

Columbia Plan Includes Underground Expansion: Columbia Master Plan ...

By ADA LOUISE HUXTABLE

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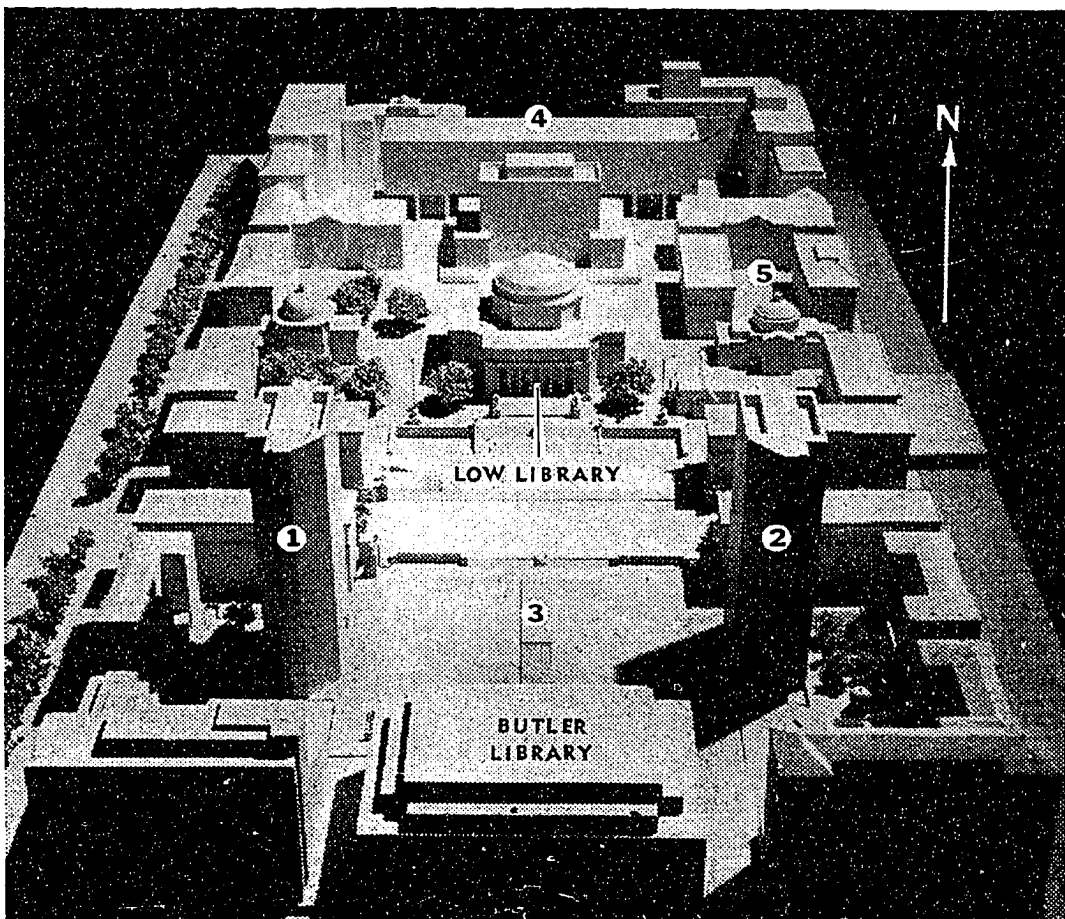
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A new master plan for Columbia University's academic and housing needs will be officially submitted to the university's trustees within the next few weeks.

The plan calls for having half of the new construction underground and for keeping all academic growth within present campus boundaries. According to I. M. Pei, the architect commissioned by the university to do the study in November, 1968, the two-level, dual-purpose plan consists of "all community-oriented proposals."

The Pei firm's recommendations are a result of 15 months of intensive consultation with trustees, administrators, faculty members, students and community groups. The study was undertaken after Columbia's expansion program had become a critical issue in the 1968 protests that disrupted the university and led to administrative and policy changes.

The plan calls for a 50 per cent increase in campus construction. Most of the underground construction would be on the South Campus, keeping



Model illustrates the interim plan for Columbia recommended by I. M. Pei. At 1 and 2, towers would rise 15 to 20 stories. Underground building at 3 would house gymnasium and student centers. At 4, science center and at 5, underground area for architecture school.

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Columbia Master Plan Calls for 50 Per Cent of New Construction to Be Underground

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the South and Central campuses open, with the North Campus heavily built up.

The South Campus underground facilities include the controversial gymnasium, for which excavation in Morning-side Park was halted by student and neighborhood demonstrations.

South Field, in front of Butler Library, would be restored to its present appearance after an underground building program that will take about three years. About three-quarters of a million square feet of construction would be added in this area.

The plan's most striking visible feature is a pair of 15- to 20-story towers, flanking Butler

Library to the east and west. They would supplement the underground facilities as an "academic space bank," providing about 300,000 square feet of flexible accommodations for departmental and administrative uses.

The other major construction is a large science center on the North Campus, behind Uris Hall.

"We have exploited underground construction to the maximum," Mr. Pei said. "It has the advantage of no housing relocation, and it gives us the chance to tie the whole university together and to provide community facilities."

Mr. Pei stresses that the proposal is an "interim report" in a continuous planning process. The actual form of the

towers, for example, is still undetermined. The schematic suggestions are meant to offer solutions to some of the problems caused by university-community conflict, as well as to guide growth.

In addition to the underground gymnasium, which has been approved in principle by an enlarged gymnasium committee, the below-grade facilities of the South Campus would include a 100,000-square-foot student activity center.

This would consist of lounges and meeting rooms, a rathskeller, bookshop and stores.

The activity center would be part of a concourse for all-weather, underground circulation and serving the entire university. This concourse level

would connect directly to the Broadway subway for public access to athletics and other events. At some points, it could be open to the sky.

Central Campus Unchanged

The Central Campus, focused on the domed, Low Library, is not to be changed. The one important addition will also be underground. This is the expansion of the Avery Library and the School of Architecture, the first to be programed in accordance with the master plan.

Designed by Alexander Kouzmanoff, a professor at the School of Architecture, the building consists of several subterranean levels joining the school's present home, Avery Hall, to Fayerweather Hall, which would be added to

its facilities. The architecture school has not been consulted previously on building programs.

The North Campus science center will have a computer center, library and auditorium, as well as classroom buildings. This requires concentrated construction, doubling the present density to 1,850,000 square feet. A life sciences building by the firm of Warner, Burns, Toan & Lunde is already well advanced in design.

The planners have also suggested a solution to the problem of university and neighborhood housing. A survey of off-campus Columbia property found 4,500 families living in Columbia-owned buildings, of which 1,900 are not university-related. Some residents

have indicated their willingness to move if the university guarantees a single move to appropriate accommodations at moderate rentals.

To provide both institutional and community housing, the plan proposes a kind of apartment-building "musical chairs." It would start with a Columbia-owned block from 121st to 122d Streets between Amsterdam Avenue and Morningside Drive.

Eleven families would be moved from the block to a building to be rehabilitated at 130 Morningside Drive. Then 50 per cent of the block would be demolished for 300 new apartments, of which half would be for the university and half for the community. Selective moving and construction

would continue on this basis, always building housing accommodations first.

The new housing would use "piggyback" subsidies, including Federal aid, rent supplements and tax abatement, to achieve acceptable rent levels. A total of 1,500 new units could be built eventually on Columbia property in this fashion. The first units could be finished in 18 months.

The problems involved in this part of the plan are constantly rising costs that could jeopardize rent levels even with subsidies, the necessity of achieving "community credibility," and hesitation among the trustees about committing university resources for community housing.

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