



February 21, 2007

MEMORANDUM

To: Campus Planning Committee (CPC)

From: Christine Taylor Thompson, Planning Associate
University Planning

Subject: **Record of the February 15, 2007 CPC Meeting**

Attending: Carole Daly (Chair), Virginia Cartwright, Nancy Cheng, Darin Dehle, France Dyke, Bill Harbough, Rich Linton, Gregg Lobisser, Randall McGowan, Garrett McSorley, Zoe Monahan, Dennis Munroe, Steve Pickett, Chris Ramey, Dale Smith, Greg Stripp, Rob Thallon

Guests: Kathy Bedbury (Alumni Center), Jane Brubaker (Facilities Services), Tim Bruegman (Athletics), Teri Giustina (Alumni Center volunteer), George Glass (Trustee), Jeff Hawkins (Athletics), Roger Kerrigan (Facilities Services), Pat Kilkenny (Athletics), Steve McBride (Athletics), Allan Price (Development), Pete Roberts (PHIT), Gene Sandoval (ZGF), Richard Siliman (Hoffman), Howard Slusher (Nike/PHIT), Steve Stolp (Athletics), Matt Swaim (Hoffman), Phil Weiler (Public and Media Relations), Jan Willemse (ZGF)

Staff: Christine Thompson (University Planning)

Agenda: Academic Learning Center – Schematic Design

1. Academic Learning Center – Schematic Design

Background: The Chair reviewed the planning process for the proposed Academic Learning Center as described in the meeting mailing. A few months ago, smaller group representing the Campus Planning Committee (CPC) and other campus constituents were invited to meet with the design team to review the preliminary design. Comments and suggestions were forwarded to the president. This CPC meeting represents the second and final opportunity to review the proposed schematic design.

Staff reviewed the preliminary applicable *Campus Plan* policies identified by the president that pertain to this project as described in the meeting mailing. She reminded the committee that the CPC should consider only these policies when reviewing this project.

New Athletic director, Pat Kilkinney, was introduced and expressed his support for the project.

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Howard Slusher of Nike and PHIT said the goal of this project is to address a clear need for academic services for athletes. The project will combine athletic excellence with academic excellence. Howard explained that the building is designed as a focal point in response to a desire to establish a campus gateway element at this location. The Yale Beineke Library inspired the building's design. Although the general design concept is complete, refinements will be made to address budget limitations and new ideas resulting from upcoming tours of similar facilities.

Gene Sandoval of ZGF Architects presented the building design as described in the meeting mailing. He said the building is designed to reinforce the nature of campus and its unique qualities, which are:

- a graceful transition, not a hard edge, between the campus and community,
- buildings that sit within fields of green,
- building masses that are sensitive to human scale,
- a holistic educational approach where collaboration is encouraged, and
- an active and strong student body.

Gene said the site was selected because new development will stimulate future campus development in this area, and it is an important crossroads for existing athletics facilities. The site is at the intersection of athletics activities that extend from north (Autzen) to south (Hayward Field) and academics and residential activities that extend from east (residence halls) to west (academic center). In addition, the site is adjacent to compatible uses.

The building is designed to be a porous facility. Although Franklin Boulevard is auto-oriented, it is still important to have a welcoming front facing it. The building will be transparent and illuminated. Glazed facades will provide a welcoming image day and night that showcase student activity inside. The building massing is relatively large (three stories with a 10,000 sf footprint) to provide the strength and presence required to respond to the scale of Franklin Boulevard. The building will enrich both the campus and Franklin Boulevard and enhance the city's entrance in a manner similar to the new courthouse.

The building's three floors will be connected by a central atrium. It will have an intentional mix of uses on each floor and a large amount of casual social spaces to inspire interaction among faculty, staff, and students.

The building will be surrounded by a shallow body of water to relate to the region's strong association with water and to animate the space. An emphasis on openness, natural light, and wood finishes are also designed to connect the building to the region. The goal is to blur the boundary between interior and exterior spaces. Primary interior activity areas will be located along the south side adjacent to an active exterior space. A sizable plaza east of the building (6,000 – 7,000 sf) hopefully will have porous paving and will serve as a future connection to the planned Alumni Center. Sidewalks will provide direct connections to Agate Street and Franklin Boulevard.

Sustainable interests will be addressed by using a double skin system—an exterior glazed skin will encase an interior wooden box. The atrium and operable windows will provide natural ventilation.

The building massing is a very simple box shape; therefore, the richness of the

exterior skin—the quality of the material—is very important. The intent is to create a faceted skin surface.

Because the building does not have a back side, it is important to conceal the service area. A trash room is enclosed within the glass skin omitting the need for an exterior screened service area.

Discussion: Staff distributed written comments submitted by an absent CPC member. She summarized his key issues including the importance of designing the building for all students, faculty, and staff (not just student athletes) to establish a meaningful "gateway" building. Specific proposed improvements included reducing the water feature so it doesn't surround the entire building, adding as many transitions from the inside (very) public rooms of the building to the public realm of the sidewalk as possible, and adding more public activities (more than just a small cyber cafe). Comments also stressed the importance of addressing sustainability, in particular sun control, and making the building and plaza design compatible with the proposed adjacent alumni center. Comments about the planning process will be deferred until a future discussion. Please refer to the letter for a complete description of comments.

In response to a member's question, the consultants said access to the service area will be provided through the plaza's multi-purpose zone where service trucks will be able to remove bollards to access the trash room. The service area will be limited to a simple trash-storage area. A loading dock and large truck access are not required.

In response to a member's question, the consultants said the building and site will be completely accessible. The flat site makes this relatively easy to accomplish.

A member noted that the design should respond to potential changes to Franklin Boulevard, which would reduce the traffic speed and encourage pedestrian and bike access. The consultants said the building has design integrity that works well up close and far away. A great deal of thought went into pedestrian entrance locations. Although the building does not have an entrance facing Franklin Boulevard, pedestrian sidewalks provide direct access to building entrances. In addition, the transparent glass façade will convey activity inside the building. A member said the building placement will not preclude future Franklin Boulevard improvements; there is enough room to enhance pedestrian and bike pathways along Franklin Boulevard in the future (although the pool may have to be modified). He noted that the design, which has large-scale elements facing the boulevard and pedestrian connections facing the campus (Agate Street and 13th Avenue), may be a good template for future development along Franklin Boulevard. He added that the building's style, however, should not be considered a stylistic model for future development.

A member expressed concern about the symbolism of the moat—it isolates the building from campus and the "castle" imagery does not relate to campus. The ground floor should be as public and open as possible. The consultants said the reception area for athletes was moved to the second floor to ensure that the ground floor is accessible and open to the wider campus community.

A member expressed concern about the auditorium being placed in the most prominent corner eliminating the possibility for transparency and interaction with

the outside. A consultant said many options were considered. The building does not have a back side, thus making the choice difficult. It seemed more important to provide active spaces along the sunny south side and near the plaza area.

A member said the modernist design is acceptable, but the building and site design should reinforce connections to the campus open-space framework, and the building shape should help create open spaces. For example, pedestrian connections to campus should be strengthened. Also, the building should help form the proposed plaza and relate to the future Alumni Center building. Finally, extra attention should be given to the building entrances to ensure they are designed as active spaces.

A member said the proposed building style does not relate in any way to the architectural style of campus. Therefore, he cannot resolve the inconsistency with the Campus Plan's policy addressing architectural style. Other members said this concern was raised when the preliminary design was reviewed. Every once in a while, it is possible to have a building that is "outside the box" or a "jewel" as described by the consultants. You can't have too many, however; when you have a jewel in a field, the field (of contextual campus buildings) is needed. Another member questioned why this building was selected to serve as the rare jewel on campus rather than a more iconic building such as a library or museum.

A member suggested adding brick elements to link the building to campus and the future Alumni Center. The unique water feature could serve as the defining element. The consultants said the wood elements behind the glass will link the building to campus and provide warmth.

A member said some diversity is good as long as there is some harmony. If the architectural style provides the diversity, then it is essential that the elements that are most important in creating harmony with campus are enhanced. This includes:

- designing and siting the building to better connect to the campus open-space framework and to define open spaces and relate to the site's landscape,
- designing entrances that are more visible and prominent, and
- making the building more humanly scaled and more pedestrian friendly.

A member said the focus on sustainability should be strengthened. This gateway building should reflect the campus's reputation for, and commitment to, sustainability. As an example, the shading should be properly designed. Also, locating the computer lab in the sunny southwest corner of the building is not ideal. The consultants said they were open to ideas and expect the shading solutions to improve as the design is refined.

In response to a member's question, the consultants said parking needs will be addressed by constructing a temporary lot on the adjacent Williams' Bakery site. When that site is developed, a more permanent parking solution will be implemented. The president has approved this solution. Staff reminded the committee that the *Campus Plan* policy addressing replacement of displaced uses was not on the president's list of policies to consider for this project.

In response to a member's question, the consultant said the building will be designed to ensure access for exterior surface maintenance.

Action: The committee agreed, with twelve in favor and two opposed, that the schematic design for the Academic Learning Center is consistent with the policies identified by the president and recommended to the president that it be approved with the following recommendations:

1. Take into consideration potential future improvements to Franklin Boulevard that would reduce traffic speeds and enhance pedestrian and bike travel.
2. Design and site the building to better connect to the campus open-space framework, and define open spaces and relate to the site's landscape. For example, strengthen pedestrian connections to campus and design the building so that it helps form the proposed plaza and relates to the future Alumni Center building.
3. Make the building entrances more visible and prominent. Ensure they are designed as active spaces.
4. Make the building more humanly scaled and more pedestrian friendly. Consider adding elements and architectural details that relate to the human scale.
5. Modify the reflecting pool to enhance connections between the indoors and outdoors and between the building and the rest of campus.
6. Modify the building's design to establish links to the architectural style of campus.
7. Strengthen the focus on sustainability to reflect the campus reputation for, and commitment to, sustainability. As an example, ensure that shading is properly designed.

Please contact this office if you have questions.

cc. Kathy Bedbury, Alumni Center
Laura Blake-Jones, Student Life (Building Contact)
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Tim Bruegman, Athletics
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M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: February 13, 2007
TO: Campus Planning Committee
FROM: Michael Fifield, Professor of Architecture
CPC Member; Chair CPC DPIT Subcommittee
Appointed to the CPC as the Faculty Senate's Representative
SUBJECT: Proposed Academic Learning Center

I apologize for not being able to attend the scheduled February 15 meeting of the Campus Planning Committee and especially for not taking part in the discussion of the proposed Academic Learning Center. I have a commitment to a class that can't be rescheduled.

Background

I have had the opportunity to review the proposed building previously as part of a group made up of University administrators, representatives from the athletic department, a small representation of the CPC, planning staff, the architects (ZGF), Nike representatives, etc. In addition, a smaller group, including CPC Chair Carole Daly, subsequently met in President Frohnmayer's office to discuss our observations and recommendations of the project. I was asked to summarize the issues and lead off the discussion. All those in attendance added their own observations of the proposed project.

The result of this meeting was essentially that this project is a wonderful opportunity to provide a new and needed academic building on this campus. We all agreed that we should do everything possible to see it come to a meaningful realization and we had numerous suggestions that address various issues for improvement or concern.

Specific Issues associated with this project and location

1. The site designated is one of the most important sites on campus because it is a major gateway to campus. Some discussion took place concerning what message we are sending about the mission of the University with a building that is primarily for athletes. Many of our subsequent recommendations centered on programming and designing this building so that it could be used by all students/faculty/staff on campus, not just student athletes. If that is done appropriately, then the building would be meaningful as a "gateway" building.
2. The proposed form and materials (a glass box) is intended to be a landmark building, an icon if you will. However, the University has an obligation to promote sustainability and this building should be a great example and the building should reflect that idea.
3. The building as an "object in the landscape" should not be seen as a destination building, but instead as a building with transitions from the outside to the inside so that all of the campus community would be invited inside.

4. A concern that the proposed adjacent alumni center building might not be compatible (in design) with the Academic Learning Center.

Recommendations to improve the building: (some have been stated previously, some are mine)

The latest images by ZGF have made improvements based on our previous recommendations:

1. The water feature is reduced so it doesn't surround the entire building (which would have symbolically and physically separated the building from the campus). As many transitions from the inside (very) public rooms of the building to the public realm of the sidewalk should be made. Both Agate and 13th should have easy connections to the building.
2. Some more public activities (more than just a small cyber cafe) should be considered to increase the perception (and reality) of the building as a place for all students, faculty, and staff, not just athletes.
3. The plaza east of the building should anticipate the proposed Alumni Center building and respond accordingly.
4. The architects have started to address the issue of sun control (read: making a statement about sustainability) by using fins on the building. This needs to be looked at more. The current images show a consistent vertical fin which provides continuity in the design, but it doesn't address sun control, especially on the south side of the building where horizontal canopies are needed. (ZGF provided minimal horizontal sun-shading devices on the Living Learning Center on the south side, but nothing on the west side. Their original proposal was to provide vertical fins on the west, but only up to below the upper floor, and stated, the "roof overhang would protect the upper windows "(which is a false assumption because of the low angle of the sun in the late afternoon of the summer -- this is especially critical since there is no air conditioning in the individual rooms). Even with modern materials and systems, a building works better in an energy sense if you control the sun before it ever hits the glass line. Thus a sustainable building should "educate" all those who see it, especially if it is a major icon at a major gateway to campus. Strategies for sustainability should be evident and they should be appropriate.

And lastly, and this isn't an issue that the donor or the architects need to address, but the University does. Although I think this building can be a great addition to this campus, and I support it if done correctly, the University needs to address a set of larger issues so when this something like this happens in the future, a meaningful process is in place.

I have argued, especially when I was chair of the Campus Planning Committee, that the current process for determining sites for buildings needs reconsideration. There is a reliance on The Oregon Experiment as the campus planning tool that puts the choice of sites in the hands of the user, after identifying "vacant" sites. The current planning staff has argued against formal master planning because "things change." However there is a vast difference between site specific master planning with specific buildings and building configurations (which do become outdated quickly) versus a "campus design framework system" that identifies certain locations for a specific type of building and how that building should engage the rest of campus. For example, a major axis or mall might be designated as the core academic mall (thus only academic building where all students might benefit from their use would be built); or a "residential" mall where new residence halls would engage the mall in a positive way. The same thing would apply to specific sites. For example, major gateways would be designated for a

specific type of building that best represents the University's mission. If this were in place, then anytime a donor (or user group) proposed a specific building, then a more appropriate location could be addressed and considered immediately. It would eliminate the reactionary method that is currently in place. This would also apply to donors wishing to provide "sculpture" on campus.

This would also make the various patterns and issues the University uses as the criteria for evaluation more meaningful. Simply look at the issues we are asked to address for this building. They are generic and would apply to any building, but there is no method in the current plans that addresses the "essence" or "uniqueness" of a specific building type and how that building reinforces the mission of the University. This is, in my estimation, a critical problem with how we evaluate proposed buildings and sites on this campus.

In summary, with concerns for the process, and with the appropriate design changes in the building, I support the project. On a personal note, I know from personal experience how a building of this type can be extremely meaningful (my youngest daughter has been on the women's soccer team at the University of Michigan for the past four years and without the assistance provided her in a similar building, it would have been difficult for her to excel academically.) Almost all other campuses have a building type like this, and the University of Oregon could greatly benefit from one. We provide separate computer labs, libraries, etc., for specific majors on campus, so providing assistance for student athletes should be seen as just one more resource the University is obligated to provide if it wishes to enhance the chances of academic success for all students.

Again, I apologize for missing the meeting.