

## **2.15 Architectural Design Guidelines Element Data and Analysis 2010-2020 Campus Master Plan Update**

### **a) General Description of the Campus Architectural Character**

Since they reside within the Academic Core, in close proximity to one another, the major academic buildings need to be engaging in architectural relationships. The core is meant to act as a frame for the architectural compositions it encapsulates. It should be natural for the core buildings to relate to one another in mass, form, and style.

The inherent symbolic content of the campus plan should not be ignored. The rings of the Academic Core carry astronomical and astrological names. The “helix shaped” roadway which was to circumnavigate the core is symbolic of the basic structure of life, the double helix. All of the roadways are named after constellations. The apses of the roadways were to contain “academic villages” that were directly connected to the core, which in turn contained all of the major academic buildings. It could be argued that the original campus plan represents an encapsulated universe. Some architectural schemes have responded to this symbolic content in plan and in form. For example, the CREOL Building, which has a long curved wall on its principal façade, creates a large circular landscape island floating beyond the building that looks, in plan, like a planet in orbit.

### **b) Architecturally Significant Historic Buildings**

Because the University is 40 years old, no building could be described as being historically significant. It is, however, important to note that the Library was the first building to be constructed on campus, followed by the Administration Building.

### **c) Aesthetics**

#### **1. Materials**

The predominant exterior building material throughout the campus is brick, occasionally accented by certain architectural elements that are rendered in either stucco or exposed concrete.

#### **2. Color**

In the Academic Core there are approximately nine different shades of brick. They vary from dark brown to dark red. One particular blend of brick has been defined as the “UCF blend”, which is the brick of choice for buildings. Natural mortar has now become the standard for campus buildings since it tends to define the brick with a wall surface. On the North End of campus,

the architectural style deviates from the traditional university standard that is found in the Academic Core. A wide variety of colors and modern building systems are used.

### **3. Style**

The style of the campus can be described as multifaceted. A variety of styles are represented, which define and place buildings in a particular architectural period. The Library, Administration Building, and Health and Physics Building all relate, in that they exhibit a similar architectural element, the "UCF Arch". This grouping is also similar in form and shape.

### **4. Siting**

Buildings within the academic Core are directly affected by a concentric sidewalk system. The architecture within the core has responded to this condition by attempting to create at least two facades, facing each concentric sidewalk system. Since the core is the most dominant central geometric element on the campus, it would be natural that siting of buildings outside the core should be affected by the core's "lines of force."

#### **d) Design Trend**

An assessment of the degree to which existing building designs are coordinated, and the degree to which they contribute to or detract from the present visual or functional quality of the University.

1. Refer to the 1995 Analysis.
2. In addition, it is noted that there has been a trend in the design of campus facilities since that update in which designs have begun to introduce other materials, colors and design details which deviate noticeably from the original, more aesthetically cohesive campus aesthetic. Whereas the older campus buildings were more consistently covered in the "UCF blend" of reddish-brown brick, many newer facilities have introduced increasing amounts of cream, or yellow colored brick. Also, newer structures have started to introduce metal, usually in a silver-metallic finish, as a significant exterior material. There is a noticeable trend in the newer designs to emphasizing horizontal lines. In design details the older facilities were more austere, using brick as a largely unarticulated exterior surfacing with simple, punched opening. Newer designs have relied on different trim materials or varying brick coursing/corbelling/coloring to articulate openings. Generally, the trend in the newer designs is to reflect contemporary design aesthetic as opposed to reflecting the aesthetic of the era of the older buildings.

3. The current trends, while moving away from the earlier aesthetic, show an awareness of modern architectural aesthetic that is more reflective of the high-tech, increasingly diverse world in which the University exists and of the more recent research-oriented, diversity-enhanced mission of the University. From the point of view of the current student and research-oriented faculty, the newer facilities as individual designs may create an aesthetic more reflective of the University's contemporary mission. That being said, when viewed together with the older designs, the newer designs, unless they have clearly identifiable visual connectivity with the older designs, may create a frenetic campus visual image. It is a matter of degree and interpretation, both very difficult, if not impossible to judge, since "beauty is in the eye of the beholder". If the design diversity reaches the threshold of visual schizophrenia for a significant number of the students and faculty, it may have an overall negative impact on the University mission.
4. The challenge for the designers and design directors/reviewers is to build a design bridge between 1) the older campus aesthetic with the traditional values it connotes and the resulting aesthetic consistency; and 2) the more contemporary, progressive aesthetic. This should be a major goal of the University's architectural design guidelines.
5. Another major issue of concern is the degree to which the "vertical" facilities reinforce the campus radial planning organization. The radial plan works well as an organizational element to create a pedestrian-only academic core. On the other hand, since most users are overwhelmingly acclimated to an off-campus world of orthogonal urban planning, the radial plan creates great challenges in wayfinding. New students and visitors are particularly worthy of consideration, as their level of comfort with the campus environment will certainly affect their initial and perhaps overall impression of the campus. The University clearly values retention of freshman as four-year-plus students as reflected in its policy of providing on-campus housing for 75% of freshman. Ease of wayfinding is critical in the adjustment of new students and visitors to the large, potentially intimidating environment of a major university.
6. What is recommended to improve on the current situation is 1) clearly defined urban design and future land use goals and objectives; and 2) policies which establish a means of achieving these goals and objectives. The goals and objectives should clearly state design principles which are to be achieved. The policies should establish procedures for communicating these principles and means for directing and monitoring progress toward achieving these principles.

**e) ADA Accessibility**

1. Refer to the 1995 Analysis.
2. The University has an active process of 1) requiring adherence of new designs to disabled accessibility requirements; 2) providing disabled student ombudsman review of all projects; and 3) identifying and prioritizing disabled accessibility deficiency correction concurrent with remodelings and renovations of existing facilities. Because of the relative youth of the campus, the backlog of existing deficiencies is of less impact than older universities. Nonetheless, the importance of accessibility to mission and to admission policy makes it a priority.
3. By policy all new facilities are to meet all accessibility requirements.
4. Deficiencies have been identified and cataloged for correction with scheduled remodeling or renovation.