

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA CAMPUS, PLAZA OF THE AMERICAS
University of Florida Campus Quad Bounded by West University
Avenue, US 441/Southwest 13th Street, Stadium Road, and North-
South Drive
Gainesville
Alachua County
Florida

HALS FL-5
FL-5

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY

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HALS NO. FL - 5

- Location:** University of Florida. It is the quad between Library West, Peabody Hall, the University, Gainesville, Alachua, FL
Lat: 29.6505 Long: -82.3428
- Significance:** Plaza of the Americas is the historic core of the University of Florida. This open space was conceived with the original university master plan by architect William A. Edwards in 1905. The space exists, although no longer central, and has served as a human gathering place for more than one century. Olmsted Brothers firm in 1925 created a planting plan using trees and shrubs indigenous to Florida. The beauty of their plan was to create a shade esplanade along the edges of the space, linking the buildings surrounding the quadrangle, and leaving the center of the quadrangle open space. This is a small, intimate quadrangle, and the Olmsted Brothers planting design creates a Classically-inspired landscape architectural space of human scale. The Campus Historic District was entered on the National Registry of Historic Places April 20, 1989.
- History:** The Central Zone of the UF Campus Historic District is characterized by the quadrangle named the Plaza of the Americas. Twentieth-century Collegiate Gothic styled academic buildings form the periphery of the quadrangle.
- In 1925, the Olmsted Brothers landscape architects developed the plans to improve the plaza. The firm's plan composed matching esplanades on both west and east sides of the quadrangle. The north and south ends are terminated by significant buildings. The center of the quadrangle was allowed to remain an open space.
- In 1931, the quadrangle was officially designated the Plaza of the Americas in recognition of the first meeting of the Institute of Inter-American Affairs. Twenty-one trees were planted around the central open space, paralleling the tree lined esplanades. These are Magnolia trees, and they tend to 'crowd' the central open space.
- Character-Defining Features**
- Master planned original 1905 Master Plan included the quadrangle as a landscape architectural open space. Simplicity of tree planting design using single species of canopy tree (Live Oak) as conceived by the Olmsted Brothers, and soon after altered with the addition of the 21 Magnolia trees.

- Sources: Laurie, Murray D. and Kevin McCarthy. Guide to the University of Florida and Gainesville. Sarasota: Pineapple Press, 1997.
- National Register of Historic Places. University of Florida Campus Historic District 8AL2552, entered April 20, 1989.
- Olmsted Brothers, Inc. Landscape architecture plans in the collection of the Physical Plant Division, University of Florida, 1927.
- Proctor, Samuel. "The University of Florida: Its Early Years." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Florida, 1958.
- Reeves, F. Blair. "Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Preservation of Significant Buildings and On-Campus Sites." Manuscript in collection of University of Florida Archives, 1977.
- Tate, Susan, et. al. The University of Florida Campus Preservation Plan with Guidelines for Rehabilitation and New Construction in the Historic Impact Area. Gainesville: University of Florida.
- <http://www.ppd.ufl.edu/HistoricCampusWebsite/pdf/UFPreservationPlan.pdf>
(accessed February 2, 2009).
- Historian: David J Driapsa Landscape Architect Chartered
725 10rd Avenue North
Naples, Florida
Telephone: (239) 591-2321



Figure 1. This allee of Live Oaks on the east side of the quadrangle was designed by the Olmsted Brothers firm in 1926 and has served the university as a shaded esplanade for nearly a century. There is a matching allee on the west side of the quadrangle, but of lesser integrity (David Driapsa, February 2009).



Figure 2. This open space is the heart of the quadrangle and has remained a volume of landscape architectural space for nearly a century. Over the years proposals have attempted to "improve" this space by removing the oaks to allow more sun and also to remove the oaks to naturalize the space with Pine Trees that grew here naturally before the natural landscape was made into cultural landscape (David Driapsa, February 2009).

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REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

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