

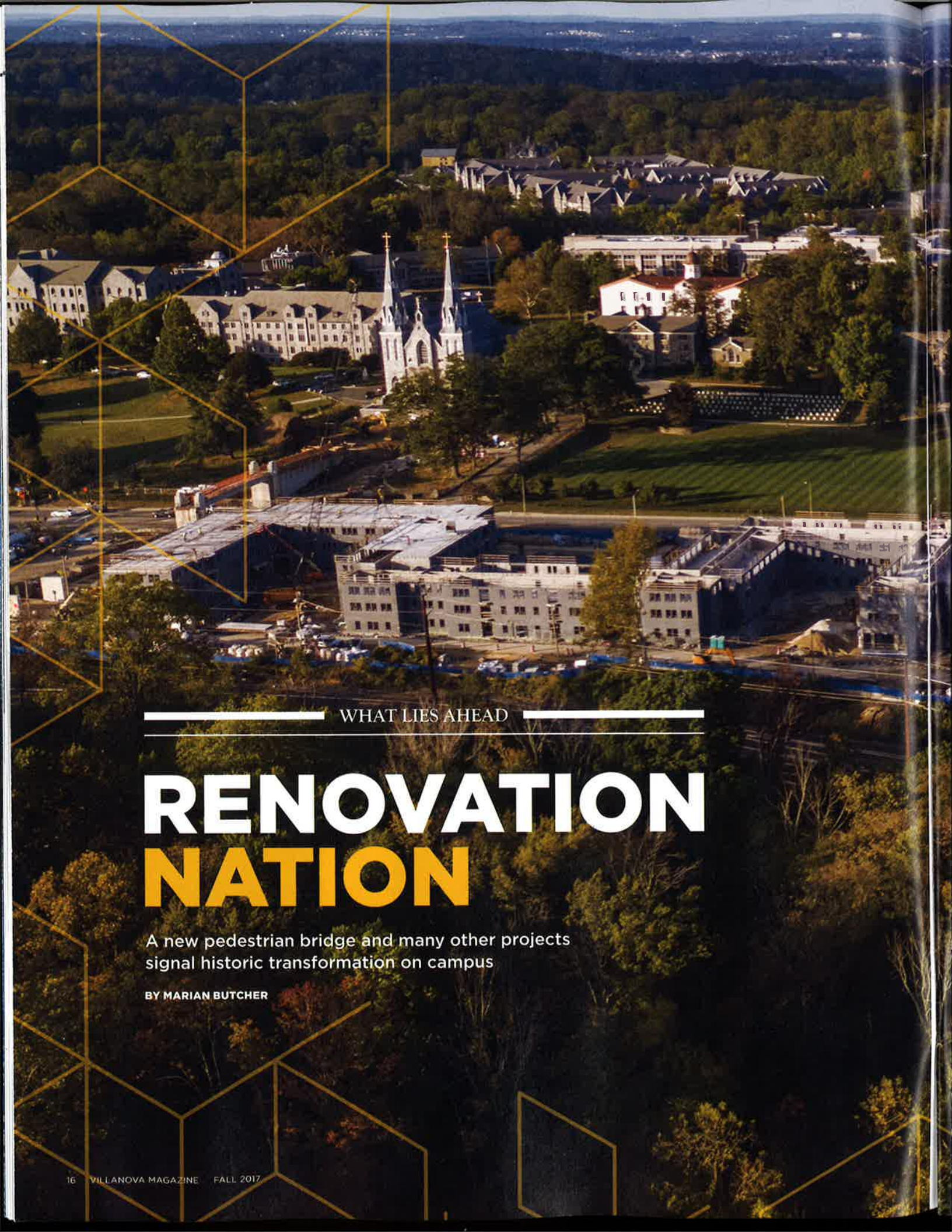
# Villanova Magazine

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## WALK THIS WAY

Pedestrian Bridge Set in Place Across Lancaster Avenue





WHAT LIES AHEAD

# RENOVATION NATION

A new pedestrian bridge and many other projects signal historic transformation on campus

BY MARIAN BUTCHER



**T**he moment was highly choreographed and eagerly anticipated: In a series of smooth motions, a crane plucked three 34-ton beams, one after the other, off a flatbed truck, hoisted them into the air, and set them gently and securely onto concrete pillars.

As the beams were placed, a cheer went up from the small crowd of students and community members who had assembled to witness the milestone. Just like that, on a cool August night, the pedestrian bridge across Lancaster Avenue went from long-held dream to exciting reality.

The new span will offer more than a safe way for Villanova students, faculty and staff, and visitors to traverse the busy, four-lane road that cuts through campus. It's also a highly visible symbol of the University's remarkable progress and ongoing physical transformation, and of the goal of every phase of the campus renewal project: to build community by enhancing the physical spaces in which Villanovans live, gather and work.

Beyond the bridge, numerous other projects are proceeding at a steady pace. A new residence hall community is rising on the former site of the main parking lots along Lancaster Avenue; the Finneran Pavilion is in the midst of a complete overhaul; Mendel Field has been cordoned off as new walkways, terraces and patios are added; plans are moving forward for a state-of-the-art Performing Arts Center; and the newly renamed Inn at Villanova University recently reopened after extensive remodeling.

Construction equipment and chain-link fencing have become a common sight on campus, but the progress is clear, and the results will be spectacular.

"We appreciate the patience of our community as these projects progress. When you look around, you have moments of amazement at all that is being accomplished," says Ken Valosky '82 VSB, executive vice president. "The work sends a great message that Villanova is moving forward in a way that's consistent with our national stature and that will enhance the experience of our students and strengthen bonds with our alumni." »



The pedestrian bridge in front of St. Thomas of Villanova Church takes shape as workers lower the center beam into position.

## BRIDGE TO LIVING AND LEARNING

The biggest upcoming milestone is the opening of the new pedestrian bridge, anticipated for early 2018. The elevated walkway will extend from the Villanova Station on SEPTA's Norristown High Speed Line to the newly expanded plaza in front of St. Thomas of Villanova Church. The orchard of crab-apple trees lining the path, which had reached the natural end of its life span when it was removed during construction, will be replanted. The pillar caps that had stood at the entrance to the church walkway also will be reincorporated into the path.

The new residence halls along Lancaster Avenue will open about 18 months later, in time for move-in at the start of the fall 2019 semester. The complex will include apartments, suites and single rooms with 1,135 beds for upperclass students, allowing 85 percent of undergraduates to live on campus.

"Being able to offer four years of housing for a larger portion of our upperclass population will strengthen our ability to attract students," Valosky says. "We know that prospective students and their parents are looking for this as they consider schools."

Student-centered amenities in the new halls will include two fitness centers and collaborative workspaces. There will also be

a market/café, and a full-service restaurant and bar that will be designed as a gathering space for the entire community, including students, faculty and staff, alumni, and visitors.

In 2018, construction will also begin on the final piece of the complex: a Performing Arts Center at the corner of Ithan and Lancaster avenues. The facility, scheduled to open in 2020, will offer much-needed classroom, studio and performance spaces for both academic and student-run performing arts programs in music, theatre and dance.

"This complex of residence halls and Performing Arts Center is going to be a real showpiece for the University," says Marilou Smith '84 COE, senior project manager in the Department of Facilities Management, who is overseeing the entire project. "The design, the features, the high-quality materials used in the construction and the location will make a positive statement about Villanova to anyone who visits or drives through campus."

## PROGRESS TO CHEER ABOUT

To those accustomed to the Pavilion teeming with the energy of crowds assembled for basketball games and other events, the atmosphere is decidedly different these days, several months into a massive renovation. Over the summer, the building was stripped clean of every seat, sign, fixture and floorboard, leaving behind an arena that was empty, yet full of opportunity.

Next year, the arena will reopen as the Finneran Pavilion, named for William B. Finneran '63 VSB, whose \$22.6 million leadership gift kick-started the \$60 million project. Everything inside will be new, from the scoreboards overhead to the seats along the sidelines.

This fall, progress toward that goal was visible and impressive. The new 360-degree concourse began to take shape, and sunlight streamed in through walls that had been opened to add windows and create a new entrance for the arena.



Lancaster Avenue is closed to traffic as crews work through successive nights to complete the placement of the beams for the pedestrian bridge.



A plaza will expand the walking area in front of St. Thomas of Villanova Monastery and lead to a brick-paved walkway around Mendel Field.



The Finneran Pavilion is “under wraps” as ongoing renovation transforms the popular athletics and event venue.

### IMPROVING WALKABILITY

In 2011, the University launched an ambitious project to create a vehicle-free, pedestrian-friendly campus core. Over the next three years, driveways were transformed into brick-paved walkways with bluestone borders. This past summer, attention turned to Mendel Field for the latest phase of the initiative.

By the end of the project in fall 2018, there will be new patios in front of Old Falvey, John Barry Hall and St. Thomas of Villanova Monastery, and the now-familiar brick pavers will wrap around Mendel Field.

“This area is in the heart of our campus, close by the church, Falvey Library and many academic buildings,” says Robert Morro, vice president for Facilities Management. “It’s important that we make these spaces accessible and open for the entire campus community.”

### A CAMPUS RENEWED

With every project, there is progress you can see, and there is also much happening below the surface and behind the scenes. Innovative stormwater management systems have been designed, installed and managed by a team led by stormwater expert Robert Traver, PhD, PE, DWRE, FEWR, FASCE, '82 MS, the Edward Daylor Chair in Civil Engineering, at the site of the new residence halls and at Mendel Field. Underground utilities are being upgraded, and all new buildings are being constructed to be rated LEED Silver or higher by the US Green Building Council, attesting to the achievement of high standards of efficiency and sustainability.

“We’ve never had so many simultaneous construction projects as we do today,” Morro says. “This is such an exciting time to be at Villanova, during a tremendous period of growth that is unprecedented in the University’s history.” ■

**“ Villanova is moving forward in a way that’s consistent with our national stature. ”**

—KEN VALOSKY '82 VSB, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

### VILLANOVA-STYLE SERVICE

From its beginnings as an early 20th-century, high-society estate to its current iteration as a high-end hotel and conference venue, the Inn at Villanova University has a long tradition of hospitality.

That tradition has been elevated further through a recently completed renovation. Over the course of eight months, the facility’s interior was remodeled entirely, upgrading 56 guest rooms, 20,000 square feet of meeting space, and the ballroom, as well as the grounds and gardens. Outside, a revamped entrance gives a welcoming first impression.

Montrose Mansion, the 103-year-old original home on the property, also received a minor facelift, with a new sound system, lighting and a patio in the bar area, which is used for special events.

“The Inn’s staff are all committed to providing the highest standard of service and professionalism, in keeping with the practices of premier hotels and with the mission of Villanova,” says Kathy Welsch, director of Sales and Catering.



The Inn at Villanova University, formerly known as the Villanova Conference Center, has reopened after extensive renovations.