

Bryn Mawr Campus Accessibility Reflection

Overall, there are many places on Bryn Mawr Campus that do accessibility right. It is clear in the new buildings that effort has been made to make them truly accessible. Despite this there are many other places where work needs to be done, particularly with the dorm buildings. Only four of the dorm buildings have reasonable accessible entrances that a person with a wheelchair or other troubles with stairs could live there. Further, in two of these buildings they would only be able to live on the first floor.

For an example of this, Denbigh Hall has an accessible entrance. Though this entrance is not perfect, if someone were able to enter the building this way, they would still not be able to live in Denbigh as you need to use stair to access the bathroom and laundry room. On top of this, there is only one room that you can access without stairs. A person could however attend a function in the Denbigh common room, but they would not be able to pee without going out the back entrance and all the way down to the campus center or Radnor—the closest buildings with accessible entrances and bathrooms. Thinking about another accessibility fail, there is an accessible entrance to New Dorm, but you have to go along a step stone path to get there. Meaning it would be difficult if not impossible for a person in a wheelchair or with some other mobility device to get there. This however in one of the 2 dorm buildings on campus that has an elevator making the accessible entrance that much more important.

When considering this project, as with most of our work this semester, I thought a lot about the Ten Principles of Disability Justice. Importantly I considered collective access and collective liberation, trying to consider more than just factual guidelines to meet predefined ADA standards, but looking beyond to true accessibility. The ADA standards, though technically met by all accessible entrances at Bryn Mawr, do not consider the whole person in their rules. You

must consider the practical application of the architecture when designing spaces to include disabled people (which all spaces should). I think as Bryn Mawr continues to grow, we as a community need to bring disability to the forefront of our mind, both with architecture and with designing inclusive academic spaces.