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#### ● [Rip Out The Stilty Building And Put In A Pub!](#)

Well, it doesn't have to be a pub. Almost anything would be better than what is there now.

Merely a fantasy:

The architects' office on stilts on the south side of West Wheelock Street across from Psi U fraternity is completely out of character with the neighborhood and aesthetically ungainly to boot. An old house, moved from somewhere else (perhaps Parker House from the Elm-Maynard Block) could be placed here and a pub installed. Put a beer garden out back connected to Old Nugget Alley (I refuse to spell it "Olde") and pave the alley with brick. One might even put in a cellar with proper beer engines...or even a brewery on the premises...

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#### ● [End Tuck Mall Now!](#)

Will it ever reach its potential? Its mall-ness depends on its being lined with buildings and its length being greater than its breadth, which it is not in its current state of (in)completion.

Building one of the new dorms west of Butterfield, replacing Murdough with something that responds to Baker (or leaving its site empty for the view), and lining the mall with regularly planted trees would help. Or we could just put it out of its misery and plant a building right in the middle, in line with Lord. Perhaps a building with an arch through its center, or better yet, a round building with a traffic lane on either side (the traffic might be worth getting rid of anyway, to make the mall into a nice forested green...)

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#### ● [Spires on the Green and the New Blunt](#)

On the sides of the Green are two spires; Baker tower and the bell tower of Dartmouth Hall. On the corners of the Green are two more: Wilson Hall and Rollins Chapel. There is one visible down the street at the White Church, and there was once even a spire on the Inn. It was even proposed that College Hall be given a spire in early drawings.

What does this mean for a building that replaces Blunt Alumni Center? It could have a spire as well, one to match Rollins in just about the same relation to Baker. This new Blunt could be an interesting building: it should relate to Administration Row by sitting about the same distance from Parkhurst as Parkhurst does from McNutt (filling in the vacant lot that is there now, former site of the Chandler building); it would have to relate to Tuck Mall and Sanborn in generally the same way that Silsby does (and would face Silsby directly); it would have to accommodate Crosby (and hopefully use Crosby's front door, which the current Blunt does not manage to do).

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#### ● [Density is Desirable](#)

Indeed it is. We cannot afford to sprawl with buildings in absurd locations like the River. There is room on campus or in the Elm-Maynard block for several more buildings (Webster and Sanborn have always been accepting of mirror buildings, there is room behind Mass, there is room for a fourth New Dorm, and there is room on Tuck Mall or south of Webster Avenue). A relatively dense campus allows for a sense of community (people who eat in the same places and travel the same paths do not segregate themselves as easily into "west-campus types"). In particular, the campus should be designed so that students do not feel the need to *drive* to Food Court, which is incredible in this little college town (this problem of walking distances is particularly important in winter). The Denise Scott-Brown plan for the north campus takes this into account and mentions the importance of density. But the five-minute walking radius which the plan uses as a guide is badly placed with its center on Baker; this is not the center of campus (though it may be physically located in the middle). The center of the campus falls in the zone defined by Thayer, College Hall and the Hop, because this is the only place that students are guaranteed to visit every day (food and mail are more essential than library books, no matter how idealistic we are). Incidentally, the River falls in neither the DSB circle nor a new one centered on College, and Maynard Street is barely included in the latter.

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#### ● [The Folly: Do We Have Any?](#)

The idea of follies at Dartmouth was suggested by Jack Wilson of Facilities Planning.

What is a folly? It is a traditionally English architectural edifice of the 18th or 19th century, object isolated in space, having no purpose (at least any more); something that is unusual, smallish, eye-catching, exotic, often humorous or fanciful or just plain a sham, often built by an eccentric or having a personal meaning. Follies are also devoted to strange causes, legends (often people make up a myth: X built it, there's a tunnel from it to something else...), the commemoration of an event, or things like the goat house (which is decorated with goats). A folly is not a statue, and is not usually representative of the human form--there is an architectural component to it, and one can often enter a folly (many are small buildings or towers). There is a difference between a folly and a monument, though; follies are less public, less central, intended for the interested or curious but not as a proclamation.

Are there any follies at Dartmouth? Certainly: a list of follies might include Bartlett Tower (it fits all the important criteria very well) and the Sphinx tomb. With a less rigorous definition, one might add Hallgarten (like the medieval abbey of Chartres, it is a remnant of a larger building, though it does get some use I admit), Dragon, the observatory, and if you want to get into a more theoretical definition and include the ephemeral and temporary, the information kiosk on the green, the bonfire, the carnival sculpture, and even reunion tents would count. Perhaps even the smokestack (one folly we can do without).

What will the folly of the ninties be? Does our ideological outlook allow for follies, or is today's folly the giant chicken stand by the highway? For that matter, what will be named the folly of this century (or the second half of this century) be? It seems that women's societies do not intend to build tombs of their own, otherwise we would have an opportunity to add to the folly collection. Or perhaps all of Dartmouth could build a new Bartlett Tower by adding a row per year as they built the first one, or we could come up with something similarly additive and unique? But it is the new Dragon tomb that will provide an opportunity to answer the question of a folly for our time. What will their new house be like? Here's hoping they do something interesting, fanciful and Romantic (big R) as befits the Victorian nature of such a society. Here's hoping they get an adventurous architect and build a fantasy instead of wanting it to be "exactly like the old place." If they do it like the old one, at least hide the antenna and get some thicker columns, guys.

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#### ● [The Unfinished at Dartmouth](#)

The unfinished, the unrealized, the unaccomplished, the incomplete, the not quite there... There are many architectural edifices that were intended by their creators to be parts of larger wholes but just never made it. There are also many things that remain from earlier times that seem to stick out now because the situation has changed around them. In fact, each side of the Green is "incomplete" to a different degree. Here are a few examples: a duplicate of Reed was intended to go where Rollins is; Baker was intended to have two more buildings attached (a duplicate of Sanborn behind Webster and a duplicate of Carpenter southwest of SAE); Webster had a companion building in the now gone White Church; Administration Row has marched all the way up North Main Street but has not yet taken Crosby (home of Blunt); and on the south side of the Green the Hop doesn't enclose the court as it was intended (the way the Inn does on its half). Also, Mass Row was intended to face a long green area or lawn for pedestrians, and Tuck Mall was not lined or ended the way its creators imagined. This is not all bad, and it adds charm and character that could not be intentionally created.

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#### ● [The Great Elm before Parkhurst:](#)

That elm that stands where Wentworth meets North Main street has grown out into the street a bit, and that is great. Drivers are not used to a tree flaunting their clearances like this one does, and they have to adjust a little as they pass it. The girth of that tree is a minor refutation of the rational ordering of the world, the strict and dead gridding of so many streets that this country is known for. It is a reminder of nature's presence and nature's disregard for our petty human orderings. That is a tree you could give a name to. No town treeplanters would ever plant a tree in a place like that today, and of course when it is gone they will have no reason to replace it.

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#### ● [The Bad Door Handle: A Hop Complaint](#)

As you walk from Paddock Music Library up to the H.B.s, you must pass through a door at the top of the stairs. Every single time I use the door (and I am sure this happens to others), I end up pulling instead of pushing. Why is this? This mistake occurs because the handle is incompetently designed. The beautiful work of brass has what must be 24 inches of lovely gripping edge on the top, bottom and side, just like the "pull" handle." But the center of the "push" handle is not cut out like that of its counterpart. Is this minor difference some sort of obscure symbology we are supposed to remember? Should proper use of such an intuitive and often-used product as a door handle require learning and memory? If so, why can other buildings get away without it? There is no question what to do with the side door to Hitchcock, for example. One reason the door is so confusing is that the handle does not bear the usual "Push" legend that most Hop doors have--but this prompts the question of whether the other doors should need the inscription at all. Should wording be necessary, especially when the building is used by people who cannot see, cannot read, or cannot read English? Any object that is incapable of communicating the simple instruction to push, especially an object so basic as a door handle is a pathetic piece of design.

But the door handle is merely the tip of the anti-intuitive design iceberg that is the Hopkins Center. Of the three main entrances, the one that is grand leads to a little-used theater, the one that is hidden leads to the crucial and high-traffic mailboxes, and the one in the back (why should a building facing two streets have a back in the first place?) presents little face at all, and yet is the major way for townspeople to attend events in Spaulding Auditorium.

The building (it is a megaplex, something that should have begun instead as a collection of typologically seperable buildings to be added to over time) is unreadable and can not be navigated intuitively. We know what one part of the north facade looks like, but the Hop as a "building" is amorphous and unnameable. What does the side of the Hop look like? Does it have a side? It is a collection attempting to be one building, and in doing so it sacrifices the possibility of intuitive navigation that is so obviously present in Baker Library. Sanborn and Carpenter are obviously separate buildings, so they must house different departments. That is simple. They are not hidden away in some basement only to be found by the initiated. The lack of a central corridor that leads from anything to anything in the Hop is a major barrier to being able to find anything by where one guesses it should be. If you are standing in the cafe and do not know the Hop, where would you guess the exit to the Green is? Where is a major theater, or a minor one? Perhaps there is something outside in the "courtyard" ... but is it a courtyard at all, if you cannot walk in it and cannot see people using it for travel because they are hidden away at the sides instead of signalling a useful navigation route right down the center? The stopgap measure of installing signage is one solution to the problem, but the question "How do I get out of here?" is still heard often in the Hop. When a replacement is built, perhaps the idea of a labyrinth will not seem so attractive.

Regarding the massing: why, when the towers of the auditoria are so tall, does the Hop use awful basement levels and only one or two above-ground levels instead of taking advantage of a three- or four-story building, especially when the offices and Inn in town it backs up against are that tall? What a waste.

One of the most terrible aspects of the Hop is its destruction of the street wall on the South facade, if it can be called a facade. The designers obviously had great contempt for the street and the town, or at least that is what their design communicates. A human scale, a rhythm of openings and entrances, and a continuous building line along the street are not too much to ask, especially as the music department is forced to burrow into the earth when they could have been given aboveground offices with views of the street and windows for fresh air and light. The College could even have rented out the ground floor of a row of offices on Lebanon street to make some money, but that space is completely wasted and deadening today. The parking lots, too could be placed behind one range of the building, or at least a wall, to keep them from creating large holes in the street wall and destroying the spatial character that the street once had.

The north facade, while not as destructive as the south, has similar problems. The one recognizable attempt at a front to the building, the arcaded entrance to the Moore Theater, seems like a main entrance but is not. The rest of the building hides behind a sunken garden and clumps of trees instead of continuing the line established by the Hanover Inn in response to Baker.

The abdication of any attempt at enclosing or defining space on the front of the building is made startlingly apparent when one walks down the steps and past the absolute front of the Inn on the right side while noticing the vague gardens and protruding lumps of the building on the left. And that bluestone paving--those slabs should be disposed of and replaced immediately for they do not work in New Hampshire and were never meant to.

What were they thinking, making Alumni Hall look like a warehouse? Studios are one thing, but the space that one can expect to be the most conservatively-decorated on campus, a space for the gathering and the nostalgia of classes from bygone days, should not be made bland, let alone unbelievably characterless. The addition of wall hangings and plaques livens things up a bit, but they are obviously an attempt to make the best out of a pathetic room.

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#### ● [Architectural Problems with the First-Year Plan:](#)

If for no other reason, the First-Year Plan as it was originally proposed (or at least part of it) should be rejected out of hand because it requires new buildings in the River and the Choates. This is the exact opposite of what the College should be doing: abandoning the River to grad students (or tearing it down) and replacing the Choates with a real dorm.

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#### ● [Arrgh! The New 'Push' Sign On McNutt](#)

The door has been around for 93 years, and now they feel the need to put a frankly unattractive sign which reads "Push to Open" (where the heck is language going? Why is "Push" not good enough--why would one push a door if not to open it?) To tell the truth, there are older hinges on the outside which hint at an earlier position for the door, but I'm sure it was made as a push door like Parkhurst. Could they not have put a simple, attractive brass pushplate above the handle, even if it must have the word "Push" cast in it? (See Hop rant.) The thumb-lever could also be removed to lessen the appearance of pullability.

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#### ● [What Would Leon Krier Do With Dartmouth?](#)

A Krier-esque plan for Dartmouth would surely include an obelisk right in the center of the Green.

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