

“The Embattled University”

Student Protest + Architecture, 1960s-1970s, University of Minnesota

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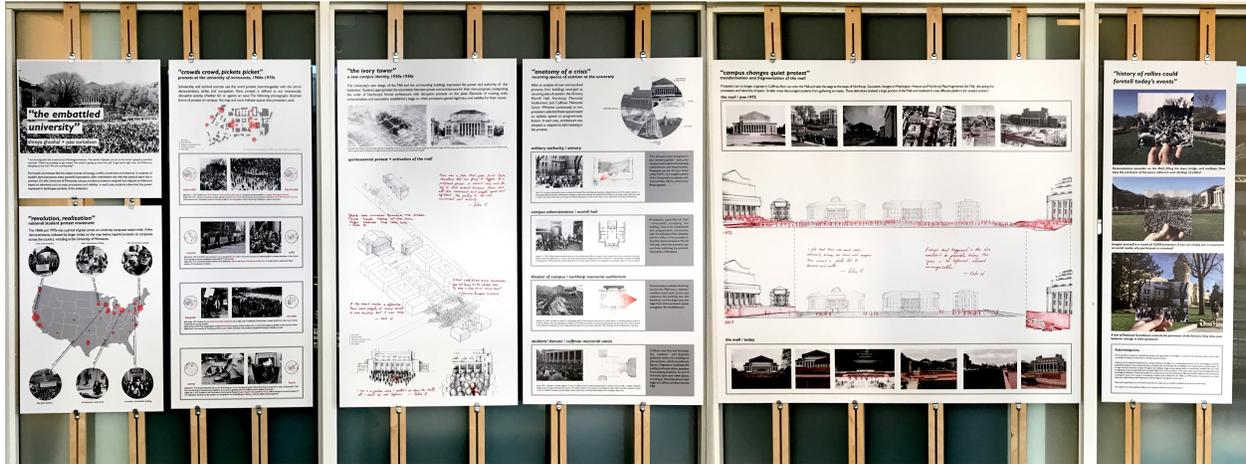
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Abstract

The 1960s and 1970s, often referred to as the ‘protest years’, were a period of great unrest on university campuses nation-wide. Students protested the Vietnam War, the draft, civil rights, and other social equity issues, all of which reflected the shifting ideals of the rising ‘baby-boomer’ generation. The scholarship surrounding the student protest movement is often discussed through the lenses of political science or sociology. Analyses of the era rarely acknowledge how architecture influences protests; most discussions of the student protest movement, in fact, completely ignore the physical settings of demonstrations. This study addresses this gap in scholarship by arguing that the design of the built environment contains controls and affordances for protests, using the University of Minnesota as a case study and a microcosm of greater social trends across the nation. It further argues that students repeatedly used certain spaces on campus—whether consciously or not—based on stylistic, spatial, or programmatic factors. The symbolism of the institution —embedded in campus architecture— influenced the locations chosen for rallies, as documented by archival resources such as student newspapers and photographs, and by oral histories of students from the era. Student unions, administrative buildings, armories, and auditoriums were found to be particularly charged spaces that demonstrators adopted or adapted to reinforce the meaning of the protests. These findings were then diagrammed onto University of Minnesota spaces in order to visually represent the information analyzed in a way that could be presented as part of an exhibition on architecture’s role in protests.

The Exhibit¹



¹ This thesis was produced in two parts: an exhibit and a written portion. The overall thesis, especially the exhibition design, was a collaborative effort between Shreya Ghoshal and Jake Torkelson. A full page view of individual boards is attached in the Appendix.



Note: The exhibit was set up in a hallway of the School of Architecture building on the University of Minnesota campus. Because it was installed in a hallway, the design and organization of the boards were such that they could be viewed by entering either side. There is no concrete beginning or end to the exhibit.

Student Protest and Architecture in the 1960s and 1970s on the University of Minnesota Campus

“I don’t care if you block Washington Ave... why not block it for several days to stop a war if it would help? What we’re dealing with is a national emergency. By every way the spirit of this nation is being destroyed by the war... We’re supposed to be reassured because Americans are not being killed in the last 6 months as opposed to the years before...here we are in 1972 and the Secretary of Defense said ‘don’t be too disturbed if the South Vietnamese aren’t playing up to our standards...’”²

Senator Eugene McCarthy, 1972

Waves of protests across the nation were set off by Nixon’s announcement to change United States policy to Southeast Asia on May Monday May 9, 1972—his new directive was to send US troops into Vietnam. His words that “decisive military action” was required in the area stood against many Americans’ desire to withdraw troops entirely. Nixon’s speech ended around 8pm on Monday. By midnight, a group of student anti-war protestors had arrived at the Governor’s mansion in Saint Paul, Minnesota demanding to speak with the DFL leader. The demonstrators had three main demands, all condemning the president’s Vietnam actions.

Tuesday saw the first day of violence on the University of Minnesota campus when 500-700 students and non-students disrupted the dedication ceremony of the Cedar-Riverside housing project. There were 17 arrests after anti-war demonstrators arrived from East Bank. The crowd moved from the street to the construction site where they eventually broke past the chicken-wire fence around the site. Wednesday brought the worst brutality that the University of Minnesota has ever seen. Several hundred protestors moved from the Mall to the Dinkytown ROTC office,

² Audio recording, “Resume of events during war protests on campus during May 9-13 with on-the-scene reporting of police action on May 10 and interviews of people on the Washington Ave. barricades [part 1/2]”, May 13, 1972, Collection: ua 01039, University of Minnesota Radio and Television Broadcasting records, 1930s-1990s, University Archives, University of Minnesota. <http://purl.umn.edu/251372>

only to find the recruiters had packed up, so they instead blocked Fourth Street. The next four days continued much like the first two: riots outside of the Armory, barricades along Washington Avenue, occupation of the student union. The violence was only settled after involvement of the National Guard (Figure 1).



Figure 1 | Tear gas thrown by police at protesters at the University of Minnesota. May 12, 1972. (Source: May 1972. Photo Files: Student Protest Images, University of Minnesota Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.)

Portrayals of protests like this depict scenes of energy, conflict, movement, and disarray. In analyses of student demonstrations, these powerful associations often overshadow the role that physical space has in activism. On the University of Minnesota campus, student protesters adopted and adapted architecture based on elements such as scale, procession, and visibility. In each case, students subverted the power expressed in landscapes symbolic of the institution.

The political turmoil surrounding the 2016 election is not the first time the United States has seen a rise in protests and activism on and around university campuses; the 1960s through 1970s was one of the most civically engaged periods of student culture due to political tensions caused by conflicting generational ideals. The era was often referred to as the ‘protest years’ because of the sheer number of protests on campuses relating to the Vietnam War, anti-draft sentiments, civil rights, and other social equity issues. This thesis is an analysis of how architecture and location influenced these demonstrations.

Protest, demonstration, strike, rally, boycott, march. These terms have been determined by the authors to have the same meaning for the purposes of this thesis; the definition of protest (and its synonyms) is any intentionally disruptive activity, whether for or against an issue. The student protest movement involved tens of thousands of protests at university and college campuses across the nation, over the course of the twenty-year period. Each of these acts of disruption took place in a specific location. Administrative issues led to occupations of administration buildings; growing anti-war sentiments led to rallies outside of ROTC buildings; students repeatedly used certain spaces on campus—whether consciously or not—based on stylistic, spatial, or programmatic factors in order to reinforce the meaning of their protests.

Causes of the student protest movement of the 1960s and 1970s have been discussed through lenses of political science and sociology at great length thanks the wealth of documentation of key protests from the era. The students of the 1960s and 1970s were disillusioned with how little their parents’ generation had accomplished, and how accepting of the ‘establishment’ they had become. The baby-boomer generation, as the students of the sixties and seventies were known, were morally opposed to any degree of acquiescence with the institutional image. The issues being protested, therefore, differed from those of previous years. While the few protests of the

1930-1950s were largely tied to economic problems, the demonstrations of the 1960s-1970s were more focused on moral quandaries. “This sense of generational resentment...has not been a dominant theme in American history. There has been generational conflict in American colleges, yet on the whole the struggles have not been channelized in student movements”, until the 1960s.³

What has not been analyzed from the movement was the role of architecture in these protests. Most discussions of the student protest movement, in fact, completely ignore the spaces hosting the demonstrations. This study addresses the gap in scholarship by arguing that the design of the built environment contains affordances for demonstrations, using the University of Minnesota as a case study and microcosm of greater social trends across the nation. It is a study of the intersection between architecture and protest on university campuses, and the potential effect that architecture has on the decisions in protest planning. Unlike previous research on the era, this thesis explores the idea that architecture may influence a protest in ways that are not as obvious as the role of political affiliation of students or size of the student body. As the political climate in the United States has again reached a point of turmoil, and protests are again becoming a more pervasive method of expression against the status quo, it is important to be able to understand the role space plays in demonstrations.

Methods

We gathered evidence to support the claim that people adapt spaces of institutions to fit their needs (even into spaces of protest) using several methods including archival research and oral histories. Most of the archival research was completed through the University of Minnesota Archives. We took a qualitative research approach in order to examine the effect of architecture

³ Lewis S. Feuer, “Generational Equilibrium in the United States,” in *The Conflict of Generations: The Character and Significance of Student Movements* (New York: Basic Books, Inc. Publishers, 1969), 319–84.

on student protests because it best captured the notion that different people construct different opinions on the architecture of campus. We focused specifically on the student perspective and the process through which students transformed the spaces of campus.

We began the research process by evaluating background information on the protests of the 1960s and 1970s at the University of Minnesota through archival sources such as reports from the Board of Regents, notes from the University presidents, student newspaper clippings, and official University of Minnesota statements. Photographs from the archives resulted in some of the most revealing qualitative data collection as they provided literal snapshots of moments during protests. This allowed analysis of how people were interacting with the architecture. Used in conjunction with official documents released by the University and student groups regarding the timelines of events, these photographs also helped establish a sense of the evolution of protests; they served as a way to track exactly which spaces were used and how the spaces were engaged by demonstrators.

Oral histories became a dynamic method of gathering first-person accounts on when, how, and why students from the ‘protest years’ were engaged with the political climate, and most importantly, how they felt during the demonstrations on campus. We identified students from the University of Minnesota during the 1960s and 1970s by word of mouth from professors and faculty still at the school. What started as one name snowballed into each subsequent interviewee listing two or three other potential contacts that were still in the Minneapolis-Saint Paul area and would be willing to share their experience of the student protest movement. Each interview began with a series of questions establishing a background for each participant: what was their relation to the protest and their thoughts on the efficacy of demonstrations, what were their political or cultural affiliations, what was their level of education? After placing the subjects on a

spectrum of involvement and background based on these criteria, the questions shifted to be more spatially concerned: how did the space make you feel, what was the scale of space, what effect did the façade have? While it was difficult at first to draw out responses about the potential role of architecture, each of the former students made statements that supported the idea that the design of buildings was an important factor for why spaces were chosen to hold demonstrations. The oral histories were key in the identification of emotional responses and opinions of the students from the 1960s and 1970s regarding the questions of architecture and its relationship to the protests.

This thesis begins with an examination of the existing literature to establish the lack of discussion on location and architecture in the student protest movement. We analyzed a few key case studies of campus protests (Berkeley, Columbia, Duke University, Cornell University) in greater depth for their discussion of the role of space. The thesis then proceeds to give a background on the national events of the 1960s and 1970s on campuses around the country, again mentioning the notable campuses around the country that were especially active. A brief introduction to the architectural history of the University of Minnesota campus (with its Beaux-Arts tradition) and the Mall, in particular, was necessary to understand the symbolism of the architecture of the institution. The thesis then moves into the discussion and analysis of the relationship between architecture and protests. The importance of façade, massing, and architectural style were key conclusions drawn from the archival research and interviews. These findings were then diagrammed in order to visually represent the information analyzed in a way that could be presented as part of an exhibition on architecture's role in protests.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The scholarship surrounding the 1960s and 1970s campus protests and the student protest movement is most often examined through the lenses of political science or sociology. Architecture, on the other hand, is almost never discussed as a potential influence on the movement. The protests of the era all occurred within the built environment of university campuses, and yet architecture and space are rarely brought into the discourse—even as a contextual piece of the puzzle. Literature on sociological and political reasons behind protests, campus planning, and two sources examining the overlap between campus planning and protest were evaluated for this literature review. This thesis seeks to bridge the gap between the architecture and protests by making it more apparent that there *is* a relationship between architecture and protest.

History of 1960s and 1970s Protests

Several scholars writing about the student protest movement, from within the era itself, offer a comprehensive analysis of the students' shifting ideologies compared to those of previous generations.⁴ It is often stated throughout the literature that the students in the 1960s were dissatisfied with how little their parent's generation accomplished in the 1930s, and how tied to

⁴ To analyze the relationship between architecture and student protests, we first established the historical context of the 1960s and preceding eras. A heavy emphasis of campus protest literature lies in the attempt to understand the ideological shift between the “silent generation” and the “protest years”, which helps establish a background for this thesis, but does not explain the role of external influences on the movement. The literature reviewed, therefore, reflects the strong focus on the political and social theories of the time, and has been taken from journals and books on American political and social sciences evaluating the existing research regarding the inception of the student protest movement, the history of the movement, and the case studies of key university protests. See: Kenneth Keniston and Michael Lerner, “Campus Characteristics and Campus Unrest,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 395, no. Student Protest (May 1971): 39–53; Nella van Dyke, “Hotbeds of Activism: Locations of Student Protest,” *Social Problems* 45, no. 2 (May 1998): 205–20, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3097244>; Maryl Levine and John Naisbitt, *Right On; a Documentary on Student Protest* (New York: Bantam Books, 1970); Richard Flacks, “The Liberated Generation: An Exploration of the Roots of Student Protest,” *Journal of Social Issues* 23, no. 3 (1967): 52–75, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1540-4560.1967.tb00586.x/epdf>.

the “system” the previous generation of post-war students had (once again) become.⁵ These authors also provide insights into the perspectives on the campus protests held by those who were not students. Keniston, for example, noted the immediate reactions to the rise in the student protest movement, writing that,

Less than a decade ago, commencement orators were decrying the “silence” of college students in the face of urgent national and international issues; but in the past two or three years, the same speakers have warned graduating classes across the country against the dangers of unreflective protest, irresponsible action and unselective dissent. Rarely in history has apparent apathy been replaced so rapidly by publicized activism, silence by strident dissent.⁶

They believed they were actively working against a system of oppression that had been left in place from the preceding generations. Civil rights issues rose to the forefront of demonstrations because the new generation felt their parents had accomplished so little on that issue.⁷ Some scholars point to the fact that the new student generation was born out of affluence, while the previous two generations felt the brunt of the Great Depression. The student protest movement was led by a generation that was able to focus on moral issues rather than economic concerns. A new emergence of an intellectual and elitist ideology caused protests to focus on issues of civil rights, anti-war, and free speech.⁸

⁵ Lewis S. Feuer, “The New Student Left of the 1960s,” in *The Conflict of Generations: The Character and Significance of Student Movements* (New York: Basic Books, Inc. Publishers, 1969), 385–435.; Flacks, “The Liberated Generation,” 56-57; Kenneth Keniston, “Sources of Student Dissent,” *Journal of Social Issues* 22, no. 3 (1967): 108–37, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1540-4560.1967.tb00589.x/epdf>.

⁶ Keniston, “Sources of Student Dissent”; Flacks, “The Liberated Generation” 56-57; Jerome Skolnick, “Student Protest,” *American Association of University Professors Bulletin* 55, no. 3 (September 1969): 108, <http://jstor.org/stable/40223829>.

⁷ Feuer, “The New Student Left of the 1960s.” 397.

⁸ Keniston, “Sources of Student Dissent,” 109.

Case Study Campuses

In “A Campus Revolution,” Kathleen Gales analyzes the events of the 1964 student protest on the University of California- Berkley campus regarding student freedoms.⁹ The protest is one of the most iconic student led demonstrations from the era. The main objective of the article was to present a survey of attitudes on campus six months after the protests had ended. Most important for this thesis is what the article was lacking: there was very little discussion of what spaces were used for protests, and no discussion on *why* those spaces were chosen. The article presents the history of the revolt, parts of which mention where certain rallies took place, but beyond a brief mention of location there is no further analysis of the spaces themselves.

“Ideology, Institutional Identification, and Campus Activism” by Alan Kornberg and Mary L. Brehm, examining activism at Duke University, is another example of a campus report trying to determine the independent variables that are indicators of campuses more or less likely to protest.¹⁰ The article has one line in the introductory paragraph about the architecture of campus asserting “the stately Gothic and Georgian architecture suggests a less complex and troubled time and affords a rather incongruous setting for radical behaviors.”¹¹ The rest of the article moves into a discussion of the potential causes of activism being age, sex, and religion, without a single mention of specific locations of demonstrations on campus.

⁹ Much of the discussion in this article explains what socio-political factors of protest are, such as the faculty role, political affiliations, and response by the university. Kathleen E. Gales, “A Campus Revolution,” *The British Journal of Sociology* 17, no. 1 (March 1966): 1–19.

¹⁰ Alan Kornberg and Mary L. Brehm, “Ideology, Institutional Identification, and Campus Activism,” *Social Forces* 49, no. 3 (March 1971): 445–59, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3005736>.

¹¹ *Idem.*, 445.

One of the only campus reports that discusses space and its impact on student protests was the Cornell University report on the seizure of Willard Hall.¹² The Special Trustee Committee commissioned to write the report was charged with investigating the occupation of the administration building of Cornell University by a group of black students seeking the establishment of an African American Studies Department. The committee presents the chronology of events of the occupation, much like the other literature from the era. But the report also briefly remarks that “there can be no such thing as a non-violent building occupation”, implying that the use of the building itself has some significance¹³ Visibility is an issue that is brought up as a factor in the black students’ decision to occupy the administration building. This notion of visibility through occupation of architecture and space is further explored in this thesis.

Campus Planning

Turner’s *Campus, an American Planning Tradition* is the basis of most of the literature surrounding campus planning.¹⁴ His work is referenced by many of the authors who sought to analyze the master plans of university campuses with emphasis on the architectural history.¹⁵ His chapter regarding the “University as City Beautiful” analyzed many of the same campuses that were discussed as case studies for the literature of the protest era such as Berkeley, University of Texas, and the Cass Gilbert plan for the University of Minnesota. His analysis of spaces and the

¹² Special Trustee Committee, “Report of the Special Trustee Committee on Campus Unrest at Cornell: Submitted to Board of Regents” (Cornell University, September 1969).

¹³ *Idem.*, 25.

¹⁴ Paul V. Turner, *Campus, And American Planning Tradition* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1984).

¹⁵ Sarah Williams, “The Architecture of Academy,” *Change* 17, no. 2 (April 1985): 14–30, 50–55, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40164487>; Janice C. Griffith, “Open Space Preservation: An Imperative for Quality Campus Environments,” *The Journal of Higher Education* 65, no. 6 (December 1994): 645–69, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2943823>.

relationships in space created by a rectangular plan with an axial emphasis were important to forming an understanding of why universities would chose a specific type of plan to reflect their “University Image”.¹⁶ As detailed as Turner’s text is in terms of architectural history of campuses, he does not discuss any student movements (or students’ perspectives in general). This thesis seeks to expand the literature of campus planning by including students’ perspectives, and by focusing more on the aspects of massing and façade rather than treating the plan as the only element of campus master plans.

Relationship Between Protest and Planning

One of the main articles reviewed discussed the University of Texas campus and the politicization of campus planning as a response to protests.¹⁷ It begins by explaining the original architect/planner’s intentions and then moves into a debate of how the built environment was used to achieve those initial goals for the spaces. The next few sections explain the shifts in educational thought that led up to the protest years; it then lays out the resulting attempts to redesign space to prohibit protest.

A dissertation regarding the architecture of Columbia University’s campus during the protests of 1968 was the most direct tie between architecture and protest from the student protest movement era.¹⁸ It discussed the idea that “the architecture and urban planning of the postwar world eras offered a place to reconcile competing tensions between ideals of liberalism and pragmatic creed” setting up an argument similar to that of this thesis: that architectural styles

¹⁶ Paul V. Turner, “University as City Beautiful,” in *Campus, An American Planning Tradition* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1984), 163–213.

¹⁷ Mark Macek, “The Politics of Campus Planning: How UT Architecture Restricts Activism,” *Polemicist* 1, no. 6 (May 1990): 3, 6–17.

¹⁸ Michael H. Carriere, “Between Being and Becoming: On Architecture, Student Protest, and the Aesthetics of Liberalism in Postwar America” (PhD. Dissertation, University of Chicago, 2010).

symbolize specific institutional characteristics, and offer a backdrop to the ideals of the public.¹⁹ Unlike this thesis, the argument presented in the dissertation concerns the many protests on Columbia's campus over the years, rather than a particular analysis of the relationship between architecture and protest.

As a whole, the scholarship reviewed discusses many different influences on the student protest movement, but this thesis argues that the overlooked element of architecture is one of the many. By using the University of Minnesota as a case study, this thesis will answer the question of how architecture acts as an influence for student protests. Rather than a cause-and-effect type of relationship that is set up by the existing sources on protest and architecture, the research shows that the relationship between architecture and protest is more nuanced.

¹⁹ *Idem.*, p11.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The events on the University of Minnesota campus between the years of 1960 and 1980 reflected the sentiments of students across the nation. “Protests on other campuses had a big effect on the university because in the Spring of ‘70 and the Spring of ‘71 the University of Minnesota closed down midterm.”²⁰ Not only did the issues being protested at the University of Minnesota coincide with similar issues at other campuses across the nation, but *the locations and spaces* of protest also paralleled protest planning choices on other campuses.

National Student Protest Movement / “*Revolution, Realization*”²¹

A leading scholar from the era investigated the 1960s and 1970s and stated that “The ‘Great Awakening’ of the American student movement...began in 1960.”²² The student protest movement was one of the most civically engaged periods of youth culture in history, due to political tensions caused by conflicting generational ideals. “The New Left was one which rose predominantly out of an affluent society and moreover, out of a relatively stable system; it therefore, when it thought critically, tended to do so in a moralistic rather than economic terms.”²³ As a student of the era claimed: “We are the country’s alienated—alienated by

²⁰ Kate Maple, Oral history interview by Shreya Ghoshal and Jake Torkelson, University of Minnesota, December 5, 2016.

²¹ The national protest board (second board) of the exhibit features a map of the United States with the most active campuses keyed in red bubbles. Six campuses were further called out with the type of protest and the location on campus. (See Appendix: Exhibit Layout Page 1).

²² Lewis S. Feuer, “Generational Equilibrium in the United States,” in *The Conflict of Generations: The Character and Significance of Student Movements* (New York: Basic Books, Inc. Publishers, 1969), 378.

²³ New Left was what the politically liberal students of the 60s and 70s called their political movement; Lewis S. Feuer, “The New Student Left of the 1960s,” in *The Conflict of Generations: The Character and Significance of Student Movements* (New York: Basic Books, Inc. Publishers, 1969), 385–435.

America's values, alienated by America's mass culture, alienated by America's image of 'Good Society'."²⁴

When campus protests first began, they "were directed at specific conditions or policies which were felt to be immoral or inconsistent with a good education... As the several campus protests [grew] into a movement, however, students progressively generalized their criticism into something like a theory of what [was] wrong with higher education in America."²⁵ Students' rights became the biggest issue in the early 1960s.²⁶ Students' rights gave way to anti-war and anti-draft demonstrations later in the 1960s through the early 1970s. Civil rights and social equity problems were addressed throughout the twenty-year period.

The students' rights issue is best represented by the University of California-Berkeley's year-long, campus-wide protests from 1964-1965.²⁷ Despite limited evidence available, it became apparent through an analysis of this protest, along with many other universities', that administrative buildings were common spaces of protest across the nation.²⁸ One of the only spaces noted by name in the documentation of strikes and rallies on Berkeley's campus was the

²⁴ Rubin, Jerry, "Oct. 15-16 and VDC" VDC News, published by Berkeley VDC, (c1968).

²⁵ Robert Wolff, *The Ideal of the University* (Beacon Press, 1969), 43.

²⁶ Authority figures of universities and of the nation were called into question for the first time (in a long time) by a large percentage of the student population. Students felt that their voices were not being represented by the choices made in the new "multi-versity" concept of higher education, that they were being exploited by universities that were being run like corporations. The multi-versity concept was an era in American higher education where a university that has numerous affiliated institutions, such as separate colleges, campuses, and research centers. They felt that liberation was possible through "solidarity, organization, and the permanent overthrow of the university power structure."; Robert Wolff, *The Ideal of the University* (Beacon Press, 1969), 43-44

²⁷ UC Berkeley protest: This protest has been seen as one of the most iconic student led demonstrations from the era, and throughout time; as it is such an iconic protest, it can be seen as representative of the student protest movement occurring nation-wide at the time; Kathleen E. Gales, "A Campus Revolution," *The British Journal of Sociology* 17, no. 1 (March 1966): 1-19.

²⁸ Major occupations and demonstrations at administration buildings also occurred at Cornell University in 1969, University of Chicago in 1968, Columbia University in 1968.

main administration building. This piece of evidence brought up a question later explored in the thesis: if student activism was meant to disrupt the daily events of campus, *what spaces caused the most disruption?*

The attitude of most students was to organize and unsettle the status quo. This mentality carried through to issues of national and international significance; the Vietnam War was the target of the majority of large-scale demonstrations throughout the student protest movement. As explained by one of the oral histories we conducted: “the differences between WWII and then the Korean War, compared to the Vietnam War, were that the Vietnam war got into peoples’ living rooms. The casualty counts were there every night, and the photojournalism, and it was a war... that wasn’t [fought under traditional military guidelines].”²⁹ Scholars of the 1960s have said that “rarely in history has apparent apathy been replaced so rapidly by publicized activism, silence by strident dissent.”³⁰ As the most affected age group for the draft, students were the most vocal demographic about their dissatisfaction with the war and the draft process. Their dissatisfaction manifested itself in the form of rallies-turned-riots in front of some of the most important buildings on campuses: the armories, student unions, and auditoriums.

Civil rights issues represented a smaller portion of the activism on campuses throughout the era, but the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. on April 4, 1968 brought a renewed wave of demonstrations regarding African American students’ rights. Black students across the nation led occupations of administration buildings demanding the establishment of black studies departments, which were entirely lacking at most universities until the 1970s.

²⁹ The new generation of students did not feel they should have to fight a war that they had inherited; their core ideals of freedom and anti-establishment inherently opposed the traditional nature of the political leadership in the country at that time; Kate Maple, Oral history interview by Shreya Ghoshal and Jake Torkelson, University of Minnesota, December 5, 2016.

³⁰ Kenneth Keniston, “Sources of Student Dissent,” *Journal of Social Issues* 22, no. 3 (1967): 108, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1540-4560.1967.tb00589.x/epdf>.

Protests at University of Minnesota, 1960s-1970s / “Crowds Crowd, Pickets Picket”³¹

From marches to strikes, flag-burnings to building occupations, the campus of the University of Minnesota became a place of defiance against “the establishment’s” ideals in the 1960s and 1970s. The typologies and spaces of protest became evident after analysis of archival materials documenting hundreds of anti-war and anti-draft demonstrations, strikes, rallies, and occupations. Over the course of nearly twenty years, the university saw protests in all sizes and forms, and almost all of them took place in one of four spaces on campus. Regardless of the level of physical activism or emotional investment for the general student body, protests at the University of Minnesota were seen as the most effective way to express disapproval against things at a University level (students’ rights), a national level (civil rights), and an international scale (the Vietnam War).³²

Though other issues were represented by hundreds of demonstrations that occurred in the era, the anti-war protests and civil rights occupation analyzed exemplify the crux of the argument being made (with the exception of a key civil rights occupation): only four spaces out of hundreds of possibilities were chosen repeatedly to host the most subversive events on campus in the 1960s and 1970s.

³¹ The University of Minnesota examples board (third board) of the exhibit features a map of the campus with the most active spaces keyed in red bubbles, similar to the previous board’s map of the United States. The rest of the board highlights different typologies of protests and pairs them with photographs of demonstrations at the University of Minnesota (See Appendix: Exhibit Layout Page 2).

³² The scale and frequency of protests at the University of Minnesota increased almost exponentially after newspaper and television coverage of the Berkeley protest in 1964-1965, and even more so after the Columbia University-Morningside Park protest in 1968. While both of those protests related more to specific issues at the two schools, they spread a message of resistance across the nation.

Anti-War / Anti-Draft Protests

The Vietnam War brought together most students, faculty, and sometimes administration, and the University of Minnesota against a common enemy. Protests related to the war were the largest and most frequent on campus during the student protest movement, therefore they became the most fruitful events to study when we were trying to identify which, out of hundreds of demonstrations, to analyze. From 1968 through 1972 itself, there were over 50 *large scale* demonstrations against the war, the draft, and the ROTC.³³

Demonstrations at the University of Minnesota often aligned with the dates of demonstrations on other campuses through the organization by the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), a student group which became synonymous with the voice of the student protest movement. Common for these anti-war protests were louder and more visible pickets, rallies, and sometimes even riots. Some of the most memorable headlines from the University's student-run newspaper, *The Daily*, were from protests that turned violent—expressions of disapproval and dissatisfaction of the institution's acceptance of a war that was felt to be morally wrong. Frequently, students would break windows of the Armory, tear down the fence surrounding the building, and throw objects onto the lawn. The Armory, the steps of the auditorium, the lawn in front of the student union, and the open space of the Mall were used significantly more often than any other space on campus. *What was it about the architecture or design of space that influenced this?*

On April 30, 1970, President Nixon declared the invasion of Cambodia. Following this declaration, campuses across the nation revolted more aggressively than ever before. The Kent State shooting on May 4, 1970 further triggered the student body on campuses; rallies at the University of Minnesota occurred so frequently after May 4th that the University put together a

³³ This does not include redundant rallies and strikes that occurred on the same day as part of a larger, more organized, more publicized protest.

report every two weeks from May 4 through June 8, 1970 to document the interim period's protests.³⁴ Over almost the entire period of those five weeks, demonstrators and organizers used Coffman Memorial Union as their base of operations, and occupied the building twenty-four hours a day until June 6th, when they were finally cleared from the building by campus administration.

May 9-13, 1972 was the next series of major protests at the University of Minnesota.³⁵ They were the most violent and memorable protests in University of Minnesota history, and led to the University being cited in international news. These riots lasted over three days, brought the National Guard to campus, and resulted in the destruction of over \$10,000 of University property. This protest series occurred on such a large scale that it was forced to constantly change locations, hence a further analysis later on in the thesis.

Civil Rights Occupation

The University of Minnesota historically had been a very homogenous campus. There was a very small racial minority student population at the University, and the growing levels of unrest and dissatisfaction with social problems during the 1960s led to increased attention on the lack of diversity. The assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., therefore, triggered strong reactions from students, faculty and administration at the University of Minnesota, drawing upon years of frustration by the minority community towards the racial injustices. Immediately following the assassination, black students and faculty at the University of Minnesota began a campaign to establish an African American studies department; the campaign was stalled almost

³⁴ Fact Sheets on the University of Minnesota Activities during the Nationwide Student Strike, May 11-June 8, 1970, Information Files: Student Protest, Folder 3, January-May, 1970. University of Minnesota Archives. University of Minnesota Libraries.

³⁵ Brandt, Steve and Philip Hage. "Police Battle Students on Campus." *Minnesota Daily*. May 11, 1972.

instantly by University administration, which led to an eventual occupation of the Office of the President.

January 13, 1969 was the end of the black community's patience. Eight members of the Afro-American Affairs Committee (AAAC) walked into President Moos's office and demanded to see him. President Moos was out of town, and they instead were forced to meet with the Vice President and other administrators, after which they requested a meeting with the President the next day. The students left a list of three demands to be responded to by 1pm, January 14, which included: that the university defray costs of the Black Conference, that an Afro-American studies department leading to a BA degree be established for the fall of 1969 semester, which would be led by the AAAC, and that the budget for the Martin Luther King Scholarship fund be placed in the agency of the black community. Approximately sixty students came to the meeting the next day, at which President Moos declined all three of the demands. As a result of this setback, the students left the Regents Room and went into the Office of Admissions and Records where around thirty black students occupied the Records Room from 1:30pm on Jan 14 until 1pm on Jan 15, 1969. After a day and night of negotiations through barricaded doors, the occupation ended with the signing of a second-round memorandum. The occupation will be discussed in further detail later on.

The occupation of the administration building was a key example of how architecture and spatial elements can be used in the facilitation of activism. "A large number of desks were moved from the Admissions and Records area into the outer lobby, and constructed into a barricade across the west entrance to the building inside the doors opening into the outer lobby. This barricade reached from wall to wall and almost to the ceiling and was at least two desks

deep.”³⁶ The students were able to make a stronger stance for their issue by engaging with their surrounding architecture.

³⁶ Proposal for Implementation of the Report of the President’s Commission on Campus Demonstrations. 1969. Information Files: Student Protest, Folder 2, 1969. University of Minnesota Archives. University of Minnesota Libraries.

Architectural History of University of Minnesota, 1920s-1930s / “The Ivory Tower”³⁷

The image of the ideal university campus is one that holds great meaning, beyond the surface level aesthetics. "Architecture is the concrete manifestation of the institutions that make up society...architecture is...the reification of social roles and a set of three-dimensional statements about power relationships."³⁸ Students believed their protests from the 1960s and 1970s, generally, were in opposition to something universities stood for, or at least stood with. The architecture of campus, therefore, symbolized to students the power of the institution, and often also symbolized something more concrete that they were protesting against. An understanding of how the earlier design of University of Minnesota architecture came to embody certain perceived values was an important element for this thesis.

There was a surge in enrollment in universities and general curriculum restructuring across the United States in the early 1920s and 1930s (between the World Wars). University officials embraced a more active role in designing campuses for their students as a result of the increased enrollment and their collective desire to engage a larger student body. The University of Minnesota itself reflected many of these broad social trends on a smaller scale on campus.³⁹ An overall redesign of campus occurred during Coffman's era (appointment in 1920 through

³⁷ The Architectural History board (fourth board) of the exhibit features an axonometric drawing of campus with the key buildings indicated by detailed shading. (See Appendix: Exhibit Layout Page 3).

³⁸ Thomas A. Dutton and Bradford C. Grant, "Campus Design and Critical Pedagogy," *Academe* 77, no. 4 (August 1991): 38, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40251247>.

³⁹ The University of Minnesota throughout 1920-1940 went through fundamental transformations of curriculum, like the creation of the honors program, because of President Coffman's desire to appeal to all types of students. He recognized that the university in the 1920s drew a very homogenous population from the neighborhoods nearby. Every president since President Northrop had been concerned with finding a way to better engage the students of the university, and with making the campus a center of cultural activity. Coffman was able to successfully establish a plan that would ensure that campus became the social hub of students' college experience. Gray, James. "Coffman: The Full Tide of Experiment." In *The University of Minnesota, 1851-1951*, 261-374. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1951.

1938), which included an entirely new portion of campus: the Mall. The design that was ultimately executed came from an earlier design by famed architect Cass Gilbert, but it was not implemented until after World War I, after some alterations were made.

University of Minnesota chose to employ a Beaux-Arts classicism to represent its academic ideals. The Beaux-Arts tradition is one that reflects the ‘Ivory Tower’ visual of older institutions, evoking the image of a scholar quietly pursuing their education within the walls of a classical structure. The architectural style is generally associated with the scholarship established in the Ancient Roman and Greek eras. It looks stylistically *academic* because it is associated with the earliest ages of philosophy and thought. President Coffman’s efforts to bring a higher level of education to campus brought the neo-classical design to the architecture of campus.

By 1900, the Beaux-Arts system of architectural planning had become a major force in American design, especially after the success of the Columbian Exposition in Chicago of 1893. “Its principles of monumental organization facilitated orderly planning on a grand scale and were capable of including many disparate buildings or parts within a unified overall pattern.”⁴⁰ Beaux-Arts architecture utilizes symmetry, uniformity, and ornamentation in order to represent the authority of the university. “The most popular pattern for a campus that emerged at this time, within the Beaux-Arts context, was based on the form of Jefferson's University of Virginia: an extended rectangular space, defining a longitudinal axis, with a dominant structure as focal point at one end and subsidiary buildings ranged along the sides.”⁴¹

True to Beaux Arts planning principles, Cass Gilbert’s design placed the grand Northrop Memorial Auditorium at one end and Coffman Memorial Union at the other (Figure 2). The

⁴⁰ Paul V. Turner, “University as City Beautiful,” in *Campus, An American Planning Tradition* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1984), 167.

⁴¹ Turner, “University as City Beautiful,” 191.

large, uninterrupted swath of open green space connecting Northrop and Coffman in the new master plan was an important element of the Beaux-Arts tradition. Gilbert, in his design, relates all parts back to the focal point of his plan, Northrop Auditorium.

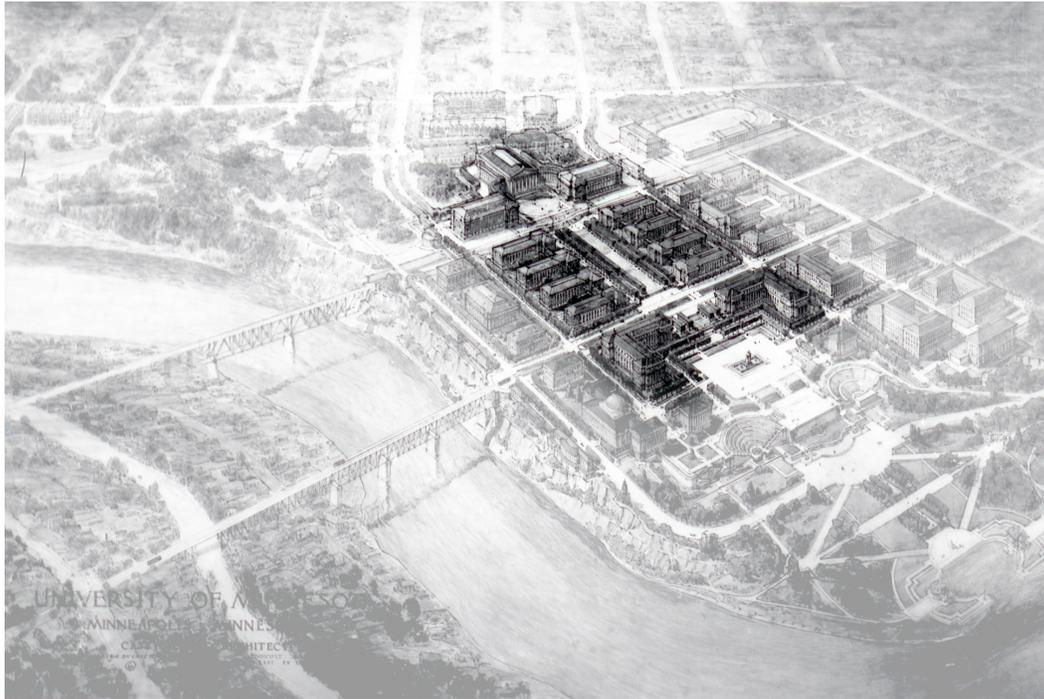
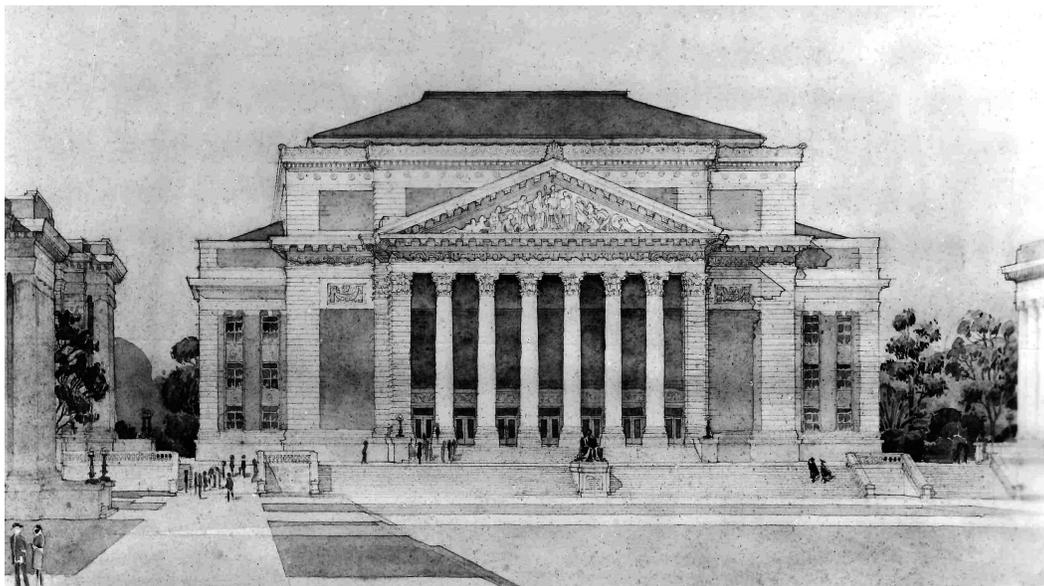


Figure 2, 3 | Architect Cass Gilbert's early plan [above] called for a temple-like structure as the focal point of campus, located at the head of a large rectilinear open space. Clarence Johnston, university architect, carried out Gilbert's plan, which created a sense of enclosure through the use of uniform facade detailing and ornamentation [below]. (Source for both images: Photo Files: Cass Gilbert Files, University of Minnesota Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.)



In addition to the plan for campus, façade is another key component of Beaux-Arts classicism that highlights the symmetry, grandeur, and ornamentation typical of the style. The buildings lining the two longer sides of the Mall all employ the same façade design, establishing a regularity across the buildings that surrounds students with expressions of order and authority.

Although all the buildings in the Mall (other than Coffman which was designed later than the rest) are clearly of the style, Northrop best exemplifies the intent and symbolism behind the use of Beaux-Arts architecture. The neo-classical building, with a massive, elegant portico and imposing colonnade, has been referred to as the “heart of the University of Minnesota campus” throughout history, due to its central location and general grandeur (Figure 3).⁴² Northrop stands at the highest point on campus, visible from nearly every street and building, acting as both the literal and metaphorical pinnacle of campus.

The University’s new design of the Mall and the surrounding buildings expressed the power and authority of the institution. Students appropriated the association between power and architecture for their own purposes, juxtaposing the order of Northrop’s formal architecture with disruptive protests on the plaza. Elements of massing, scale, ornamentation, and association established a stage on which protesters gained legitimacy and visibility for their causes.

⁴² “History,” Northrop Auditorium. <http://www.northrop.umn.edu/about/history>.

Spatial Analysis / “Quintessential Protest”⁴³

Analysis of the University of Minnesota campus in the following portions of the thesis is largely done through diagramming. The exhibition that was designed in conjunction with this paper presented the diagrams as a synthesis of the research examined. Layered on top of many of these images in the exhibit were handwritten quotes taken from the oral histories describing the scenes. It was important that the exhibit conveyed the feeling of chaos and disarray that the students from the movement often felt when within the spaces of protest. These diagrams and images were a key component in attaining that impression.

Activation of the Mall

Relative to the rest of the built environment at the University of Minnesota, the location of the Mall places it at the center of campus. While the Mall was designed purposely to be the most beautiful space on campus and to act as a leisurely gathering space, students adapted the Mall, like other spaces, into a place for more than just recreation and entertainment during the 1960s and 1970s. We chose to focus part of our analysis for this thesis on the Mall area because of its centrality and, therefore, its physical connection with other areas on campus (especially during protests).

The Mall allowed for activation through protest, more easily than other campus spaces, because of its scale and overall design. It was the only area of campus that could hold more than 10,000 students at a time without seeming overly crowded or empty. As mentioned in an oral history interview with a former student at the University in 1969, “the Mall is like the living room of campus; it is perfectly framed and perfectly scaled...”; the Mall apparently felt large enough to host a high volume of people that they felt their demonstrations had an impact on the Vietnam

⁴³ The Spatial Analysis boards (fifth through sixth boards) of the exhibit features the majority of the diagrams produced for this thesis. (See Appendix: Exhibit Layout Page 4-5).

War, and just small enough so that the students did not seem like the people in the space were disconnected from each other.⁴⁴ The scale of the space compared to human scale was an important element of protests because students needed to feel that they were actually visible within the built environment in order to feel that they were accomplishing anything by demonstrating.

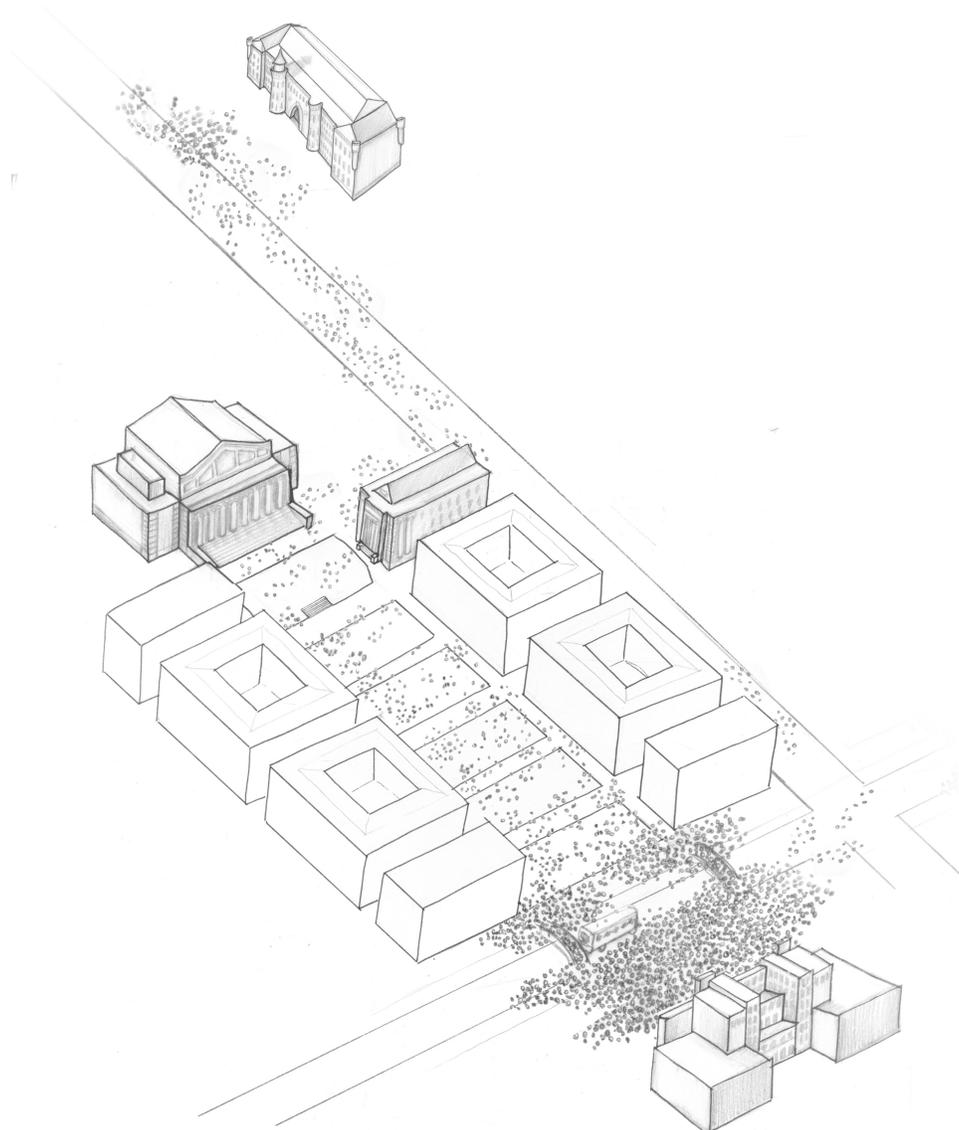


Figure 4 | Hand-drawing produced for this thesis. Axonometric showing the layout of the Mall and outlying structures.

⁴⁴ Julia Robinson, Oral history interview by Shreya Ghoshal and Jake Torkelson, University of Minnesota, February 23, 2017.

The purpose of the axonometric diagram (Figure 4), which was a main focus for the exhibition, is to visually represent the feeling of uniformity, order, and enclosure. Four buildings in the drawing are highly rendered: the Armory, Morrill Hall, Northrop Auditorium, and Coffman Union. These are the buildings that will be analyzed in detail later. The other buildings along the Mall are drawn as simple masses because their individual facades become less significant when seen in the context of the overall space. Separately, each building boasts the Beaux-Arts principles; due to that design choice, students viewed the facades of these structures as representative of the institution. But as a whole, the uniformity of masses along the sides of the Mall acted more as a sense of enclosure that framed the open green space at the center of campus.

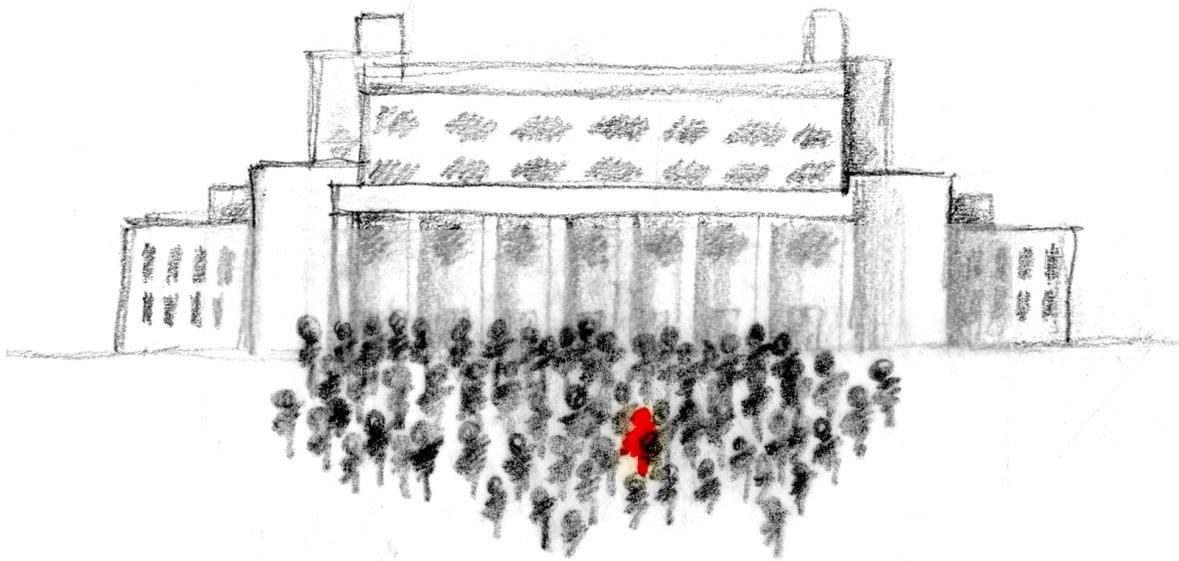


Figure 5 | Sketch based, in part, on the photograph below.

Figure 6 | Photograph below of students and speaker on steps of Coffman. (Source: 1970. Photo Files: Student Protest Images, University of Minnesota Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.)

This drawing (Figure 5) was one of two supplementary sketches paired with the larger axonometric drawing in the exhibit. The red figure

called out is to show the scale of one person, versus the scale of the whole crowd. In the oral histories conducted, a theme repeated by the former students was that the crowds of the protest often felt overwhelming and scary. *“There was a fear after Kent State that something bad would happen. As a pregnant person, it wasn't very wise for me to stick around, because there was all this movement and people all upset and agitated... The feeling to me was excitement and anxiety.”*⁴⁵ While this drawing is a smaller-scale protest than what the axonometric was based on, there is still a feeling of being lost in a crowd. Much like the axonometric, this drawing also emphasizes the building's scale over the people, simultaneously illustrating that one person amongst many leaves a more impactful image.

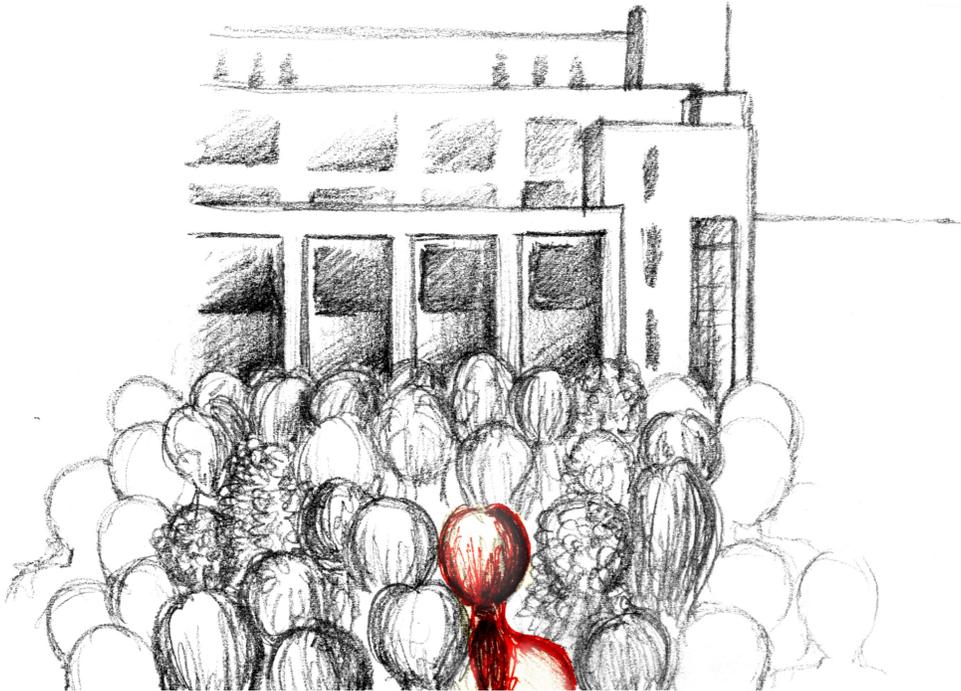


Figure 6 | Sketch based, in part, on oral history.

This second supplementary drawing (Figure 7) was sketched based on a description in an oral history of a protest in front of Coffman. *“I was in a position where I couldn't see down the mall, all I*

⁴⁵ Julia Robinson, Oral history interview by Shreya Ghoshal and Jake Torkelson, University of Minnesota, February 23, 2017.

could see was Coffman.”⁴⁶ A viewshed from the perspective of a sample student (in red) illustrates what each student was actually able to see during large-scale demonstrations. Although there were often speakers on the steps of Coffman, or Northrop, students on the ground would only be able to hear their voice. In reality, demonstrators saw only the façade of Coffman and the backs of other students’ heads. Coffman, therefore, became a synecdoche for the voice of activist leadership, such as the head of SDS.

Recurring Spaces of Activism / “Anatomy of a Crisis”

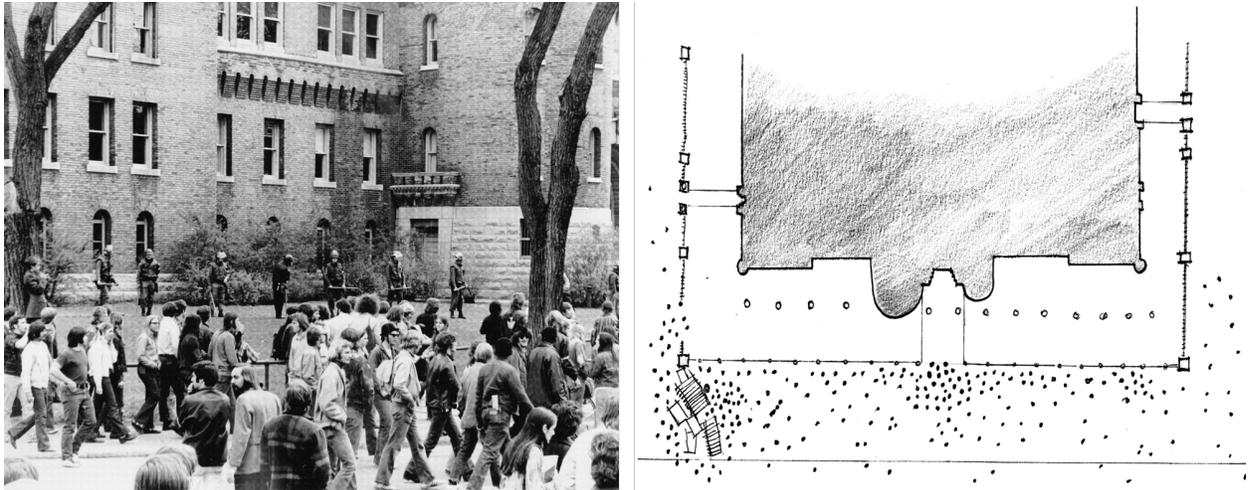
Kevin Lynch, in his seminal text *Image of the City*, discusses the concepts of ‘nodes’ of urban space.⁴⁷ According to Lynch, nodes are strategic points in a city that act as convergence points; they become social cores that act as recognizable gathering points of the city. After an analysis of over one hundred protests, four buildings emerged as recurring nodes of activism: the Armory, Morrill Hall, Northrop Memorial Auditorium, and Coffman Memorial Union. Whether consciously or not, protestors selected these spaces based on stylistic, spatial, or programmatic factors. As explained in one of the oral histories we conducted, “the architecture of campus is not frivolous; there is an association with intellectual life.”⁴⁸ In each building’s case, the architecture was adopted or adapted because certain spaces hold more meaning, more significance in their architecture and design. “Different locations within a city are more or less ‘charged’; that is,

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Kevin Lynch, “The City Image and Its Elements,” in *Image of the City* (MIT Press, 1960), 99.

⁴⁸ Julia Robinson, Oral history interview by Shreya Ghoshal and Jake Torkelson, University of Minnesota, February 23, 2017.

buildings like City Hall and main thoroughfares like Broadway carry more representational weight than the sidewalks around perimeters.”⁴⁹



Figures 7, 8 | May 1972. Activists stormed the street to protest the Vietnam War while National Guardsmen defended the Armory. This sketch is based on a photograph [left] of protesters tearing down wrought iron fences that defined and separated the building from the public realm. Debris was used to build a barricade and lay claim to the space. The sketch illustrates the order of the military versus the spontaneity of student demonstrators. (Photograph Source: Photo Files: 1972, Student Protest Images, University of Minnesota Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.)

Military Authority / The Armory



Figure 9 | Armory Facade (Source: Photo Files: Armory Images, University of Minnesota Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.)

The Armory, located off of the Mall on University Avenue and Church Street, signified everything the students were campaigning against in their anti-war and anti-draft rallies. The building was designed in the “military-gothic” style, meaning the structure was meant to be imposing, authoritative, and impenetrable. As the home of the ROTC, the building implicated the University as complicit in the Vietnam War efforts, which students firmly opposed.

⁴⁹ Kristine Miller, *Designs on the Public* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 9.

Beyond the imagery of the architecture itself, there was reasoning behind the types of demonstrations that took place in each location. The armory, for instance, never hosted a civil rights or social equity rally; the demonstrations outside the fence were exclusively anti-war. In locating their protests in front of such an imposing structure, with such loaded associations of military, order, and power, the students felt that their protests against the war were given that much more credence.

Over the course of the era, there were multiple peaceful, and less-than-peaceful, demonstrations outside the barriers of the Armory because of its station as an analogy for the larger ideologies of the military being protested. One especially violent protest in May of 1970, related to the demands by students to abolish the ROTC from campus, involved students ripping down the fence separating the Armory from the street in an attempt to take over the building.⁵⁰

Campus Administration / Morrill Hall

Across the nation, students protested administrative issues at buildings housing the Office of the President. If there were protests related to establishment of a new department, or the firing of a professor, etc., students made their dissatisfaction known by occupying or rallying in front of the administrative building of the university. Morrill Hall, the University of Minnesota's administration building, has a direct association with the President

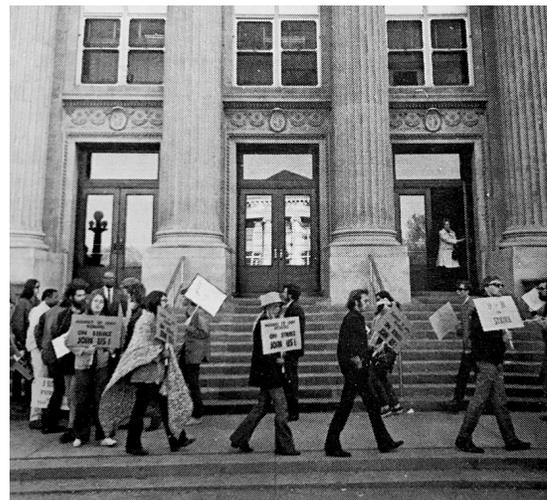


Figure 10 | Strike in front of Morrill Hall (Source: Photo Files: Student Protest Images, University of Minnesota Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.)

⁵⁰ Jim Fuller, "Protestors at U Ask End of ROTC," *Minneapolis Tribune*, April 12, 1972.

of the University of Minnesota. The building represents the figure making the decisions for the University, and therefore was often chosen by students as a site of demonstration.

Association through architecture was a strong enough driver that even if the President was not present within the structure, students would still demonstrate outside of Morrill Hall. The architecture was a more visible target than President Moos himself. It made a bigger statement to break windows in Morrill Hall as a show of frustration against the institution, than to walk out of a meeting with the President

We analyzed one particular occupation of the building in further depth to better understand how the students engaged with space inside Morrill Hall. The occupation of January 13, 1969, referenced earlier in this thesis, is a model protest where architecture played a large role in the success of a protest. Following is a narrative description taken from a report by the University of Minnesota on the occupation:

Students [were] not admitted into this work area in the ordinary course of the office business. The black students then took up positions, sitting on desks and in chairs... The students made it clear that their purpose was to sit-in in the working area of the Admissions and Records office. One of them overheard the staff being instructed to put documents away and go home, and asked why- the order to leave was being given, since the students would not harm anyone... The black students closed the windows around the inner lobby- and the business of the office was brought to a halt. After guards had been posted at the inner doors, black students informed people inside the area that they would be allowed to leave but once outside they would not be allowed back in...One of the sets of doors into the inner lobby area was barricaded with large wooden tables which normally- stand in the middle of the inner lobby. In the meantime, black students had closed the outer doors on the west side of the main floor. The south and middle pairs of doors were jammed with coathangers in the

panic bars, while black students stood guard at the northern pair of doors.⁵¹

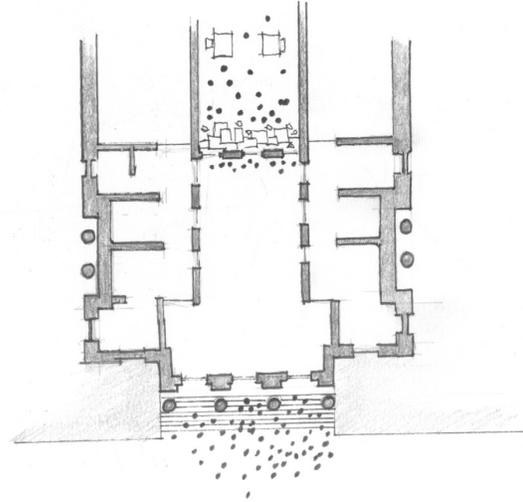


Figure 11, 12 | January 13, 1969. White students blocked the entrance to administrative offices to support black students who took up positions in the inner lobby as they barricaded one set of doors with large wooden tables, bringing administrative business to a halt. Students occupied the building to advocate for an Afro-American Studies department. The sketch [right] is based on photographs and newspaper reports on the occupation. (Photograph Source: Photo Files: Morrill Hall Takeover Images, University of Minnesota Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.)

Theater of Campus / Northrop Memorial Auditorium



Figure 13 | Northrop Memorial Auditorium front facade. (Source: Photo Files, Northrop Memorial Auditorium Images, University of Minnesota Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.)

With its idyllic Beaux-Arts design, an image of Northrop immediately evokes a sense of intellectualism and authority, which was appropriate as the University of Minnesota desired it to be the public face of the institution. It was built after President Coffman had stated there was a “crucial need of the 1920s...for centers of social life in

⁵¹ Proposal for Implementation of the Report of the President’s Commission on Campus Demonstrations. 1969. Information Files: Student Protest, Folder 2, 1969. University of Minnesota Archives. University of Minnesota Libraries.

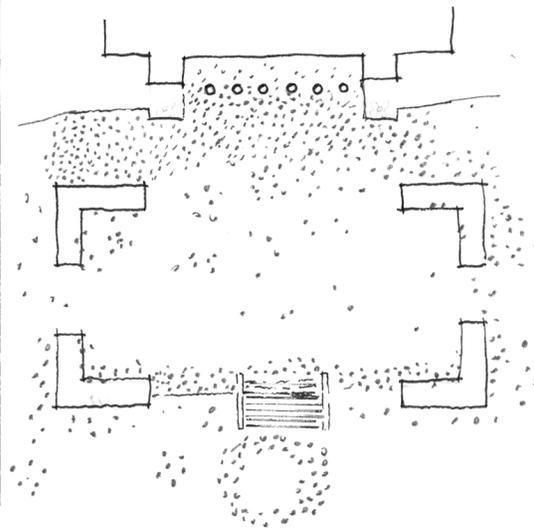
which the whole student body could come together...”⁵² Northrop, therefore, became an auditorium to host convocations, commencements and all other major campus events. Already, the building was a daily node of campus activity. But students adapted Northrop almost immediately after its construction to be a space of demonstration, a notion that is not unheard of for public spaces of such importance. As Kristine Miller states in her book studying the design of public space, “a public space can be changed by public action”.⁵³ As one of the most visible areas of the built environment at the University, it became a perfect place to host protests.

The design of Northrop’s front steps, plaza space, and façade influenced its adaptation as a space of protest by students. Demonstrators outside Northrop turned the Mall into a theater: students were both actors and audience; the building was the backdrop, and the steps were the stage from which protestors could speak out against “the establishment.” The imagery of a student speaking out against the perceived ideals of the institution on the steps of Northrop, with an architectural backdrop of symmetry, order, and nobility, gave the act of demonstrations a boldness that many of the other locations on campus did not have. An act as subversive as a protest hosted in front of the University’s “heart” destabilizes the accepted practices, which is exactly what the students were hoping to do throughout the student protest movement. While students might not have understood what the architecture of a Beaux-Arts façade represents, they did understand that “the permanence of the steps... and the classical references of [the] architectural detailing conveys legitimacy across time.”⁵⁴

⁵² Gray, 275.

⁵³ Miller, *Designs of the Public*, xi.

⁵⁴ *Idem.*, 2.



Figures 14, 15 | February 18, 1964. This sketch is based on a photograph [left] of demonstrators who formed a “human wheel” on Northrop plaza in protest of Governor George C. Wallace, who was addressing an audience inside Northrop. Nearly ten thousand people showed up and police had to limit entrance to the auditorium. Students who did not gain admission gathered on the steps of Johnston Hall, Northrop, and the embankment of the plaza. (Photograph Source: Photo Files, Student Protest Images, University of Minnesota Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.)

Students’ Domain / Coffman Memorial Union

As the official student union of the University of Minnesota, Coffman is essentially the “home” of the students on campus. This association with student life, and other spatial factors, led to Coffman’s repeated use as the host of some of the largest demonstrations throughout the 1960s and 1970s.

The building acted as a place of refuge for students during rallies and demonstrations for the same reasons it was used as a place for protest: it was

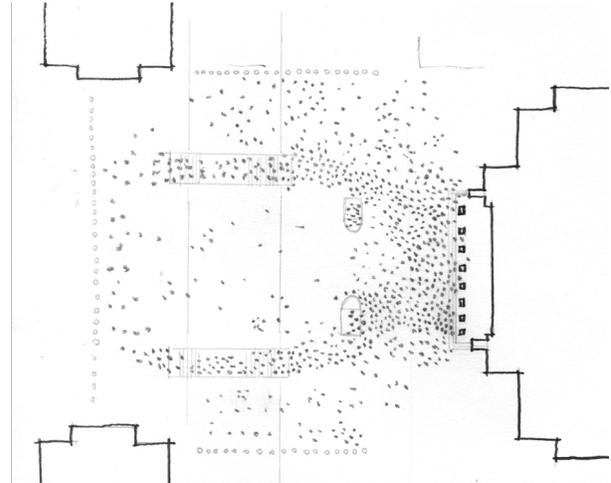
easy to access, and was part of the student domain. During the particularly violent



Figure 16 | Coffman Memorial Union front, side facades (Source: 1951, Coffman Memorial Union Images, University of Minnesota Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.)

demonstrations in May of 1972, students often ran into Coffman in order to flee the gas bombs and the police.

Student activists often gathered in Coffman to plan out protests, causing the building to become the first site of most protests. It was easy enough for the organizers of protests to walk out the front doors of Coffman and call attention to their cause. The high visibility of Coffman and the open space in front (interrupted only slightly by the depression of Washington Avenue) due to its location at the end of the Mall made it an ideal area for large-scale gathering, allowing protests to function within the space without much restriction. As one of the most open and noticeable spaces on campus, demonstrations could begin at Coffman and flow through the Mall to the steps of Northrop.



Figures 17, 18 | Spring 1972. Protesters crowded together in front of Coffman Union as police hemmed them in during an anti-war rally. A speaker addressed students from the steps underneath the portico. This sketch is based on an oral history describing how police often controlled protesters' actions in front of Coffman. The police used the design of space, in this case, to prevent demonstrators from occupying a larger area. (Photograph Source: 1972, Student Protest Images, University of Minnesota Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.)

Transformation and Fragmentation of the Mall / “Campus Changes Quiet Protests”

The latter half of the exhibit focuses on the differences between how protests occurred during the 1960s and 1970s, versus today. Based on sectional analysis of the Mall, we realized that the large-scale demonstrations that were so prevalent during the ‘protest-years’ would be nearly impossible to organize today. Successive changes to Washington Avenue and Northrop Plaza fragmented the Mall, disrupting the procession and hierarchy of space. Smaller areas discouraged students from gathering en-masse. These alterations isolated a large portion of the Mall and rendered it a less effective platform for student activism. Protesters can no longer organize in Coffman, flow out onto the Mall, and take the stage at the steps of Northrop. The oral histories noted something similar, stating that, “*Protests that happened in the 60s wouldn’t be possible today; the space is too different, almost unrecognizable.*”⁵⁵

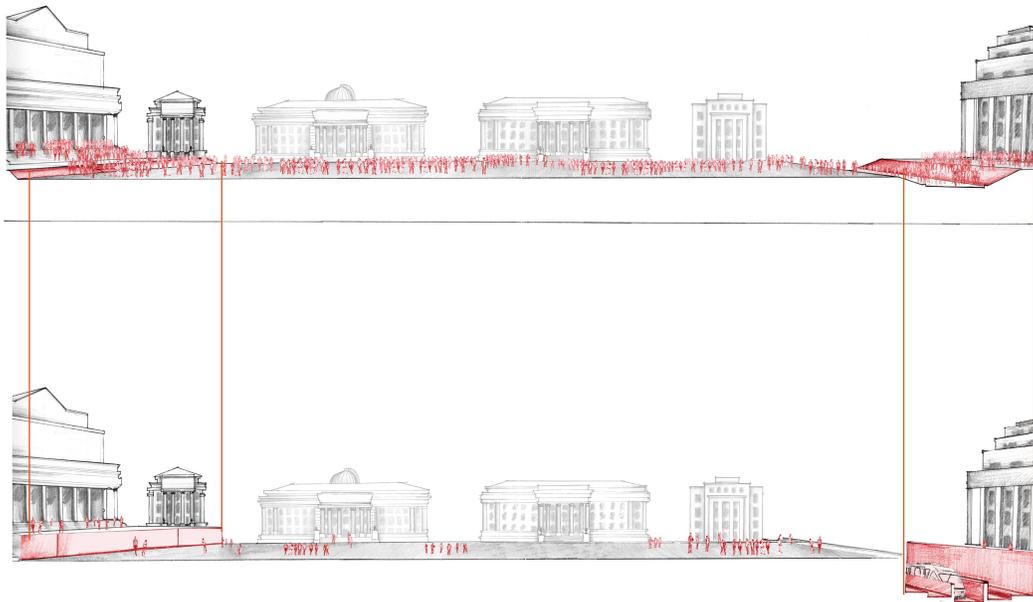


Figure 19 | Section drawings showing 1960s-1970s organization of the Mall [above], and current organization [below]

⁵⁵ Kate Maple, Oral history interview by Shreya Ghoshal and Jake Torkelson, University of Minnesota, December 5, 2016.

Two section diagrams were used to compare the organization of the Mall that existed in the 1960s and 1970s (drawn in the axonometric diagram and other diagrams throughout the thesis), versus the Mall today. While there was no direct cause and effect relationship between protests causing the changes to the Mall, or the changes to the Mall ending large-scale demonstrations, the drawings illustrate how architecture has influenced the actions of students. *Both* then and now. Walking around campus, a viewer can notice how deep the trench separating Coffman from the rest of the Mall is; there is no longer a way to enter or exit the open space in front of Coffman without using the footbridges, which are small enough to control the flow of traffic. A similar isolation transformed the plaza in front of Northrop into a space utilized much less often by demonstrations and rallies. Supporting images from then and now, placed above and below the section drawings on the exhibit board, express the extent to which the Mall has transformed.

“History of Rallies Could Foretell Today’s Events”

We used this last board of the exhibit to start a more directed conversation about the status of campuses and campus protests today. In the previous portion of the thesis, we set up the notion that the physical space of the Mall has changed into something that is not as useful to large-scale demonstrations, but we also realized that the generation of students protesting today have a different toolset available to them than the students of the 1960s and 1970s. We now have social media, where the click of a button supposedly shows your support for or against a cause. We did not try to reconcile the differences between the occupation of virtual space and physical space within the scope of this thesis, but we did ask that the viewers of the exhibit stop and think about it for a moment.

The photographs we took framing a historic 1970s image with a background of the same space today was another way of compelling people to consider the historic protests in the context of the campus they have seen in their lifetimes. Throughout the research process, we realized that university campuses do not acknowledge this tumultuous period of student history. Although the University of Minnesota had a twenty-year span in which demonstrations and rallies were all the students knew, today's generation of students has no sense of the size or prevalence of said protests. There has been little done at any of the campuses across the nation in terms of memorialization of the protest years. The magnitude and volume of demonstrations that took place is largely unknown because no physical evidence remains of the history. Again, we have not proposed an appropriate commemoration for the events that occurred, but we did point out to the viewers that there should be a recognition by the University and by future students that something like the 'protest-years' even happened.

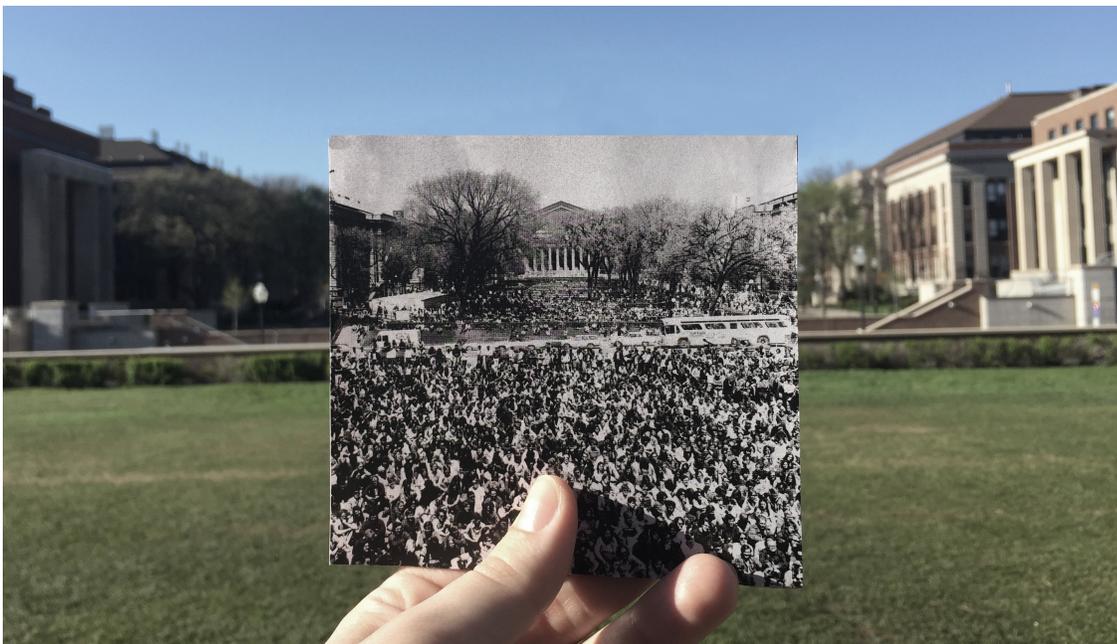


Figure 20 | Image taken of current Mall background with historic photograph in center.

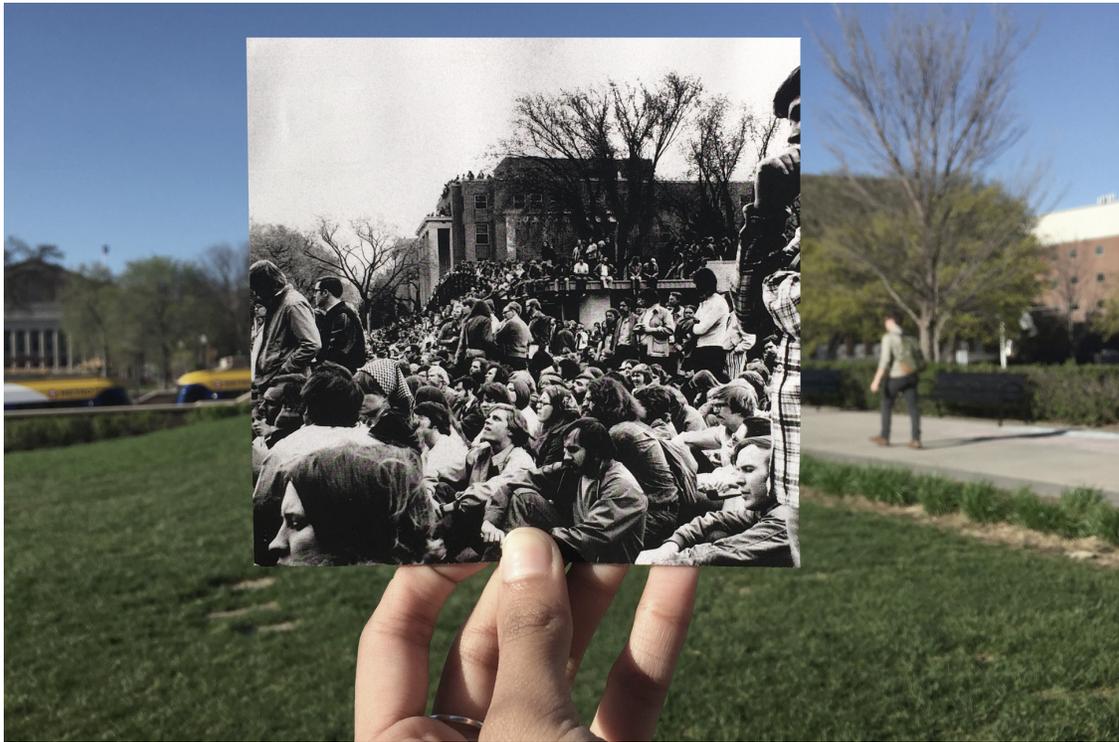


Figure 21 | Image taken of current Mall and Washington Avenue bridge background with historic photograph in center.

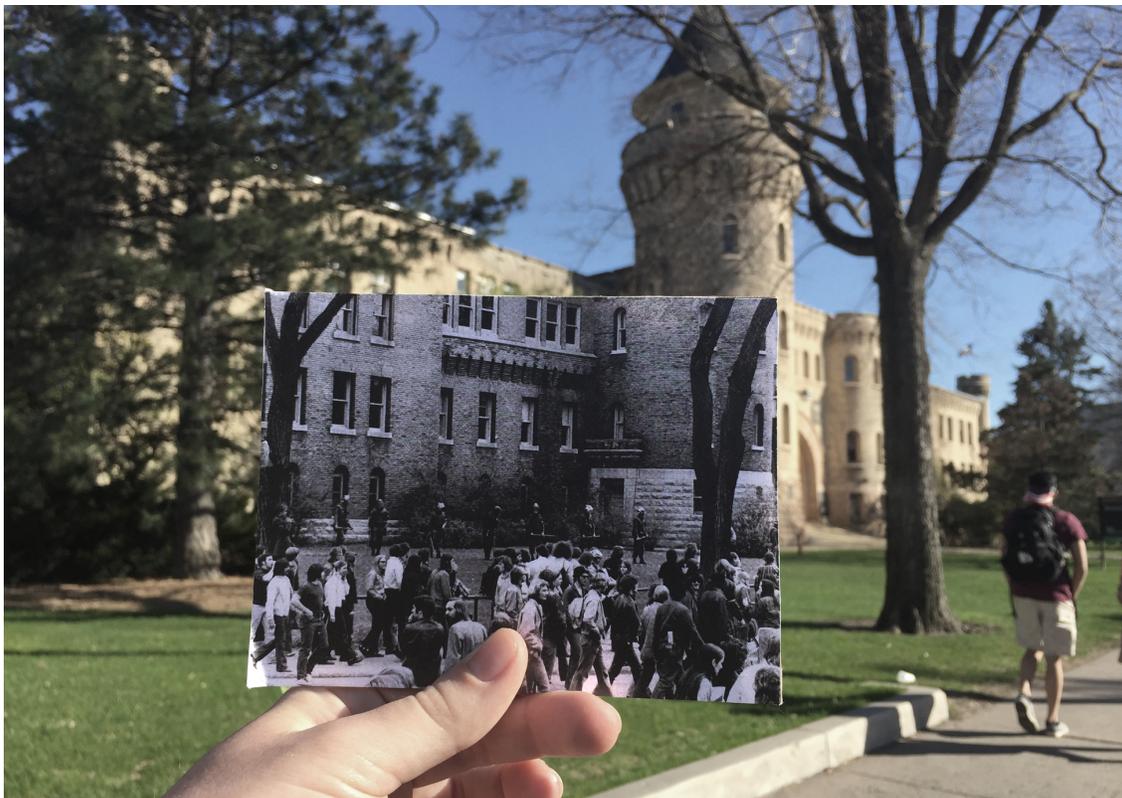
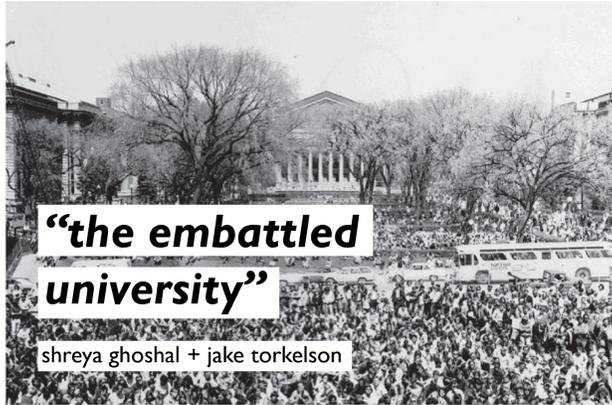


Figure 22 | Image taken of current Armory background with historic photograph in center.

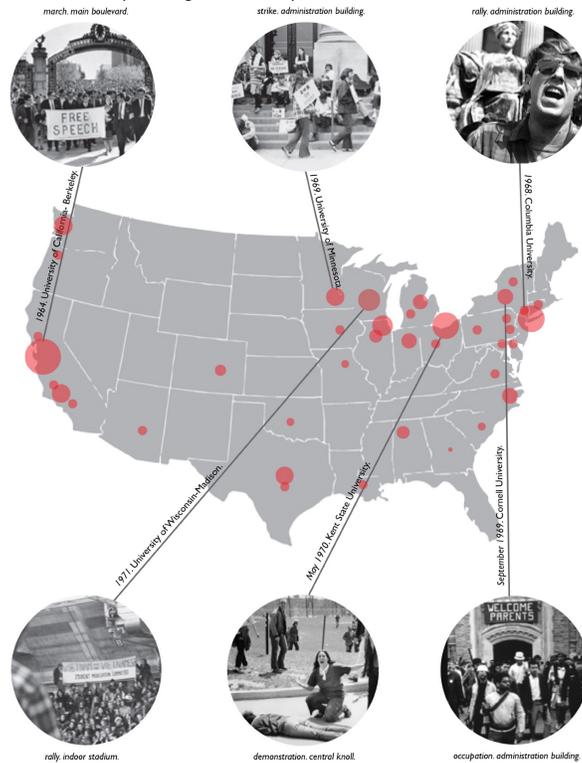


"I am moving with the crowd across Washington Avenue. Thousands of people are out in the street," gasped a panicked reporter. "Police are putting on gas masks! The crowd is going up onto the mall. A gas bomb right near me! Police are charging up the mall. We are running away!"

Portrayals of protests like this depict scenes of energy, conflict, movement, and disarray. In analyses of student demonstrations, these powerful associations often overshadow the role that physical space has in activism. On the University of Minnesota campus, student protesters adopted and adapted architecture based on elements such as scale, procession, and visibility. In each case, students subverted the power expressed in landscapes symbolic of the institution.

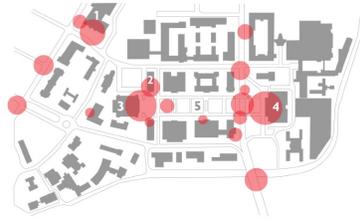
"revolution, realization"
national student protest movement

The 1960s and 1970s was a period of great unrest on university campuses nation-wide. A few demonstrations, indicated by larger circles on the map below, inspired protests on campuses across the country, including at the University of Minnesota.



“crowds crowd, pickets picket” protests at the university of minnesota, 1960s-1970s

Scholarship and archival sources use the word protest interchangeably with the terms demonstration, strike, and occupation. Here, protest is defined as any intentionally disruptive activity, whether for or against an issue. The following photographs illustrate forms of protest on campus; the map and icons indicate spaces that protesters used.



- 1 Armory
- 2 Merrill Hall
- 3 Northrop Auditorium
- 4 Coffman Union
- 5 The Mall

This diagram is drawn based on a 1972 map of the University of Minnesota.



assemble



barricade

[left] May 11, 1972. Students **assemble** in front of **Coffman Memorial Union** in a spring anti-war demonstration, **occupying Washington Avenue**.
[right] May 1972. Dozens of students worked together to build a **barricade** made of metal, wood, and other materials to **block Washington Avenue**. Demonstrators had a "proprietary interest in their pile of defiance." As one protester noted, "if they bring in bulldozers, it ought to stop them."



march



rally

[left] April 8, 1969. Anti-ROTC demonstrators **march** along the **Armory** fence. The march was part of a week-long effort to propose demolition of the Armory due to student continued dissatisfaction with the ROTC and the draft.
[right] May 1972. University President Malcolm Moos addresses a **rally** on the **steps of Northrop Auditorium**. A student holds an upside-down flag in protest of US involvement in Vietnam.



boycott



occupy

[left] Spring 1965. Students **boycott** the **University bookstore** due to high costs of textbooks. Demonstrators wanted profits from sales to go towards scholarships for minority students.
[right] January 1969. White students gather outside **Merrill Hall** in support of black students who **occupied** the building to establish an Afro-American Studies Department. The University of Minnesota joined the ranks of other universities where students occupied administration buildings in protest.



camp

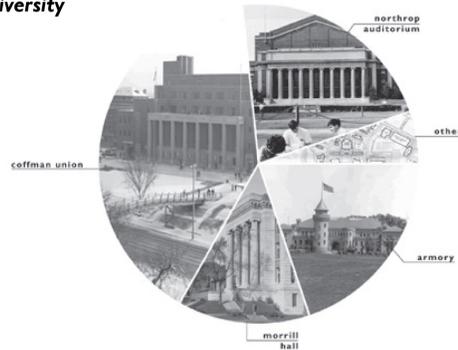


burn

[left] April 21, 1972. Students stake their claim to the **Mall**, setting up a **camp-in** for several months in front of Northrop to protest US air raids in Southeast Asia. "We'd like to use the camp-in to get everybody together. It can be used as a gathering point for all different causes" declared one camper.
[right] May 2, 1969. Students for the Preservation of the American Republic **stage a flag-burning** outside **Northrop**. Before the flag was burned, the leaders of the organization addressed the fifty students who had gathered. As the flag fell apart in flames, a university official's clothing caught fire.

“anatomy of a crisis” recurring spaces of activism at the university

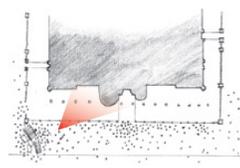
After an analysis of over one hundred protests, four buildings emerged as recurring sites of activism: the Armory, Morrill Hall, Northrop Memorial Auditorium, and Coffman Memorial Union. Whether consciously or not, protesters selected these spaces based on stylistic, spatial, or programmatic factors. In each case, architecture was adopted or adapted to add meaning to the protests.



military authority / armory



May 1972. Activists stormed the street to protest the Vietnam War while National Guardsmen defended the Armory. This sketch is based on a photograph [left] of protesters tearing down wrought iron fences that defined and separated the building from the public realm. Debris was used to build a barricade and lay claim to the space. The sketch illustrates the order of the military versus spontaneity of student demonstrators.

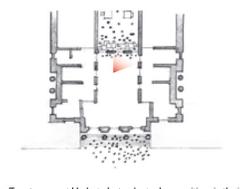


The Armory was designed in the “military-gothic” style; the structure was meant to be imposing, authoritative, and impenetrable. Protesters saw the Armory, home of the ROTC, as a tangible symbol of the University’s complicity with Vietnam War efforts, which they firmly opposed.

campus administration / morrill hall



January 13, 1969. White students blocked entrance to the administrative offices to support black students who took up positions in the inner lobby as they barricaded one set of doors with large wooden tables, bringing administrative business to a halt. Students occupied the building to advocate for an Afro-American Studies department. The sketch [right] is based on photographs and newspaper reports on the occupation.

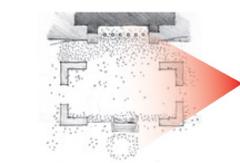


Protesters used Morrill Hall—frequently occupying the building—due to its architectural and programmatic association with the authority of the university and the office of the president. Students demonstrated at Morrill Hall even when the president was not there, indicating the symbolic importance of the space.

theater of campus / northrop memorial auditorium



February 18, 1964. This sketch is based on a photograph [left] of demonstrators who formed a “human wheel” on Northrop plaza in protest of Governor Wallace, who was addressing an audience inside Northrop. Nearly ten thousand people showed up and police had to limit entrance to the auditorium. Students who did not gain admission gathered on the steps of Johnston Hall, Northrop, and the embankment of the plaza.

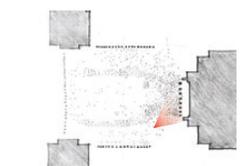


Demonstrators outside Northrop turned the Mall into a theater: students were both actors and audience; the building was the backdrop, and the steps were the stage from which protesters spoke out against “the establishment.”

students’ domain / coffman memorial union



Spring 1970. Protesters crowded together in front of Coffman Union as police hemmed them in during an anti-war rally. A speaker addressed students from the steps underneath the portico. This sketch is based on an oral history describing how police often controlled protesters’ actions in front of Coffman. The police used the design of space, in this case, to prevent demonstrators from occupying a larger area.

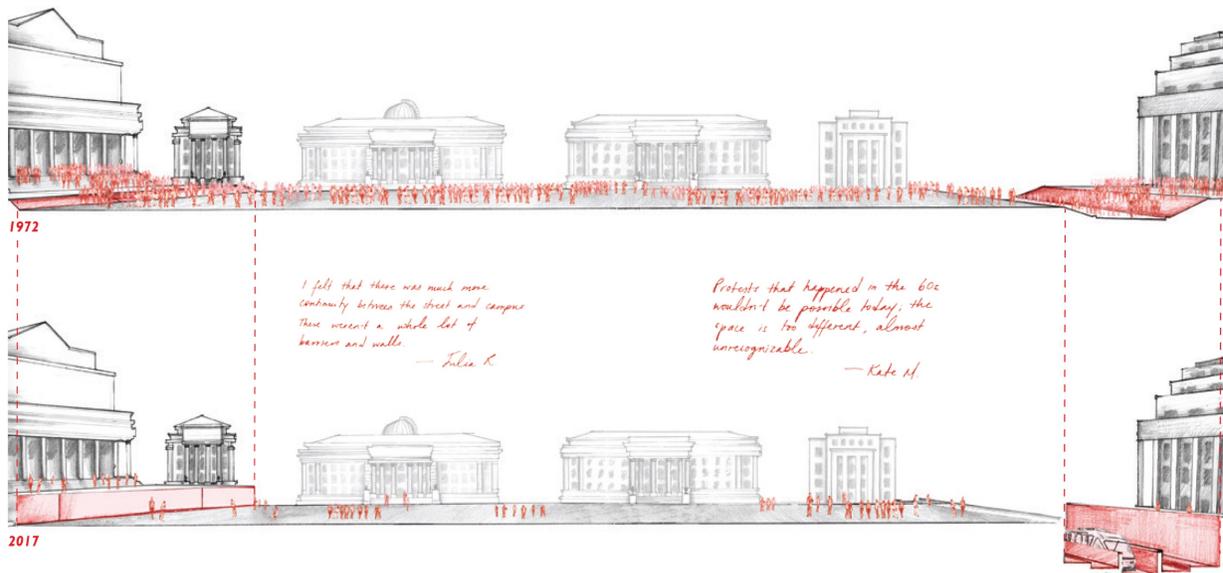


Coffman was first and foremost the students’ turf. Activists gathered within the building to plan protests, safe from authority figures. Organizers could leave the building and easily attract attention from passing students. As one of the most open and visible spaces on campus, demonstrations could begin at Coffman and flow into the Mall.

“campus changes quiet protest”
transformation and fragmentation of the mall

Protesters can no longer organize in Coffman, flow out onto the Mall, and take the stage at the steps of Northrop. Successive changes to Washington Avenue and Northrop Plaza fragmented the Mall, disrupting the procession and hierarchy of space. Smaller areas discouraged students from gathering en-masse. These alterations isolated a large portion of the Mall and rendered it a less effective platform for student activism.

the mall | pre-1975



the mall | today



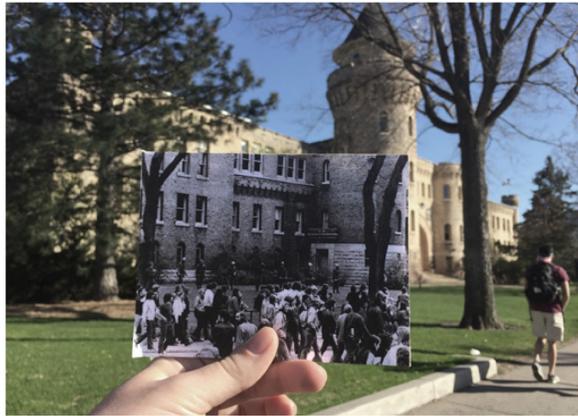
**“history of rallies could
foretell today’s events”**



Demonstrators assemble on the Mall, filling the lawn, bridge, and rooftops. How does the enclosure of the space influence your feelings of safety?



Imagine yourself in a crowd of 10,000 protesters. If you can simply join a movement on social media, why participate in a protest?



A line of National Guardsman extends the perimeter of the Armory. How does your behavior change in their presence?

Acknowledgments

We are grateful to numerous individuals for giving us the opportunity to shed light on a period of the University’s history that is often overlooked. Architecture and activism, we believe, go hand in hand.

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