

Design Review Board Minutes

July 16th, 2013

Project Review: Memorial Union Phase II / Alumni Park

Present:

Bill Patek	SmithGroup JJR
Del Wilson	Uihlein-Wilson
Nate Novak	SmithGroup JJR
Mark Guthier	Union/Design Review Board (Memorial Union)
Hank Walter	Union
Wendy von Below	Union
Katie Carey	Union
Paula Bonner	WAA/ Design Review Board (Alumni Park)
Mark Blakeslee	WAA
Kathy Southern	WAA
Julie Grove	FP&M CPD
Dan Okoli	FP&M CPD/ Design Review Board
Peter Schaudt	Design Review Board
Yemi Falomo	FP&M CPD
Bridget Geissler	FP&M CPD
Gary Brown	FP&M CPLA
Dennis Cohen	Ralph Appelbaum Associates
John Boyer	Ralph Appelbaum Associates
Erik Sande	State / DFD
Neil Damron	Union

Project Background:

The second phase of Memorial Union project will restore the building's central and east wing's exterior and interior while improving functionality, life safety, and service functions to extend the building's life. The building exterior is in need of repair to address deteriorated roof, windows and curtain wall, as well as damaged soffits and fascia. The scope includes rehabilitation of the grand main staircase, along with needed ADA and Terrace improvements. Plans for the interior include modest renovations and an eye towards infrastructure improvements such as building plumbing, mechanical, and electrical systems. To better serve building users, this project will abate hazardous materials, upgrade life safety and security systems, and include compliance for ADA requirements. A new service elevator will be installed along with an underground loading dock. Currently both are inadequately sized for current and expected future needs.

In tandem with the Memorial Union project, the Alumni Park project provides for a new campus pedestrian gathering space between the Union and the Red Gym on existing parking lot #1. Functions include alumni recognition spaces, landscape plantings,

seating and gathering areas, and iconic university images to portray the importance of university faculty, staff and alumni accomplishments.

Presentation

- The fast-paced schedule has Phase II to be under construction for the loading facility by summer of 2014.
- Alumni Park to be completed in 2015 and Union complete in 2016 with an aggressive schedule.
- Phase II is enumerated at \$33 million; the loading facility at \$9 million; Alumni Park at \$8 million.
- Theater is to be reopened fall of 2014.
- Loading facility is now funded by anonymous donor.
- Lower level loading facility turntable will be used to facilitate large truck traffic in and out of the facility.
- Mechanical systems are to be built underneath southeast corner of building.
- The design team is rethinking the east wing of first floor – possibly replace extended corral of Lakefront on Langdon with 3 smaller food venues.
- Tripp Commons and Tripp deck – looking for better access to the Terrace and Alumni Park.
- Third floor – infrastructure work.
- Fourth floor – still have six guest rooms and meeting spaces.
- Fifth floor – being completed as part of first phase of this project with minor infrastructure work on east end.
- Currently there are upwards of 360 deliveries per week to the Memorial Union and adjacent buildings (Red Gym, Pyle Center, Below Alumni Center).
- With plans for Alumni Park, the best solution for the loading dock is for it to be underground.
- Best entrance for loading dock would be close to the Red Gym.
- To accommodate this, Lot 1 would need to be raised 3 feet which will also allow physical accessibility of the Union and the Terrace.
- Reevaluating program for shape of loading dock to ensure the right size for its function.
- Program development for the Terrace is in 15% review includes topics about site access, the stage, and the sacred nature of oaks that are currently present.
- 8-12 feet of grade change from water to surface of Alumni Park requires details such as steps and ramps.
- Major components of Alumni Park are being identified such as large lawn space and exhibit space that portrays the Wisconsin Idea.
- Need to understand that the elevation will affect the faces of the building because of the 2-3 foot grade change.

- Old concrete pier was removed and created a whole new atmosphere near Alumni building.
- Objective to redesign west side of Alumni Center to make it more of a destination and give it more visibility.
- Looking to portray the five themes that represent the Wisconsin Idea: Service, Discovery, Tradition, Progression, & Leadership.
- Interested in having more green space in the park as opposed to concrete.
- Things have been learned from Union South experience, mainly regarding the dining and services experience.
- Memorial Union adjustments to create a more student-friendly place based on feedback from Union South in the ways of dining spaces, entrance ways and coffee shops.
- Ultimately, programming, management, and entertainment experience brings a lot of people in.
- Building should be connected to landscape.
- There is no clear connection or entry to the building from the lake because entrances are recessed in shadows.
- Perspective is lacking in this building in the sense that there should be vertical viewing of the lake.
- Space needs to be simple and levels need to be consolidated.
- Landscape should be more related to the Union itself and an activated building elevation will create huge opportunity in the sense that the green space could wrap the building.
- Design that unfolds should respect the experience of student life and open access while still balancing utilitarian needs.
- Terrace should have a balance of chairs to people so there is adequate seating without making the terrace look empty or cluttered with furniture.
- Audio and lighting needs to be markedly improved on the Terrace.
- Demand for better food and drink services will be increased with addition of Alumni Park.

Design Review Board Comments

- Concerns about students' view of Union – though its architecture is representative of a “fortress”, designs need to ensure that it will be welcoming to students of all ages as a place for socializing and relaxation while still creating a historical Union experience.
- Entry from Langdon should be more like a front porch and inviting. Perhaps putting a balcony on an upper level and having a “back porch” design will be more engaging to the street.

- Southwest corner of Union has tremendous opportunity for opening up the building to Alumni Park.
- Team should be looking to bring people to the Union and funnel them to the Alumni Center building.
- Both the Memorial Union and Alumni Center suffer from lack of visibility and inviting entrances.
- Need to have perfectly designed bike parking space so students are not locking their bikes to trees and handrails.
- There should be a certain amount of transparency so that when people are drawn to the space, they can see events taking place in front of building and on the “back porch” of the building, as this will create a more inviting atmosphere.
- Need to think of this project in a holistic perspective including the elements of East Campus Mall
- There should be areas where people can sit without having tables and chairs.
- Size of stage on the Terrace should be based on sizes of nearby venues such as Library Mall and State Street Mall and should not overpower the space.
- Shape of current stage is inefficient and should be a rectangle of appropriate size.
- Should strengthen the entertainment that is already present by having more than one stage – potentially one in Alumni Park.
- Consider WID, as an example, in the sense that there are food services with indoor seating that can be adjusted to outdoor seating with a removable wall.
- Positioning of points of service should be integral to the design as there are so many levels.
- There will be two outdoor stairs by the theater side of building, but it might be more beneficial to add another outdoor stair to the east side of building from the Tripp deck down to Alumni Park.
- Alumni Park should help illuminate the history of campus and display the meaning of this establishment.

Design Review Board Minutes

July 16th, 2013

Project Review: Library Mall / State Street Redesign Project

Present:

Jason DiPiazza	MSA Professional Services, Inc.
Ken Saiki	Ken Saiki Design
Nate Novak	SmithGroup JJR
Jill Sebastian	Jill Sebastian
Shane Bernau	Ken Saiki Design
Gary Brown	FP&M CPLA/Design Review Board (Library Mall)
Dan Okoli	FP&M CPD/Design Review Board
Peter Schaudt	Design Review Board
Yemi Falomo	FP&M CPD
Bridget Geissler	FP&M CPD
Chris Petykowski	City of Madison
Jaime Kurten	MSA Professional Services, Inc.
Bill Patek	SmithGroup JJR
Rebecca Cnare	City of Madison
Bill Fruhling	City of Madison

Project Background:

The UW is working with the City of Madison on their redevelopment of the 700-800 blocks of State Street Mall. The UW is particularly interested in coordinating the design of the East Campus Mall and Alumni Park with a future University project to redevelop Library Mall, immediately adjacent to the city's State Street Mall.

The project team will share their thoughts and ideas and will receive input from the DRB on the Library Mall portion of the project. This is the A/E firm's second presentation to the Design Review Board (DRB).

Presentation

Project Site

The project site consists of two spaces (Library Mall and State Street Mall) which are being redesigned as one because of the amount of connectivity between the two spaces.

- The core design principles for the project are to keep the area timeless, flexible, durable, and make it easy to maintain.
- This area is used mostly by people passing through in order to get to their desired destination.

- The area is heavily used by bikers coming from East Campus Mall and State Street so a goal is to improve the circulation of traffic through the area.
- A traffic count was done one day from 6:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. and it was found that approximately 10, 000 pedestrians are moving through the space.
- The main goal is to enhance the site so that it is used more as a destination for people to stop and enjoy instead of only passing through.
- Currently the State Street Mall and Library Mall are separately designed. They would like the areas to be more cohesive so that traffic flows better.
- Library Mall is typically limited to University-based organizations therefore it is important to assure private vendors can remain on State Street when large events might be occurring in Library Mall.
- The A/E team presented two options for the entire space including both Library Mall and the State Street Mall.
- The Wisconsin Historical Society had expressed the desire to maintain the symmetrical design of the existing Library Mall so that it fits with the Beaux Arts buildings in the area.
- Option One – The Oval
 - The first option the A/E team proposed was to create an oval shaped area of grass with a fountain in the center and allow for pedestrian traffic to cross through the oval diagonally.
 - There would be shade structures placed on the edge of the oval grass area by the Library Mall and State Street intersection.
 - The city of Madison fire department is requiring a 26 foot wide fire access lane along State Street from Park Street to Lake Street.
 - This design would allow the bicyclists to be able to ride through the area, mixed with pedestrian traffic to help slow them down, and have the food carts and other elements on the outside of the 26 foot wide fire lane to maximize the space for bicyclists and pedestrians passing by.
 - The shade structures were proposed as an idea because the existing tree canopy on the 700 and 800 blocks is primarily ash trees and a lot of them are not in good condition.
 - This plan allows for diagonal movement through the Library Mall towards Memorial Union and Alumni Park.
 - The oval green space being cut diagonally forming an X creates four large grassy areas.
 - This design will keep the view corridor open when approaching from the south on the East Campus Mall so that the lake to the north is easily visible.
 - The fire lane for this option would shift down and then back up when going past Library Mall.
 - A variety of options were presented that shows how the food vending would be accommodated.
 - It is important to have queuing parallel to the fire lane so that people in line are not blocking pedestrian traffic in the center. Additional seating was added throughout the 700 and 800 blocks.

- The Wisconsin Historical Society would prefer the fountain to either stay where it is or be completely removed. They are also open to have some other type of water feature.
- The Park Street and Lake Street gateway areas will be improved in both options.
- Option Two – The Great Lawn
 - The second option the A/E team proposed consisted of one larger lawn area in addition to two smaller lawn areas in front of the Wisconsin Historical Society. There is a slight diagonal cut at the bottom of the main grassy area to allow for pedestrian traffic to move through the site toward the Memorial Union and Alumni Park.
 - Similar to the first option, there would be a 26 foot wide fire lane to allow for emergency vehicle flow.
 - This plan creates a large, uninterrupted green space. It also creates garden spaces and lawns in front of the Wisconsin Historical Society as well as a water feature in front (west side) of the Memorial Library.
 - It also has a stage for entertainment events and terraced seating.
 - This design will also keep the view corridor open when approaching from the south on the East Campus Mall so that the lake is easily visible to the north.
 - The fire lane for this option would shift up once when State Street passes Library Mall. The shift creates the offset to give more room for seating.
 - Again in this option there would be parallel queuing and more seating added throughout all spaces.
 - The Park Street and Lakes Street gateway areas will be improved in both options.
 - The water feature along Library Mall would be an iconic feature for the Great Lawn option.

Design Review Board Comments

Overview

- The DRB is drawn more toward the Great Lawn design option.
 - They like having Library Mall as an open area.
 - Taking the round fountain out of the center is a good idea.
 - The diagonal walkway on the south end of the Great Lawn doesn't relate to the center of the plaza on the west in front of the Historical Society building. The problem is you would take away from the green space if you moved it further north. Consider moving the diagonal walkway closer to the center.
 - The two green spaces in front of the Historical Society do not need to be symmetrical. In other words, maybe the space south of the plaza could accept a larger plaza. The diagonal could be at more of a sharper angle, but maybe the plaza could be a different size so that you come right into the building.

- The entire area of Library Mall should be seen as one space.
- This is a more timeless design.
- The DRB would like the Great Lawn to be developed more.
- The Oval design seems arbitrary but is based on the historic existing design.
 - The iconic piece (clock, fountain, etc.) should be within Library Mall. Having these very big shade structures on the south end is going to create a bottleneck for pedestrians. The vision would be to have this whole thing open as a view corridor to Bascom Hill to the west. The State Street Mall section in the 800 block should be as open as possible to connect State Street visually to Bascom Hill.
 - The DRB doesn't like the iconic piece (fountain) breaking up the center of the overall greenspace.
 - It's nice that this provides one large space.
- The original Paul Friedberg plan site elements are visually outdated and should be removed.
- It's important to keep in mind the view corridors. It would be great if people could see the Capital by looking one way and Bascom Hill by looking the other. Right now you can't do that because of the trees.
- The Historical Society wants the design to be symmetrical.
- The DRB members would like to see 3-dimensional drawings.
- The DRB members would like the plan to be more simplified.

General Design Considerations

- It is important to see where everyone is coming from via circulation studies. From a hierarchical standpoint, most people come from Lake Street, then East Campus Mall and then Park Street. There's also a large amount of people coming from the west and Bascom Hill.
- The amount of pedestrian traffic will change and it will likely increase along the East Campus Mall. Most people gravitate to the southeast door of Memorial Union because it is the functional front door of the Union. That may change when we redesign Alumni Park. It might pull people straight through. The Oval scheme allows that to happen.
- There's a difference between a destination and where people really want to go. Make sure to distinguish between it being a destination or a pass-through space. If pass through, try not to block their path.
- The DRB doesn't believe there is anything wrong with it being a pass through space.
- In the next review, the Design Review Board would like to see the plan for Alumni Park included because it is important to have that as part of your design to understand it in context.
- There is a three foot grade change from the south end of Library Mall to the north end. Consider the three-dimensional grading aspects. It would be wonderful if you had a sloped plane going to the lake.

- The DRB questioned whether the green is plantings or lawn.
- The DRB wants to keep seasonality in mind. Consider incorporating a skating rink into the design.

Design Considerations Specific to the Great Lawn

- Try to make the walking path no wider than needed. This path goes through a green space. Bikes still need to be considered.
- From the south, it should be graceful to come through the main area instead of having to deflect and go over. The DRB thinks it should be an open space where you can casually curve and go north.
- Consider a scheme where you have a slight diagonal from the Mall to Memorial Union going northwest.
- The design could accept the centerline all the way across Langdon Street to Alumni Park, it doesn't necessarily have to go all the way through, but it could accept it across the street as a space.
- There needs to be the thought of the central axis. People are going to want to cut through that space.
- Consider having it be more open with strong circulation in front of each building. Then have a minor element that goes down the center. It wouldn't take away any functionality of the space.
- The DRB likes the idea of activating the edge along Memorial Library. It's a huge space where you could take an element and relieve the activities in State Street.
- Perhaps consider a plan that would be more asymmetrical (perhaps classically asymmetrical), something that has a more park-like quality, visually pulling the hill down to Langdon Street.
- The lawn could be a backward L with a path going across it and then the upper quadrant could be a plaza. It would be nice to have a little plaza within Library Mall proper. You could have a forecourt where you come across Langdon Street and are accepted in the Library Mall space. Then you reorient yourself to a path and then from the south mall your triangular space is a reorientation so it's almost like you come, you congregate and then go round. The intersections could be more enhanced. Instead of just coming across the street and there's a path, there should be more of a space created at the intersections.
- Consider making the great lawn more circular.
- Consider taking the great lawn and put it on the other side facing the much more architecturally interesting east elevation of the Historical Society.
- For concerts, if you put your pavilion on Langdon Street instead of State Street, you could walk by State Street and see the crowd. The stage would face south and the lawn would slope towards the stage. Most events will happen in the late afternoon or at night sun may not be an issue.

800 Block of State Street

- The City's State Street Oversight committee that is responsible for the State Street part seems to be going in a different direction than you're coming from about the amount of activity in the 800 block and the amount of shade from the trees.
- Keeping the food trucks to one block of State Street creates a lot of energy in that space. Consider making that denser and then have the other block of State Street more open to the west. Maybe have some lawn panels that slope up to Park Street and make it more of a transition from super urban to Bascom Hill. You could play with the grade of the retaining wall and slope it down so that you feel the hill. It might be more interesting to make it more of a park space.
- Consider adding tables to the space, particularly on the west end of State Street.
- Consider continuing Bascom Hill so that you see the sloping hill on State Street, continuing over Park Street as if it didn't exist.
- This area needs to be a simple space. Perhaps have paths closer to the building and then have planting in the center that will cast shade on either side (this contradicts the comments about keeping the space open for the view shed to Bascom Hill).
- If you wanted to stop bikes from moving through the 800 block of State Street you could have a panel going through the center with two lateral sidewalks going side by side with the raised lawn facing east.

Closed Session

Post-Closed Session

- A lot of work has gone into this and we appreciate you coming to show the designs. There are two schemes – the Oval and the Great Lawn.
- Starting with the Oval, it is a safe scheme. There is also the idea that the form of the Oval is an arbitrary form. It isn't necessarily derived from anywhere. It would have helped to see it in three-dimensions. At this stage, it doesn't need to be as detailed as it is, but there needs to be more sketches, perspectives, or three dimensional images to help us understand your ideas better.
- The Great Lawn is intriguing but feels like it needs a lot of development. We talked about how the path might be changed. Right now, the lawn feels a bit chopped up with three different spaces. The Great Lawn is intriguing, but it's the breaking up of the spaces that are not desirable. Try treating it as one large space instead of three smaller spaces. A more open design would be great. The paths through the great lawn could just follow the desire lines. We feel that more studies need to be done. Some sketches and three-dimensional drawings would make the schemes easier to understand. This is almost a finished schematic. If it could be less so, but more visual in terms of three-dimensional, that would be great. Pete Anderson is not here, but one thing we know he would say is simplify. There's a lot going on here.

- The other thing that came up is budget. Sometimes we struggle with the budget and the materials. For durability, you need really good materials. To keep a budget, a simple design helps. We encourage you to explore that. If the design gets too complex you skimp on the material, and it will require more maintenance sooner.
- For the next time, please use the most recent version of Alumni Park design so that it can be viewed in relationship to Library Mall and State Street.
- It's important to consider the connection to Bascom Hill.
- Thanks again for your presentation.