

# Bishop's University Master Plan Report

November 2012

Peter Rose Architecte | ARCOP  
Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates



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# Letter from the Principal



There are many profound insights and compelling ideas in this Master Plan Report. It provides clear guidelines for the development and stewardship of our campus. Most importantly, it sets out how we can provide concrete expression to the fundamental values of our institution.



It is a special honour to write this introduction to the Bishop's University Master Plan Report. The Master Plan Report is the result of extensive thought and discussion within the Bishop's community and I am confident that it will have enduring influence on the development of our campus.

We have been fortunate to work with two firms of exceptionally thoughtful and talented architects, Peter Rose Architecte and Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates. I would like to express our deep appreciation to Peter Rose, Paul Puciata, Laura Solano, and Neil Budzinski, who have helped us appreciate the outstanding qualities of our campus and have developed a plan that will allow us to preserve and enhance the best of our unique natural and built environments.

One of the critical insights that the architects brought to this process is that over that last 60 years we have allowed the automobile to take precedence over the pedestrian. As you will note on page 48, 74% of the buildings on our campus were constructed between 1950 and 1975. This was the era when the car was king, and the automobile was certainly given pride of place during that period.

In her song "Big Yellow Taxi," Joni Mitchell wrote that "they paved paradise to put up a parking lot..." She was probably not writing about Bishop's, but she could have been. Our bucolic campus now includes the equivalent of

21 football fields of pavement. The architects' proposal to create a ring road and to restrict cars to the periphery of the campus is a simple but transformative idea that I believe will positively affect the development of our campus for decades to come.

Casual conversations at chance meetings while walking on the campus or in Lennoxville are hallmarks of the Bishop's experience. A pedestrian bridge across the Massawippi River and a new walking spine of the campus would significantly facilitate these interactions.

There are many profound insights and compelling ideas in this Master Plan Report. It provides clear guidelines for the development and stewardship of our campus. Most importantly, it sets out how we can provide concrete expression to the fundamental values of our institution.

Bishop's University's goal is to provide the foremost undergraduate education in Canada. The Master Plan Report challenges us to ensure that our campus is a worthy manifestation of that ambition. It encourages us to aspire to excellence. I am confident that we will rise to the challenge and that this plan will guide us well into our third century.

Michael Goldbloom  
Principal and Vice-Chancellor  
Bishop's University  
November 2012

# University Mission Statement

In 1843 the founders of Bishop’s University declared their intention “to offer to the country at large the blessing of a sound and liberal education.”



Today, our primary focus remains the liberal education of undergraduate students.

We aspire to be the institution of choice for outstanding young people seeking academic excellence and a comprehensive undergraduate experience in a community that instils confidence, courage and a sense of responsibility in its students.

At the heart of the Bishop’s experience is close interaction between professors and students, within the classroom and elsewhere, in research, scholarship and creative activity.

We seek to engage our students in their own intellectual and social development by offering programs of study and extracurricular activities that foster intellectual curiosity and a life-long commitment to learning.

As a learning community, we are engaged in the advancement and dissemination of knowledge. We encourage both breadth and depth in our students’ academic programs, to equip them to explore and solve complex problems.

We are committed to maintaining our intimate size and residential nature in order to foster the social development of our students, encourage the creation of lasting friendships and engender a true sense of community.

We invite our students, who come from Quebec, elsewhere in Canada, and around the world, to practice the respectful and informed dialogue that sustains democracy, to exercise the rights and responsibilities of good citizenship and to realize their potential for leadership.

We encourage our students to engage with individuals from different social, cultural and linguistic backgrounds and to take advantage of opportunities to open themselves to the world.

## Values

### *Community*

We value our welcoming and inclusive community, which fosters deep engagement in the life of the University and the exceptional dedication of our alumni.

We value individual integrity, mutual respect and collegiality.

We value the self-reliance, ethical engagement and accountability that are essential to responsible leadership.

We value service to our local and global communities, and research and scholarship that contribute to their growth and betterment.

### *Discovery*

We value the curiosity, creativity and innovation that lie at the core of the intellectual endeavour: the search for truth and the discovery and transmission of knowledge in research and scholarship.

We value a liberal education, which combines the sustained study of a particular field of knowledge with the ability to approach it critically through exposure to different intellectual traditions and points of view.

We value active engagement in learning on the part of our students, and their contributions to innovation in our programs and pedagogical activities.

We value the academic freedom that is essential to the discovery and transmission of knowledge, the development of critical approaches, and true engagement in learning and discovery.

We value the opportunity to learn from and with each other, in our classrooms laboratories, libraries, theatres, residences, dining and sports facilities, as well as in the broader community.

### *Excellence*

We value outstanding teaching, research and creative expression.

We value the pursuit of excellence in all that we undertake, and we aim to instil the aspiration to excel in our students and in all other members of our community.

### *Sustainability*

We value principles of sustainability and seek to integrate them into our academic programs and our individual and institutional activities.

We value the natural beauty of our surroundings and exceptional architectural quality in our built environment.

## Preface

It is with pleasure that we, the professional team, submit the Bishop's University Master Plan Report, dated November 2012, to Bishop's University. The Report represents the most comprehensive study of the Bishop's campus ever undertaken.

Using documents and tools ranging from the very old-fashioned (drawings and maps done by hand, found in archives and libraries) to the very modern (data from web sites, maps and photos from Google Earth, three-dimensional digital modeling), the Report traces and illustrates the remarkable evolution of the campus from its beginnings in the 1840s to its current state.

Many important discoveries were made, among them that approximately 70% of the current campus was constructed in the relatively short time span from 1950 to 1975, during which period a substantial area of the campus was paved in service of the perceived needs of the car. A major goal of the Master Plan Report, via a set of strategic adjustments, is to return the campus to its roots as a walking-, cycling-, and landscape-focused environment – with cars conveniently located, but not dominant. The Report further proposes to connect the campus more deliberately to, and to take greater advantage of, the extraordinary surroundings among the rivers, fields, forests, hills, and mountains of Quebec's glorious Eastern Townships. It is one of the great settings for a university anywhere.



**Above all, the Master Plan Report is a map for orderly, opportunistic development and growth of the campus, driven by the desire – indeed, by the need – for the whole of the campus to be vastly greater than the sum of its parts.**

The Master Plan Report should be understood as a “living document,” to be diligently and consistently referred to by a Campus Plan Oversight Committee, a permanent group at Bishop's charged with stewardship of the plan. Updating and developing the plan in greater detail as needed, via the hiring of skilled outside consultants, will be one of the main tasks of the committee. Implementing good master planning decisions will pay incalculable dividends for many years.

# Acknowledgements

We are pleased to present the Bishop's University Master Plan Report developed by the firms of Peter Rose Architecte, ARCOP, and Michael Van Valkenburg Associates. With the leadership of the University's Master Plan Consultative Committee, the University has endeavored to implement a planning process which engaged a wide spectrum of campus constituents. Principal Goldbloom, Consultative Committee members, and the planning team consulted extensively with University and community groups, including faculty, students, staff, alumni, administrators, the greater Lennoxville and Sherbrooke communities as well as Champlain Regional College regarding the development of the plan. The plan stands as a detailed study of campus life, its built and natural environment and an ongoing dialogue among students, faculty, staff and administration. This interaction and open dialogue has been critical to the development of this plan, and will continue to be central to its successful implementation.

## **Consultant Team**

Peter Rose Architecte / ARCOP, Architects and Planners  
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The University would like to acknowledge the contributions of the following members of the University community, whose participation in the Campus Forum process was essential to identifying the central themes of the Master Plan and its development.

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## 0.1 Why a Master Plan?

### 0.1.1 The Catalyst

While various abbreviated plans and studies of the University have been completed over the years – including a plan drawn by Henderson Architecte in 1990, as well as a campus study completed by McGill University School of Urban Planning in 1992 – a full-scale Master Plan for Bishop’s University campus has not recently been undertaken.

The catalyst for this current Master Plan was the renovation and addition to the John H. Price Sports and Recreation Centre, the largest project in Bishop’s history. The magnitude of the Sports Centre project, and its potential impact on Bishop’s campus, suggested that both the project and the campus itself would benefit enormously from carefully considering the campus as a whole.

Additional issues that Bishop’s University currently faces – the implementation of a new geothermal energy system; insufficient student housing, both on and off campus; and the prospect of the construction of a new highway around the perimeter of the campus – have made it clear that the timing of this Master Plan is opportune.

### 0.1.2 The Professional Team

Directed by Peter Rose and Paul Puciata of Peter Rose Architecte / ARCOP, the master plan was produced by a group of highly qualified consultants. Key collaborators and partners throughout the process were the exceptional landscape architecture firm of Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates – represented by principal Laura Solano and as-



sisted by Neil Budzinski – and Transsolar Climate Engineers, extraordinary consultants on all aspects of sustainability, represented by principal, Matthias Schuler. This professional team worked in close collaboration on the Master Plan over a period of more than two years.

### 0.1.3 A Holistic Approach

We present this Master Plan Report as a living document that will help Bishop’s University address these issues within a coherent framework. We have looked back in time at the history of the campus to understand how it became what it is today. We have used these insights to look forward in time to understand how decisions can be made most beneficially for Bishop’s campus in the future.

The goal of a holistic way of thinking in regard to a master plan is for the “whole” of the campus to vastly exceed the sum of its parts – i.e.,  $2+2 = 7$ . A good master plan also maximizes the impact of capital investments, as it provides



a structure for prioritizing campus improvements based on specific, strategic criteria.

#### **0.1.4 Stewardship of A Living Document**

Unlike the product of pure research, which may be summarized as a static work, a master plan is a living document that requires constant stewardship.

The endeavors proposed here will require an excellent team (possibly called the Campus Planning Oversight Committee), consisting of members of the Bishop's community as well as expert outside consultants. This team will further develop individual aspects of the Master Plan Report, as well as engage in a series of negotiations with a range of relevant local authorities. On a regular basis, this team will supervise the periodic updating and revising of the Master Plan Report – a procedure that is required of any evolving and working master plan.

#### **0.1.5 An Operating System for the Future**

The operation of a university is an extraordinarily complex undertaking, involving thousands of people and an incalculable number of decisions on a daily basis. Over time, the campus – the “stage” on which the life of the university plays out – grows and is constructed, sometimes incrementally, sometimes in great leaps, at a cost of hundreds of millions of dollars. A good, well-developed master plan, taken seriously, functions as an organizational structure for the making of good decisions in regard to the construction of all aspects of the physical campus over time. A master plan is the best tool for avoiding the downside of making short-term decisions and solving short-term problems without the long-term vision in mind. Wisely managed and effectively deployed, a good master plan creates an enormous upside by optimizing the cumulative effect of making good tactical and strategic decisions over time.

## 0.2 A Master Planning Process

### 0.2.1 The Five Phases of the Master Plan Process

The Campus Master Planning Process for Bishop's University has progressed through five distinct phases:

#### Observation Phase:

This initial phase consisted of the collection and documentation of existing qualitative and quantitative aspects of the campus. Data gathering took place in libraries and archives, as the professional team examined historic maps and photographs. “On the ground” observations of the Bishop’s campus of today completed the picture of the University. In addition, a series of focus group meetings allowed members of the wider Bishop’s community to voice their priorities regarding the campus. The data collected were formatted into a series of analytical diagrams, which became the foundation for developing planning principles with the University.

#### Concept Development:

In the Concept Development phase, we took a broad, macro-scale look at the campus. Emerging big-picture planning principles were identified and graphically represented, and a summary analysis of the Observation Phase were presented. Major goals of the Master Plan were articulated as a series of guiding principles.



#### Precinct Studies:

Focusing on specific areas of the campus that were determined by their importance for the overall Master Plan, this phase studied in greater detail options for the spatial organization of buildings, program adjacencies, and landscapes. The goals developed in the Concept Development phase were examined at this micro-scale.

#### Design Guidelines:

In this phase, broad recommendations were established to direct the development of future projects. These included issues relating to site planning (including circulation and street patterns), landscapes, building massing, signage, and sustainability.

#### Final Plan:

Refining the ideas generated in the previous four phases, the Final Plan document shows proposals for new buildings; open spaces and landscapes; parking, circulation and street patterns; and infrastructure improvements. *Before* and *After* renderings illustrate the



physical appearance of the concepts as outlined in the plan. Suggested phasing and project priorities are diagrammed.

## **0.2.2 Organization of this Document**

These five phases outlined above are reflected broadly in the organization of this document:

The first chapter, “Campus in Context,” contextualizes Bishop’s University within its social and natural setting, both geographically and historically, and will show how the campus has evolved over the past century and a half. This detailed look at Bishop’s growth over the years allows us to see how the physical form of the campus has been sporadically shaped by external forces far beyond the campus itself. Understanding Bishop’s context and history provides invaluable clues for how to set in motion coherent growth in the future.

The second chapter, “The Campus Today: Six Observations,” provides the hinge of the Report. In this chapter, we concisely summarize the most important results of the previous two chapters. These observations form the core

of the principles that have guided the development of the Master Plan.

Chapter Three, “A Campus for the Future,” contains the detailed diagrams, drawings, and images of the proposed Master Plan itself.

In the fourth chapter, “Implementation of the Master Plan,” we provide an overview for phasing and other procedures that will allow Bishop’s University to implement the plan.

Finally, in Chapter 5, we conclude this Master Plan Report with a recapitulation of its most essential elements and strategic proposals.

## 0.3 Main Goals

### 0.3.1 A Walking Campus

Bishop's should be a **walking campus** – an all-weather, all-season, pedestrian-friendly campus. Pedestrian paths should be everywhere, forming a network of outdoor spaces, all deliberately defined by landscape. Pedestrian paths should not pass through parking lots, or other spaces dedicated to cars.

Buildings and landscapes, both within the University and in the region beyond, should be connected in multiple ways. This **multiplicity of connections** will offer a rich range of choices when navigating the campus, especially important on a campus with as varied a climate as at Bishop's University. Fast and slow, in the sun or in shade: the campus should be beautiful and a **pleasure to use in all seasons**.

Bike and walking paths should be developed around the campus perimeter, along both rivers, into the woods and through the fields. Connected to existing hiking and biking networks beyond Bishop's University, these **paths could better connect the campus to the region**, for the mutual benefit of both. Paths between Lennoxville and the campus should be improved, and a new pedestrian bridge should be considered.

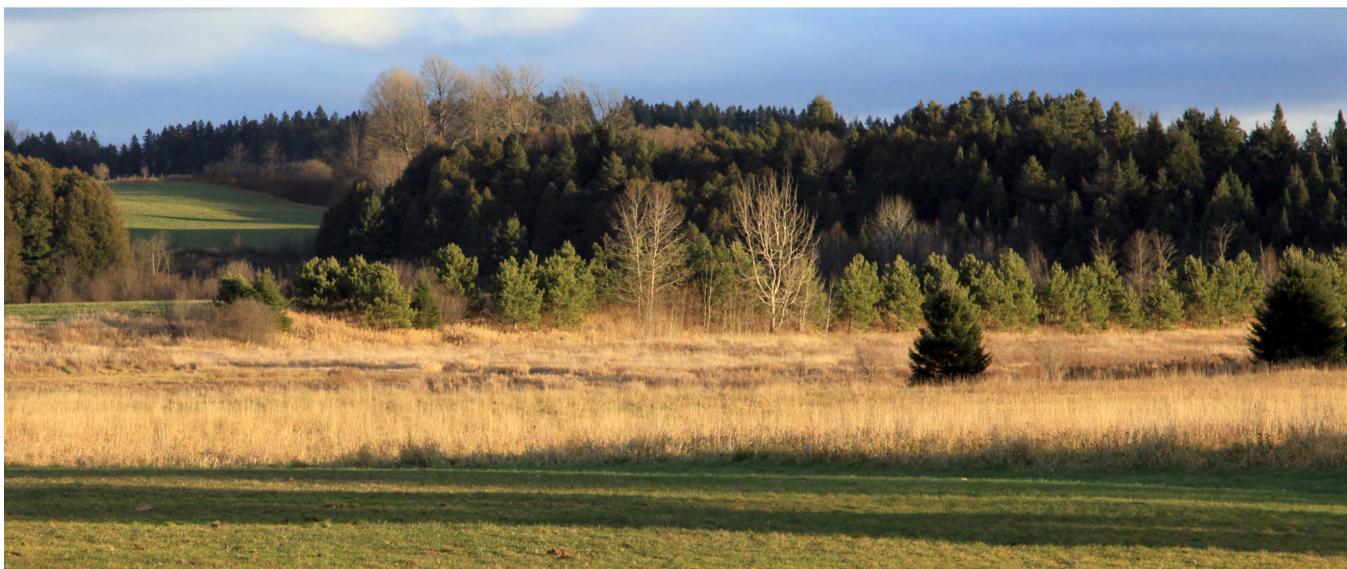


### 0.3.2 Managing the Automobile

Cars should be relocated to the **perimeter of the campus**. This new perimeter vehicular circulation should be separate from the pedestrian network, and cars should not be in conflict with the pedestrian network.

Cars will be, for the foreseeable future, the primary means of travel to and from the campus. These cars should be parked on the campus in conveniently located lots. To the greatest degree possible, these **conveniently located parking lots should be hidden**, heavily screened by landscape and not visible from the network of outdoor spaces and buildings. The use of cars to move around the campus should be discouraged.

The **main entrance** to the campus should introduce the campus in an appropriately dignified fashion, and strategically reveal the essential character of the campus. The Highway 410 Bypass project provides an opportunity to both improve the University's connection to the river, and establish a more harmonious integration between the University and the landscape.



### 0.3.3 Integrating Landscape with the Campus

Strengthening Bishop's connections to the glorious surrounding landscape is one of the critical goals of the Master Plan Report.

One of the most beautiful spaces on the campus, which also happens to be at the geographic Centre of Bishop's, is the hill surrounded by a series of mostly two-storey faculty bungalows. Connected to the spaces in front of the Student Centre and the Theatre, this hill has the potential to be a truly **iconic campus centre**. The Quad, St. Mark's, the Tomlinson Room, and Bandeen Hall have all been identified as important heritage resources on campus. Improving, developing, and preserving these key campus assets, and programming them with appropriate activities, will tie these important places to Bishop's University's history and assure their continued relevance to campus identity in the future.

Buildings and landscapes should each be considered as **integral parts of a larger whole**.

### 0.3.4 Connections and Gathering Spaces

Most of the activity on the campus is hidden behind opaque walls and doors. Much of this activity can and should be revealed, helping to establish further connections. Views from landscape into buildings, and from circulation spaces into classroom spaces, should be emphasized and enhanced. A **more visible and transparent campus** will improve the social and pedagogical life of the University.

Gathering spaces of all scales should serve as points of connection throughout the campus and landscape. The revered Quad is one of the only enclosed exterior spaces on the campus. This is an example of one type of **informal gathering spaces**, but these should be everywhere.

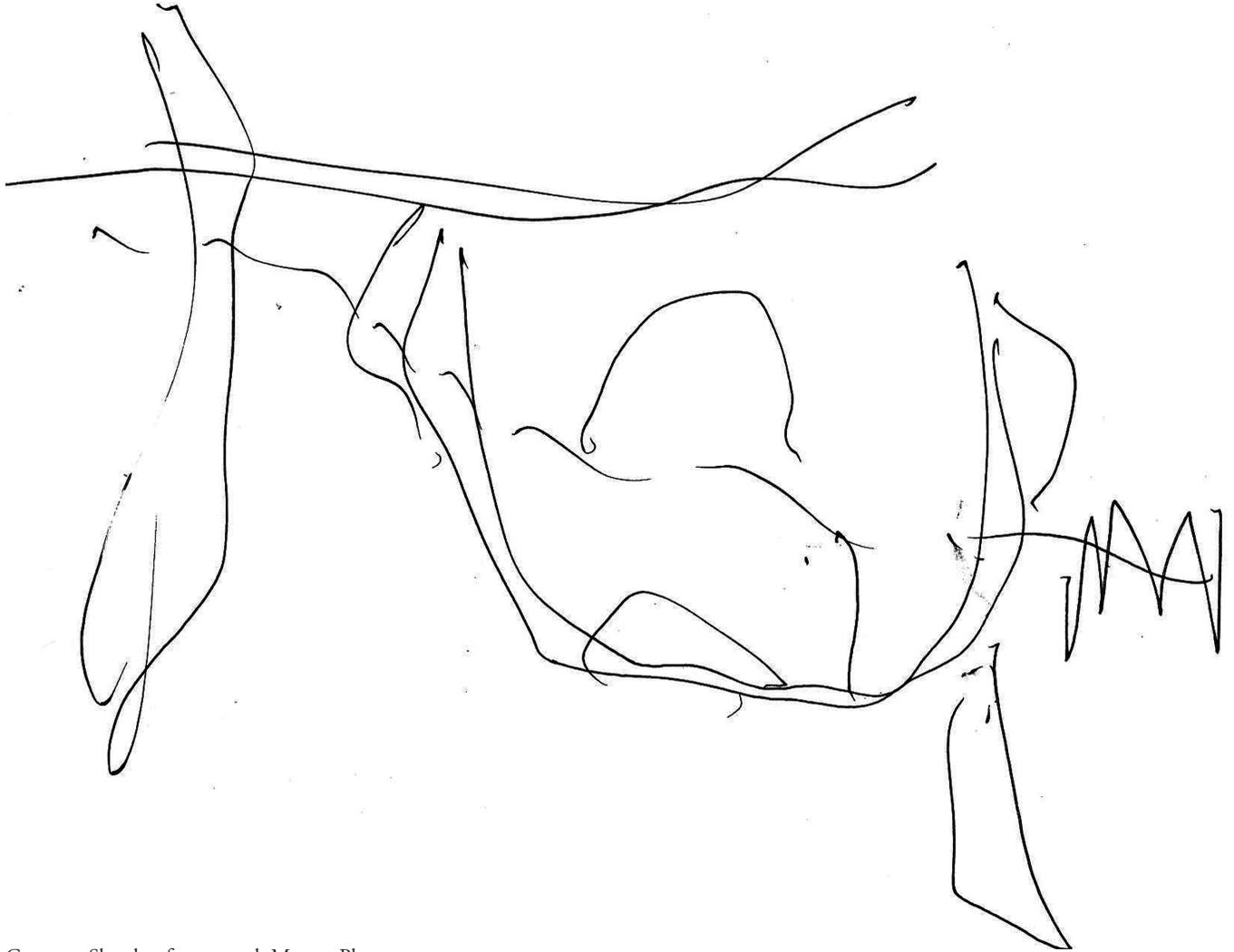
Two-thirds of Bishop's students now live and eat off-campus. The possibility of healthy, affordable food available for all students, in multiple locations, will encourage the development of a **lively twenty-four hour campus**.

### **0.3.5 Working with Existing Conditions**

The above guiding principles have all directed the development of the Master Plan Report, and are the result of the research undertaken by the Master Planning Team to determine key assets already existing at the University.

Improving, developing, and preserving these campus assets, and programming them with appropriate activities, allows us to respond to site-specific conditions to maximum effect. Working with existing conditions allows for a master plan that is both sustainable and that can be executed within an economy of means.

By carefully studying the history of the campus, as well as its current structure, we propose a Master Plan that makes the most of existing conditions, and as such, consists of a feasible and realistic guide for the future of Bishop's University.



Concept Sketch of proposed Master Plan, showing major discoveries and interventions.

