

reader comment

BAC is not a dead issue

Although funding is not immediately forthcoming, the University of Alberta is continuing its plans to construct the Business Administration and Commerce Building (BAC) south of Tory Building on the Arts Court in the north-east sector of the campus.

In view of the revised long range population prediction of 20,000, from the previous 30,000, and a sorrowfully small amount of green space, and the large opposition to the site (in the March, 1973 Referendum, 77.9% of the students voting opposed the site) such a commitment needs to be examined closely by all persons concerned.

Below are the reasons which the various planners (Campus Development Committee) the long range planners and the long range landscape planners) give to justify the construction of BAC in the Arts Court. Following each of these statements is a critical look at just what each one means.

1. BAC would make the Arts Court a "better defined" and a "more manageable" open space.

The Arts Court, being the only major open space on campus, with the exception of the Central Quad, is an integral and much needed part of campus. It is enclosed (defined) on four sides by Tory, HUB, Rutherford II, and Arts. At the same time it is a natural area which relieves the man-made forms of the building. It serves as an esthetic and recreation-al area for a large student and faculty population (it is, in fact, the only recreational area available to residents in HUB). Its size has already been reduced by the addition of Rutherford II, and the construction of HUB has increased the number of people using the area. It is nonsensical that BAC could define the north side of the court any more or any better than it is presently defined by Tory. And it is nonsensical to believe that reducing the size of the Arts Court by 1/4, from 4 acres to 3 acres, injecting an extra 1600 people into the area and damaging or removing some of the finest trees on campus (between 15 and 20 trees stand on the site) would contribute to the functional and esthetic qualities of this space. Rather than gain by the construction of BAC, the Arts Court and the people who enjoy this area would suffer. If the Arts Court does need to be "better defined" could not the proposed landscape plan for this area serve the purpose.

2. The building contributes to the principle of consolidation of the campus core.

The planners have not clearly told us what benefits would result from building BAC in the core of the campus so we can only guess. However, the costs are apparent. The addition of yet another building to an already cluttered area, and the subsequent reduction of a vital open space and the addition of a large number of people to a densely populated area would be detrimental to the learning and living environment. Moreover, the revised population prediction calls into question the need to fulfill the principle of consolidation any more than it has already been fulfilled.

3. The Faculty of Business Administration and Commerce would be close to the social sciences departments located in Tory and the proposed computing centre.

At present, the faculty, located in the Central Academic Building is just a couple of minutes from Tory. A substantial amount of money was spent this year on improving pedestrian movement around CAB. More than 140 faculty members from the departments of Economics, History, Geography and Sociology were signees of a petition in November 1972, opposing the Arts Court site for the construction of BAC. And at the present time it appears unlikely that the computing center will ever be built. The long range plan is designed to illustrate principles and concepts. But to blindly and arbitrarily decide that the Arts Court site fulfills the principle of faculty linkage, without looking at the costs or the alternatives is not planning but bulldozing.

4. The Business Administration and Commerce building would provide needed entrance and foyer space for the Tory building.

The fact that an existing building has shortcomings does not justify the construction of a new building. The provincial

parliament building may be too small to house all government activities, but we wouldn't think of constructing a hi-rise directly in front of it or tear up the Parliament Grounds. We seek viable alternatives. Access to Tory can be improved without constructing a building which would cost \$3,000,000 (1972 estimate) and destroy 1/4 of a vital open space. The planners have locked themselves into a misguided solution based on no amount of forethought and no appreciable amount of research. With a higher population density using the main south entrance to Tory, and the actually reduced size of the entrance way, movement in the area would actually be worse after the construction of BAC than before, and the danger in case of fire or an emergency would be increased. The south entrance to Tory can be much improved simply by constructing steps outside the building which give direct access to the basement. Similar improvements could be made to the west side of the building.

5. BAC would contribute to an east-west pedestrian walkway.

Lastly, the planners feel that an elevated walkway connected to the 2nd floor of Tory would facilitate east-west traffic and alleviate the problem of overcrowding at the south entrance of Tory. They seem to have forgotten, however, that the large majority of people entering Tory are destined for the main and lower floors. The second floor is lightly used, being composed mainly of offices, with a few seminar rooms. The hallways are not designed to carry heavy traffic. People using the walkway and wishing to go to a lower floor would have to downstairs and pass through the already congested space around the stairs and elevators on the main floor. But if these people wished to ascend to the upper floors, they would still have to go down to the main floor, as the elevators do not stop at the second or third floors. Nor would extending elevator service to these floors help, but merely cause congestion and slow down further the dreadfully inefficient elevator service in the Tory building. If a linkage between Tory and HUB is desirable, there are alternatives, such as a ground level linkage, which should be considered.

Thus, far from being sound and sensible reasons for constructing a costly new building in the Arts Court, the statements of the planners and the Campus Development Committee are ill-thought out, vague rationalizations, based on possible peripheral benefits, which, as we have seen, are far outweighed by the costs. The Campus Development Committee has not considered the alternatives to the Arts Court site which are available. Recent construction should make space available in new buildings or in older ones which have been vacated. The revised population forecast has made it unlikely that several buildings in the long range plan will ever be built. This leaves the University with several alternative sites, one of these being the greenhouse area to the west of Tory. If BAC was to be built here, it would not be destroying vital open space, the Faculty would be close to Tory, and much more vital pedestrian walkways could be established, linking Tory to BAC and thence the Chemistry II, CAB, Cameron Library, Physics and the Biological Sciences Centre.

Another development which makes it imperative that CDC reconsiders its stand is the vast student opposition to the Arts Court site. The CDC appeared to give ear to this opposition last December when they held an "open" review on BAC. However, the review was conveniently held during examination week. One of the committee members openly admitted to the Gateway editor that he had his mind made up long before the hearings. Obviously the others had too.

These arguments, and new information - the large student opposition to the siting for BAC, and the revised population prediction - make it imperative that CDC reopen examination of this matter in an enlightened and responsive fashion.

Lastly, government should consider very carefully before granting funds for the construction of BAC, or, for that matter, any building.

Greg Teal

Civil fun

Now that midweek is over, everyone and his grandmother knows that Engineering Week is fun week. Great displays of strength and melodious harmony have occupied the halls - just like the students occupy the skiing slopes during Reading Week.

Wednesday morning, as prophesized, proved to all that the CIVILS do give a DAM(N). Within its very structure are 3 concrete pilings, 2 bus benches, and a partridge in a pear tree.

Watch for the Keg Race from Tory to the Engineering Centre at noon on Thursday.

Max Celmens
3rd Civil

Biased

The Students' Union is Sexist!

I was amazed to see the advertisement in Gateway for Students' Union position nominations. The position of President of Men's Athletics automatically includes a position as the Chairman of the University Athletic Board, while the position of President of Women's Athletics automatically includes the position of Vice-Chairman of the U.A.B.

Is it not time for the Students' Union to recognise women as equals at this university, rather than automatically relegating them to subordinate positions?

Anne M. Lambert
Assistant Professor

There is no law that says that the president of men's athletics must be a man, or that a woman must hold the position of W.A.A. president. Anyone is welcome to run for either position, regardless of sex.

A.C.

Wisdom or?

In most of the major Canadian cities there is a portion of land that has been set aside for the building of a magnificent Temple. A Temple whose building all men consented to no matter what their various religious beliefs. A Temple to the God of Knowledge where we daily deliver up human sacrifices using the knife made of lack of wisdom. What name has man given to this huge glittering Temple? He calls it a University. During the last twenty years there has been a steady push by society on the youth of the day to go to university to "make something of themselves." They go there to consume facts and figures as well as a large amount of useless information. All this to become useful tools for society to use as it would. Yes, university is viewed as the be all and end all, the alpha and omega, the beginning but far too often viewed as the end. We turn hundreds upon thousands of human computers loose on the world; but the trouble with them is that often they are unable to think for themselves. They have no wisdom.

Is wisdom more important than knowledge? If so, why has man not tried harder to find it? If a man has discovered his need for wisdom and is searching for it, where does he look? Before university in high school? Not there. In the home? Most of the older generation has not searched for it, so it would not be at home. Then where?

What can be done? A large percentage of university students are there looking for knowledge, not wisdom, and therefore should not be there, for their good as well as society's. For a man to have knowledge without wisdom is as dangerous as for a child to have a loaded pistol.

But still the sacrifice goes on.

Miles Johnson
Concordia College
Edmonton

1974 STUDENTS' UNION GENERAL ELECTION

Nomination forms are now available at the SU receptionist's desk, 2nd. floor of SUB for the following positions:

The President of The Students' Union

The Executive Vice-President of The Students' Union

The Academic Vice-President of The Students' Union

The Finance and Administration Vice-President of The Students' Union

The Services Vice-President of The Students' Union

The Chairman of the University Athletic Board

& President of Mens Athletics

The Vice-Chairman of the UAB & President of Womens Athletics

The Treasurer of The University Athletic Board

Student Representative on the Board of Govenors

Nomination forms will be accepted in Room 271, SUB, on Tuesday, January 29, between the hours of 8:30 AM and 5:00 PM ONLY

For further information and rules and regulations concerning nominations, contact the SU receptionist in SUB.

