though it was not until 1900, with the construction of Morrill Hall when the program really took off, the campus saw its first co-eds in 1895. With the establishment of this new program, women could learn how to perfect the art and science of homemaking or pursue careers outside of the home. The presence of women on campus ignited an evolution of student social life. We see student activities outside of the classroom becoming an integral part of the university as male students were beginning to enjoy female company in a non-academic setting. Henry Haigh, class of 1874, remembers sitting across the dinner table from Belle Allen, Mollie Jones, and Libby Sessions, three of the first women to attend MAC. In his diary, he writes "I promptly fell in love with all of them and they were an influence for good" (Haigh, Diary). It was this introduction of women into the college setting that altered the social life of students at Michigan Agricultural College.

Phase two appears to be one of growth and change both physically and socially. MAC began to mature slowly with the construction of important new structures that would influence both academics and social life. The location of these buildings is important to note as well as they are all located in very close proximity to College Hall, keeping the geographic center of campus static. Furthermore, the full integration of women into the college would heavily impact student social activities. With the introduction of coeds, the student social life becomes focused away from the academic and dormitory life and shifts to outside of the classroom and residence halls. As we progress into phase three of the university, from 1900-1925, we continue to see the campus expanding both socially and physically.

During the third phase, from 1900-1925, we see various changes taking place affecting both the landscape and the social life of students. In 1905, President Snyder hired Ossian Cole Simonds, a landscape gardener, to conduct a careful survey of the college campus and to offer suggestions for the building location of new businesses as well as general improvements. Simonds offered many suggestions that the university board approved and implemented over time. Linda Stanford and Kurt Dewhurst, in their book *MSU Campus: Buildings, Spaces, and Places* explain the most significant contribution made by Simonds:

“Among these [suggestions], the most important was his recommendation regarding the ‘sacred space’. It had the most profound philosophical impact on subsequent planning for the entire campus. By naming the oak opening the sacred space, Simonds imbued it with spiritual reverence. It became something to be appreciated, preserved, and studied” (Stanford and Dewhurst 2002:14).

His deeming of the area around College Hall the “sacred space” would influence the future building plans for Michigan State University. In addition, during this phase of the history of

University, funding from the state and the government became more readily available. This increase in funding led to the increased construction of numerous buildings.

During phase three we also see the university begin changing socially. During the early 20th century, we see traditions begin to shape the university's social atmosphere. With the addition of the parade grounds (the present day Walter Adams Field), the ball grounds, and the football grounds, student life begins to shift as a greater focus is placed on activities and traditions. Furthermore, World War I is occurring during this phase. Over the course of the war, the MAC campus evolved into a military camp-like atmosphere. Students were being prepared to become more proficient in their uses of technology and machines to help with the war efforts. The sight of a uniformed man was not uncommon and the college decided to become an ally in the war effort as it expanded the way that it trained young people to serve the public (Widder 2005:408). These collective changes influenced the social life on campus at this time in MSU history.

As previously stated, the MAC campus underwent extreme physical changes during phase three. The first comprehensive campus plan was established during the early years of this phase. The College Board hired Frederick L. Olmstead Jr. and John Charles Olmstead of the firm Olmstead Brothers to create this plan in 1915. The Olmstead company was known for designing important areas such as Central Park in New York City, the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, and Belle Isle Park in Detroit. The selection of this firm represented "the strong Michigan State commitment to the development of the campus park as a lace for buildings and nature" (Stanford and Dewhurst 2002:15). The Olmsteads devised a plan to include more buildings within walking distance of one another seeing as though the only mode of transportation at this time was by foot. They were faced with a problem however; it was

important to keep the buildings close to one another, yet at the same time they had to be conscious of keeping the sacred space open and maintaining the park like quality of the university. It was decided that all of the academic and service buildings were to be kept on one side of the oak opening, and new building construction would expand south and east onto the farmland (Stanford and Dewhurst 2002:16). While planning the future construction sites, the institutional concern of providing more on campus housing was brought up. The Olmstead brothers proposed sites for men's and women's dormitories. The proposed location for the women's hall was between the present sites of Morrill Hall and Farm Lane and the proposed site for the men's hall was south of the Cowles House. Although these locations were not used to build housing structures as according to Olmstead's plan, they were used for the construction of other buildings such as Olin Health Center, Berkey Hall, and the Music Building. I would argue that had these sites been used for residence halls, the social center of campus would have been altered for it would have separated students by being located on opposite sides of campus. Another key influence that the Olmstead Brothers had on the planning of MSU's campus is the endorsement for an area south of the Red Cedar River that would become the football stadium (Stanford and Dewhurst 2002:18). This decision would have a lasting impact on the social center of campus.

As a result of the proposed campus plan, we see the construction of various new buildings emerge. The expansion of the campus for academic buildings was shifting due east and both sides of the Red Cedar River were now being utilized for construction (Stanford and Dewhurst 2002:15). The decision in the placement of these buildings is important to note. The agricultural fields were chosen as building sites because they were flat, open, and already developed. There was not a large amount of effort that had to go into preparing these sites for

construction. As a result, the agricultural fields continued to get pushed further south. A few buildings that were added to campus at this time had lasting impacts on the culture of Michigan State University. Morrill Hall opened in 1900 and was the dormitory for co-ed students. Known as “the coop” to the male students, Morrill Hall was able to house 120 individuals, and had a large dining room, and beautiful gymnasium. This hall became a home to many female students and their presence on campus surely influenced campus life. Agriculture Hall (1909) was another important building erected during phase three. At the time of construction, Agriculture Hall was the largest and most noticeable building on campus. It stood as a “symbol of a modern land-grant college and of contemporary approaches to agricultural research” (Stanford and Dewhurst 2002:55). Two other buildings were constructed around this time, but were located further east. The second Dairy Buildings and Giltner Hall both began the major building expansion eastward. As the location of new building sites began to move eastward, we begin to see the geographical center of campus shifting slowly. With the expansion eastward, College Hall is no longer the geographical center of campus.

In addition to the building expansion and campus plan, we also see an extreme growth in social changes during phase three. In this period, we see the growth of traditions as well as organized social clubs. Both of these things influenced the way in which students interact in a non academic setting. The introduction of campus traditions became very important in student social life. Traditions such as the annual barbeque, the night shirt parade, and class rushes all had a lasting impact on the culture at MSU. These events all took place within the Sacred Space area. Furthermore, it was in this phase that literary societies and fraternities emerged on campus. These groups had a presence since the beginnings of the college, but existed merely as local organizations. It was not until the 1920s that they emerged as official societies and fraternities

recognized by the university. The majority of these became official beginning around 1900. Literary societies in particular played an important role in the development of social life on campus. They “stimulated intellectual life outside of the classroom, gave birth to student publications, and staged dances and parties, all of which enriched the lives of M.A.C. students (Widder 2005:292). These organizations would host a multitude of parties and dances throughout the year which integrated male and female students socially along with members of the faculty. These organized events became an important piece of student life. The 1955 Wolverine Yearbook comments on the impact that these societies had on the campus: “Through the 19th century, and on into the 20th, societies out-paced athletics as a student-life interest. There were organizations in literature, music, art, and the sciences, including agricultures” (Wolverine Yearbook 1955:43). Social life evolved on campus due to many of these events and traditions. We also know that they all took place on campus; many of the dances took place in the Armory, the Barbeque in Sleepy Hollow, the Night Shirt Parade in front of Wells Hall. Each of these places surrounded the Sacred Space area. This area continued to remain the heart of MAC’s social life during this phase.

Despite a shift in the geographical center of campus as buildings were erected to the east on the open fields, we are still seeing the social center remain static by College Hall and the Sacred Space area. The Armory building begins to play a major role in hosting various social events put on by the new formally established literary societies and clubs. Furthermore, these events are concentrated in the area that is home to all of the dormitories for students. With Morrill Hall to the east, Wells hall to the south, and Abbott Hall to the west, the dormitories created a certain boundary that enclosed the majority of the space where the events took place. By having the events in essentially the middle of this ring of buildings, they were able to cater to

all students as the social events were held in the middle of the living quarters. Phase three of the University's history, from 1900-1925 brings with it a growth and expansion in buildings and construction as well as an evolution in student societies and activities. As we progress into phase four, we see this evolution progress to a greater degree.

The years between 1925 and 1955 were extremely significant in shaping the university into the institution it is today. This phase was one of rapid campus development. Construction boomed with the introduction of the automobile to campus as well as the acquisition of more land. The agricultural areas once again, become the choice locations for development. This phase also marks the beginning of the John Hannah era. John Hannah became president of Michigan State College in 1941 and served as secretary before that. Hannah was the primary individual responsible for the rapid growth of campus. During his time as secretary and subsequent time as president, he acquired a total of about 7,000 acres (Thomas 2008:15). It is during this phase of campus history where we see the university transform into a similar image of how it appears today.

Phase four brought with it a plethora of physical changes. First and foremost, the college board decided to create another campus plan. They hired landscape architect and city planner from Detroit, T. Glenn Phillips. In his plan of 1926, he envisioned the land north of the Red Cedar dedicated to academic expansion while the land south of the river to be used for athletics and agricultural purposes. In agreement with Olmstead's plans, Phillips would strive to maintain the area known as the Sacred Space and also to incorporate many of the building sites and land uses already suggested by the brothers back in 1915. In addition to using elements of the old plan, Phillips would create his own plan as well. Phillips offers the following suggestions: move the circular drive from the west side to the east side of Linton Hall; create East Circle Drive;

permanently establish athletic fields and facilities south of the river; construct women's dormitories west of Abbot Road and West Circle Drive; construct other dormitories that would occupy the area where Mason-Abbott Snyder-Phillips halls stand today. As we can see today, the board implemented most of Phillips suggestions. Phillips, in his 1926 campus plan, "was able to succeed where the Olmstead Brothers did not, in extending the ambience of the oak opening or sacred space to the whole area north of the Red Cedar River and along its south bank as well" (Stanford and Dewhurst 2002:19). Phillips paved the way for the future construction and expansion of Michigan State University.

Using Phillip's plan as a guideline, the university constructed additional roads throughout campus. With the introduction of the automobile to campus, the additional roads made getting around campus easier. At this same time, the enrollment of the university skyrocketed. In 1932, there were 3,272 students enrolled; fifteen years later in 1947, enrollment increased to 14,979 students (Thomas 2008:134). This increase in enrollment caused the College Board to make sure that the new developments created a balance between academic and housing structures. Between 1926 and 1940, we see campus development expand immensely. During the Depression, public campuses such as Michigan State were eligible to receive federal New Deal program funding thus allowing for the construction of the following buildings: music building, current museum, an addition to the Union, Campbell Williams and Mayo Halls, Olin, Botany Greenhouses, North Kedzie, auditorium, three additions to Giltner Hall, Mason-Abbot, Jenison Field House, Demonstration Hall, and the beginning construction phases of the Library (Stanford and Dewhurst 2002:21). Each of these buildings still stands today and are still of significant importance.

The years during and after World War II had a significant impact on the physical landscape of MSU. During the years of the war, there was very little construction happening not only on Michigan State's campus, but in the United States as well. Building materials were scarce and those that did exist were diverted to the war effort. When WWII ended, the university yet again saw another increase in enrollment. Most of the newly enrolled were retired war veterans. The increase in the war veterans required a need for more housing. The 1955 Wolverine recalls the first strive towards housing for these individuals and their families: "By February 1946, a handful of trailers huddled together in a barren area opposite Jenison Field House. Two years later there were 450, set up neatly in sections organized around their own utility houses, recreation halls and cooperative stores" (Wolverine Yearbook 1955:97). Also in 1946, we see the Quonsets being erected. These structures were used to house war veterans and their families and were located south of Kalamazoo Street near Harrison Road.

Of all of these physical changes occurring to the landscape at this time in MSU's history, especially the construction of new buildings, two structures stand as important markers of how people viewed their university at this time. Beginning in the early 20th century, there was great interest for the construction of a Union Building. There was a decision made to renovate College Hall into this structure as not only a way to satisfy interest in a student social center, but to save the deteriorating landmark (Kuhn 1955:263). The age and poor construction of the building became apparent as two walls of the structure crumbled during the renovation process. It was decided that rather to abandon the project in its entirety, that a new building would be constructed. The Union in and of itself is a fascinating structure with a lot of history in regards to how it was funded, who built it, etc. however, in relation to this study, it is important to note the location of the structure. The Union was built to serve as a social center for MAC students

housing a ballroom, meeting places, lounges, a soda bar, a cafeteria, a billiard room, a barber shop, a beauty parlor, and hotel rooms for visiting guests (Kuhn 1955:266). This building would serve as the heart of campus with the majority of student social life concentrated here. I would argue that its choice location of construction says a lot about where the university perceived its center of campus to be. Despite the new construction occurring to the east, the Union's location to the north of the sacred place proves that this general area of campus is where the "heart" of campus was located at this time. In addition to the Union, the construction of Beaumont Tower visually represents the idea of the center of campus during this era.

Beaumont Tower was erected in 1928 on the northeast corner of the site of College Hall. The construction of Beaumont Tower illustrates the ideologies that people held of campus at this point in time. After the collapse and subsequent leveling of College Hall, this area of the Sacred Space was empty. We have seen that at this time, the University was slowly growing and the demand for new buildings was steadily increasing. Madison Kuhn notes, the construction of Beaumont "preserved the memory of College Hall and protected the areas from gargantuan structures that a growing college required" (Kuhn 1955:352). Rather than build another large academic or residence building on the site, the University decided to commemorate this area and preserve it as an element of the Sacred Space. This conscious decision places value in this area that once held a structure that used to be the social center of campus. The construction of Beaumont Tower continues to identify this area of MSU's landscape as the "heart" of campus as it attempts to preserve the original core landscape.

Phase four also brings with it important social changes that will have an influence on the center of the university's landscape. During this time period, sports rapidly developed at MSC. Although sporting events were being held since the late 19th century, it was not until 1925 when

most athletic teams began to compete at the intercollegiate level. At this same time, sports start to become an integral part of the university's student social life. Men's sports teams begin to compete at the intercollegiate level in football, basketball, ice hockey, wrestling, track and field, swimming and diving, baseball, tennis, cross country and rifle shooting; women's teams competing at the intercollegiate level included tennis swimming and rifle shooting. Among all of these teams, football would have the biggest impact on student social life. The football games would turn the M.A.C. Field into the center of campus on game-days, a tradition that still holds true today. With the integration of sporting events into university social life, we see areas both north and south of the river beginning to serve as social centers.

The increased interest in sporting events influenced the social center of campus as did many other events during this same phase. We see the integration of sororities and fraternities as a part of campus life, the tradition of dances continuing to occur, and theatrical productions having a new home in the auditorium. Each of these things further influenced student social life on campus. Sororities and Fraternities would host events on campus such as the Red Cedar tug-of-war, Union activities, and academic competitions. Dances, a tradition since the beginning of the 20th century, were continuing to take place. Most often they would occur either off campus or at the Union building. The construction of the auditorium gave theatrical productions a new venue to showcase performances. During WWII, activities on campus began to fade as efforts were placed on supporting the war. Following the war however, Kuhn notes an explosion of campus activities. He explains that this decline in events during the war "was followed by an eruption of campus activities as old groups and old customs were revived and new ones developed... This burst of energy fostered new movements that promised to become integral parts of college life (Kuhn 1955:457). As one can see, the social life of students was no longer

concentrated in one area of campus, but was beginning to spread all throughout the landscape. It is in phase four where we no longer see one social center of campus, but rather various locations around campus that would serve this purpose.

Phase four represented a time of extreme physical and social change in the history of Michigan State University. A construction boom brought with it new buildings located on both sides of the Red Cedar as well as on both the east and west sides of campus. These buildings were constructed to meet the demand of the increased student population. The growth in land use at this time affected the geographical center of campus, moving it from the College Hall/Sacred Space Area to a location south east of this area. It was becoming clear that that “the campus plan was no longer guided by an open space idea” but rather one whose goal it was to meet the growing student population (Michigan State University: Campus Master Plan). The introduction of the automobile no longer restricted construction to areas within walking distance of one another. Socially, college life exploded. Following the war, an explosion of social events developed on campus. Taking place in various locations, such as the Union building, the football field, the auditorium, and areas along the river, we see there no longer being one concentrated area that we can call the social center of campus. As we move into phase five, we continue to see an evolution in both the physical landscape and social life and how they influence the center of campus geographically and metaphorically.

Phase five, from 1955 to the present, encompasses a wide spectrum of changes at Michigan State University. Throughout this phase, the campus develops into what we know today as the familiar campus of Michigan State University as student population booms, new buildings are constructed that serve academic and housing purposes, and the campus is transformed into a nationally-recognized university. Each decade throughout phase five brings

with its new ideals, growth, and identity. During this phase it becomes difficult to identify each and every element that affects either the physical center or social center on campus, yet there are a few defining events or construction projects that speak to this issue.

The campus evolves physically in numerous ways. There is major expansion to the east and to the south. Parking structures and lots are erected in various locations around campus in an attempt to meet student needs as the automobile becomes a primary mode of transportation. The historic north campus remains the same as the Sacred Space still continues to be preserved. New facilities for sports are constructed such as Munn Ice Arena and the Breslin Center. Their close proximity to the existing sports complexes denotes that the south west area of campus is the center for athletic events. As the campus expands in all directions, we see the center of campus geographically shift to the rough area around Shaw and Farm Lanes. The university has even marked this area with commemorative pillars. Since 1955, Michigan State University has grown to a size of about 5,200 acres and has 521 buildings (Michigan State University Physical Plant Division 2011).

The university sees an enormous change in student social life during phase five. Dances, that were popular in the 1950s continued to be an important aspect of campus throughout the following decade. Alumni Tim Knight notes that the Shaw Hall mixers were an enormous part of student life bringing together people from across campus (e-mail to author November 7, 2011). Beginning in the early 1960s, philosophies were beginning to change and students seemed more willing to stand up for change (Thomas 2008:375). The escalation of the Vietnam War caused controversy among students. Knight notes that that “The center of campus moved to Beaumont Park as the old Administration Building [now known as Linton Hall] was right there for sit-ins, and the area around Beaumont Tower was perfect for protest meetings... When the current

administration building opened, it was in close enough proximity that Beaumont Park remained the campus center” (e-mail to author November 7, 2011). As the 1970s approached, we begin to see even more evidence of student protest. On April 25, 1970, campus sees the establishment of People’s Park. The open area by Wells Hall and the International Center was “claimed” by students for their use and became a spot where “Students hung out, pitched tents, painted the chain link fences in rainbow colors, [and] sang” (e-mail to author November 7, 2011). As the 1970s progressed, we see more protesting occurring around the current administration building and Beaumont Tower. It appears as though these areas, People’s Park, the Administration Building, and Beaumont Tower, were areas viewed as the center of campus for students.

With the onset of the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s, there was an extreme decline in protests and student social life changed yet again. Dances have disappeared, traditional events have become a thing of the past, and the campus has grown to such an enormous scale both physically and in population size that there seems to be a loss in a location that all students would identify as the only social center of campus. It appears as though the social center of campus in present times is dependent on the individual to whom this question is being asked. Due to the fact that there are no longer events being held in one consistent area, each person associated with MSU has begun to form their own idea of where the center of campus is located. This notion is based on individual experiences that each individual holds to their career as a Spartan. For a football player or avid fan, the heart of campus might be the stadium. For a theater major who spends most of their time in the auditorium might say that is their center. For someone like me who is a MSU history lover and a four-year resident of the West Circle residence halls, I would call the Sacred Space my heart of campus. The growth of the campus has influenced the way individuals

perceive the social heart of campus to be located. Rather than one location serving this role, we see various different areas serve as the heart of campus to a range of individuals.

Over the past fifty years, we have can see the original idea of a campus park disappearing and being replaced by the emergence of numerous buildings and parking structures. As Michigan State continues to grow, “the university set out to develop a comprehensive plan for guiding future growth and campus development” (Michigan State University: Campus Master Plan). This plan, the *2020 Vision*, was developed in 1999 and serves as a guide to long-term physical development of MSU’s campus. It will focus on “the overall organization and character of campus systems including land use, buildings, motorized and non-motorized circulation, open space, and supporting infrastructure” (Michigan State University: Campus Master Plan). It hopes to guide campus development over the next year and place emphasis on extending the park-like quality set forth by the original campus, enchainning pedestrian environment and developing campus in an environmentally sensitive manner.

One of the main goals of the *2020 Vision* master plan is to conserve the Sacred Space, for it reveals aspects of our campus’ origin and development (Michigan State University: Campus Master Plan). I believe that this action says something about the historical center of campus. The need to preserve this space reveals the ideologies of the campus planners as they make a conscious decision to expand the campus while preserving an area that was forever a vital area in our campus’ history. Another goal set forth in the *2020 Vision* is to address parking. When the automobile became the primary means of transportation on campus during phase four, we saw an extreme growth in campus, for building locations were no longer restricted to areas within walking distance of one another. This change caused an increase in parking lots and structures. Still, we see parking as an issue as the campus continues to grow. The *2020 Vision* suggests

moving parking to the perimeters of campus or build more ramps (Master Plan Parking). The building of ramps would eliminate the need for many lots and therefore increase open green space. Finally, we see the creation of a People's Park as another goal of the 2020 Vision. Here one can expect to see the Shaw Hall and International Center Parking lots become a large park with green space. Gazebo structures are projected to grace the banks of the Red Cedar as well as an outdoor amphitheater, the planting of more trees and the placement of more benches. All of these changes will hopefully create a park-like quality in what has become the geographical center of campus. Overall, the 2020 Vision aims to foster growth and development at MSU while striving towards a more park-like university.

As we look back over the course of the university's history, we see the heart or center of campus evolve over time. The geographical center becomes different from the social center of campus and eventually the social center becomes a location based upon each person's individual ideology. The construction of new buildings, establishment of events and traditions, shift in academic curriculum, location and use of monuments, change in ideologies of the times, and events occurring elsewhere in the world have all influenced the evolution of landscape and student social life at Michigan State University. Each of these factors, among many others, all play a vital role in tracing the literal and metaphorical "heart" of MSU's campus. The University has evolved and has even created a plan for its future development, yet I expect the center of campus to be ever-changing. As the University grows and the needs of students evolve, the location of the "heart" of campus will progress as well.

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