

**Design Review Committee (DRC)**

**Meeting Minutes**

January 18, 2024

**Meeting Location and Time:**

ZOOM Meeting

10:30 AM – 2:30 PM PST

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**Committee Members:**

Susannah Scott, Co-Chair - Senate Chair  
Renée Bahl, Co-Chair - Associate Vice Chancellor  
Alice Kim, Architect - Design Consultant  
Annjolie Vester - GSA Student Representative  
Derrick Eichelberger, Landscape Architect - Design Consultant  
Julie Eizenberg, Architect - Design Consultant  
Julie Hendricks, Campus Architect, Staff Representative - Design & Construction Services  
Lisa Jacobson - Senate Appointed Faculty Representative  
Matthew Begley - Senate Appointed Faculty Representative  
Richard Wittman - Senate Appointed Faculty Representative  
Silvia Perea - University Art Museum  
Victor Soto - AS Student Representative

Staff Support – Ed Schmittgen, Design & Construction Services

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**Welcome:** Co-Chair, Renée Bahl

Ed Schmittgen – conducted roll call, those below were in attendance.

1. Susannah Scott (SS)
2. Renee Bahl (RB)
3. Annjolie Vester (AV)
4. Derrick Eichelberger (DE)
5. Julie Eizenberg (JE)
6. Julie Hendricks (JH)
7. Lisa Jacobson (LJ)
8. Mathew Begley (MB)
9. Richard Whitman (RW)
10. Victor Soto (VS)

**General Business:**

Meeting Minutes from the DRC Meeting of April 12, 2023 were approved.

Co-Chair Bahl gave an overview of the charge of the DRC:

In summary, the Design Review Committee is a recommending body focusing primarily on the exterior features and aesthetics; siting and contextual relationship with adjacent buildings; circulation including pedestrians, bikes and vehicles; landscape design, and other environmental matters.

The DRC is comprised of faculty, students and staff. The Committee makes a recommendation to the Chancellor.

#### Engagement with the DRC

- Projects From \$1,000,000 to \$10,000,000 are presented to the DRC 2 times;
  - Conceptual Site and Massing Design (this goes to CPC)
  - 100 % Schematic Design (this goes to CPC)
- Projects over \$10,000,000 are presented to the DRC 3 times;
  - Conceptual Site and Massing Design (this goes to CPC)
  - 50% Schematic Design
  - 95 % Schematic Design (this goes to CPC)

#### Project Updates:

Julie Hendricks, Director of Design & Construction Services, gave a brief update of two projects which included context photos of the buildings in use.

- AS Bike Shop
- Interactive Learning Pavilion

Josh Rohmer, Director of Capital and Physical Planning, gave a brief update on the Eddleman Quantum Physics Building, reviewed by the DRC in April 2023. The project is essentially on hold, pending the finalization of the funding with the donor.

#### Action Items:

San Benito Student Housing - Site & Massing Review

Project Proponents:

- Willie Brown, Associate Vice Chancellor for HDAE
- Gene Lucas, Professor Emeritus

Architect:

Skidmore Owings and Merrill – Mithun (SOM-M)

Mr. Rohmer, provided a project introduction.

He emphasized we are mid-conceptual planning. The primary objectives are to integrate the project into the campus context while providing quality and affordable student housing. The 2010 LRDR memorialized the use of the site and the requirement of adding 3,500 beds. The project we are looking at today will provide approximately 2,250 beds.

The project is following UCSB's traditional approval process involving Planning, Design and Construction phases.

SOM-M began in Fall 2023 developing the conceptual planning design we will see today. Oversight was provided by a Building Committee comprised of UCSB Faculty, Staff and Student representatives.

Planned opening is Fall 2027.

A housing project at this location is included in the 2010 LRDP which was approved by the California Coastal Commission (CCC). Approval of the project design by the CCC is anticipated after the Design Development Phase.

Upcoming Milestones:

- January 2024 – CPC Review of Conceptual Design
- February 2024 – CPC Recommendation for Conceptual Design
- March 2024 – Completion of the Detailed Project Program

- May 2024 – UC Regents Review

Phase 2 of the Project is planned for the South East quadrant of campus and is intended to provide 1,250 Beds.

Mr. Rohmer introduced the Design Team:

Carrie Byles – Architect, Partner in Charge, SOM  
Olin McKenzie - Architect, Design Partner, SOM  
Sade Borghei - Architect, Principal, Mithun  
Tom Leader - Landscape Architect, TLS Landscape Architecture

SOM-M provided a comprehensive presentation that outlined the project's vision and objectives:

- Project Vision (Carrie Byles):
  - A project goal is to have different scales of space creating different quality of space.
  - SOM-M will take advantage of Environmentally Sensitive Habitat (ESHA) to integrate social spaces with the natural surroundings.
  - Natural materials (wood) will be incorporated to lend warmth to the project and respect the integrity of materials and structure.
  - Campus connections will be challenging since the project is on the periphery of campus.
  - Wellness concepts will be incorporated, such as:
    - Spaces that encourage a wide range of activities.
    - Allowing the building to breathe (operable windows).
    - Easy access to resources (natural path of travel).
    - Gathering spaces for both interior and exterior amenity spaces.
  - A critical project goal is affordability. SOM-M will collaborate with the CMAR to be sure the project is as affordable as possible and will investigate use of pre-fabricated construction techniques to maximize efficiencies of repetitive building components. Other repetitive components such as doors and windows will be evaluated to leverage efficiency and save cost.
- Campus Integration (Olin McKenzie)
  - Discourage students from crossing Mesa Road.
  - Stitch the ESHA into the plan.
  - Increase Stadium Road as a 'pedestrian thoroughfare.'
  - Improve the north end of Lot 30.
- Site Design & Massing
  - Create a sense of home on each floor as well as the project at large.
  - Increase access to daylight with orientation of program into horizontal (east-west oriented) bars that allow light and air to penetrate the site.
  - The North end of Lot 30 (to the south of project) was emphasized as a "landing pad" and abutted Stadium Road giving the project an entrance on stadium road that can serve as a welcoming entry plaza.
- Amenities/Student Life (Sade Borghei)
  - These programmatic components are planned to be multi-functional and adaptable.
  - The Connector is the "main street", a pedestrian corridor through the site with views to the mountains to the south.
  - Retail dining (freshly prepared food) to be located along the Connector.

- The Site Experience (Tom Leader)
  - The ESHA has a key influence on the site. A project objective is to extend the ESHA's influence into the site.
  - The ESHA has not reached its potential and increasing water to the ESHA can create bio-diversity.
  - Oak trees on the edges have an important role and will be a feature of the landscaping design.
  - The entry plaza will be off of Stadium Road at the top of the Connector.
  - Plazas, outdoor rooms, smaller trees, and seating galleries will emphasize human scale and promote general comfort and sense of place.

## **DRC Comments**

### DRC Q & A:

DRC: *There are a lot of steps with the Connector. How is Accessibility addressed?*

#### Answer:

- The Connector will transition the grade subtly. There will only be ~ 18" between levels, allowing for easy transition. Ramps will make the transition, but they are not integrated into the plans yet.
- The connector is 2 stories above the garden level so there will be elevators (and stairs) incorporated for access to the garden level.

DRC: *The site is a "bowl" – what is the approach to managing stormwater?*

#### Answer:

- The site will be permeable, allowing for maximum absorption of water. There will also be bio-filtration. Finally, stormwater will be directed to the ESHA to encourage bio-diversity.

DRC: *What is under the Connector? How does the service and trash circulate?*

#### Answer:

- Circulation is primarily via a U-shaped service road that enters and exits to Mesa Rd. This is primarily for fire trucks and service vehicles. Additionally, there will be student amenity spaces that will be open to the garden level to the east.

DRC: *How will daylighting reach the lower level? Can the buildings be spaced out more?*

#### Answer:

- While the site is densely built, the buildings have been carefully arranged to maximize daylight by orienting the buildings east/west. Additionally, the daylight and movement of the sun was modeled, the buildings are 'bent' to allow maximum penetration of daylight.

DRC: *Are there activating elements on Stadium Road, Café fronts, etc.?*

#### Answer:

- There are taller amenity spaces facing Stadium Road that can activate Stadium Road and may serve stadium events.

DRC: *How is the 65 ft height ceiling achieved?*

Answer:

- The number of stories steps down from 8 to 7 to 6 as they approach Mesa Rd to the north. This is in response to the elevation at Lot 30, which is approximately 20 ft higher than Mesa Road.

DRC: *How is noise being addressed? Have you considered soundproof windows? Did you consider soundproof windows? Are the study areas sound proofed?*

Answer:

- Acoustic studies have not yet been conducted. However, the premise that the student demographic is not as sensitive as, say, a luxury condo. Students will tolerate or even thrive on (some) noise. They will consider introducing white noise and sound proof windows.
- Small outdoor "rooms" lend themselves to smaller groups of people to have quiet space; they are sensitive and sympathetic to the people in the buildings.

DRC: *How are study spaces configured?*

Answer:

- Study spaces are dispersed. Some are externally oriented with views, while some are internal similar to music practice rooms.

DRC: *Can the buildings look less institutional, i.e. 'hospital-like'? How can we introduce texture to make it an enduring and welcoming experience? Is there an opportunity for exterior facing balconies to activate/energize the façade? It would be a shame to lose the inviting aspect. This (concern) is not dispensable (to be ignored).*

Answer:

- The facades shown are pre-schematic and have not been developed. They need to balance the efficiency of planned repetition with articulation and playfulness. Unfortunately, balconies are not allowed for safety concerns.

DRC: *How did entry into the site become developed?*

Answer:

- Several aspects were considered. There was an opportunity for an entry plaza to engage Stadium Road as a "front door" drop off area. This entry plaza converges with the main Connector, providing a logical junction point for the entry. Additionally, the bike parking made sense adjacent to this location since bike parking to the south was desirable both for access to the campus and the bikeway (North of Lot 38). The campus wants to limit bikes to one area to discourage bikes on Mesa Road.

### **Landscape Committee (DRC/LC)**

DRC/LC:

- Encouraged Cheadle Center (CCBER) to be engaged and asked the design team to look at the North Campus Open Space for wet/dry conditions of ESHA area. Also, advised there is a litany of local flora that can be utilized. The seeds are very specific to the area, actually grown by CCBER on site.
- Consideration should be given to mosquitos (vector control).
- Odors from standing water or dried out wetlands can be an issue.

### Answer

- The team concurred with the comments about engaging CCBER. The current condition of the EHSA does not look great and will benefit from enhanced draining and adding more water via site stormwater management approaches. This will encourage bio-diversity. Regarding vector control, mosquitos tend to be an issue only with standing water which will not be a factor on the site.

Co-Chair Bahl asked Mr. Schmittgen to recap the meeting's major points, for the purpose of incorporating the major points into the CPC Agenda to be held on January 30, 2024.

- There was discussion about the aesthetics of the facades which appeared institutional. DRC acknowledged that this was a conceptual site and massing design and the facades will be developed as the design moves forward. The DCR challenged the designers to explore texture and other ways to activate/energize the façade in order to make the project more inviting and have more expression and excitement especially at the main entry on Stadium Road.
- There was discussion about effective drainage of site stormwater and the design team acknowledged that this may be used to benefit bio-diversity in the ESHA and other landscaping features, and were less concerned about flooding.
- The tiered nature of the design's pedestrian "Connector" raised a conversation about accessibility and the importance of incorporating an effective way for persons with mobility impairments to move through the site. The design team plans to include elevators that will reach the on-grade landscape areas.
- Due to the relative density of the site, the DRC challenged the design team to explore increasing the spacing between the buildings in order to maximize daylighting and increase beneficial exterior space, especially at the on-grade level.
- The DRC encouraged the design team to build a partnership with CCBER and to incorporate indigenous plant species throughout the design. Landscape committee members commented on the good balance between active and passive outdoor spaces.
- Bicycle parking and location was discussed with an emphasis on discouraging access to Mesa Road and encouraging pathways to campus.

Co-Chair Bahl provided a summary and reiterated that comments that go forward to the CPC and Chancellor focus on Site and Massing, essentially the purview of the DRC.

Next DRC meeting will be at 50% Schematic Design.

### **Adjournment**