

V The Plan: Architecture and Campus Planning

Campus Identity: Creating a Distinctive Sense of Place

In General Palmer's time, a society's achievements were recorded in both building and in landscape, proof that a hostile natural environment had been overcome. Today, Colorado College has the opportunity to continue in the focused tradition of enlightenment first laid out by Palmer. The qualities of place include an urban scale that contrasts with the virtual scalelessness of the prairie landscape, the brilliant light of the Southwest prairie skies, a rich palette of indigenous materials, and the careful nurturing required for vegetation to exist in the Colorado Springs climate. These salient features can be as powerful in the next century as they have been during the last one hundred years.

Architectural Language and Campus Identity

The quality of a community's built form can be compromised over time by lapses in judgment. However, clarity of vision in the pursuit of campus identity does not necessarily imply dogmatic prescriptions. "Style" often surfaces in the discussion of campus identity, and superficial restrictions should not be imposed, especially rules that resort to mimicry. The College's campus retains several majestic and proud architectural examples, both historic and modern, that will serve as inspiration for future building. Palmer Hall and Cutler Hall have repeatedly been referred to as the strongest architectural precedents on campus; however, the original Tutt Library by Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill is also an example of a high point of another architectural era. We believe that the Master Plan should not attempt to outline an exercise in historicism, but rather, must focus on those architectural qualities that evoke timeless survival.

Open Space

Just as recommendations related to future architectural language on campus call for restraint and frugality, so, too, must the landscape of open spaces be reduced to their essence. An understanding of interrelated occupations of campus landscapes has created the organization of a rich hierarchy of open spaces. This organization has been driven by loosely programmed relationships of outdoor use and their adjacencies. Variety in levels of intimacy, formality, symbolism, orientations, views, and relationships to building facades have all proven to be factors in the development of the Plan.

Material Palette

This Plan proposes a limited palette of well-selected materials for the campus. Design integrity, consistency, and continuity will occur only with this kind of clarity of vision. Deep red crushed stone paths will demarcate routes throughout the campus lawns. Where concrete is used for paving, we propose a carefully considered pigmented material, which complements the natural colors of the paths and the surrounding rocky landscapes. The organization and design of the proposed circulation system attempts to construct a blurring of boundaries between use—pedestrians, bicycles and occasional service vehicles will share a common system—with the exception of designated bike paths that link up with the Pikes Peak area trail system. Path widths have been designed to register frequency and type of use. A reduced palette of high-quality local materials is



View across the Main Quadrangle from Tejon Street to Palmer Hall (photo c. 1950).



View across the Main Quadrangle looking west (photo c. 1905).



Before the Taylor addition to Bemis Hall (1956), there was an open view between Ticknor Hall and Bemis to Cutler Hall (photo c. 1945).



Cutler Hall was built to house classrooms, a library, an auditorium/chapel and administrative offices in 1880. Peabody and Stearns, Boston, architects (photo c. 1880).

proposed for the architecture, incorporating construction methods that evoke a contextual understanding of craft.

Proportions

The campus retains a clear sense of scale in the relation between building mass and the horizontal expanses of landscape. The three- and four-story facades of buildings on the Main Quadrangle, for example, impart a sense of implied volume to the open spaces they profile. The continuity of the proposed allées of ever-changing deciduous tree canopies and more resistant and permanent evergreen tree canopies serve as another spacemaking device. Shove Chapel, the tallest structure on campus, will continue to be a powerful, symbolic form.

Scale

The magnitude and physical presence of Palmer and Armstrong Halls are associated with commensurably grand open spaces at the heart of campus. The more intimate designs of the Academic Village and the East Campus, adjacent to the College's residentially scaled neighbors to the north and the east, provide a scale that is sensitive to adjacent neighborhoods and to the more intimate qualities of residential life.

Massing

The Plan for Colorado College delineates an inherently two-dimensional plan associated with building placement and programming. Building and landscape mass on campus, inherently three-dimensional, must also be carefully planned. The implied volume of buildings will be a function of the registered footprints of the Plan and their two-, three- and four-story development corresponding to existing building fabric already found on campus.

Architecture at Colorado College

In the course of this planning study, the professional team and the Master Plan Committee have reviewed and analyzed distinctive architecture on the Colorado College campus that contributes most positively to the architectural and aesthetic identity of the College. Buildings such as Palmer Hall, Cutler Hall, and Shove Chapel are obvious high points architecturally. They are extremely successful with respect to the aesthetics they embrace and the functions they house. In contrast, several buildings built during the mid-1950's and later are remarkable in their indifference toward aesthetics and use.

Palmer Hall and Cutler Hall are examples of well-considered collegiate architecture and are excellent precedents for future architecture at the College. These buildings are sensitive to the campus plan, the site, views, and the surrounding city. Sensitivity can also be found in the material palette, proportions, scale, massing, and craft of the buildings. The success of these buildings contributes significantly to the symbolic qualities of the campus atmosphere and helps to aesthetically establish associations with venerable traditions of higher education, both in the United States and Europe.

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Palmer Hall

Palmer Hall is a massive stone building that recalls the natural outcroppings of the Colorado landscape, linking the architecture conceptually to the region and reinforcing a sense of place. The building is wonderfully scaled, as it simultaneously addresses the city, the Main Quadrangle, and the campus landscape. Palmer Hall terminates the primary Tejon Street axis and is a landmark, locating the College visually from the downtown and from the North End. In this way, Palmer is a civic monument, formally linking City and College. Palmer Hall is appropriately scaled as an individual, discrete object, defining the primary open space of the Main Quadrangle, and reorienting the south-north approach along Tejon Street to the west view of Pikes Peak.

The mass of Palmer Hall is sculpted in a way that literally recalls the massing of mountains, and the tripartite division of the building again responds to the civic and monumental duties of Palmer along the Tejon Street axis, creating pleasing silhouettes at dawn and dusk. The overall massing of the building is complex, with the curvilinear form of the projecting classrooms to either side of the entry enlivening the facade and creating an active, sculptural chiaroscuro along the edge of the Quadrangle. This articulate display of light and shadow is continued in the details of the building. The stone finish is rusticated and textured, and the portals in the form of windows and the large entry loggia create a dynamic dialogue between light and darkness, responding to and enhancing the experience of the intense atmosphere of the Colorado Springs light.

The rhythmic punctuation of doors and windows adds to the visual interest of the buildings and is well-proportioned in relation to overall mass, helping to define a well-scaled building. The windows, with respect to their sizes, detailing, and ability to be opened, help to humanize the building, as does the gracious entry sequence and interior stair. The building celebrates the functions it houses. The portal of the building addresses the Quadrangle appropriately and, like the portals of Cutler and Shove, helps to define the scale and pedestrian use of the Quadrangle.

Similar observations can be made of Shove Chapel, Cutler Hall, Packard Hall, Spencer Center, Bemis Hall, and several of the distinguished residential structures on campus.

Armstrong Hall

Armstrong Hall does little to enhance the aesthetic environment of the college. While the location of the building is appropriate to its program, its massing is overwhelming. The severe brick exterior walls of the building and narrow slit windows tend to emphasize its scaleless qualities. They do not acknowledge the Quadrangle, the interior spaces of the building, or the views to the west. The interior organization is dismal and limited, and presents a series of awkward spaces in which faculty members almost unanimously hate to teach. Future campus architecture at Colorado College should be informed by the missed opportunities of Armstrong Hall. Future buildings should contain interior spaces that are related to natural lighting and exterior views, and must



Palmer Hall was built across the proposed route of the Tejon Street trolley. It was originally the College's science and administration building. Andrews, Jacques and Rantoul, Boston, architects. Dedication day, February 23, 1904.

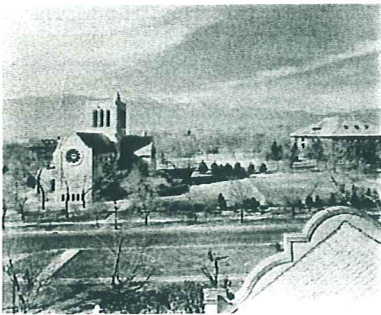
be designed in response to the programs they serve. They should have a massing proportional to adjacent open spaces and neighboring buildings, a sensitivity to issues of scale, and they should display a sense of craft in their construction.

Design Principles and Guidelines for Future Campus Architecture

The aesthetic identity of the campus will be well-served by future architecture that masterfully addresses issues of siting, massing, scale, proportion, materials, and craft, all within the context of the fine architecture already in place at Colorado College.

A Framework for Siting and Massing

The Master Plan proposes future building sites that designate the location and footprint size of future structures. The locations and proposed massing at each site respond to the historic planning principles of the original quadrangle, where open landscape spaces were loosely formed by individual, rectangular object-like buildings. For the Plan to succeed, it is imperative that the designated open spaces, such as the Main Quadrangle and Palmer North Quadrangle, remain open in perpetuity. It is also imperative that the buildings sited at the perimeter of these spaces be individual objects, allowing space to flow from one landscape space into the next. This is a basic tenet of the American campus plan. Under the Master Plan, several new buildings have been proposed as well as several building sites to be held in reserve.



**View of the Main Quadrangle
from Lennox House
(photo c. 1931).**

Opportunities for “Green” Architecture

The impact on the environment should be carefully considered for each new project, and “green” architecture techniques should be employed at every opportunity. Future buildings should be sustainable with respect to construction materials and operation, and designers should consider the following techniques and principles:

- Energy efficient design, including super-insulated construction
- Passive solar design
- Non-toxic construction
- Recycled construction materials
- Indigenous, local materials
- Non-rainforest, sustainable materials
- Healthful interior environmental design
- Durable, permanent materials with infrequent maintenance demands
- Energy consumption management systems
- Grey water systems

Future buildings at the campus should be didactic with respect to their low impact on the environment. The techniques employed should be easily understood. The buildings should also respond to recycling needs, and should incorporate a system for trash recycling in their design. The buildings should demonstrate the environmental and civic outlook of the College.

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Historic Preservation

The Plan recommends the preservation of all historically significant structures, as identified in the "Historic Preservation Project" by Manning Architects, John Prosser Associates, and Winter & Company. In some cases the preservation of these resources is achieved through the relocation of structures, creating residential zones on the campus of high-quality, historically and architecturally significant houses.