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EXISTING FACILITIES: The existing Mesker Park Zoo was begun in 1928. It exists on a site of approximately 50 acres and is surrounded by sparsely located single-family residences.

There are two major buildings at Mesker Zoo. The KARL RAE KEECHT MEMORIAL BUILDING houses felines and primates. It's overall condition is generally good, however it is inadequate for housing the animals which presently occupy it. Insufficient accommodations for transfer and holding of animals is the major problem. Other problems include improper ventilation, sterile animal environments and lack of storage space within the building. The KLEY MEMORIAL BUILDING contains the administrative offices in addition to exhibits for birds and reptiles, elephant and hippopotamus. Many of the cages in the Kley Building, such as those for birds and reptiles, have inadequate access to enable keepers to properly clean the cages. Many of the cages are sterile and do not properly exhibit the animals in their appropriate environments.

Most of the outdoor exhibits are in poor condition and are outdated. In addition, the animals are not necessarily exhibited in their natural habitats. The general layout of the zoo needs to be replanned according to a clearly defined system of paths which indicate the direction of travel for the pedestrians so they view the exhibits in an appropriate sequence and are not required to backtrack.
MASTER PLAN PROPOSALS:

Zooplan Associates are presently acting as consultants to the Park Board, city of Evansville, for the study of Mesker Park Zoo. They have presented a Master Plan Program, dated July 25, 1974, and have received approval to continue with the actual Master Plan. The following is an interpretation of the Master Plan Proposals by Zooplan.

Site Design:
1. Use or remodel existing facilities whenever possible.
2. Take advantage of natural site characteristics such as topography, hydrography, soils, vegetation, and climate.
3. Present zoo exhibits in a logical and systematic sequence without unnecessary walking and backtracking with landmarks or graphics to help orientate the visitors.
4. Allow convenient service and maintenance to all exhibits.
5. Disperse popular exhibits among less popular ones to create interest in all parts of the zoo.
6. Encourage sales of refreshments and other practical items.
8. Allow implementation of the Master Plan in phases as follows:
   CRITICAL NEEDS - "These includes the items which must be done first in order to make better use of existing facilities, restore to proper use those facilities now being used for other purposes than intended, arrest deterioration and provide those public desires and conveniences so as to make a trip to the zoo a pleasant and meaningful outing."
   URGENT NEEDS - "These items, while not critical, are strongly recommended and should be accomplished within five years."

MESKER PARK ZOO  PROLOGUE:
EVANSVILLE, INDIANA  MASTER PLAN PROPOSALS
Attendance
1971 (count)  166,000
1975 (estimate)  175,000
2000 (estimate)  250,000

Maximum number of persons in the zoo at one time (peak season of the year).

Park flow in/out  
people  912/hr.
cars  261/hr.

Number of parking spaces needed by year 2000  
overflow spaces  226

Zoo Concept
Zooplans acknowledges the most outstanding feature of the zoo as being the site. Excitement may be generated here by the potential of dynamic views. The concept they allude to is that of organizing the animals by continents to allow better comprehension of the animals for educational purposes. What they term the "view zoo" pertains to the dynamic views they wish to create by three levels of walkways. The first around the periphery of the site which allows a panoramic view of the whole zoo. The second, a walkway level which actually penetrates some of the exhibits and happens at the same level with the exhibits. The third level is the inner most loop which encircles the main lake and allows views up at the exhibits. At this level rest areas occur.
The project budget as proposed by Zooplan Associates and presented in occasional newspaper articles devotes $250,000 for Phase I and eventually could result in several million dollars of construction.

Phase I construction would include: relocation of the big cats from the inadequate cages in the Knecht Building to new outdoor exhibits, initial construction of a service area for storage and maintenance of equipment, development of a children's petting zoo, and removal of much fencing to be replaced by dry rock.

Future development proposed by Zooplan would include regrouping of animals into regional habitats, remodeling the Knecht Building as administrative and educational offices, development of a "tropical rain forest" in the lower level of the Kley Building, construction of a new snack bar overlooking the main lake, and offering boats for rent on the main lake.

The existing budget proposals seem to disregard any financial assistance from donations by individuals and corporations, memorials, grants, education-facilities funds, or rental income from commercial enterprises located in the zoo.

It seems this type of diverse financing would be healthy. The only way the zoo will become a successful educational event and leisure activity is if the people actively participate.
NOTE:

Data presented by Zooplano, such as square footage, animal stock, and other animal statistics will be considered here as expert opinion. This information will not be duplicated in this program, but it will appear in the accompanying document prepared by Zooplano Associates.
Modern zoos have indicated a desire to emphasize the education of the public in their facilities. This probably parallels the trend in recent years toward man taking a harder look at his influence on the environment. Zoos have taken on the role of "earmarking" endangered species as well as breeding them in captivity. In many cases, as in the case if Mesker Park Zoo, the older zoos need to be revitalized in this sense and become something more than just holding pens for animals.

Mesker Park Zoo, Evansville, Indiana has a "watershed" sufficient enough to support a general type zoo that exhibits the total range of animals from around the world as opposed to specializing in one type or a series of related species. The general type is the kind of zoo which exists there presently. However, in the revitalization an attempt should be made to clearly identify the animals in terms of species, relationships between species, and continental location for the purpose of education.

It would be a superficial statement to assert that Mesker Zoo should become a facility extensively involved in research and experimentation. However, a greater emphasis could be placed on cooperation with local schools and universities in the study of animal psychiatry or other related fields.

While education and research are areas that zoos can expand into, the primary role of a zoo such as Evansville's is providing a form of leisure or cultural activity for the populous contained within its "watershed." The revitalization should involve an offering of a variety of activities that entertain people for an afternoon. It should also offer a changing series of activities so that people may enjoy the zoo not only once in ten years, but again and again.
The revitalization of Mesker Park Zoo is a must within the next few years. Presently, it is a liability in the hands of the city and the condition of the zoo is rapidly deteriorating. The city has recognized this problem and has contracted Zooplan Associates to study the zoo and make proposals and recommendations. Zooplan has presented a Master-plan Program dated July 25, 1974, and the proposal has been accepted by the city Park Board. Zooplan is now continuing with the actual Masterplan. Masterplan accepted, November 11, 1974.

The validity of Mesker Park Zoo in terms of a student project is evident because of the variety it offers in terms of planning, landscape architecture, architecture and coordination between these elements of the total design. In addition, it offers confrontation with an actual client and could offer an introduction to some aspects of working within the city governmental structure.
### Meteorological Data for the Current Year

#### Station: Evansville, Indiana

**Dress Regional Airport**

- **Latitude:** 38° 03' N
- **Longitude:** 87° 32' W
- **Elevation above mean sea level:** 231 feet

#### Normal, Means, and Extremes

### Temperature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>95% Extremes</th>
<th>Extremes</th>
<th>Normal Range</th>
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- **Mean:**
- **95% Extremes:**
- **Extremes:**
- **Normal Range:**
- **Extremes:**
- **Normal Range:**

### Precipitation

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</table>

- **Mean:**
- **95% Extremes:**
- **Extremes:**
- **Normal Range:**
- **Extremes:**
- **Normal Range:**

### Climatological Data

**Mesker Park Zoo**

- **Evansville, Indiana**
ANIMAL CHARACTERISTICS:

Flight (confined, free)
Climbing
Running
Crawling
Swimming
Grazing

BUILDING SYSTEM ADAPTATIONS:

Site
Slope (flat, gradual, steep)
Rocky terrain
Lakes and ponds
Animal
Large (elephant, bison, hippopotamus, tapir, giraffe)
Average size (deer, antelope, ostrich, tiger, leopard, bears, monkeys, llama)
Small animals (small birds, snakes, reptiles)
Flying animals (large birds)

Animal grouping must be considered here
SPACE ALLOCATIONS AT AUSTRALIAN/N. AMERICAN NODE:

Entrance/ticket booth
Ticket stand
2 gates with turnstiles
telephone communication with main office

Restaurant (150 indoor, 150 outdoor)
Serves zoo during daytime
Serves amphitheater- must be outside zoo entrance
Service is an important consideration
Outdoor areas utilized during peak day attendance
Square footages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Square Footages</th>
<th>Indoor</th>
<th>Outdoor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15-18 sq. ft. per seat (150)</td>
<td>2100 sq.ft. (indoor)</td>
<td>2100 sq.ft. (outdoor)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Space breakdown:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Space Breakdown</th>
<th>Indoor</th>
<th>Outdoor</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indoor dining</td>
<td>2100 sq.ft.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor dining</td>
<td>2100 sq.ft.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen 800-1600 sq.ft.</td>
<td>1000 sq.ft.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dock/receiving 8' x 12'</td>
<td>96 sq.ft.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storage</td>
<td>200 sq.ft.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Refrigerated Storage</td>
<td>200 cu.ft.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanitation area</td>
<td>500 sq.ft.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pot and pan area</td>
<td>100 sq.ft.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locker and lounge area</td>
<td>300 sq.ft.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Office</td>
<td>150 sq.ft.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coat checking</td>
<td>100 sq.ft.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mechanical 7th floor</td>
<td>1189 sq.ft.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8934 sq.ft. total</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Auditorium/Multi-media facility
Auditorium seating (300-400) 18 sq.ft. / seat

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Space Breakdown</th>
<th>Indoor</th>
<th>Outdoor</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Projection room</td>
<td>8540 sq.ft.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Screen</td>
<td>100 sq.ft.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Restrooms</td>
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<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>200 sq.ft.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>300 sq.ft.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backstage area</td>
<td>5000 sq.ft.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14700 sq.ft. total</td>
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</table>
OTHER FACILITIES WITHIN ZOO:

Restaurant
Auditorium/Multi-media center
Concessions
Novelty shops
Commissary
Rest Areas
Shelter house
Animal Hospital
Storage facilities
Pages 33 to 318 represent a survey of ideas concerning the exhibition of animals in terms of architectural statement and psychological implications that result with respect to the relationships between animals and zoo visitors.

It must be noted that not all the following concepts can be utilized because of site restrictions and various other restrictions.
CONCEPTS:

VISIBLE ARCHITECTURE

MESKER PARK ZOO
EVANSVILLE, INDIANA

CONCEPTS
VISIBLE ARCHITECTURE
CONCEPTS:

INVISIBLE ARCHITECTURE

MESKER PARK ZOO
EVANSVILLE, INDIANA

CONCEPTS
HIDDEN ARCHITECTURE
Higher planting to cut off view of unsightly moat.

Moat should be so shaped and cushioned so as not to injure animal during fall.

Necessary to have an exit in case animal falls into moat.
Low fencing for animals that can be petted.

Windows for viewing animals up close and from more interesting angles.

Viewing from a distance.

Interesting juxtaposition of animals to show relationships between them.
The following three pages display three schematic diagrams that were evaluated as possible alternatives for the overall master plan for Mesker Park Zoo.
The following page shows a more detailed diagram of the planning concept that was chosen as the most suitable alternative for organizing the zoo. It is perhaps a more comprehensible plan than many of the 'traditional' plans that exist in many of our zoos presently. It offers many alternatives in terms of which pathways one might wish to traverse yet one always regains his orientation when he returns to the central pathway. Along this central pathway all indoor animal exhibits occur as well as all the other supportive amenities. The looped pathways allow the zoo visitor to experience the animals in a more natural outdoor environment. Within these loops the animals are arranged geographically—one loop containing each geographic division. At each end of the central walkway are ticket gates and a parking area. Also at these nodes occur the more public zoo activities so that visitors to these areas may reach them without having to actually enter the zoo.
After having achieved a workable planning concept, it was decided at this point to proceed into design investigation. It was realized that a full degree of detail could not be accomplished in one quarter of work so it was decided to investigate one series of exhibits on the level of establishing a format or architectural vocabulary that could be extended into the design of the remainder of the zoo. This format was based on the concept buildings that resemble rock forms protruding from the earth. This concept is a development of the idea that the zoo is a representation of the natural habitats of the animals. Buildings that symbolize rock forms symbolize the natural environments of the animals. Concrete was used as a material to simulate rock and wood was used where people visually come into contact with the buildings because it also is a natural material and in addition gives a warmer feeling psychologically. An important consideration in the animal houses was that of ventilation. Attention was given to the wind direction and how ventilation was to be achieved when the form of the buildings were expressed.