

General Description of the Campus Architectural Character

Since they reside within the Academic Core, in close proximity to one another, the major academic buildings within the core need to be associated architecturally. The academic core is meant to act as a setting for architectural relationships. It should be natural for the core buildings to relate to one another in mass, materials, 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” roadways, which were meant to circumnavigate the core, are 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.

Architecturally Significant Historic Buildings

Because the University is 50 years old, there may be historically significant buildings on campus. It is important to note that the John C. Hitt Library was the first building to be constructed on campus, followed by Millican Hall the Administration Building.

Materials

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

Color

There are many different shades of brick on campus that 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 residing within the academic core. Natural mortar has now become the standard for campus buildings, since it tends to define the brick with a wall surface.

Style

The architectural style of the campus can be described as multi-faceted. A variety of styles is represented, which define and place buildings in a particular architectural period. The Library, Administration Building, and Mathematical Sciences Building all relate, since they exhibit a similar architectural element, the “UCF Arch”. These original core buildings are also similar in monumentality and massing.

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 academic core is the most dominant central geometric element on the campus, siting of buildings outside the core should recognize the core's "concentric lines of force".

Following is 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. There has been a trend in the design of campus facilities since the 1995 update, in which designs have begun to introduce other materials, colors, and design details which deviate noticeably from the original, campus architecture. Whereas the older campus buildings were more consistently covered in the "UCF blend brick" of reddish-brown color, many newer facilities have introduced various amounts of cream 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 emphasizing horizontal lines. In design details, the older facilities were more austere, using brick as an unarticulated exterior surface with simple, punched openings. Newer designs have relied on different trim materials or varying brick coursing, corbelling, and coloring to articulate openings. The trend in the newer designs is meant to reflect contemporary design aesthetics as opposed to reflecting the aesthetic of the era of the older buildings.
2. Current trends show an awareness of modern architectural styles that are 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.
3. The challenge for the designers and the reviewers is to build a design bridge between the older campus aesthetic and- the more contemporary, progressive aesthetic. This should be a major goal of the University's architectural design guidelines.
4. 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

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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 way-finding. 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 reflected in its policy of providing on-campus housing for 80% of freshman. Ease of way-finding is critical in the adjustment of new students and visitors to the large, potentially intimidating environment of a major University.

5. An improvement to the current situation is - to clearly define urban design and future land use goals and objectives and policies. 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.

An assessment of the accessibility of University buildings to disabled persons:

1. The University has a process for new designs to adhere to handicapped accessibility requirements. 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 policies makes it a priority.
2. All new facilities are to meet all current accessibility requirements.
3. Deficiencies have been identified and catalogued for correction during scheduled remodeling or renovations.