

LANDSCAPE RESOURCE SURVEY
 University of Oregon Campus Heritage Landscape Plan
 Eugene, Lane County, Oregon • Spring 2007

RESOURCE IDENTIFICATION & SUMMARY

LANDSCAPE AREA NAME

Onyx Axis (r)

HISTORIC NAME(S)

Onyx Street

CAMPUS PLAN DESIGNATION

Axis

CURRENT HISTORIC DESIGNATION

No historic designation

ERA(S) OF GREATEST SIGNIFICANCE

Lawrence/Cuthbert Era
 Mid-Century Era

LEVEL HISTORIC OF SIGNIFICANCE

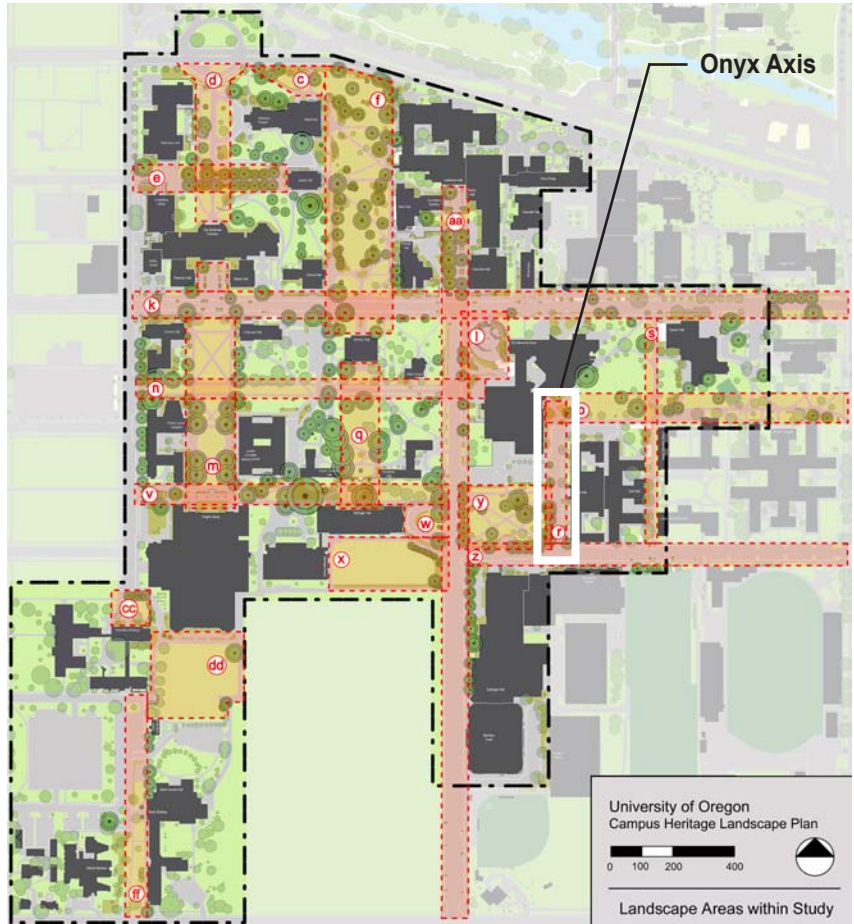
Low

LEVEL OF INTEGRITY

Fair

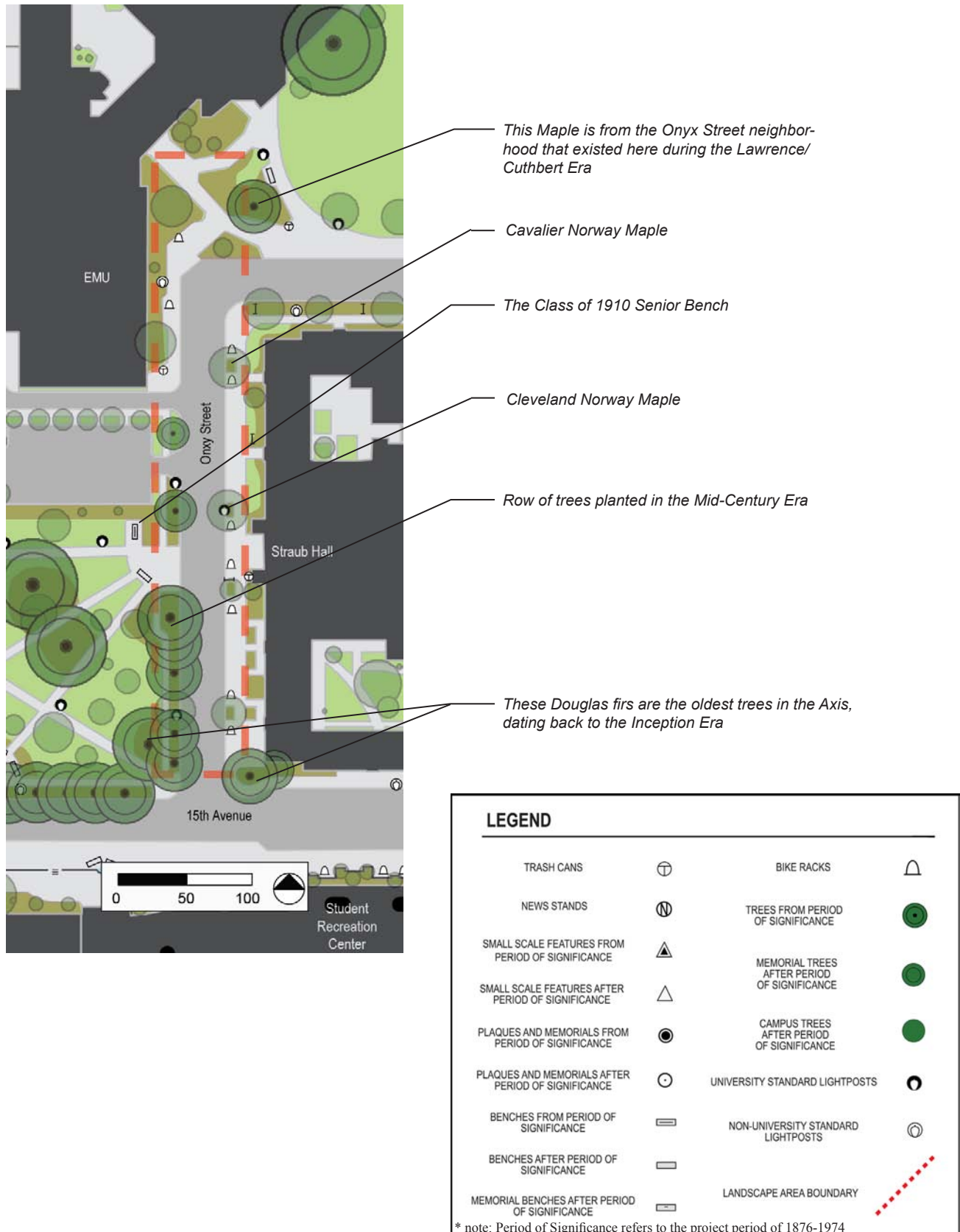
RANKING

Tertiary



View looking north toward the EMU, with Straub Hall at right.

LANDSCAPE AREA SITE MAP — Highlighting existing elements from the period of significance (1876-1974).

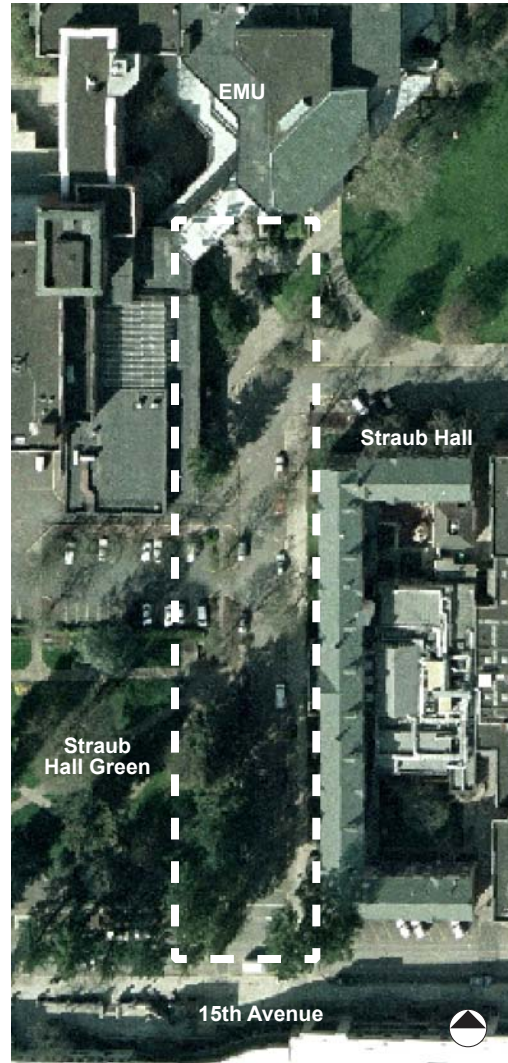


SUMMARY OF EXISTING HISTORIC FEATURES

The Onyx Axis is a remnant of Onyx Street, which was a residential road up to the end of the Lawrence/Cuthbert Era. Straub Hall is the most distinctive feature on the Axis, but the Douglas firs on the corner of 15th Avenue predate the building. Onyx Street and its association with the EMU was altered in 1972 when the EMU expanded eastward and blocked the road.



View to the northwest of the large Douglas fir trees west of the Axis.



2004 aerial of the Onyx Axis



Southeast view of the Axis, with Straub Hall to the left.

■ **RESOURCE HISTORY**

ERA(S) OF GREATEST SIGNIFICANCE

Designated Eras within the Period of Historic Significance Determined for this Survey (1876-1967) are listed below. Check the era/eras determined to be of highest significance for this landscape area.

- Inception Era (1876-1913)
- Lawrence/Cuthbert Era (1914-1946)
- Mid-Century Era (1947-1974)

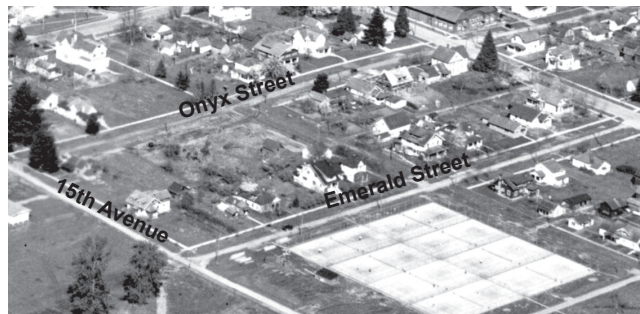
DATE(S) OF CONSTRUCTION DURING ERA(S) OF SIGNIFICANCE

- 1928: John Straub Hall is constructed
- 1936: Esslinger Hall is constructed

MAJOR ALTERATIONS OCCURRING AFTER ERA(S) OF SIGNIFICANCE

- 1949: Carson Hall is constructed
- 1950: Erb Memorial Union is constructed, blocking 14th Avenue

- 1951: Straub Hall Green is constructed
- 1953: Earl Complex is constructed
- 1958: Leighton Pool is added to Esslinger Hall
- 1961: Onyx Bridge is constructed
- 1962: Onyx Street closed due to the EMU addition.
- 1972: Additions to the Erb Memorial Union and its east lawn which blocked Onyx Street's connection to 13th Avenue.
- 1999: The construction of the Student Recreation Center.

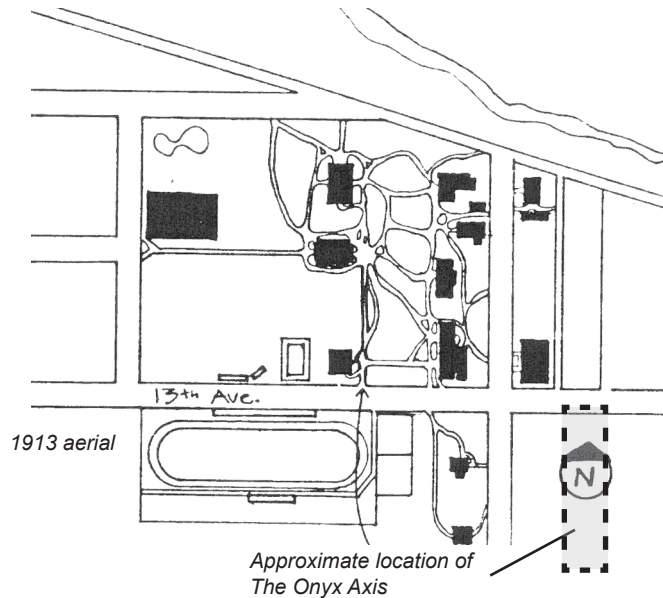


1921 Aerial of Onyx Street. Note the large fir trees at the street's entrance and the first of the University's tennis courts.

ERA DESCRIPTION:

The Inception Era (1876-1913)

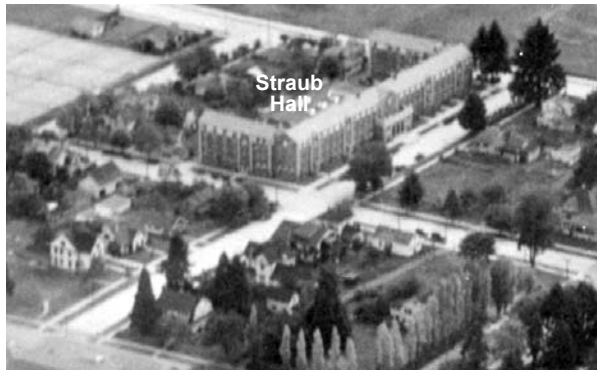
The Axis at the end of the Inception Era was rather rural and residential in character. Onyx Street was not yet paved and may not have even been constructed. Young Douglas firs were planted near the intersection of 15th Avenue, which was most likely a dirt road.



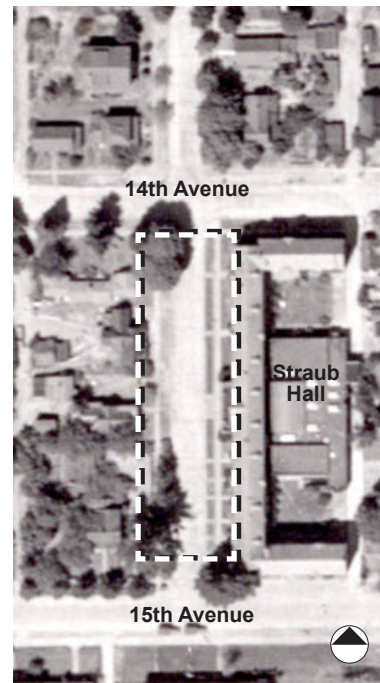
ERA DESCRIPTION:

The Lawrence/Cuthbert Era (1914-1946)

During this era Onyx Street was paved and connected between 13th and 15th Avenues. Residences lined Onyx Street between 13th and 15th Avenues, with Straub Hall (1928) being the exception. The R.O.T.C. building was located on the future site of the Student Recreation Center. Several Douglas firs near the 15th Avenue intersection and from the Inception Era continue to mature.



1930 aerial

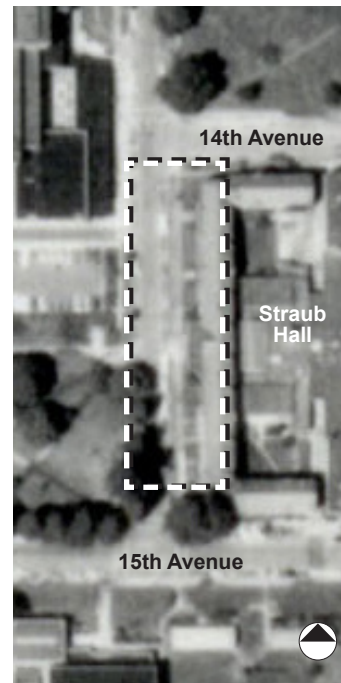


1944 aerial

ERA DESCRIPTION:

The Mid-Century Era (1947-1974)

During this era the Erb Memorial Union, Straub Hall Green and the EMU's east lawn replaced all of the residential blocks that were previously associated with the Axis. 14th Avenue was blocked by the EMU, and Onyx Street was closed north of 13th Avenue. Vehicles accessed the EMU's east entry drive and south parking lot from the Axis.



1968 aerial

ONYX AXIS

■ DESCRIPTION OF LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

LAND USE

Describing both the historic and current use of the Area.

Onyx Axis functions as a low traffic street with two-way car traffic, sidewalks and parking on both sides. It provides service vehicle access to the Straub Hall north courtyard service area, auto access to the EMU parking lot, and bike access to EMU and Straub Hall bike parking.

Historically, the Onyx Street Axis was a throughstreet connecting north to Franklin Boulevard.

DESIGN INTENT

Describing the overall design intent of the Area.

The intention of the Onyx Street Axis is to provide access by both automobiles and pedestrians to adjacent destinations.

SPATIAL ORGANIZATION

Describing the arrangement of physical elements that create a three-dimensional sense of space.

Onyx Axis has the character of a typical tree-lined street. Its eastern edge is formed by the front façade of Straub Hall, and the western edge is defined by a row of large conifer street trees and the eastern façade of the EMU. The absence of structures in the Straub Hall Green provides a soft edge to the Axis.

TOPOGRAPHY & SITE ORIENTATION

Describe/document gradient, slope orientation and solar access.

The slope of this Axis falls to the north at 3-5% (see diagram below). The three-story street wall of Straub Hall and the large coniferous street trees cast long shadows throughout the Onyx Axis, allowing for little solar exposure.

VEGETATION

Describing tree, plant, shrub, ground layer groupings and arrangements.

There are many large street trees that line the Onyx Axis, including Douglas firs, lindens, sequoias, and maples. At the north end of the Axis there are large pine, linden and maple trees. There is a small euonymus hedge that partially screens the EMU parking lot from the street. Along Straub Hall, there are shrub and perennial foundation plantings made up of arbutus, mahonia, boxwood, spirea, ginkgo, laurel and assorted bulbs. The boxwood that flanks either end of Straub Hall has been formally hedged into a rectangular shape. There is only one small patch of lawn within the Onyx Axis, and it is located along the northern portion of Straub Hall.

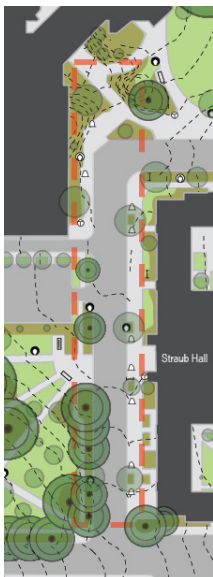


Diagram showing the topography of the area.



Diagram showing circulation paths.



Significant views through the area.

NATURAL SYSTEMS AND FEATURES

Describing natural processes, water flow, and habitat, if applicable.

The mature conifers along the western edge of the Onyx Axis provide bird habitat.

BUILDINGS/STRUCTURES

Describing built physical elements in and around perimeter of the Area, and their relationship to the landscape.

The Onyx Axis is strongly defined along its eastern edge by the uniform street wall created by Straub Hall (1928). The north end of this Axis terminates at the EMU and the southern end at the Student Recreation Center (1999). The western edge is defined in part by the mature Douglas firs.

SMALL-SCALE ELEMENTS

Describing elements such as monuments, markers, seating, fences etc.

There are no historic small scale elements within the Onyx Axis. Non-historic small scale elements include bicycle racks, signs and trash cans.

EDGE CONDITIONS AND ADJACENCIES

Describing the perimeter of the site and important adjacent connections to spaces beyond.

The perimeter of the Axis is defined by the Student Recreation Center, Straub Hall, the Straub Hall Green, and the EMU. This Axis provides access to the main entrances of the SRC and Straub Hall and to the southeast entrance to the EMU.

CIRCULATION

Describing movement paths and associated materials for: pedestrian; automobile; bicycle; other (e.g. system, alignment, materials, character).

Though not a through-street, the Axis is used primarily to access parking areas near the EMU and Straub Hall (see diagram, pg. 6). Many pedestrians use this space to move between the EMU and the Student Recreation Center, as well as between Straub Hall's main entrance and the Knight Library Axis. The Onyx Axis also intersects the Promenade and the 15th Avenue Axis, both important east/west circulation routes.

VIEWS/VISTAS

Describing focal points and views to and from the Area.

There are few remarkable views from the truncated Onyx Axis. Minor views include the linear one from the entry of Straub Hall down the Knight Library Axis, and the often-obstructed view through the Straub Hall Green of the historic eastern facades of Hendricks and Gerlinger Halls (see diagram, pg.6).

ONYX AXIS

■ DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE

CURRENT HISTORIC DESIGNATION

- City Landmark
- National Register - full listing
name:
- National Register - partial listing
name:
- National Historic Landmark
- No historic designation

NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA

Criterion A: Significant Events

Describe events with the landscape area that have influenced the broad patterns of campus history.

Not Applicable

Criterion B: Significant People

Describe connections with the lives of significant persons, including designers.

Not Applicable.

Criterion C: Distinctive Characteristics

Describe elements that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values.

The Onyx Axis meets Criterion C for its association with Ellis Lawrence’s 1932 plan. The construction of Straub Hall in 1928 created the need for this axis to service automobiles and pedestrians to the ever expanding campus. Straub Hall and the large Douglas firs at the 15th Avenue intersection are the most distinct features on the Axis.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

Rank the landscape area in term of its level of contribution to the historic significance of the university campus as a whole.

- High Significance
Considerable contribution to the history of the campus and its growth.
- Medium Significance
Noteworthy contribution the history of the campus and its growth.
- Low Significance
Discernable contribution to the history of the campus and its growth.
- Very Low/No Significance
No discernable importance to the history of the campus and its growth.

■ **DETERMINATION OF INTEGRITY**

Integrity of the Landscape Area is evaluated based on the retention of the historic characteristics described in the categories below.

LOCATION / SETTING

Are important elements still in their original location and configuration?

Straub Hall and the large conifers along the western edge of the Axis are historic elements and remain in their original configuration.

DESIGN

How has the general structure of the landscape changed since its period of significance?

Onyx Axis was originally a through-street that connected to 13th Avenue, which changed over time with various expansions and new buildings.

MATERIALS

Are original materials/vegetation that were used to structure and shape the landscape still present?

The large trees that line the Axis date back to the era of significance.

WORKMANSHIP

Does the landscape retain characteristic workmanship from the period of significance?

Straub Hall's historic façade features ornamental detailing consistent with buildings from that era.

FEELING

Does the landscape evoke the period of significance?

Straub Hall and the large trees within the Axis help anchor the site to the era of significance. The buildings that are at either terminus of the Axis, the eastern addition of the EMU and the Student Recreation Center, are not from the era of significance.

ASSOCIATION

Is it possible to associate elements of the landscape with significant people/events?

Any association with significant people and events has been diminished by changes that have occurred along the Axis. The circulation pattern of the Onyx Axis was drastically altered when the eastern addition to the EMU was built and through traffic was severed.

■ **INTEGRITY & CONDITION FINDINGS**

HISTORIC INTEGRITY

Determine the level of historic integrity, based on the Era(s) of Significance – check one

- Excellent Integrity
Retains a very high percentage of original fabric, and the original design intent is apparent.
- Good Integrity
Retains a significant percentage of original fabric, with a discernable design intent.
- Fair Integrity
Original fabric is present, but diminished.
- Poor Integrity
Contains little historic fabric, and the original design intent is difficult to discern.

OVERALL CONDITION OF LANDSCAPE AREA

– check one

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

■ RESOURCES

— List all primary sources used (plans, maps, surveys, photographs, drawings, newspapers, periodicals, and autobiographies) and secondary sources (books, theses, guidebooks).

Lawrence, Ellis F. drawing for the "Plot Plan, University of Oregon," 1914. Photograph of original kept in the University of Oregon Special Collections, University of Oregon Photo Collection, Box 3, Campus Plans folder.

Lawrence, Ellis F. drawing for the "Proposed Development Of The University Of Oregon Campus, Scheme No. 6," 1932. Photograph of original kept in the University of Oregon Special Collections, University of Oregon Photo Collection, Box 3, Campus Plans folder.

Long, Stephen W. "Historic Continuity A Diagnosis Report" (Eugene: University of Oregon Office of Planning and Campus Development, 1980) 1-67.

Marshall Brothers, 1921 map of Campus, duplicate held by the University of Oregon Planning Office

McMillan, Adell, A Common Ground. (Eugene, Oregon: Erb Memorial Union, 2003) 1-637.

Sandahl, David A. and Castro, Ricardo. "An architectural history of the University of Oregon," (unpublished manuscript, University of Oregon, 1975) Architecture and Allied Arts Library

Shellenbarger, Michael. ed. Harmony in Diversity: The Architecture and Teaching of Ellis F. Lawrence (Eugene: University of Oregon, 1989), 1-91.

Teague, EH. (2004, Oct. 10). The Architecture of the University of Oregon. Retrieved Mar. 1, 2006, from <http://libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/architecture/oregon/>

Unruh, Richard L. Campus Development Guidelines (Eugene: University of Oregon Office of Planning and Campus Development, 1968)

University of Oregon, 1953 map of Campus, duplicate held by the University of Oregon Planning Office

University of Oregon Catalogue: 1945-1946. Campus Map (Eugene, Oregon: University of Oregon, 1945)

University of Oregon Catalogue: 1955-1956. Campus Map (Eugene, Oregon: University of Oregon, 1955)

University of Oregon Map Library, Aerial Photo Collection. Aerial photograph of the University of Oregon, 1936.

University of Oregon Map Library, Aerial Photo Collection. Aerial photograph of the University of Oregon, 1944.

University of Oregon Map Library, Aerial Photo Collection. Aerial photograph of the University of Oregon, 1947.

University of Oregon Map Library, Aerial Photo Collection. Aerial photograph of the University of Oregon, 1952.

University of Oregon Map Library, Aerial Photo Collection. Aerial photograph of the University of Oregon, 1960.

University of Oregon Map Library, Aerial Photo Collection. Aerial photograph of the University of Oregon, 1968.

Electronic version available on the University of Oregon Planning Office web page: <http://uplan.uoregon.edu/projects/HLP/hlpsurveyoflandareas.htm>

Survey research by Dustin Welch and Daniel Schaible.

Survey form completed in Spring 2006 under the supervision of Fletcher Farr Ayotte, Inc.

Edited by the University of Oregon Planning Office, Spring 2007.
