KRESGE COLLEGE
PLANNING PRECEDENT

Santa Cruz
Cal.

Overview
Kresge College is one of ten residential colleges at the University of California at Santa Cruz, which is located in hilly terrain on the outskirts of the city overlooking the Pacific Ocean. Kresge College itself sits on the western edge of the campus in a redwood glen, somewhat remote from the other colleges. Founded in 1965, the university as a whole was conceived as a place for progressive, experimental undergraduate education. Kresge was perhaps the most progressive of these: run as a participatory democracy that included the students, all decisions were determined by consensus. The academic, faculty, staff, and student spaces were all integrated - intertwined even - into one setting.

The design of the college allows for students to live within eyesight of the buildings they have classes in. This fosters a cohesive environment with a seamless transition between academic and personal life.

Design
The experimental nature of Kresge's pedagogy extends to its architecture. The architects, Charles Moore and William Turnbull, rejected the traditional hierarchical and axial arrangement of institutional college campuses. Instead, the model for Kresge was an Italian hill town. The buildings, all two or three stories, are arrayed somewhat haphazardly along a pedestrian route that wanders in an imperfect L-shape some 1,000 feet up and through the forested hillsilce.

At the lower end are the college offices and a rec room, at the top is a dining hall, and in the middle is the library and classroom. Classrooms and student dorm rooms line the route as it twists, widens, and narrows, forming various types of public spaces along the way. These spaces are the whimsical equivalents of Italian piazzas; here, though, the focus is not on a Renaissance church but on more mundane uses, such as the student laundromat or a public telephone.

The interior of the buildings along the route have a staged feel: the buildings are mostly clad in white stucco but they have free-standing screens with large cut-outs and colorful supergraphics to highlight entryways, stairways, and upper-level balconies. On the outside, that is facing the trees and the natural environment, the buildings are a subdued brown. Only within the college, as if to mimic the vitality of the hilltown, does the color challenge the surroundings.