

CRAIG HOLMAN | DISPATCH

This aerial shot shows newly created green space on the campus of the Columbus College of Art & Design at the northeast corner of Gay Street and Cleveland Avenue.

Arts school's new green space an oasis for urban campus

By Kathy Lynn Gray
THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

The lush lawn at Gay Street and Cleveland Avenue might seem like a drip of green on a concrete canvas to most people, but to Bill Heifner, it's the Oval at Ohio State University.

Or, more accurately, the College Green at Ohio University.

Just a lot smaller.

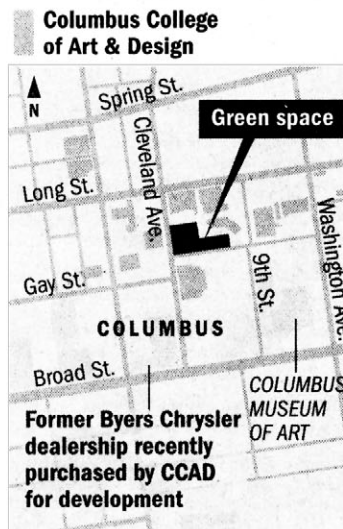
It's the first green space that the Columbus College of Art & Design has created on its urban campus just east of Downtown's skyscrapers.

"Before the quad, there was hardly a blade of grass anywhere," said Heifner, a CCAD board member for eight years and an OU graduate.

"CCAD has 9 acres, and it's all buildings, parking lots and sidewalks."

Tonight, the spot just south of the school's Loann Crane Center for Design will be officially dedicated with a plaque, a tailgate party and a game of tag football between faculty and students.

The school had no place for students to hang out on sunny days — to study, toss a Frisbee or lie in the grass. Heifner, who



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said he has fond memories of doing that on the OU College Green when he was a student, has been pushing CCAD administrators to create such a spot.

Several years ago, he was looking at the CCAD parking lot at the northeast corner of Gay and Cleveland and thought: "That's the spot."

After CCAD administrators agreed, Heifner rallied his company, Renier Construction, and some associates to the cause, and drew in Keith Myers of

Myers Schmalenberger to create a design. Heifner and his wife, Sandy, donated trees, several walkways and a concrete wall designed for sitting.

The spot was mostly complete last fall, but school officials waited to dedicate it until the plantings were more established.

Jeff Fisher, senior vice president and chief financial officer for CCAD, said he hopes the green space is the first of many parklike additions to the campus.

Some space might come from the city, which has tentative plans to add grassy traffic islands in the area.

Others might be developed as CCAD renovates the old Byers Automotive building at 390 E. Broad St., which it bought this summer.

The plan is to have a large space in the three-story, 86-year-old building for the school's growing fashion design program and other classes, as well as a gallery space and possibly an art-supply store.

The expansion is part of an overall plan to create more of a campus for CCAD rather than just a collection of buildings.

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