

CASE STUDY

Kresge College, University of California at Santa Cruz, California, USA: a living-studying building/complex (1966–74)

Kresge College is interesting both for its design and the process through which it was conceived. It was initiated at a time when the members of Board of Trustees of the University of California system were worried about the student unrest at the University of California at Berkeley with its main square, Sproule Plaza, giving a focus, a heart, to the university. The master plan for the University of California at Santa Cruz was designed by William Turnbull (of Moore and Turnbull) in 1967 to have dispersed colleges. One of them located on a rugged peripheral site surrounded by red-wood trees is Kresge College.

In 1969, Moore and Turnbull had completed a design for a college on the site but state funds were only available for teaching facilities. The idea of an integrated living-learning environment existed in the minds of the provost, Robert Edgar, and assistant provost, Michael Kahn. A donation from the Kresge family (of K-Mart fame) had enabled a college along those lines to function in temporary accommodation. With financial contributions from the state and recognition that ongoing student accommodation fees would have to cover some of the costs, planning went ahead. To aid the programming process, the university ran a course 'Creating Kresge College' and a group of students conducted a survey of their fellows about the types of accommodations they desired. The results were partially incorporated into the design.

The college has antecedents in the Ezra Stiles and Samuel F. B. Morse Colleges at Yale (1962) designed by Eero Saarinen and

the colleges at Oxford and Cambridge. The actual design has precedents in similar neighbourhood-like 'village' designs in California. Sea Ranch (1975) by Moore, Lyndon, Turnbull and Whitaker, for instance, is a 2020-hectare (5000-acre) development of clustered units (designed by Joseph Esherick) that exudes a sense of coziness.

For Kresge College, Moore and Turnbull (really Charles Moore) designed a scheme around a 1000-foot (280-metre) L-shaped central open space – a 'street' – that the site allowed (see Figure 6.15). This space is entered from the parking lot through a large gateway. At both ends of the street are 'crowd-pullers'. Along the street the architects placed administrative, academic, residential and social units. The idea is similar, like Bielefeld University, to that of a suburban shopping mall with its anchor stores at both ends and smaller shops in between. It is a powerful geometrical type.

The street has kinks in it to give a picturesque, 'townscape' flavour and it has places for people to meet, sit and chat. It was designed to make the sequential experience of spaces varied and interesting from the moment a person comes through the entrance gate to its termination at a court around which are located a restaurant and the assembly (town) hall. Along the way the vista changes as one changes direction. The street is punctuated with steps, platforms and student speakers' rostrums (above the garbage cans). It is the communal space of the college. The architecture of the built form is stark and contrasts strongly with both the picturesque street layout and the