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UMass |

Dartmouth

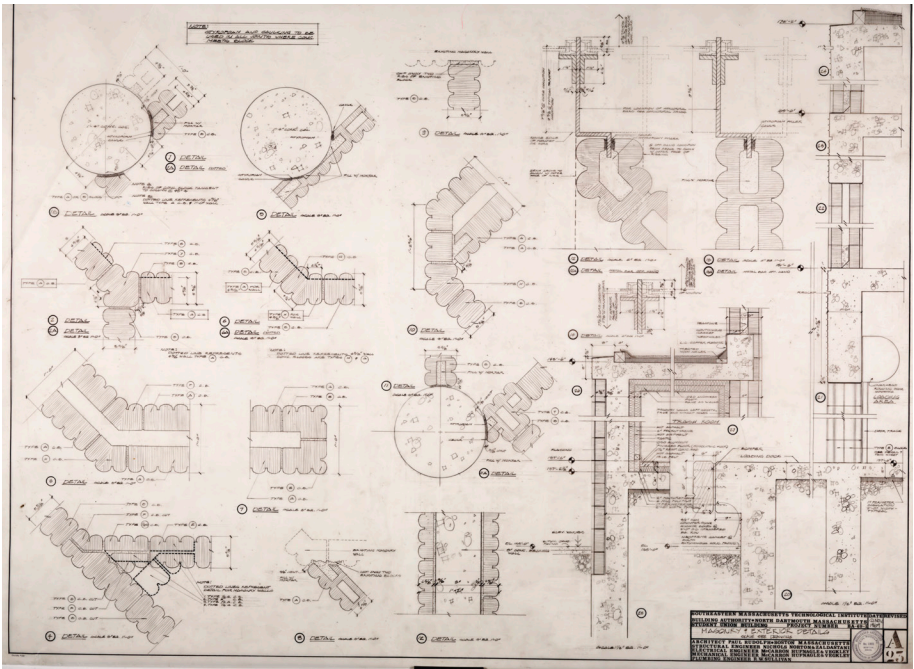
UMassD The Original Intent Behind this Concrete Jungle



SMTI

Paul Rudolph & Firm
"SMTI/UMass Dartmouth, North Dartmouth,
MA. Campus Center. Student Union Masonry
and Exterior Details"
1968-1971
Pen
30 x 42 in.
University of Massachusetts Dartmouth Archives and
Special Collections, Rudolph Drawings Collection

of each individual block as an
individual student, and when they
were all brought together, every-
thing (including the campus and
students) are united as a whole.



appearance,⁵ an aspect very important to Rudolph in his final products. In a metaphorical explanation, the very blocks themselves created a unified feeling, not just the concrete they were made out of.

The block was an element that corresponded to the individual student. Added together, they created a collective form that became the mega-structure that housed the university.⁶ This "humanized" the building.⁷

Rudolph's intent was not to create a cold, unwelcoming campus when designing SMTI as a concrete campus, but rather the opposite.

He used concrete and explored its different finishes, precast and in-situ, with different exposed aggregate and shutter-board textures because he felt that it was a modern material and its plasticity gave him infinite flexibility in his dynamic designs.⁸

His ideas concerning depth and open space were realized with the natural light and shadow play that poured over the concrete blocks, which brings the monotone colored buildings to life. This also tied into his concept of unity. We might think

6 Ibid

7 Ibid

8 Monk, Tony. *The Art and Architecture of Paul Rudolph*. Chichester: Wiley-Academy, 1999. P. 7

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History Senior Seminar

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UMass Dartmouth: The Original Intent Behind this
Concrete Jungle

First Edition

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<http://paulrudolph.blogspot.com/2009/08/rudolph-biography-added-to-foundation.html>

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Architectural Detail

After viewing many of Paul Rudolph's architectural creations, one is able to find characteristics many of them share. An example would be his use of concrete. This is seen in some of his buildings including The Government Center in Boston, Massachusetts, The Art and Architecture building at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut, and also at Southeastern Massachusetts Technological Institute (SMTI; currently known as University of Massachusetts Dartmouth) in Dartmouth, Massachusetts. Another characteristic commonly found in Rudolph's buildings is the use of light and shadow to create a sense of depth and space. The way concrete is incorporated into his buildings allows this sense of depth to come alive. Rudolph explained:

If one were to make a prognosis, one would say that the aesthetics of pre-cast reinforced concrete will lead us to an architecture which depends on the play of light and shadow as opposed to the architecture which depends basically, for its aesthetic values, on reflections which come from a curtain wall... One thing that we all long for is much more plasticity or depth in the treatment of the exterior of our buildings. This,

I feel, will come to a large degree through the manipulation of reinforced pre-cast concrete.¹

Rudolph developed "a 7" X 14" concrete block that was used throughout the entire campus (Rohan 2001)"² and was referred to as the "SMTI Block". The block was "Completely mass produced and light gray in color. It featured six "flutes" on its surfaces that were convex rather than concave so that the rain and snow dripped off of them more easily."³ The SMTI block was also explained as:

The most inexpensive and appropriate for a state-supported school constructed on a budget, and as a mass-produced element, the block was also appropriate for a technical school where the emphasis was upon products made by machine.⁴

One might look at the exterior of the UMassD campus and wonder what is so great about its "cold", "drab" concrete walls. Rudolph explained that "the campus (of SMTI) is intended to be a single building utilizing a single structural-mechanical system, to be constructed of one material in order to create a unified

1 Rudolph, Paul. "On the Potential of Pre-Cast Concrete." Interview with John Peter, 1959

2 Rohan, Timothy M. *Architecture in the Age of Alienation: Paul Rudolph's Postwar Academic Buildings*. Ann Arbor: Bell and Howell Information and Learning Company, 2001. p. 261-300

3 Ibid

4 Ibid

5 Ibid

benches, as microcosms of the larger campus—a campus that the architect believed would continue to grow.

Moreover, the shape of the benches illuminates the material used to construct them and also references the local geography. One of Rudolph's signature design concepts was "To achieve the desirable texture. Rudolph mixed local materials, many times selective micas, seashells, stones, and even branches of corals into the aggregate. The use of indigenous material was present during his entire career."⁶

Rudolph mixed the broken seashells with concrete in order to create the nautilus benches. Although concrete may seem to be a rather odd choice, Rudolph's use of this material is consistent with his overall design plan for UMassD. Arguably, few people know that one of the main ingredients in concrete is cement, which, according to a standard dictionary, may be defined as "something that serves to bind or unite."⁷ Rudolph's space at UMassD was just that—a public space that serves to unify the campus community.

In this regard, Rudolph's organic nautilus benches represent spatial interludes where the pedestrian may stop, rest and chat with others. These benches are just one more form of community space where students and faculty alike can congregate. As angular spirals, the benches contrast

the sharp rectangular forms and pagoda-like floating tiers of the nearby buildings.

The outdoor and indoor benches, along with the interior alcoves, follow the golden ratio, each section expanding accordingly. The benches and architecture remain true to the geometric simplicity and formal emphasis of 1950's international modernism, albeit a design with a progressively interrupted curtain wall façade. The architectural style of the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth is perhaps then best described as proto-postmodern.

6 Rohan, Timothy. "Rendering the Surface: Paul Rudolph's Art and Architecture Building at Yale," *Grey Room* 1 (Autumn 2000) p. 85

7 "YourDictionary Help." *YourDictionary. LoveToKnow*, <<http://www.yourdictionary.com/dicthelp.html>>. Accessed March 29, 2012

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During the first half of the twentieth century, and for a couple of decades after World War II, Adolph Loos' jeremiad against ornamentation dominated the understanding of modernism.¹ He believed that all architecture should reflect an "ascetic, utilitarian, masculine and industrial" aesthetic.² Loos considered the eradication of superfluous sculptural elements as a sign of an advanced society. He believed that "The evolution of culture is synonymous with the removal of ornamentation from objects of everyday use."³ Painted wall scenes, carvings, and other embellishing elements, for Loos and such international style glass-box modernists as Mies van der Rohe, were to be eliminated from the modernist idiom. Paul Rudolph, the designer of the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, and an avowed modernist, was a judicious rebel against Miesian orthodoxy. He writes:

"Modern architecture's range of expression is today from A to B. We build isolated buildings with no regard to the space between them, monotonous and endless streets, too many goldfish bowls; too few caves. We tend to build merely diagrams of buildings. The diagram consists of regularly spaced bays, with

the long sides filled with glass and the end walls filled with some opaque material."⁴

For Rudolph, the use of ornament was one way to transform the "the monotonous and endless streets." To inspire this transformation, the architect added architectural furniture and textured elements to the surface of the exterior walls of the buildings he designed. At UMassD, he used benches as architectural "ornaments" in order to serve both a functional and humanizing purpose. The campus benches are geometricized nautilus structures that he strategically placed throughout the campus. More importantly, their shape is reminiscent of a seashell spiral—a form that is a metaphor for a dynamic entity without a fixed endpoint. Essentially, the benches are an actualization of the Golden Ratio. The Ratio is a fundamental pattern commonly seen in nature, apropos a nautilus shell, and the ratio seems to please human perceptions. "Geometrically, it can be defined as the ratio obtained if a line is divided so that the length of the shorter segment is in the same proportion to that of the longer segment as the length of the longer segment is to the entire line."⁵ Indeed, one might regard these seashell shaped

1 Loos, Adolph. "Ornament and Crime," in A. Loos, *Ornament and Crime and Selected Essays*, trans. By Michael Mitchell. Riverside CA: Ariadne Press, 1998, pp. 167-176 and excerpted in *The Design History Reader*, ed. by Grace Lees-Maffei and Rebecca Houze. Berg: Oxford and New York, 2010, pp. 98-100

2 Houze, Rebecca. "Introduction" to "Modernisms: 1908-1950. *The Design History Reader*, p. 89

3 Loos, "Ornament and Crime," in *The Design History Reader*, p. 98

4 Rudolph, Paul. "The Changing Philosophy of Architecture," *Architectural Forum* 101 (July 1954), p. 120. Cited in Timothy Rohan, "Paul Rudolph's Blue Cross and Blue Shield Building." *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 66:1 (March 2007), p. 89

5 See <http://www2.gi.alaska.edu/ScienceForum/ASF7/716.html>. Accessed April 15, 2012

Architectural Detail



Bruce Barns

"Southeast Side of Group I"

1970s

Photograph

Original is 8 x 10 in., blown up is 11 x 17 in.

University of Massachusetts Dartmouth Archives and
Special Collections, Rudolph Drawings Collection

Introduction

Tucked away in the wooded suburban area of North Dartmouth, Massachusetts stands perhaps one of the most peculiar looking campuses in America—The University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. As visitors drive onto the only public access road, these newcomers to the University may find themselves struck with conflicting emotions: some with awe, others aversion. Nonetheless, they will be exceptionally engrossed with what they see before them.

Over the decades the campus buildings seem to have taken on the appearance of flotsam and jetsam. Yet visitors, students and faculty are undoubtedly aware of the architect's compelling design. His "hand" gently leads them around this distinctive campus. Virgin to the campus grounds, the newcomer, nevertheless, is often disoriented as he or she is drawn into a forest composed of cement and cinder block. As the foreigner to the campus meanders, taking in the unusual uniform of his or her surroundings, the visitor moves on through to his or her desired destination, unaware of the original intent behind this concrete jungle.

Designed by architect Paul Rudolph and founded as SMTI, the original intent has been lost to those who occupy its space today. Instead, UMassD has picked up a few urban "origin" legends—most of which have to do with underground tunnels and

the satanic or suicidal architect who created the crazy campus design. Because the campus is rather unique and few understand what the designer intended, visitors and students invent stories to explain the imaginative design.

There is, however, a more rational explanation. Rudolph's expressionistic modernist style developed out of his concern to crack the glass curtain façade of international modernism. As Timothy Rohan notes, "Rudolph articulated the growing feeling in the profession that modern architecture was in danger of becoming alienating, dehumanizing, and an almost rote activity for architects."¹ Even as early as 1953, architectural journals were decrying the planar glass wall's ubiquitous presence: "The standard curtain wall—perhaps America's single, most important building innovation in the past decade or so—is fast becoming, in the hands of less-than sensitive architects and manufacturers, one of the most irritating eyesores on the U.S. scene."²

Rudolph intended to break the glass façade's stranglehold by using a more plastic, textured form—concrete. Nevertheless, he did not reject the modernist idiom. To understand both the importance of concrete and the significance of the geometric form in the design of the school, we have to begin with Rudolph's first drawings.

1 Rohan, Timothy M. "Challenging the Curtain Wall: Paul Rudolph's Blue Cross and Blue Shield Building." *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*. 66, 1 (March 2007): p. 89

2 The Monotonous Curtain Wall," *Architectural Forum* 111 (Oct. 1959), 143. Cited in Timothy M. Rohan, "Challenging the Curtain Wall," p. 88

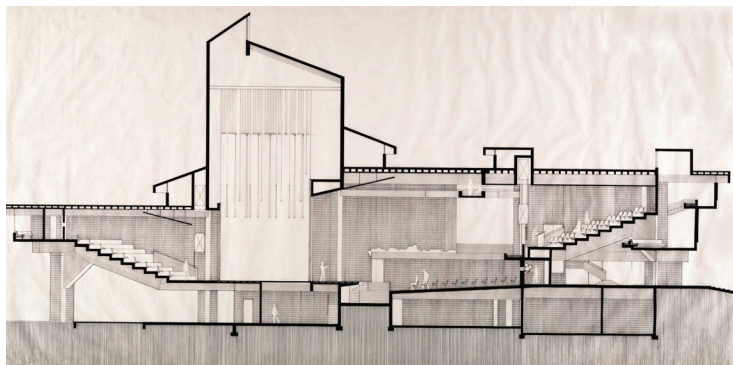
An avid fan and practitioner of the Beaux-Arts, as well as a student of Walter Gropius's Bauhaus drafting methods, Rudolph made both beautiful illustrations and complex plans of buildings and spaces that he hoped he could realize as material structures. Rudolph envisioned a campus of timeless monumentality, a muscular architecture that would lift classrooms and offices into the air and allow pedestrian traffic to pass beneath—that is he planned a bold looking and adventurous center in which students could acquire cultural capital.

The University's architecture was Rudolph's grand opportunity to create an ensemble of structures in accordance with his tastes and design principles, including his desire to build an "educational utopia." From the grand optical illusions and monumental appearance, to the geometric fields and gardens throughout, the exterior of the school is a vast mall, an ideal integrated city. Separated from the outside, Ring Road and its parking lots (somewhat ironically) encircle the utopian architecture. The school's various interiors are semi-labyrinthine grand open spaces that which include numerous bridge-like tiers connect the floors to common areas. With the plethora of crossing paths into larger social areas, the buildings come alive with activity. Illuminated through its win-

dows, dramatic light covers "fluted" wall forms throughout the day.

The original orange and violet color scheme, designed to reflect diffused light onto the neutral cement environment, has been changed. Vibrant chairs are now black and tan in color; the once warm tones of the seating areas and floor are now pale or blue gray. And yet brilliant color is not really necessary to appreciate the campus. Throughout the day, as the changing light flickers across the concrete exteriors, the buildings shift in appearance and color as they catch the shadow and light. As Owen Jones remarked over one hundred years ago, "Form without color is like a body without a soul."³ We just have to look closely to see the color and the soul at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth.

3 Owen Jones. *The Grammar of Ornament*. Illustrated by examples from various styles of ornament. One hundred folio plates, drawn on stone by F. Bedford, and printed in colours by Day and Son. London: Published by Day and Son, 1856. This quote was cited by several scholars at Harvard University's symposium "Ornament as Portable Culture: Between Globalism and Localism," Organized by the Departments of Art History and Architecture, April 21-14, 2012



Paul Rudolph & Firm
"SMTI / UMass Dartmouth, North Dartmouth, MA.
Auditorium. Section. Presentation Rendering"
1969
Pen
29x58.5 in
University of Massachusetts Dartmouth Archives and
Special Collections, Rudolph Drawings Collection

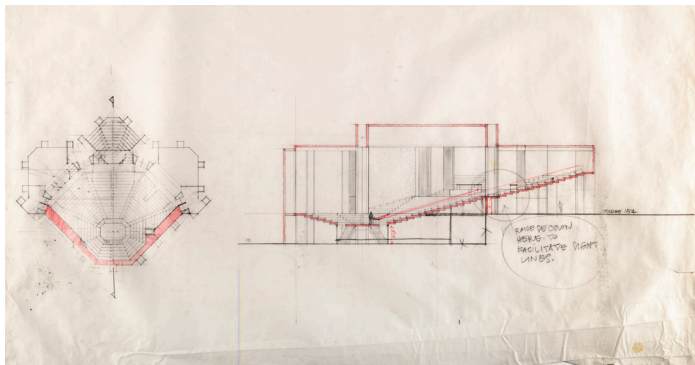
The auditorium, while part of the UMassD story, is also a form of architecture in its own right. Audience members, like participants in a theatrical pageant, gracefully exit and enter the auditorium from two sides. As though they are performers on the stage, individuals process up and down the stairs. Thomas Thiis-Evensen points out that "stairs are a path dramatized."³ They not only move individuals up and down and through space, but also guide them to places of refuge where they might observe or engage with those around them. Rudolph's auditorium (like all his

interior spaces) represents, as Timothy Rohan puts it, an "enclosed space that could engender feelings of protection and well-being for the user—the very opposite of the unnerving exposure of the goldfish bowl. Reflecting the widespread interest in Jungian archetypes, he believed that the cave was shelter in the real, metaphorical, and psychological sense."⁴

3 Thiis-Evensen, Thomas. *Archetypes in Architecture*. Oslo: Norwegian University Press, 1987, p. 297.

4 Rohan, Timothy M. "Challenging the Curtain Wall," p. 89

Interior Space



Paul Rudolph & Firm
"SMTI / UMass Dartmouth, North Dartmouth, MA.
Theater. Floor Plan and Section Study. Sketch"

1969

Graphite

30 x 44 in

University of Massachusetts Dartmouth Archives and
Special Collections, Rudolph Drawings Collection

Imagine a cozy indoor amphitheater and you will have conjured up Paul Rudolph's main auditorium at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. Although this drawing provides an analytic sketch of the fan-like seating, it does not convey how comfortable the space actually is. Rudolph's auditorium, while a simple geometric form, is also a colorful array of seats carefully arranged to give the audience a close view of the stage. Its rather shallow depth and circular arrangement brings audience members into close proximity—and thus dialogue—with those on stage. Because of

the shallowness and relatively low ceiling, the auditorium appears almost cave-like, a direct contrast with the "fish-bowls" of the International Modernists—spaces that Rudolph decried.¹ In effect, the audience becomes part of a story and part of the performance. As Philippa Tristram states, "Every inhabited building or interior tells a different story, of how life is or was."² The story of this space is the story of UMassD—those of the dancers, the scholars and the athletes who performed and who were lauded here.

1 Rohan, Timothy M. "Challenging the Curtain Wall: Paul Rudolph's Blue Cross and Blue Shield Building." *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 66, 1 (March 2007), p. 89

2 Philippa Tristram, *Living Space in Fact and Fiction*. New York: Routledge, 1989, p. 1. Cited in Molnar, Joy Monice and Vadvarka, Frank. P. *Sensory Design*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004, p. 187

Biography



Portrait of Paul Rudolph

Paul Marvin Rudolph was born on October 28, 1918 in Elkton, Kentucky. His father was a Methodist minister and his mother was an artist who inspired her son to pursue a creative profession. Rudolph enrolled at the Alabama Polytechnic Institute in 1935 and graduated in 1940 with a Bachelor of Architecture degree. Despite five years of study, he believed that he had not received an adequate architectural education. To correct this, Rudolph enrolled in the Harvard Graduate School of Design in order to study with Walter Gropius, the former director of the Bauhaus in Germany. Rudolph considered Gropius to be "a truly great teacher, a theorist, [and] an entrepreneur" from whom he could learn a great deal.¹ At Harvard, Rudolph learned the fundamental modern

design axioms that he would apply (albeit in a modified form) to all the structures that he built. As a student, he also developed a philosophy that would influence how and what he created. For Rudolph: "An architect's function is to help man forget his troubles, and enrich his spirit."²

Six months after enrolling at Harvard in 1941, Paul Rudolph was drafted into the Navy. He worked in the Brooklyn Navy Yard as an officer helped design merchant ships for the war effort. It is possible that the heavy and durable building of Naval ships affected Rudolph's later work and played a part in the development of his heavy, concrete, brutalist style.³ After the war, Rudolph returned to Harvard where he honed his skills as a modernist architect.

Paul Rudolph built many architectural masterpieces throughout the 1950s and 1960s. The sophisticated Florida vacation homes that he designed with his partner Ralph Twitchell are embodiments of the modern idiom. Not everyone believed that his other commissions were also exemplars of the modern. For example, his controversial Art and Architecture building at Yale University, like Boston's City Hall, "was initially celebrated and subsequently reviled" as Ada Louise Huxtable succinctly puts

1 <http://prudolph.lib.umassd.edu> Also See Barnes, Bruce. "Introduction" on the Paul Rudolph website at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. <http://prudolph.lib.umassd.edu/introduction>. Accessed March 15, 2012

2 Rudolph, Paul M. "Regionalism in Architecture." *Perspecta* Vol. 4 (1957): p.13. Also see Barnes, Bruce. "Introduction." Paul Rudolph website at UmassD

3 Rohan, Timothy M. *Architecture in the Age of Alienation: Paul Rudolph's Postwar Academic Buildings*. Ann Arbor: Bell and Howell Information and Learning Company, 2001, pp. 288-292

it.⁴ With its corrugated and angular cement facades, which are noticeably reminiscent of the UMassD Campus, it engendered strong reactions—both positive and negative (as do Paul Rudolph's other buildings).

Rudolph was asked, in 1963, to design the UMassD campus, which was then the Southeastern Massachusetts Technological Institute (SMTI). After the completion of his master plan, construction began on the Liberal Arts building (then known as Group I). However, it did not take long before severe financial complications forced Rudolph to leave the SMTI design team. Nevertheless, he remained as a volunteer and helped to oversee its development. Rudolph admits, "Yes, I was fired. But in a sense, my influence and efforts did not change that drastically—not at first anyway—because the other architects—and I have to emphasize that there were many architects involved—understood that there was a pervading idea, a series of ideas, wielding the campus into one, and that it needed to be an ongoing effort, so the other architects actually came to my rescue, otherwise, it would not have worked."⁵

During the 1970s, his career suffered a precipitous decline.⁶ His health also began to deteriorate. Paul Rudolph died on August 8, 1997.

Despite the few commissions that he received during his later years, his obituaries note that his accomplishments were legendary. Indeed, all we have to do is browse through any architectural history book today to understand why he received these encomiums. In all likelihood, we would come across one of his buildings—in fact, that building could be either the Yale School of Architecture or the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth.

4 Huxtable, Ada Louise. "The Beauty in Brutalism Restored and Updated." *The Wall Street Journal*, 253, 45 (2009): p. 7. Also: http://online.wsj.com/article_email/SB123551788204263927-1MyQjAxMDI5MzI1NjUyMTY3Wj.html
Accessed on April 12, 2012.

5 Antonsen, Lasse. Interview with Paul Rudolph. 1996. <http://prudolph.lib.umassd.edu/node/3831>

6 See Barnes, "Introduction" to the Paul Rudolph website at UMassD. <http://prudolph.lib.umassd.edu>. Accessed March 15, 2012

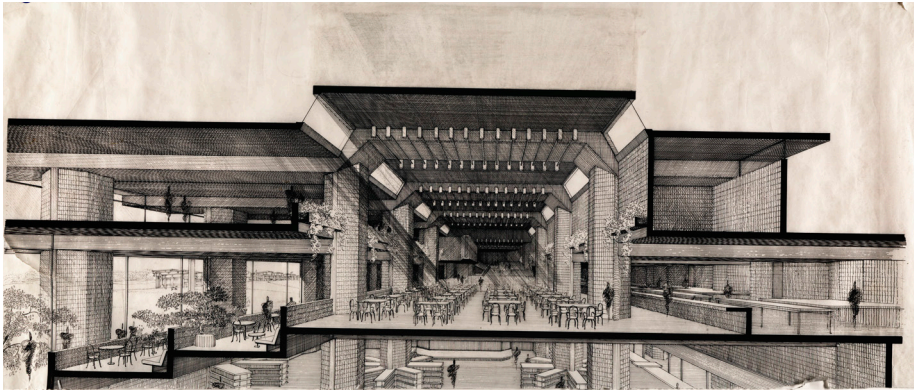
Paul Rudolph & Firm
"SMTI / UMass Dartmouth, North Dartmouth, MA.
Campus Center. Perspective Section, Presentation
Rendering"
1969
Pen
55 x 21.5 in.
University of Massachusetts Dartmouth Archives and
Special Collections, Rudolph Drawings Collection

and longer in width than one finds on most staircases. This forces the pedestrian to walk at a slower pace because each step requires a longer stride. Moreover each stairway also frames a distinct view of the interior—one that the architect is at pains for the pedestrian to see. That is, Rudolph reminds the viewer that the so-called empty space through which he or she passes is an important component of the overall interior design.

In sum: Rudolph's belief that architecture should foster social interaction informed his design of the UMassD campus. Evidence as to

whether or not he was correct can be gleaned from simple observation of how students and faculty use the public spaces today. In the campus center, hundreds of people meet and converse each day. But this is especially evident in the renovated library spaces where countless students once more converse and study in the dynamic spaces the architect had envisioned half a century ago.

Interior Space



Though it may seem surprising, Paul Rudolph's interiors—including those at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth—were inspired by the “vitality” of the Piazza San Marco in Venice, Italy. He stated that “it has little to do with style, it has little to do with materials, and it has to do with the psychology of architectural space.”¹ Rudolph's simple, open-floor plans were designed as dynamic, active spaces that foster community.

This drawing encapsulates Rudolph's belief that form should frame the communal rather than the merely functional. The coiled-shaped concrete

benches located on each landing “serve an important purpose by providing places for informal conversation and small meetings.”² Their shape allows students and faculty to enter the space within and remain there as they become engrossed in what and who surrounds them. Each small space functions as a refuge as well as a place from which to observe or to engage with others.

Like the benches, the stairwells also shape communal spaces. The architect accomplished this by altering the dimensions of the conventional step. Rudolph's are shorter in height

1 Rohan, Timothy M. *Architecture in the Age of Alienation: Paul Rudolph's Postwar Academic Buildings*. Ann Arbor: Bell and Howell Information and Learning Company, 2001, pp. 288-292

2 *Architectural Record*, McGraw-Hill Publication January 1975, “Building Types Study: Campus Architecture”, p. 124

History

After the Second World War, the United States emerged as a world power. This occurred in part, because of the devastation suffered by the peoples of Europe. Conducted on a scale and with an efficacy never before seen in history, WWII left Europe in ruins. In addition to the horrific loss of life, the continent's economies were in ruins and their populations exhausted. As a result, Europe could no longer dominate global politics and cultural tastes as it had for half a millennium. By contrast, the U.S. survived the conflict nearly unscathed (with the important exception of the loss of life). Wartime spending, in fact, bolstered the American economy and built the economic foundation for the post-war boom that led to American political, economic and military dominance.

This dominance also extended to the cultural arena. The United States assumed the role once occupied by France, England, Italy and Germany. As Mark Gelernter notes, "Where Americans had long followed European ideas and tastes in cultural matters, now much of the world acquired American tastes in popular music... and eventually [in] architecture."¹ Americans, who once favored classic historical styles, now shifted to the "ahistorical" and "visually austere forms"² of international modernism — a preference that spread rapidly throughout the world. America's indus-

trial might, booming population and enthusiasm for the new can explain the embrace of modernist architecture over the traditional.

"First of all, modernism symbolized a break with the past and seemed to stand for a shiny new age of peace and prosperity after the deprivations and nightmares of the Great Depression and the two world wars. Second, the Modernist emphasis on rational and efficient building technology accorded well with the enthusiasm for high technology... particularly for the government and the private corporations, the visual character of the modernist style seemed to up their own self-images: rational, efficient, the confident possessors of immense power and wealth."³

For Americans to embrace modernist forms, they had to disavow the socialist principles with which these forms had been associated before World War II. The principles of utopian modern architecture were initially developed in the German Werkbund and the Bauhaus, and found expression in the writings and works of Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius and Mies van der Rohe. Gropius and van der Rohe, who emigrated to the U.S. after the war, helped to

1 Gelernter, Mark. *A History of American Architecture: Buildings in their Cultural and Technological Context*, (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1999), p. 260

2 Gelernter, Mark. *A History of American Architecture*, p. 260

3 Gelernter, Mark. *A History of American Architecture*, p. 263

transform American cities—somewhat ironically—into a modernist landscape of uniform corporate headquarters. These architects and their followers built the glass geometric structures that have come to dominate the New York and Chicago skylines. Known as the International Modernist style, this flat, rectilinear glass architecture spread across the North American continent, to Brazil (with the building of the new capital Brasilia) and eventually around the world. Although many of its practitioners were European, international modernism became associated with global Americanization and corporate capitalism. That is, “corporations quickly seized upon the [glass] curtain wall because it projected an image of organization, efficiency, and more... [It] lent elegance to the ordinary work-day.”⁴

By the mid-1960s, many architects attempted to introduce expressive forms into the modernist idiom in order to break this corporate stranglehold. Paul Rudolph, the designer of the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, believed that International Modernist architects no longer met the needs of the individual as a social and psychologically sensitive being. To Rudolph, integrity in architecture had been lost and architects needed to think more for themselves rather than what the marketplace demanded (especially

in terms of costs). Rohan claims that “Rudolph feared that the cities were succumbing to a ‘wallpaper’ architecture of inferior-grade, mass-produced curtain walls.”⁵ He was joined by a host of others. Eero Saarinen, for example, asked “Have we gone overboard on too many big windows, creating too many thermo-problems? Is the flat roof really the answer to all problems?”⁶ José Luis Sert went further. He stated, “Today we need a new vocabulary, rich and flexible... By now we should have something more than mere practicality, which need not conflict with the functional but should add other elements to it.”⁷

As though responding to Sert’s assertion, Rudolph attempted to articulate his own rich design vocabulary—one in which ornament, texture and the organic figured more prominently than flat, planar and glass. For Rudolph, Sert and many of their generation, it was high time to challenge post-War Modernism. This challenge was not a direct rejection of the modernist idiom. Instead, it was an attempt to introduce the subjective and the expressive back into architecture and to return modernism to its non-corporate noble beginnings. Rudolph and other American architects sought to discover “a formula to replace that of the glass-sheathed surface, one which possessed a certain degree of

4 Rohan, Timothy M. “Challenging the Curtain Wall: Blue Cross and Blue Shield Building,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 66, 1: (March 2007), p. 86

5 Rohan, Timothy M. “Challenging the Curtain Wall.” p. 89

6 Saarinen’s comment cited by Paul Rudolph in “Changing Philosophy of Architecture,” *Architectural Record*, 116 (August 1954), p. 182

7 Sert’s comment cited by Paul Rudolph in “Changing Philosophy of Architecture,” *Architectural Record*, 116 (August 1954), p. 181

Paul Rudolph & Firm
"SMTI / UMass Dartmouth, North Dartmouth,
MA. Auditorium. Perspective Study with Bridge
and Stairways. Sketch"
Graphite
1969
18 x 36 in.
University of Massachusetts Dartmouth Archives and
Special Collections, Rudolph Drawings Collection

choose to stroll forth outside. For the most part, this shields students and other pedestrians from the elements, whether it is the beating sun, pouring rain, or heavy snow.

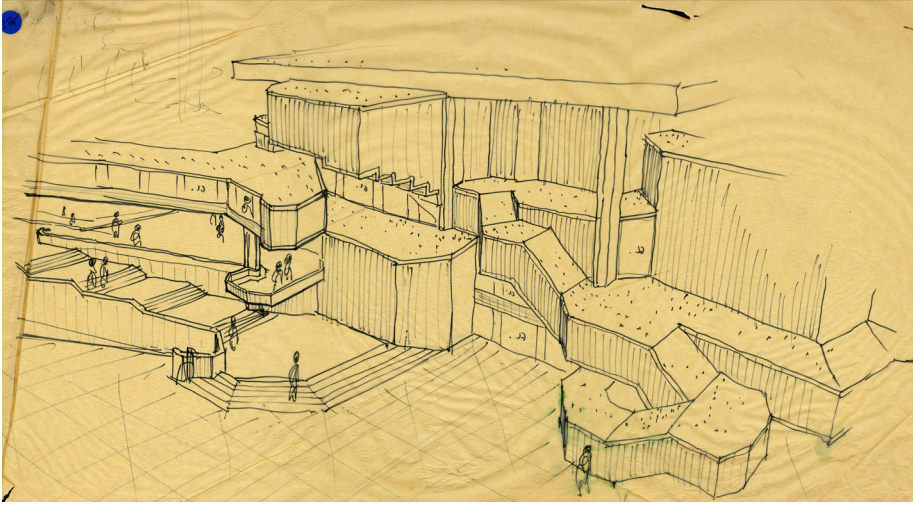
If someone chooses to walk inside of the enclosed walkway, they can still connect to the exterior of the campus and its landscape. The walls on either side have very large windows along their spans, ensuring that the pedestrian may still experience the sensation of being in an external location of the campus.

On many of the buildings' exteriors we see balcony walkways with seating areas. Professors can hold small classes here; students and visitors can take a break. Throughout the campus, the designer placed circular gardened

communal sitting spaces. Professors of the University have and continue to utilize the option of holding class with the exterior furnishings and grass fields (with planted trees for shade) as places for the students to sit, listen and exchange ideas.

By taking the time to slow down when trekking around the UMassD campus, pedestrians are acutely aware of the serene surrounding landscape and nature, juxtaposed with the protective and provisional architecture. The space Rudolph designed is an inviting arena, a harmonious environment to the open minded and visually curious person.

Exterior Space



One of the most striking features found throughout the entirety of the exterior of UMass Dartmouth is the way in which the stairways are incorporated. The stairways at the college are quite different from a common set of stairs. Unlike most stairways, the university has about 4" risers to 18" treads, resulting in elongated steps with shallow impressions in between. The stairs become almost ramp-like, yet there is still the need to take a step either up or down, depending on the direction you are walking. The design approach behind these steps makes it difficult to utilize them at a fast pace. To maneuver around this campus (where the pedestrian inevitably encounters a stairway), slow, long strides must be employed in order to maintain balance on the steps—something that Rudolph believed to be very

important. That is, he wished to force the pedestrian to slow down. As a result, the visitor, student or faculty member would have to look around. Rudolph hoped that this pedestrian would then have a greater appreciation for the landscape of the campus. He wanted his design to connect campus residents, visitors and workers to the physical school, and not just to the psychological community therein.

Another feature of the drawing is the raised walkway and exterior canopy connecting the Liberal Arts building to the Auditorium. By creating an enclosed walkway, Rudolph allowed for comfortable travel between buildings. You could choose to walk inside or outside, depending on weather conditions and personal inclination. The exterior of the walkway forms a canopy for those who

novelty and elaboration, but which would, however, preserve the sense of modular regularity.”⁸

The University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, formerly known as The Southeastern Massachusetts Technological Institute, represents Paul Rudolph’s attempt to recapture the utopian, socialist spirit of the early modernists. The University, however, was not born with Rudolph’s design. The Bradford Durfee Technical Institute of Fall River and the New Bedford Institute of Technology joined to become Southeastern Massachusetts Institute of Technology (SMTI) in 1962. Eventually SMTI became UMassD when the University of Massachusetts was reorganized.⁹

Paul Rudolph’s unified design plan allowed—at least visually—for a seamless weaving of these schools into one University. Moreover, by hiring this prominent architect, Massachusetts sent a message that education was truly important. Joseph Driscoll, SMTI’s first President, wanted to build a school to educate Southcoast citizens and to help revitalize the local economy. By giving the children of mill workers and fishermen a first-class technological education, Driscoll could begin the task of creating leaders of tomorrow.¹⁰ Paul Rudolph’s design reinforced this intention. As Endicott W. Peabody, Governor of Massachusetts

said at the ground breaking ceremony on June 14th 1964: “This is a great symbol for southeastern Massachusetts, for all of Massachusetts, for the United States itself, because it means that the young men and women of this area who have been too long neglected, in my opinion, by our state in the area of higher education - these young people can be assured of a first-class technological education which will enable them to take their places amongst the business, civic, and governmental leaders of the world.”¹¹

8 Rohan, Timothy M. “Challenging the Curtain Wall,” p. 88.

9 See the University of Massachusetts website for more on this early history. <http://prudolph.lib.umassd.edu>

10 “SMTI President Tells of Goals,” *New Bedford Standard-Times*, May 12, 12 (1963), p. 1. Also see <http://prudolph.lib.umassd.edu/node/3577>

11 See <http://prudolph.lib.umassd.edu/node/3321> for information about tapes of the Governor’s address. The tapes are listed in the archive as: Portion of Lt. Gov. Elliot Richardson’s Speech and Presentation of the Building by Paul Rudolph; SMTI President Joseph Driscoll’s Speech, Group 1 Dedication, June 5, 1966: Excerpts: Tracks 5-10, North Dartmouth, MA, (1966)

Negative Perceptions



Paul Rudolph had a clear vision and intent for the design and architecture of the Southeastern Massachusetts Technological Institute campus, currently known as University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. One of his ambitions in the design of the campus was to connect the school community with the surrounding township and to use innovative techniques with materials that were easy to mass produce and were visually engaging. He wanted the design of the campus to attract students. "His architecture was itself intended to be the spectacle

that generates as much excitement as possible."¹ Though he successfully realized his vision of a unified design for this public university, today's students do not respond to the campus in the way that earlier students had. Rudolph himself could not have anticipated the reactions that visitors would have when they saw his work—both initially and in years to come.² The diagonal paths, cantilevered balconies, and rough surfaces seem to either dazzle or confuse, and often just perturb visitors.

In large part, these negative emotions arose and continue to arise

1 Rohan, Timothy M. *Architecture in the Age of Alienation: Paul Rudolph's Postwar Academic Buildings*. Ann Arbor: Bell and Howell Information and Learning Company, 2001. p. 306

2 Rohan, Timothy M. *Architecture in the Age of Alienation: Paul Rudolph's Postwar Academic Buildings*. Ann Arbor: Bell and Howell Information and Learning Company, 2001. p. 307

3 *Scrimshaw Yearbook*, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, Ed. by John R. Ledwidge (1967)

Paul Rudolph & Firm
"SMTI / UMass Dartmouth, North Dartmouth, MA.
Aerial Perspective. View Looking Northwest. Rendering
Ink and Pen Drawing"
1963
34 x 50 in. (also reproduction 10 x 15 in.)
University of Massachusetts Dartmouth Archives and
Special Collections, Rudolph Drawings Collection

that the spiral suggests—have washed up against a protective beach. Rudolph designed these spiral pathways in order to create a shifting perspective for the individual traversing the campus.

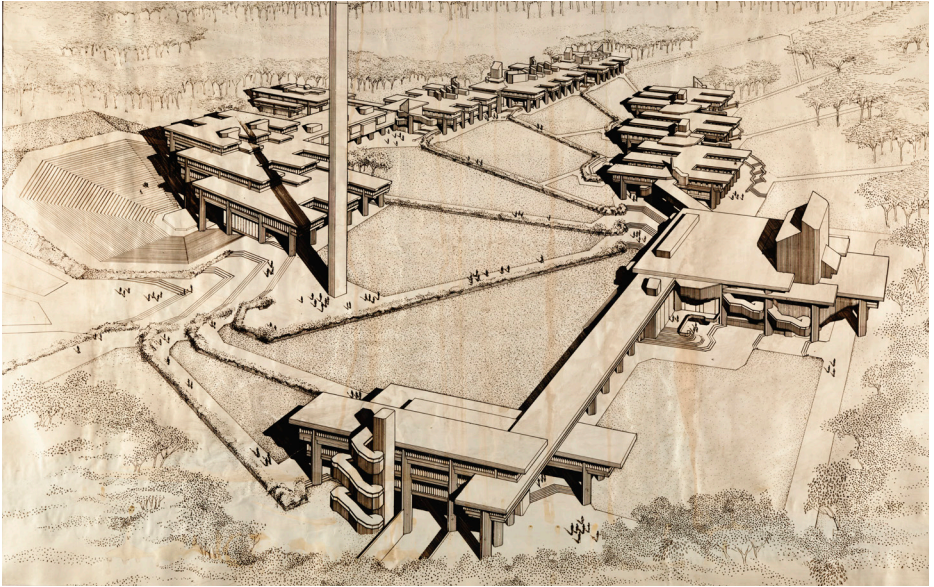
As one meanders around the campus, the individual's visual experience within the exterior space creates an optical illusion with the structures appearing larger and further away than they are in reality; a technique Paul Rudolph referred to as forced perspective. However, the design of UMassD is so large that its illusion is subtle, perhaps even invisible to the layman. To satisfy his taste in revisiting ancient architectural principles, Rudolph aspired to recreate a well-recognized achievement in optical illusions derivative of sixteenth-century stage design, and of Italian piazzas. To fit into the spiral mall, Rudolph needed an angled shape. The most suitable example would be the Piazza San Marco, perhaps because it

is the only documented L-shaped piazza in the western world.³ Rudolph found in the Piazza a kind of aesthetic feat conducive to his mission.

What Rudolph succeeded in creating was a timeless campus to inspire and bring together future scientists, artists, and leaders. As any individual visiting, attending, or working at the college walks throughout the public campus grounds, the angles and variation in proportion trick the eye into seeing the collection of structures as much larger than they truly are. With the completion of Rudolph's plan to encapsulate an inspirational center of social educational capital, UMassD has become a community space where angled pathways guide the pedestrian across geometric fields into its campus center or to its circular perimeter. All individuals, in other words, are drawn together into a "profound scholarly" space devoted to learning and to community.

3 Rohan, Timothy M. *Architecture in the Age of Alienation: Paul Rudolph's Postwar Academic Buildings*. Ann Arbor: Bell and Howell Information and Learning Company, 2001, pp. 288-292

Exterior Space



Southeastern Massachusetts Technological Institute (SMTI), currently the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, was designed to appear as a timeless educational enclosure, to educate the young men and women who had to find work in a struggling economy, and to establish a potential social meeting place for students, faculty and citizens of the local southeast MA communities. Rudolph's desire to create and to demarcate communal places has materialized in the various pathways that flow through the common areas—from the exterior park-like grounds to the enclosures that connect the academic buildings. All these pathways lead to the heart of the campus: the Campanile (or tower). Thus,

the first-time visitor will have a great deal to see. Once immersed on campus, he or she will experience a place that is hardly the “concrete jungle” that many purport it to be.

The campus layout was inspired by Thomas Jefferson's mall at the University of Virginia and by Frank Lloyd Wright's abstracted mall design for the Florida Southern College.¹ The latter influenced Rudolph to explore diagonal and spiral shapes for the design of the campus.² As seen in the illustration, the entire campus space is connected with diagonal pathways that flow into various spirals. The contour of each spiral coil nestles up against an ensemble of structures as though the spiral paths—like the seashells

1 Rohan, Timothy M. *Architecture in the Age of Alienation: Paul Rudolph's Postwar Academic Buildings*. Ann Arbor: Bell and Howell Information and Learning Company, 2001. P. 284-285

2 Ibid

Photographer Unknown

"Group 1, construction completed, 1966" pc3,
SMTI Construction photographs"

1963-1966

Photograph

10 x 8 in.

#267. University of Massachusetts Dartmouth Archives
and Special Collections, Rudolph Drawings Collection

because few have understood the architect's guiding principles behind his rather unique aesthetic. Contemporary students focus on the campus' isolation, lack of color, and the foreboding look of the buildings. However, when the campus was first constructed, Rudolph's work was generally very much appreciated by the students. Images in the 1967 *Scrimshaw Yearbook* glorify the campus' architecture. In the early days of the year book, Rudolph's portrait and character remained a part of the University culture. The only color photograph of the interior in the '67 yearbook shows contestants

in the "Miss SMTI" beauty pageant. The photograph depicts the contestants standing in front of a much more vibrantly colored campus interior than what we see today.³

Several years after the construction of the school, the architecture had ceased to be an important aspect of the yearbook. Over time, a decrease in architectural imagery in the yearbooks seems to indicate a decline in admiration for the architecture. For example, the 2010 yearbook contains scarcely any pictures of the campus, and instead focuses primarily on the student body and student life. Given

that contemporary architectural critics often praise the design of this campus, it is fairly striking that the unique appearance of the campus is absent from depictions of student life.

When asked to reflect on the campus architecture and design, current UMassD student Aimee Carpenter explained that “there is too much concrete, and it’s super hard to get around.” When first visiting the UMassD campus, many people tend to get lost because of the similarity between the buildings’ appearances, along with the circular design, which can be disorienting when navigating the grounds. Rudolph’s circular design functioned as a barrier to the world on the outside, thus allowing students to focus on the scholarly community within Ring Road.

The photograph of the SMTI campus reflects what many students think and feel. It displays the cold harsh “feeling” of the concrete buildings. To many, the campus seems as if it is a “prison”. The environment of Southeastern Massachusetts underscores this impression. The concrete façade does not shimmer in the dreary New England winter as it would in the Florida sunshine (where Rudolph designed several houses). The image is not one that invites, or suggests a sense of community. Rather, it depicts a place that is cold and ominous. The

perceived lack of color (or warmth) in and around the campus (as well as in this photograph) only adds to the negative outlook that many have about UMassD. We, as artists, designers and photographers at UMassD know that all art—including the photograph on page 8—represents a subjective point of view. The photographer can manipulate color, light and mood. -take another shot—and another “look” at our campus.

Schurcliff & Merrill Landscape Architects & Planners
"SMTI/ UMass Dartmouth, North Rendering SMTI/
UMass Dartmouth, North Dartmouth, MA. Land-
scape Master Plan. Rendering."

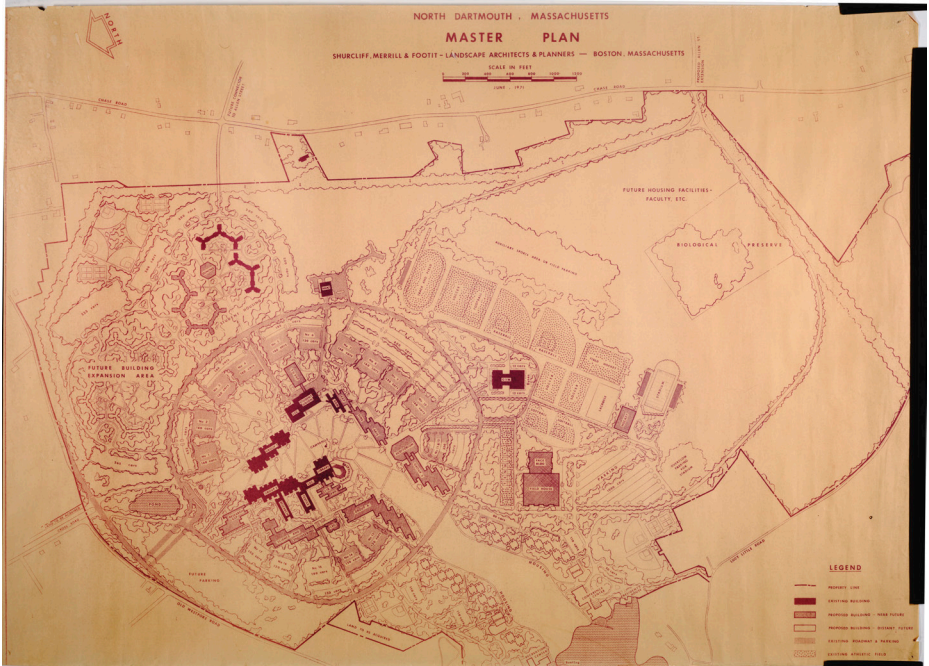
Pen

1963

30 x 42 in.

University of Massachusetts Dartmouth Archives and
Special Collections, Rudolph Drawings Collection

ficult. Rudolph's master plan showed how the buildings would be placed within groups while still leaving the campanile as the central focus of campus activities. The buildings were placed in a circular pattern to instill a sense of unity and a perfect educational utopia that kept out the "outside world."



between the two (other than the fact that BSU is surrounded by the city, and cut through by a road) is that all of the buildings of BSU appear to have been built by different architects, in different styles, with no central idea or core to them.

According to *Architectural Record* in January of 1975, Projected enrollment (5000 students by the mid 1970's) called for significant volume of buildings to be constructed on a rapid schedule, Rudolph was

invited to head the design team to provide a strong master plan and design vocabulary to avoid the visual and functional chaos which rapid growth brings.⁴

With such rapid growth, there frequently comes rapid change, and this could be the reason for loss of connectedness of the campus that Rudolph had hoped to achieve. Though Rudolph tried to create a "unified" ground allowing for expansion, the growing number of students accepted each year made this increasingly dif-

4 *Architectural Record*, McGraw-Hill Publication January 1975, "Building Types Study: Campus Architecture", p. 124

Negative Perceptions: A Rebuttal

Construction on the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth campus began in 1964. As evident in the drawing on page 12, Rudolph's public University is an affirmation of Modernist aesthetic principles. Although each of the UMassD buildings is a stripped down geometric structure, Rudolph did not entirely adhere to Adolph Loos' anti-ornamental manifesto.¹ Instead, his multiplanar concrete facades fracture the conventional glass curtain wall.

As with William Morris' arts and crafts residence and Frank Lloyd Wright's Robie House, Rudolph's brutalist buildings embody a truth to materials' aesthetic in which form is both functional and ornamental.² We see this in the Art and Architecture building at Yale University, as well as in his original designs for SMTI (currently University of Massachusetts Dartmouth), where ornamentation is integrated into each design.³

At Yale, the exposed concrete of the buildings' exteriors exemplify his notion of ornament. Arguably, Rudolph chose to do this in order to animate the stark matte "gray" facade. This is especially evident at different times of the day when the changing light and shadow dance across the windows and concrete walls. The light breaks up the facade into an abstract, glittering energy force

field. Rudolph later incorporated this vision into the construction of SMTI.

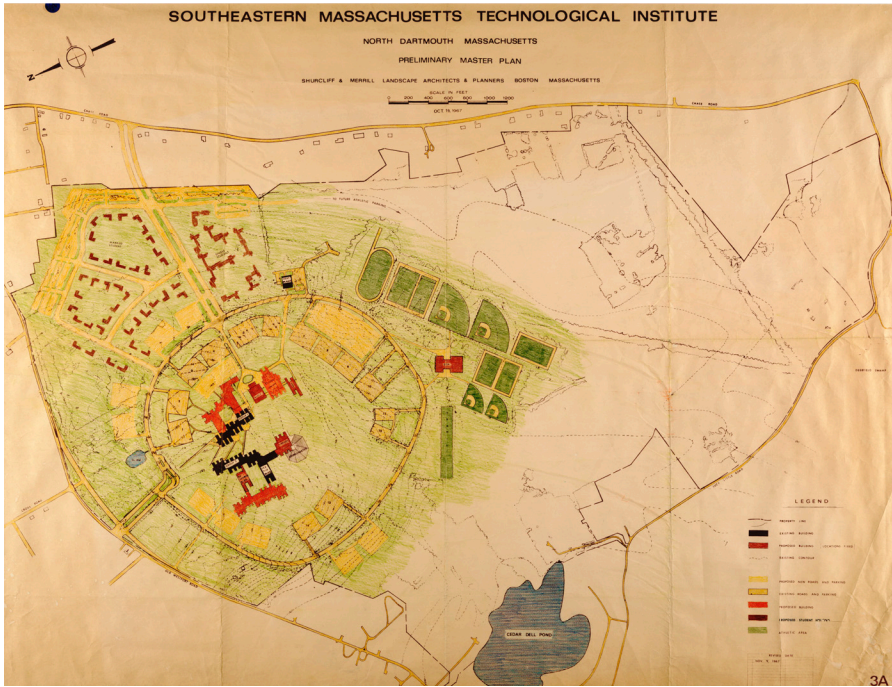
Rudolph's ornamental concrete structures enliven his "utopian" educational campus. He believed that all learning should take place within an educational center that was separate from the outside "profane" world. As this drawing displays, he placed alcoves with seating areas throughout the academic buildings and the exterior grounds to encourage and facilitate student and faculty interaction.

Today, many students, faculty, staff and visitors are unaware of Rudolph's utopian plan. For some, the University buildings' "grayness" gets in the way of how they experience the campus. This was not the case in the early years of UMassD. In 1967, when the school was still known as SMTI, the *Scrimshaw Yearbook* prominently featured many beautiful images showcasing the school buildings. In many of the early yearbooks, we see close-ups of the ornamented, ribbed concrete. The photographs show shadows dramatically transforming the textured exteriors. During the 1960s, the SMTI community clearly admired and appreciated the architecture of their school. This attitude has changed over the years as our appreciation for the campus and its architectural design has turned from wonder to distaste.

1 Loos, Adolph. "Ornament and Crime" (1908). In *Ornament and Crime: Selected Essays*. Trans. Michael Mitchell. Riverside, CA: Ariadne Press, 1998, pp. 167-176

2 Rohan, Timothy M. *Architecture in the Age of Alienation: Paul Rudolph's Postwar Academic Buildings*. Ann Arbor: Bell and Howell Information and Learning Company, 2001

3 Ibid



Currently, many believe that the design of the campus is depressing. To them, the school appears jail-like and isolated from the rest of society. Dave Bray, a Fitchburg State University senior who spent his freshman year at UMassD, believes that the school looks “futuristic and imperial.” Andrew Moore, who lives in the South Coast area, states that the campus “gives the feeling of being contained inside a prison.” Commenting on the poor maintenance, UMassD senior Ariana Casey maintains that: “The cubby holes [the alcoves in the Liberal Arts

Building] would be neat if they didn’t look like bats were about to fly out of them.” This is far from Paul Rudolph’s original intention for the school. We might conclude that this misunderstanding stems from a lack of information among the students and from an administrative failure to properly execute Rudolph’s design concept.

This aerial map of the early master plan (see above) illustrates this notion quite well. All the buildings are enclosed within a ring, which itself is almost entirely disconnected from Old Westport Road. This separation was,

Educational Utopia

Paul Rudolph was one of the leading modernist architects of the mid-twentieth century. All of his work conformed to a singular aesthetic principle, one that underlined a distinct political philosophy. This is especially evident at Southeastern Massachusetts Technological Institute (SMTI)/University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. Rudolph believed that the architecture of UMassD should showcase an ideal—that of an educational utopia. With this in mind, he designed a campus with a central core that could evolve and grow outward over time.

The central organization of this is purposely a moving or dynamic one. The idea, the central core, must be strong enough as a center of the campus, and other architects will add on to that. But the cohesiveness of the center remains intact.¹

The open-ended design of UMassD is a result of the unique need for certain buildings and college campuses to be expandable and allow for educational growth. Rudolph's belief in the inevitability of campus expansion also reflects another of his architectural philosophies: that buildings are

never finished. In Paul Heyer's book *Architects On Architecture*, Rudolph explains, "The complexities of our time suggest that buildings should not be thought of as complete within themselves – they should have an open end, and should change."²

Paul Rudolph approached the campus design of UMassD as a single entity where each building was part of the unified design that reflected his beliefs regarding education. In a *College University Business*: "College of the Month" essay,³ the author states: "Something that is very rare among today's college and university buildings—a single architectural concept strong enough to control the design of a whole campus – this is embodied in Southern Massachusetts Technological Institute."³ The author is referring to the overarching concept that dictates the form and position of each building of the campus. In most of today's college campuses, the buildings are disjointed and often have no continuity between them. For example, schools within an urban setting change as they grow and the buildings are spread out across the city. Even rural universities lack Rudolph's design unity. Bridgewater State University (BSU) is spread out over a large amount of land, much like UMassD is. The difference

1 Cook, John Wesley. *Conversations with Architects: Philip Johnson, Kevin Roche, Paul Rudolph, Bertrand Goldberg, Morris Lapidus, Louis Kahn, Charles Moore, Robert Venturi & Denise Scott Brown*. New York: Praeger, 1973

2 Heyer, Paul. "Architects on Architecture" NY: Walker and Co., 1966

3 *College University Business*, College of the Month; Architecture Gives Campus Unity of a Single Building, Feb 1967

see the paths that lead across to the library and eventually to Ring Road—paths that suggest the ease students encounter when travelling through the campus grounds.

The paths that expand outward from the Campus Center are somewhat narrow, encouraging pedestrians to be aware of others on these walkways. Paul Rudolph's pathways and routes act as veins; they channel students, visitors, and faculty through the building, depositing them at benches, alcoves, or tables. Those who do not find their destinations or distractions within the building are guided around its edge and to the exits or stairs, circulating people to other parts of the campus.

Since it is the major hub of activity at UMassD, the Campus Center represents a dichotomy: it is both a refuge (a place to suspend movement) and a place students are drawn to before they move on to another destination. The Campus Center is a building that clearly embodies Paul Rudolph's belief that architecture can function as a space that fosters community.

Schurcliff & Merrill Landscape Architects & Planners
Title: SMTI / UMass Dartmouth, North Dartmouth,
MA. Preliminary Landscape Master Plan. Rendering
1963

Ink and colored pencil on paper
47 x 36.25 in.

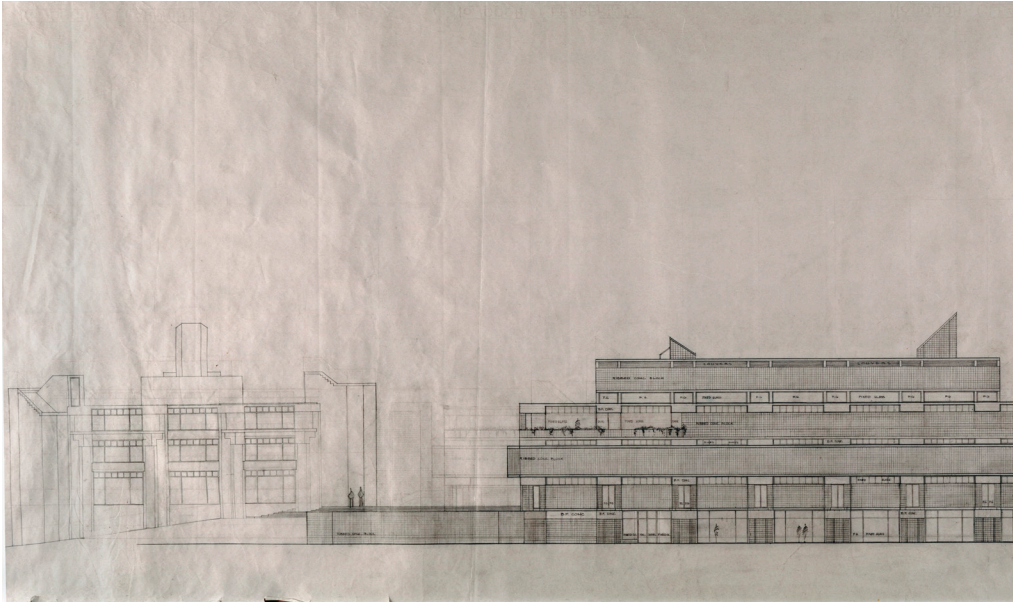
University of Massachusetts Dartmouth Archives and
Special Collections, Rudolph Drawings Collection

in fact, intentional. Every detail behind the construction of the campus confirm this. The man-made hills, which obscure the parking lots and the placement of the educational buildings inside the Ring Road perimeter, point to Rudolph's intention to create a campus separate from the commercial, everyday world.

Although UMass Dartmouth may seem 'ugly' at first, in reality, it is the product of an innovative, unique vision. We hope that this drawing and others in this exhibit will illuminate Rudolph's aesthetic vision for our

campus. In the end, though visitors may not agree that ours is a beautiful campus, they will have gained an understanding of why the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth looks the way that it does.

Educational Utopia

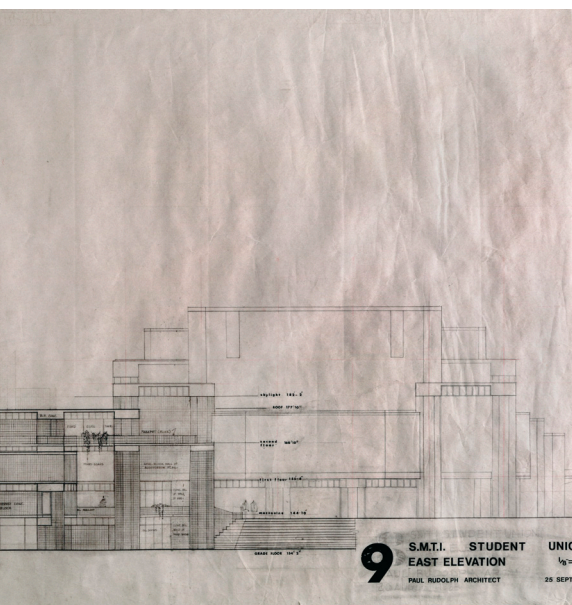


The University of Massachusetts Dartmouth Campus Center exemplifies Paul Rudolph's communal utopian design. Like the trunk of a great tree, the Campus Center branches out into various structures, connected through pathways and entrance/exits directed from the other buildings. Aside from its offices and the school store, the design represents a three point dining area: the 'Commuter Cafeteria', the 'Sky Ranch Grill' and 'The Underground Café', which serve food to all persons of the university. The overarching unity of the campus design

was meant to embrace the community and to encourage the sharing of space among the students and faculty. Rudolph said, "An age expresses through its artists certain preferences and attitudes which are inherent to that age, but no man can ascertain at the time those which have validity."¹ The campus is still visited by the "Crème de la Crop" of the architectural critics community, who come from all around the world to see Rudolph's work.

The Campus Center is a booming community crossroads. Like a bazaar, student organizations and

¹ Rudolph, Paul. "Rudolph." *Perspecta*, 7, (1961) p. 51



Paul Rudolph & Firm
 "SMTI/UMass Dartmouth, North
 Dartmouth, MA. Campus Center.
 East Elevation. 9. Rendering"
 Pen
 1968 – 1971
 24 x 68 in.
 University of Massachusetts Dart-
 mouth Archives and Special Collec-
 tions, Rudolph Drawings Collection

clubs gather on the ground level adjacent to the dining areas. For many students, this is their first experience of the interior of the campus. Upon entering the Center from the entrance near Ring Road, one will quickly see the large span of glass just to their left. Paul Rudolph opened up the space via his treatment of the inward-facing side of the building. His ceiling-to-floor windows stretch across the building and allow natural light to spill into the seating/dining area. They give a wide, clear view of the quad and campanile outside, and transform the

building into something fresh and invigorating.² In other words, Rudolph's attempt to design dynamic structures that would engage and stimulate those who moved through them appears to have succeeded at UMassD.³ Because of the window arrangements, light activates the interior space, and in return, the students who occupy it.

The large windows allow for a constant relation to the environment outdoors, and the fairly high ceiling space creates an open atmosphere, diluting the feel of a claustrophobic space. From these windows, we can

2 Rohan, Timothy M. "Challenging the Curtain Wall: Paul Rudolph's Blue Cross and Blue Shield Building." *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 66, 1 (2007): p. 84
 3 Rohan, Timothy M. "Challenging the Curtain Wall: Paul Rudolph's Blue Cross and Blue Shield Building." *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 66, 1 (2007): p. 88