

Main Library Renovation
Advisory Committee
August 14, 2003

Members present:

Eugene Holland, Faculty, Comparative Studies
Sarah Iles Johnston, Faculty, Greek & Latin
Jerry Ladman, Faculty, International Studies
Karen Lawson, University Libraries
Tony Mughan, Faculty, Political Science
Katie Schmees, Undergraduate Student Government
Dona Straley, University Libraries
Lewis Ulman, Faculty, English

Members unable to attend:

Joy Reilly, Faculty, Theatre
Julia Watson, Faculty, Comparative Studies
Chris Zacher, Faculty, Humanities Institute

Architects:

Pete Confar, Acock Associates Architects (PC)
Graham Gund, Graham Gund Architects (GG)
Youngmin Jahan, Graham Gund Architects (YJ)
David Zenk, Graham Gund Architects (DZ)

University Libraries:

Wes Boomgaarden (WB)
Joe Branin (JB)
Sally Rogers
Betty Sawyers

JB: Welcome. The design concepts from our architects are being presented as draft ideas. We want to get the Committee together during this summer to give a status report on information that we are gathering for this project. We are now in the midst of programming and design ideas. The designs that will be presented today are in the draft stage; nothing has been finally decided yet. Interesting ideas will be presented, and we hope you'll speak up and share your reactions to them.

The major program issue presented today concerns the building envelope, which includes constraints of the physical site, the efficiencies of space utilization, and other site-related concerns. Each has a cost component, which is a prime reason for our creation of these draft designs.

An overriding program issue is the amount and balance between collections, user spaces, and staff spaces. The designs begin to tell us what we can or cannot put into the building. At this point we don't think of the concepts presented today as specific, but rather as a snapshot in time.

YJ: What you'll be seeing is a third iteration. They've been working with construction engineers and making revisions based on their input. The two concepts that will be presented are comparable in cost and within the budget.

JB: Another important program decision that must be made relates to the potential move of library technical processing, preservation, and IT units out of the Main Library to the Sullivant Hall spaces; and the collections and services of the Education, Psychology, Social Work and Human Ecology (EHS) Library to the Main Library. These potential moves would free a great deal of space in Main Library for additional collections and services. We're looking at what is in each building now, and believe that some programming issues would be well served by concentrating the collections and services in Main Library and moving out the "non-public" areas currently housed in the Main Library building into Sullivant Hall, e.g., Technical Services, Preservation, and . Sullivant Hall is more conducive to staff space, as many of the floor surfaces are not load bearing and cannot be used for storing collections. A final decision has not yet been made, but it is being given very serious consideration, as it would provide a better use of the space. (The Music/Dance Library would remain in Sullivant Hall.)

Another idea that we're beginning to explore is whether all of the separate collections in Main Library need to remain separate, or are there some that could be consolidated or absorbed into the general collection. Things probably won't remain the same as they are now, but how they'll differ isn't yet known. For example, should there be a consolidated current periodicals room? East Asian collections are now separate and will probably remain that way because of the non-Roman alphabets. *Advisory Committee Member: It is really important to keep the reference books housed in the current Reading Rooms together. It was also observed that there are benefits to having the periodicals separate, but that this is not as important.* What about having all Roman language reference materials together? This is just one of many discussions that will be continued in the fall when everyone comes back on campus

On the question of phasing the project – that is, how the construction and renovation takes places – we see distinct cost benefits of a plan that would move everything out of the Main Library at the beginning of the project, rather than working on the building in different protracted phases. This approach will take less time and will cost less. Prior to what we have learned this summer, we hadn't expected enough "swing space" to become available to make a single-phased project realistic. However, the ABB building on Ackerman Road has become available, and some additional space on campus will also be freed for our purposes. We will need to have intensive document delivery service, and it would perhaps be possible to have patron access to the ABB building, which is a combination of office and warehouse space. The question of what would need to be done to make the building a public area has not yet been addressed. Electronic services and collections wouldn't be affected at all. *Committee Member: How long will construction take?* Three years had been the estimate assumed for phasing, but as much as a year could be taken off if the work is done in a single phase. *Committee Member: How would people get there?* There is ample parking, but campus transportation would also need to be

arranged. We had hoped for parts of Pomerene to be available, but the Larkins project won't be finished in time. We will continue library services on campus through our many departmental libraries.

Joe Branin, Wes Boomgaarden, Pete Confar, George Acock, Scott Conlon and Bernie Costantino visited Boston last week for a preview and discussion of the concepts that will be presented here today. They also visited the University of New Hampshire Library, renovated by the Gund firm, and received rave notices from the library staff now using that building. Branin also has visited the Gund-designed buildings at Kenyon College and Dennison University. He plans to visit the Botanical Garden in Cleveland tomorrow while he is there for development purposes.

Site and building issues—GG: The architects have thought a lot about the site and its interaction with the building. They are proposing to bring the paths around the Oval to the north and south of the building to bring folks to the new entrance on the West. They also are proposing to curve the road behind the library to complete that end of the oval to match the curve at the east end of the Oval on College Road. There will be a new entrance on the west side of the building, which they want to be a special place with dramatic steps to enter on the first level. They plan to have two entrances—the existing one on the east side of the building and the new entrance on the west—and do away with the north and south entrances. They also propose to remove the pavilion wings from the east front of the building and re-design much of the flagstone landscaping in front, which was part of the 1951 addition to the library. They're planning to have a drop off for books, an entrance for persons with disabilities, and an automobile turnaround for those who would be stopped by the gates on Neil at the west end. A café would reside near the west entrance, with a view of Mirror Lake. They are planning no expansion to the north or south of the existing building; any expansion should be to the west, to Neil Avenue. The original east façade will be restored, and the original grand reference hall on the 2nd floor would also be restored.

The two major concepts presented today are similar on the first floor. The atrium is retained for both, but it will be widened to make it more useful. Stairs are planned for the periphery of the atrium to the second and third floors.

Tower Scheme. The first scheme presented would retain the stack tower and expand its construction to the west, nearly to Neil Avenue, creating large spaces for both readers and book collections. Some mezzanine floors would be removed (current 2a and 3a). More of the collections would be moved toward the center of the building, and non-collection areas would be moved into the existing tower (core stuff—stairs, restrooms, etc.) The atrium will take over part of the 1913 building. *Committee Member: What function does the atrium serve?* It brings in natural light and provides more of an “outside” exposure for people spaces. It also serves as an orientation point; currently one doesn't have a sense of how the building is laid out. It would provide for more clarity, and a consistent, logical layout.

Committee Member: What is current collection size? WB: 1.26 million volumes in the stack tower; approximately 310,000 in reference, reading room collections, and special (Rare, Charvat and Hilandar) collections. When the architects started they were to plan for 1.1 million volumes in 330,000 sq. ft. Subsequently they were told that the space went down to 300,000 sq.

ft. and to try for 1.5 million volumes. The tower scheme that is being presented allows for 1.4 million volumes, and the other scheme would accommodate 1.48 million volumes. *Committee member: Happy to learn that the collection size is up from what it was in May. Hard decisions will need to be made about collection size. If the Social Sciences (i.e., EHS) collections are to be brought over from Sullivant Hall, there will be an additional 300,000 volumes to absorb. Eighty percent shelf loading capacity is assumed at move in. The tower scheme would propose 20% compact shelving (33% compact shelving in the “New Core” scheme); in the Tower scheme, compact shelving would be used on floors below the 1st floor. WB: Moves to the Depository have reduced the collection from 1.5 to 1.26 million volumes. Tradeoffs between user space and collections must be evaluated.*

Committee Member: What are the implications of “electronification?” (i.e., digital versions of research materials). Many of the common journals in humanities are now available electronically, and print copies, e.g., JSTOR titles, might very well be put in the Depository. A recent study has shown that for sciences people prefer electronic access to journals when both are available. In the future we may need less space for print materials; it's important that spaces remain flexible to accommodate future changes in patterns of use. Committee Member: What is the reliability of electronic storage? JB: Digital systems are maturing, and we have a better understanding of what needs to be done. Metadata very important, and standards are developing. YJ: We are assuming that we will plan for an IT grid everywhere that is possible; wireless access will also be provided..

Committee Member: There appear to be users and collections, but no staff on many floors. There is a serious current problem with no staff available to help folks on the upper levels of the tower.

New Core Scheme. This scheme would involve demolishing both the stack tower and the 1970's addition, and would allow the building to go down two levels below ground. (A utility tunnel is in the immediate vicinity of this plan, and must be accommodated.). The first three floors would connect with the original building, with stack areas above. Area below grade would be away from the footprint of the original building to avoid costs of underpinning beneath an existing foundation. A new two-story reading space would be added on the west side of the building with windows on three sides. This scheme matches with the buildings around the site in scale; the taller addition is stepped back. There would also be a rooftop reading room. The intent is to use stone and have the same feel and color of the original building. The addition would be more contemporary in feeling, but tie in with the original.

DZ: The two schemes have approximately the same capacity and cost.

WB: What are the Committee members' opinions about removing the stack tower? *Committee Members: One person strongly in favor of the esthetics of the current tower; one strongly in favor of tearing it down. There was support for the idea of a Reading Room at the roof level. There was also support for the western entrance and the major stairs. It was suggested that something resembling the top of the tower could be put on the roof of the new core scheme. The present atrium has been a problem—not enough light has come in and there has been a significant problem with water leaks during rain or snow.*

GG: There should be no problem with leakage in the new/renovated building. It is important the building have access from both directions on Neil Avenue. The intent is to maintain the façade on the east. They want to provide more distinctive spaces within the library with different types of character. The curves in the walls of the new reading room echo the curve of the ceiling in the old reading room. *Committee Member: There's a clock tower in University Hall and a bell tower in Orton Hall. Perhaps we should have an observation tower on top of the Library. It could contain a restaurant or a reading room that could be lit up at night.* The intent is to be able to see folks who are studying, etc. If the tower concept is followed, the current tower would be refurbished, rather than redone.

Committee Members: Put the administration up high with reception space adjacent, and put user space down below in the prime space on the entry level. How many seats will there be in the building? The goal is 1,500 –2,000 seats. There should be exhibit space on the first floor to showcase what the library has. Will there be art Exhibits? GG: Museums now have open storage behind glass, e.g., Beinecke with glass walls, etc.

GG: Traffic pattern through the library will be important—more people passing through. If the staff currently housed on the ground floor are moved to Sullivant Hall, that space will be available to use for collections and users. It will be a challenge to design adequate loading dock facilities for both Sullivant Hall and the Main Library.

Committee Member: Students who live east of High Street and in the vicinity of Sullivant Hall, use the EHS library for studying.

Do the Committee Members present think we are on the right track? *Committee Members: YES. Collection size is the biggest problem that people raise. The use of electronic rather than print is much more convenient.*

Next Steps. September 4 is the next meeting with the Gund and Acock teams, and it will include meeting with a large campus group including representatives from Traffic & Parking; Physical Facilities; Disability Services, UNITS; OIT, etc. Firmer project cost estimate information will be available at that time. An abbreviated Program of Requirements (PoR) draft will be submitted to the University's Facilities Planning & Development soon. A second rough draft version of the PoR is due on September 18. On October 8 and 9 there will be open meetings for the campus, library staff and this Advisory Committee. The fall will be used to test the concepts with faculty and students. By the beginning of the new year we should have a pretty firm idea of which direction to go.

Presentations in October have a goal to come out with a single design to pursue in the schematic design phase. We are now getting some information earlier than usual to help with the decisions that need to be made.

Your comments continue to be welcome at any time.