

# UCCB Campus-Centre Expansion

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The University College of Cape Breton's Campus-Centre Expansion was envisaged as a mixed-use space, comprised of varied and dynamic sequences of public and student spaces. The complex, situated at the heart of the existing campus, ambitiously establishes and merges a new Student-Union Centre, a Tourism/Hospitality Laboratory, an Educational/Teaching Centre, and a Cultural/Heritage Centre.

The architectural design expressly challenges the conventional image of a Campus Centre as something resembling a business building. The complex of structures serves to readdress common assumptions about the character and spirit of campus architecture. Beyond housing a variety of specific functions, the building creates a sense of warmth, intimacy, activity, brightness, hustle and bustle, and community identity. The design achieves this mandate by relying on traditional, European, academic forms, which are often neglected in North American architecture.

The dynamic spatial forms of the expansion were derived from existing site geometries, established by the curvilinear University Boulevard, and the diagonal building edges of the existing "Tech" buildings and Fieldhouse/Rink. The basic movement systems of the complex are enlivened through the creation of arcade galleries, wrapping around a central, outdoor courtyard. Fronting on University Boulevard, the curved, stone-finished facade of the Cultural/Heritage Centre and Educational/Teaching Centre creates a rugged, but serene, backdrop. Symbolic of the approach to Cape Breton via the causeway, the curved facade is bounded by a shoreline landscape motif, pierced by a ceremonial, entry portal. The rugged facade and strong, ceremonial, entry sequence serve to evoke images of Cape Bretoners' solidarity as an island people, and their sense of welcome to others.

The design assembles the buildings along the geometric edges of



the site boundaries, thereby creating a broad, multilevel, sun-filled, plaza court. The plaza forms a new, central focus for the University

College of Cape Breton Campus. The courtyard also serves to organize a glazed, arcade gallery of principal corridor systems. Based on the traditional European forms of the piazza and cloister, the courtyard and surrounding gallery create a strong, physical identity for the building.

At the hub of the triangular composition is the central, pivotal point for all primary movement systems -- the Student-Union Centre. The Student-Union Centre is situated so as to revitalize the heart of the existing Campus Centre by drawing all students into the core of the complex from various paths.

A dramatic, glass-roofed atrium is the architectural focal point of the entire complex. The lofty and ceremonial presence of this public space is created by joining two separate masonry facades, at roof-top level, via a steep, double-pitched skylight. This area was envisioned as an atrium, as well as an art galleria, to be filled



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with floor sculptures, hanging tapestries, banners, and mobiles. The Cultural/Heritage Centre and Art Gallery/Multipurpose/Public Conference Room open directly onto this atrium space. The atrium culminates on University Boulevard, with a soaring, two-storey high, pillared, gable entry facade. The motif established by this entry is based on traditional, classic imagery of academic institutions. The entry facade is purposely "over glazed" in comparison to the remainder of the University Boulevard facade. By increasing the transparency of the entry portico, a more illuminative, welcoming, "beacon-lantern" effect can be achieved.

The architectural language of the complex directly confronts the myriad of shapes and forms of the existing campus. The variety of existing shapes, materials, and dissonant building languages invites the architecture of the new complex to introduce a placid and tranquil quality to the ensemble. The facades seek to invoke an ordered, serene, and rational expression to the chaos of facades presently on the Campus.

The service-lane and boulevard facades were designed to portray a rugged, solid image of indomitable island spirit. Window glazing is kept to a minimum and raised above grade, with the exception of focal, motif entry points. In contrast, the heart of the complex, the Courtyard, yields an abundance of transparent, glazed facades; invoking the warmth, spirit, and vibrant celebration of life as found in Cape Breton. The Courtyard is comprised of multi-level steps, sitting ledges, and platforms with hard, paved surfaces, in concert with soft, sodded, landscaped areas. Facing South, the Courtyard is intended to be the outdoor, animated, heart of the



Campus, filled with sunlight, warmth, life, activity, and exuberance.

This ambitious Campus-Centre Expansion expressly and deliberately sets out to shatter the iconography of the Campus Centre as a business building, shoehorned into a site. The

architectural design hopes to redefine the spirit, character, and identity of the University College of Cape Breton's architecture for years to come. The aesthetics of the proposed complex project a distinguished image, symbolic of the University's commitment to the students, the community, and the employees who serve it.

