



2008 Tucker Design Awards

Friday, May 9, 2008 The Fairmont, Dallas, Texas



Bailey Plaza, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York

Design by:
Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, Inc.,
Landscape Architects, PC
Stone Installers:
New York Quarries, Inc., Alcove, NY
Ithaca Stone Setting, Ithaca, NY
Syrstone, Inc., North Syracuse, NY
Stone Suppliers:
Connecticut Stone, Milford, CT;
Tompkins Bluestone, Hancock, NY

Project Description

Prior to its recent redesign, Bailey Plaza at Cornell University was a one-acre parking lot. People attending lectures at Bailey Hall auditorium and students crossing between Cornell's historic Arts and Agriculture Quadrangles, were pushed to the edges of the space or forced to weave between the cars. The new landscape, suitable for both large gatherings and daily use, displaced the parking lot and now occupies this central campus location. Executed in the elemental language of stone, water, plants, and wood, the place is at once an oasis and thoroughfare.

The large central space is paved in bluestone while the perimeter of the plaza

is captured by a massive stone fountain, ponderous wooden benches, densely planted beds, and to the north, Bailey's grand entry staircase. The richness and warmth of Bailey Plaza is very much an outgrowth of its paving materials, with banded patches of thermal flame finish Portage bluestone alternating with natural cleft bluestone.

The Hamilton bluestone fountain outcropping at Bailey Plaza seems to heave up from below the surface of the plaza in a way that abstractly resembles the Devonian period sedimentary rock exposures that are abundant in the Cornell region.

Jury comments

The challenge with a large plaza is to manage the scale. The design concept addresses the challenge by introducing pattern in the plaza floor with various types, textures and colors of stone. Stone as a building material delineates pedestrian movement in and out of the plaza. Placing stone as sculpture was a subtle but creative way to frame the seating areas. The fountain lifts out of the site to create interest while serving as a backdrop to the seating areas.

