

Charles E. Shain Library Renovation Priorities Plan January 30, 2007

Introduction

The Charles E. Shain Library, dedicated in 1976, replaced Palmer Library, the original library facility of Connecticut College. With over 100,000 square feet, an energy efficient design and an interior design that allows for relatively low-cost renovation, the Shain Library has served the college well for 30 years. During that time functions have been added to the facility to serve the changing needs of students and faculty, e.g., media services, computer classrooms, staff offices, etc. In 2001 a major improvement was made to the building by renovating space on the main floor to construct the Charles Chu Asian Art Reading Room, an area that provides gallery, lecture and quiet study space. Shain Library is now organized as an Information Commons with open access computing stations, technology classrooms, the Blue Camel Café, the college Help Desk, group study spaces, as well as traditional library operations such as reference, collection management, and technical processing.

Beginning in the late 1990s, the college began planning for a renovation and expansion of the Shain Library to accommodate the college's expanding and changing needs for its library. Over the past 10 years, a number of library space planning efforts have been completed that considered expansions of from 8,500 to 15,000 new square feet and substantial renovations. Costs estimates for these projects ranged from \$15M to \$38M.

Beginning in 2007, the college's planned capital campaign will target numerous college capital and building projects. Revised, realistic estimates of the college's development opportunities and debt capacity, along with consideration of capital project priorities, necessitate a reappraisal of the scope of the Shain Library renovation and expansion project. Though important and among the top capital priorities of the college, available financial and human resources dictate that the library project be reconsidered and appropriately sized. The foreseen needs that drove the college to begin planning a decade ago remain critical today. The college will meet those requirements, however, in a staged development process over a longer time frame. In the near term, five to seven years, the college will concentrate its attention on those facility improvements most needed to provide quality library and information commons services to the students and faculty of the Connecticut College community.

This document summarizes the assumptions and priorities for the first stage of a Shain Library renovation project. It builds on earlier works which are included in the appendices. Among those priorities, outlined more fully below, are:

- To maximize the usefulness of the current facility
- To create small group study and media viewing/development areas
- To expand and renovate Special Collections and Archives
- To accommodate collection management and growth
- To create an inviting and functional entry area to Shain Library
- To provide flexibility to meet changing needs.

Assumptions:

The Library Renovation and Extension Project (LREP) Committee was reconvened in November, 2006, and met twice to review earlier planning efforts and to reaffirm, if appropriate, the current and future needs for Shain Library. These meetings, including one facilitated by architects from Shepley, Bulfinch, Richardson, and Abbott, Inc, produced the priorities of this report.

The Committee worked with these assumptions:

- The estimated project budget will be no more than \$5M.
- Any modification of Shain must remain inside the current building footprint for heated and cooled space. (Upgrading the HVAC system is a part of the campus improvement plan, not a part of the library renovation plan.)
- Renovation and expansion of Special Collections and Archives is a priority and is funded through a naming gift.
- A staged long-term, renovation is desirable; this project under current consideration will be the first stage and will allow subsequent work to build on this initial phase without a loss of momentum as each phase is implemented.
- The outcome of the current planning effort will enable the college to raise funds for the library and information commons renovation. However, detailed architectural planning and construction are probably at least five years distant.
- Stage one of the renovation project should allow the current facility to be effectively used for some 15 additional years.
- Additional operating funds may be necessary to sustain the renovation plan, e.g., annual costs for off-site storage of materials.
- Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Standards should be followed as possible.

Priority Recommendations:

After consideration, the LREP Committee offers these priorities for a Shain Library renovation project.

Overall Priorities:

1. Maximize the usefulness of the current facility while maintaining its strengths.
 - Use spaces to meet the changing needs of the college community, regardless of current use, e.g., move media services to provide access to natural light for student study, reorganize office or other interior spaces, etc.
 - Capture floor space from off-campus storage of archival materials and from the installation of compact shelving.
 - Create an appealing environment with functional and attractive furnishings. Furniture should accommodate laptops, networks, electrical needs, group study space, and should provide study light, etc. Areas with armchairs, big tables, and floor lamps are inviting and useful. (Much of second and third floor are used minimally.)
 - Create a design that maximizes flexibility in the use of space that anticipates new technologies and approaches to student teaching and learning.
 - Incorporate an ADA-compliant signs that increases ease of use
 - Maximize available natural light inside facility.
 - Improve 3rd floor usability with new furnishings, stack rearrangement combining bound journals, and improved lighting.
 - Add electrical outlets in study areas for laptop and other electronic devices.
 - Incorporate the use of environmentally responsible building and design concepts whenever feasible into the renovation plans.
2. Make remodeling efforts visible for visitors, as well as current students, faculty and staff to help demonstrate the college's commitment to its academic program.
 - Concentrate remodeling efforts on first floor, lower level, and second floor.
 - Modernize interior lighting and design elements to improve the esthetics of the space.
 - Modernize furnishings throughout the facility for better study and research comfort and function, e.g., lighting, technology compliant, etc.
 - Increase visibility of and access to the Help Desk.
3. Maintain the Information Commons philosophy of service in Shain Library.
 - Address the need for additional workstation clusters, small group spaces, and media viewing and development areas.
 - Continue to provide quiet study space to students and faculty.
 - Segregate activity spaces from spaces designed for quiet and more focused work.
 - Consider combining Reference and Help Desk activities.
 - Maintain Help Desk, café, reference services, workstation clusters, advanced technology lab, electronic classrooms, and current staff offices in facility.

Specific Recommendations:

4. Expand and renovate Special Collections and Archives.
 - Remodel and enlarge current Special Collections on 2nd level.
 - Combine Archives with Special Collections, including those materials in the third floor “cage.”
 - Create a gracious entrance and reception area, a research and reading area, workroom space, and expanded collection storage.
 - Use available natural light effectively.
 - Ensure appropriate climate controls are in place to preserve the collection.
 - Improve security.

5. Accommodate collection management and growth.
 - Use compact shelving to the extent allowed by the building construction and available space.
 - Plan for fifteen years of collection growth inside the building, understanding that digital technology, e.g., the Google Books Library Project, may change how libraries “collect” books within that time.
 - Use compact shelving in Special Collections on second floor if possible.
 - Use off-site archival storage opportunities for materials that are duplicated digitally on campus or that have limited expected use.
 - Develop a shared collection development program with CTW Consortium members, and potentially with other New England colleges, to maximize the value of the collection on campus, increase the value of the materials budget, and share the cost for off-campus archival storage.

6. Remodel the entry area of Shain Library to be more functional and esthetically pleasing.
 - Create attractive and inviting front door and foyer area (e.g., Bowdoin College renovation)
 - Create mall area in front of Shain, across the bridge, toward the street. Include tables, chairs, benches, lighting, heating, electrical outlets, and technology access. Maximize use of multiple levels including moat area below bridge.
 - Remodel bridge to eliminate the fenced hole and capitalize on opportunities for community building.
 - Use plants and/or architecture to create inviting and attractive space and library entrance.

7. Add small group study and media viewing and development spaces.
 - Accommodate changes in pedagogy by creating spaces for student group work, both with and without media viewing and development facilities.
 - Provide sound control, privacy, and security.
 - Create multi-function spaces that can be used as students need.
 - Minimize staff supervision required, e.g., unlocking doors, visual control.
 - Accommodate growing student use of web and digital media technologies to develop class assignments or research projects.
 - Accommodate student media viewing requirements, both web-based and hard-media such as DVDs.

8. Support the changing needs for instruction and use of technology, digital information, and media project development.
 - Improve the computer labs to meet the needs for courses using technologies and technology-based resources, information research tools and project development instruction and use.
 - Relocate the Digital Curriculum Center to Shain Library if possible and combine DCC staff and technology with the student-centered Advanced Technology Lab.

9. Maximize the amount of study space served by natural light sources.
 - Arrange furniture, offices, and service areas to take maximum advantage of available natural light and attractive views. For example, moving the “cage” from the third floor to newly remodeled Special Collections and Archives creates access to windows and a view to the LI Sound.
 - Install half-height shelving, if possible, on main floor to maximize natural light.

Appendices:

Shain Library Space Plan--Jay Lucker (2002)

Shain Library Space Plan revision--Schwartz/Silver Architects (2003)