

# University of Michigan Gerstacker Grove

STUDIO 431  
landscapeforms

ANN ARBOR, MI

**Landscape Forms Elements:**  
Custom Benches

**Design Partner:**  
Stoss

The Eda U. Gerstacker Grove is a renovation of an underutilized campus quad at the heart of the University of Michigan's North Campus, home to the Schools of Engineering, Art, and Architecture and freshman dorms. The transformation has turned four acres into an active and lush space that accommodates a range of rotating performances, events, and everyday activities. The central plaza connects the campus community and can host larger-scale activities, student and alumni events, and casual play. The elevated lawns beyond provide a quiet place to relax in the sun or shade.

Benches of precast concrete clad in two-inch wide steel ribs provide nearly continuous seating along the quad's walkway and were created by Landscape Forms' Studio 431 and design firm Stoss' Boston office. The 240 linear feet of sinuous bench forms, with a multitude of concrete base and steel seat dimensions, were based on a study of seated positions and student activity. In total, 97 bench modules, each requiring 2400 welds, were produced in 18 different forms and installed to build five 48-foot benches.

The Grove is a dynamic place, with people walking to and from classes or stopping to visit or play. The contours and linear scale of the benches lining pathways that connect buildings, disciplines, and students reinforce the dynamic nature of this new landscape.

