Experience + evolution: Exploring nature as a constant in an evolving culture and building type

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Experience + Evolution:
Exploring Nature as a Constant in an Evolving Culture and Building Type

by

Robin Plotkowski

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Architecture
School of Architecture and Community Design
College of The Arts
University of South Florida

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis project to Pablo and my parents, Mary and Robert. Without your offerings of unconditional love and support throughout the course of my education, this thesis would not have happened. A debt of gratitude is owed each of you. Thank you.
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“SACD ...
Your commitment to the improvement and growth of the school is truly admirable…”
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ABSTRACT

Throughout time, our natural environment has been one of the only constants in our evolution. While cultures change and evolve, nature’s beauty and positive effects on humans have always been present. Unfortunately, our built environment has generated much attention for its profound negative impact on our natural environment. Buildings in the United States consume a third of our total energy use, raw material use, and waste output, not to mention the negative effects they can have on our well-being, economy, health and productivity. In an effort to protect it, our built environment must become more responsible to our natural environment and the building users.

A great stride has been made lately with the emergence of organizations like LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) and the US Green Building Council. These organizations have pinpointed the benefits that result from building green. Still, sustainable design has become complicated and is missing the awareness and priority of the qualitative experiences one receives when their built environment and natural environment coexist.

With this thesis, I explored an evolving building type, the library, as a symbol of our evolving culture and its relationship to nature; studied the phenomenological relationship between humans and their natural environment; defined basic design principles for sustainable design; analyzed successful and unsuccessful examples of libraries and sustainable architecture; studied the process of pro-

“... study of the phenomenological relationship between humans and their natural environment.”
gramming a building efficiently; and explored creating architectural and natural environmental experiences.

This thesis proposed a design of a new academic library in Sarasota, Florida. It is located on the campus of New College of Florida on the Sarasota Bay, servicing New College of Florida, University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee, and the general public. This project’s goal was to give both library users and the public the opportunity to have memorable, sensory experiences of architecture and nature in their everyday life and buildings they inhabit. This constant reminder of the beauty of nature will place a desire in the public to protect and preserve it. While nature is defined as the ‘constant’, it will only be a constant throughout time if we take care of it now.
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This thesis is centered on two drivers, or foci; the theory of sensible sustainable design, and the library as an evolving building type. This thesis will focus on each of these topics and how they come together to inform each other to reinforce the main concept, the harmonizing merger between our natural environment and our built environment. I believe it is pertinent to introduce each of these topics in order to understand how they can start evolving together as one project.

Focus 1: Sustainable Design

Sustainable design is a term that is very difficult to capture. It is very broad and has several different meanings to several different people. I will start by defining sustainable design and its benefits in a broad scope. Then, I will define sustainable design in the terms of this project and examine the benefits that directly relate to the project.

General Definition and Benefits

Landscape architect, Margie Ruddick has this thought to offer about the definition of sustainability, “No one really knows what it is. It is something that people recognize, but it’s still not clear. People have ideas about its very basic principles: it is about minimizing impact and thinking about systems, about integrating environmental health with social and economic sustainability.”

“Sustainable design is the art of designing physical objects and the built environment to comply with the principles of economic, social, and ecological sustainability.”
Because the online encyclopedia, Wikipedia, is an open forum for all people to discuss the meanings of terms, Wikipedia offers a great start at grasping the concept of sustainable design. “Sustainable design is the art of designing physical objects and the built environment to comply with the principles of economic, social, and ecological sustainability. It ranges from the microcosm of designing small objects for everyday use, through the macrocosm of designing buildings, cities, and the earth’s physical surface. It is a growing trend within the fields of architecture, landscape architecture, urban design, urban planning, engineering, graphic design, industrial design, interior design and fashion design. The needed aim of sustainable design is to produce places, products and services in a way that reduces use of non-renewable resources, minimizes environmental impact, and relates people with the natural environment. Sustainable design is often viewed as a necessary tool for achieving sustainability. It is related to the more heavy-industry-focused fields of industrial ecology and green chemistry, sharing tools such as life cycle assessment and life cycle energy analysis to judge the environmental impact or “greenness” of various design choices…Proponents of sustainable design generally believe the crisis of environmental degradation may be resolved by using innovative design and industrial practices which reduce the environmental impacts associated with goods and services. Green design is considered a means of doing that while maintaining quality of life by using clever design to substitute less harmful products and processes for conventional ones”, see Figure 1.0 (Wikipedia Encyclopedia 2008).

Figure 1.0
Sustainable Design Principles
The benefits of a sustainable design philosophy are broad and plenty and positively effect the environment, economy, health of the population and the community, see figure 1.1. Environmental benefits include the enhancement and protection of ecosystems and biodiversity, improvement of air and water quality, reduction of solid waste and the conservation of natural resources. These benefits alone are enough to make one consider using a sustainable design approach, but there’s more. Economic benefits can include reduction of operating costs, enhancement of asset values and profits, improvement of employee productivity and satisfaction and the optimization of life-cycle economic performance. Health and community benefits include improvement of air, thermal and acoustic environments, enhancement of occupant comfort and health, decrease of strain on local infrastructure and a contribution to overall quality of life. Several other benefits are available as well. Some are harder to identify or quantify, such as social benefits, but will be investigated further along in the study.

**Definition, Goals and Benefits Related to Project**

For this thesis project, sustainable design will be defined as the idea of creating buildings and landscapes that join the highest positive regard for our quality of life with the least ecological consequences to our environment. I believe that the theory of sustainability should be clearly articulated as a guiding principle for this project’s development, and not only be incorporated into the project from the earliest stage, but become a driving force for the project.
throughout its entirety. This will ensure that the project’s design needs and the site’s natural environment will join in a holistic approach to inform the completed design.

The aim of this project is to use basic, sensible design principles that support responsible, sustainable design. The intent is to prove that following good design principles from the earliest stage of a project through completion will aid in sustainable design’s efforts, while providing short and long term benefits to end users, the community, and the environmental context. Some examples of these basic, sustainable design principles to be integrated include:

- Site specific - Design should reflect and respond to the natural context
- Appropriate site selection
- Reducing direct site impact
- Lessen impact on micro climate
- Storm water reuse
- Positioning on site
- Responsible envelope design
- Conservative HVAC
- Use of passive cooling/natural ventilation where possible
- Day lighting
- Responsible material selection

“The aim of this project is to use basic, sensible design principles that support responsible, sustainable design.”
Focus 2: The Library as an Evolving Building Type

This section will examine the library, past, present and future. I will look at the history of the library as a building type. Then I will address what the present and future may hold for the building type as it evolves and reflects the changes in the social community, technology and sustainable building.

History of Building Type: The Library

Throughout history the library has been a public institution that symbolizes knowledge. I would like to focus on a few aspects of this building type that will be investigated further during this thesis; the library as a historical public resource for the masses, the library as a public gathering place, and what the future holds for the library as a building type.

The Encyclopedia Britannica gives the following definition of a library, it states, “A library is a collection of printed or written materials arranged or organized for the purpose for study and research or general reading or both. Many libraries also include collections of films, microfilms, phonographs, records, lantern slides and the like with the term written or printed material. Libraries may be roughly classified in two ways; by ownership or use e.g. national, municipal, country, University, research, school, industrial, club, private, etc. or by contents; general, special (including medical, legal, theological, scientific, engineering, etc.). General libraries frequently contain special collections. (Panda 1992)

“Perhaps no place in any community is so totally democratic as the town library. The only entrance requirement is interest.”
- Lady Bird Johnson
While the library has a long history and broad definition, the one thing that hasn’t changed throughout time is the fact that the library exists for the public’s use first and foremost. A notable librarian and mathematician, S.R. Ranganathan, made the following observation, “A library is a public institution or establishment charged with the care of a collection of books, duty of making them accessible to those, who require them, and function of persuading every person within its jurisdiction to accept and continuously use its service.” (Panda 1992) These three functions that have been realized are all centered on the public, the user. For the duration of this thesis, it is important that I do not lose focus that the satisfaction of the user/public is a primary driver for how the library functions.

**Evolution of Building Type: The Library**

I will examine some individual directions that the library is evolving in, then explore how these can merge together to bring a rich culture to this building type.

- **Social Evolution** – Particularly in an academic campus setting, the library has increasingly become a public gathering space, fig. 1.2. The academic library has evolved to become more than a warehouse of books or quiet zone. It has become more like a student union/resource center hybrid. In successful cases, the academic library is the center of the campus, both symbolically and physically. This thesis will incorporate this strategy to the fullest extent on many different levels.
• **Technological Evolution** — With the advancement of technology, the library’s evolution has been in question. What does the library’s future hold; will the library exist in the future? Some believe the library will become obsolete, with the access to the internet and databases putting them out of existence. However, most believe that this is not the case. Instead, the advancement of technology will only add to the existing rich culture of the library. This is what many call a “blended library”, see figure 1.3. This means that the library will provide the traditional resources, such as, books, journals, special documents, etc. as well as digital resources, such as the internet, e-books, databases, etc. The library’s program is evolving to include more of these functions to keep up with the user’s needs. This new type of library building type is a perfect example to prove that the library is not becoming obsolete, but evolving into a new, evolved building type. It will most likely continue to evolve as technology evolves, but I believe that it will never become extinct.

• **Design Evolution** — One of the goals for this thesis is that the design of the library as a building type will evolve environmentally as much as it will evolve socially and technologically. This new type of library will demand more environmentally responsible design to reflect the demands and views of the users. The students and faculty of New College of Florida advertise themselves as innovative, inspired, and involved; these are qualities of responsible thinkers who will lead a new generation that will require respect for their environment. A unique quality about this type of evolution is
that it requires designers to look at the past as much as they will look toward the future. Good sustainable design is much simpler than attaching new technology to any building. We should look to the past, when the built environment was designed and built to respond to the surrounding environment and climate. This strategy will be examined further in this study.

**Connection between Sustainability and the Library**

Because this thesis has two primary drivers, sustainable design and the library as an evolving building type, I would like to explore the connection between the two and how they can start to inform each other and reinforce the main concept.

The library has been throughout history, a high energy consumer. Due to the need for plentiful lighting, air condition and protection of books, and the shear volume of the building, libraries can consume a high amount of energy. I will explore ways to satisfy the libraries functional needs in a more energy efficient manner. This will be explored further later in the project.

Following good sustainable design principles will allow the building to contain several opportunities for various levels of indoor/outdoor gathering spaces. These gathering spaces will enrich the campus culture.
Design Implications

Because this design will be intended to serve the universities needs for years and years to come, looking toward the future is vital for the design to be flexible to evolve. Some needs that a library of the future may require are clear, while others are not. I will investigate and predict what future needs this library may have. Many questions arise about what a library should or should not include. I will ask general questions about several topics to be investigated:

• **High Technology** - In an expanding digital world, is there a place for high technology in our libraries? Will this take anything away from the traditional functions of a library? To be as flexible as possible, should the library be equipped with proper equipment to have the potential to grow technologically? How can traditional aspects of a library be merged with new technological elements to create a holistic experience for users? See figure 1.4.

• **Globalization** – Technological advancements have allowed humans to share intellectual thoughts across the globe. Our rapidly expanding ability to share information and ideas is leading to what can be called the globalization of the university (Atkinson 2001). “By ‘globalization’ I mean the forces that are transforming the university from an institution with a monopoly on knowledge to one among many different types of organizations serving as information providers, and from an institution that has always been circumscribed by time and geography to one without boundaries.” (Atkinson 2001)
This idea brings up questions about how the library will react to globalization. How can the library use information and communication technologies to their fullest ability, and be flexible enough to grow for the future? What role will streaming and interactive video have in the library to forge global networks for teaching and research?

- **Museum Qualities** – Historically libraries and museum have been closely related. Should an academic library also serve the purpose of holding exhibitions? Should the library hold the campus’ historical artifacts and documents? Will the special collection of the library be on display for the public to view? Will these museum qualities add a cultural richness to the library?

These and other issues will be kept in mind throughout the design of the project. They are important ideas about how this building type will evolve and continue to evolve. Instead of taking parts of the library’s program away, should these other functions be added?

“...how will the library react to globalization? ...can the library use information and communication technologies to their fullest ability and be flexible enough to grow for the future?”
CHAPTER TWO: CASE STUDIES

Case studies are pertinent to the exploration of the building type of Library and the issues that surround it. The studies will allow me to fully understand the library as a building type.

Analysis Criteria

A list of criteria has been established to be analyzed using seven different library projects. These criteria, the parti, the building entry, the public vs. private spaces, user circulation, and reading areas, will be diagrammed and analyzed to successfully compare the projects to one another in order to gain a complete understanding of the functional requirements of a library. The following projects were part of the case study:

a) Arabian Public Library | Scottsdale, Arizona
   Richard + Bauer
b) Cesar Chavez Library | Laveen, Arizona | Line and Space
c) Delft University Library | Netherlands | Mecanoo
d) Desert Broom Library | Cave Creek, Arizona
   Richard + Bauer
e) Library Media Center | Glendale, Arizona | Richard + Bauer
f) Quincie Douglas Library | Tucson, Arizona
   Richard + Bauer
g) Phoenix Central Library | Phoenix, Arizona | Will Bruder
The Parti

I started the case studies by diagramming the organizational parti of each project, see figure 2.0. This was a great exercise to identify if a clear organization existed in each project. I clearly realized the value of a clear organizational element to be present in the library, specifically in plan. While I expected there to be a clear organization of spaces in the projects, I was surprised at how the partis clearly identified the circulation of the projects. This stressed a high priority on both the flow of well organized spaces and the flow of circulation of users and library material.

Figure 2.0
Organizational Parti Diagrams
The Entry

After the partis, the entrances of each project were diagrammed graphically, see figure 2.1. Most were clearly defined, I am assuming because the entrance is one of the most crucial elements of the library. To many people, libraries can be intimidating structures. Therefore, the entrance should be clearly identifiable and inviting. Many of the projects I looked at used different strategies to create an inviting entrance to the library. Some used overhangs to invite and protect the users. Others brought down the scale of the entrance to not allow their very large buildings to become intimidating. Some of the projects use a funneling strategy to gather users into the building. This study has shown that a high priority should be placed on the building’s entrance. Much attention should be placed on bringing the scale of the project down to the level of the user, be inviting, and clearly represented.
Public Spaces vs. Private Spaces

Public spaces vs. the private spaces of the libraries was analyzed next, see figure 2.2. There needs to be a clear distinction between which spaces are for the general public and which are for staff only, however, the staff frequently work closely with the users, particularly for references. From the diagrams, it is clear that several different strategies have been used. Some projects, c, e and g of fig. 2.2, place private spaces along the majority of the perimeter of the building. This allows the spaces to keep their privacy while still in close proximity to the users for assisting them. A problem that I can see possibly emerging with this strategy is that the private spaces are consuming the majority of the daylight. This is a problem because most private spaces are closed off by walls that don’t allow the daylight to extend pass their offices, increasing the load on electricity. Also, the users won’t be able to benefit from enjoying their natural environment that exists beyond the walls of the building. Other projects, see d and f of fig. 2.2, place private spaces near the middle of the public spaces. This creates a very open relationship between staff and users. One drawback could be lack of privacy. However other strategies could be used to increase privacy, such as screen walls, etc. All are great examples of how to handle this perplexing issue.
User Circulation

The next criteria that were analyzed across the case study projects were user circulation. I looked at the ease of which a user would circulate through the library. The diagrams in figure 2.3 show a circulation path of a user if they were to enter the building, pick a book off of a shelf and take it to a reading area. I found it interesting that when I compared these diagrams to their matching organizational parti diagrams that there was a connection between the two. Many of the user circulation diagrams clearly followed the parti of the building. This information stresses, even more, the importance of well defined parti. The parti and circulation flow should inform each other for a clear journey throughout the library.

The overall idea about this study is that the user should have ease in the journey to grab a book and read it. They should not have to travel far and the journey should be clearly defined.
Reading Areas

I have also analyzed the location and scales of reading areas within each project, see figure 2.4. One of the most important parts of library program is the main reading room. Many times this reading room is a central focus for the design of the entire building.

I think these diagrams also indicate the importance of having various scales of reading areas. Often a user browses books before selecting ones to read. There should be reading space within book stacks as well as separate from book stacks. The reading spaces within the book stacks should probably be at a more intimate scale.

The overall idea about this study is that the user should have ease in the journey to grab a book and read it. They should not have to travel far and the journey should be clearly defined.
Field Study: Arizona

Field studies serve a vital role when researching a particular building type or method. The projects I studied led me to take a field study trip to the Phoenix, Arizona area. While there, I paid a visit to the following projects:

- Phoenix Central Library
- Desert Broom Library
- Mesquite Public Library
- Arabian Public Library

During these visits, my focus was centered on areas of the program that could be classified as public outdoor or indoor/outdoor space. I studied these spaces for their positive characteristics as well as their flaws.

Figure 2.5 includes images from Will Bruder’s Phoenix Public Library in downtown Phoenix. These images represent an exterior area adjacent to the children’s collection and reading areas. While the space looked enjoyable and inviting, however, it was not accessible. I learned later that the space had previously been open to the library patrons, however it currently is not. It is not known to me the reason the space had been closed off. I feel that while one can still see the space, it is a shame it cannot be inhabited. Because the space is a fine example of exterior library space, I decided to analyze it as if one could currently inhabit it. I enjoyed the colorful screen walls that filter the sunlight beautifully while also maintaining security and privacy. Trees in the landscape provide shade for patrons. Also, the majority of the ground is landscaped in grass,
which will help keep the space cool. The elevation of the ground varies to accommodate seating. The space is partially covered by a light colored canvas to protect patrons from the sun. The concrete flooring of the interior space continues several feet into the exterior space for a smooth transition and the illusion that the line between outdoor and indoor is blurred. Overall, it was a good example of visually experiencing the natural environment while inhabiting a built environment; however, had the space been able to be inhabited, it would have been a more dynamic example.

Figure 2.6 shows images from Phoenix Central Library as well. These images are of a public downtown park that can be viewed from a space inside the library adjacent to book stacks. Once again, the space can be viewed, but not accessed. Library patrons must exit the library and walk around the building to access the public park. While I appreciate the clear, unobstructed view of the park, attained by using perpendicular glass structure for the glazing, I feel the inability to immediately access the park is inhibiting. When one has a view of an exterior space, the anticipation of inhabiting that space grants them the feeling of already being there. While I would prefer to have easier access to the park from the library, it is understood that this decision was avoided due to security issues. This field study has allowed me to understand the challenges of library security I will face in the design of my project.
Richard + Bauer’s Desert Broom Library in Cave Creek, Arizona provided another example of an exterior library space. Figure 2.6 exhibits images of an outdoor patio the architects incorporated into the program. The space is completely covered by a large overhanging roof, which also acts as an inviting entrance, see Figure 2.7 for plan. Patrons are treated to a preview of the outdoor reading area as they approach and enter the building. Once inside, the exterior space is in constant view along the west side of the building as a reminder of its presence.

The space is very enjoyable as it is fully shaded, protected from southern sun exposure, partially landscaped and visually accessible to the natural desert surroundings. The untreated steel rebar screen provides a practically unobstructed view while also addressing security issues.

Though the space had plenty to offer, it was completely uninhabited during my visit; while the interior of the library was bustling with patrons of all ages. My initial thought was that the sign posted on the door to the patio that warned of ‘rattle snakes and other wildlife’ deterred patrons from entering the space. Another observation I made was that the interior of the library provided exceptional seating and reading areas of various sizes and levels of comfort. Was the exterior patio having to compete with lounge seating, built-in headphones and conditioned air? I personally preferred the patio, especially on a relatively cool desert morning. This particular visit taught me, among other things, that interior spaces need not take away from their exterior counterparts, but compliment them.
1. Lobby
2. Service desk
3. Staff
4. Teens
5. Lounge
6. Computer resources
7. Information desk
8. Computer training
9. Children
10. Meeting
11. Garden terrace

Figure 2.8
Field Study: Desert Broom Library Plan
A second library by Will Bruder, the Mesquite Public Library of Phoenix, was observed. Although the library is located directly north of the large Paradise Valley Shopping Mall, it is not evident once one enters the library. The environment surrounding the building is of a natural desert landscape. From the north book stacks a glazed wall exposes a narrow landscaped space before a retaining wall (see figure 2.8). While the space is not to be inhabited by users, it successfully serves its purpose of allowing light to enter the interior space and giving users a well deserved desert view.

Adjacent to an interior reading area on the west end of the building is a glazed view of a second exterior space (see figure 2.8). Users can enjoy this space from both inside and outside. After leaving the air conditioned space, users will find a second reading patio surrounded by desert landscape. Although the space appears to be enjoyable, a very shallow overhanging roof does little to shade readers from early afternoon to sunset. The space is lined with wire screens. The screens have been heavily landscaped to a point where they are barely apparent. This gives users the sense that they are not contained while still providing efficient security. Like the Desert Broom Library, this patio was not being taken advantage of, even on a busy Sunday afternoon. The lack of protection from the sun led me to believe this was the reason the space was not populated. However that did not stop patrons from enjoying the space from the directly adjacent interior reading area. This study taught me how valuable interior space can be when it is directly affected by an exterior space or view.
CHAPTER THREE: PROGRAM

When beginning the programming process, I set up a list of values that must be satisfied in the program. They are: a library that is designed using sustainable techniques, principals and materials, a library that is designed using passive cooling strategies, a library that allows users to experience their natural environment while performing library functions and a library that has rich architectural elements.

The values of the clients, USF Sarasota-Manatee and New College of Florida, must also be considered. The values of the clients are a library that serves the academic community, develops, organizes and maintains collections, and administers resources effectively. In addition to their core values, the client also wants to achieve a library that is the heart and soul of the campus, is adequate to house and service the collections, has the space and environment to allow both users and staff to work productively, plans for the future role of the library, maintains the collections responsibly using proven preservation techniques and has an electronic linkage to other libraries.

“...a library that allows users to experience their natural environment while performing library functions...”
Objectives: Library and Sustainability

The following are objectives that I have identified for the design of the library. This list will be a framework for the concept and design of the project. The project must:

- Posses exterior spaces, interior spaces as well as spaces in between exterior and interior
- Be an educator for all who enter or view it
- Architectural and environmental experiences
- Spatial definition
- Passive sustainable design
- Efficient design of all systems
- Architectural and environmental experiences
- Address energy consumption issues of the building type
- Integrate sustainable materials
- Posses Clarity and flow
- Accessible to students, staff and public

Space Utilization

Figure 3.0 identifies the space allotment for the library. It quantifies the square footage allowed for each space in the library’s program. One of the goals for the space utilization will be to examine if any spaces can be overlapped to make the most efficient use of the space and allow for spaces and functions to flow from one to another.
### Introduction

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<td>Circulation Work Area</td>
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<td>Interlibrary Loan Desk</td>
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<tr>
<td>computer stations</td>
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<td>Special Use Area</td>
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<tr>
<td>Storage Rm</td>
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<tr>
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### Special User Facilities

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<td>Assoc. Director Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work/Supply Room</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Receiving/Shipping</td>
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<td>Electrical Closet</td>
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### Gross Total

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Figure 3.0

Space Utilization Chart
CHAPTER FOUR: SITE SELECTION PROCESS

For the selection of the site, three possible sites on the campuses of University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee and New College of Florida will be selected. After analysis of the three sites, one site will be chosen as the final site selected for the project.

**Why USF Sarasota-Manatee/New College of Florida?**

The decision to site this project on the campuses of the University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee and New College of Florida was made simultaneously when defining the premise of the thesis. The premise of this thesis lead me to choose these campuses in Sarasota, Florida (see figure 4.0) as the site for this project for several reasons:

- It’s university/academic setting
- City of Sarasota’s reputation as an environmental leader
- The beautiful, natural environment that the campus is set in

The following explains these in further detail.

- **The Academic Setting** – Those involved in an academic community will most likely be those leading business, social and political decisions in the future. Therefore it is pertinent for this project to be a teaching example to students and faculty to invest in our environment. These two schools are known for their intellectual, innovative, inspired students and faculty. These individuals will have a wonderful opportunity to shape our future. By giving
them this project as a living example of good sustainable design and its benefits, I can help them make environmentally responsible decisions in the future.

• City of Sarasota – The City of Sarasota, Florida has become a leader of environmental management and a fine example of an emerging green city. By selecting the project to be sited here, the city will support its intentions. With this, recognition on a national level would possibly occur. There are hopes that the project’s reach will be beyond the city.

• Natural Context – The campuses, particularly New College of Florida, are home to a beautiful, natural environment on the coast of Sarasota Bay. What better place to teach the value of our environment than here.

Three Possible Sites

Three sites were selected on the campuses for the possibility of the project to be sited there. The three sites were graphically mapped and analytically described to select the most suitable site for the project. In order to ensure that the three sites are analyzed consistently, a set of analysis criteria has been selected. These criteria are centrality, context, access, space and environmental. The three sites are as followed:

• Site One – Approximately 2 acres, see figure 4.1
  o Centrality
    Centrally located on campus
Centrally located on the proposed Bay walk

- **Context**
  - Historic College Hall and Cook Hall
  - Sarasota Bay
  - Uplands Shoreline Area

- **Access**
  - Vehicular – College Drive
  - Pedestrian – Dort Promenade + Bay walk

- **Space**
  - Satisfies space requirement for project

- **Environmental**
  - Limited southern exposure
  - Access to bay breeze

- **Site Two** – Approximately 2.25 acres, see figure 4.2
  - **Centrality**
    - Central to the College Drive Campus
    - Central to Dort Promenade

  - **Context**
    - Historic College Hall and Cook Hall
    - Sarasota Bay
    - Uplands Shoreline Area

  - **Access**
    - Vehicular – College Drive
    - Pedestrian – Dort Promenade + Bay walk

  - **Space**
Satisfies space requirement for project
  o Environmental
    Northern exposure

- **Site Three** – Approximately 2.6 acres, see figure 4.3
  o Centrality
    Centrally located on the USF campus
    Located at north end of Bay walk
  o Context
    Nature preserve
    New USF Campus Building
  o Access
    Vehicular – Tamiami Trail
    Pedestrian – Bay walk
  o Space
    Satisfies space requirement for project
  o Environmental
    Access to bay breeze

**Final Site Selected**

Site one was selected as the final location for the project due to several reasons. First, the site is centrally located on both the campus and the proposed Bay walk that will connect the currently unorganized campus. Both pedestrian and vehicular traffic has easy access to the site. The environmental conditions of the site are suitable and pleasant for the program. Also, the proposed
site for the library will be a precedent for future development of the campus to define the open green space that surrounds Dort Promenade. I will propose that this green area be the central courtyard for the campus, with new construction to be built around it to define the space.
CHAPTER FIVE: SITE ANALYSIS

Now that the final location has been selected for the project, the site must be analyzed in further detail. The following text will be referring to figure 5.0, which is graphically explaining the analysis of the site.
Access

The red, dashed lines describe the access to the site, see figure 5.1. The boldest line is depicting the access one would take to access the site by vehicular means. The sight line the vehicular traffic will have may have a role in the design of the project. The second boldest line depicts the heaviest mode of pedestrian traffic along Dort Promenade. Other means of pedestrian access include a secondary path off of Dort Promenade and the Bay walk, with traffic coming from both the north and the south. The various modes of access to this site were one of the deciding factors for selecting the site.

Sun Exposure

The yellow, dashed line represents the path the sun will make across the site daily, see figure 5.1. The yellow, solid lines indicate that the site will receive much western sun exposure from mid-afternoon to evening. This exposure will be the heaviest for the site. This will have to be managed or reduced in the design.

View

The light blue shape is indicating the best view from the site, Sarasota Bay, see figure 5.1. The view will be a priority for the project. I have identified the sight lines of the contextual buildings’ views and wish to not interrupt those.
Breeze

The blue arrows are representing the direction of the breeze that moves across the site, figure 5.2. There is a steady breeze that comes from the west off of the Sarasota Bay. This information is crucial to provide passive cooling for occupants in outdoor or indoor/outdoor spaces.

Proximity

The selected site has close proximity to major local landmarks. Directly a quarter mile toward the east is highway, US 41, also known as Tamiami Trail. This is a major thoroughfare for Sarasota and Manatee. Also just to the east is the Sarasota Bradenton International Airport, the cities’ major airport. Just toward the south is the famous Ringling Museum of Art including the Ringling mansion Ca’ d’Zan. A little further to the south is the Ringling College of Art and Design. To the north is a preserved natural area. Beyond that is the University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee Campus. To the west, of course, is the beautiful Sarasota Bay. These proximities will put this project in the public’s eye and should be considered during the design process.

Challenges and Strategies

The combination of the project’s program and the site leads to some interesting challenges. It is important that I recognize and identify these challenges in order to develop strategies to improve them.
Scale – The program for the project calls for a rather large building when compared to the existing contextual buildings on the campus. It will be a challenge to reduce the scale of this project to fit in with the rest of the campus.

Historical Context – The site is situated in close proximity to the historical buildings of College Hall (see figure 5.3) and Cook Hall. This poses a challenge as how to create new, modern construction within such a historical context. Do I try to blend it in with the existing context or make it a stark contrast?

Environmental Context – The site is situated on a beautiful natural Florida landscape which includes several palm trees and a few oak trees. It will be a welcomed challenge to locate the built environment in a way that showcases and preserves the natural environment. The challenge will be to impact the natural environment in the least invasive manner. My goal for this challenge is to create a design in which the natural environment is the main focus. The built environment should only complement the natural environment and be a secondary focus.
Images

The following figures are images of the site and its context for visualization purposes. The images capture the site’s unique context.

Figure 5.4
Aerial Photos of Site
North, South, East, West
CHAPTER SIX: INITIAL DESIGN IDEOGRAMS

The intent of the following initial design ideograms is not to describe the main driving concept for the design, but to graphically describe the secondary ideas that are important to incorporate into the design. All of these ideograms will be integrated throughout all stages of the design and will reinforce the main design concept, which will be introduced in the next chapter.

**Mass vs. Light**

To suit the design program to the site and vice versa, this sketch, see figure 6.0, describes how important the orientation of the building is. I see the mass, both in program and materiality, to the south and the light, again in program and materiality, to the north.

**Elevated Exterior Spaces**

One of the main objectives of the design program is to allow opportunities for users to enjoy the outside environment while performing regular functions of the library. When thinking about outdoor spaces within the library, several challenges come to mind. How to protect the books from outdoor conditions? How to secure the books to the premises? How to cool the occupants? The next ideogram, see figure 6.1, attempts to provide outdoor spaces for users to enjoy while solving some of the challenges that arise with this condition. By providing elevated spaces that protrude...
out from the main volume, wind from the east-west axis can freely move under, above, and inside the outdoor spaces, naturally cooling the occupants. A roof over the space provides shade and protects from rain. Because the spaces are elevated off of the ground the books become more secure. Because the spaces are elevated off of the ground, users are unlikely to leave the premises with library material, leaving the materials secure. Because the spaces are integrated into the main volume, users are more likely to enjoy them.

**Building as a Frame**

This ideogram, figure 6.2, reflects the importance I place on respecting the existing conditions of the site, including the historical context and the natural environment. It describes the library being designed as an anti-building, a frame for the existing site rather than an eyesore. This sketch shows that the building will highlight important views as well as make as little impact as possible on the natural environment by elevating portions of the building off of the site. By limiting the building’s presence, respect will be paid to the existing historical buildings that are currently surrounding the site.

**Flow: Space and Circulation**

Proper circulation of users and material is a key to a well performing library. This is especially true of academic libraries, where students and faculty are frequently navigating from one re-
search media to another. The ideogram in figure 6.3 is graphically explaining the priority ‘flow’ has on the project; flow of circulation of users and material and flow of spaces. The flow of each of these will inform each other. This will allow users to move freely from one function of the library to another function. The spaces should also flow freely to reinforce the path of circulation for users. Another important layer of circulation is that the journey should highlight an element of the project that is of great hierarchy.

**Just Say No to Closed Containers**

The traditional volume for the library building type is a sealed box, or container. Traditional libraries have limited exposure to their surrounding environment. Users are kept inside oblivious to what is happening around them. This ideogram (see figure 6.4) is describing that the project be distanced from the traditional closed containers that have been associated with this building type. I believe that the strategy behind a sealed box or closed container is to just surrender to the fact that this building type is an energy hog and to seal the air conditioning inside. My strategy will be to open the volume up to introduce ways to minimize the building’s impact on energy consumption. This strategy will allow the outdoors in and the indoors out. This blurred distinction between what is inside and what is outside will allow the built environment to be more in touch with its contextual natural environment. The end result will be a more enjoyable space and place for end users as well as a building that is minimizing its impact on the environ-
ment.

**Conclusion of Initial Design Ideograms**

After studying the ideograms individually, I realized that each of them support one another in some way. My next step will be to prioritize these ideas as well as other drivers of the project to create a main design concept.
CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCEPTUAL DESIGN

Main Conceptual Drivers

Upon completing my initial design ideograms, I quickly began the conceptual design phase of the project. In addition to the initial design ideograms, there were several conceptual drivers that led me to the development of my conceptual design. Conceptually, I was interested in the following ideas (see figure 7.0):

- **Duality** - the duality between the past and present evolutions of the library building type; duality of mass vs. light; duality of south and north
- **Collecting** - the collecting of people to a gathering space; collecting of wind, breeze; collection of sunlight, enlightenment
- **Flow** - the flow of circulation; flow of wind, natural ventilation; flow of spaces
Initial Conceptual Model

The preceding conceptual drivers and the initial design ideograms led me to the construction of the conceptual model in figure 7.1. This model represents the idea of a duality which breaks the library’s program into two separate elements. It allows the building to be opened up allowing a central gathering space. A heavier mass is to the south, represented by the block of plywood. A lighter structure is to the north, represented by the piece of chipboard. The structure creates an implied frame which would frame the view of Sarasota Bay out toward the west. After completion of the model, both positive and negative characteristics were analyzed. While the model successfully possessed a couple of the initial ideograms, not all ideas were represented. I felt that the conceptual form lacked an overall flow as well as a dynamic, bold form. The successes and failures of this first attempt led me to develop a second conceptual design model (see figure 7.2).

Final Conceptual Model

The second and final conceptual model, shown in figure 7.2, represents the same ideas as the first model, but also incorporates the ideograms in further detail. The form first expresses a bold representation of a duality. This duality represents two main ideas, or variables:

First, the evolution of the library building type. The heavier mass, again represented by the plywood, is a symbol of the traditional program of a library; the book stacks and reading areas. The lighter structure, represented by the grey museum board, ex-
presses the advancements the library is taking toward technology and globalization; the computer labs, audio/visual, high-tech media lounges, cafe’, bookstore, etc. The academic library is evolving to become the hub of the campus. These program elements would be placed in the light structure to also represent this evolution.

Second, the duality expresses a balance of mass and light, south and north. The heavier mass is to the south to offer protection from the southern sun exposure. The lighter mass is to the north to accept northern light, or enlightenment.

These two main ideas I call the ‘variables’. The ‘constant’ is what is created when the two are brought together, the central courtyard. This central courtyard is intentionally meant to be the main focus of the design project. Though the library is evolving to include more functions and technological elements, the one thing that remains constant is the natural environment and the human desire to be a part of it. The two forms overlap each other to create an implied ring, to represent the never ending process of evolution. This creates an ever constant relation to the central courtyard from any space of the building. The courtyard is the constant, both symbolically and physically.

In this model, I also reinforced the concept of the building as a frame. Upon approaching the entrance of the building, users will see that the cantilevered structure frames the central courtyard as well as the view of the landscape beyond and the Sarasota Bay view. Upon entering the courtyard, the overhead space of the lighter structure also frames the landscape beyond and Sarasota Bay.
limits the building’s impact on the surrounding site and instead respects the existing site and historical context.

This conceptual model will be my jumping off point to schematic design. My goal for schematic design will be to elaborate and reinforce my initial concepts and ideograms.
CHAPTER EIGHT: SCHEMATIC DESIGN

I began the schematic design process with a schematic plan sketch, shown in figure 8.0. The sketch represents my goals for schematic design, which are, again, to further elaborate and reinforce my concepts.

While their forms are still relative to one another, I chose to represent the two forms in different colors to explain that there should still be a clear delineation between them in materiality, space planning, flexibility, etc. The only main constant between the two forms will be their relationship to the natural environment.

The sketch represents the courtyard to be naturally landscaped with very little hard scape. Also, that the courtyard will be used as a main access on the first floor to each side of the building. A large part of the courtyard will be shaded by the south mass for most of the day. The west end of the courtyard will be shaded by the elevated part of the light structure.

This sketch also started to resolve one of the challenges I identified earlier, scale. The south end of the project will be in close proximity to the historic College Hall. To help reduce the scale of the building, I sketched spaces of the south wing to extend outward College Hall. These extremities will be of a smaller scale to help bridge the scale gap between the two buildings.

Using the schematic plan sketch as a starting point, I created a schematic sketch model. This sketch model (see figure 8.1) clearly explores the design concepts laid out and begins an evolu-
tion process of the design. The delineation between the two main elements is becoming more distinct. The forms are becoming more dynamic. The elevated extremities from the south end of the building are clearly addressing the scale challenges I identified, as well as satisfying one of the design ideograms, elevated exterior spaces.

To address the challenges of the historical context and to further reinforce my concept, the materiality of the south, ‘mass’ wing would reflect that of College Hall. The facade of college hall is faced with a light etowah marble laid out in a running bond pattern. The height to width proportions of these ‘bricks’ are 1:3. Therefore the ‘bricks’ of the south wing will also be in a running bond pattern with the same proportion and be of a materiality with a similar light color, possibly stained concrete or stone facing.

At this stage of the design process I am dealing out the library’s program in more detail. For example, the spaces that jut out of the south side of the building will be reading areas of various scales that can be opened up to the outdoors. This will allow users to enjoy the cool sea breeze, the views to the west of the natural environment including Sarasota Bay, and views to the east of the existing campus and future development of the campus. Also, the elevated space on the north wing is the main computer lab/reading room. This will be a grand space to view and to inhabit. Panoramic views of both the campus and Sarasota Bay will be accessible from here.

While sustainable design principles are also beginning to evolve further at this point, it is important to point out that all design...
decisions are being put through a ‘sustainable/responsible design’ filter; that is, the design of this project in every aspect is relative to the main goals and foci identified for this thesis, whether stated as such or not. For example, the building has been situated on the site to have a solid mass south facing to protect from the southern sun exposure. Solid glazing is restricted to north facades. Other facades with glazing will receive louver treatment. The roof of the light structure will be a green roof which continues at an angle to reach the earth in what will become the campus central courtyard. This will give the appearance of the earth being cut away and lifted up to reveal a glass structure underneath. In the same way, the earth of the courtyard is also lifted slightly to accommodate a plinth below the entry level. This decision for a plinth level was made in an attempt to limit the height and scale of the building and also to limit the impact on the natural environment. Approaching the design project one will see a built structure to the south, natural landscape in the center and a green roof being peeled up to the north. This will make the building also appear to be less an impact on the environment.

Schematic section sketches, see figure 8.2, explain other benefits of introducing a plinth level into the project. It allows for two levels of courtyard earth. The entry level will be the level of the landscaped central courtyard. Being at grade level, the level below the entry level will have the opportunity to have partial landscaped mini courtyards within the library program. Steps from the main level to the grade level will be have open risers. This will allow the sea breeze to enter the plinth to naturally ventilate exterior spaces.
Openings in the courtyard level will allow the spaces in the plinth to be naturally day lighted by the sunlight. These conditions allow the users and general public to experience a completely free, naturally landscaped courtyard above the plinth and a unique environment below where a typical library programs meets the exterior conditions of a courtyard.

Upon completing the schematic model, I pressed forward with a schematic plan/space planning, see figure 8.3. This space planning process allowed me to further explore the differences between my ‘variables’, the two dueling wings. The ‘mass’, or the traditional, wing will house, among other pragmatic functions:

- Book stacks
- Circulation Desk
- Periodicals
- Catalog
- Special Collections
- Various scales of reading areas

The ‘light’, or evolved, wing will house the following, among other pragmatic functions:

- Campus Museum/Traveling Exhibitions
- Hi-Tech Media Room
- Campus Book Store
- Cafe’
- Learning Commons and Computer Labs
- Main reading/computer room and Lounge seating
- Audio/Visual Lab/Catalog
In addition to developing the plan, I simultaneously developed the design in elevation and section, see figures 8.4 and 8.5. The elevation of the south wing explores a modular grid to be used in conjunction with the 1:3 proportions of the facade materiality. The modular grid represents where the elevated reading rooms will be located. These will be of various scales using the modular grid; singles, doubles horizontally, and doubles vertically. The grid also abides by the four total levels of this wing. Figure 8.5 demonstrates a sketch of the north elevation of the south wing and the section of the central courtyard. I explored opening up the mass with a wall of deep set glazing to take advantage of the view and the northern day lighting. Because of this opening, every space of the south wing has a relationship to the central courtyard.
CHAPTER NINE: DESIGN PROPOSITION + CONCLUSION

Before I introduce my design proposition, I would like to point out that this project is in no way meant to be a finalized design never to be altered. Instead, I would like this design proposition to be thought of as a starting off point for discussion and interpretation. My goal is that this design proposition sparks conversation and debate to constantly evolve and revise it to an even better design. Please feel free to ask questions and make comments to yourself, to others or to me, rplotkow@mail.usf.edu. Also, while I will try my best to describe this design proposition, I understand that it is impossible to discuss every aspect of the project as it generally is described best in conversation and debate. Therefore, any questions or comments can be directed toward me. In an effort to not clutter any one’s mind with my detailed description of the project, I will only discuss main factors that contributed to this current evolution. I hope these descriptions, drawings and images allow you to make your own conclusions of this current evolution.

This design proposition, see Figure 9.0, is based on several months of evolving research, conceptual design, schematic design and design development. What this design proposition has become is the most current evolution of my initial design concepts and ideograms. For clarity purposes, I will identify the main drivers that created this current evolution of the design:

- **Duality + the Natural Environment** - The two, distinct formal elements of the project represent:

Figure 9.0
Proposed Design Model: Aerial View
• the past, traditional elements of the library building type, mass, books
• the present and future, evolving elements of the library building type, light, technology

These two elements, while very different in design, have a ‘constant’ in common, the natural environment. No matter how much technology evolves or the library as a building type evolves, the one constant will be human’s need to inhabit and enjoy their natural environment. Therefore, though they occur in different ways, both of these elements possess:

• a physical relationship to the central courtyard
• exterior spaces to inhabit the natural environment
• convertible spaces to enjoy the natural environment, Figure 9.1

• **Duality + Space Planning/Construction** - The two, distinct formal elements of the project were designed to function in different ways according to their concept. The ‘mass’, south wing has: massive floor plates, lower ceiling to accommodate book stacks, fewer penetrations, permanent partitions, heavier construction, etc. The ‘light’, north wing has: thinner floor plates, higher ceilings, several penetrations, flexible partitions, lighter construction, etc. Overall, the south side appears massive to reflect its permanence and the north side appears transparent to reflect its flexibility.

Though these two formal dualities are different in several ways, they both satisfy their functions, interact with the natural environment, and provide users with qualitative environmental and...
architectural experiences.

The design begins at the campus’s center courtyard near Dort Promenade (this area is the proposed center of campus with new development filling in the perimeter) see figure 9.2. From this courtyard users see the library in the distance and the beginning of the green roof ramp that leads one directly to the north wing. From this view, the ground appears to be lifting up from the earth to create the roof and green space of the library, see Figure 9.3. This point of view also provides the framed view of the existing context including Sarasota Bay. At this point, users have the option of progressing up the ramp to access the second floor of the north wing or continue walking on the ground level toward the library entrance. Once under the cantilevered shade element that welcomes users, one has the option of progressing toward the center to the landscaped courtyard, entering the south wing or entering the north wing.

The south wing will greet users with a generous lobby, vertical circulation tower and circulation desk. Beyond these begins rows of steel bookstacks hanging from the ceiling. The bookstacks run perpendicular to the courtyard so users can always relate to the exterior. At the west end of this wing, users will find a lounge area with a 3 storey volume and a great view of Sarasota Bay. Off of the four floors of bookstacks are various sizes of reading rooms that cantilever from the south wall. These reading rooms provide protection from the southern sun while still allowing day lighting and generous views of either Sarasota Bay or the Campus. These reading rooms can be enjoyed both in conditioned air or natural venti-
lation. On comfortable days, the glass partitions can be slid open and rotated to close off the reading room from the air conditioned library. Therefore, the reading room can become a completely exterior space. Users can then enjoy the outdoors, the breeze and the views while reading a book or studying.

The north wing also greets users with a generous lobby and vertical circulation tower. Beyond these are the campus bookstore and café along a promenade on the south side of the north wing. The southern walls of this promenade are lined with a series of pivoting glass doors, stationary glass and louvered windows. These doors and louvers can be opened to convert the promenade into a series of exterior spaces adjacent to the central courtyard. The overhanging roof protects users from the southern sun exposure, see figure 9.4. The west end of the north wing contains a voluminous 4 story high space used for lounge seating and as a special use area. This space is graced with a glazed 180 degree view of Sarasota Bay. The space can also be opened up to the exterior shaded patio of the amphitheater.

The user or general public that continues straight through to the central courtyard will find themselves in an environment that is resembles the natural environment around the building. Grass landscape, several palm trees and the sea breeze keep the space cool and comfortable, see Figure 9.5. The academic and technological energy between the two wings also gives the courtyard an energized feel. Users can lay on the lawn, sit and study, socialize, eat and generally enjoy themselves. This space will be a the social gathering space

Figure 9.4
Proposed Design Model: Courtyard
Figure 9.5
Proposed Design Model: Courtyard
of the campus. Users can also continue on through the courtyard to a series of shaded steps, also know as the amphitheater. Here they can sit and socialize or study or continue through to the Bay Walk or natural landscape.

Users who chose to walk up the green roof ramp toward the second level of the north wing will be greeted with a view down to the central courtyard. Continuing to the second floor they can choose to walk inside toward the learning commons remain outside to find their own green space adjacent to another series of pivoting glass doors and louvers. This green space is partially protected by the sun by the floor plate above. This site allows for a great view of the entire courtyard and a gaze into the massive south wing through the large glazed penetration.

Users can access the fourth level computer/reading room of the north wing either from the north wing’s west vertical circulation tower or from the south wing’s west vertical circulation tower. Either way they will be blown away by the panoramic views of either the Sarasota Bay to their west or the Campus toward their east. An exterior patio is toward the south of this reading room, see figure 9.6. This grand space spans the wide end of the central courtyard symbolizing the two wings harmonization.

The following pages contain floor plans of the ground floor, first floor, second floor and third floor. Preceding each floor plan are diagrams of each floors exterior space as well as interior space that can be converted to exterior space.
Figure 9.7
Proposed Design Model: Southwest Corner
Figure 9.9
Ground Floor Spatial Diagram
Figure 9.10
First Floor Plan
Figure 9.11
First Floor Spatial Diagram

exterior spaces

convertible spaces
Figure 9.12
Second Floor Plan
Figure 9.15
Third Floor Spatial Diagram

exterior spaces

convertible spaces
Figure 9.17
Proposed Design Model: Aerial from Northwest
My conclusions of this thesis project include successes, flaws, epiphanies, comments and questions. I will address the goals that were set out for this thesis, make my own conclusion about sustainability, take a last look at an evolving building type, address any design flaws and look to the future of this project.

The main goal for this project was a simple thought, give both library users and the general public the opportunity to have memorable, sensory experiences of architecture and nature. I feel that this goal was met on numerous levels. The current evolution of the project already exhibits many opportunities for humans to interact with nature while experiencing the architecture of the built environment. I have shown users that a built environment can coexist harmoniously with our natural environment. This was my most important goal, and I feel that I have exceeded it.

My conclusion of ‘sustainable design’ is that, while many are struggling to define what exactly this current buzzword means, I feel it is not a complicated puzzle to figure out; it is simple: if one follows time-tested, good, basic design principles, sustainability follows. Give the environment the respect it deserves by designing with it, not against it. If you do this, beautiful results will follow.

The library is an interesting machine. I disagree greatly with those that believe the library is becoming obsolete. When new books are written, librarians do not throw out the old books completely. Just as the library’s collection grows over the years with more materials, so does the library’s program. Technology is not the library’s enemy, but rather, its friend. My thought for the de-

“...a built environment can coexist harmoniously with our natural environment...”
sign of new libraries is this: design with a large degree of flexibility, but don’t lose the important elements, especially the books. There is a special experience that occurs when one picks a book off of a shelf, finds a great space and reads. This experience cannot be duplicated by reading off of a computer screen. This quality of the library should never be replaced.

Now that I have had a chance to look back at the current state of this project’s design, I can observe some design flaws, as to be expected. The most apparent flaw is library security. The design sacrificed security in the name of nature and freedom to explore. Library material should have been held more secure, possibly with secondary circulation desks or self check-out stations. Another observed flaw is the west facade’s lack of sun protection. Only a series of vertical sun shades currently protect the glazing. A possible revision would be to replicate the treatment of the south wing’s southern facade, only reversing the materiality, glazed to the west to maintain the view and solid to the north and south. This would create a deeper vertical sun shade while still allowing the view and creating several alcoves for readers/computer users. Another major flaw was the continuity of the green roof ramp. Currently, when one progresses up the ramp to the second floor, the journey abruptly ends in a green space. I feel that the journey should continue back down and out toward Sarasota Bay. This would make it possible for users to interact and experience the architecture without actually entering the building. This journey would be a great example of a built environment not interrupting nature, but instead, embracing it.
As mentioned previously, this design project is not to be considered complete at the current state. Instead, it is an evolving design to be questioned, revised and commented on, for its own benefit, our benefit and the benefit of the natural environment.

My hope for this project is that it would allow people to experience their natural environment in their everyday life and buildings they inhabit. And also that this constant reminder of the beauty of nature would be enough to place a desire in the public to protect and preserve it. The evolution of the library is a symbol for the evolution of our culture. While nature is defined as the ‘constant’, it will only be a constant throughout time if we take care of it now.

Thank you.
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