



Penn State Harrisburg: New Freshmen Housing

Penn State Harrisburg asked Viridian Landscape Studio to design the site for its new hillside housing. VLS took advantage of existing grades to create a variety of public and private spaces that give students both active and quiet spaces.

Pedestrian connections are made with community buildings and the new dorm, as well as major pedestrian routes that lead to the parking lot and the main pedestrian spine which connects the residential side to the academic side of campus. Exterior spaces combine formal terraces, informal meeting areas, and recreation greens for play. The plant palette is native to Pennsylvania and representative of species from the Appalachian Oak Forest.

Stormwater is carried through a series of vegetated swales and rain gardens. These allow water to infiltrate, restoring the natural hydrologic balance.

The northeast portion of the site is seeded with meadow which reduces the need for mowing, and encourages water infiltration.

Viridian worked closely with the campus maintenance staff to ensure that the end product did not overburden staff resources. Another key to success was the knowledge brought to the project by soil scientist, Tim Craul. Soil tests showed the existing site was essentially absent of any organic matter and had high pH levels. A combination of created and amended soil supports the plants that make a great setting for student life.

Location: Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Client: Penn State University

Size: 3 acres

Cost: \$1 million in Site Work and Landscape

Status: Completed 2011