

Dear Campus Community,

In preparing for the construction of the Learning Commons building on the east lawn we have had to consider all the current elements including the health and well-being of the Yew Pine (*podocarpus gracilior*) tree. In order to investigate, an arborist was hired to provide a report about the impact of the construction plans. The report was submitted to USD at the beginning of September.

The construction of the new classroom building will impact the health and life span of the tree. While the tree is currently considered “healthy” by the arborist’s standards, there is concern that disturbing the root structure during construction will negatively impact the tree. Currently there are sewer lines that run adjacent to the roots of the tree and there have been damage to the sewer lines as the roots have matured. These will need to be fixed as the project continues and the need for proper sewer disposal will increase with the expected use of the building.

If the tree remains, we lose approximately half of the programmable student space between the new building and Camino and those who have mobility issues would be excluded from the green area. Further, the area below the tree would receive little direct sunlight creating a soft, wet ground cover with the likelihood of material being tracked into the adjacent buildings requiring the maintenance and facilities staff to combat this every day.

A further consideration is that the location of the tree will block much needed access to the internal systems of Camino, the Library, and the Learning Commons. For each intervention into systems maintenance or repair, there would be substantial added cost compared to having easy access to the systems through the hard scape.

The tree is a beautiful symbol, but like many plants that were part of the original landscape of USD (and San Diego) it is not native to the region and therefore poses environmental concerns. The tree requires a significant amount of water and is not part of the native plant initiatives that inform current landscaping practices.

The decision has been made to remove the tree so that the best possible space can be created for students. The current plan will require that new trees be planted and, to the extent possible, maintain the sight line and shade that is currently created by the tree. Ultimately, the new outdoor patio scape will provide access that aligns with Universal Design practices and allow for the introduction of native plants that will thrive in the environment. Furthermore, the patio space will offer opportunities to host outdoor events and gatherings to take advantage of San Diego’s temperate climate.

For additional information, please find the renderings and the pro/con document provided to the stakeholder representative group below.



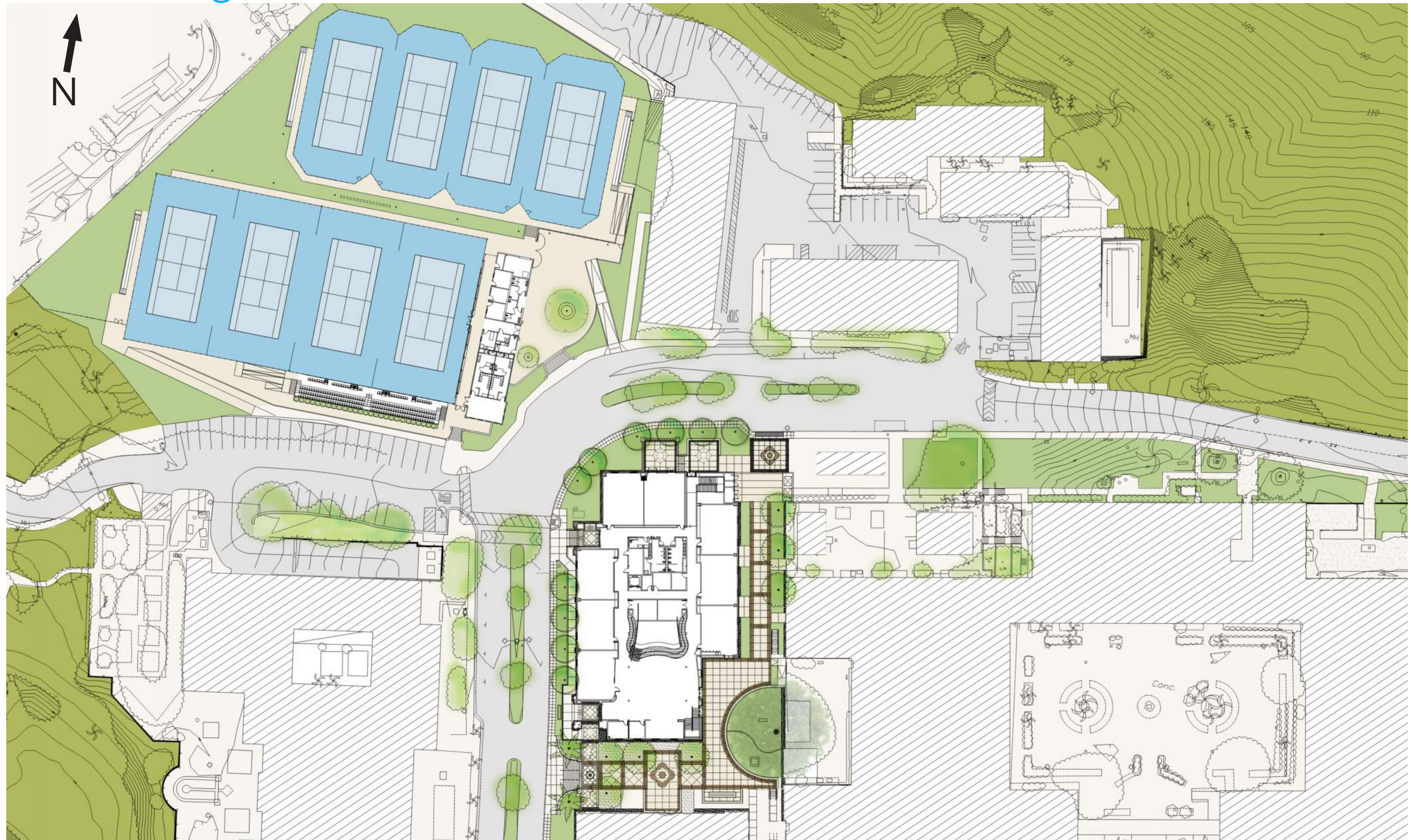
Learning Commons

October 24th, 2018

Gensler

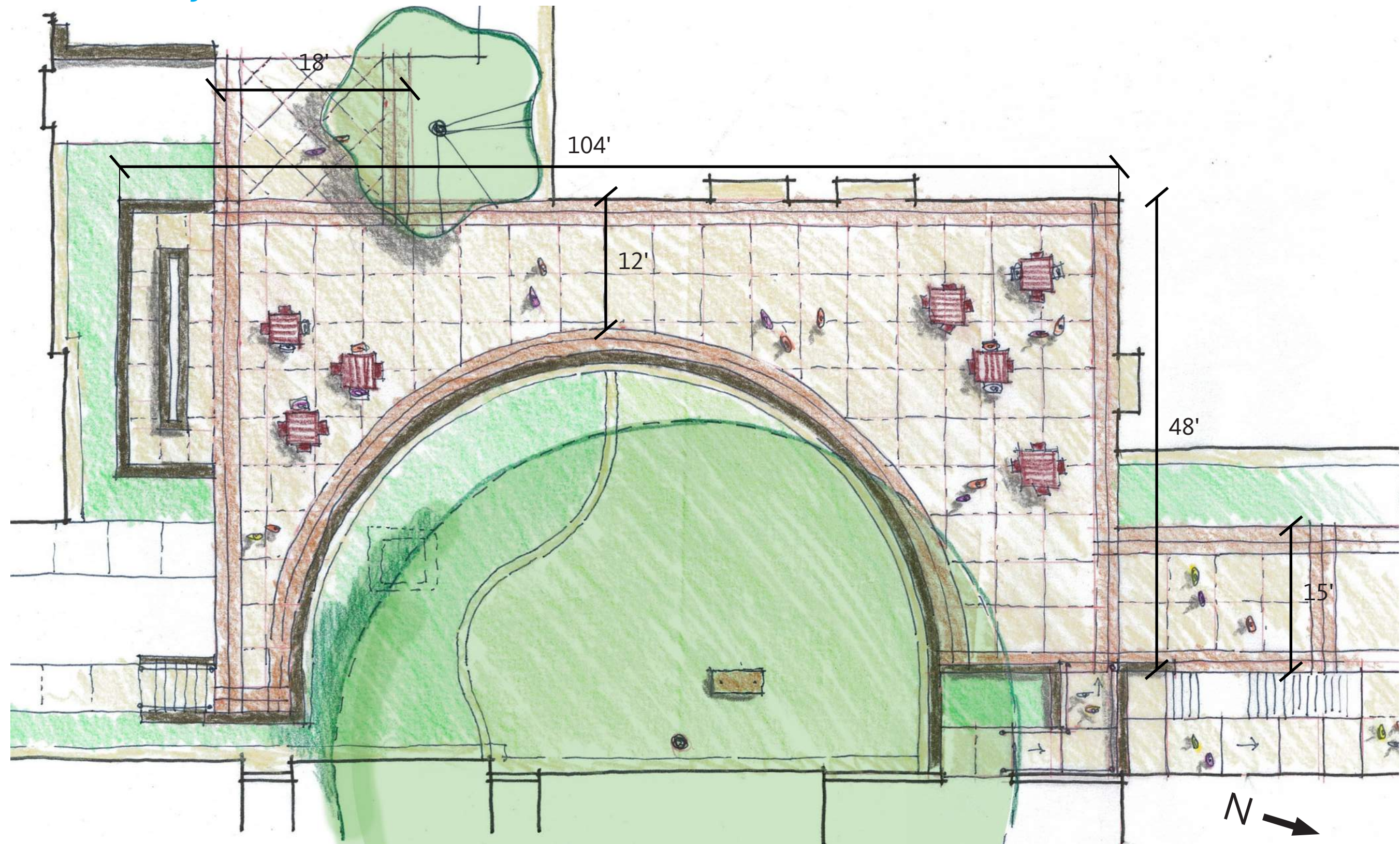
Illustrative Site Plan (Crescent Courtyard)

Tennis + Learning Commons



Courtyard Options

Crescent Courtyard (Grass) - Plan View



Courtyard Options

Crescent Courtyard (Grass) - Typical Day



Courtyard Options

Crescent Courtyard (Grass) - Guest Speaker



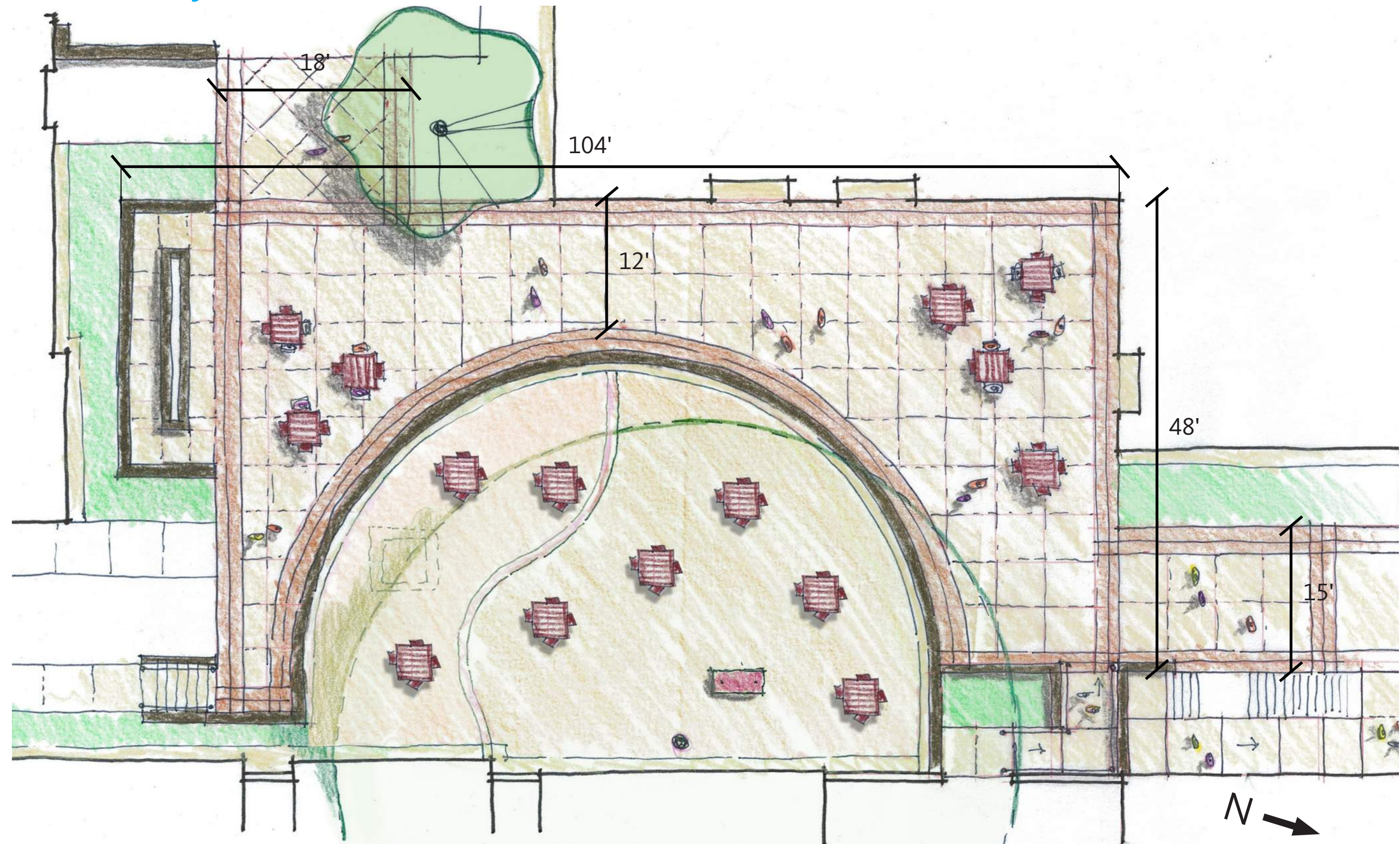
Courtyard Options

Crescent Courtyard (Grass) - West View



Courtyard Options

Crescent Courtyard (DG) - Plan View



Courtyard Options

Crescent Courtyard (DG) - Typical Day



Courtyard Options

Crescent Courtyard (DG) - Guest Speaker



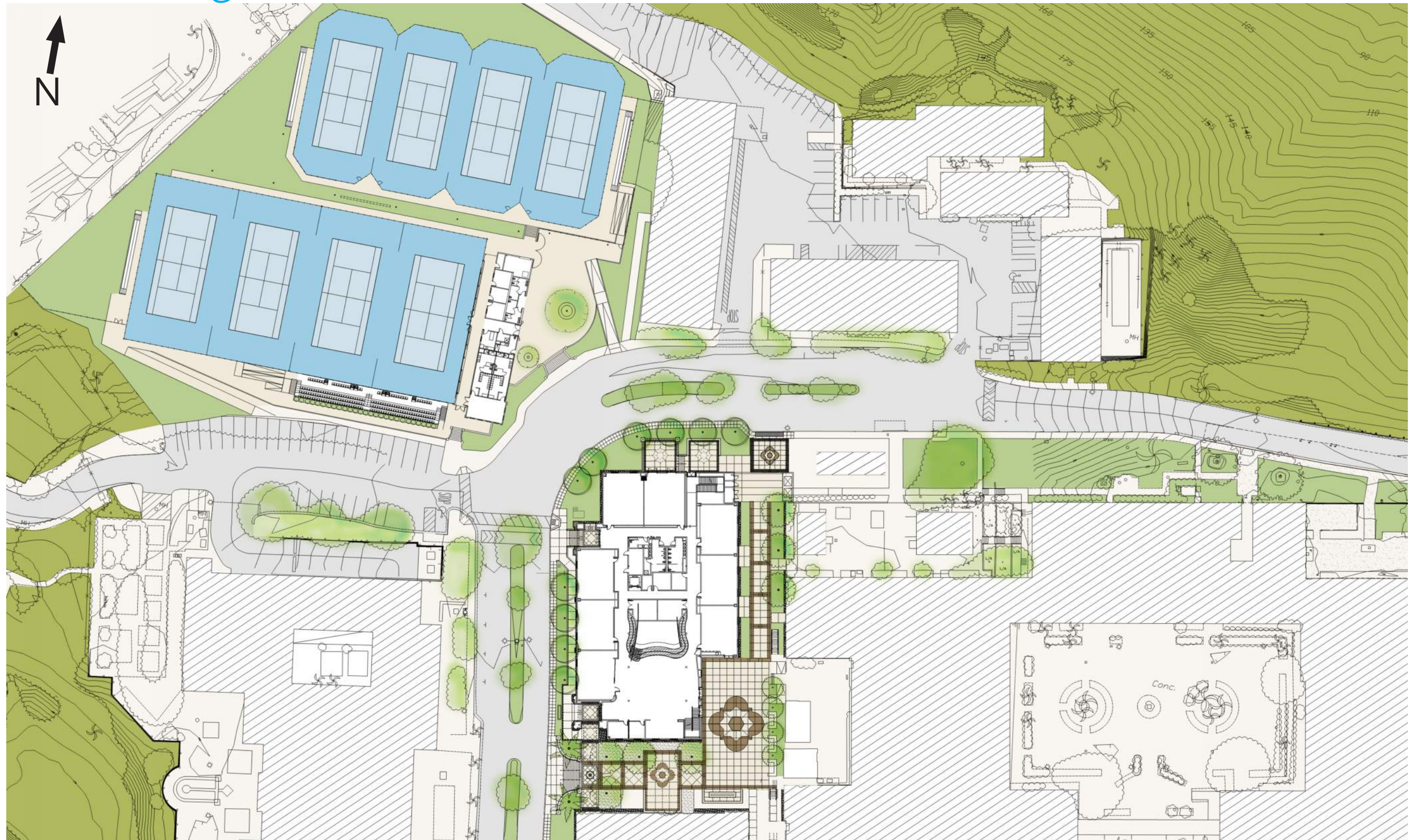
Courtyard Options

Crescent Courtyard (DG) - West View



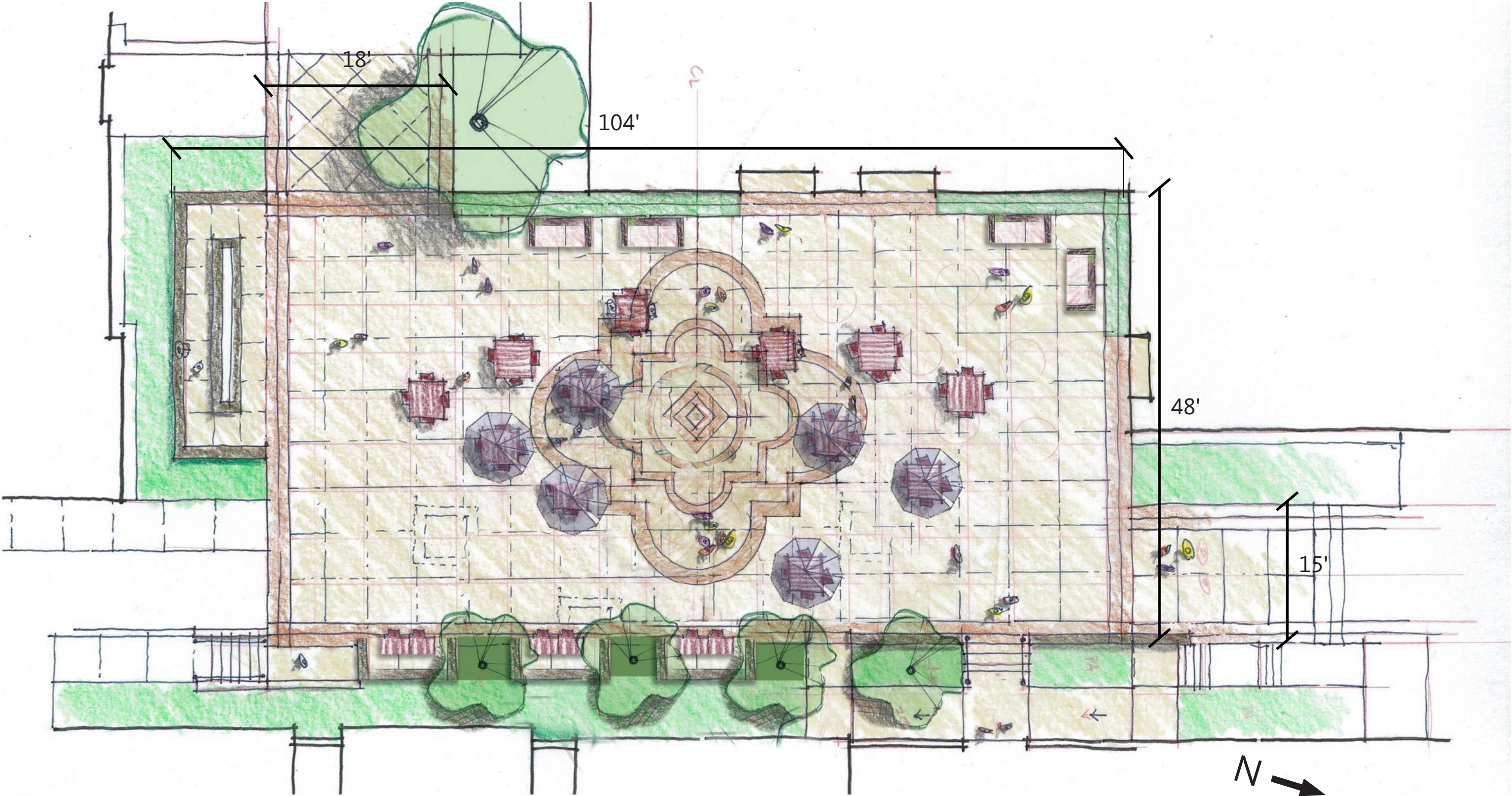
Illustrative Site Plan (Open Plaza)

Tennis + Learning Commons



Courtyard Options

Open Plaza - Plan View



Courtyard Options

Open Plaza - Typical Day



Courtyard Options

Open Plaza - Event



Courtyard Options

Open Plaza - West View



Courtyard Options

Open Plaza & Crescent Courtyard, Side by Side



Open Plaza



Crescent - Grass



Crescent - DG

USD Learning Commons

Courtyard Options

Open Plaza & Crescent Courtyard, West View Comparison



Open Plaza



Crescent - Grass



Crescent - DG

PROS & CONS OF PODOCARPUS TREE

SCENARIO #1A – TREE REMAINS – SEE ATTACHED RENDERINGS

- **TREE REMAINS ON SITE**
- **HARDSCAPE BUILT AROUND DRIP LINE**
- **GRASS IS PLANTED IN SEMI-CIRCLE**

PROS

- An iconic 65-year-old tree specimen may remain alive.
- Programmatic space remains.
- Stepped semi-circle creates an intimate and shaded amphitheater.
- Unique on USD's campus.
- Comfortable to sit or lay on.

CONS

- **Maintenance** – Increased time to move furniture and maintain grass. Grass will need to be irrigated so people may get wet or have wet shoes if using space close to when grass is watered.
- **Steps down** – open flexible
- **Dark** – Shading from the new building in addition to tree will not allow for much light.
- **Damp** – Limited sunshine will prevent moisture from escaping.
- **Dirty** – This species of tree sheds roughly 70% of its leaves throughout the course of each year. Constant shedding of leaves will be an unsightly maintenance issue.
- **Limited Access** – The curve of the hardscape prevents Facilities from gaining proper access to this area with work trucks and equipment such as forklifts needed to reach the roof of Camino. Would need to investigate use of ramps. Pedestrian choke points still exist between corner of building and edge of semi-circle stairs.
- **Survival** – This option includes the most features to increase probability of survival, however, there is no guarantee the tree will survive through construction and after completion. The current root system is spread out through the Copley lawn and has depended on this vast water source for 65 years.
- **Constructability** – Significant challenges exist in minimizing impacts to its roots and keeping tree alive during construction. The biggest concern is during site excavation and underground utility work when heavy equipment will be in close quarters to the tree. There will need to be site fencing around the drip line which cuts off major access and efficiency for construction personnel to perform work in the southeast portion of the building.

PROS & CONS OF PODOCARPUS TREE

SCENARIO #1B – TREE REMAINS – SEE ATTACHED RENDERINGS

- **TREE REMAINS ON SITE**
- **HARDSCAPE BUILT AROUND DRIP LINE**
- **DECOMPOSED GRANITE (DG) IS PLANTED IN SEMI-CIRCLE**

PROS

- An iconic 65-year-old tree specimen may remain alive.
- Programmatic space remains.
- Stepped semi-circle creates an intimate and shaded amphitheater.
- Unique on USD's campus.

CONS

- **Maintenance** – *Non-compacted* DG would be required for the tree's best chance of survival. Using a compacted DG would prevent water from filtrating down to the roots. Use of this non-compacted product comes with some concerns that need to be evaluated:
 - Irrigation lines would be required under the non-compacted DG. The area may get wet/muddy and have ponding over time. Any rainfall would also create a wet surface that may take time to dissipate into the soil.
 - Non-compacted DG is loose and does not allow for a hard, sturdy surface for outdoor furniture. Legs of chairs will likely sink into the DG and tables will need to be adjusted to achieve a proper level.
 - This option is not as comfortable to sit or lay on like grass.
 - This product may track dust onto the hardscape and into the adjacent buildings.
- **Dark** – Shading from the new building in addition to tree will not allow for much light.
- **Damp** – Limited sunshine will prevent moisture from escaping.
- **Dirty** – This species of tree sheds roughly 70% of its leaves throughout the course of each year. Constant shedding of leaves will be an unsightly maintenance issue.
- **Limited Access** – The curve of the hardscape prevents Facilities from gaining proper access to this area with work trucks and equipment such as forklifts needed to reach the roof of Camino. Would need to investigate use of ramps. Pedestrian choke points still exist between corner of building and edge of semi-circle stairs.
- **Survival** – This option includes the most features to increase probability of survival, however, there is no guarantee the tree will survive through construction and after completion. The current root system is spread out through the Copley lawn and has depended on this vast water source for 65 years.
- **Constructability** – Significant challenges exist in minimizing impacts to its roots and keeping tree alive during construction. The biggest concern is during site excavation and underground utility work when heavy equipment will be in close quarters to the tree. There will need to be site fencing around the drip line which cuts off major access and efficiency for construction personnel to perform work in the southeast portion of the building.

PROS & CONS OF PODOCARPUS TREE

SCENARIO #2 – TREE REMAINS ON SITE – HARDSCAPE IGNORES DRIP LINE

- TREE REMAINS ON SITE
- HARDSCAPE BUILT TOP OF DRIP LINE.
- **OPTION WAS VOTED NO AT THE 10/8/18 STAKEHOLDER MEETING.**

PROS & CONS OF PODOCARPUS TREE

SCENARIO #3 – TREE IS REMOVED – SEE ATTACHED RENDERINGS

- **TREE IS ELIMINATED.**
- **HARDSCAPE BUILT IN TREE'S EXISTING LOCATION.**
- **SMALLER, WELL PLACED TREE SPECIMENS ARE PLANTED IN COURTYARD.**

PROS

- **Increased programmable space** – The amount of space for outdoor furniture and movement is enhanced allowing for more pre/post functions and student gatherings.
- **Light & Clean** – Removing tree will allow area to be free of fallen leaves and bring in light to brighten up patio and adjacent art studios.
- **Enhanced Access** – Choke points will be eliminated and area will free up to allow trucks and other equipment to properly service the patio and adjacent buildings.
- **Constructability** – Removing tree promotes productivity by giving free access to site for construction equipment, vehicles, material laydown space, and personnel to move.

CONS

- **Tree is lost**