

VENICE HIGH SCHOOL COMPREHENSIVE RENEWAL

LOS ANGELES, CA





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The story of the Venice High School Campus Comprehensive Modernization Project is a story of the complete reorganization and reinvention of one of LAUSD's most historic campuses. Initially built in 1935 after the 1933 Long Beach earthquake, Venice High School is best known for its classical PWA Moderne façade that faces out onto the busy eight-lane Venice Boulevard.

Monumental, this campus became a stand-in for the quintessential American high school with more credits than most Hollywood actors. But over the years, the campus had become a clunky, disordered mess of aging buildings, bungalows, and threadbare lawns punctuated with expanses of cracked asphalt and crumbling sidewalks. Unfortunate grade changes across the site, chain link fences, and internal campus parking chopped the large campus up into a place that felt divided and inhospitable to students, teachers, and visitors alike.

The District desired a well-planned, revitalized campus with high-performing learning environments to foster student achievement and well-being while respecting the historical integrity of the campus and its contribution to the neighboring community.

We worked through an intensive four-year, \$132 million, 112,000 sf revitalization of one of Los Angeles Unified School District's most distinct and historic campuses, celebrating its rich history and launching it forward as a model for the next generation of learning.

SCOPE OF WORK & BUDGET

The project scope included demolishing six permanent buildings, twelve modular buildings, partial removal of existing campus infrastructure, hardscape, and landscape. Replacing, consolidating, and updating these programs are two new cutting-edge classroom buildings housing a variety of labs, shops, art spaces, and special education facilities, which flank dynamic outdoor spaces. Additionally, a new gymnasium anchors a fully revamped athletics core replete with sports fields, grandstands, courts, concessions, and ticketing buildings.

The District also wanted to modernize its central utility infrastructure throughout the campus, update parking areas and relocate a solar panel array to a more advantageous location. The project team was asked to carry out this work, touching all parts of the campus without disrupting student life.

PROJECT DATES: 2018–2022

COST:\$132,000,000

SQUARE FOOTAGE: 112,000 sf



SPACE PLAN

NEW SCIENCE BUILDING

- 1 Horticulture Lab
- 2 Flexible Engineering Lab
- 3 Special Education

SCIENCE COURT

- 4 Robotics Patio
- 5 Demonstration Gardens

MAIN QUAD

- 6 Outdoor Stage
- 7 School Assembly
- 8 Venice Walk of Monuments

ARTS VERANDA

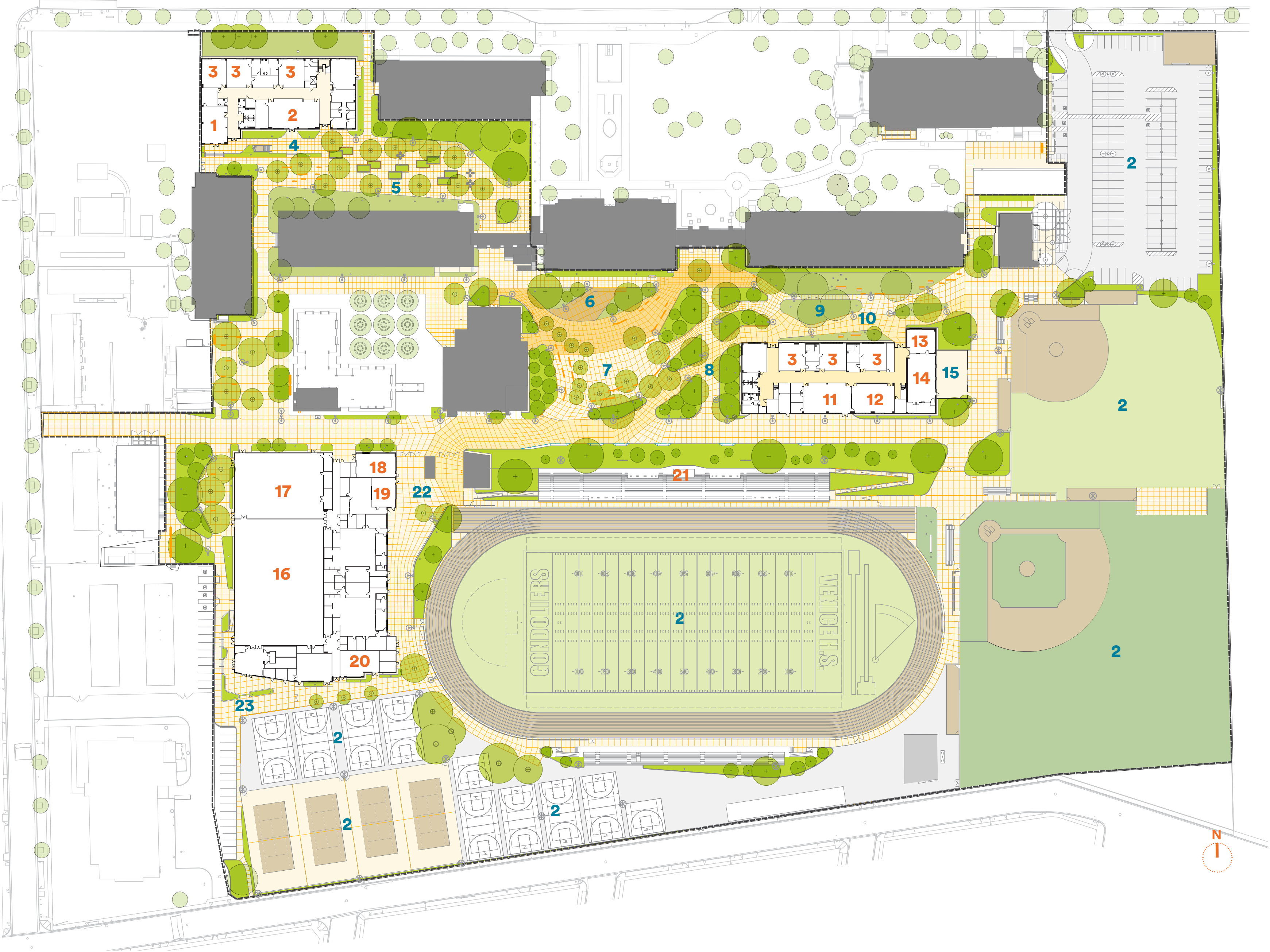
- 9 Passive Gathering
- 10 Outdoor Breakout Spaces

NEW ARTS BUILDING

- 11 Graphics Print Shop
- 12 Graphic Design Lab
- 13 Autoshop Classroom
- 14 Auto Lab
- 15 Auto Yard

ATHLETICS COMPLEX

- 16 Main Gym
- 17 Practice Gym
- 18 Aerobics Classroom
- 19 Sports Medicine
- 20 Fitness Classroom
- 21 Bermed Grandstand & Pressbox
- 22 Rally Court
- 23 Spirit Plaza
- 24 Track & Field
- 25 Softball Field
- 26 Baseball Field
- 27 Baseball Courts
- 28 Tennis Courts
- 29 New Parking Lot w/ PV





SCHOOL & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Venice High School is a beloved Los Angeles location with a diverse and robust community, famous cameos in movies like *Grease*, and an intense focus on the future of learning. We improved the flow throughout the entire campus, creating a greater sense of community and opportunities for collaboration.

CONNECTION **TO COMMUNITY**

The design positioned the **new Science Building and Science Quad** adjacent to the **Neighborhood Community Garden**, leveraging a connection between the horticulture students and the Garden's committed members. As the threshold between the High School and neighborhood, the **Venice High School Learning Garden** acts an educational lab open to the community. The garden is used by students, elementary school children, local college students, and Venice community members alike.



Photo Credit:
@vhsgardenclub



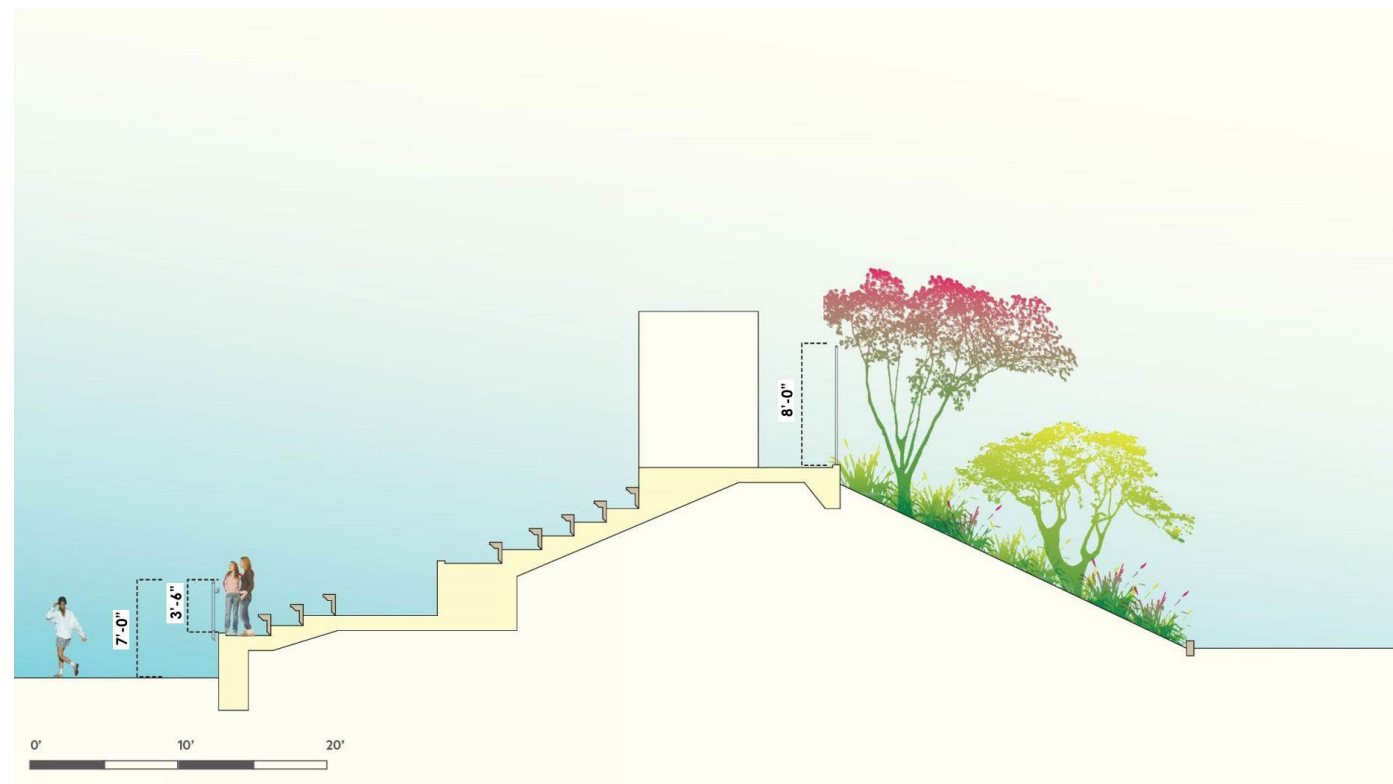


CONNECTION
TO COMMUNITY

Similarly, the new athletics facilities and track and field can easily open to the community during off-hours without compromising campus safety.

CHALLENGES **& SOLUTIONS**

The existing campus suffered from **disjointedness and major accessibility issues**. Severe changes in topography, broke up the campus inefficiently and inconveniently. Additionally, the District required a new grandstand for the football/soccer field at the center of the campus and asked for ideas on how to deal with the unsightly, insecure area behind the structure. We offered to pull dirt from the athletics area, bring the entire campus to level, and use this excess soil to provide a planted berm behind the athletics grandstand. **The berm** became a backdrop for the **Campus' Main Quad** and a centerpiece of the project design. **By making the entire campus flatter and more accessible we were able to smooth transitions across campus.**



Berm Section





EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

VENICE HS VISION & GOALS

- STEAM
- Indoor/Outdoor classrooms
- Project based learning
- Hands-on education
- Community school: integrated support, family/community engagement, collaborative leadership, and extended learning time/opportunities
- Intersectional learning
- Sustainability
- Accessibility
- Inclusive of different learning styles





CREATIVITY **& INNOVATION**

The **Arts and Shop Building** houses a variety of **hands-on educational spaces** including arts, graphic design, a print shop, a multimedia lab and an auto-lab with a yard. The glassy, perched 2nd story bar creates a shady 'front porch' at the entry level perfect for outdoor work, while providing ample north light for the arts program within.

ACTIVITY & INTERACTION

The activity in the double-height **graphics print shop** is visible from the windows in the ample 2nd floor corridor equipped with benches for **collaboration and gathering** between classes. The Lab was designed around a variety of printing presses and connects directly to a computer lab where students can develop skills in graphic design and production.





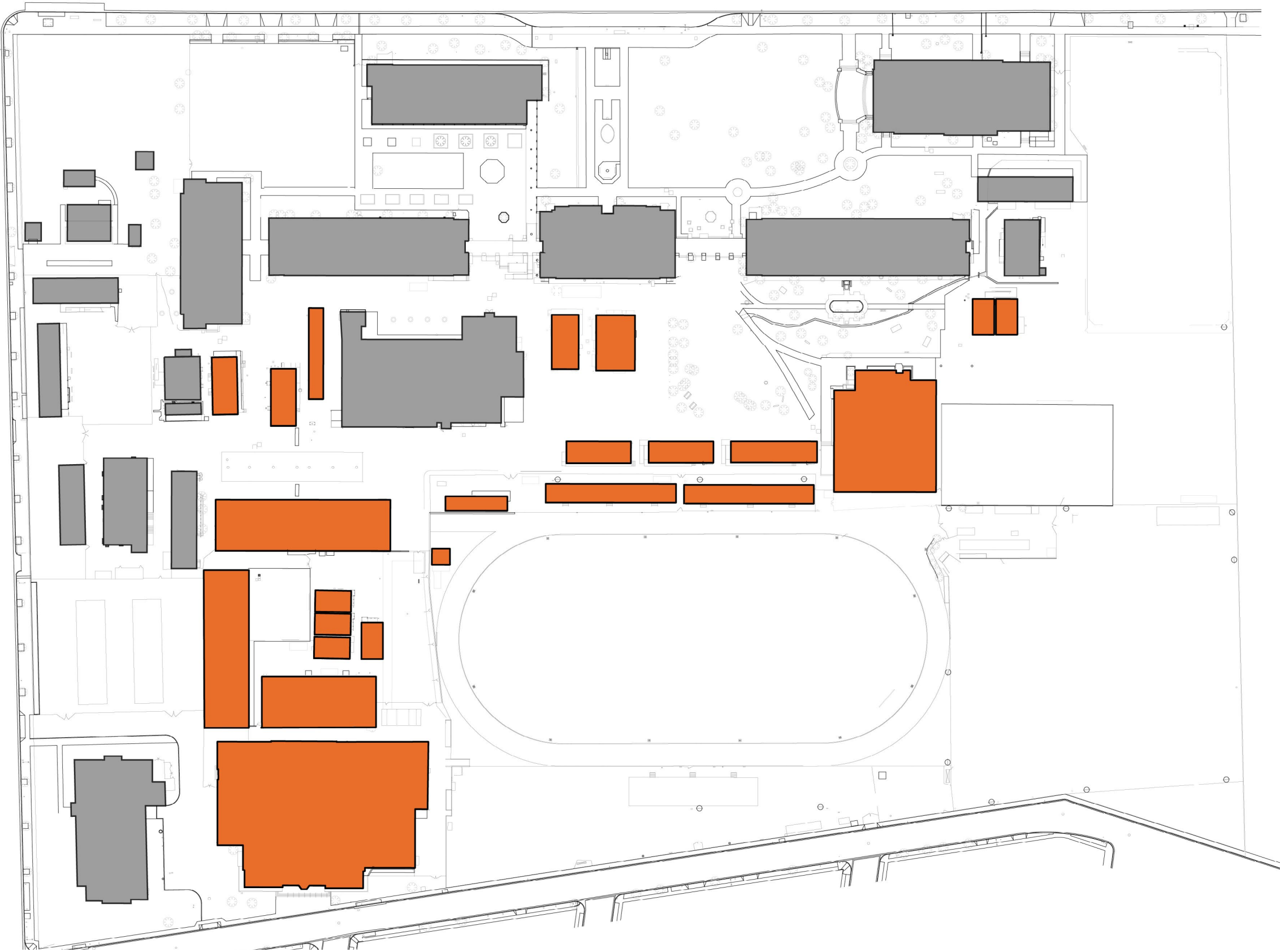
BLOOMING **& GROWING**

The new **horticulture lab** and **maker space** spill out onto the **Science Court** replete with **demonstration gardens** and raised planter beds for **project-based learning**.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

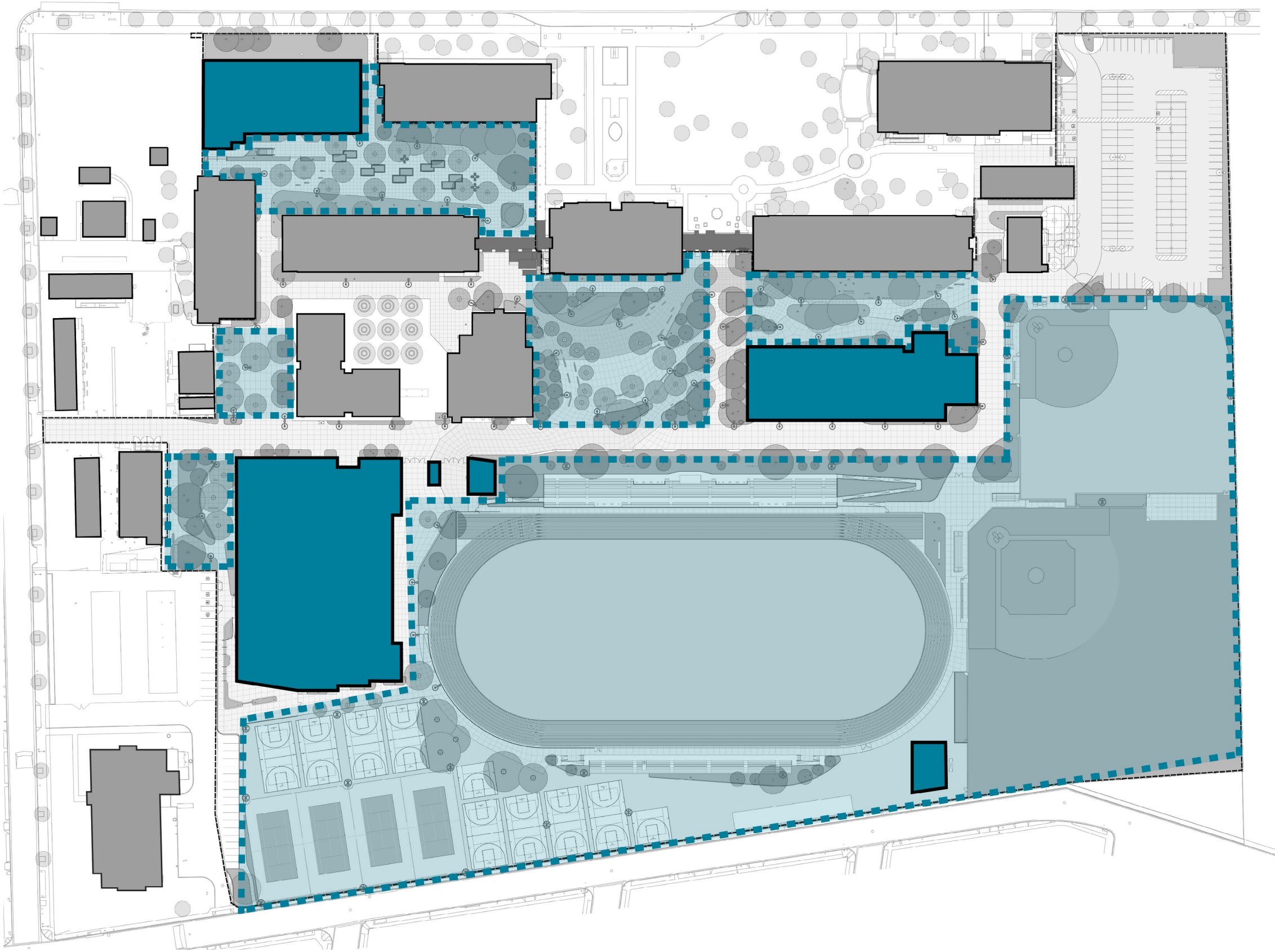
A new fluid relationship between indoor and outdoor learning introduces innovative pedagogies and programs to the High School as landscape and outdoor spaces are treated as an essential part of the campus goals.

Existing Buildings Buildings Demolished



BEFORE

New Buildings New Outdoor Spaces



AFTER

FLOW & CONNECTIONS

The new design leverages the **open campus culture** and temperate climate in conceiving a campus that exploits the potential for intersectional and hands-on outdoor learning. A concept of ‘canals and islands’ protect existing plantings in landscape islands while defining new canals of circulation and movement.





OUTDOOR LEARNING

Three new quads have been developed for their diverse programmatic requirements of learning, gathering, and circulation. The new **Science Court** is furnished with raised planters, demonstration gardens, and outdoor classrooms that can be flexibly programmed to meet curricular goals.

The old Senior Quad is reimagined as **The Arts Veranda**, allowing for outdoor breakout and passive gathering space under a mature canopy of magnolias. The Veranda will also include a contained yard for the new **Auto-Lab**.

The Main Quad becomes the new heart of the campus. A diversity of shade, seating, and planted areas provide a variety of settings for socializing or introverted respite, with a **new outdoor stage** allowing for the showcase of school performances.

These spaces were designed for student performances and various gatherings, including school assemblies, dramatic performances, ceremonies, and graduation. Ultimately, the new campus is unified with a strong cross-campus flow.

Circulation channels connect major nodes and campus buildings, introducing a diagonal northeast-to-southwest movement.



CONTEXT
& COLLABORATION

The sloped-face concrete block base and long vertical slot windows of the new **Science Building** echo the weight and rhythms of the campus' existing historic, concrete PWA Moderne buildings while housing **cutting-edge and contemporary programs**.



DIVERSITY **& ENGAGEMENT**

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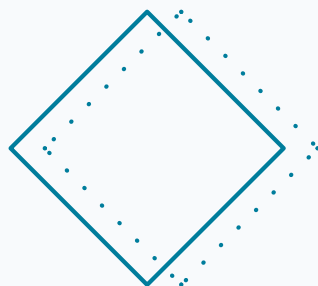
SUSTAINABILITY & RESILIENCY

Designing and constructing Venice HS with sustainability in mind played an essential role in the campus modernization project. As a **California High Performance School (CHPS) verified campus**, the school is equipped with a wealth of sustainability features. Sharing the knowledge of the tactics used with students, staff and visitors alike via informational signs is imperative to ensuring that we all become better stewards of the natural world we inhabit together.



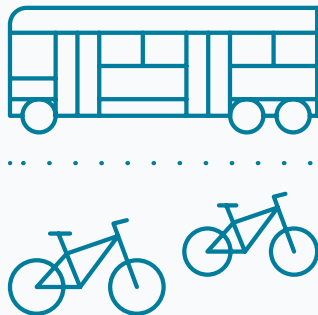
CENTRAL LOCATION

Over 81% of Venice HS's attendance boundary falls within a 2-mile radius of the campus. Which means most students and staff can walk, bike or take public transportation to the school.



JOINT USE

Venice HS is integrated with its surrounding communities and allows the public to maximize use of school facilities for group gatherings and meetings outside of school hours.



PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

All building entrances on the campus fall within one-eighth of a mile of a bus line stop, permitting students, staff and visitors to travel to the school without having to rely on a personal vehicle.



STORMWATER

At Venice HS 100% of the rainwater that lands on the campus is treated before it leaves the site in order to preserve the energy that would be required at later stages for cleaning.



COOL ROOFS

Venice HS uses lighter color “cool roof” materials since these have higher Solar Reflectance Index values (SRI).



LIGHT POLLUTION

All building exterior lights and those across the Venice HS campus have shields to stop their artificial light from reaching the sky.



INDOOR WATER USE

By using high performance and low-flush plumbing fixtures, less water is used each time a faucet or shower is turned on and each time a toilet or urinal is flushed.



OUTDOOR WATER USE

The utilization of efficient irrigation systems and the strategic selection of native plant species significantly reduces the total amount of water needed to serve the planting areas across the Venice HS campus.



AIR

The Venice HS buildings use extra-fine filters to clean the air supplied to rooms through the HVAC system. These filters trap particulates, contaminants, and dust preventing those from reaching the lungs of students and staff.



ENERGY MANAGEMENT

Building Management Systems (BMS) are used to monitor energy use in the Venice HS buildings allowing building operators to see immediately if something is not working correctly and make repairs quickly.



ENERGY

All new buildings on the Venice campus use high-efficiency heating, cooling and lighting systems. This ensures that the electricity and natural gas used to run the buildings is as minimal as it can be.



SOLAR READY

All the large buildings constructed as part of the comprehensive modernization project at Venice HS are designed to accommodate solar photovoltaic panels on their roofs in the future.



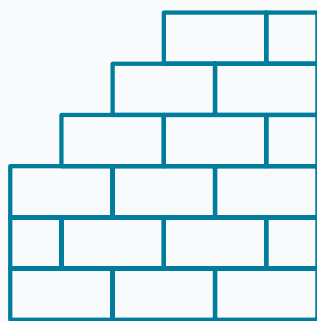
COMMISSIONING

The commissioning process checks that all the building systems have been installed as designed and that they are operating as expected.



RECYCLING

At Venice HS numerous waste and recycling bins are dispersed throughout the campus, reducing the amount of waste and energy that would be required to separate these items at the landfill site.



CONSTRUCTION

All building exterior lights and those across the Venice HS campus have shields to stop their artificial light from reaching the sky.



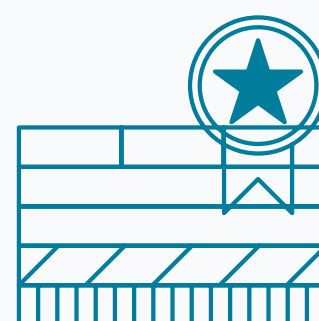
RECYCLED CONTENT

Venice HS construction used many materials containing recycled content, reducing of the amount of virgin material that is harvested / mined / produced.



LIGHTING

The light fixtures installed in the Venice HS's buildings and site work do not contain mercury, preventing problems associated with mercury in the future.



LOW-EMITTING MATERIALS

Materials were carefully selected and installed to ensure they do not emit harmful volatile organic compounds (VOC). VOCs can have a potent odor, and can cause damage to human lungs.

RESULTS OF THE PROCESS & PROJECT

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

- Reorganize campus with a central community area.
- Provide 21st-century learning environments with specialized programs offering unique academic and athletic learning opportunities.
- Provide opportunities for learning indoors and out at various sizes and scales.
- Update and modernize campus infrastructure.
- Work with the neighborhood community of Mar Vista to provide enhanced infrastructure and connections.
- Blend new facilities in seamlessly with the existing historic buildings.

REALIZING OBJECTIVES

Construction was slated to take four years and offsite parking was calculated to add \$3 million to the project. Subtle manipulations to the campus plan and alterations to the phasing allowed for on-site parking that reallocated these costs into the project.

New shared thresholds like the Athletic Center and Learning Garden create a fluid crossover with the surrounding community.

By fixing the topography changes and simultaneously solving the need for bleachers with the creation of the berm, we made the campus more accessible and connected.

New STEAM classrooms and outdoor spaces flow together, creating flexible spaces for project-based learning inside and out.

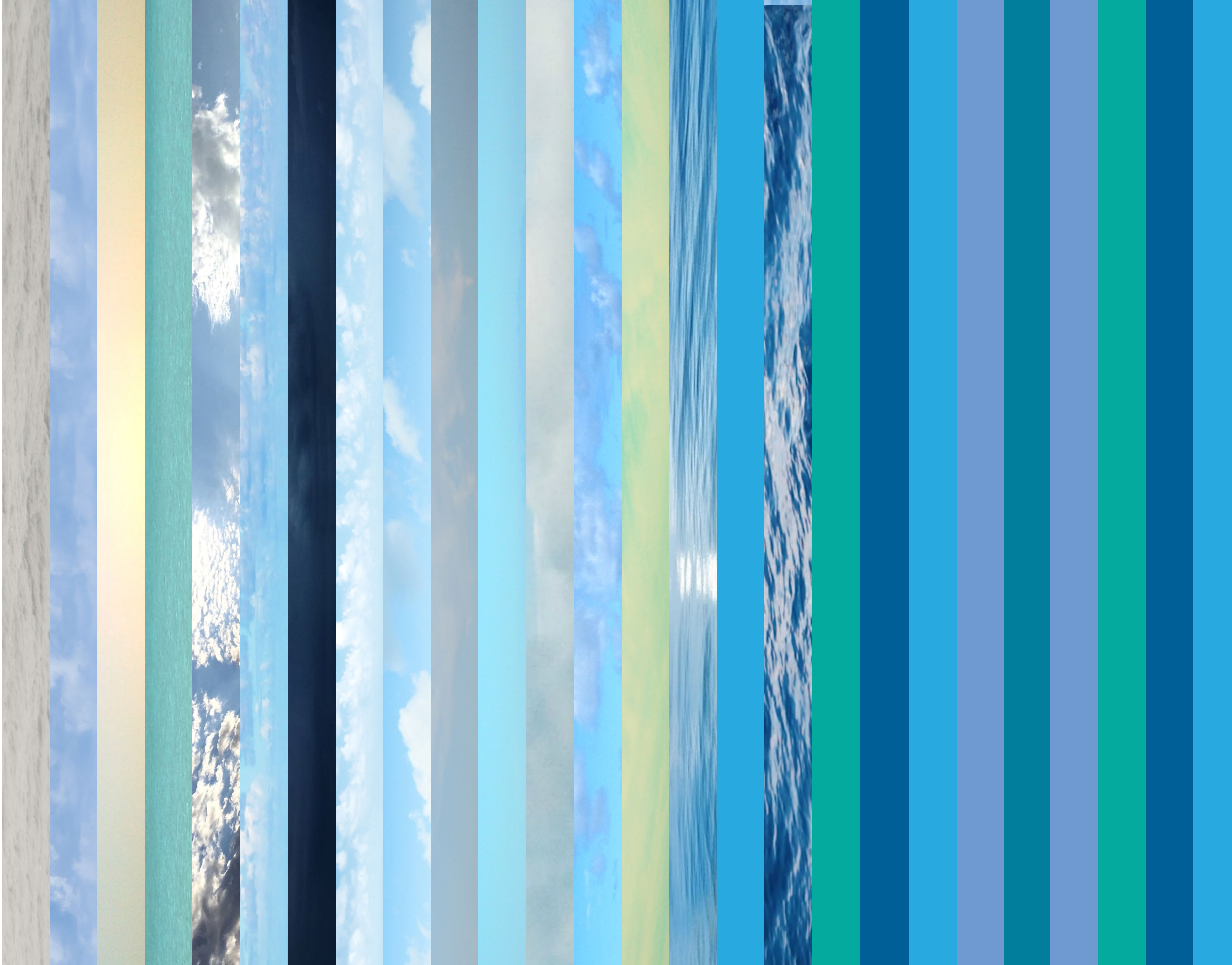
We blended old and new into a cohesive and inviting center for students and the local community by creating a secondary language of buildings on the campus.

We re-branded the campus with a bold and unique identity that fosters school and community pride.



IDENTITY
& SENSE OF PLACE

We crafted a unique new graphic identity to bolster school pride and foster a greater sense of place. Celebrating the iconic coastal culture of Venice Beach, the new graphic identity places Venice High School boldly between the sky and the sea. The graphics build from this iconic striping style into a comprehensive language that unifies the entire school.



IDENTITY **& SENSE OF PLACE**

Bold color use, unique typography, and large-scale graphics unify the once disjointed and outdated campus. Across the campus, environmental wayfinding, signage, and planting are employed to seamlessly unify the various academic and athletic functions to create an increased sense of school spirit, identity, and belonging.

VHS

SCHOOL VENICE HIGH





IDENTITY
& SENSE OF PLACE

The Main Gym incorporates translucent glazing that not only lets in diffused natural light, but also extends the activity on game night to the exterior. The new graphic identity developed for the project aids in providing unity and school spirit.

IDENTITY
& SENSE OF PLACE

Large signage elements create dramatic gateways and visual anchors to the new **Athletics Complex**, allowing for a sense of communal procession and grandeur. The raised topography created by the bermed grandstand elevates the field into a stadium-like setting.

The berm punctuates the flat site giving an edge to the academic complex, housing elements for gathering during the school day and providing an opportunity for school spirit before athletic events.



