

Goldendale Observatory

An immersive landscape under the stars



DOWNTOWN GOLDENDALE

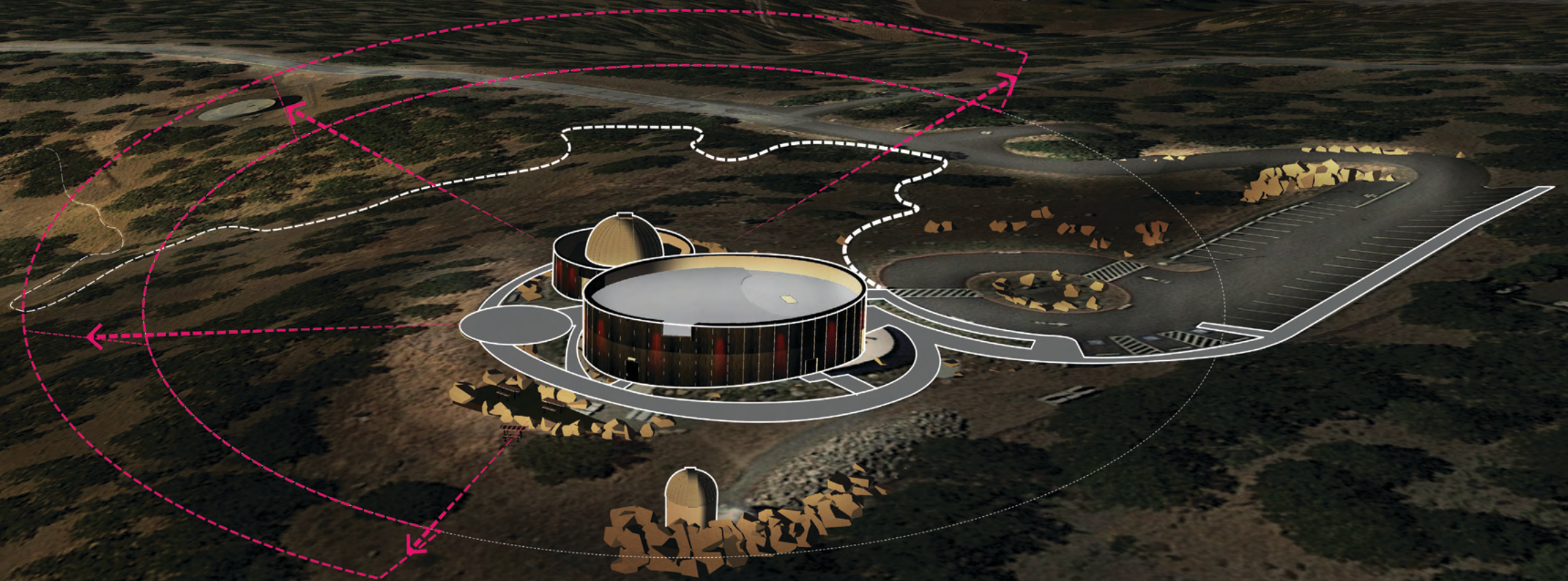
MOUNT JEFFERSON

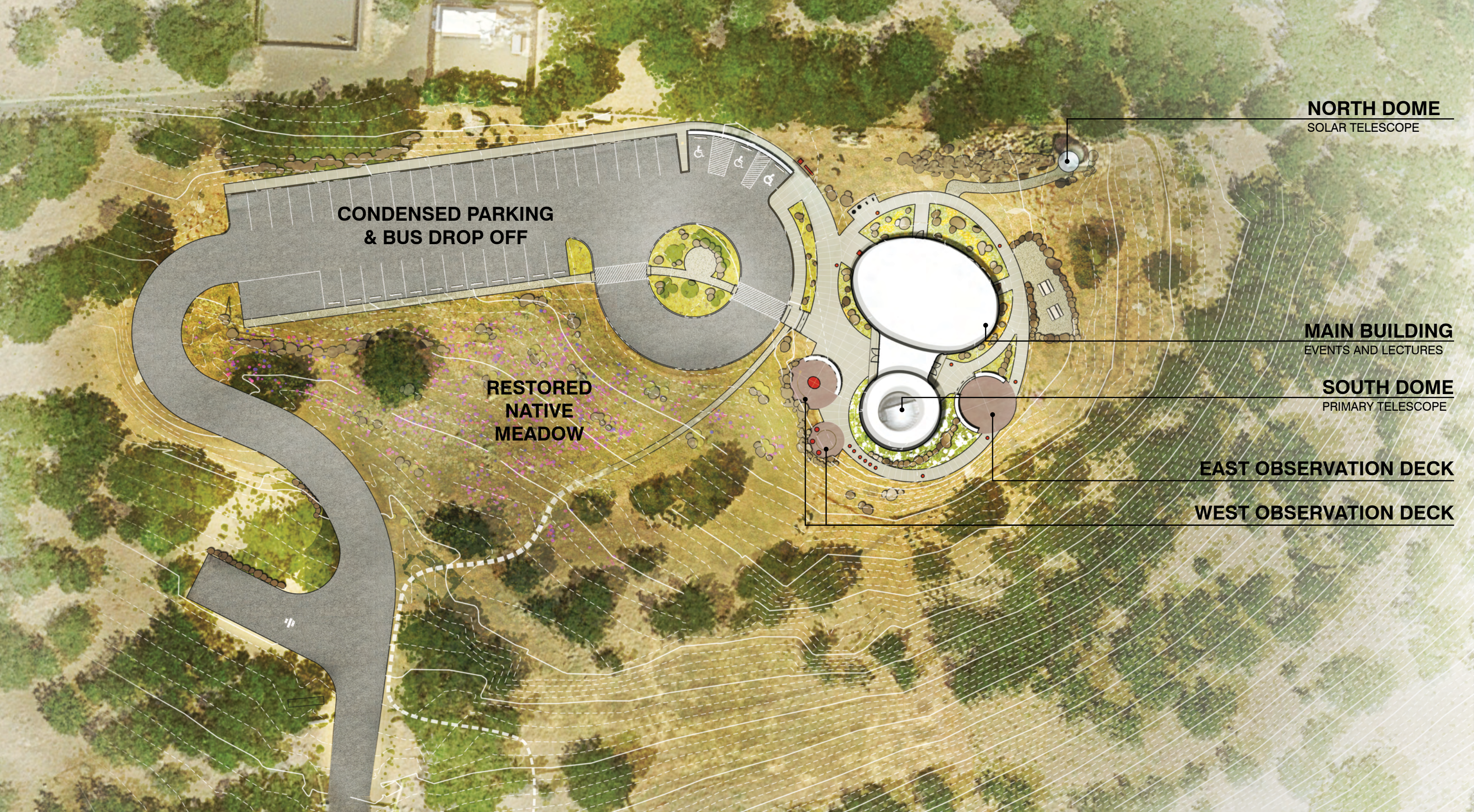
COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE

MOUNT HOOD

Context Plan

The Observatory was sited in Goldendale for its clear sky. The new design creates relationships to the impressive natural landscape and educates visitors about its features.





NORTH DOME
SOLAR TELESCOPE

**CONDENSED PARKING
& BUS DROP OFF**

**RESTORED
NATIVE
MEADOW**

MAIN BUILDING
EVENTS AND LECTURES

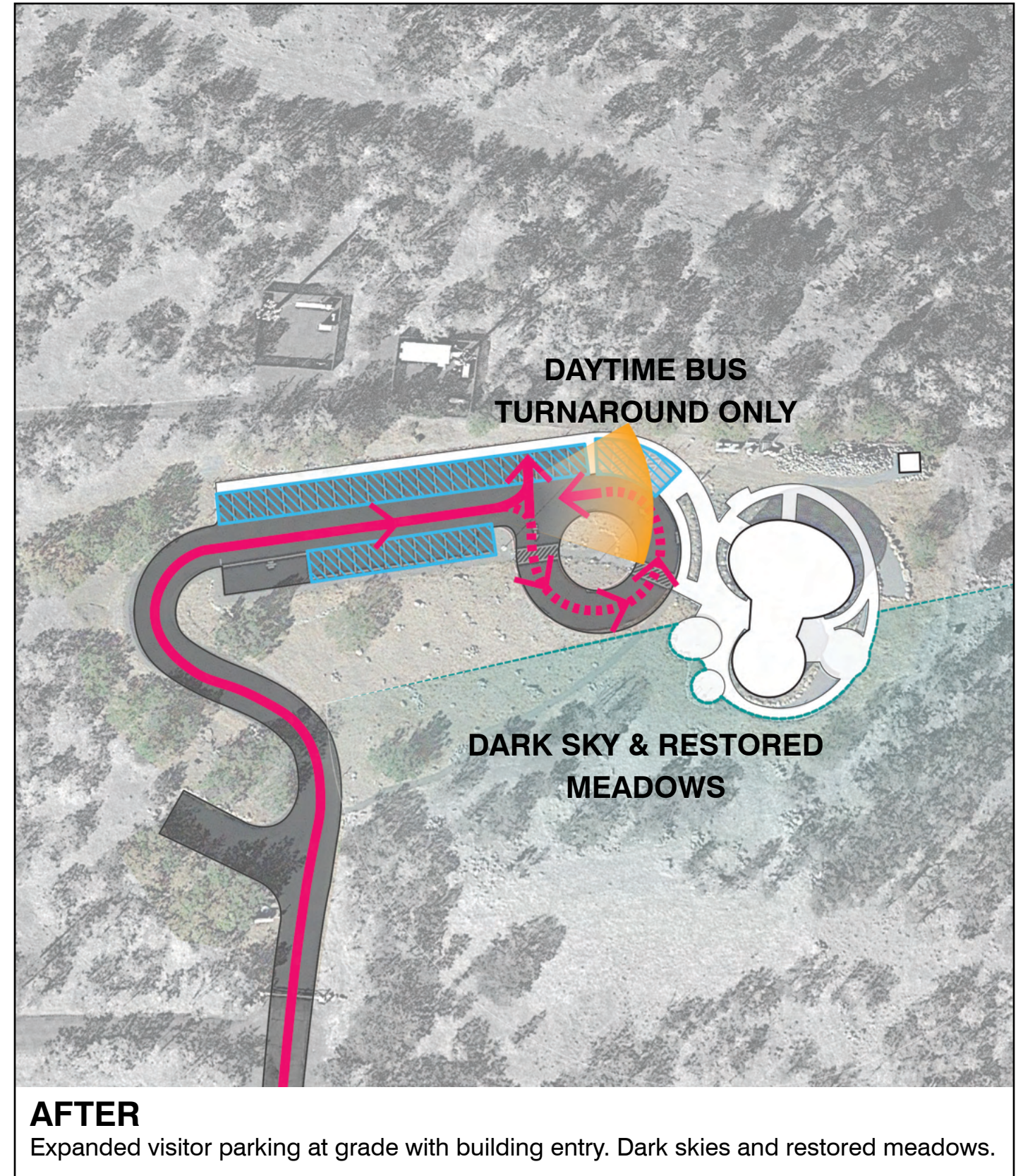
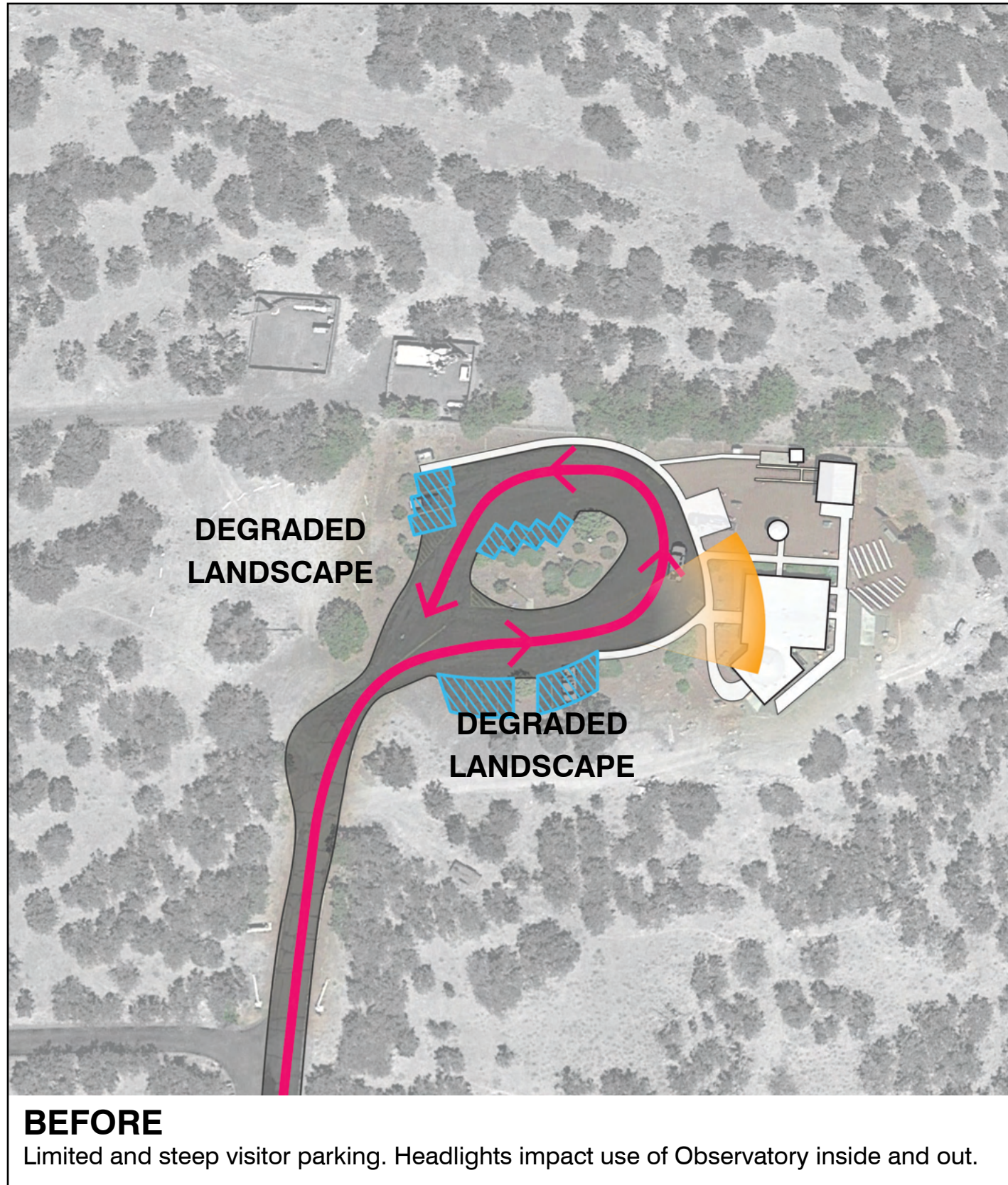
SOUTH DOME
PRIMARY TELESCOPE

EAST OBSERVATION DECK

WEST OBSERVATION DECK

Site Plan

Situated in a remote area of South Central Washington, the Observatory houses one of the largest public telescopes in the nation. This project re-designed the entire site and building, allowing the State Park facility to accommodate more visitors and provide a more compelling destination.



Arrival Sequence

The landscape architect redesigned the vehicular approach to eliminate the impact of headlights on the facility, creating dark outdoor areas for telescope use and a restored native meadow around the building.



NORTH DOME
SOLAR TELESCOPE

MAIN BUILDING
EVENTS AND LECTURES

SOUTH DOME
PRIMARY TELESCOPE

EAST OBSERVATION DECK

INTERPRETIVE ART
SOLAR SYSTEM WALK

WEST OBSERVATION DECK
VIEWSCOPE

WEST OBSERVATION DECK
SUNDIAL INTERPRETIVE PANEL

Design Concept

The design concept features outdoor spaces that orbit around the building to provide a series of connected experiences.



Nestled into the Surroundings

The building is surrounded by a series of welcoming outdoor spaces that embody the character of the site. Native planting transitions the natural landscape to the building.



Views

The entry frames views to the landscape beyond.



Playful and Engaging Spaces

The observatory's multi-use outdoor spaces support informal play and interaction with interpretive elements, including an integrated sundial.



Simple but Detailed Design

The design approach focused on an economy of materials and unique details designed to capture visitors' attention near and far.



Ecological Restoration

The Observatory is connected to the existing trail system through expanded meadows whose character changes with the seasons. New meadow areas were created with a locally sourced seed mix featuring native grasses, broadleaf lupine, rabbitbrush, and sagebrush.



Sustainable Design

The team developed a highly sustainable approach to the sensitive site – boulders unearthed in construction were reused to build site walls, and disturbed areas were re-seeded with native meadow grasses.



Integrated Interpretation

The team treated the entire site as part of the educational experience, integrating astronomical instruments into the landscape to encourage visitors to explore.



Moon Garden

The planting at the entry features a “moon garden” with bright white and yellow native plants selected to be visible in the evening.



Dark Sky Spaces

Exterior areas are illuminated with amber light to limit light pollution and provide the best possible viewing experience. The terraces are designed for personal telescope use.



A Hilltop Beacon

The building acts as a beacon on the hilltop, preserving the Garry Oak meadow below.