

# Library at park to grow, add quad

Current building to be parking lot

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Revised plans for the new main library in Independence Park call for the existing library to be torn down to make room for a main access road and parking lots off Goodwood Boulevard.

Architect Ken Tifton said library patrons will enter the proposed 100,000-square-foot library through a partially covered pedestrian quad called Thought Square, which will also provide access to an adjacent cyber cafe and botanic gardens on the north side of the park.

Tifton and fellow architect Steve Jackson, who is also helping to design the park revamp, said details are still being worked out about what kind of shade or covering to provide over Thought Square.

“This is really a starting point, it’s not final,” Jackson told the city-parish Library Board on Thursday.

In all, the Library Board has budgeted \$33.2 million for the new main library, including \$24 million for the building itself. Plans call for the library to have three stories, with 43,000 square feet on the first two floors and 14,000 square feet on the top floor.

As part of a facelift of Independence Park, BREC originally wanted to build a circular drive off Independence Drive through the botanical gardens to access the new library and adjacent parking lots. And BREC officials were pushing to use the site of the existing main library as open space, with parking lots north of the proposed main library.

The latest plan calls for the access road to the new library to come off Goodwood Boulevard, with parking lots on what is now the existing library.

BREC Superintendent Bill Palmer said the change in access and parking for the library will benefit all parties.

“Our objective was to make it work for the library and to make it work for the park, and I think this latest plan does that,” he said.

Palmer said the latest plan also preserves the existing soccer fields at Independence Park.

The proposed park makeover includes the construction of two soccer pavilions that will include restrooms and concessions.

The plan for the park also includes a network of trails that circle the park.

“There will be circles within circles that you can take as well,” Tifton said.

The plan calls for 850 parking spots in Independence Park, including more than 300 spaces at the entrance of Thought Square and the new library. The existing library has about 220 parking spaces.

Palmer noted that Tifton and Jackson, who developed the plan for Independence Park, are also part of the architectural team tapped to design the new main library.

“It made a lot of sense to have the same team working on both projects,” Palmer said.