

Changing the Face of Mt. Oread

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"Far above the golden valley
Glorious to view
Stands our noble Alma Mater
Towering toward the blue."

IN 1863, when the founding fathers of the University of Kansas were planning the first campus on the promontory where Corbin Hall and North College Hall now stand their choice of site was obvious. From this point, 180 feet above the little town, spread a vast panorama from northwest to southeast. The then barren hill top was an ideal place for the new seat of learning—a lofty throne whose sweeping views would inspire and lift the minds and hearts of future generations of college students.

But our fathers' dreams were not big enough. They did not foresee the steady, sure growth of the tiny college of pioneer days into the complex giant of today. And each successive administration (despite the occasional mention of planning as a good thing) failed and failed again to plan for growth. Who could foresee the automobile and the ever greater and greater demands of the state for education?

But there always have been the expeditious planners of the moment who have been shackled by countless human limitations of courage and imagination and tied to the monetary restrictions of the legislature and the ever pressing hurry-hurry demands of time. The gracious, simple, dignified and spacious campus that once proudly spread her great green slopes and grand views is becoming a hodge podge of congested pedestrian and vehicular traffic in a maze and clutter of awkward and closely spaced buildings that are gradually blocking the views, filling the spacious green areas and adding to congestion.

The last cycle of growth here at K.U. is causing many an alumnus to express concern over the elimination of old landmarks, such as the removal of old Snow Hall and the old windmill. Unwanted changes will always shock those who reminisce of times gone by, but if these changes are orderly and beautiful, then the oncoming generations may recall new landmarks such as the carillon tower or the Memorial Drive that are now shaping the new character of the north slope. Along the drive the future may bring many garden spots such as the rock wall garden of the east entrance, and the plantings and paths near the tower. The Stadium area is gradually being dressed up, and graceful walks are replacing random paths.

The greatest inherent beauty lies in the landscape of the north slope, in the long sweeping views over the Kaw Valley, the

great stretches of open grassy hillside, the little lake nestled in the western slopes, and the wooded areas of Marvin Grove, north of Bailey. Even from the northeastern and the northwestern approaches to the campus the green sweep of the hillside provides a fundamental stateliness to the Campanile and buildings along the skyline. Marvin Grove and the wooded sections north of Potter Lake should remain (in part, at least) as the traditional woodland trail.

Here one finds the quiet seclusion that adds reverence to the landscape. Nevertheless, it is evident that tree planting can be overdone. A few great trees at the top of the hill can enhance the view by framing it and lending scale to the distant scene, but a grove of sapplings down the slope will soon crowd out the view entirely. Since the view is the greater beauty some great trees may someday be carefully pruned or selectively cut.

The sunny south slope, which has been considered as the "back door" to the campus, will become a main approach, for here will be built many of the buildings of the future. It is the hope of the writer that these will be planned to embrace wooded green areas where the walks and drives and the sunny views to the south will reflect orderliness, spaciousness, and repose that cannot now be found in the helter-skelter arrangement of existing shacks and service buildings. Plans are being made for graceful, broad walks to connect the new science building area with the top of the Hill. These will curve down terraced slopes between Haworth and Hoch and between Robinson Gym and the new Journalism building.

The new field house will have large areas of playfields east and west with great parking areas to the north and a grand boulevard along the east. Yet, despite its great size and the vast areas of development around it, the jewel of the landscape of the south will be the warm, distant views over the Wakarusa Valley from the hilltop.

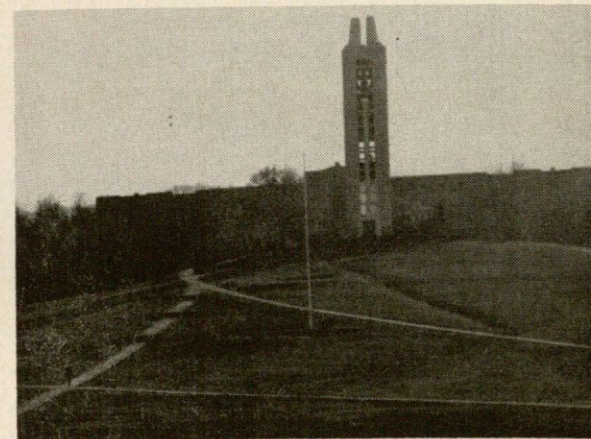
A great seat of learning should reflect dignity, stateliness and order in its physical character. Simple spaciousness is the principal basis for dignity in beauty. The writer believes that the great heritage in beauty of the original campus site may die slowly with each cycle of growth if the intangible values are lost in the expediency of the moment. Necessity and the factors of time and day-to-day physical needs are always pressing upon the judgment of those involved in planning. The friends of this University can do a great service by adding their support to the ordered, dignified and spacious growth of our University.



A SMALL THING but the wall garden at the east end of Memorial Drive adds beauty to the campus. Designed as a natural outcropping of rock it blends into the Hill.



STRONG HALL'S BOWLEGGED SIDE-WALK resulted from an effort to direct pedestrians along a natural route to save the grass and shrubs.



OPEN GREEN SLOPES preserve the wonderful view of the Kaw Valley.

WHAT WILL HE DO HERE? On the weed choked slope behind the new science building Alton Thomas plans to build "hanging gardens." Stop by next summer and see them.

