

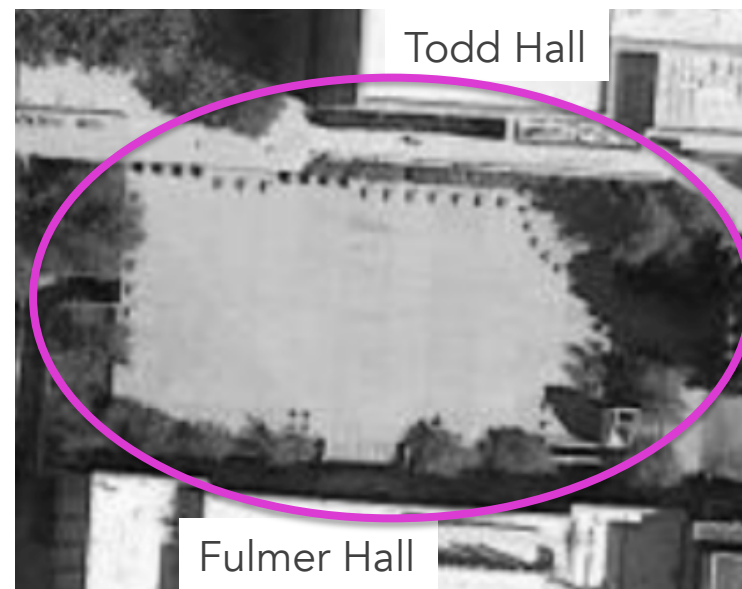


There are several examples of the element of urban design called “plaza” on WSU’s campus. These are deliberately arranged, enclosed to some degree, and not a passageway



# The Plazas of Washington State University





## Between Todd and Fulmer Halls

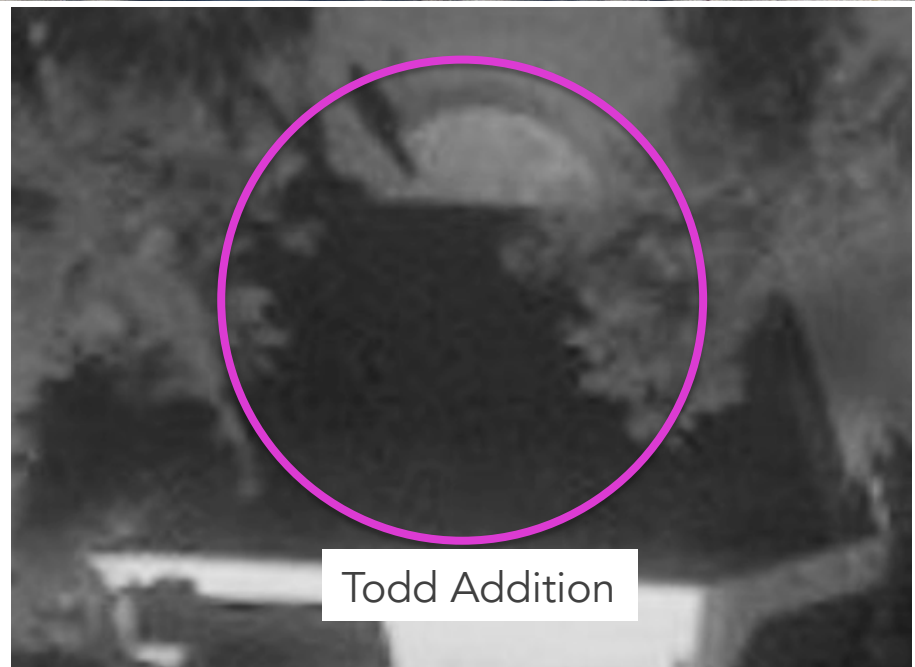
One of the most fully enclosed large plaza spaces on campus. Yet this is nearly devoid of personality. What could have been a prime space dedicated to creating micro-climate and people watching areas is instead a nearly barren, harsh, windswept leftover. The large concrete blocks resemble anti-tank barriers; at least the smaller ones can be used for sitting. Nothing in this space says "linger here." Which is a shame as the pedestrian flow and numerous windows could provide great people watching.



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Todd Addition

### North side of Todd Addition

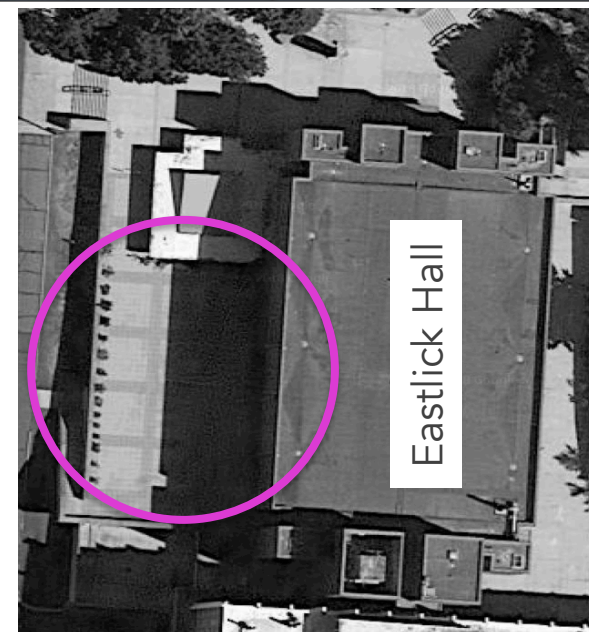
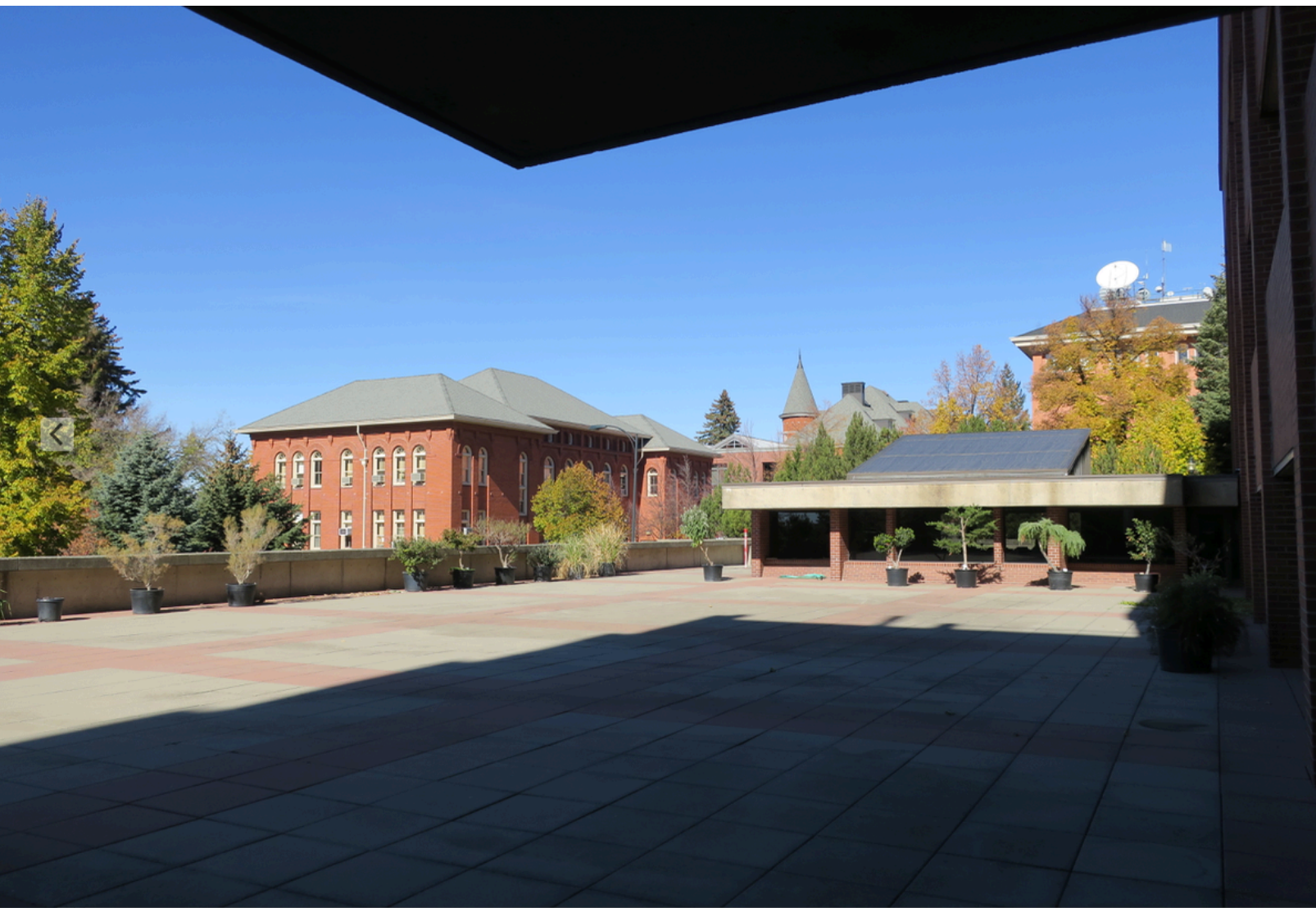
While having some design elements that make it a plaza as I've defined it – deliberately arranged and enclosed to some degree with the building and plants in planters – this space functions primarily as a transition space from the Mall to the building. There are tables near the building, in a nice north-side summer micro-climate, and some seating opportunities along the planters.

The steps are obviously the strongest design feature. Yet their sinuousness does not extend in any way through the rest of the space. And while the step's location should be prime for people watching, it appears that few people actually sit on them. Why not? Could be summer heat. Perhaps the line of the steps should have been reinforced with shade providing trees. Too, the location of the steps may feel too exposed for comfortable sitting.



# The Plazas of Washington State University





## West side of Eastlick Hall

A barren and forsaken space. This is a rooftop plaza, which would seem to explain the lack of greenery that would offset its summer sun-baked exposure. This doesn't work as a winter micro-climate either, as there is only wind shelter from one side; generally at least two enclosed sides are needed. No seating or gathering space. No pavement design that would be interesting from above. This space is ripe for a makeover.



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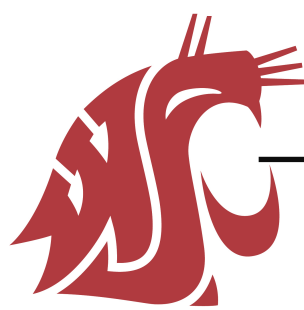


## North side of Fine Arts

This set of spaces feels a bit schizophrenic. The space on the upper left is more intimate and has some obvious thought given to the form and arrangement of elements. The large space above, is nothing but a dreary mid-century modern hardscape plaza.

The smaller space fails on a user-friendly level. There is no where to comfortably sit, it offers neither a winter or summer micro-climate, and it turns its back on the prime people watching opportunity along this end of the mall. It fails too on a design level. The plants are not correct for creating micro-climates in this space – shade in summer, wind blocking in winter. The block elements are all the same size and have no compositional coherence.

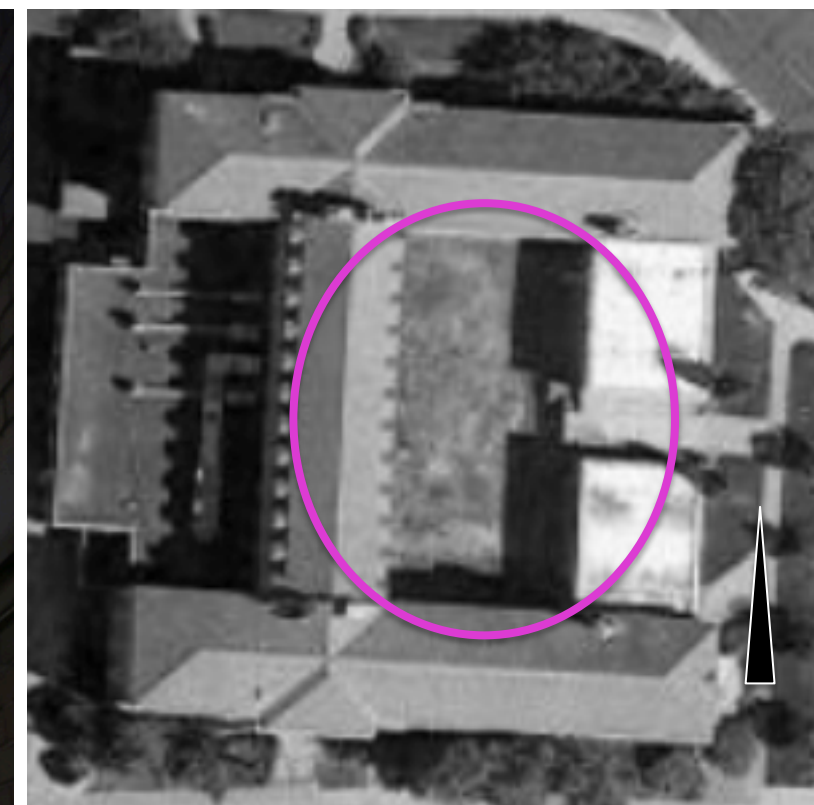
The large plaza is simply a space to move through. Other than the low steps, there is no seating opportunity. Even the steps do not appear inviting as there is little to watch. The light standard does not help. Overall, a disappointing space to front the "Fine Arts" building.



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## Davis-Wilmer Hall

Perhaps the most classically formed plaza space on campus is also its most derelict. Why? Is it too exposed to be comfortable to sit in? What must the residents who live in the dorm think about WSU's past and future if this is their view? This is a prime space for a design makeover, even if it is just for aesthetic and non-functional purposes.



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### Between Cleveland Hall - Education Addition – The Spark

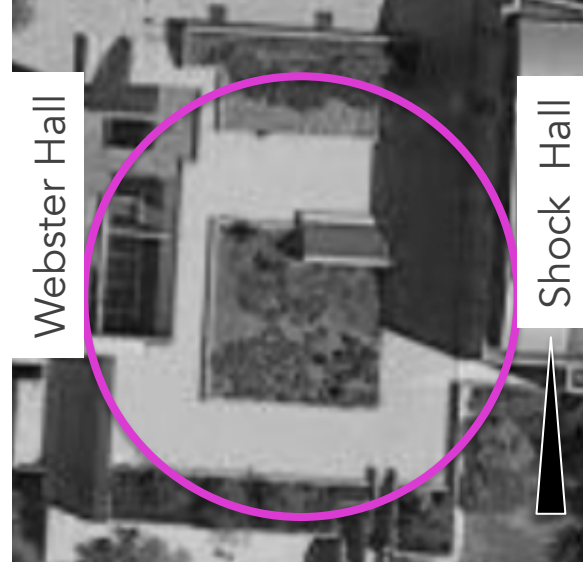
This is a hybrid plaza – part urban hardscape part village green. Too hot for the summer and too windy during the winter, but not bad during the shoulder seasons in fall and spring. It is unknown as to why the space was not complete by the addition of properly scaled trees to provide badly needed edge definition and shade.



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## Between Webster and Shock Halls

This is a “green roof.” That explains its minimal greenness, given the loads that the roof can support. Not a place for sitting, but rather a place to move through. Perhaps the design could have been a horizontal counterpoint to the blocks which surround it rather than just a reinforcement of that vocabulary.

The planting area in the middle has potential to become a place for planting composition, which it is not now. Selecting the right plants and maintenance will be key in such a harsh environment. Overhead elements could be explored too, to help humanize the space.

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## South side of Neill Hall

A weird little space. There is nothing to look at within or without. People don't appear to use this space as there is really no reason to be here. People go where people are – that is one of the prime understandings of urban design. Instead, this looks like a theoretical exercise on what an urban space should look like. There is no center, no focus. The benches are oddly arranged. In the fall at least, the plant palette adds interest.



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## North side of Cleveland Hall

A little afterthought of a space. Yet one that works well for an outdoor classroom in the summer and early part of the fall semesters.. Deep shade and cool vegetation are inviting on hot days. The plaza is too shaded to be used on winter and spring days. Better furniture would enhance its use as an outdoor classroom.



# The Plazas of Washington State University

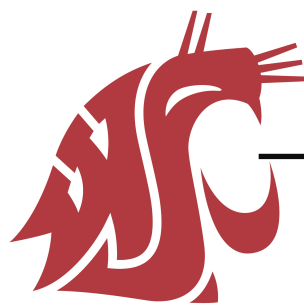
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### Between Goldsworthy Hall and Hall Rotunda

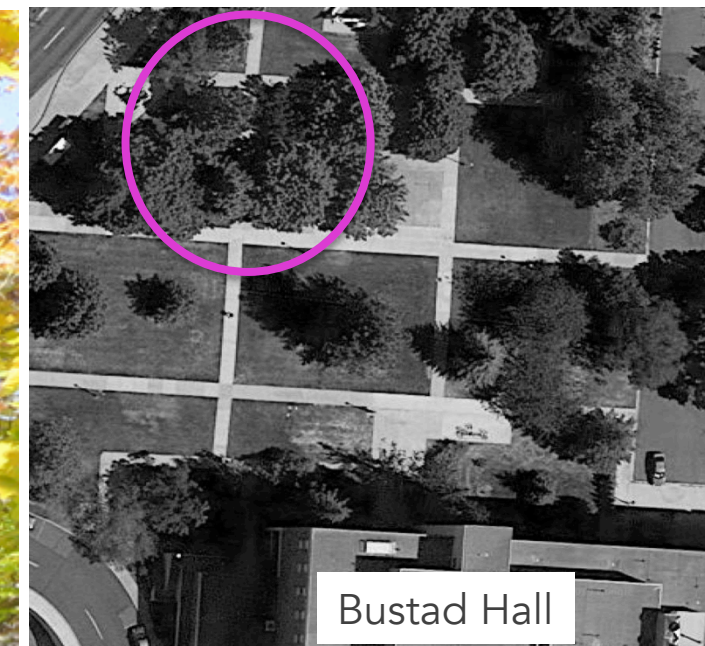
An intimate space, nearly hidden amongst large dorms and the cafeterias. I can imagine this gets used at night as a place for couples to be alone. Works well as a summer micro-climate. Ground cover is needed to give the space a more finished look.



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### North of Bustad Hall

This small space is unique in that its enclosure is accomplished by plants. It is intimate, refuge, ideal for solitary picnics or small conversations. I imagine however, that this space is unusable in winter (too shady) and at night (too disconnected).



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