High Art
Arch 484/584
Donald Corner

Whereas....

The University has recently invested well over $300 million on the north edge of the campus. Arriving in Eugene, Franklin Boulevard leads visitors past the Knight Arena, the Ford Alumni Center, the Jaqua Academic Center, and the Lewis Integrated Science Building. Then, these visitors pass by Lawrence Hall.....

And....

In the late 1980’s, when we planned the last expansion of Lawrence, we were compelled by a very tight budget to move critical activities in art and architecture to the north site, where construction costs would be lower. The rapid growth of Product Design in the former Romania car showroom further dispersed our programs, prompting new discussions about the need to reintegrate our disciplines. AAA provides much of the ART at a liberal arts university and our new initiatives engage us more deeply with the student body of the central campus.

However....

After considerable detailed study, the prospects for a wholly new home for AAA have become remote. A first phase was to have provided a cluster of interdisciplinary studios and workshops at the south end of University Street. That proposal has recently been pushed down on the priority list for capital construction in the state. Extreme competition for building sites on the central campus threaten future phases of construction even if that first step were to have been realized.

Therefore....

It is time again to reconsider the future of Lawrence Hall. Our ecological commitment dictates that we must determine what can be made of the buildings that we already have. This time we will have to tear some things out to create sites for substantial improvements. We must test the capacity of our current complex by proposing new spaces inside, alongside and on top of the present buildings.

Peter Bohlin: Intelligent Workplace. Constructed on top of a campus building at Carnegie Mellon.

This studio will explore how designers work and what types of spaces can facilitate interdisciplinary interactions between our respective fields. We will try to build on the thinking and planning that was invested in the south University proposal, as well as the studies and experiments that have been undertaken since. We will not take on the whole scope of Lawrence Hall, but rather specific sites that can be created through very selective demolition. The most obvious site is the brick boiler plant to the east of Lawrence. Here a substantial, innovative building can reintroduce AAA to the public along Franklin while connecting to the heart of our present activities.

The studio will include a series of discreet design tasks: interior remodeling, vertical additions and wholly new construction. In aggregate, the expansions will integrate architecture studios displaced by the extension of the AAA Library with new, flexible learning environments for Art and Product Design.

The new spaces must be clear in their organization and spatial structure, with proof of their adaptability in long term use. The building proposals will be formed around appropriate systems of construction and environmental control.

There is an opportunity in this effort to give expression to our shared ideals of sustainable design and explore their specific material realization.