



# Founder's Hall and the Rowland Courtyard

## Burr & Burton Academy

Submitted for 2023 Vermont Public Places Awards



### Project Team:

Design Architect; KATO

Architect of Record; ZGF

Landscape Architect; SE Group

Civil Engineer; Engineering Ventures

MEP; Engineering Services of Vermont

Contractor; DEW





## PROJECT BACKGROUND

Burr and Burton Academy is an independent high school with a public mission and a global reach located in Manchester, Vermont. Surrounded by the natural beauty of the Green Mountains, the Academy provides students with a rigorous academic program while also emphasizing the importance of character, creativity, and leadership.

The Founder's Hall project was undertaken to expand the school's offering and is home for the English and Social Studies departments, as well as a maker's space, and a grand central atrium/library leading up to a spectacular view of Mr. Equinox. The top level also features the Belltower Room, a flexible meeting space highlighting the view of the school's iconic Seminary belltower.

The project included not only the design of the new Founder's Hall building, but the redesign of the adjacent parking lot into a new courtyard space. The courtyard features landscaping, outdoor seating, and ample open space and is designed for school events, outside instruction and outdoor recreation. The project also included significant upgrades to the school's stormwater management system and the addition of new stormwater gardens that serve both the health of the landscape and provide education opportunities for students.

The Burr and Burton Academy Founder's Hall project creates innovative public spaces both indoor and outdoor for teaching, learning and to serve as a community center for the campus. The new campus design expands opportunities for public recreation and increases access to the benefits of these public spaces. The design integrates the new Founder's Hall into the historic context and fabric of the campus— realizing the goal of looking towards the future while honoring the past.

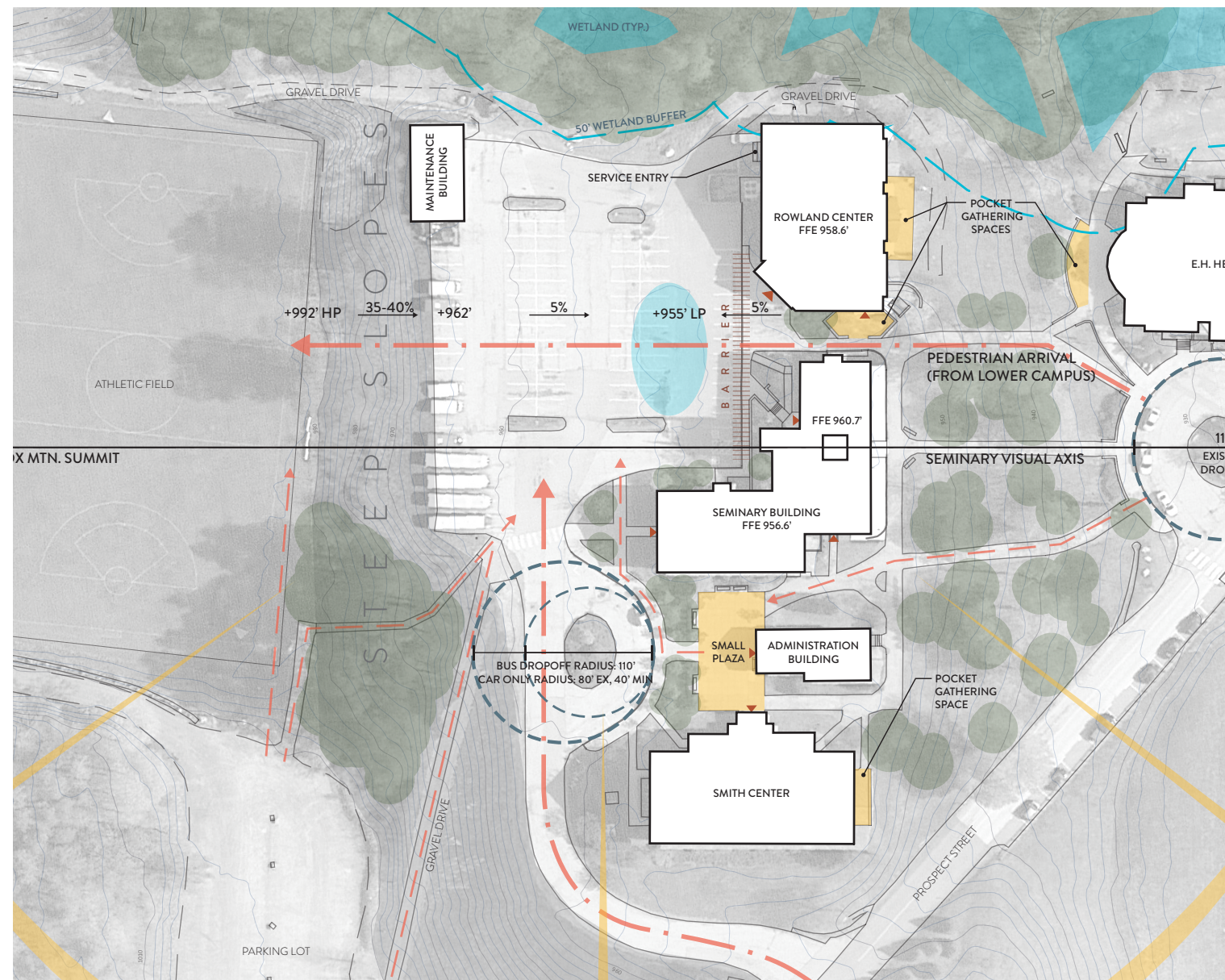




# DESIGN CHALLENGES

The existing campus of Burr & Burton Academy had several existing challenges that the project team needed to address. These included the need for expanded education space, the creation of a central outdoor hub, accessibility, parking, energy efficiency and stormwater management. Furthermore, these challenges had to be evaluated within the larger context of both the campus typography, circulation, and how to provide a future-forward and innovative design while honoring the historic legacy of the school.

## Existing Conditions



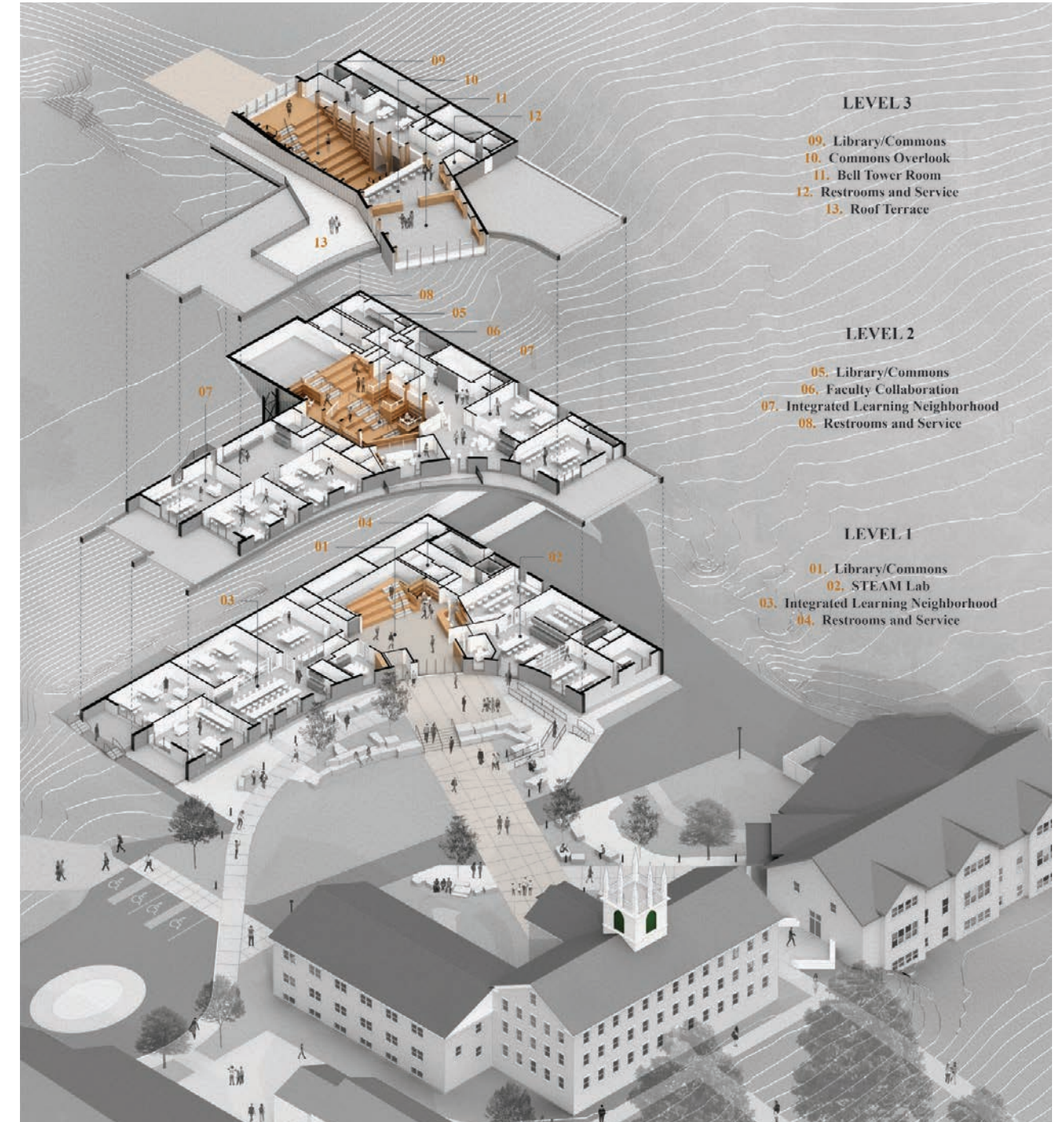
## Site Concept





## Site and Architecture Integration

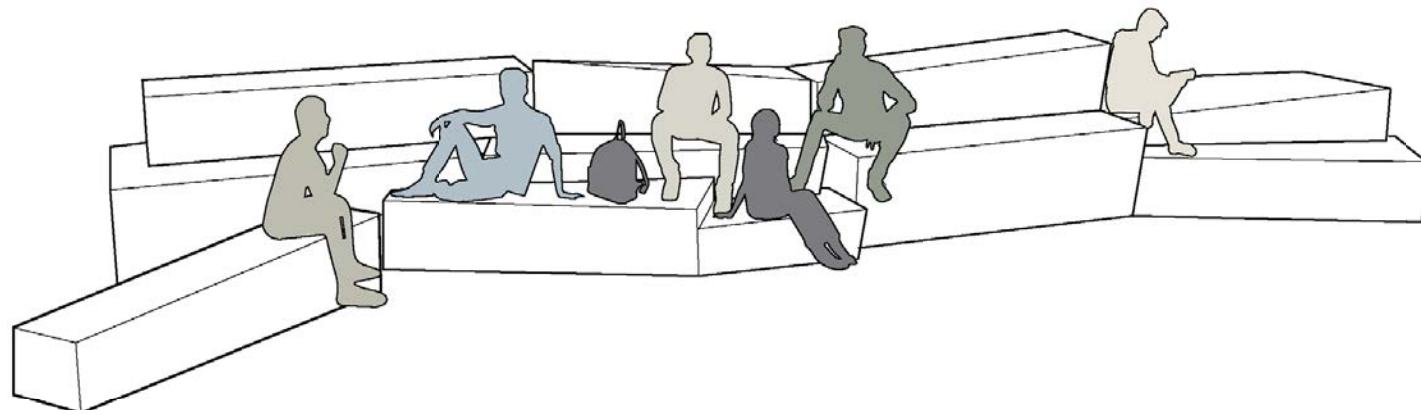
The Burr and Burton Academy campus is set on a hillside overlooking Manchester Village. The headmaster came to the project team with a vision—to take an existing parking lot on the uphill side of the campus and transform it into a new academic center that facilitates project-based education and integrated learning, as well as provide an exterior gathering space for the community. At first glance this location may seem to be a less-than-intuitive design choice. However the project team evaluated the existing terrain and through a rigorous design process produced an elegant and functional design. The result is a beautiful composition integrating the new courtyard into the existing campus with the recently completed Founder's Hall serving as an anchor.





## Historic Context and Inspiration

Burr and Burton Academy has a rich history dating back to 1829 when it was founded in Manchester, Vermont as a seminary. That legacy inspired many of the design choices now evident in the newly improved campus. The team used local and historic materials—the new Founder’s Hall building is clad with local slate and over 50 marble blocks were curated, hand-labeled and measured for seating and other interesting landscape features. The planting palate, though thoughtful in regard to maintenance and seasonality, represents the native character of the local flora, similar to what can be found on the slopes of the Mt. Equinox, which is accessible to the public from the property. The new building frames views of Mt. Equinox and the historic bell tower, honoring these historical campus features.





# PROJECT OUTCOMES

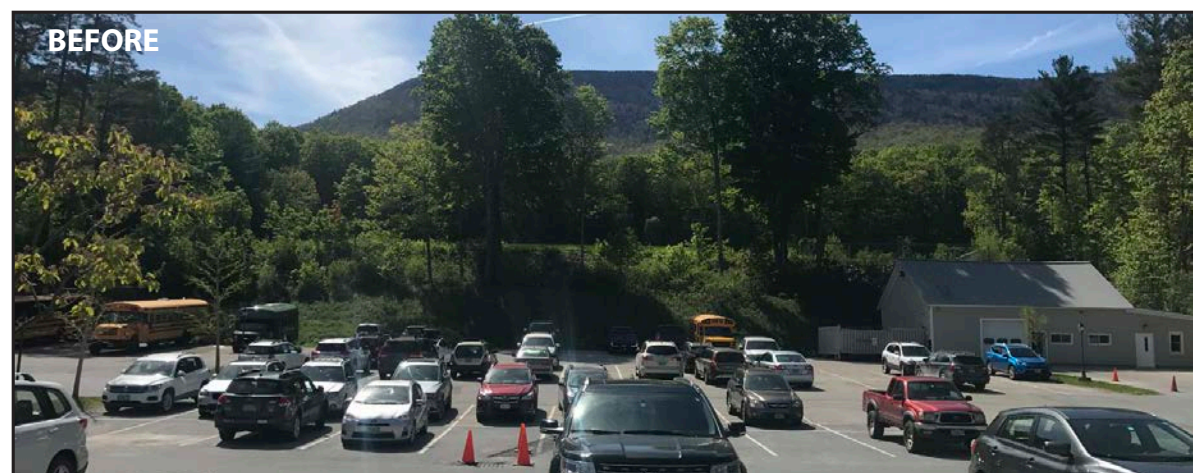
## Expanded Recreation Opportunities

The project expanded recreational opportunities by creating new outdoor spaces that could be used for various activities. By creating these new areas, the improved campus provides students with a range of opportunities to be physically active, engage with nature, and socialize with their peers. These activities help support students' physical and mental health, as well as contribute to a sense of community on campus. The new site design also provides educators the space to take the classroom outside, using newly established stormwater infrastructure for science and ecology instruction. It also demonstrates to students how thoughtful planning and design can improve the functionality and beauty of our public places.

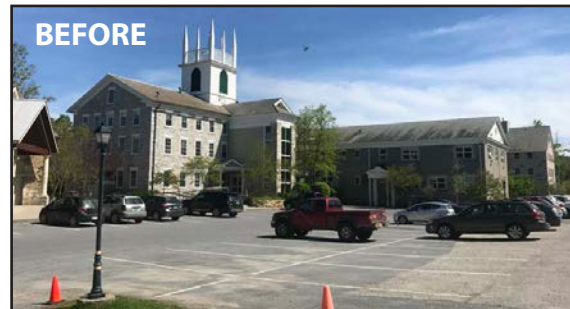
## Corridors and Linkage of Open Spaces

The planned site at Burr and Burton Academy was designed to create corridors and linkages for pedestrians by implementing a network of sidewalks, paths, and green space that connects various parts of the campus.

The main feature of the new design is the central courtyard, which serves as the heart of the campus and provides a gathering place for students and staff. This courtyard—located between Founders Hall and the original Seminary Building—provides an outdoor extension of the classroom and unites the buildings of the main campus. The courtyard is connected to the rest of the campus via an expanded network of sidewalks and paths. These walkways are designed to be safe and accessible for pedestrians, with added features like stormwater gardens, pause places and carefully placed landscape infrastructure that invites students and visitors to gather, meet and enjoy their surroundings.















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