

# **Design Review Board Minutes**

## **May 6th, 2013**

Present: Pete Anderson, Peter Schaudt, Art Hove (Phone/WebEX) and Dan Okoli,  
Staff: Bill Elvey, Gary Brown, and Yemi Falomo

### **Project Review: State Street Redevelopment (State Street 700-800 Block & Library Mall)**

A/E Firms: MSA Professional Services, Inc – Jason DiPiazza; SmithGroup JJR – Nate Novak

Landscape Architecture Firm: Ken Saiki Design – Ken Saiki, Shane Bernau

Public Art Consultant: Jill Sebastian - Jill Sebastian

### **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 first presentation to the Design Review Board (DRB).

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## **Presentation**

### **Project Site**

- The project site consists of two spaces (Library Mall and State Street) that they are looking to design both areas as one because of the amount of connectivity between the two spaces.
- The City of Madison has this portion of State Street (from N. Park Street to N. Lake Street) programmed for reconstruction beginning in early 2014 and this has been the real driver for MSA's project schedule for redesign of Library Mall at the same time.
- The goal of the project team is to develop preliminary plans for the Library Mall space along with cost estimates for the university's planning purposes and for fund raising.
- It is important to note the connections; State Street's tie on the west side to N. Park Street and its tie on the east side to N. Lake Street.
- These spaces are also tied to other very important spaces such State Street to Bascom Mall and Library Mall to East Campus Mall and Alumni Park.

## **Project Team**

- The project is being led by the City of Madison – Engineering Department who are working closely with UW-Madison – Facilities Planning and Management, the city’s appointed State Street Design Oversight Committee and the MSA led design team.
- MSA Professional Services’ team consists of Ken Saiki Design (landscape architecture), Smithgroup JJR (landscape architecture), Jill Sebastian (specializes in public art installations; she has installed projects on State Street in the past), Zebradog Studio (branding & wayfinding graphics consultant) and KJWW (electrical engineering consultant).

## **Project Schedule**

- MSA Professional Services’ project schedule is as follows:
  - April to May 2013: Stakeholder Input – Public Information meeting #1
    - ✓ This is where the project is at as of today.
  - June to August 2013: Preliminary Design - Public Information meeting #2 followed by Common Council Review
  - September to November 2013: Final Design - Public Information meeting #3 followed by a Common Council Approval
  - December 2013 to March 2014: Construction Documents and Bidding Process – Public Information Meeting #4
  - April to September 2014: Construction
- The University’s portion of the project will fit in through the fall when we will be designing the preliminary plans that tie the two spaces (Library Mall and State Street) together.

## **Stakeholder**

- The project is currently in the stakeholder involvement phase and will be meeting with the following list of the stakeholders.
  - ✓ General Public
  - ✓ Wisconsin Historical Society
  - ✓ Mayor and Alderpersons
  - ✓ Food Vendors
  - ✓ City Agencies & Emergency Responders
  - ✓ Religious & Campus Centers
  - ✓ UW Staff & Students
  - ✓ Business & Business Associations
- It is important to note that the site is within a registered historic landmark district and both spaces (Library Mall and State Street) are very important space to campus.

## **Library Mall Historical Timeline**

- Since there is a different perception between what Library Mall was and what it is perceived as today, it is important to take a step back and look at what it used to be and how it has evolved.
  - ✓ Lower Campus was added in 1891 and its uses included athletic, social and political gatherings.
  - ✓ Historical Society opened in 1900 and the Library Mall concept was introduced and included. The design included diagonal paths, a large circular gravel space in the center.
  - ✓ This design of Library Mall was controversial at the time because the students wanted the space to remain un-programmed. They wanted it to remain an active, recreational space for socializing and a lot of the plans showed it as a formal garden space.
  
- After that time period, there were many designers that planned the Library Mall as a quadrangle.
  - ✓ O.C. Simonds Campus Master Plan of 1906 installed an arched roadway in front of State Historical Society (early 1900's) and preserved open space including Library Mall.
  - ✓ Hagenah Plan for Murray Mall and Lower Campus of 1945 anchored Library Mall with Historical Society and Memorial Library and was eventually implemented in 1955.
  
- In the 40's and 50's, Library Mall's purpose starts to shape the space.
  - ✓ Quonset Huts were installed as temporary classrooms in 1946 to accommodate an increased post-war population. This eliminated the recreational use of Library Mall as an open space.
  - ✓ Memorial Library was built and opened in 1953 and controversy continued as plans to formalize the Mall continued.
  
- The current Library Mall design was installed in 1955 and it was followed by Hagenah Memorial Fountain and vegetation designed by G. W. Longencecker in 1958.
  - ✓ It incorporated design components from previous plans dating back to 1900.
  
- Most people today might think that State Street ends at N. Lake Street and the 700-800 blocks were always part of the Library Mall quadrangle.
- This is actually was not the case, the 700-800 blocks of State Street was open to vehicular traffic up until the 1970's.
- It was first closed for trial testing in 1971-72 and in 1975 was formalized, permanent closed to cars and converted into a pedestrian mall.
- Library Mall and State Street also fits into campus in the north and south direction. This is because of its connection to East Campus Mall.
  - ✓ The concept of the East Campus Mall was developed in the 1970's but it wasn't actually formalized until 1996 (then known as Murray Mall).
  - ✓ There was a proposal to remove the Hagenah Fountain but it was kept.
  - ✓ Since 1996 the East Campus Mall has been implemented in different phases; the Alumni Park is scheduled to be complete in 2 to 4 years, after which the Library Mall State Street portion will be completed when

funding is identified and the project is approved through the capital budget process.

- Please note that this history study is being used as a benchmark and is not guiding design.

The current plan for dealing with servicing and delivering supplies to Memorial Union, while still conceptual at this point, is that there will be an underground loading dock that will serve the building. This will be studied in greater detail next year but not as part of this city project. It is part of phase II for the Memorial Union project.

### **East Campus Mall**

- Some components that have already been implemented at the East Campus Mall are as follows:
  - ✓ Regent to Dayton (2004)
  - ✓ University Square (2008)
  - ✓ University Club/Chazen (2012)
  - ✓ Gordon Commons (2013)
- Some that are pending are:
  - ✓ Memorial Union & Alumni (2015)
  - ✓ Library Mall (?)
- These two components need to be looked at closely together in order to make sure they flow well together.

### **State Street Historical Timeline**

- State Street runs east to west and is one of the streets that run radially to the Capitol Building, even in the earliest plans for the city of Madison.
- It is believed that the Doty Plan of 1836 was a marketing tool prepared to convince the State Government of why Madison should be the capitol of the Wisconsin territory.
- John Nolen, the Landscape Architect hired by the City who developed the 1911 City Plan, praised State Street as his favorite street in the city and also called for widening and other improvements to the street.
- This widening never happened but a lot of the improvements he suggested were implemented on State Street in the 1970's.
- A transition that we begin to see on State Street's 700-800 block around the Memorial Library is a change in character. The character begins the change from residential to more commercial and institutional.
- The 1960's and 1970's are marked by the decentralization of cities.

- A lot of businesses and residents were moving from the center of the city away to outskirts of the city and to suburbs, and this leaves parts of State Street vacant.
- To revitalize State Street, the City started to experiment with the idea of converting the 700-800 blocks into a pedestrian mall. The intent was to create a space where people are comfortable moving through while shopping. This experiment was called the 700-800 Block Traffic Experiment 1971 and it led to the eventual closing of State Street.
- A 1968 plan was created to address the physical deterioration of the built environment and to revitalize the area by designing a street that encouraged retail.
- The Paul Friedberg plan of 1970 recreated State Street into the format that is known today.
- As State Street moved into the 1990's and the early 2000's there were still design and strategic plans being implemented, and the following are design principles that are important to note from them:
  - ✓ Flexibility
  - ✓ Timelessness
  - ✓ Long lasting/Easy to maintain
  - ✓ Sustainability
- Today on State Street there is seating along the wide sidewalks, light fixtures, café terrace conditions, and food carts on the 700-800 blocks.

State Street is a transit mall, so public transportation, emergency vehicles, a limited amount of certain types of delivery vehicles and bicycles are allowed on the mall. Private vehicles are not allowed. Note that the space between Lake Street and Park Street is pedestrian only. Vehicular cross traffic is allowed at Gilman, Gorham, Johnson and Dayton/Fairchild Streets.

### **700-800 Block of State Street:**

#### **Current state of the site**

- The 700 Block is the area where there are street cart vendors. It is interesting to see this area empty compared to when it is filled with vendors.
- The night use of the 700 block and the lighting is also being studied.
- As you move toward Library Mall on 700 Block you encounter a concrete stage. Note that the stage has some trees planted on it.
- The secret podium is also location on the 700 block. Note that it is located in the middle of the road and it looks back to the capitol. They are also a few wooden benches in this area.
- It is important to note that the 700-800 block is not just used by students but by people of all demographics.

- Even on winter days people will sit on the available tables in the 700-800 block area to study.
- This 800 block area is pretty open and there are three sculptural forms, an art piece that used to have a fountain element, kiosks, and very tall stands of trees located in this area.

### **Circulation**

- Despite that fact that, on parts of the Mall, there are signs that say “Bicycle riding and parking prohibited on Mall”, there is still a significant amount of bicycle riding and parking on the Mall. This seems like a topic that needs to be discussed.

### **Library Mall**

- The way the sidewalks and fountain in Library Mall are laid out are formal, classical and chains are used to limit access to some lawn spaces.
- While this space might be used as a pedestrian mall with a few people sitting on the lawns in summer, it is important to remember that it is also used as a gathering space for thousands of people during special events. For example, the 911 Memorial event.
- The fountain in this space is about knee height, and while it does not cause any visual obstruction, it helps people choose their paths of travel.
- The clock is another element in Library Mall. In addition to the several steps and change in grade between State Street and Library Mall, this element borders State Street and Library Mall and creates a clear distinction between the two spaces.

The clock is currently still being discussed. We are asking for feedback from the Historical Society. Our understanding is that it can be moved.

We have actually been told by the Historical Society that it in no way sacred and can be removed as long as the class gift is memorialized in another way on the mall. It was actually quite controversial when it was installed.

Nowadays, very few people use clocks like this, but it did serve a certain purpose as something to look at in regards to what happened in the space.

### **Project Site**

- Looking at the site in plan you can see how the clock is centered and lines up with Library Mall and East Campus Mall.

### **What the project team wants to learn**

- As the design continues, the following is a list of things the project team would like to know from the Design Review Board:
  - ✓ 700 & 800 Blocks of State Street :

- What aspects work well?
- What are the problems?
- What do you feel is needed as far as a new design?
- ✓ Library Mall:
  - What aspects work well?
  - What are the problems?
  - What do you feel is needed as far as a new design?
- ✓ According to the Cultural Landscape Study, the relationship between Bascom Mall, the Capitol, and the State Street Pedestrian Mall/Library Mall is unclear.
  - What are your thoughts and ideas about making connections - viewing this area as an intersection?

### **What the design team heard at the public meeting**

- The following are some of the common themes from the comments the project team received at the public meeting a few weeks ago:
    - ✓ General Comments
      - Maintain and add more seating space
      - Maintain green space in some capacity
      - Better connections from State Street to Library Mall to the future Alumni Park
      - Better connection from Bascom Hill to State Street
    - ✓ Library Mall Comments
      - Preserve Library Mall as a gathering space
      - Better lighting other than from the flood lights at Memorial Union
      - Majority likes the fountain or a water feature of some form.
      - Main entrances of Historic Society and the Memorial Library should be onto Library Mall
      - Really like crab apple and other flowering trees to be incorporated into the space.
      - Expand the usage to other hours of the day or times of the year.
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### **Design Review Board Comments**

- There is a need for human interaction. There are all these pictures of this space with people meeting and gathering.
- State Street should be allowed to continue through East Campus Mall in a stronger way than it does now. Most would agree that those structures that are in the middle of the road should be taken out. State Street has a character as it comes down from 500 blocks and this sense of State Street should be carried through the 800 block up until the foot of Bascom Hill. There is no need to make an exclamation mark like it is now where it crosses East Campus Mall.
- The DRB asked why the project was not taking on the bottom of Bascom Hill and how that connection is made across Park Street. Right now you do almost

kind of hit a brick wall after crossing Park Street westbound. The topic of making State Street continue over Park Street was discussed, making State Street the primary axis.

- The State Street crossing could be one of those places where town and gown intersect as opposed to stopping and suddenly becoming a university space. The idea of Bascom Hill being that connection point is very powerful.
- The design team should design the crossing at Langdon Street and look at what will happen at the edge of Library Mall where it crosses Langdon Street and get into Alumni Park and how delivery trucks and services get into Memorial Union.
- The City is pretty adamant that there will be no vehicular traffic down this space. We are not going to extend the bus transit route down to Park Street; it is going to continue to be a pedestrian street.
- The Friedberg plan is outside the period of significance. The Wisconsin Historical Society (WHS) has not offered an opinion on it yet. The WHS said the clock tower can go but the fountain needs to be discussed because that's a contributing feature in the historic district. Everything else can be changed.
- The DRB wants a clearer idea of the team's intentions and its approach. This is a historically rich project – we need to understand the design intentions. There are many historical periods of relevance. To have a successful design, that has to be thought through.
- The DRB questioned who the lead designer was. There needs to be strong design leadership to move this forward.
- The design review board strongly urges the team to come up with some options for the design of Library Mall.
- The DRB hopes to see different perspectives through the view corridors, including the view to the north, the view down to the water, and the view to the west towards Bascom Hill.
- The intersection of State and Park Street will be points of exploration.
- Opening up views and defining views could be considered as a way to add things to a space.
- Lighting is a great opportunity that could create connectivity between Library Mall on State Street and Alumni.
- The idea of introducing lawn space into the area right off of Park Street on Lake Street.
- The design review board recommended trying to simplify the number of elements that you're working with. It is important to have a clear design intent.
- Library Mall should be thought of in terms of all seasons.

The next DRB meeting will be held on July 16<sup>th</sup>, 2013.