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Reshaping the Hill: construction begins for the Colby Green, centerpiece of the College's most significant expansion in a half- century

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Reshaping the Hill

By Stephen Collins '74

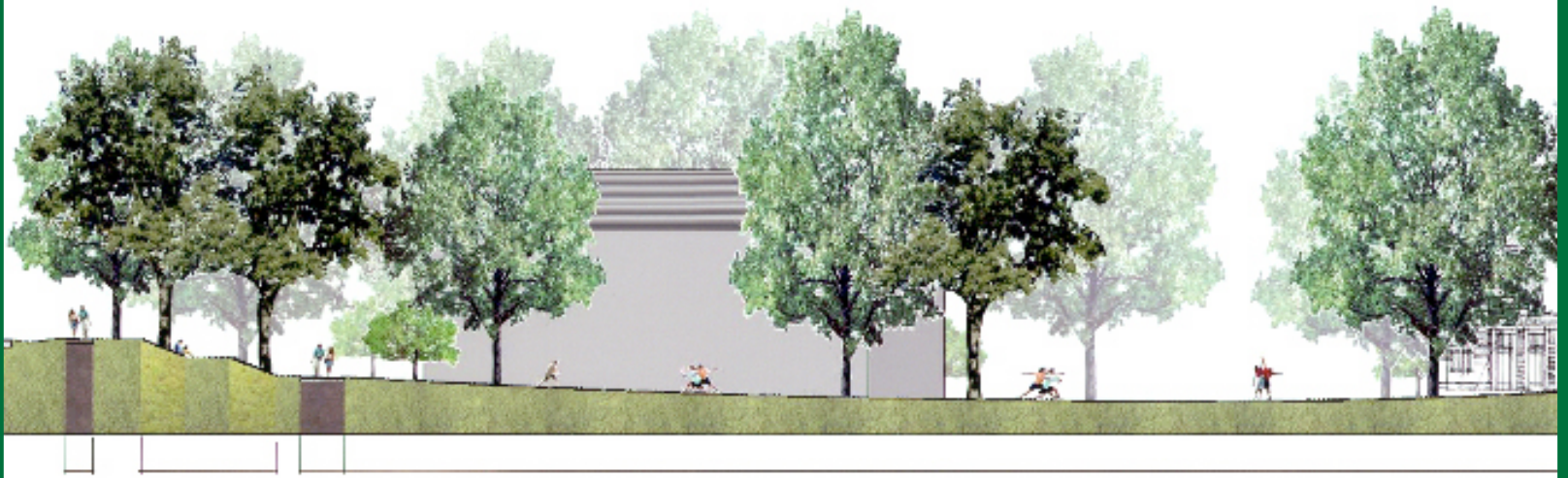
Construction begins for the Colby Green, centerpiece of the College's most significant expansion in a half-century

With a strategic plan that calls for four new buildings over the next 10 years, all of them across Mayflower Hill Drive from the academic quadrangle and Mary Low Commons, Colby will start literally laying the groundwork in September for the most ambitious campus expansion since the move to Mayflower Hill more than a half-century ago.

After more than three years of planning on paper and in meetings, College officials are ready to roll out the heavy equipment to break ground for a whole new area on campus—the Colby Green. In April the Board of Trustees approved spending \$6.2 million for earthmoving, landscaping, underground utility service and storm-water management systems to support the new buildings. This is the first in a series of sequential projects, according to Vice President for Administration W. Arnold Yasinski.

Necessary permits are expected in time for earthmoving to begin in September to build the Colby Green, an elliptical lawn directly across the road from Miller Library's terraces, Yasinski said. The green, modeled on a traditional New England town common, eventually will anchor four buildings: the existing Lunder House (admissions); an alumni and development center that will house administrative offices and space for College and alumni functions; and two new academic buildings, one for the natural sciences and the other for social sciences and interdisciplinary programs.





New buildings will address needs identified in the *Strategic Plan for Colby*. Groundbreaking for the alumni center is slated for the spring of 2004; the social sciences/interdisciplinary building will be next. In addition to the buildings on the Colby Green, a music instruction and performance center is envisioned facing the Runnals Building.

Landscaping and earthwork to build the Colby Green accounts for about \$2 million of the \$6.2 million approved for phase one of the campus expansion plans. Cut-and-fill grading will build a terrace down from the roadway to shape the elliptical green in the field between Lunder House and the Alford-Wales Tennis Courts. To build Colby Green, an estimated 60,000 cubic yards of soil will be moved, about half of it to be trucked in, Yasinski said. Landscapers will raise the back edge of the field so the landscape will no longer fall away toward the east. The view over the Kennebec Valley and the Dixmont Hills will remain open.

Dean of Admissions Parker Beverage said that, construction disruptions out his window notwithstanding, he thinks the Colby Green will enhance Colby's renowned campus beauty and unique views. "All the

Facing page, the view from the steps of Miller Library toward the planned Colby Green. Above, the green, with Mayflower Hill Drive at left, and terracing leading to social science and alumni/development buildings. Below, the view from the proposed alumni/development building across the green toward Miller Library.



admissions tours either pause on the library steps or walk across in front of the library; it's an important view," he said. "If anything, it will be even better, since the Colby Green will give that eastern side of the campus better definition where right now it drops off into the woods."

Phase one of the construction project encompasses 14.5 acres and will develop the site for the alumni center and associated parking areas. Phase two will develop sites for the two academic buildings on the Colby Green and will continue plantings. A third phase will develop the site for the music and performance building and will replace

the Runnals parking lot with terraced parking areas. Since the Colby Green will be the site of the first academic buildings east of the main road through campus, concerns about traffic were raised early in the planning effort, and steps are being taken to mitigate the number and speed of vehicles. Maine's biennial Department of Transportation Improvement Program this year included engineering funds for a bypass that will eliminate the steep hill between Colby and North Street, rerouting that traffic onto County Road behind Colby's field house and soccer fields. When complete, the bypass is expected to

reduce significantly traffic flow through the campus. It also will allow the roadway, currently state-maintained, to become a locally maintained thoroughfare, which means the speed limit can be further reduced and traffic-calming measures can be implemented.

Discussions in 2002 that proposed building a new road between Lunder House and the arboretum and/or a southern bypass to route Mayflower Hill Drive traffic south of campus both have been abandoned.

Environmental regulations require the College to collect, manage and treat storm runoff created by new campus development



The Colby campus today, at left. Below is an artist's rendition of the same view with the Colby Green in place. Miller Library is at top left; proposed buildings include a social sciences building, at center, and alumni/development center, at right. At right center is the existing Lunder House admissions building.



and construction. Systems have been designed to handle not just the impact of the Colby Green but of all the development proposed in the long-range plan, according to Steve Mohr of Mohr & Seredin Landscape Architects of Portland. Currently, storm water from 30 acres of the developed campus flows into two pipes, and serious erosion problems occur where they discharge on the east side of campus.

The approved plan includes filtration chambers and settling ponds that will handle runoff from newly developed areas as well as from the pre-existing campus—an area developed in the 1930s and '40s before such environmental regulations were in effect. “We’re treating water that wasn’t treated before,” Mohr said. In the end, despite the new area being developed, the storm-water systems will produce a net improvement in the quality of runoff currently exiting the campus, and serious erosion damage in and around the edge of the woodlands will be repaired, he said.

The plans approved by trustees are the result of several years of planning involving firms from Maine and Massachusetts. The architectural firm Shepley Bulfinch Richardson and Abbott, of Boston, was engaged to help Colby develop a master plan for the campus. Reed Hilderbrand Associates Inc., a landscape architecture firm from Watertown, Mass., developed the schematic plans for the Colby

Green and for campus landscaping. Mohr & Seredin Landscape Architects prepared construction documents for phase one and designed the environmental remediation systems associated with the plan.

The design challenge was to respect the rectilinear forms of the Miller lawn quadrangle, designed by Jens Fredrick Larson in the 1930s, while making an effective visual transition from that formal area to the fields and forest across the street, according to Eric Kramer of Reed Hilderbrand. The Colby Green’s elliptical lawn with curving pathways was adopted because it relates to both the formal beaux-arts style of the academic quadrangle and to the less-developed pastures and woodlands that are also Colby hallmarks. “We’re really excited about where this has come from and about the next phase,” Kramer told trustees in April.

Additional architectural renderings of the campus plan and Colby Green are available at www.colby.edu/planning/campus online.

Diamond Gift

Plans to erect new buildings on the Colby Green took a giant leap forward in May, when Robert E. Diamond Jr. '73 announced one of the largest individual gifts Colby has ever received—\$6 million toward construction of the social sciences and interdisciplinary studies building that will stand next to the Lunder House (admissions).

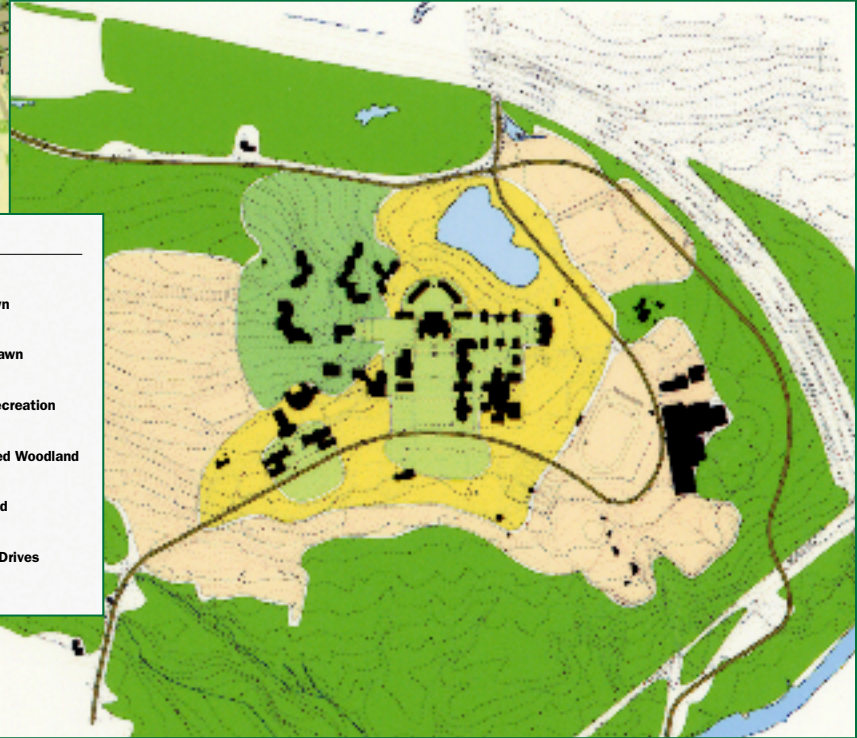
Diamond, head of investment banking and asset management at Barclays Bank in London and a Colby trustee, gave the naming gift for the new building, which will house several social science departments, the Oak Institute for the Study of International Human Rights and the Center for Public Affairs and Civic Engagement, an innovative new interdisciplinary program that will capitalize on the College’s strengths in



At left, the campus layout with the Colby Green. Below, the Campus Landscape Master Plan with the planned bypass road that will route through-traffic to the north and west of the athletic complex. Color codes indicate expansion of greensward, giving the campus more of a parkland character and transition to existing woodland.

Legend

- Fine Lawn
- Rough Lawn
- Field/Recreation
- Cultivated Woodland
- Woodland
- Primary Drives



Moves Social Sciences Building Forward

policy matters and in civic participation at the local, state and national levels. The project budget for the building is \$12 million, including endowment to cover upkeep of the property in the future.

"This gift is remarkable both in its magnitude and its capacity to change Colby for the better," President William D. Adams said when he announced the gift. "Not only will the new building create tremendous opportunities for our students and the community, but Bob's gift coming when it does lays the groundwork for a broader campaign that will underwrite other ambitious aspirations in our strategic plan."

Construction of the social sciences and interdisciplinary studies building will begin in 2005 or 2006, after groundwork and fund raising are completed. The

building, which is being designed by the award-winning architectural firm Bohlin Cywinski Jackson of Philadelphia, will be located in or near the current Lunder parking lot, across the road from Eustis.

On the other flank of the Lunder House, construction of an alumni and development center is expected to begin in April 2004. Trustees gave project approval to the alumni building at their May meeting, clearing the way for that \$7.9-million project, including endowment. Facing the Colby Green, the 27,000-square-foot building will include a large function room that will be used for alumni events and trustee meetings as well as for programs during the academic year. Offices for alumni relations, development and communications departments will be on the second floor

and in two two-story wings.

The new offices in the alumni center address a severe office-space crunch on campus. By moving administrative functions to the new building the College will, through a series of other moves, free up offices in Lovejoy and elsewhere for faculty. Ann Beha Architects of Boston is designing the building. The alumni center, which will use geothermal wells for heating and cooling, was the first academic building in Maine proposed for certification through the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program.