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LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

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#21
Bryan

June 23, 1936

Dr. William Lowe Bryan, President,
Indiana University,
Bloomington, Indiana.

Dear Sir:

In studying the various problems involved in the planning of every area of considerable extent, such as your University campus, both the designer and the client are often handicapped by the difficulty of visualizing the situation adequately in three dimensions, from maps and plans. The constant use of topographical maps, building plans, perspective sketches, and so forth, gives the designer a varying ability to see the problem as a whole, but the difficulty of presenting his ideas so that they will be fully understood by the layman is often serious. The only form of presentation which overcomes this difficulty almost entirely is a model, made at a reasonably large scale.

In the course of our work for various educational institutions, we have made several such models — some including only a limited area for the study of a specific problem, others covering the entire property and showing all the details possible within the limits of the scale. We enclose photographs of two such models, one for Phillips Andover Academy, the other for Phillips Exeter Academy, made in 1929 and 1930. They are at the scale of approximately thirty feet to the inch.

A model is, of course, based on a topographical map, from which the ground forms are reproduced accurately. Buildings are modeled from architect's plans, or from photographs, or both. Trees are made to scale, and while they do not necessarily represent existing growth exactly, except for individual specimens of special size or character, they are arranged on the model to indicate the type and location of such growth with reasonable accuracy.

It has occurred to us that you and your Trustees might consider it worth while for the University to have such a model for the purpose of studying the future development of the campus. Obviously, in selecting the site for a new building and in determining its size, form, and character, it would be easier to visualize the problem in relation to existing conditions, and so to reach conclusions with a clearer understanding. If a model had been available last winter when the location and form of the Medical Building were under discussion, we believe that even those who favored the site of Assembly Hall would easily have seen how crowded that site would have been for the building, as then designed. The study of lines for roads, paths, planting, and even of minor details is both simplified and expedited when aided by a model.

While we believe that this use for purposes of study — by you and the Trustees, your architects, and your landscape architects — would be its chief justification, we know from the experience of other institutions that the publicity value of a model is also large. If placed in a conspicuous position in your Administration Building, or in the Union, where alumni and other visitors, as well as the student body, could see it frequently, we believe that interest in and enthusiasm for the growth of the University would be stimulated and that this might well result in appropriations or private gifts for specific

projects. In exhibitions given by architects and landscape architects, models always receive greater attention than drawings or photographs, because they are more easily understood. In all probability, a model that people can see and understand would count a good deal in crystallizing, coordinating, and stabilizing the future development of the University's complex physical plant.

A model of your entire campus, from Indiana Avenue to Jordan Street and from Third Street to Tenth Street, made at the scale of forty feet to the inch, would be six feet by seven feet in dimension. The new topographical map would serve as a basis. The new buildings would be made from the architects' drawings, and the older buildings from photographs taken especially for the purpose. Judging from the actual costs of the Exeter and Andover models (see enclosed photographs), a model of your campus would cost about $6,000. The amount of detail shown governs the cost to some extent, but we believe a satisfactory model could be made for that amount.

We realize that this expenditure in itself may seem large, but if considered merely as a small part of the total cost of the proposed work now on your building program, it could reasonably be called insurance for the development of a well organized and efficient plan. Considered as an investment alone, the model might prove distinctly profitable.

From our point of view, the model is not a necessity, though both we and your architects should welcome its use in studying your problems. As an aid to you and your Trustees, we believe that its value would soon be demonstrated. We believe the matter is worth your serious consideration.

Very truly yours,

Olmsted Brothers

Enclosures:
Photographs:
176 - 291
3118 - 55