2015

Connecting the New Library to Smith Campus

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CONNECTING THE NEW LIBRARY TO SMITH CAMPUS

LSS 105: Intro to Landscape Studies
Proposal by Susannah Howard, Sabrina Ko, Insia Naqvi, Jenny Perrin, Lynne Siringo, & Mary Taylor

Mission Statement
This team reimagines the existing library landscape conditions to address issues that inhibit library connectedness with regard to pathways, entrances, and general accessibility. We seek a library that no longer disconnects people from the spaces that they utilize daily and maintains the integrity of Smith College history and traditions. We challenge the library design team to consistently concern themselves with the needs and wants of the disabled community at Smith College.

Barriers to Campus Movement
The current library landscape impedes people’s ability to move around the library with ease.

We suggest to:
• Eliminate congestion on pathways through widening paths and providing social spaces on the edge of paths
  • This allows for people to move around campus efficiently and still use it socially
  • Also creates a symbolic connection between the academic buildings and the library.
• Build an artery through library that connects Seelye Lawn to the Science Quad
• Separate paths/roads for vehicles to travel on
  • Allow workers to easily service the library
  • Reclaiming the library as a space for the people rather than vehicle

Disability & Access
For the library redesign, the opinions and needs of physically disabled people should be put front and center. Since none of our group members identify as physically disabled, we offer these ideas with the hopes of input of those with physical disabilities.

We suggest to:
• Create non-hidden, multi-use ramps (wheelchair accessible, delivery etc.) at every entrance
  • Design for disabled people by eliminating stairs and widening doorways
• Build truly accessible pathways in regard to slope and congestion
• Receive consistent input from students with physical disabilities throughout the process
• Design a landscape for disabled people rather than creating accommodations for disabled bodies.

Physical Barriers
We’ve identified issues with the current landscape relating to physical barriers, or aspects of the built environment that impede on the connectedness of the library to the rest of the campus.

We suggest to:
• Add more entrances and exits
  • Improve the flow for library visitors as they access different spaces on campus.
• Consider removal of fences around lawns
• Simplify connection between buildings
  • Specifically the connections between the library & Wright Hall (outdoor alleyway)

Communal Barriers
One top priority is encouraging students to connect with the landscape and one another. Some things about the library landscape, such as the tunnel effectively do this. The design team should consider constructing spaces in the landscape that encourage students to share ideas and appreciate the beauty of the landscape.

We suggest to:
• Maintain spaces for student communication
  • Construct spaces that allow for mass-communication carried out by students.
  • Removal of the locked kiosk or unlocking the kiosk so that students and community members can easily share their ideas.
• Add benches or sitable spaces that foster connectedness between students
  • Encourage students to engage with the outdoor campus and one another by drawing attention to prominent landscape features and allowing interaction.
• Add flexible outdoor space that fosters connectedness between the library and surrounding landscape.