

Main Library Renovation
Student Focus Group
May 21, 2003

Attendees

Students:

Christel Baldia, GRD, Textiles & Clothing
Jaarel Deaton, GRD, Linguistics
Yucel Demirer, GRD, Near Eastern Languages and Cultures
Steven Galbraith, GRD, English
John Gossom, GRD, Comparative Studies
Suat Gumkusoy, Electrical Engineering
Mary Anne Harsh, GRD, French/Italian
Kerry Hodak, GRD, Political Science
Stephen W. Horn, GRD, East Asian Languages & Literature
Audra Jennings, GRD, History
Kathleen Kennedy, English
Patrick McAloon, GRD, Chinese Pedagogy
Katey Price, UND, Political Science
Charles Runyan, UND, Communication
Shalini Sitaramman, UND, Biophysics
John Tully GRD, History
Na'im Tyson, GRD, Linguistics

Architects:

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

University:

Wes Boomgaarden, University Libraries
Joe Branin, University Libraries (JB)
Scott Conlon, Facilities Planning and Development (SC)
Betty Sawyers, University Libraries (BS)

Introduction

GA: We visited all seven of the design architects who were in the running and were very impressed with Graham Gund.

JB: It's a \$100 million project; \$30M in private funding and \$70M in public funds. This is one of the biggest construction projects for the University. Planning/design will continue through 2005; begin construction then to be completed by 2008. We're building to last through this century and into the next. We're here to find out what kind of library students need.

GG: When he first visited OSU many years ago he was struck by the important position of the library on campus. Libraries are rarely the primary building; it's uniquely positioned in the oval. He's interested in bringing back the importance in a physical way and is excited about renovating, restoring, and adding to the building. It's actually three buildings done at separate times in 1913, 1951, 1977, with different architectural approaches in each. This project will involve phasing; every portion of the building will be touched. \$100M is not really a large amount considering the scope of the project; cost constraints can be a positive.

YJ: The initial thing that must be done is setting goals; we need to have a consensus vision. We need to determine what things are important to the community. Acock will be working with a team of engineers to determine the "state of the building" inside and out; These studies will tell them the parameters they'll be operating within. They'll also be looking at the significance of the library on campus and the site and determine how to contribute even more to the fabric of the campus, taking into consideration site issues and the campus Master Plan. The programming phase will involve building a complete list of requirements—looking operationally and in more detail. The key issue is flexibility; we're dealing with a finite volume and footprint—continued growth is not possible. The challenging issue is to take what is found in the programming and match with engineers' information and the Master Plan. We'll be testing concepts during the summer and will come back to the community in the fall with alternatives; costs will be continually checked throughout the project.

We should consider compact storage. We should have more multimedia, with a separate section for TV etc.

Generally happy with the library, but we do not have many public spaces--places for people to hang out. We're using places that should be quiet study as public spaces. The study tables in the stacks are disruptive to those who are trying to study in the carrels. Specific levels of the stacks should be reserved for serious, quiet study. The building should be useful and functional, not just flashy; simple and understated—not weird. Better stairways are needed between levels in the stacks. YJ: There should be a sense of permanence. GG: We need to think of this as a 100 year building; esthetics endure.

It's important to have many books in the building; he now has to travel all around to find the things he needs. He'd like to have a classic, timeless look for the Library; inspiring, yet timeless.

JB: What is the future of the book?

Currently; there is little space to put books down and read on site. With the need for technology to access catalog, there need to be more terminals available in the stacks--more dummy terminals

The books are dusty; the current library does not have a good atmosphere or good air quality. (JB: HVAC, etc are in severe need of upgrading and will be a major cost in the project.) The Library shouldn't cut down on print even though so much is available on the Web. The Internet is definitely useful, but she wants to read from print, not electronically.

It's very difficult to read for recall on a computer screen, but it's fine for browsing. A screen is not as easy to read nor as portable as a physical volume. We will always need physical books and also need to be able to print out electronic versions. The space implications of keeping physical volumes are understood, but would prefer expanding space for the collection; it's difficult to get stuff back from the Depository in a timely manner. (JB: There's a debate about the future of print. Even if material is in electronic form, people will print out to read. Even if we stay with print for journals, etc., there's a limit to how much can be stored. What is a reasonable volume capacity?) We need to have quality space in the stacks.

It works best for her to browse on line and request the material to be delivered to her. We need to make sure to have space for books that will never be online.

If a journal's on line there needs to be a realistic price for printing out; hard copy will be needed for a number of years.

Climate control is important. Is this a research library or a student union? We should emphasize research; priority should be on books and other research materials. There needs to be a balance between what's here and what's elsewhere. We should make use of compact shelving. There needs to be a tightly coordinated technical interface in order to adequately access materials in the Depository. Fuller cataloging is needed; the situation must be rectified before moving them off site. The Library must be retained as a research library, not a social place.

Access and preservation are the most important issues. The collection and staff are most important, not the building itself. We get hung up on medium; 90% of what he uses is print, but he uses MLA and Worldcat every day. He cautions against putting too much emphasis on digital. We need to remember that digital resources need space for the equipment that is needed to access them.

Much of what he uses will never find its way into a database; some accommodation for books will always be needed. It's cold in the carrels in the stacks. The lighting in the stacks is bad; natural light is needed. It would be nice to have a place to eat outside without having to check materials out. Having lockers or a secure place to store laptops is very important. Carrels should have responsible human beings in the vicinity for security. Sunlight and windows are very important. Windows in the stack tower haven't been cleaned in a long time. Stacks make great noise buffers. There should be places to study adjacent to the books, and there need to be workable computers in the stack areas.

Having two major entrances at opposite ends of the building will cause a significant security problem. On the question of research vs social, he thinks social is important. Perhaps areas could be designated more quiet as you move up in the building, and there could be disincentives to talking near carrels. There should be a sense of balance between beautiful spaces and books. We need to have computer spaces near books, and book use possible near computers.

The design should be classic. The building should be open and inviting; you should enter into an area where the ceiling is very high to set the tone of walking into something "sacred". It's a different type of building from any other. There should be books and library staff on every floor; it's important that they're everywhere. (JB: Worried about the future of the staffing budget.) Grand, inspiring spaces are important, but how to balance is also important. There should be a sense upon entering that this is different and important.

Her concern is with conservation—temperature, humidity and light levels are important. The needs of the books need to be balanced with the needs of people. Esthetics is important—There should be a classic look, but also historical importance in the newer facility. A long tradition should be shown, but we also need green space and light space. JB: We are concerned about these matters. The Book Depository is excellent for preservation; accessibility is lost, but there is a great gain for preservation.

Much of what undergraduates need is online; graduate students need more print. The outside appearance of the building is important—tradition; the appearance will help emphasize research.

There should be a drop off box. Books should be on shelves and accessible. There should be areas just for graduate students with desk space and coffee available; areas for both group work and quiet study. They need network interface and electrical outlets, with wireless available on all floors. History graduate

students are emphatic that the Map Room should stay in the Main Library; it's important to keep maps together. (JB: We're looking at all the facilities on campus; the Map Room, Social Sciences, and Journalism are all being looked at.) The microform reader/printers need to be working and accessible; there is currently a problem with the microform tables being used as general study tables. Microforms are very important; microform readers should be attached to scanners. There need to be more seats in the café area. There should be coffee machines available on multiple floors.

The computer lab is important but should be separate. The Library is the place to come for serious study before finals. We need to have places to do group work, but also need quiet separate study areas. More areas are needed for group work; the student union can't really be used for group projects and discussions.

Lockers are important—can't carry everything you need from place to place. She'd like to see more e-journals. She uses ILL a lot; copies are often poor quality and the references at the end are sometimes omitted. She would like to have historical materials scanned and available on the Web; they would be much more accessible, and it's also important for conservation. She's generally happy with the library system. Although we have a rich array of e-journals, she'd like to see more European literature.

It would be nice to have an outdoor space to eat and smoke.

Group work only is first year as graduate student, but law students do a lot of group work. Professional students are more into group study, as are Education graduate students.

How important is physical orientation and moving through the building? We're responsible for future generations—need to lead them, orient them to how and where to find materials. GG: Character and shape of space is important; symbolism; the Grand Reference Room; use hierarchy of spaces to orient you to the space and use.

For students who don't have lab space the library is important as their space to use for study and research.

The trees around the building are important, particularly the Jessie Owens oak.

Undergraduates come here to study for exams because there aren't adequate spaces elsewhere.

There's a definite need for group spaces for four to six people; they should have lots of windows and good security. There should be a signup system for them.

The fact that the library is open to the general public is good.