

Ideas That Make A Student Centre

New SUB-Expansion Chairman Explains Philosophy

By J. A. Brook

A building of the complexity and size of the new Students' Union Building expresses the combined thinking of many academic disciplines and a wide range of men.

The thoughts recorded below are the ideas of: student planners, architects and various professional and academic men. These principles do not exhaust by any means the thinking that has gone into planning the new student centre. A building designed to serve as wide a range of human interests and personalities and to provide as diverse a collection of services requires a very complex theoretical foundation.

A. Our building will change the personalities of the people using it. This is the first fact one faces in planning anything new, and it carries with it a certain moral responsibility.

This building will be a new medium of activity, and new media of activity change the way people carry out their activities. And the way they do things changes what they are. If our building is to offer anything, it will have to change the lives of the people using it. It is the responsibility of the people using it to ensure that this influence is as open and free as possible, and that it is beneficial.

B. The influence we hope our building will achieve is one of quality, warmth and intelligence. The people using this building will come to feel that this is the sort of place they are in without ever becoming aware that this feeling is developing.

To do this, the new building will have to display subtly and without harsh or extreme visual effects, the results of good design and good planning. Urbanity or sophistication are not being taken as substitutes for being aesthetically right and functional.

C. Good design is important because the way areas are designed affects the use people make of them. People will avoid ugly, uncomfortable areas; they will be attracted to and stirred to greater efforts by properly and beautifully designed areas. Good design enhances function.

D. Our building will achieve its effects with subtleness and warmth, rather than through short-lived gimmicks. Quality of design and furnishings is essential to the quality of life in the building. "The structure should be an experience for all persons using the facilities. Its influence should be quiet and disciplined."—H. J. Richards, architect.

E. Our building will not hide the ways it affects the people using it; that is the difference between good taste and deliberate deception; between intelligent planning and the sorts of effects advertisers try to achieve.

F. The planners of this building are using applied psychology in one way, deliberately — we are trying to draw people into the building. This is justified, however, because we are drawing them in by motives and interests that deserve furthering.

GENERAL PLANNING CRITERIA

G. The basic principle used in including, planning and designing each facility is this: each facility must meet some specific human need and the whole collection of facilities must meet the widest possible assortment of human needs that can be administered in one building, but in such a way that it has some interest for anyone using the building.

H. The whole collection of facilities must be welded into one whole because the building when

completed must symbolize the particular, powerful but loose body politic called the Student's Union.

This building must become the concrete representative of student life at this university.

I. Any facilities must serve to develop some aspect of student life. No facility is being included that has no positive value. The three aspects of student life that most concern us are (a) his life as a member of the university community, (b) his cultural and intellectual life, (c) his social life.

J. Facilities included in our building must not duplicate what is already being done by other groups at this university. In this way, we are both best meeting our own needs, and we are best helping the university as a whole meet the demands placed upon it.

K. All areas must serve the maximum number of uses, and the need for multi-use and flexibility of facilities is foremost. For example, lounges must also serve as corridors and congregating areas, and so on.

L. Maximum use for each facility and maximum efficiency in use of space must be met. The present Student's Union Planning Room is a good example of what is to be avoided. There a meeting-room has been combined with an office, and neither can serve the needs placed on them without interrupting the other.



ANDY BROOK
... SUB expansion chairman

M. Each facility must meet all the demands of the activity for which it is built.

GENERAL DESIGN CRITERIA

N. 'Form must express function' is the most basic design principle at work in the new building. Both for efficiency of space and for purity of design, the simplest and most straightforward approach to

meeting the needs of the activities for which we are providing facilities will be taken.

O. The facilities which we plan must relate to each other and complement each other in such a way that the building presents a series of interrelating and inter-fusing activities, as opposed to a series of unrelated and disparate facilities. Each activity will be related to every activity peripheral to it, so that every activity complements other activities.

Among other advantages, this arrangement of facilities helps the people using one activity to be drawn into other activities, thus helping the role our building will play as a mixer of people who ordinarily outside the building would not mix.

P. To assist the movement of people in the building, design should be as open and unencumbered as possible. This has to be done in such a way that the work areas, where people need to feel privacy and that need to be quiet, are private and quiet. The two goals, as design will show, are not incompatible.

Q. Site and climate will be used to heighten the total appearance of the outside shape and coloring of the building. The outside of the buildings as well as the inside, will express the individual and varied functions designed to take place within. The theatre, and other facilities, will be separate forms in the final design.

R. The need for expansion some time in the future is being planned for. The site lends itself well to such expansion. A Student's Union Planning Office will of course have to be included.

S. Each facility in the building is being designed to serve as many uses as possible. Some real contributions to the over-all field of student centre planning are taking place in this field.

This, however, will not affect the need of each area for a character of its own.

T. Each area will serve the emotional and aesthetic needs, as well as the activities needs, of special student groups. And each cell so designated for a specific group will also be designed so that something about it interests everyone who will use the building.

U. Abstract, unfunctional design is being avoided. The greatest beauty is achieved when all elements in the design of a space serve to enhance the function of that space.

V. Waste space and space that serves only one function incompletely, will almost be non-existent in the new building. All space is being designed both to serve the overall goal in the building of achieving fluidity and free, related human movement, and to serve more than just its own activity.

Lounges, for example, will serve as corridors and as art-galleries. The snack-bar may serve as an activities area. And so on.

W. The whole building is being designed to achieve the maximum possible freedom for and interest in, exploring the facilities of the building. Each floor, so far as is possible, will reveal immediately to anyone entering it, the key activities taking place on it.

This will help create a feeling of community and fellowship among those using the building and it will help encourage inter-mixing.

It is also the best way to design the varied collection of facilities that will make up our building so that all of them are easily accessible to everyone interested. X. All areas will be designed in the light of the need of human beings for warmth, balance, order and a sense that their environment has been created by someone of intelligence. This is a feeling notably lacking in design and architecture current in this city.

All areas of the building will be designed in human terms, so that human beings will feel comfortable and even happy using them. The visual aspect of areas is the key to satisfying these needs.

We have kept in mind that the people to whom this building will have to appeal initially are new to university and that they are generally rather nervous and uncertain of themselves and their environment.

Y. The whole building is being designed so that it will function and so that it can be administered, as a complete, thoroughly inter-related whole. To this end, the designers are considering the relationship of facility to facility and of floor to floor and the planners are considering the need for the students to keep a hand in all aspects of building management.

Thus the need for creating a sense of community and for constant and close communication among the groups using the building is being met.

The basic principle of this building is to get students interested in the student life of this university, and then once they are interested, to broaden and enrich this interest.

A Viewpoint

Ban Partisan Politics On Campus - Nihilist

I wish to deal with a relatively minor part of campus life — minor because the small minds involved have chosen that role.

I propose that partisan politics be banned from the campus.

The pee wee league politicians will shudder as they read this, but the general student population has more cause to shudder when they realize the atrocious fraud that has been perpetrated upon them.

The Students' Handbook describes the purpose of the Political Science Club, namely "to increase political awareness on campus; to give grounding in parliamentary procedure."

The political parties which operate under the Political Science Club are the major means by which this purpose is carried out.

The parties have failed miserably. They should be eliminated and replaced by organizations that will carry out the purpose.

First the Failures.
(1) To increase political awareness.

To accomplish this one would expect to see The Gateway loaded with letters from the club elites, or a great number of panels and speakers discussing the latest political problems. But the club leaders have no time for such mean activities. Their major pre-occupations are centred off campus as they trot down to a Red Deer or Calgary convention to enter that stomach turning ritual of paying homage to the true party leaders. The directors of the clubs use their positions to "meet the right people" and leave their duties to the campus unrealized.

One has but to look at the groups sponsoring panels and speakers to see that the responsibility of increasing political awareness has been left to other groups—for example, Students for Peace, Student Christian Movement, the UN Club, and so on.

To be sure, the political clubs do sponsor guest speakers. If a minister or party leader arrives in town then the clubs will grab him. The club president gets on a first name basis with "the big man" and the party name appears in big print on the posters.

Wonderful, the president has stepped up the ladder and the club has achieved publicity for model parliament and the campus has heard an ambiguous speech full of nasty jokes about Pearson or Diefenbaker. This is a great way to promote a purpose.

(2) To give grounding in Parliamentary Procedure.

One has but to mention last year's Model (?) Parliament to understand the tragic failure of the clubs. Not one club made an honest effort to educate its members. Not one club held a session where parliamentary procedure was outlined.

Instead four party leaders decided to play God.

With heads swollen from seeing their pictures on posters during the days of campaign they destroyed model parliament. We ended up with a two hour fiasco which was an excellent demonstration of childishness and stubbornness—but what of the major purpose?

Model Parliament is being used to feed overstuffed egos and presently accomplishes nothing!

Thus if an organization fails to accomplish its purpose it must change or be eliminated. The very nature of the political parties precludes change. Their responsibilities lie not to the campus but to the national leaders. How can a

campus party put aside its rigid partisan viewpoint to accomplish some good for the university when Uncle Lester or Big Bad John tells them to keep plugging the party name.

Elimination is the answer. But such a solution must be accompanied with an alternative suggestion as to how the purpose will be fulfilled.

Therefore I suggest the following.

Political awareness can be increased by encouraging the present groups (mentioned above) to continue their work. But more important a revitalized Political Science Club could carry out this responsibility. It would have the valuable asset of approaching the duties more objectively.

To provide grounding in parliamentary procedure the same Political Science Club could sponsor a model parliament much like the Tuxis version. There would be no political parties, rather a government and opposition, to carry out proceedings in an orderly and educational manner.

In concluding I must comment upon my style in writing this article. I realize I have come close to slander in describing the elites of the political parties. But I have little fear of a forceful or brutal counterattack. I doubt whether the club leaders would care to enter campus life by analyzing their position at this university. They are probably too busy writing another chapter in their autobiography—the one entitled "How I became a big man on campus."

The clubs exist on this campus under fraudulent conditions. They claim an important purpose on this campus but do nothing to further that purpose. So let's get rid of them so that people concerned with those purposes can get the job done.

The Nihilist