

Design Review Board

October 16th, 2012

Present: Pete Anderson, Art Hove, Peter Schaudt, and Dan Okoli,

Staff: Bill Elvey, Gary Brown, Dorothy Steele, Megan McBride, Yemi Falomo, Matt Collins

Project Review: UW Hospital Ramp Expansion #12B1K

A/E Firms: Graef – Dewy Hembra; Eppstein Uhen Architects – Paul Raisleger, Jonathan Parker; Ken Saiki Design-Ken Saiki, Mike Strum

Client Representative: UW Transportation – Patrick Kass, Gordon Graham, Rob Kennedy

UW System- Chris Gluesing

Background:

The Hospital Ramp Expansion project is in the initial phases of schematic design and is presenting to the DRB for the first time. The scope of the project includes an addition to the existing ramp and consideration of the site around the ramp. The Design Team plans to look into the scope of the project to determine the extent of the site improvements around the ramp project, including signage and wayfinding related to the main entry to the UW Hospital.

A/E Presentation:

- The Project will increase the ramp to a total of 2,255 stalls.
- Traffic will enter the hospital from Highland Avenue or Observatory Drive and exit further south on Highland Avenue.
- The outer loop, currently used for drop off and pick-up, will remain the same and will not enter the ramp.
- All landscaping will address the immediate area surrounding the ramp. The design team will determine the exact extent of this work and report back to the users and the Design Review Board (DRB).
- In addition to the ramp there will be modifications northbound on Highland Avenue and Observatory Drive, as well as to some sidewalks and curbs.
- It is important to the Design Team to address Universal Design by including a safe accessible means of wayfinding around and through the site.
- The Design Team is looking at lot 76 as a good example of a parking ramp on campus especially the corner stair detailing on the ramp. The hospital ramp will address the corners in a similar manner with views to the entrance and to the site.
- The Design Team is considering the context of the area and they are looking at stone, metal, glass, and the lighter brick as potential materials for the ramp addition.
- There is a stormwater detention pond in the north east corner of the site.

Project Discussion:

Hospital Entrance & Entrance Experience:

- The core problem, besides replacing parking spaces, is the confusion caused by the hidden hospital main entrance especially considering the stresses that some of the visitors are dealing with.
- The DRB is concerned with how visitors find the entrance to the hospital.
- Currently the hospital entrance leads visitors down a long narrow corridor with an indeterminate end. The main entry signage on the corner, is not very informative. There is a void on the end of the entry drive with a brick wall as a backdrop and no signage. It should be the focus of the Board to address these issues.
- The DRB is also hoping the project includes the experience of the arrival to the front door to the hospital. They would like to see a design study at the northwest corner of the drive up to the front doors.
- The board would like to see the northwest corner become better than it is today and become a forecourt to the entrance with a strong elevated green space.

- The northwest corner is such a good location to enlarge the green space for health and wellbeing benefits and create a therapeutic landscape. The lower garden is already a wonderful space for staff and it will still get light during certain parts of the day.
- The DRB commented that the entrance space would be improved if it is possible to come in orthogonally at 90 degrees to the entrance overhang.
- The ramp could also be considered as part of the threshold for the entry and contain portals to the hospital. The details should be finessed where people will occupy the space.
- The Design Board commented that hospital entrances are a difficult problem all across the country.

Project Scope:

- The project shouldn't be considered only in terms of its site boundary. This project addresses the entry drive and the entry experience so the Design Team will have to look into the details of the how the project design scope is defined.
- Regardless of the design scope, the DRB should discuss the whole site including the entrance and how the parking ramp addition can help and hinder the area, thus details regarding the project design scope can be deciphered later.
- Even if the hospital entrance isn't part of the scope, future designs in the area need to be considered so that the projects can eventually be implemented and realized. It is also important for all projects to capture the intent of the Campus Master Plan.
- The Design Team will check the project design RFP for the extent of the project scope.
- Transportation service fees include the site around the ramp and the drive, so there should be no need for additional funding sources.

North Addition:

- Currently a visitor can see the iconic arch/UW Hospital logo and the entrance as they drive up and around the corner. If the north addition is added the entrance arch will be blocked visually.
- If it is possible the Board would like to see the bulk on the north addition shifted to the south or reshaped to capture more of the entrance space. The plans don't have to be symmetric.
- The Design Team stated that they were looking into moving the north addition to the south but there are obstacles with the property line and due to the close proximity to the VA ramp.
- Another possibility for the north addition would be to take off a few stories so the area would be more inviting.
- Regardless of whether the north mass moves to another location, the entry point into the garage will remain where it is currently on the plans.
- The Design Team inquired as to whether the Board thought that it would help if the mass on the north was open on the bottom levels creating a plaza, and then starting the ramp on the third floor. The DRB believed that proposal would help break up the mass visually. The real problem is the bulk of the building at that northwest corner.
- The Board would like to see some 3 dimensional renderings of the space, a series of perspectives from the vantage point of the car, and potentially a prototype study of the hospital entrance(s).

East/West Façade:

- The east façade extends out as far as the current surface parking limits and is predicated on the university's setback requirements.
- The Design Team commented that the plan for the West façade is much the same as it is currently and it will not be replaced. They also stated if they decided not to add onto the north, then they would not replace the brick on that façade either.

Site/Ramp Access:

- The Design Team is still looking into whether someone exiting the parking ramp at the intersection of Highland Avenue and Observatory Drive can turn both left and right. Currently the plans only show a possibility to turn right. The intent was to have traffic go straight onto Observatory Drive or left onto Highland Avenue. They could still turn right, but that would put the visitors back into the congestion of those exiting from the south.

- The previous study said those exiting out the south entrance would only turn right and those with parking pass would have the knowledge to exit out the north at the intersection of Highland and Observatory. The main exit will be similar to where it is now. The exit to the south isn't currently shown on the plan drawing correct and in line with the median.
- The flow within the garage will be fairly similar to the current layout; however, there are a few operational questions that the Design Team is still working through.
- The details of the stair towers are immaterial for the current conversation.
- The conceptual report should be complete in January and the Design Team should have something again for the DRB in the spring.

Design Review Board Summary:

- The materials and color palette should come from materials and colors in the neighborhood with emphasis on the newer buildings which have moved towards the lighter colors.
- The Board would like the Design Team to be creative with the materials and colors. The dark brick will remain in some places so the DRB would like to see creative applications where the materials could be subtly referenced.
- It would be nice if the northwest corner of the site could be improved and become light but the DRB is open to proposals.
- At this time, if it was possible, the DRB would prefer not to add the north addition and they would like the Design Team to seriously investigate different options.
- This project should enhance wayfinding, provide a clear sense of arrival, and enrich the experience of people coming to the hospital either by car or on foot.
- The Board encourages the Design Team to think beyond the ramp envelope and consider the rest of the site and what it could be. They also suggested sharing these insights with the Hospital Administration so that everyone is on the same page and all priorities get addressed.