

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH



CHALLENGE:

Founded in 1787 as Pittsburgh Academy, the University of Pittsburgh has grown into a sprawling 132-acre campus that is home to approximately 28,000 students. Nestled in the historic Oakland neighborhood of Pittsburgh, the campus is renowned for its diverse architectural styles, ranging from Greek revival to Neo-Gothic, Italian Renaissance, and modern influences. As the University continued to expand, it became increasingly important to seamlessly integrate it with the surrounding community. Moreover, with a significant student population, there was a pressing need for safe gathering spaces to promote relaxation, study, informal gatherings, and community connections.

The goals of the project included:

- Prioritize pedestrian and vehicular circulation, safety and accessibility
- Incorporate green infrastructure
- Establish a connected environment between all design spaces and the community
- Create a hub of outdoor student life that encourages relaxation, studying, informal gatherings and connections

LOCATION:

Pittsburgh, PA

DESIGNER:

LaQuatra Bonci Associates

PRODUCT:

Eco-Promenade®



Promenade Paver™



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The primary focus areas for this project were on Bigelow Boulevard, located at the heart of the campus, and the William Pitt Union Grounds. The university collaborated with the city of Pittsburgh to transform Bigelow Boulevard into a safe and functional space for both students and city residents. LaQuatra Bonci Associates aimed to redevelop William Pitt Union Grounds into an accessible gathering area for students.

SOLUTION:

Designed by LaQuatra Bonci Associates, the completed project successfully bridges the gap between the university and the surrounding community, creating striking designs that serve as safe, accessible and collaborative spaces for students and city residents. Notable improvements include the transformation of Bigelow Boulevard into a welcoming space with dedicated pathways for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists. The key to this design was the use of [Promenade Pavers](#) in various finishes, which played a pivotal role in the project's success. The various surface textures selected for these pavers not only provide a pleasing tactile contrast but also delineate the flow of traffic, with arrows visually guiding the way. The bus lane was also paved with the same Promenade Pavers laid in a herringbone pattern, creating an eye catching design that breathes new life back into the environment. Additionally the cross walk showcases these same pavers in a striped pattern leading pedestrians safely across the road alternating between lines of smooth and textured surfaces.



As the project's designer noted, "The ability to have color, materiality, contrast, delineation of use, and the pavements softening was crucial in the project's design." Promenade Pavers, with their long, liner look available in a variety of colors and finishes, were instrumental in achieving this. These pavers are further enhanced with [EnduraColor™](#) technology, a two-step manufacturing process that combines a base of coarser aggregates with concentrated color and wear-resistant finer aggregates on top. This technology protects the paver surface, preventing the appearance of fading over time. The choice of Series™ finish in Mocha and Smooth Premier finish in custom cream colors created a stunning contrast, adding vibrancy, warmth and offering an enticing topic of conversation.

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The William Pitt Union Grounds were reimagined to establish a more accessible outdoor gathering space for student activities. This space, designed as a large circular area, featuring Eco-Promenade® pavers, enabling the integration of green infrastructure into the design. By reducing impervious surfaces and incorporating strategies like rain gardens and increased planting areas, this project successfully promotes sustainability. The paver design within the circle includes dark paver lines guiding pedestrians towards the center, creating a warm and inviting gathering space that encourages collaboration, connection and relaxation.

Eco-Promenade® pavers, designed with a 7mm joint spacing, allow for the rapid infiltration of rainwater into the sub-

base and soil, promoting sustainable storm water management. These permeable pavers also benefit from EnduraColor technology, enhancing their durability. The selection of these pavers in both Series and Smooth finishes created a visually pleasing contrast and enriched the William Pitt Union Grounds' aesthetics.

In achieving all of these project goals, the collaborative effort between the University of Pittsburgh, LaQuatra Bonci Associates and Unilock proved to be the linchpin that allowed this project to come to life ensuring that students and citizens can relish these remarkable, collaborative spaces for many years to come!

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- LaQuatra Bonci Associates



Photo Credit: Rich Eddington