

Campus 'Master Plan' moving toward completion

Brad Walters
Reprinted from *The Gamecock*

USC's Facilities Master Plan for campus development is becoming more of a reality every day.

Charles Jeffcoat, USC's director of facilities management, said the plan was originally drawn up with some broad objectives in mind.

"One is to better centralize the academic functions of the university to the campus core," Jeffcoat said. "Another is to create a better living and learning environment for the students and faculty, including the development of green space."

Jeffcoat said the Master Plan has been carried out aggressively since its beginnings in 1993. Although the plan has been fine-tuned and altered somewhat since then, the basic goals have remained the same.

"The Master Plan is a dynamic planning tool, not a static one," he said. "You have to be flexible enough to make adjustments when programs or funding requires it."

HOUSING

One of the most important parts of the Master Plan, according to Jeffcoat, has been the building of new residence halls and the renovation of old ones to meet modern standards.

The plan calls for demolition of some

of the oldest campus dormitories, as well. Two residence halls in the Towers complex, Baker and Burney, were demolished in 1996. The other four Towers (Douglas, LaBorde, Moore and Snowden) won't be coming down in the near future, though.

"The Master Plan recommended the demolition of the Towers," Jeffcoat said. "Unfortunately, we can't justify taking them down because of the revenue that they produce, so they will be with us for several more years."

McBryde Quadrangle faces a similar situation. Jeffcoat said the quad's demolition as scheduled in the Master Plan won't happen in the foreseeable future.

"Housing has pretty much built out everything it can afford to do, currently," Jeffcoat said.

In fall 1997, a \$5 million renovation of Maxcy College, along with the \$20 million construction of South Quadrangle apartments, was completed. Preston was completely redesigned in 1995.

The architecture of the South and East quadrangles, along with the National Advocacy Center completed in 1998, has followed a more traditional design pattern. This design, Jeffcoat said, is modeled after the successful design of the Horseshoe.

"We had a goal of returning to the architectural heritage of the older campus, and I think we've been successful in projects that will allow it," Jeffcoat said.

ACADEMIC SPACE

With the renovation of Flinn Hall in 1997, two academic departments that had been located in inconvenient and often inadequately-spaced areas were consolidated into one building, Jeffcoat said. The Flinn renovation is a hint of the many academic renovations and relocations that have been planned.

The College of Journalism and Mass Communications will eventually move to Petigru College at the end of its renovation, and the department of sociology is moving into Sloan College. These moves will happen as early as two to three years from now.

This fall, the department of art will move into McMaster College, which is being renovated.

"That frees up some of the older buildings on Gibbes Green," Jeffcoat said. "Each of those will be renovated to accommodate academic programs."

One of the changes that's already underway is the \$30 million Graduate Science Research Center construction on Devine Street between Sumter and Main streets. Among its many features will be lab stations that team one faculty member with four students. The GSRC will be completed by this fall.

GREEN SPACE

A theme of the university's Master Plan is to turn central campus parking lots

into green space. At least one central parking lot will be gone by this time next year.

The Preston Quadrangle project, one of the university's most immediate priorities, will create a large park-like space between Preston and the south side of the Horseshoe. Two science annexes and an energy plant, both directly behind Preston, are targeted for demolition. A staff-reserved parking lot behind Preston will be eliminated, as well.

The university also plans to add a large area of green space where the two parking lots are in front of Thomas Cooper Library.

"The project, even though everyone hates to see the parking go away, will vastly improve that part of campus," Jeffcoat said.

Farther away from the campus core, engineers are surveying the Rocky Run Creek, which cuts through the south area of campus behind Blatt P.E. Center.

The university wants to create jogging and bicycle trails along the creek, which runs from Martin Luther King Jr. park in Five Points to the Congaree River near the Olympia Village neighborhood.

Jeffcoat said "there's a real ambition for several groups" to implement the project, and "If all these groups come together and the funding can be found, I think you'll see a very nice amenity one day that flows through campus."

PARKING

With the addition of green space at the campus core, students worry that the already troublesome parking situation could get worse.

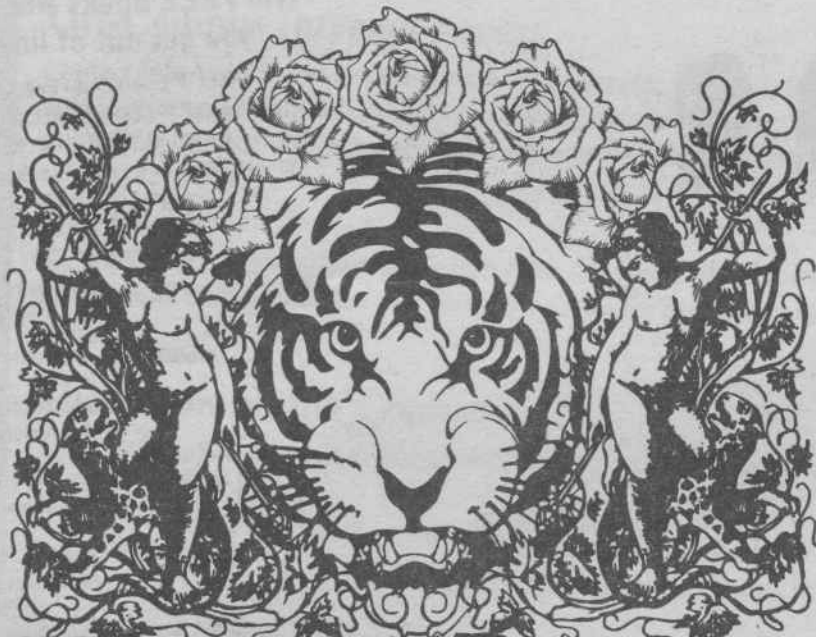
Not to fear, Jeffcoat said. The lots near Thomas Cooper Library are being held to stay until the university feels it can justify their elimination. The university is investigating the amount of revenue these lots produce, how often the lots are fully occupied, and where parking can be relocated.

"There's funding set aside to do that work, but we're not going to proceed with it until we're comfortable that we have a solution for displacing the parking," Jeffcoat said.

The university is trying to acquire the BellSouth building, three blocks north of campus on Pickens Street.

"The acquisition will include a six-acre site that is already paved and designated as parking," Jeffcoat said. "So, we do think a portion of that site will become remote perimeter parking, and there will be shuttle service all day long on a 15-minute basis."

Extra parking near the new Fitness and Wellness Center will be developed, and the university is in negotiations with the city of Columbia to lease daytime parking near the Capital City Bombers stadium on Assembly Street.



TIGER ROSE
CELEBRATING THE WONDERS OF NATURE

MON.-FRI. 11-6
SAT. 10-6
SUN. 1-5

613 Harden St.
765-2050
(Next to Groucho's -
Free Parking in rear)



Circle K International welcomes you to the University of South Carolina!

<http://www.circlek.org/club/USC>



For more information about the world's largest collegiate service organization, call Rebecca at (803) 796-2642 or e-mail us at USCCircleK@aol.com.

