

***A Vision Statement for the
Planning and Design
of the
University of Virginia
Buildings and Grounds***

The architectural legacy of the University of Virginia embodied in the historic Academical Village should be reflected in the architecture of the University as a whole. In the planning and design of the new facilities, there is one distinct goal: to restore the Founder's vision of the reciprocity between the academic plan and the physical plan of the University. Mr. Jefferson's vision for the University was based on the premise that the principles guiding the physical design and character of the institution are the same as those affecting its academic undertakings.

What can be said of the physical elements can also be said of the academic components...the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. And the composition is reworked as new circumstances and opportunities arise, but always according to the criteria of rationality and clarity of purpose. When the parts fit together and create a recognizable whole, they form a university setting that is designed to enhance the academic experience.

Mr. Jefferson's University is valued now as it was then as a remarkable arrangement of buildings and grounds supporting clear academic intentions. The rotunda, the pavilions, the hotels, the ranges, the alleys, gardens, lawn, and terraces fit together to function efficiently and provide an inspiring setting. Each of these elements has a role to play in the overall scheme of things. It is not a collection of individual buildings. It is a composition, an ensemble, of buildings and spaces between, all of them completely interdependent and designed to simulate study and thought and research and collegiality, to foster the exchange of ideas and the discovery, protection and dissemination of new knowledge.

The University of Virginia buildings and grounds should achieve the following objectives

1. a clear separation of the parts into discrete units;
2. a clear representation of the functional role each part plays;
3. a hierarchical distinction between the parts revealing which are more important and which are less important in fulfilling the purpose of the whole;
4. an appearance for each part that allows it to be distinct while also allowing it to appear as a part of the larger whole to which it belongs;
5. a clear geometric scheme controlling the disposition of the parts and their relationships of one another and to the whole;
6. a clear gradation of spaces and uses ranging from public to private;
7. residences dominate and establish the primary character of the place.

To satisfy these objectives would be to restore one of the most important legacies of the University of Virginia, namely, its ability to illustrate the unity between the University's purpose, the curricular structure governing the academic lives of its members, and the physical setting. These had all been laid down by the Founder and can be extended and adapted to new circumstances as the University and the world in which it exists change.

**Approved by the Buildings and Grounds Committee of
the Board of Visitors
May 24, 1991**