

Design Review Board

June 19, 2012

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

Staff: Gary Brown, Dorothy Steele, Megan McBride, Yemi Falomo, and Rachel Feil

Project Review: Elizabeth Waters Remodeling & Patio/Terrace Renovation

A/E Firms: Somerville Architects – John Oates

Landscape Architecture Firm: Ken Saiki Design-Ken Saiki and Jon Wanta

Client Representative: UW Housing- Mike Kinderman

FP&M Project Manager: Stu LaRose

Overview:

This is the second presentation of this project to the Design Review Board. The presentation included site analysis, architectural and physical context, and previously discussed design concepts related to the landscape plans and building renovations.

Background:

Elizabeth Waters is currently a co-ed residence hall with a public dining hall. The original building was designed as an all-female residence hall, but was converted to co-ed in 2006. The site is bordered to the north by the Lakeshore Nature Preserve and Lake Mendota and to the south by Observatory Drive. The five connected building units are terraced down towards the lake. Units one and five are closest to the lake and unit three is the center building that contains the dining hall.

Principal components from the A/E:

- There are two exterior building improvements to the project. Somerville Architects will be adding mechanical housing for make-up air on the north side of Elizabeth Waters. The project also includes an addition to the current elevator shaft which is visible on the south side of Elizabeth Waters along Observatory Drive. A new, larger elevator will be installed to improve overall accessibility. The existing elevator shaft will be abandoned and filled in but will still use some of the hoist weight.

Elevator Addition

- The existing elevator takes up half of the proposed mechanical penthouse on the south east exterior. The addition will be added to the east side of the current penthouse. Somerville Architects has proposed to use the same materials that currently exist: the Spanish roof tiles and stone. They will try to repurpose some of the stone that will be removed from the east face of the current elevator housing. The Wisconsin Historical Society suggested placing a reveal between the new and old elevator penthouse with a two inch setback that would produce a visible shadow line. Due to the additional elevator housing, there will no longer be symmetry between the south exposed roof elements that are visible on either side of the entry façade. The directive from the Historical Society was to maintain the symmetrical look. Jen Deval from the Wisconsin Historical Society said this could be accomplished through the reveal or with a completely different material

such as metal. John Oates would prefer to use stone and not bring attention to the elevator penthouse.

Make-up Air

- The proposed plan will bring make-up air to the existing bathrooms and corridors. They are still examining the possibility of air conditioning. Somerville Architects will be using some of the existing lounge space in buildings two and four for the air handling equipment. They will be adding another area well on the upper terrace and using the space from the existing dishwashing room in the basement, which will be moved to the dining floor, for additional equipment. There will be air conditioning in some of the public spaces such as the dining hall and market. Units two and four have a game room on a half floor that is rarely used, which will be converted for air handling equipment. The room will be extended and an architectural bronze panel with ribbing will be placed on the exterior; the metal panel will attempt to match the color of the current stone.

Accessible Interior Entry

- The proposed architectural plan will open up the accessible interior entrance and create a better lobby with a better door series. The elevator adjacent to this lobby is the main way in which non-residents access the dining hall in the lower level. It was suggested by the DRB that ideally the existing accessible exterior ramp would also be addressed.

Corridor Windows

- Somerville Architects plans to move the vertical mechanical chases that were originally proposed to be placed at the end of some corridors so that the windows can now remain. Mike Kinderman, with Housing, is looking into how to rearrange rooms or adjust space to accommodate the chases that will potentially be placed in the rooms at the end of the affected corridors. Housing is invested in keeping the corridor window but still is in the process of figuring out the logistics of the affected rooms. The DRB strongly encourages maintaining the windows in corridors to bring light into the space as well as allow occupants to enjoy the views which create better experiences. If the chases were not placed in front of the windows or in the rooms, they would have to run through the fire rated stairwell; John Oates would like to avoid this latter option.

Principal components from the landscape architecture firm:

Lower Wall

- After having the web conference discussions with Peter Schaudt, Ken Saiki Design determined that the lower wall gives form to the lower terrace and the public pedestrian path. The Wisconsin Historical Society seemed to have a similar inclination. The wall currently is in a state of disrepair and is tipping. It also was never entirely finished. The proposed scheme replaces the lower wall and reduces its overall height with a two to four foot lower wall, which will allow better construction access to the upper terrace and improve visual access for those walking on the lower, public sidewalk.

Upper Terrace

- The upper terrace will be paved with reinforced cast-in-place concrete. The concrete will be stamped and colored to mimic the current stone treatment. Ken Saiki believes the cast-in-place concrete will help address the settling issues that the current flagstones are exhibiting.

Upper Wall

- The upper wall will be repaired and they will excavate behind the wall, install new free drain fill and drain tile to solve some of the drainage issues that currently exist.

Lower Terrace

- The lower terrace will be sloped on the sides at 4:1 which makes it possible to reduce the height of the lower wall slightly. Due to the proposed slope, Ken Saiki Design did introduce stairs along the path that runs east and west at the top of the lower wall and on the path that runs north and south on the lower terrace.

Seat Wall

- The proposed plan incorporates a seat height wall that has a slight curve at both ends; the wall runs parallel to both the lower and upper walls. The seat wall allows the grade to remain relatively flat (3% slope) in the middle portion of the lower terrace.

Pump House

- Tuck pointing will most likely occur on the pump house and Ken Saiki Design is looking into fixing or replacing the railings in the same area. The original plans called for a two inch galvanized rail. The Wisconsin Historical Society suggested making the rails a two line rail and adding cables to meet the code requirements. Peter Schaudt commented that the most successful rails he has seen were those which restored the historic rail and also introduced a new rail that was to code but was placed on the inside of the old rail. He believes when you make a hybrid that combines the old and new, the rails lose their integrity.

Pump House Doors

- It is not clear from the original plans as to what were the original materials for the pump house doors. The DRB encouraged the designers to address the doors on the pump house given all the work that is planned for the project and due to the prominent location of the pump house along the path. Also, there was a desire from the DRB to have the designers look into changing the grade at the pump house doors and eliminating the pits that currently exist.

Existing Upper Terrace Sugar Maple

- The existing Sugar Maple will be removed in the proposed plan. It was commented that the Sugar Maple should never have been planted in the first place as it is too dense and creates a lot of dense shade. It also has a shallow root system that could be compromising the paving in the upper terrace. The tree will be removed in order to pave and make room for the accessible ramp from the interior dining hall to the upper terrace.

Upper Terrace Pavers

- It was briefly discussed whether or not the upper terrace pavers could be permeable and what the reception would be from the Wisconsin Historical

Society. Ken Saiki stated that the biggest concern was to maintain a level surface but he would discuss the issue with the structural engineer. Assuming the draining issues are addressed, this could be a workable solution. Otherwise, all of the stormwater from the terrace will go directly into the lake.

Curved Path along the Lower Terrace

- The curved paths along the lower terrace have a slope of about 5%. They are not accessible due to the fact that there are no accessible routes to them. There are stairs above this path as well as stairs below.

Upper Terrace Steps

- Ken Saiki Design has not lowered the upper wall but they have reduced the height of the lower wall, which ultimately reduced the terrace in the lower terrace and made adding more steps to the upper terrace necessary.

Drainage in the Lower Terrace

- The proposed plan has added a water collection area behind the lower wall so that water won't collect along the wall.

Project Review Discussion:

Public Pedestrian Path

- The DRB would like to have a woodland feel on both sides of the public pedestrian path. The current lawn creates a no-mans-land.

Seat Wall

- It was commented that the seat wall geometry does not reference the current site geometry. The current geometry of the pump house is rectilinear and also contains segments of circles. The seat wall should maintain the existing geometry.
- The path from the upper terrace should also reference the current geometry and become a straight path rather than the current proposed curved path. If the path became straight the seat wall would extend back in towards the building a few feet on both sides which would define the middle terrace space. The wall could be jogged at the two ends to open up the space where the two paths meet along the top of the lower wall.
- The seat wall could also be pulled back a few feet towards the main building, all the way across the middle terrace, to widen the path along the top of the lower wall. Widening the path would allow space to add tables along the edge with possible views to the lake.
- The wall could also be made taller to make the middle terrace more flat and then incorporate a lower seat which would be built into the taller seat wall. The goal should be about place making. It was later determined that it would be better if there were not jogs in the wall. Functionally it makes sense for the upper stairs to come out towards the lake and extend outward in straight path that ends perpendicular to the path along the top of the lower wall. This way a user could walk down the path and turn left or right and continue down the small set of stairs that run along the top of the lower wall.

Upper Terrace Steps

- It was suggested that the stairs from the upper terrace to the lower terrace turn back upon themselves, ultimately extending the geometry from the pump house into the flat lower terrace and side paths. If the stairs turn back on themselves Ken

Saiki Design would have to meet again with the Wisconsin Historical Society. The Historical Society has approved the stairs coming out from the terrace but they have not approved the stairs turning back and covering the existing wall. Ken Saiki said they could propose an option A and an option B to the Historical Society and see which option was preferred. Option B would propose the stairs go straight out and option A would propose the stairs turn back. Programmatically if the stairs go out towards the lake they allow the terrace to be larger and more functional. The general consensus was that option B was better and would be closer to what was acceptable by the Historical Society. The stairs that extend outward to the north from the upper terrace are intended to be a rubbed concrete. Ken Saiki design was encouraged to present option B to the Historical Society as the only option.

Middle Lower Terrace

- Originally Housing had requested space for a sand volleyball court but it was determined it wouldn't be possible. If the lower terrace space is programmed with a volleyball court, they would need to make the entire lower terrace accessible which is too difficult physically without blocking views from rooms and reducing the overall exterior informal green spaces. The next request was to have as much flat space on the lower terrace as possible; however Housing knew they wouldn't be able to flatten the entire lower terrace. There also were discussions about removing the lower wall and grading the lower terrace out towards the north, but they found that that too wouldn't work (slope would be too steep) so they requested that the middle section be designed to be as flat and functional as the site would allow. This appears to be a good trade off overall in providing a large open passive greenspace in the center of the terrace and the need to provide visual access to the public sidewalk.

Paths in front of Units Two and Four

- The current paths that run along units two and four are not necessary. The exit at the end of this path is an emergency exit so it is not accessible from the outside. If the path was removed the grade wouldn't change much, due to the fact the current grade against the building is steep. Ken Saiki suggested they might be able to create a bit more flat space in the two side lawns closer to the lower wall if these two sidewalks were removed from the plan.

Lower Terrace Functions

- Rachel Feil, a student and former Elizabeth Waters resident, stated that the rear terrace and paths are often used on move-in day by the students. Some students will park in lot 34, to the west of the pedestrian path, and use the path to move their belongings in. Move-in and move-out days are two of the most critical periods in the calendar and creating a space that is functional should be a priority. Having the path and a flat lawn space makes a lot of sense functionally.

Further Discussion

- After all this discussion Ken stated Mike Strum of Ken Saiki Design may say some the issues discussed are not possible for reasons which are unknown to Ken at this time (possible grading/drainage issues, etc.).

Upper Terrace Trees

- Rachel Feil stated it would be nice to incorporate only one tree into the redesign, not the two which are currently proposed. The sunlight is important during the academic year and, already, the building sidewalls block much of the light. The sunlight into the sunroom behind the upper terrace and residents' rooms above the sunroom would also be blocked by the trees. The DRB stated one tree would be better than two but it would be hard to design compositionally unless the tree was pulled away from the center; if the tree moved too far to one side there wouldn't be enough room for the root system to grow. The conclusion was that there needed to be some shade on the upper terrace and two trees is the better solution. The size of the trees could be smaller or lighter or even smaller leaved trees like a honey locust. Ken Saiki Design will look at options for species of trees that will provide some dappled shade but still maintain views and sunlight during the academic year. It should be noted that during the majority of the academic year (November to April) the leaves will be off the trees and sunlight will be maintained to the sunroom, the residence rooms and the terrace.

Design Review Board Private Discussion:

- The design is going in the right direction. The designers have responded to the comments from the last DRB and from the online discussion with Peter Schaudt.

Option B

- There is an option B which proposes that stairs from the upper to the lower terrace come out towards the lake. This plan seems to be more functional than other plans.

Option A

- There really seems to be one scheme and that option A is no longer a viable option.

Railings

- The goal should be to keep the railings that currently exist but have a two rail system, one of which is the existing on the lake side of the wall and the other second system which would be separate but attached; this could be a wire cable that would meet code. The existing railings should be refinished and reused.

Seat Wall

- The seat wall geometry should be strengthened to relate to the existing geometry.

Corridor Windows

- The building design should keep the corridor windows and find a way to move the air chase so as not to block the windows.

Elevator Addition

- The Wisconsin Historical Society wants to see stone or metal on the elevator penthouse. They suggested this because it would be hard to match the stone perfectly. The elevator housing should contain a four inch reveal to separate the existing stone from the new stone. The DRB would like to see stone on the elevator penthouse and not metal. They would also like to see the new portion set back so that it is not in the same plane as the existing portion (it was noted later in the meeting that the face of the penthouse cannot be moved back due to the size needed for the equipment inside the space. The recess should also be large enough

so it doesn't appear as a mistake. It would not be good if the new stone moved in front of the existing.

Accessible Entry

- It would be good if the existing exterior accessible ramp could be addressed and if the new rail from the terrace could also be used for the ramp to help fit it in better with the overall site plan for the building.

Design Review Board Summary:

- The Board thanked the designers for coming and stated that the general direction in which the project was headed was consistent with the guidance from the DRB.

Option B

- Option B is the only option for the landscape plan which will be developed and proposed to the Historical Society. Option B is more functional and provides more space on the lower terrace.

Railings

- The railings should maintain the distinctiveness of the existing rails but still meet code. The juxtaposition of the two rails should have the existing rail on the lake side and have the new rail attached to the inside of the old; it would be preferred not to modify the existing rail to meet code. The two rail system would ultimately provide a cleaner look.

Corridor Windows

- The windows need to remain in order to bring light into the corridor.

Elevator Addition

- The existing elevator penthouse unit should be closer to the front of the building and have the new portion recessed. John Oates stated that they are unable to recess the addition to the elevator unit because of a structural constraint. They could, however, create a three inch deep and one foot wide reveal. John suggested from his experience in order to make the reveal visible from the street the spacing would have to be at least four inches deep and eight inches wide, but John Oates would like to look at the proportions of the stone. The DRB would not like the reveal to look like a saw cut. The proper spacing should be studied and can easily be done through a perspective rendering from the point of view of a pedestrian. There is, however, a hill across the street from Elizabeth Waters that has a path which makes the elevator housing fairly visible.

Accessible Entry

- It was recommended that the existing exterior accessible ramp be considered as part of the overall redesign. It was stated that it is unfortunate to have accessible entries separate or less important than the main entries. Mike Kinderman stated that there are many other issues and needs to this project, and he believes it is unlikely that the ramp will be included at this time in this renovation due to funding constraints. Mike Kinderman made a note of the desire and will discuss it with others in Housing as a future improvement project.
- All future issues can be reviewed internally.
- This is an important building historically and is the number one desired residence hall on campus. These decisions and the design are important.