

The Nexus

A Deep Look At Architecture

From the inception of the Stony Brook Campus more than 30 years ago the main concept, architecturally speaking, was to represent a successful blend of modern structures adapted for modern living. Although today the campus is not a composition in comfort, what should be noticed is that the university is as much Stony Brook as the buildings and its architecture.

Frank Lloyd Wright once said, "Give me the luxuries of life and I will gladly do without the necessities." Stony Brook as a public institution of higher learning could hardly become a fanciful peacock fan of luxury, but we have evolved our surroundings that naturally avoided unnecessary glitter and show, primarily we have the necessities.

Even for those pessimists in the crowd, the campus does offer variety now and then. Although possibly lacking a timeless elegance in this timeless day and age, the campus has an ar-

chitectural spirit that will persist. Like something beautiful about to happen or an event which you have been waiting for, the campus will be something in your past, for your future. This place has significant and consistent standards of design, material, and craftsmanship, offering to the student aesthetic satisfaction, and to the administration, lasting value along with a touch of "you're a million years from yesterday, while still being a millenia into tomorrow."

We can be happy that the variety of the primary architect did not stray too far off the beaten path as to end up with a proverbial white elephant on our campus. Or luckily we were not graced by any columns from the classic orders. If they had been put on the original campus, like Albany, they would have been in and out of style two or three times by now. We have no Pantheon, Eiffle Tower, or any other monumental structure that exists just for the sake of existing. University

Hospital serves as a vital and important function, although that is a monumental structure.

We do have a fountain, but like potato chips, one is never enough. We have walkways that look as if they are driveways — asphalted and black. We have plenty of sunlight and an occasional window to gaze through, as well as trees, but few flowers. The campus was demanded by and created for perfectionists, the original planners learned from their experience that the campus must have as much integrity as it can get. Realizing that in architectural tomorrow species frequently vanish from the earth, they chose a most revealing architectural test — the day-in, day-out reality. Lo and behold it works, day-in and day-out the campus works. Which for some disillusioned few can end up being all too exasperating and real.

Article by — Gerard L. Brandenstein

