

Campus Architecture

Section B

March 25, 2005



The new Bigelow Chapel at the United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities: B10

Campus Scale in the Age of Behemoth Buildings

It's a very particular historical moment that we're in," said Columbia University's president, Lee C. Bollinger, last month at a forum in New York organized by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Universities are extraordinarily successful institutions "with an imperative for growth," he said, adding: "Most universities seem to grow a million square feet a decade. Two million is not unusual. It's not unthinkable to have a Columbia of 100,000 students a century from now."

The topic of the forum was universities as urban planners, and Mr. Bollinger went on to talk about the relationship between city universities and their neighborhoods—a topic particularly important to Columbia, which hopes to expand

to 18 acres near its century-old Morningside Heights campus. No urban university today could build a gated, walled campus like the one in Morningside Heights, he said. "Now you need glass and transparency and color. Streets must remain streets."

What worries him, he said, is whether a university can build in a city and retain the feeling of a campus. "I think the essence of a university requires a sense of community, and that's physical space," Mr. Bollinger said. "The problem is, you also need laboratories."

And laboratories today are big—almost too big to fit into the ideal of the pedestrian campus, whether urban or not. No new lab could be squeezed into the floor plan of the build-

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Ontario College of Art and Design thought above the box for its Sharp Centre.

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Boston University's huge fitness complex is an exercise in vistas.

B11

Santa Cruz's engineering building includes as much green design as possible.

B14

Notre Dame's performing-arts center houses five state-of-the-art venues in a mammoth Gothic shell.

B18

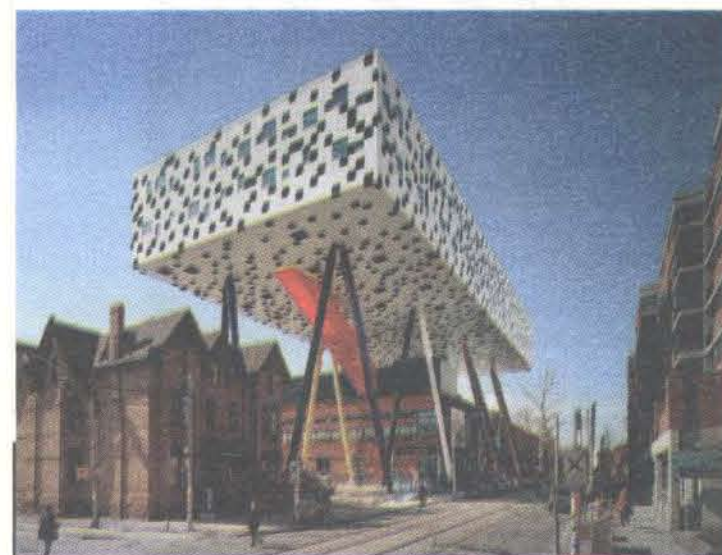
Architecture stars, like movie stars, can be demanding. Arthur J. Lidsky asks: Is the glamour worth it?

B24

Charles Klauder's designs define some of America's most memorable campuses, writes Frances Halsband.

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Food services have dispersed all over the campus, reflecting the networks of academic life, says Jamie Horwitz.



Ontario College of Art and Design's Sharp Centre towers over the college's main building and makes the institution's presence known on "a nondescript little side street."

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a street that you'd have no idea there was an art college on it."

When planning for the expansion began, Mr. Caldwell says, the college expected to build on a small site beside the main building that was being used as a parking lot. After hiring Mr. Alsop and Robbie Young + Wright, however, the college was surprised to find the architects thinking far outside the box—not to mention outside of fiscal reality. At one point, Mr. Caldwell says, the architects thought of putting three separate 21-story buildings on the diminutive parking-lot site. "The tabletop idea grew out of the three towers—they grew a horizontal piece, and then the towers went away," he says. The initial plan for the tabletop showed it stretching the length of the block, but that would have required putting legs through the oldest part of the main building, an idea that proved impractical.

As built, the tabletop consists of two 28,000-square-foot floors housing classrooms, studios, modest faculty offices, and, on the back side of the building, a student lounge with spectacular views of the small but much-loved Grange Park. Users have no sense of being in a

building suspended above another building. Only in a few places do the massive internal trusses that support the Sharp Centre show through its walls. Windows of various sizes occur at different heights—some nearer the floor, others closer to the ceiling.

The windows fit nicely into the Sharp Centre's lively exterior. Both the sides and the underneath have what Mr. Caldwell calls a "pixelated" pattern of black square spots of several sizes against a white background. The spots were originally supposed to be colored, but the cost was prohibitive, he says. Making the spots and windows different sizes, he notes, was Mr. Alsop's way of disguising the structure's large scale.

An important benefit of lifting the Sharp Centre up so high is that doing so preserved the park views of condominiums on the opposite side of McCaul Street—the underside of the table is level with the top of the condominium building. Despite the noise and disruption caused by constructing foundations for the legs, Mr. Caldwell says the college's neighbors like the new building. And it didn't cost much more than a traditional building would have, he says, adding, "It's a very conventional structure stuck up on stilts." ■

sloppy cuts for expansion joints in the concrete. Matching wood is also featured in lockers and cabinets in the entryway.

The wood was an attempt to warm the building's otherwise cold, industrial aesthetic. The ceiling is bare and painted white, as are the exposed beams, metal shelves, and other hardware in the building. The stacks are in the basement, and cuts in the floor have been made so the building can accommodate compact shelving sometime in the future.

Harrison S. Fraker Jr., the dean of the College of Environmental Design, looks out on the library from his office window. "The building needed to stand up on its own to the dissonant number of architectural vocabularies around here," he says. "What I like about it is that they bring a very contemporary interpretation to the picturesque Arts and Crafts references and a very sophisticated and clever solution to a very difficult program."

Edward A. Arens, director of the Center for Environmental Design Research, works across the quad from the library, too. He complains that the louvers, some of which are on the north side of the building, do nothing to shield glare from the sun, that the ventilation in the building is inefficient. In terms of aesthetics, he says he is "tolerant of many whimsical things" in architecture, but he chuckles when he thinks of a sign students made depicting the building as a boxy motor home, pulled behind a truck.

"When you look at other libraries around the campus, they are pretty grand, and this thing isn't," he says. "It's symptomatic of a thoughtless architecture, which is all over the place. I find it distressing that it is in Berkeley and that it is right in my field of view all the time." ■



The music library's design has elements borrowed from nearby buildings in several different styles.

U. OF CALIFORNIA AT BERKELEY

A Controversial Library Amid Architectural Hodgepodge

BY SCOTT CARLSON

JOHN H. ROBERTS, the head of the music library at the University of California campus here, says he was leaving the Jean Gray Hargrove Music Library one recent evening when he saw two architecture students standing out front, arguing about the trapezoidal, slate-clad building. She loved it, he hated it. "Nothing is symmetrical," he complained as they argued.

The new music library, it seems, is nothing if not controversial here at Berkeley. The building's fans say that despite a limited budget of about \$10-million, the

29,000-square-foot building makes a strong impression on a difficult site. Its detractors say it makes a strong impression of the worst kind, although few want to say that on the record.

"This campus, politically, is very liberal. Design-wise it is very conservative," says Frederick S. Yasaki, an architect who supervises library-building projects at Berkeley. "People just hated the building." He's one of its fans. "I think in that location it is very appropriate because it marries the hodgepodge of architectural styles in that area."

The Hargrove Library sits on the west side of the so-

called arts quad, surrounded by vastly different structures. The heavy, Brutalist architecture building towers across the quad, while a Spanish-style music-school building and a mundane modern arts-school building sit on either side. The design firm, Mack Scogin Merrill Elam Architects, of Atlanta, dealt with the eclecticism of the quad—and, really, of the whole campus—by blending inspirations from all the buildings nearby.

The library is an off-kilter box, with its foundation level oriented on the city's grid and its upper two levels twisted slightly to align with the original grid of the campus. The building has dark seams, louvers, and clear and amber windows forming geometric patterns that some architecture critics have likened to Piet Mondrian's paintings. A slate craftsman, brought all the way from the Northeast, was hired to dress the building in its rocky green scales.

Merrill Elam says the slate shingles echo the old wood-shingle-style buildings on the campus, like the nearby Faculty Club. Colored-glass windows in the nearby music building inspired the colored glass in the library. The provocative modernism of the building responds to the modern structures around it. The sign for the building is on a low concrete arm that reaches out to the music building. (It was meant to be a bench for visitors, but budget cuts took out the seating area.)

Walking inside, a visitor passes underneath an exposed support beam, through glass doors, and into the lobby. Sunlight pours in through a far window. A reading room and listening room, both encased in glass, are immediately on the right. Dark cherry wood covers the first several yards of the floor, but elsewhere the floors are mostly polished concrete—Mr. Yasaki says the wood floor was laid down after a subcontractor made

Colored glass and window louvers in the U. of California at Berkeley's Jean Gray Hargrove Music Library remind some viewers of paintings by Piet Mondrian.



MACK SCOGIN MERRILL ELAM ARCHITECTS

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ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDINGS

■ **Babson College**
Lunder Undergraduate Admission Center at Mustard Hall
 Babson Park, Mass.
 Cost: \$1.9-million
 8,000 sq. ft.
 (renovation)
 Architect: Mount Vernon Group

The project involved a complete renovation of a 1920s building to accommodate the college's admissions staff, including support-staff members.

■ **Empire State College of State University of New York**
111 West Avenue
 Saratoga Springs, N.Y.
 Cost: \$3.4-million
 52,000 sq. ft.
 (renovation)
 Architect: Joy, McCoola & Zilch, Architects and Planners

This project renovated a formerly abandoned building to house general offices for the college, facilities for local students, and a Center for Distance Learning. Also located here are a bookstore, print shop, and mailroom. The renovation was planned to take advantage of geothermal energy for heating and cooling.

ARTS BUILDINGS

■ **Ball State University**
Music Instruction Building
 Muncie, Ind.
 Cost: \$19.6-million
 85,000 sq. ft.
 Architect: CSO Architects Inc.

The centerpiece of the Music Instruction Building is the 600-seat David and Mary Jane Sursa Performance Hall, designed so that it can be "tuned" acoustically according to the needs of particular performances. The building also houses a smaller performance venue, rehearsal rooms, a recording facility, and practice studios.

■ **Christopher Newport University**
Ferguson Center for the Arts
 Newport News, Va.
 Cost: \$54-million
 200,000 sq. ft.
 Architect: Pel Cobb Freed & Partners, Hanbury Evans Wright Vlattas + Company

Christopher Newport's new performing-arts facility is being built in two phases. Phase 1, opened in July 2004, includes a 500-seat theater for plays and music (pictured) and a 200-seat studio theater, as well as rehearsal spaces and classrooms. Phase 2, due to open in the summer of 2005, includes a 1,700-seat concert hall. The structure also houses dance spaces, scene and costume shops, design labs, and soundproof practice rooms.

■ **Doane College**
Whitcomb Lee Conservatory
 Crete, Neb.
 Cost: \$3.2-million
 16,050 sq. ft.
 (renovation)
 Architect: Bahr Vermeer Haecker Architects

Doane's five-sided conservatory, built in 1906 but closed since 1970, reopened after a renovation that included adding a basement and an elevator, repairing the roof, and installing new plumbing, heating, and wiring. The building now houses a 200-seat auditorium as well as a theater carpenter shop, faculty offices, seminar rooms, and a classroom. The original design was by two Doane alumni, George and Arthur Dean, of Dean and Dean Architects of Chicago, and featured an unusual combination of Prairie School and Arts and Crafts influences. It is one of three buildings on the campus that make up a historic district listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

■ **Providence College**
Smith Center for the Arts
 Providence, R.I.
 Cost: \$15.7-million
 60,000 sq. ft.
 Architect: S/L/A/M Collaborative

The Center for the Arts contains a 273-seat concert hall, a 275-seat thrust-stage theater, and a smaller black-box theater. It also houses a dance studio; rehearsal rooms; a scene shop; classrooms; offices for faculty members in music, theater, dance, and film; and an art gallery. The building's Gothic style echoes the style of Harkins Hall, the college's historic main administration and classroom building.

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