Palliser Garden

1. Statement of Significance

Palliser Garden is a secluded landscaped courtyard at the University of Saskatchewan, located between Qu’Appelle Hall and Marquis Hall. Although it is not configured precisely as illustrated in the original 1909 Campus Plan, a similar courtyard was planned in the same location by university Architects David Brown and Hugh Vallance. The form of Palliser Garden was the result of the unfinished state of Qu'Appelle Hall and the later construction of Marquis Hall. Celebrated Vancouver landscape architects Clive Justice and Harry Webb undertook the landscape design of the garden in the mid 1960’s as part of their work on the Marquis Hall project.

Palliser Garden has been used for events such as openings and performances as well as informal leisure and study by university students. Palliser Garden contains heritage value in its location, in its form as an outdoor room in keeping with the intent of the 1909 Campus Plan, and as a work of design by landscape architects Justice & Webb.

Alternate Names
Sunken Court

Architect(s)
Clive Justice and Harry Webb, Justice and Webb Landscape Architects, Vancouver

Builders
Unknown

Construction Dates

Recognition
University of Saskatchewan ‘B’ Listed

Figure 1. Materials defining the character of Palliser Garden: the greystone facade of Qu’ Appelle Hall, steel balustrades, oak doors, pine and spruce trees.
2. Character - Defining Elements

2.1 Materials

The exterior materials of the buildings around Palliser Garden define its material character to a large degree. Palliser Garden is formed by the materials, shape and character of two buildings from different periods of campus construction and is therefore influenced by two different material palettes. To the east, Palliser Garden is defined primarily by the rough-faced greystone, the limestone accents and the painted steel balustrades of Qu’Appelle Hall (Figure 1). To the west, the garden is characterised by the materials of Marquis Hall – smooth-faced Tyndall stone panels and aluminum-framed glazing (Figure 3). As shown in Figure 4, the garden has several retaining walls constructed in stone as well as a ramp flanked by a stone wall built of greystone and Tyndall stone. (For more information on building stones used at the U of S refer to Appendix: Stone.)

The landscape features of the garden were designed by landscape architects Clive Justice and Harry Webb, who aimed for the garden to have an ‘alpine’ feel with lots of smaller plants. Character-defining plants include the spruce and pine trees shown in Figure 1. The use of trees without heavy foliage at eye level is another character-defining element allowing for visibility within the garden. Figure 3 depicts one of the trees chosen and planted in the middle of the space for this characteristic.

Figure 2. Top to bottom: Tyndall stone facade of Marquis Hall, Tyndall stone coping and greystone wall.

Figure 3. Materials defining the character of Palliser Garden: the Tyndall stone and the glazed facade of Marquis Hall, trees with trunks allowing visibility.

Figure 4. Materials defining the character of Palliser Garden: L to R: greystone retaining wall, foliage.

Figure 5. Palliser Garden as viewed from the east. Marquis Hall in the background makes up the western boundary. Photo retrieved from http://www.flickr.com/photos/usask/5263879602/sizes/z/in/photostream/
2.2 Form & Location

The form of Palliser Garden is the product of the unfinished state of Qu’Appelle Hall and the construction of Marquis Hall. University architects David Brown and Hugh Vallance specified a courtyard to the west of Qu’Appelle Hall (Figure 6). The courtyard was originally intended to be enclosed on three sides by the wings of Qu’Appelle Hall and was intended to remain open to the west. However, the northern wing of the building was never realized. In 1964, Marquis Hall was constructed to the west of Qu’Appelle Hall. The space left between Qu’Appelle Hall and Marquis Hall was landscaped to become Palliser Garden. The negative space between the two buildings largely determined the form of the garden (Figure 7).

2.4 Style & Spatial Configuration

Palliser Garden is asymmetrical in its spatial configuration. To the east, it is enclosed by the walls of Qu’Appelle Hall. It is open on its north side to ‘The Bowl’ and defined on the west side by Marquis Hall. The space is enclosed on its south side by a raised platform created by the partially buried tunnel connecting Marquis Hall and Qu’Appelle Hall. Figure 7 illustrates these boundaries. A concrete footpath encircles the space, and a set of steps allow access over the roof of the tunnel. Figure 8 shows the concrete steps and path. The garden is accessed from the north by a concrete ramp flanked by a stone wall (Figure 9).

Palliser Gardens is sunken in relation to the grade level immediately to the north. This quality gives it a more private atmosphere as does the heavy foliage around its perimeter. The foliage is used to screen visibility to the adjacent residence rooms in Qu’Appelle Hall and to the service court to the south. The sunken quality of the garden and the landscape design are character-defining elements which create privacy in the space. The screening foliage is visible in Figures 8 and 9.

The buildings forming the vertical boundaries of Palliser are Qu’Apelle Hall, which is designed in the Collegiate Gothic style, and Marquis Hall, which is a modernist building. The contrasting architectural styles of these buildings contribute to the character of the courtyard, although their scales are similar. The facade of Qu’Appelle Hall before the construction of Palliser garden is shown in Figure 10.
2.5 Use(s)

Palliser Garden is one of the more secluded outdoor spaces in the core of the campus. As such, it sees much less use than other outdoor areas such as The Bowl or Voyageur Place. However, it is sought out by students looking for a quiet place to read or study. In warmer weather, gatherings such as openings and performances have taken place there.

Before its incorporation as Palliser Garden, the open space behind Qu'Appelle Hall was a vacant grassy lot. Historic photos show cars were sometimes parked there. Figure 10 shows the area of Palliser Garden before it was landscaped.

2.6 Cultural & Chronological Associations

Palliser Garden is named for John Palliser. Palliser was an Irish-born geographer and explorer who led an expedition to the Canadian west between 1857 and 1861 on behalf of the British government. He was instrumental in ending the ownership of Rupert's Land by the Hudson's Bay Company through the 1869 Deed of Surrender. He also declared a southwest region of Saskatchewan too arid for agriculture and named it Palliser's Triangle. This did not deter settlers from farming there. He is credited with helping to bring development and settlement to the Canadian prairies.

Palliser Garden is also associated with the work of landscape architects Clive Justice and Harry Webb. Justice and Webb were pioneering landscape architects of the mid-twentieth century in British Columbia. Some of the firm's notable projects included the University of British Columbia's Botanical Gardens and the Van Dusen Gardens in Vancouver.
3. Associated Objects

N/A

4. Supporting Documents


Facilities Management Division (2011). Asset Resource Database [Data File]. Retrieved from `\usask\fmddfs\files\iis\IIS_Public\ARS`.

5. Summary of Character-defining Elements

Materials
- greystone façade, walls and retaining walls
- grass
- trees: spruce, pine
- small plants
- glazing
- Tyndall stone

Form & Location
- asymmetrical
- University of Saskatchewan
- between Marquis and Qu’Appelle Halls

Style & Spatial Configuration
- ramp and stairs
- closed on three sides by the facades of Qu’Appelle and Marquis Halls
- sunken
- trees with visibility at trunk height

Uses
- privacy
- reading, study
- small gatherings (openings, performances)

Cultural & Chronological Associations
- John Palliser
- Landscape architects Clive Justice and Harry Webb