Livingston College Tract Physical Inventory

There are several prominent physical characteristics of the Livingston Site worth noting. First, it should be mentioned that it contains the highest geographical point on the campus outside of the nature preserve, which cannot be built on. From these higher points visitors can gain a view of the Watchung Mountains. Second, there are almost no physical constraints that prevent from building, the soils are both well drained and offer a moderate slope in the vast majority of the site. There are no wetlands or environmentally protected areas within its bounds nor does it contain any existing structures other than several crumbling asphalt roads used for maintenance access and piles of rubble meant to block unwanted vehicles.

The vegetation of the area is early successional plants including Eastern Cedars and invasive species such as Mulberry and Norway Maple, indicating the relatively recent abandonment of the tract of land.

The physical surroundings of the site are key in defining both its opportunities and character. Directly to the south is the core of Livingston campus including the amenities offered by its student center and the associated infrastructure. Parking facilities surround the south side of the tract offer 3320 spaces for students faculty and visitors. During University Football games the large lot to the east provides parking for fans offering a unique opportunity for cross over visitors.

Rutgers bus service offers students the ability to visit the site with ease along with offering opportunities for families to visit the New Jersey Revolutionary War Center and a Rutgers football game in the same day.
The character of our site can be traced back to its history as part of the U.S. Army Camp Kilmer. When the camp's usefulness waned after World War II, Camp Kilmer's Lands were sold to the University in the Early 1960's. Simultaneously the University was undergoing its own changes including its establishment as the State University of New Jersey, with this change came a demand to both consolidate the New Brunswick campuses, including College Avenue, Cook College and Douglass into a single cogent entity along with a need to create a new campus that would be capable to supporting a six times increase in Rutgers's student population within ten years.

In the scramble to fulfill these state mandated quotas, the university quickly set to work developing its Kilmer Tract into Livingston Campus. Initial proposals called for a dense inner campus and the complete removal of the old army barracks. Even today in 2007, these barracks have not been completely razed from Livingston, a true testament to the endless debate and argument that has muddled the campus since its inception. Throughout the construction process of Livingston’s first buildings, planners found themselves in a quagmire. Major voices within the university, including an Ad-hoc committee of staff and faculty were calling for the preservation of the Kilmer Woods and the restoration of ecologically sensitive areas.

The proposals have gone through many stages and been worked over many times. In comparison to the present state of Livingston it is clear that none of the concepts ever reached fruition and that the identity of the campus and, the proposed building site, is the result of ongoing indecision about the appropriate treatment for the campus. Recently the 2003 master plan for the campus which specified as Campus Village for our site was thrown out leaving the future open.
The physical aspects of the Livingston site offer several amenities for a future New Jersey Revolutionary War Center and Memorial. Its location on Rutgers’ lands gives it an immediate association with the university, along with the opportunity to use existing infrastructure including ample parking facilities with over three thousand spaces in the immediate vicinity. It sits within a mile of several state and county roads including 18 and 287 making access to the site quick and easy. It is also within a half mile of NJ Transit’s Edison stop on the North East Corridor regional rail. Major population centers including New York and Philadelphia are both within an hour’s drive. Within a two mile radius are over 20 schools, contributing both a healthy group of continued visitors and the means to accommodate those wishing to stay in the area.

Lastly, the site is highly visible from different parts of the region, a viewshed analysis indicates that our site is a visible area from both the Watchung Mountains, and New Brunswick. A new Revolutionary War center on this site offers the opportunity to connect with the identity of the region and its many inhabitants.

The site is situated within miles of Washington’s retreat and central to many skirmishes and large battles sites including Princeton, Trenton, Springfield, and Monmouth.

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