

October 25th, 2010
The Argosy,
Mount Allison University,

Letter to the editor:

What a disastrous decision from the powers that be at Mount A as to the fate of the old memorial library, one of the sweetest buildings in the Maritimes. A building you could die for (and many did).

When it goes, to be replaced with a huge rectangular box shoehorning two disparate elements together; boisterous, chemically stinky Fine Arts and Performing Arts, what will be the net gain? It'll be Lego Central. The west end of the university will be pinned with a long box on Main Street. The east end is already pinned with another long box, the enormously boring brick flank of Convocation Hall, the least-used building of the university. It comes alive a few days a year, then sits silent and brooding, a complete performing arts centre within it, mute. That long, brick side of Convocation Hall contains a parking lot wide enough to carry a fine arts building, upper floors with wonderful northern light, All available and only needing some powerful people to think outside the box (sorry). A gifted architect, could reconcile the Doric front of the Hall with the addition. It just takes some critical thinking. And what would be the net gain? The Lego effect of the two boxes would disappear. The wonderful nuances of the Swan Pond would be enhanced. The performing arts and fine arts people would come together with more equal footing. The old memorial library would live. And the legacy ensuing from this empathic approach to including visual equity in the mix would be long-lasting and appreciated by all for years to come.

This is all stuff a great university would do.

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