
The Plan for Wayne University

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Wayne University is the educational center of the metropolitan Detroit community. Situated in the most densely populated area of Detroit near the Art Institute, the Central Library, and the Historical Museum, it becomes an important part of a planned cultural center for Detroit. For this high purpose, it should have a fitting architectural environment, serene but stimulating—useful and delightful.

In resolving this plan, it was necessary to take full account of the following considerations: the very high cost of land in this area; the projected, enormous student population (35,000 by 1970); and the obvious traffic problems of a heavily-used urban area, both pedestrian and automotive.

Because of those factors, any repetition of the typical American campus seemed basically wrong. It seemed logical to follow, instead, the pattern of the Renaissance city, with open squares and narrow streets.

For this reason, we created a large superblock, about one-half mile by one-quarter mile, within which we arranged buildings in a series of arcaded courts around paved areas. These areas would be varied, some with trees, some open, and others with fountains. These should give the student walking through the campus a series of delightful experiences.

We have assumed that most of the ground would be paved. Because of winter use and heavy future traffic, grass seemed impractical. We hope to achieve in most areas a pavement more interesting than bare concrete.

We also plan to have the buildings arcaded, enabling the students to be under shelter in inclement weather. We

have avoided covered connections between buildings to keep the campus from turning into a maze.

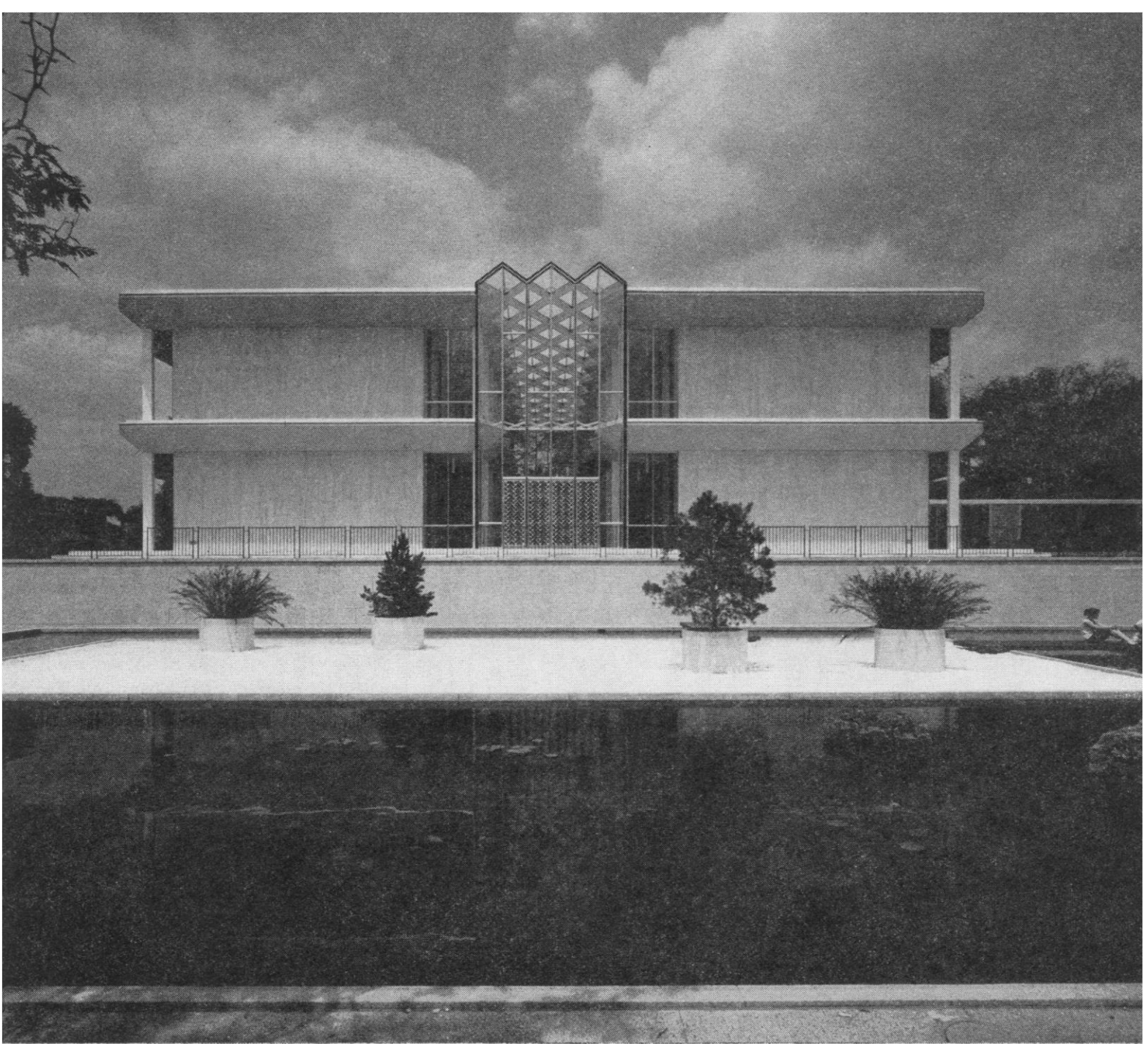
Second Boulevard, which runs north and south through the length of the campus, will become a mall. We plan to keep this open, with trees, so that it will become the basic point of reference for the campus. Thus, a student wandering through the various courts will at some point come to the open mall and reorient himself.

With regard to the architecture, we felt it was important, since the University is a meeting place for many ideas, that it not have the dogma of a single architectural idea. Thus, we have recommended to the University that several able architects be engaged to provide a variety of architectural thinking within the discipline of the site plan.

One determination that we made earlier in the study was that classrooms could be interior spaces, thus providing for the possibility of larger and fewer buildings and preventing the campus from becoming a conglomeration of many small buildings. Only offices, laboratories, and drafting rooms would require daylight.

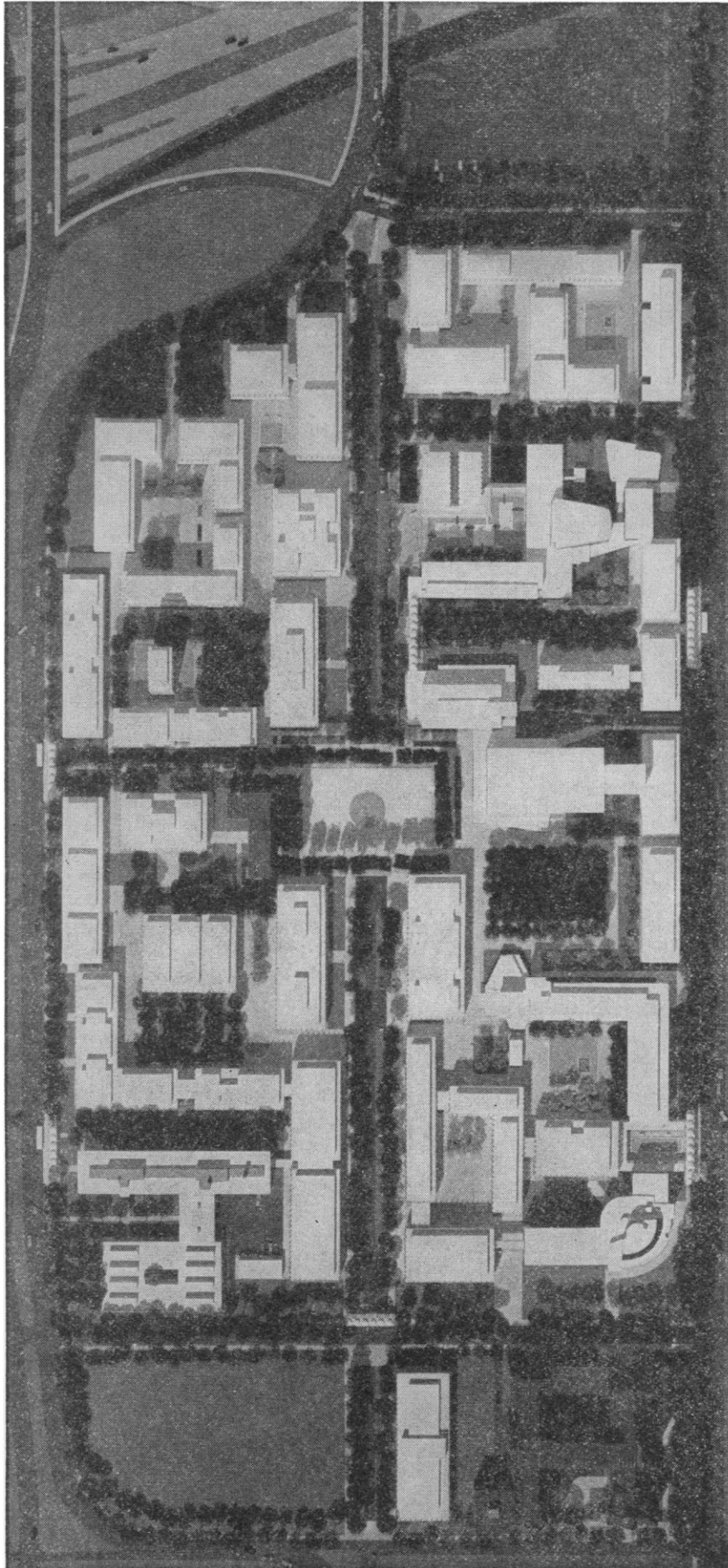
The earlier buildings shown on the site plan are complex. To avoid this complexity, the newer buildings have been shown in basic rectangular forms, related to each other and to the whole pattern. This we felt was essential since complex buildings crowded together would result in architectural confusion.

We hope that the architects who will build buildings on this campus will keep in mind the necessity for serenity, particularly in this environment—as a background that will invite intellectual activity, and as a haven from the confusion that industrialization has brought to society.



McGregor Memorial, Wayne State University

Yamasaki, Leinweber & Associates



Photos: Baltazar Korab

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Wayne University, Detroit, Michigan