Landscape, buildings targeted for improvements

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had been donated for the project, which originally was scheduled to closely follow the completion of the Lied Center, but financing is not yet sufficient to start work. The project faces possible revision because of the decision to cancel downtown redevelopment.

Even with a visitors' center to reorient them, former students inevitably will encounter several surprises as they stroll around campus years from now.

A teaching auditorium may have replaced the dilapidated City Campus greenhouse currently located next to Oldfather Hall. Planners speculate that the auditorium would seat 400 to 500 students and would provide a lounge area in which students and faculty members could socialize after classes.

The auditorium would serve as a substitute for the auditorium originally included in the College of Business Administration addition plans. The addition was taken out of those plans.

In turn, a new bioscience greenhouse to be located south of the proposed George W. Beadle Center for Genetics and Biomaterials Research may have replaced the greenhouse currently located next to Oldfather. Renovations and additions to the East Campus greenhouses would complement the City Campus greenhouse project.

The new bioscience greenhouse would be only one of the buildings that planners say eventually would make up a research core bordered by 19th, 20th and Vine streets.

The Beadle Center, which John Benson, director of Institutional Research Planning and Fiscal Analysis, called "the campus' No. 1 priority," would be the main attraction. It would be joined later by a biological science building and a math and computational science center.

The Nebraska Union and the Administration Building may be the beneficiaries of additions as well, although a previously discussed link between the two is unlikely at this point, Todd said. The two buildings face similar problems with inadequate space for meeting rooms, offices and student service space.

Landscaping is receiving considerable attention as planners contemplate the disruptive effects new buildings and additions might have on the appearance of the campus in the 21st century.

"It (landscaping) is not just a frill anymore. It's an essential part of a building — people form opinions before they go in the door," Todd said.

The unpredictable effect construction can have on the soil prohibits landscapers from planning a definite design for the space around new or even renovated buildings. Construction can affect what will grow there, Todd explained.

"We'll attempt to maintain key open spaces, enhancing the whole image of the campus as a green campus. We are intentionally trying to provide spaces for students . . . it provides a very much-needed connection with nature, a sense of comfort rather than going from building to building," Todd said.

In conjunction with landscapers' efforts to maintain open space, campus architect Bob Carpenter said, planners will attempt to keep new building height below five stories for the denser part of campus. Unfortunately, planners don't have the luxury of redesigning existing buildings, he said.

"There are certain buildings I personally wish had never been constructed, but we're not in the business of trying to tear buildings down. We have to take what we have and improve it.

"Our palette is already sprinkled with several styles — our campus is very eclectic in design. Any new buildings will be influenced by the style we choose to promote. . . . We'll try to play that game of pulling together," Carpenter said.

Even the old familiar faces of buildings may be revitalized by the time current students return to the university a few years down the road.

After years of deferring maintenance on buildings constructed decades ago, university administrators have succeeded in making several renovation projects a top priority for the 1991-1993 biennium, and several more are in store for succeeding years.

"There's asbestos all over campus; the infrastructure of buildings is deteriorating — those are problems all older university campuses face. The improvements and modifications were put off for years, much like with the highway system. Now we're finding that they must be considered," Benson said.

The Burnett Hall renovation ideally would make classrooms more teaching-friendly, with the building becoming more accessible to the handicapped. In fact, classrooms all over campus have been targeted for modifications through a survey that the university departmental heads completed.

A post-renovation Richards Hall, while maintaining its original character, would contain all the benefits of modern technology. Air conditioning would be installed and the exterior of the building restored.

Though it didn't make the top 10 list of priorities for the 1991-93 biennium — its renovation ranks 11th — Todd expressed excitement over the Richards Hall project.

"I've been waiting for 10 years (for Richards to be renovated). It's a grand old building."

Benson said that if financed, renovation of Richards might take about two years, an accelerated version on a reduced scale of the celebrated Architectural Hall renovation, which took more than 12 years to finish.

Morrill Hall also may be the beneficiary of renovation, with completed current exhibits and new permanent ones. Benson said the Morrill Hall improvement was a campus priority not included in the submission to the regents and state in December for approval for 1991-1993.

Engineering students in the 21st century should have the convenience of an additional completed engineering link between Walter Scott Engineering Center and Nebraska Hall. The top floor link has been completed, and the second floor link remains under construction. The project is 13th on the priority list for this biennium.

Convenience will be an important consideration for residence hall modifications in the 21st century, said Doug Zatechka, director of university housing. Changes already are being made in an effort to accommodate an increasingly diversified student population, but even more options are needed.

Students living in university housing will demand a wider range of service, contract and payment options. Single students, he said, may be offered a low-service, low-rent option as costs rise.

In addition to adjusting to the evolving needs of traditional students, changes are in order to accommodate the demand for more family and summer housing units, Zatechka said.

"We have about 70 family housing units on campus right now with a six- to 12-month waiting list, because it's cheaper and more convenient. A university of our size should have about 150 family units," Zatechka said.

While convenience will continue to exert a strong influence over 21st century projects, planners and city officials refuse to gamble with the safety of students and visitors on campus for convenience's sake.

The dangers that heavy traffic through campus pose would be eliminated by any or all of several plans supported jointly by the university and city, one of which is the Ninth Street alternative. Under this plan, high-speed, dense traffic from 10th Street would move one block further from campus to Ninth Street. Another viaduct would be built over Ninth Street to replace the present viaduct on 10th Street, which is in need of replacement anyway. Ninth street would hook up with the Holdrege bypass.

Traffic down 16th and 17th streets also may be diverted as a consequence of the construction of a new road on the east side of campus. Seventeenth Street would remain functional as a low-traffic, non-arterial street until Vine, and then pick up again by Y Street. Sixteenth

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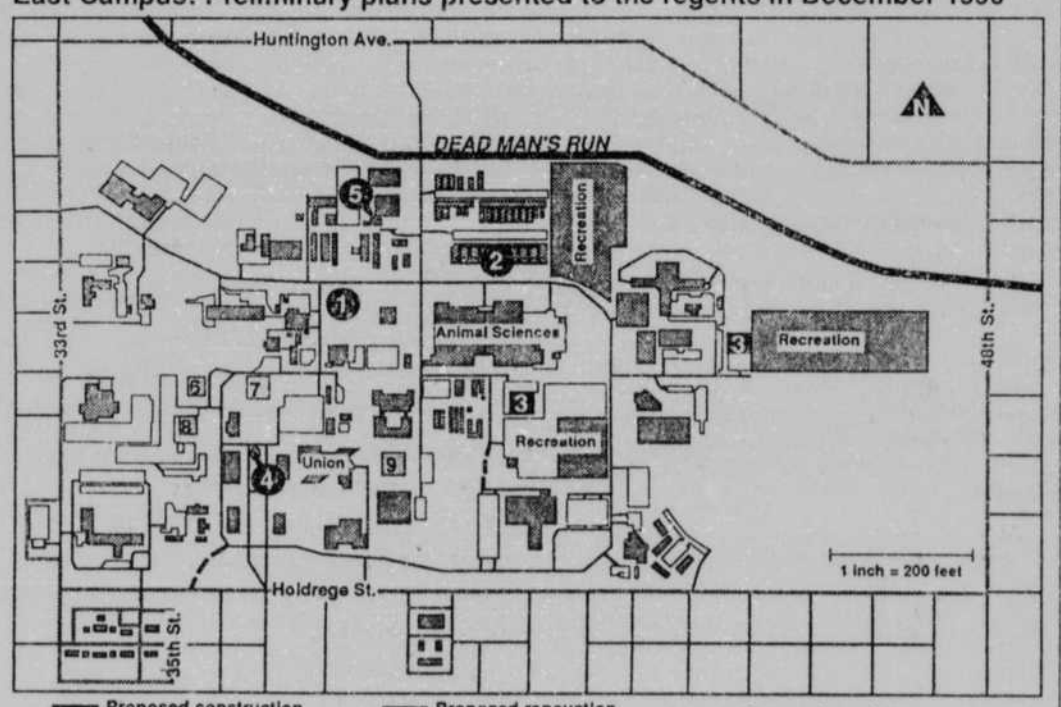
East Campus: Preliminary plans presented to the regents in December 1990



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