



TROWBRIDGE & WOLF
Landscape Architects Planners

August 21, 2002

**WEST CAMPUS RESIDENTIAL INITIATIVE DEIS
ADDENDUM THREE**

1. **Replace** pages 121-a, 121-b and 121-c Section 2.11 Community Character at University Avenue Parking Lot, **Addendum 2**, and Figure 2.11A Community Character with the attached **Revised** Section 2.11 and **Revised** Figure 2.11, **Addendum 3**, dated August 22, 2002. (pages 121-a, 121-b, 121-c and 121-d)
2. **Chapter Four**, Section 4.2 Alternatives to University Avenue Surface Parking, 4.2.:
ADD the attached pages 147-a, 147-b, and 147-c, **4.2.5 Parking distributed on Multiple Sites**, to the end of the section
3. Proposed City of Ithaca Water Tank at the Site of the Proposed University Avenue Parking Lot:
ADD the attached section, including Appendix to Addendum Three, to the back of the WCRI DEIS.

2.11 Community Character at University Avenue Parking Lot

Existing Community Character. The areas immediately surrounding the proposed University Avenue parking site is comprised of a mix of apartment buildings, Greek houses, student cooperatives, an academic facility, multi-family housing and two single-family residences. The site is located two blocks from the central campus and so housing is predominately student housing. Ravenwood apartments, an approximately 46-unit apartment building, and its associated surface parking lot is located directly across the street to the west of the project. There are twenty-three structures located on University Avenue between Cascadilla Park Road and Ravenwood apartments. The following information was collected from the tax assessment office and site visits. According to these sources, the twenty-three structures consist of the following:

- 6 single-family residences
- 3 two-family residences
- 1 three-family residence
- 5 apartment buildings with approximately 3-4 apartment units
- 8 apartment buildings with more than 4 apartment units

The University Hill Neighborhood has reported that 8 of these structures are owner-occupied. The University Hill Neighborhood has also reported significant changes in ownership over the past decade, resulting in many upgrades to properties in the neighborhood. Transfer of ownership on University Avenue is reported by the University Hill Neighborhood as follows:

- 14 properties changed ownership in the past 5 years or are currently for sale
- 17 properties changed ownership in the past 10 years
- 6 properties have not changed ownership in the past 10 years

Of the 23 structures on University Avenue, 6 are located across the street from the parking lot. Of these 6 structures, 4 are apartment buildings with 3-7 apartments, one is a two-family house, and one is a three-family house.

To the north of the site is the Kappa Sigma Fraternity, 614 University Avenue which is a residential-scale building housing apartments, and the Belleayre Apartment building, which largely houses graduate students. To the east is the Von Cramm Fraternity, student cooperative housing at 660 Stewart Avenue, and the Kahin Center, an Asian studies academic facility. Delta Phi fraternity is located to the south of the site. Figure 2.11.A *Community Character* illustrates housing types in the vicinity of the project.

Impacts to Existing Community Character. As is noted above, the project is located near the central campus. Areas immediately surrounding the proposed project site are multi-family student residential. Ravenwood apartments and the multi-family buildings to the north and east of the site have associated surface parking lots. As one moves south along University Avenue, further from the project site, the number of single family residences increases. For this reason the proposed parking lot and entrance are located as far north on the site as possible, adjacent to predominantly multi-family development. Several characteristics of the design of the project are intended to minimize its visibility from adjacent properties and will serve to mitigate its impact on structures along University Avenue. These include maintaining a continuous band of vegetation between the west edge of the parking lot and University Avenue, terracing the lot so that only portions of it are visible from any viewpoint, raising the lot above University Avenue to increase the separation from the site and structures on University Avenue, substantial new landscape plantings to screen the

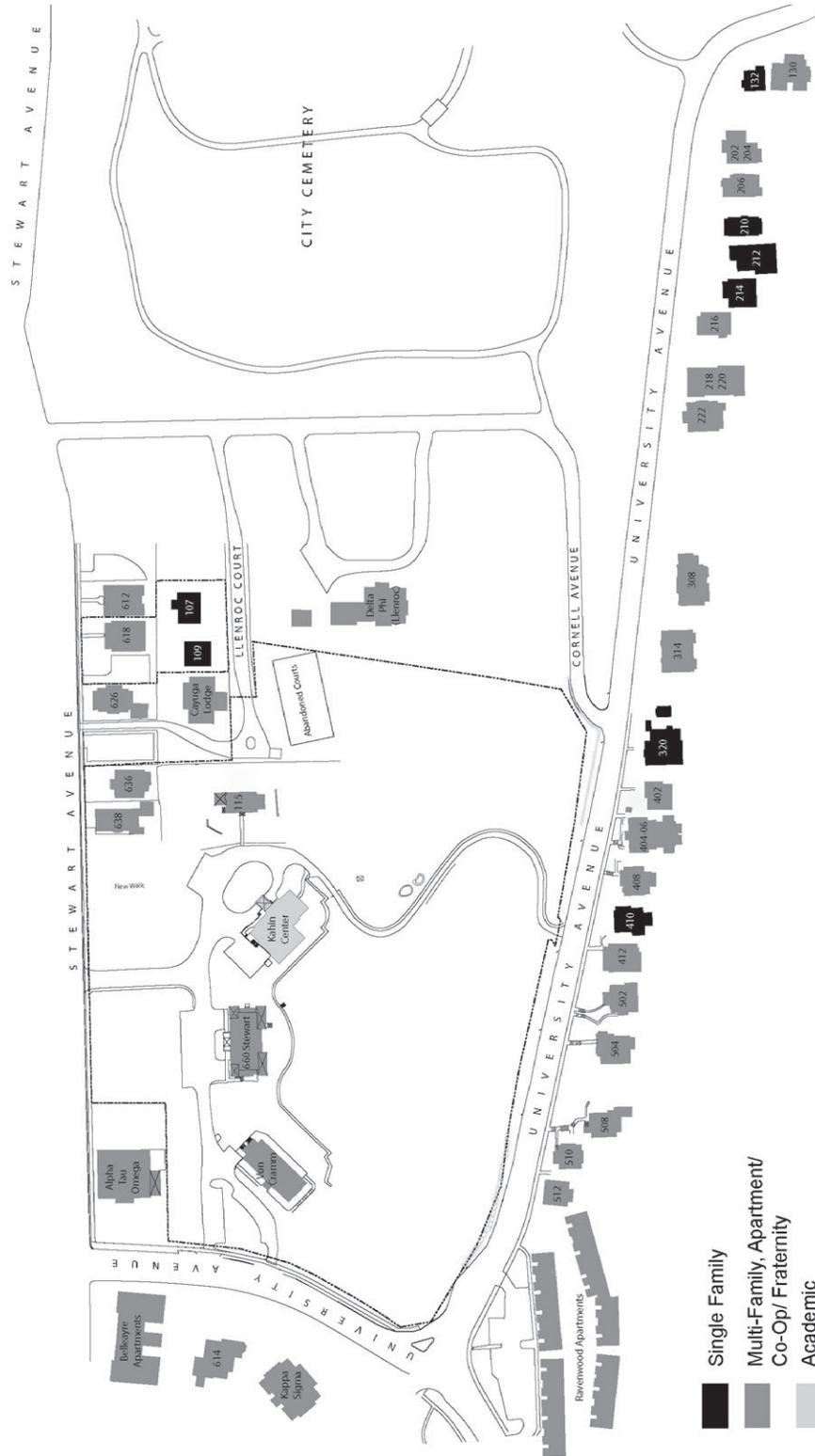


Figure 2.11.A (Adden.):
 Community Character

parking lot and block car headlights, and sharp cutoff light fixtures to minimize light trespass.

2.12 Security at University Avenue Parking Lot

Security is an important consideration in the design of the University Avenue parking lot. Security will be achieved through a combination of appropriate light levels, maintaining visibility in and out of the parking lot at appropriate locations, and installation of blue light security phones. In 1999, the university contracted with a recognized lighting and safety expert, Lighting Design, Inc. to develop lighting guidelines for the university. The recommended guidelines are based on criteria set forth by the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IESNA). The recommendations took into consideration glare, safety and security, light trespass and pollution, psychological aspects and many other issues. The recommendations will be established as the Cornell Standards within the year. Although not yet formally adopted, the guidelines are being utilized in the design of the University Avenue parking lot lighting.

According to the guidelines, the proposed University Avenue parking site is considered an area of Intermediate Activity. Mounting heights for fixtures in the parking lot should be at 25 to 30 feet. Each luminaire will use a 400 watt Metal Halide lamp producing approximately 25,000 lumens. Dark spots will be minimized by maintaining light levels on all areas of pavement of the parking lot at 0.6 footcandles. Light fixtures will be specified with optical characteristics that place light only where it is needed, minimizing light trespass. Light fixtures along the carriage path will be lower--15' high. Light levels of approximately 0.6 footcandles will also be maintained along the carriage path.

Existing streetlights on University Avenue provide high light levels on the street. The light level from existing streetlights on the properties on the west side of University Avenue is higher than what will be generated from the new parking lot. The University Avenue street lighting will be visible from the parking lot and will provide an added sense of security since the surrounding area will not be dark. Since these fixtures are not sharp cut-off fixtures, light trespass from the street to the parking lot is anticipated and is considered positive from a security standpoint.

Landscaping will be an important consideration. Screening the lot from views on University Avenue is a priority. Therefore, landscaping of the parking lot along the east edge towards campus will be done so as to maintain views in and out of the lot to avoid a site that is enclosed on all sides.

Blue light telephones will be installed in the lot and along the reconstructed carriage path so that a phone is visible from all locations. Site lighting, appropriate blue light locations and landscape plans from a security standpoint will be determined in conjunction with Cornell Police.

2.13 Noise at University Avenue Parking Lot

The majority of parkers at the University Avenue parking lot will be students who store their cars for occasional use. The design of the lot will mitigate noise impacts to residences along University Avenue. The entrance/exit to the lot is located on the north end of the site. Traffic entering and exiting at this location should not be audible to residences on the west side of the site due to the distance. The lot will be at a higher elevation than the residences along the west side of University Avenue. The lower parking terrace is approximately fifteen feet higher, and the upper terrace is approximately twenty-five feet higher than residences on the west side of University Avenue. Substantial vegetation will be planted between the lot and University Avenue. The location of the parking lot entrance, the grade differential between the lot and University Avenue, the terracing that

interrupts the expanse of the lot, and landscape buffer plantings will all combine to mitigate noise. Also, existing traffic on University Avenue creates a level of ambient noise that is expected to exceed and muffle most noise from the parking lot.

4.2.5 Parking Distributed on Multiple Sites

A number of locations on the west campus site have been studied as possible locations for smaller surface and subsurface parking lots that could accommodate the projected parking needs of the WCRI. This section examines those locations and analyzes the feasibility of accommodating the required 200 parking spaces onsite while at the same time ensuring an adequate level of vehicular and pedestrian safety; development of a cost effective solution; avoiding significant adverse impacts on the historic resources in the area and avoiding significant adverse impacts on traffic patterns.

In September 2000 TND Engineering completed a comprehensive analysis of possible locations for parking in the project area. This study investigated the development of both additional on-street parking along West Avenue, University Avenue, Campus Road and Stewart Avenue, and additional off-street parking. The following paragraphs summarize concepts explored in that study.

Parking Lots Along West Avenue There is a limited amount of space for small parking lots on the west side of West Avenue between West Avenue and the Gothics. The Gothics are set back from the street approximately 45 feet. The capacity of the lawn areas between the buildings and the street to accommodate parking lots is extremely limited. Two or more small lots located between the Gothics and the sidewalk, with angled parking spaces and one-way circulation, are possible. Such parking lots would not accommodate any more than 40 to 50 cars in aggregate. The introduction of parking lots into this location would disrupt the heavily utilized network of pedestrian walkways that cross West Avenue and increase the potential for vehicle/pedestrian conflicts in an already congested area.

The construction of parking in the lawn areas immediately adjacent to the Gothics would not leave any space for buffer plantings. There are currently 12 street trees planted between the buildings and West Avenue, of which eight are substantial in size, with trunk diameters of between 19 and 30 inches. Almost all of these mature street trees would have to be removed to accommodate parking lots between the Gothics and West Avenue.

On-Street Parking On West Avenue At the south end of West Avenue, on the east side of the street, there is room for between 15 and 20 parking spaces. These spaces would be pull-in (a.k.a. head-in) type spaces such as the ones at the northern end of the street. This location has been studied on a number of occasions in the past as a potential site for parking, including by TND Engineering. The proposal is not a desirable solution, however, because it would adversely impact traffic and pedestrian safety in the area. A key consideration is the limited sight distance to the south for drivers backing out of such spaces. This constraint, coupled with the relatively large volume of westbound traffic on Campus Road that turns north onto West Avenue, poses a substantial risk of accident if a parking lot were constructed in this area. The university began phasing out pull-in parking spaces several years ago due to the danger posed by vehicles backing into traffic, especially as traffic volumes have increased on the campus. Adding new head-in spaces along West Avenue would reverse this policy.

Installation of parallel parking along both sides of West Avenue was also considered. This would yield approximately 15 spaces but is considered undesirable due to the heavy pedestrian traffic that moves across West Avenue.

Parking Lots Along University Avenue. In addition to the small parking lot proposed as part of the WCRI to be built between University Avenue and the proposed House One, the feasibility of

additional parking on the lawn area between North Baker Hall and University Avenue was investigated. Parking for an estimated 20 cars could be built in this area, in a configuration similar to that studied for the locations between the Gothic halls and West Avenue.

The existing grade along University Avenue at this location, and the existing floor elevations of the North Baker Hall buildings, would require construction of substantial retaining walls between any parking lot and the residence hall. As with the locations along West Avenue, parking lots in this location would also remove almost all of the existing mature street trees along the south side of University Avenue.

On-street Parking on Stewart Avenue and University Avenue. The TND study also analyzed the potential widening of University Avenue and Stewart Avenue to provide additional parking. The two streets could be widened to provide additional parallel parking but, because these two streets are public streets, the City of Ithaca is constrained by New York State law from restricting the privilege of parking to any one segment of the population, or allowing Cornell University to do so. Also, although University Avenue in the 700 block is wide enough to accommodate parallel parking, and has done so for many years, the City in recent years eliminated on-street parking in that block due to safety issues associated with such parking. Widening Stewart Avenue would require a substantial amount of excavation into the hillside and construction of retaining walls on the east side of the street. This is not considered cost effective.

Noyes Center Site. Use of the void in the hillside created by the existing lower level and loading dock area of Noyes Community Center has been studied as the location for an underground parking garage. The building footprint of Noyes Center is larger than the actual space available at the lower level. The above grade portion of Noyes Center is substantially larger than the area excavated below the building. The area available for a parking facility within the existing void measures approximately 140 feet deep from the Stewart Avenue right of way eastward and approximately 90 feet wide. This void could accommodate a single level garage with a capacity of between 20 and 25 automobiles, depending on its configuration.

Although this approach could provide for between ten and fifteen percent of the estimated parking need for the proposed project, it would require a substantial concrete roof structure to support the earth above, and mechanical ventilation of the enclosed parking area. The facility would also have to include an elevator from the parking area to the surface to ensure accessibility for physically disabled persons in conformance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Due to the costs of these structural requirements for a parking facility of this size, the per space cost would be substantially higher than the cost of a parking space in a standard parking garage. In general, 300 cars is considered a minimum optimum capacity for constructing a cost-effective garage. This structure would be substantially less than 300 cars.

The security of users would also be a major concern, as unlike a typical parking garage, an underground garage would likely be enclosed on all four sides, and activities within would not be visible from the street or adjacent buildings. Also, because of its small size, the level of security afforded by the movement of traffic in and out of the typical parking garage would not be present. Hence such a facility if built would require extra security measures above and beyond those normally implemented in parking garage design and operations.

Finally, construction of a parking facility on this site could not begin until after the completion of House 5 in August 2010. This is due to the fact that no central dining facility will be constructed as part of the WCRI. A fundamental concept of the House system is to have dining facilities in each

of the Houses, and not have a central facility. Therefore, Noyes Community Center cannot be demolished until June 2007 when sufficient Houses with replacement dining facilities have been constructed. The site must also remain open after the demolition of Noyes to provide construction access to the site of House 5 which will be constructed between January 2009 and August 2010. No other construction access to House 5 exists. Thus, this site would fail to meet parking needs for contractors, students, or staff between spring 2003 and fall 2010.

In addition to the above constraints, the alternative approach of constructing several smaller parking lots on the west campus site in lieu of one large facility as proposed would likely result in additional vehicular traffic on adjacent streets. This is because empty parking spaces will be scattered throughout the area in multiple locations and the probability of a driver finding a parking space in any one individual lot would be reduced. As a result student users are likely to have to drive from one parking lot to another in search of a parking space.

Even with the multiple smaller lots, it is not possible to meet the overall needs of the project for parking. At most between 80 and 95 parking spaces could be developed. These spaces represent less than 50 percent of the parking to be displaced from west campus. Parking for other residents and employees would have to be accommodated further away on campus. This could have the inadvertent effect of drivers seeking spaces on campus or on streets in the surrounding neighborhood.

The lack of large open spaces within the area, topography and the limited number of safe access points on surrounding streets are major constraints to siting surface parking lots of a size adequate to serve future residents of the WCRI. In contrast to the preferred alternative, the concept of scattered parking in and around the west campus site also presents a number of substantial impacts beyond the fact that it does not adequately meet the space requirement needed to replace lost parking. These impacts include increased vehicle/pedestrian conflicts along the length of West Avenue. Construction of a small underground parking garage within the confines of the Noyes Center basement area is not practical from the standpoint of cost, security or long-term operational efficiency. Traffic generated by the proposed West Campus Residential Initiative would also be higher should several smaller lots be constructed instead of the preferred alternative.