

Main Library Renovation Project
Open Meeting with the Campus Community
November 13, 2003

JB: This is an eight-year project, and we are three years into it. A Feasibility Study was conducted, and we now have moved into the project proper. Architects were hired to do the detailed design, and we hope to complete the programming and design and begin construction in summer of 2005; construction will take two to three years to complete. By 2008 the project will come to fruition with a great new Main Library. We're still in the planning stages and are entering the more concrete detailed design phase. This is a \$99 million capital project; the largest single, academic building project for the university. The state will provide \$70 million, and \$30 million must be raised from private sources; \$13million has thus far been raised in private funds. It is intended that construction be completed in a single phase, with all materials and staff being moved out while the construction is in progress. Most staff and materials will go the ABB building on Ackerman Road, but some collections and services will remain on campus, either in existing libraries or other buildings on campus that may be vacant. All collections and services will be available. By moving out we can get done more rapidly and less expensively.

We're at a critical phase of the project; we need to select a design concept and then move on into the detailed design. The team that is working on the project consists of he and Wes Boomgaarden representing the Library; Scott Conlon (serves as team leader for the project) and Bernie Costanteno representing Facilities Planning and Development; George Acock and Pete Confar representing George Acock Associates, the Architect of Record; and Graham Gund, Youngmin Jahan, and David Zenk representing Graham Gund Architects, the Design Architect. Gund has done work at Kenyon College and Dennison University, as well as the Botanical Garden in Cleveland. Graham will be leading us through the design concepts and then we want to hear your comments.

GG: Start by talking about the Oval; we're concerned with the sense and context of the Oval and what makes it important. Some of the buildings on the south side curve with the Oval, as does College Road. We want to continue and complete the Oval at the west end with Neil Avenue. The University is growing to the west, which has created a need for an entrance on the west side of the building. The original building had good proportions; we will be taking off the pavilions and restoring the original façade. The road originally curved around the library. He asked George Acock to share his impressions of the library when he was a student here in the Fifties. GA: When he walked into the library, he was greatly impressed to see the great marble staircase. He then went up to the great reading room and was amazed at the statement it made. He was very impressed with the fact that the library was within the Oval. The bookstacks were located at the opposite end of the building from room 210, at the other end of the great reading room. Now there are no memorable spaces and the beauty that existed then is gone. During the next five years there will be a great change in the appearance of the Oval and the library will become the center of knowledge and the centerpiece of the Oval. This is a great opportunity for the library.

The current building doesn't match with the flow on campus. We need to open an entrance to the west and close the north and south entrances. There will be two reading rooms--the original and a new one over the new west entrance. All three schemes have a very clear east/west axis with a prominent, dramatic set of stairs on the west with disabled access. There is also a clear pathway through the building. All of the schemes have the same collection capacity and the same square footage. Discussion about the actual location of services within the building cannot begin until the design concept has been finalized.

Scheme A: Would have two light wells to bring in light and provide orientation points. There would be a two story reading room at the west. The east/west walkway would have displays to show the culture and contents of special collections. This area would have a great deal of activity and be a setting to get people interested in using the library. . The building would take on the same curve of the road, as do the buildings on the south side of the Oval. A bay would be added on the south side overlooking Mirror Lake. The tower would look similar to how it looks today.

Scheme B: There would be an entrance directly on grade to a coffee shop. The entire east west corridor would be open to the light. There would be light from above, with people spaces along the corridor. Orientation is important; how do you know where you are and how to get from one place to another? There would be bridges across the corridor to get from one side to another. Reading Room and bay added to the south.

Scheme C: Has two light wells with stairs and the same east/west access and reading room and the same exterior on the west. This scheme has the least number of floors, with more books per floor. There would be intermediate stack areas between some of the floors. The top of the building would only be a few feet higher than the original building and would not be visible from the east at all. The use of wood and fabrics would give a softer appearance than what is shown in the computer renderings.

Scheme A would have more windows in the tower; it wasn't originally built for people and didn't have the need for windows. *Why isn't the stack tower good for book storage? If collections are stored within a big footprint, it's easier to find things; small vertical floor plates are a hindrance. The collection is also remote from service personnel. If tower isn't usable for stacks, what would it be retained for?* Nostalgia is a factor, and renovation costs are lower than new construction costs. Perhaps administration, special collections, etc. could be there. Tradeoffs exist, and we're trying to look at the pros and cons of each of the schemes. *The tower is an important visual element on campus. As you put people up higher they are removed from the patron traffic on the lower floors. If the tower stays, it's better to put people in the tower to leave collections on the lower floors. Perhaps more and improved graduate student carrels could be put in the tower.*

Does the price go up with each of the schemes? YJ: All three schemes are within $\pm 5\%$ of the target. The architects feel that many things should be taken into consideration, and price, at this stage, shouldn't be a determining factor.

In fifty years will there be a problem with the skylight? GG: Not a problem with current technology. They have built 20-30 buildings with skylights and have had no problem. The original building had access to light on all sides; we're trying to get back to that concept by having the light wells. The east/west light wells also help provide orientation points. The intent is to retain the current footprint. They've tried a variety of designs, some of which have gone down and toward Mirror Lake. The building should continue to be a landmark. *What about the aging of the Skylight? They are often neglected; would these be self-cleaning?* GG: they are essentially self-cleaning, and they don't leak. *Will all the glass that is shown on the facades require cleaning?* There was not an intention to say that the skin is all glass; portions would be more solid. We'll be building a cutting edge library and there should be a visual statement of that. However, there's a value to mixing the historic with the new. They're also looking at making the building energy efficient; bringing in natural light will help in that regard, and people also like to have natural light.

Will the design accommodate future growth? There won't likely be any future expansion. We need to remain sensitive to the site; building additions would impinge on the site. There is only so much you can build on central campus. Major libraries are now going in the direction of off site storage and maintaining a static size on central campus. We've reached the limit of the site. *What will be the projected use of the building?* That's hard to visualize, but this building will have to last for 100 years. Information Technology is changing, and very difficult to predict. The paperless society has not yet arrived; we still acquire 100,000 new volumes per year. There will be some growth, but there is not enough land or money to expand the building any further. The new library will make the collections more accessible, and we're thinking a lot about flexibility. Technology becomes obsolete very quickly; we need to be able to change to meet the new needs.

This building can hold 1.7 million volumes; The Book Depository can currently hold three million volumes, and additional modules can be added. The Depository stores materials in much better environmental conditions. The more heavily used material should be housed on central campus in the library, with lesser used materials in the Book Depository..

Will the current reading rooms be maintained? JB: The Theatre Research Institute Library will move in, and we would like to have the Cartoon Research Library as well. Social Science collections currently housed in Sullivant Hall will also be moved here. Staff operations such as Technical Services, Preservation, Information Technology will move to Sullivant Hall. Collections and services will be concentrated in this building; the building will be more efficient and provide more space for collections. Final decisions not made about the reading rooms, but we'll be looking at the issue carefully. If we ever are to make a change, this is a good opportunity.

What about parking? There's a 900-car garage currently under construction. South Oval Drive is going away as a part of the Master Plan for the Oval; there won't be parking adjacent to the library. They're proposing that the loading dock be moved to the north

side and take it away from Mirror Lake; this would require a change to the traffic flow on campus.

If the tower is gone there won't be a place to view the entire Oval.

What about compact shelving? YJ: The current plan is to have ca. 30% of the collection in compact shelving.

Scheme C gives more prominence to the 1913 building, but the additions appear to be terribly modern—all glass. GG: Colonnade and steps on the west would give some level of the same kind of grandeur as the eastern facade. JB: We looked for an architect that would be sensitive to the tradition of the building, but make it a special place. You should take the opportunity to see what they've done at the other locations in Ohio—the buildings are new and modern, but don't clash with the existing traditional structures.

Won't large expanses of glass create climate control problems? GG: Special coating would be used on the glass; they also would use glass that absorbs the heat. Bringing natural light into interior spaces is an important design concept.

GG: The University doesn't have a lot of interior spaces that are grand.

What are the variables that should be considered? GG: Fewer floors are more efficient and usable; in one sense, we are measuring usability against the familiarity of the tower. The tower is a terrific place to take visitors; the views are great, and recently it has become a more user-friendly space. YJ: Data grid would be present on all floors. JB: We're down to the final schemes. Cost, functionality, and square footage are very important considerations. Other issues like clarity, esthetics, and flexibility are important as well. We want a design that will be the most timeless and give us the greatest flexibility in the future. Budget is a great constraint. All the models try to stay within the budget. Our ideal program demands a larger building; compromises have to be made. We want to have the most balanced building possible within the budget.

Will the lower levels get used? Yes; we can't do a lot below grade because of tunnels, water table, etc. The space that is there now will get used for patron space.

What is Joe's idea of which is best? All of them will work and would be a great improvement. He's taken by Scheme B; it has more light, better orientation and is strikingly new but timeless. *Who will make the final decision?* Many people are involved; the core team—Wes and Joe, Scott, Jill and Bernie from the Architects office, and the two architectural teams will be meeting later today. We've listened carefully to everyone's input, and our intent is to make a decision at that time.

Why is there so much emphasis on the western part of campus? Both the Design Review Board and the Architect's Office told them to pay attention to the western expansion of campus. We don't want to have a front and back, but rather entrances on both sides, encouraging folks to walk through. The library is a very important public building on

campus and needs to be both beautiful and functional. We want to entice students to walk through the library and see exhibits that will inspire them to want to come to the library. It's an opportunity to capture students to become library users.

Scheme B has three memorable spaces—the two reading rooms, plus the dynamic grand space through the building. Books would be moved back from the edges with people space at the edges. *Wouldn't there be a problem of sound disturbance with that central open space?* Serious study areas would be back from the edges and beyond the stacks or on the upper floors with the windows. We would also use wood and fabrics to help absorb the sound.

What would the floor covering be? Something that will stand up to a lot of use.

GA: Cork on floor and plaster on the ceilings. We'll have to use quality materials; perhaps cork on the floor and plaster on the ceilings. He's really nostalgic about the tower, but is concerned about the efficiency, flexibility, etc.

The pavilions are currently well used and give a feeling of the Oval. Built at the same time as the tower. GA: They were originally built to be the feet of the tower. The original building is a "9", but the tower is a "5". Original sketches had the tower twice as big as it ended up and would have been much more functional. The tower actually takes away from the 1913 building. *Always thought the Oval ended in front of the library because of the barrier of the saddlebags.* GG: We want to free up the front of the building by removing the pavilions to restore the important façade and clear away much of the shrubbery and paving to increase the green space around and in front of the library.

There is still concern about a skylight. Use of clerestory windows would be better, and with that problem taken care of, would be in favor of Scheme B.

How do you take electronic things into consideration? East Asian will not be digitized in the next 100 years. The building needs to be very flexible to accommodate either print or electronic. The building will be completely wired and will also accommodate wireless technology to provide the most flexibility for future use. The amount of space that will be taken up with print collections is a major element of this building; 45% of the space will be devoted to collections.

Hope that the library will become a gathering place. JB: Committed to providing a variety of spaces in the library--private study, group study areas, social space, exhibits to capture people's interest.

What about the landscaping around the building? Landscape architect has been hired and will be addressing the landscape around the building.