

Vision for a Future Main Library Building

Report to Paula Kaufman and the Library Executive Committee and the Library Administrative Council

January 30, 2004

Organizing Committee: Lisa German, Lisa Hinchliffe, William Maher, Nancy O'Brien, Allison Sutton, David Ward, Karen Wei, Cherie Weible, Tom Kilton, Convenor

In considering our future main library building needs with respect to our stated visions for the future, it is very useful to be able to think and plan "outside the box" of our current constraints, be they physical or financial ones. "What would an ideal main library building for us look like and consist of?" becomes the question. The purpose of this report is to offer an outline of essential elements that should be featured in an ideal main library building of the future, without reference to our present infrastructure or financial limitations. In presenting a set of principles and attributes for such a future ideal building to the UIUC Campus planners and architects, the Library is stating its needs for space and facilities which these planners and architects can consider in planning reconfigurations of our present building as well as additions to that building or the erection of additional buildings and space. And should a miracle gift donation or endowment come our way, perhaps we could even think in terms of constructing a totally new building.

It should be noted that some of the needs expressed in this outline document do not relate exclusively to infrastructure. Nevertheless, the organizing committee felt that they should be stated in the report.

A hearing was held on December 15, 2003 to obtain suggestions and ideas from members of the Library faculty. Many of the suggestions offered at that meeting have been incorporated into this report.

The first section of the report is a listing of the principles. The second section contains these same principles with some explanatory text. A set of rough sketches which concludes the report is intended to express conceptual relations rather than to propose a specific building design.

Section 1: A listing of the principles

I. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- 1. Structure in the central part of the campus**
- 2. Distinctive architectural and aesthetic presence with a grand entrance symbolizing the Library's role as the gateway to recorded knowledge**
- 3. A design that recognizes functional relationships to other library spaces on campus**

4. **Malleable structure that can accommodate changes in technology and other future trends**
5. **Public areas with significant natural light and views of the outside**
6. **Optimal environmental conditions**
7. **Quality workspace for all Library Personnel including offices for all Library faculty**
8. **Layout and interior design that facilitates access, including quality signage**
9. **A central information center at the building's main entrance**

II. SPACES THAT FACILITATE PROACTIVE SERVICE INTERACTIONS

1. **Optimal conditions and space for on-site research**
2. **Integrated research environment for users**
3. **Integration of reader space**
4. **Instructional space**
5. **Exhibit facilities throughout the library**
6. **Duplicating facilities for all**
7. **Individual study spaces**
8. **Collaborative/group study spaces**
9. **Informal dialogue and conversation spaces**
10. **Event spaces.**
11. **Collaborative space for shared services with other campus units**

III. ACCESS TO COLLECTIONS

1. **Integration of tangibles with intangibles**
2. **State of the art microtext facilities**

IV. UNITS AND THEIR LOCATIONS

1. **Centralizing and streamlining service points by clustering departmental libraries and area studies units**
2. **Integrated technical services space**
3. **An undergraduate facility with a large collaborative study area and information mall to complement the integrated services provided to undergraduates throughout the library**
4. **Provision of space for the management and use of non-book cultural artifacts**
5. **Provision of space in a facility that can accommodate orderly storage of 60% of the overall collection**
6. **Special collections facility**

Section Two: Principles with brief explanations

I. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1. **Structure in the central part of the campus** - The Main Library must be located in a central area of the campus to be accessible to the maximum of students and faculty who have classes, offices, and laboratories clustered around the main quadrangle.
2. **Distinctive architectural and aesthetic presence with a grand entrance symbolizing the Library's role as the gateway to recorded knowledge** - The building should have a distinctive presence that reflect its importance and indeed is memorable to casual visitors as well as to student, faculty, and visiting scholar users.
3. **A design that recognizes functional relationships to other library spaces on campus** - The collections and services of the Main Library should form a central research core for the campus, which is complemented and enhanced by those offered by other library spaces on campus. As a Main Library, it needs to address many library needs, but it cannot accommodate all library needs.
4. **Malleable structure that can accommodate changes in technology and other future trends** - The building will need to be as malleable as possible to support its continued viability with changes over the next 25 years and beyond. Future reconceptualization of space should be possible as information technology, communication media, library materials, scholarship, and learning change.
5. **Public areas with significant natural light and views of the outside** - While collections need to be protected from harmful light, public and staff areas should have generous natural light, and it should be possible for users to have views of the outside to allow them to connect their research and learning with the outside world.

6. Optimal environmental conditions - To ensure enduring future access and usability of the collections, the building needs to provide an environment that protects library materials from all types of threats to their survival.

7. Quality workspace for all Library Personnel including offices for all Library faculty - Sufficient, flexible, and attractive space is needed for faculty, staff, and student workers that enhances the Library's role as a great place to work.

8. Layout and interior design that facilitates access, including quality signage - To render the large amount of space needed for the Main Library accessible and to facilitate user navigation of its specialist spaces, thoughtful layout, design clues, and clear signage is needed by both novice and experienced library users.

9. A central information center at the building's main entrance - So that the Library can fulfill its role of unlocking the world of knowledge and so that all can take advantage of the library's vast resources, a central reception and information center should greet visitors on entering the building.

II. SPACES THAT FACILITATE PROACTIVE SERVICE

1. Optimal conditions and space for on-site research - The great collections and services of the University Library are only valuable for users to the extent that they can actually make use of them. Careful attention to the design and provision of library spaces to ensure a high quality research experience should be of the highest concern.

2. Integrated research environment for users - Users should be provided with versatile workstations including foreign language capabilities and productivity software. The workstations should allow the full-range of information based activities – from search and discovery to analysis and new knowledge production.

3. Integration of reader space - A large quantity of comfortable study spaces and high quality furnishings should be interspersed throughout public areas and the bookstacks in order to maximize reader space.

4. Instructional space - Teaching and learning spaces are the hallmark of an active learning environment and should be located in proximity to library collections and services. Such spaces are needed for information literacy instruction, user education, and library staff training and should be multi-purpose so that they are available to users when not needed for formal instruction sessions (their primary purpose) and adaptable to accommodate unforeseen future employments of technology.

5. Exhibit facilities throughout the library - Exhibit spaces should be available to showcase collections and services. They should be appropriate to the materials to be displayed, modular to accommodate different types of displays, and of varying scale and size.

6. Duplicating facilities for all formats - There should be on-site facilities for making user copies of all information formats held in the collection, e.g., video and audio copying, oversize print materials, and digital objects.

7. Individual study spaces - Individual study carrels and tables should be provided. Study areas should include quiet areas as well as noisier food and beverage zones.

8. Collaborative/group study spaces - Group meeting space is critical. Users need small tables and spaces where they can meet to discuss projects and assignments. These spaces should offer network access.

9. Informal dialogue and conversation spaces – Places that facilitate open discussion and interactions among users as well as general socialization will provide a welcoming environment. Such a space should offer a coffee shop environment and services.

10. Event spaces – The Library needs spaces for receptions, lectures, and other public events, including small seminar and auditorium environments. Ideally these facilities would be tied to a special collections building or wing and have public parking.

11. Collaborative space for shared services with other campus units – In order to better integrate the Library and other campus service units, there is a need for collaborative service spaces, e.g., CITES, Graphic Services, and the Writing Center.

III. ACCESS TO COLLECTIONS

1. Integration of tangibles with intangibles - A new structure should present the user with intellectual access (bibliographic, directional, and physical) to all formats of our collection, whether print, manuscript, microtext, artifact, or electronic, in as integrated a fashion as possible within present and future schemes of bibliographic control.

2. State of the art microtext facilities - A single location will provide viewing and printing equipment for all standard formats of microtext. For obsolete formats (e.g., microcards), reading facilities will be provided, but duplication will have to be referred to external facilities. Lighting, seating, equipment and storage will all be at the highest level for preserving and servicing microtext materials.

IV. UNITS AND THEIR LOCATIONS

1. Centralizing and streamlining service points by clustering departmental libraries and area studies units - Clusters of libraries and units, in a sort of confluence of arcades, would make the pursuit of interdisciplinary studies more convenient, they would reduce duplication of some print resources, and they would reduce service points. A Social Sciences “cluster,” for example, would feature libraries in a contiguous formation so that users could move freely from one unit into another. Each autonomous library would feature a core circulating print collection, a study area with workstations, a reference collection, exhibit facilities, and offices for librarians and staff.

A single general information and circulation desk would serve all of the libraries in a particular cluster. Print reserves would also be centralized within the cluster.

2. Integrated technical services space - Easily reconfigurable space to allow for staff and workflow changes. Workspace for our users (i.e., other library faculty coming to look at gifts or approvals, etc.). Well marked shelving for finding unprocessed materials. Offices for faculty and other professional staff

3. An undergraduate facility to complement services provided to undergraduates throughout the Library - A space or facility that is attractive to undergraduates for study, collaboration and information retrieval will be provided within the Library building. Service to undergraduates will be integrated into all operations of the library in addition to the designated space.

4. Provision of space for the management and use of non-book cultural artifacts - The building needs to provide space for the management and use of non-book cultural artifacts. Such a space must have appropriate environmental conditions to accommodate these materials, as most are far more fragile than books. We currently have many special collections which have great physical display possibilities that we could use to engage our students, faculty, and visitors. We will also need to be able to collect and manage materials of research and instructional value that are broader than the conventional books, serials, and electronic resources.

5. Provision of space in a separate facility that can accommodate orderly storage of 40% of the overall collection - A facility (adjacent or off-site) that can accommodate 40 % of the overall library collection will be part of the master plan. This facility will provide optimum conditions for housing and preserving lower use items in the collection as well as easy retrieval of materials.

6. Special collections facility - A Special Collections facility/wing is absolutely critical to the Library. This facility would present an infrastructure to highlight the unique nature of some of the Library's resources and offer optimal storage area for these materials. It would also provide easily accessible space for public events such as receptions for the development functions or hosting guest lectures and presentations. The facility could be integrated in the Main building or operated in a separate building.