

Project for the School of Music

The present Music School is cramped and partly derelict. The practice rooms are not well insulated; there are few places where faculty and students can meet informally; the building's entrances are not clearly marked; there is no place for small public recitals; the noise from passing traffic disturbs people working in the studios. Earlier analysis suggested that some 16,000 square feet of new building would be needed to solve these problems. At our suggestion, the Dean of Music agreed that he, and a group of people from the department, would themselves make a design for the new space, according to the process which we have proposed. A group of seven was chosen: the Dean, three members of the faculty, a student, and two of us. We seven formed the core group. We worked together for one full week, developing a schematic design. During the week other persons were brought into the group, as matters concerning them arose. The university planner helped in discussion of pedestrian movement; the instrument repair man was invited to design and locate his workshop; undergraduates were asked to conceive of a plan for safe, private storage of their instruments.

The work started with a survey of the existing buildings. The survey showed which parts of the existing buildings could be left intact because they were working

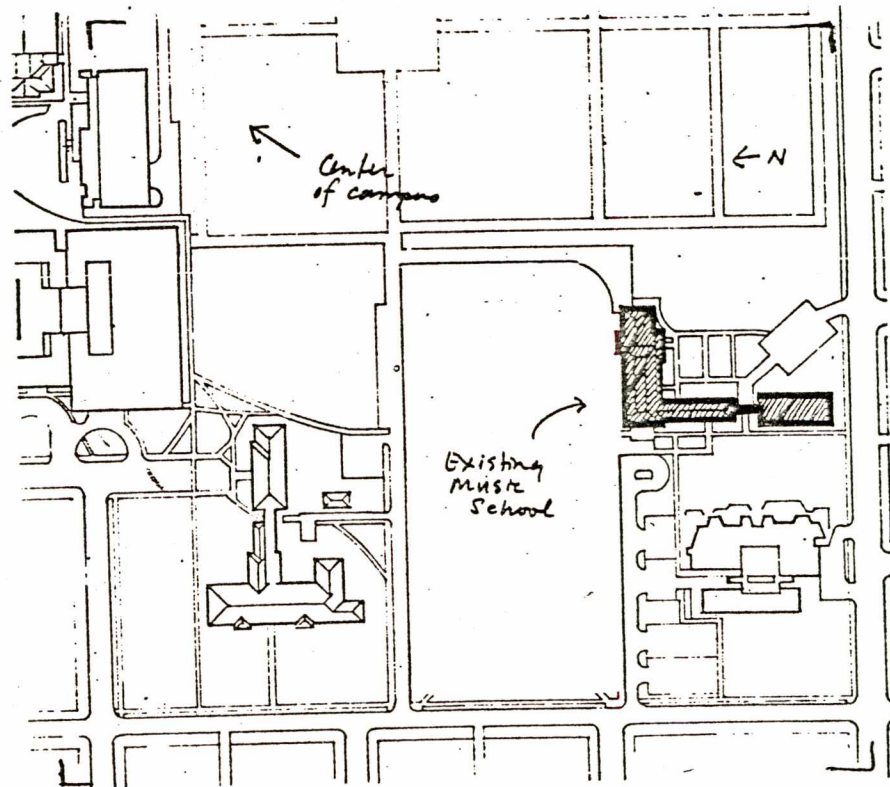
well; which parts required repair; and which parts needed a complete overhaul. The dean and faculty added a program which described the various kinds of new spaces which were needed.

Then the group set about the design. Design decisions were made step by step, taking one pattern at a time, in the manner we describe in Chapter 6, page 140. The patterns used to generate the drawings are presented in Chapter 4. Decisions were always made by consensus; the university planner and the staff members from the Center acted primarily as advisors, pointing out implications, making suggestions. Most of the design work was done on the site itself, walking around the existing buildings. Drawings were made to record the work we did out on the site; but these drawings were always made after decisions had been reached on the site. Designs were not created "on paper."

Here is the sequence of drawings made by the users during that week.

1. This drawing orients the sequence. Existing buildings of the School of Music are outlined.

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II-E "The existing building"  
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2. This drawing establishes possible locations for new buildings. The lines of pedestrian approach are set down. Potential buildings are indicated by blobs, drawn roughly to scale.

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II-F "Monday"  
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3. This drawing takes the opposite tack. Instead of showing the possible building sites, it locates the possible outdoor sites that could function as small hubs of activity.

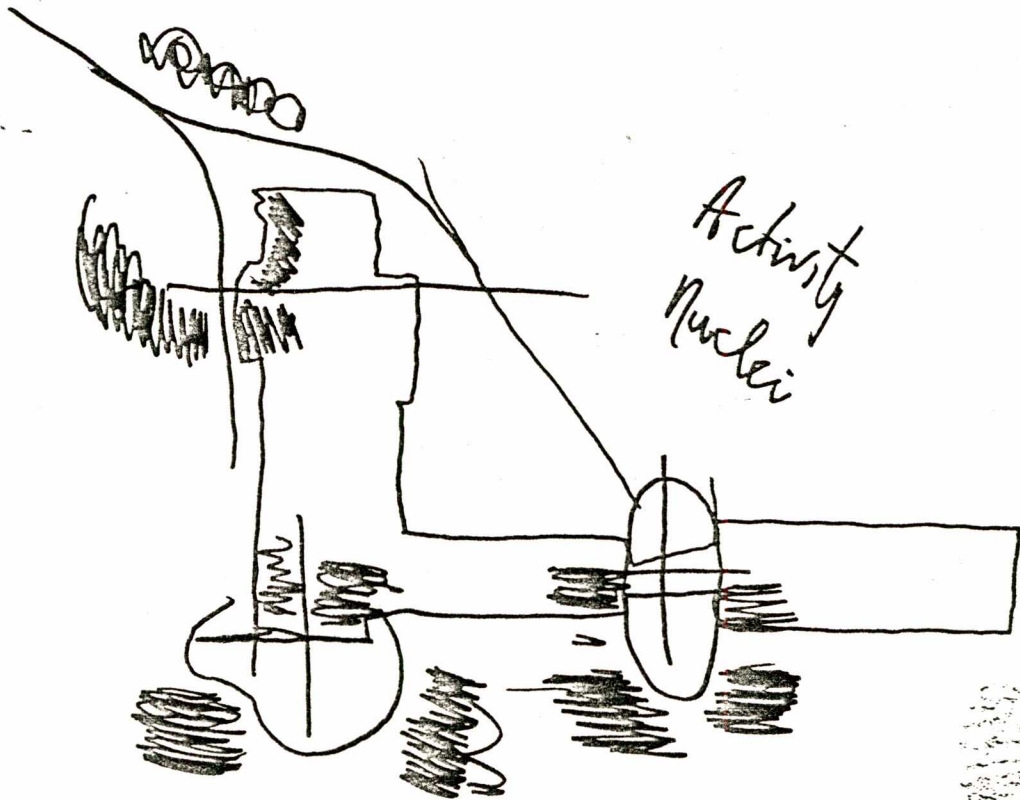
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II-G "Tuesday"  
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4. At this stage the group chose places for buildings, and places for public open spaces. In addition, new functions were assigned to areas in both the old and new buildings. Critical adjacencies, such as the proximity of practice rooms to practice auditoria, were set down.

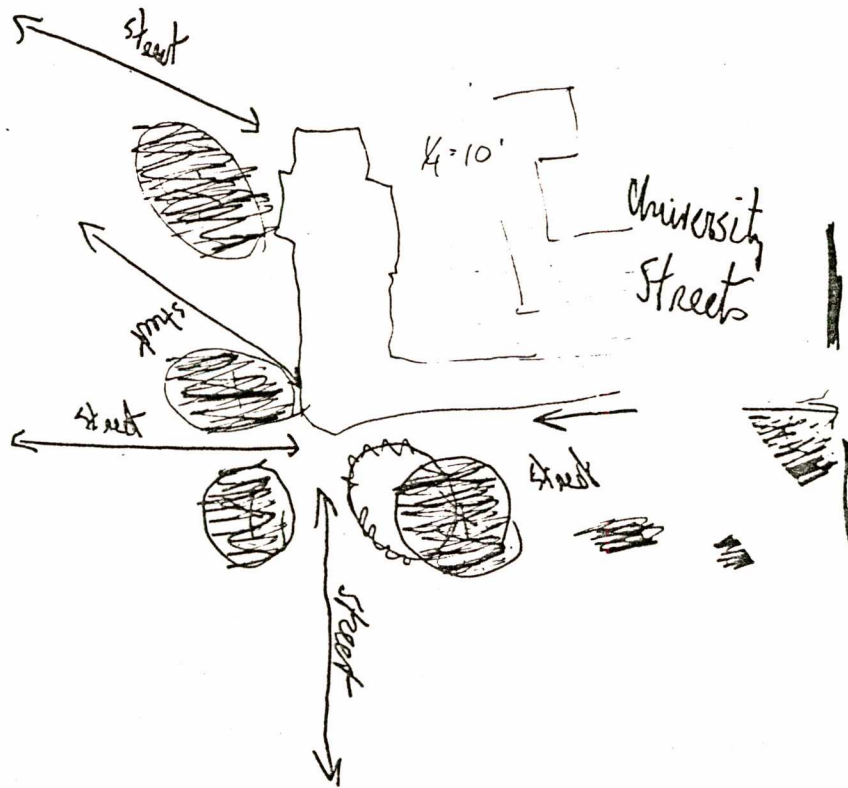
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II-H "Wednesday"  
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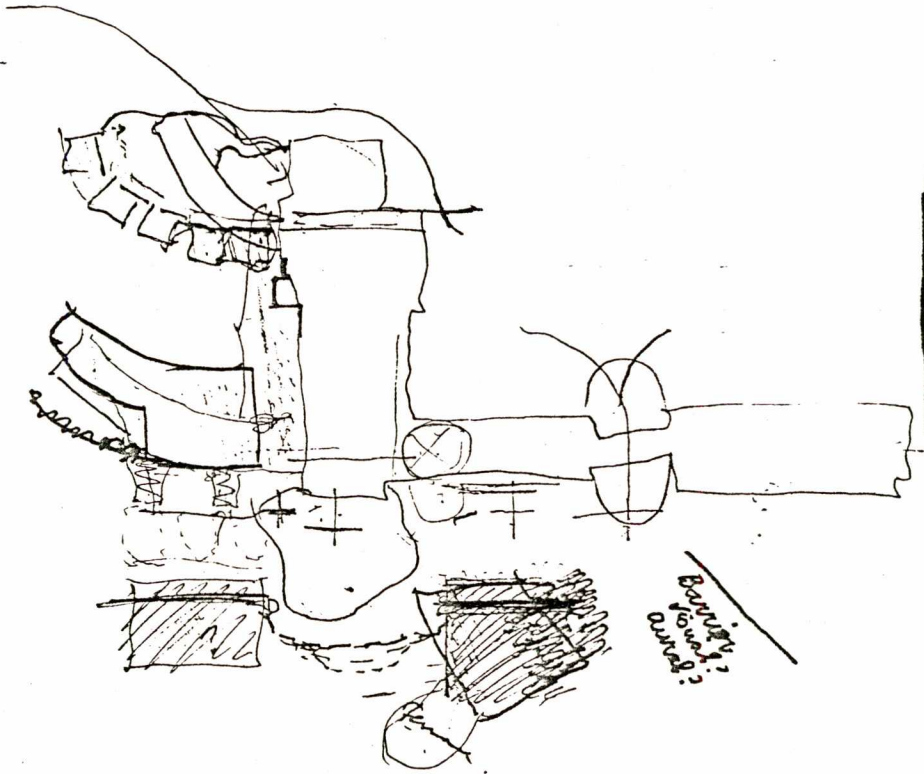
II-F



II-G



II-H



5. This drawing was made as a result of long hours walking around the site, imagining the exact location of buildings, the feeling of the open spaces, and the clarity of circulation among the various buildings. The buildings were more precisely scaled at this point, and rough space assignments were fixed.

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II-I "Thursday"  
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6. This is a detailed drawing showing the organization of piano and organ teaching studios.

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II-J "Thursday afternoon"  
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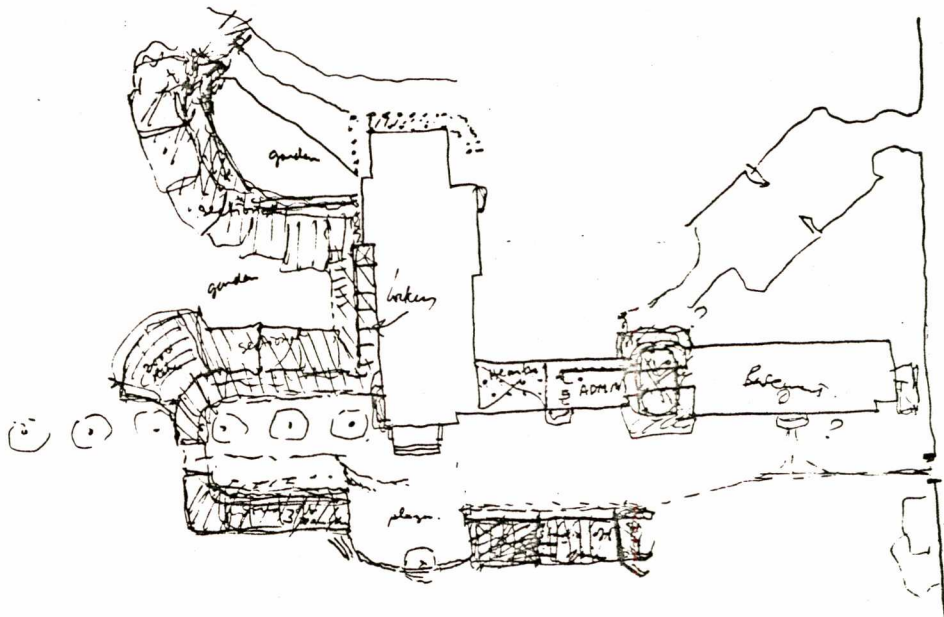
7. This schematic drawing represents the culmination of the week's efforts. The design, of course, is still far from finished. It does show, however, what a user group can accomplish in a week of intense design work.

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II-K "The final drawing"  
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We believe that this design goes a long way to establish the case for participation. The people involved



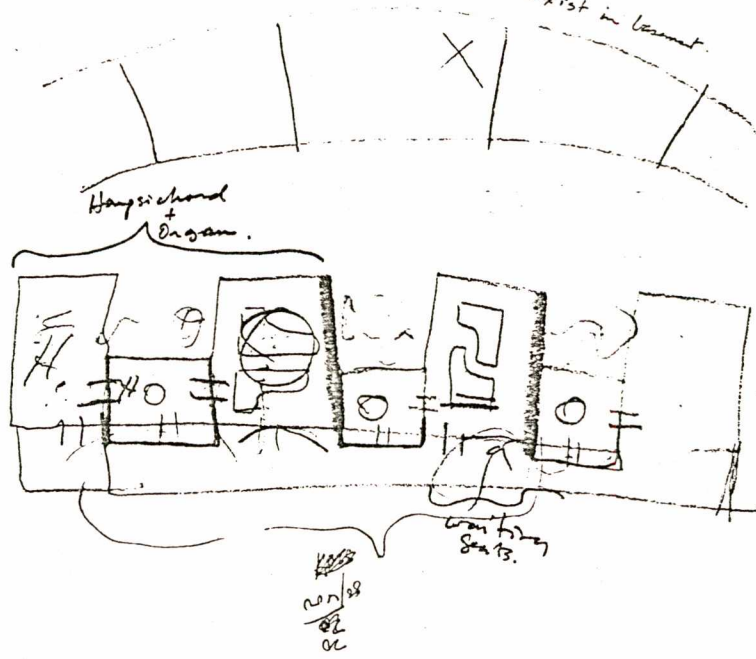
II-I



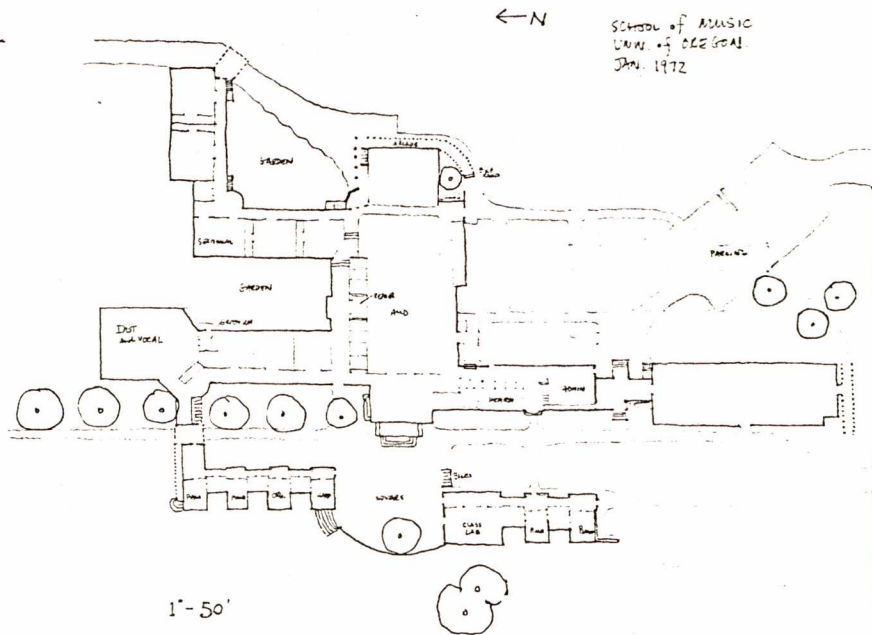
Cape  
Local parts  
Family friend's studio  
Kitchen area  
Admin  
Play area

II-J

Practice rooms:  
45 needed.  
13 exist in basement.



II-K



entered fully into the design process; they could make the design what it is only because of their working knowledge of the day-to-day activities and problems of the school. Even though the design is still in its infancy, you can see already how alive and rich it is, how much more love and care there is for every corner--than in the over-simple box-like designs so often churned out by architects.

The Dean of the Music School, Robert Trotter, made a statement describing the experience of this week of design, a few months after the event. The statement appeared in a local newspaper, AVENU, School of Architecture and Arts, University of Oregon. The following is an excerpt:

". . . Midway through the week everybody experienced a kind of overnight conversion. A kind of "what's going on here?" What is really happening? What have I been doing that I must not be doing, and vice versa? And the same happened to everyone else in the group. So that Wednesday, there was an extraordinary difference in our experience--from Wednesday to Friday afternoon we really went into high gear. . . .

And, for most of us, certainly, it was the first time that we had to deal in spatial terms, in spatial imagery. Also, in a way, rather rare, we began to deal with each other directly--and the experts were not playing cat and mouse with us, but were in effect

saying . . . damn it they didn't say: they kept making us realize that it was not so much that they knew exactly what to do and just weren't telling us: it was that the essence of what came out had to be from us."

Let us turn now to the practical implications of our discussion. What steps must be taken in a community like the University of Oregon, where there are a large number of users who are not legal owners of the buildings, to allow these transient users to take an active part in the process of designing buildings? The practical steps needed are expressed by the following principle:

The principle of participation: All decisions about what to build, and how to build it, will be in the hands of the users. To this end, there shall be a users design team for every proposed building project; any group of users may initiate a project, and only those projects initiated by users shall be considered for funding; the planning staff shall give the members of the design team whatever patterns, diagnosis and additional help they need for their design; the time that users need to do a project, shall be treated as a legitimate and essential part of their activities; the design team shall complete their schematic designs before any architect or builder begins to play a major role.