

PHASE THREE

Viewpoints and Visions

Intent:

In this phase of the project, student teams interviewed campus users and neighbors about their use, perceptions, preferences, and visions of public places on campus for enhancing social interaction and aesthetic pleasures; and of their perceptions of physical features that best reflected campus identity.

Procedures:

1. Student teams had to create survey questions specific to campus users that would help them answer the following research questions. They were given guidelines for developing survey questions. The research questions were divided into two sections, those focusing on: 1) each team's targeted public space, and 2) the entire campus.

Questions for the Targeted Public Space

- a. What are the primary (or main) reasons people come to this particular place? What are secondary (or associated) reasons?
- b. What do they especially like about the place (as it relates to their primary and secondary activities there)? What do they particularly dislike about it?
- c. Do they spend time viewing any of the physical objects or features in the setting (e.g. sculpture, building, landscape, fountain, signs)?
- d. How does the weather affect their use and perceptions?
- e. What improvements or changes would encourage them to stay longer to enjoy the place, or would help them enjoy the place more when they do visit there?

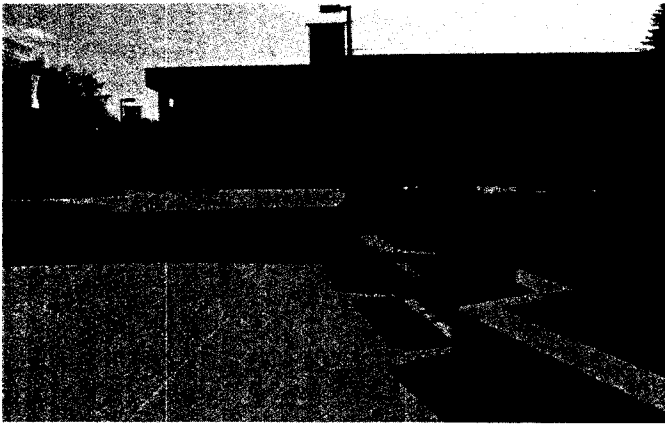
Questions for the Entire Campus

- f. What building, setting, or other physical feature (e.g. sculpture) on campus best represents the positive aspects of the campus?
 - g. What building, setting, or other physical feature (e.g. sculpture) on campus best represents the negative aspects of the campus?
 - h. What is their favorite public place on campus to (1) people watch; (2) to study (by oneself or with others); (3) to be alone; (4) to enjoy a pleasant view (whether of built or natural landscape)? What makes it their favorite place?
2. The survey questionnaire also contained an introduction, and both open-ended and close-ended questions.
 3. Student teams pre-tested their questionnaires to make sure that the questions were not vague, ambiguous, or confusing. Each team had to show their questionnaire to the instructor or teaching assistant *for approval* before they could start interviewing people.
 4. Each team sampled between 12 and 25 people, and the sample represented a range of different users of the setting (that is, both students and staff/faculty).
 5. One team created a mailed questionnaire that was sent to households in the neighborhood surrounding the campus. A local neighborhood organization, Watertown Landmark Trust, provided a mailing list of their members.

6. Once the information was collected, each team aggregated and analyzed its results to answer the research questions.

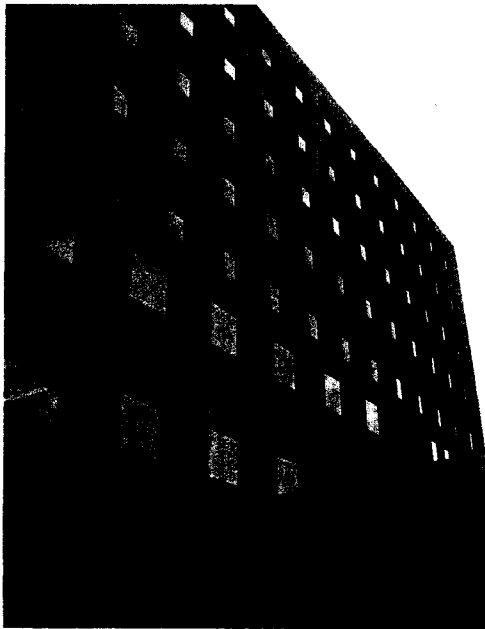
Presented here are a compilation of the students' reports, summarizing the response of over 250 campus users (including faculty, staff, students, and administrators) and 74 residents of the neighborhood surrounding the campus (called here, "UWM Neighbors").

"Orchids & Onions" on the UWM Campus – A View from the Campus



Student Union

Overall, campus users felt that those spaces that **best reflected the most positive features** of the UWM Campus were the Student Union and Golda Meir Library. The Union was said to be "a nice place to meet friends," "a busy and bustling place with a lot of activities," and that it was "interesting to watch how people behave in the various spaces." Golda Meir Library provided "a space for watching other students" and "was a quiet place for studying and being alone." Other spaces that positively reflected the campus were the fountain plaza between the library and Curtin Hall, and various green, landscaped spaces, such as those at the Sandburg Residence Halls, and the Downer Woods.



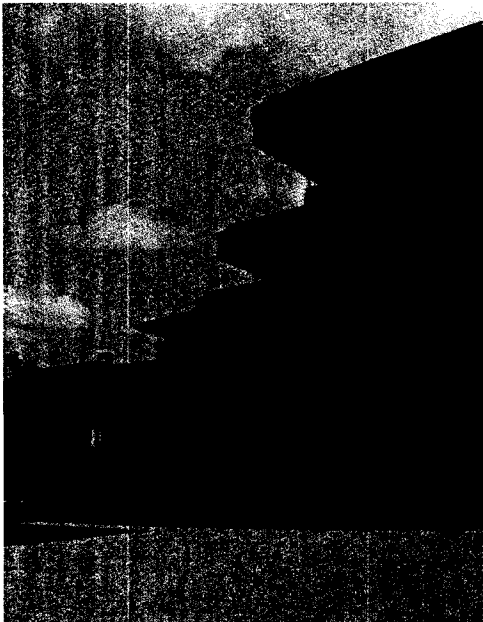
Curtin Hall

There was a range of buildings and physical features mentioned as representing **negative aspects** of the UWM campus. But overwhelmingly, the place most singled out as a poor reflection of the campus was Curtin Hall. Respondents disliked the concrete construction and the style of modern architecture that did not "fit" with many of the old, brick buildings of the campus.



Curtin Hall and surrounding buildings

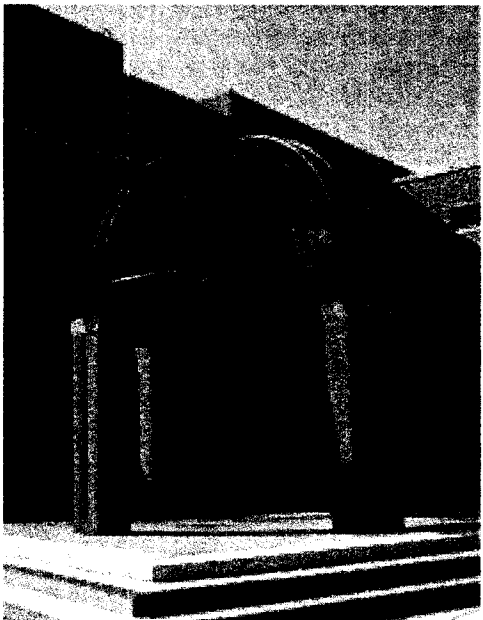
While also liked by some campus users, others felt the Student Union was a “dark, chaotic place that displays an uninviting attitude.” Many other campus buildings – specifically those that are multi-story and usually built between 1960 and 1980, such as the EMS Building, Bolton Hall, the Physics Building and Enderis Hall – were considered as “ugly, unsuitable and out-of-scale.” A few people mentioned that the UWM pedestrian bridge on Maryland Avenue poorly reflected the campus as it “blocks the line of vision” on that street.



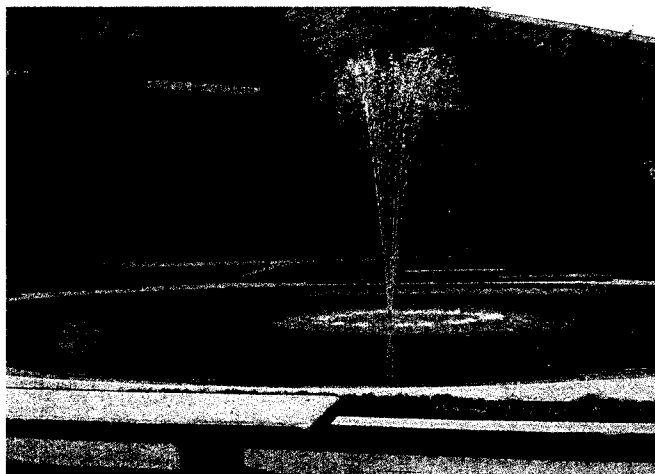
Golda Meir Library

The survey also asked campus users about their **favorite campus places for certain activities**. The most favorite public space for *people watching* was the Student Union, followed by Spaight's Plaza and Sandburg Halls. For *studying*, people most often mentioned the Golda Meir Library as their favorite campus place. Also mentioned as favorite places for studying were dorm rooms and study rooms in the Sandburg Residence Halls; the SARUP Building; the Student Union; and various outdoor spaces, such as the grassy area around the Sandburg Halls, the courtyard between the Student Union and the Business School, and the plaza west of Mitchell Hall.

For a place to *enjoy a pleasant view*, respondents mentioned a number of different spaces on the campus, including Downer Woods; the gazebo-sculpture in the courtyard of the Business Building; the west-facing window wall of the SARUP Building to enjoy sunsets; rooms in the Sandburg Residence Halls that view the lake; the fountain near the Golda Meir Library; the SARUP courtyard; and Spaight's Plaza.



Gazebo Sculpture in the Business Building Courtyard



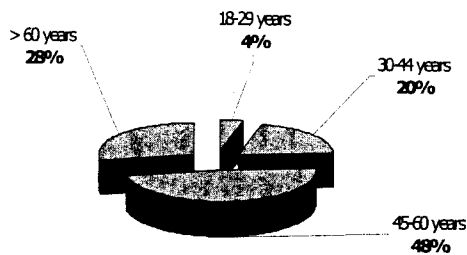
Fountain near Golda Meir Library

"Orchids & Onions" on the UWM Campus - A Response from the Neighborhood

Members of Watertower Landmark Trust, a neighborhood group in the residential community surrounding the UWM campus, were mailed a questionnaire. A total of 74 surveys were returned and analyzed. The survey asked about their viewpoints and ideas of the public spaces of the campus, including:

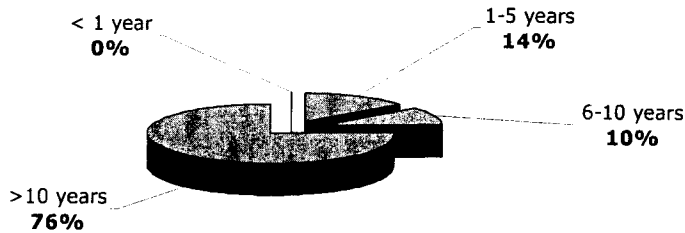
1. **Use of public space on the UWM campus:** e.g., primary reasons for visits to the campus, most favorite space(s) on the campus, spaces and features that are disliked, and features that represent positive and negative aspects of the campus
2. **Suggestions for improving the public spaces of the campus**
3. **General description of the resident:** e.g., age, length of time lived in the neighborhood, the average number of times per month one visits the campus, and the average duration of such visits.

Age of residents visiting the UWM campus



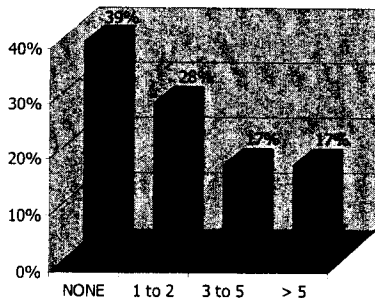
Nearly half of the residents surveyed were between the ages of 45-60 years. More than a quarter of them were 60 years or older.

Length of residency in the neighborhood

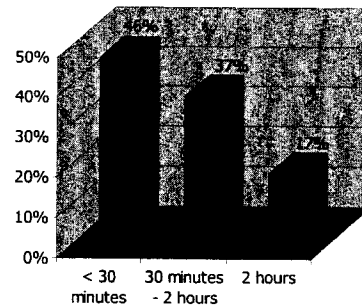


Of those who were surveyed, 76% have lived in the neighborhood for more than 10 years.

Number of visits per month

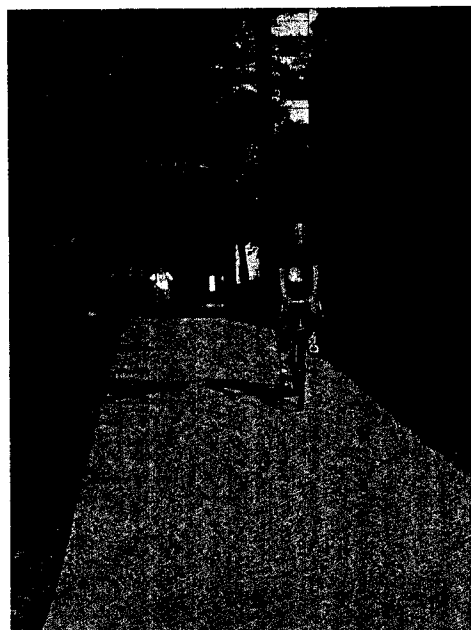


Duration of the visit

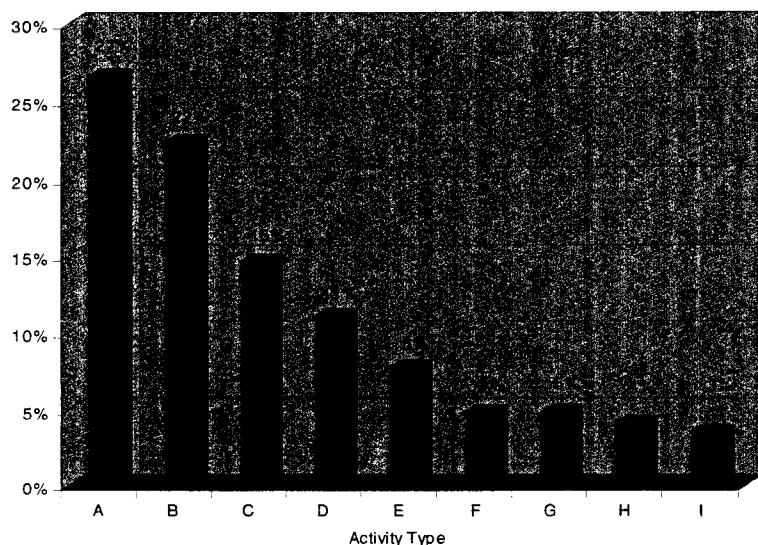


Over a third (39%) of the respondents indicated that they *never* visited the campus on a monthly basis. However, approximately one-quarter (28%) visit the campus once or twice a month; and a third (34%) visit at least 3 times a month or more. But these visits may be relatively brief. When they are on campus, nearly half of the neighborhood respondents (46%) said they stayed less than 30 minutes.

UWM neighbors use the campus for special as well as casual events and activities. Attending conferences, special lectures, and art/music/theatre performances were often mentioned; but also prominent was simply driving or walking through the campus. Interestingly, UWM neighbors were much more likely to use the campus for outdoor exercise (such as jogging) than they were to use the Klotsche Center. **Such usage suggests that a landscaped area or sculpture exhibit that followed a path or meandered through the campus – instead of one that was located in a singular, bounded space in the interior of the campus – would facilitate neighbors' use and enjoyment of the campus for their leisure purposes.** Such "meandering landscapes" (whether sculptural or botanical) are used successfully on many college campuses, such as the topiary walk at Wellesley College, the egghead sculptures that permeate the University of California at Davis campus, and the labeled botanical pathways at the University of New Mexico.



Reasons for campus use



- A - Attend Conferences, Special Lectures, and Performances
- B - Walk or Drive Through
- C - Other (e.g. Use Day Care Center, Book Store, Attend Committee Meetings)
- D - Exercise Outdoors
- E - Use Educational Resources
- F - Eat, Socialize, People Watch, or Public Solitude
- G - Attend Classes
- H - Attend Exhibitions
- I - Exercise at the Klotsche Center

Neighborhood respondents had different opinions about their **most favorite space** of the UWM campus, but the two most prominent spaces were the older brick buildings along Downer Avenue (e.g. Mitchell Hall, Merrill Hall) and the Downer Woods and other landscaped spaces. Respondents preferred the old buildings for their “timeless architecture,” “beauty and attractiveness,” and because they “fit the architecture of the area.” Noticeably, these spaces are along the periphery of the campus – the “seam” that connects the older residential neighborhood and the campus proper.

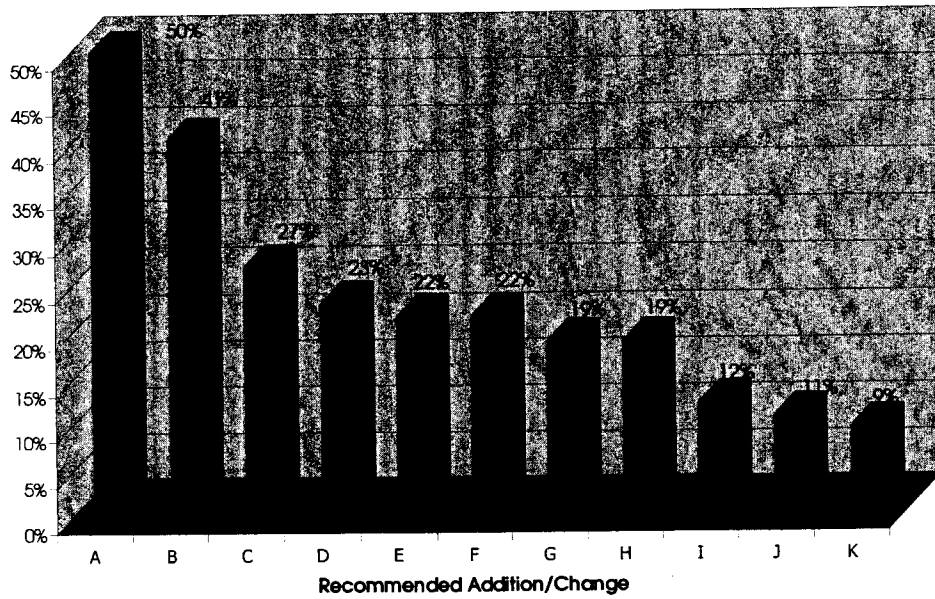


Not surprising then is that **this seam is liked when it reflects the landscaping and building materials of the surrounding neighborhood** – but disliked when the composition abruptly opposes the scale and setting of the neighborhood. Other positive aspects of the campus mentioned were Golda Meir Library because it is “interesting and welcoming.” The banners and signs were singled out by a few neighbors as positive aspects because they “give pride to the campus.”

Similar to findings of the campus users, the **least favorite campus places** mentioned were Curtin Hall and the buildings on the southwest quadrant of the campus, such as Physics, EMS, and Chemistry. Curtin Hall provides a negative quality because it is “pure concrete and ugly.” But neighbors *also* disliked – but to a lesser extent – the two newest buildings on campus: those of SARUP and the Business School. These respondents considered these newer buildings (built in the 1990s) as reflecting negative aspects of the campus because they are “cold and boring,” and “did not match the residential buildings of the area.” The SARUP Building in particular projects a negative quality because “it turns its back to the street (Maryland Avenue).”

Suggested Improvements to the Campus:

When asked about **recommendations for improvement** to make the campus a more pleasing and inviting place, almost half of the 74 neighborhood respondents suggested more landscaping around the periphery of the campus. **More extensive and mature landscaping proximate to the disliked buildings in particular** (e.g. along the Maryland Avenue edge of the SARUP building; a more prominent gateway entry that utilizes extensive shrubbery and trees between the EMS and Physics Buildings on Cramer Street) may provide a more contextual seam discussed earlier. In addition, 30 people suggested adding more outdoor activities, a few specifically mentioning a **farmer’s market and outdoor concerts**.



- A- Landscaping at the Edges of Campus
- B- Outdoor Activities
- C- Outdoor Food Vendors, Lighting on Pathways, and Bolder Signage
- D- Coffee Shop on Downer Entrance
- E- Sculpture Garden in Downer Woods
- F- Outdoor Benches and Tables
- G- Brick Crosswalks for Pedestrians
- H- Other (e.g. Parking spaces, wrought iron fences)
- I- Intergenerational Activity/Learning Center
- J- Information Kiosks
- K- Playground on Downer and Edgewood Avenues