

**Design Review Committee (DRC)
Meeting Minutes**

July 11, 2024

Meeting Location and Time:

ZOOM Meeting

9:00 AM – 12:00 PM PST

Committee Members:

Susannah Scott, Co-Chair – Academic Senate Chair
Renée Bahl, Co-Chair - Associate Vice Chancellor
Alice Kimm, Architect - Design Consultant
Derrick Eichelberger, Landscape Architect - Design Consultant
Julie Eizenberg, Architect - Design Consultant
Julie Hendricks, Campus Architect, Staff Representative - Design & Construction Services
Lisa Jacobson - Senate Appointed Faculty Representative
Matthew Begley - Senate Appointed Faculty Representative
Richard Wittman - Senate Appointed Faculty Representative
Silvia Perea - University Art Museum
Victor Soto - AS Student Representative

Staff Support – Ed Schmittgen, Design & Construction Services

Welcome: Co-Chair, Renée Bahl

Ed Schmittgen – conducted roll call, those below were in attendance.

1. Susannah Scott (SS)
2. Renee Bahl (RB)
3. Alice Kimm (AK)
4. Derrick Eichelberger (DE)
- ~~5. Julie Eizenberg (JE)~~
6. Julie Hendricks (JH)
7. Lisa Jacobson (LJ)
8. Mathew Begley (MB)
9. Richard Wittman (RW)
10. Silvia Perea
- ~~11. Victor Soto (VS)~~

General Business:

Meeting Minutes from the DRC Meeting of June 13, 2024 were approved.

Co-Chair Bahl reviewed the charge of the Design Review Committee:

In summary, the Design Review Committee is a recommending body focusing primarily on the exterior features and aesthetics; siting and contextual relationship with adjacent buildings; circulation including pedestrians, bikes and vehicles; landscape design, and other environmental matters.

The DRC is comprised of faculty, students and staff, as well as consulting architects and the campus architect. The Committee makes recommendations to the Campus Planning Committee and the Chancellor.

Engagement with the DRC:

- Projects From \$1,000,000 to \$10,000,000 are presented to the DRC 2 times;
 - Conceptual Site and Massing Design (also considered by CPC)
 - 95 % Schematic Design (also considered by CPC)
- Projects over \$10,000,000 are presented to the DRC 3 times;
 - Conceptual Site and Massing Design (also considered by CPC)
 - 50% Schematic Design
 - 95 % Schematic Design

At this meeting, the DRC will review the East Campus Student Housing Project, which is in the Conceptual Site Design & Massing review stage. In fall 2024, the DRC will convene to review the same project at the Schematic Design stage.

Action Items:

East Campus Student Housing - Site Design & Massing Review

Project Proponents:

Willie Brown, Associate Vice Chancellor for HDAE
Gene Lucas, Professor Emeritus

Architect:

Skidmore Owings and Merrill – Mithun (SOM-M)

Josh Rohmer, Director of Capital and Physical Planning, provided the planning context for the project.

The project under review today is Phase II of a major campus housing initiative. Unlike San Benito (Phase I), this an infill project that will be placed within an existing residential community on the southeast corner of campus. Currently, this community has five residence halls and two dining commons serving approximately 2750 students

The expansion will require the demolition of at least one structure. After a thorough feasibility analysis led by SOM-M and the Building Committee, the proposed Phase 2 project will remove the existing Santa Rosa residence hall and the Ortega Dining Commons.

At this time, the project is programmed as follows:

- 1,275 new beds in a student apartment-style configuration
- 412 new beds in residence hall-style configuration, to replace the residence hall beds that will be lost due to the demolition of Santa Rosa Hall.
- A new dining commons to replace the to-be-demolished Ortega Dining Commons
- An additional facility to house campus catering functions

On July 30, 2024, the CPC will review the Detailed Project Program (DPP) that describes the conceptual project approach, as well as the scope and budget. The project is expected to be presented to the UC Board of Regents in November to request approval to move into Schematic Design.

The schedule for the project includes starting demolition and construction in April 2026, with planned occupancy starting in Fall 2029.

Mr. Rohmer transitioned the presentation to the Design Team:

- Tannar Whitney – Architect, Senior Project Manager, SOM
- Olin McKenzie - Architect, Design Partner, SOM
- Sade Borghei - Architect, Design Principal, Mithun
- Tom Leader - Landscape Architect, TLS Landscape Architecture

Tannar Whitney gave an overview of the Project Vision, addressing specific challenges and objectives.

Site Context & Urban Approach:

- The project takes an urban approach to the development, with a density that will deliver the number of beds required.
- The context of the neighboring two-story buildings amidst sprawling, ample lawns was noted out, as well as the need to allow for the appropriate amount of open space to create a comfortable new community.
- The western side of the site has three towers, each approximately 85 feet tall.

Sustainable Strategies

- Passive sustainable strategies such as solar orientation and consideration for wind ventilation were noted.

Site Selection Strategies:

- Two Sites were Considered:
 - Site option one, involving demolition of Santa Rosa and Ortega
 - Site option two, involving demolition of San Miguel, San Nicholas and Ortega
- Site option one was ultimately preferred, largely due to the fact that fewer residents would be displaced. This option is the focus of today's presentation.

Program Summary:

- Sage Borghei reviewed the following program information:

Space Name	Beds	Total ASF	Gross Factor	Total GSF
Residence Halls	412	81,100	1.25	122,900
Apartments	1275	277,500	1.25	371,600
Offices		5,100	1.3	6,600
Catering & Dining		45,600	1.3	64,800
Program Summary	1,687	409,600	72%	565,900

Site Design & Massing Strategies:

- Olin McKenzie described the critical mass of the project as the Central Block that includes the student-focused amenities, dining hall, and central service area.
- Interconnection of open space is the concept behind the recreation space and green space corridors.
- Parking is provided for approximately 200 cars. The intent is to straighten UCEN Road.
- Various strategies for integrating green space were reviewed that balance the density of the program while retaining the open space. A concept dubbed 'checkerboard' was adopted. When viewed at the site plan level, it balances open space in a way that looks like a checkerboard. This approach gave the spaces a nice scale and creates opportunity for individuality and variety, while allowing for pedestrians to move through the community.

Landscape Design:

- Tom Leader gave an overview of the landscape strategy. A rectilinear U-Shaped diagram connects the new community's Central Block to the existing Library Walk and Science Walk. Counterpoint to this is a playful diagonal path that meanders through the checkerboard open spaces, providing an interesting experience while moving east and west in the community.
- The idea of a sustainable greenbelt was reviewed, considering all the collective green space south of UCEN road and north of Channel Islands road. These areas will be carefully considered in reducing water use by minimizing lawns and plantings that require more water.

DRC Q & A:

Site Design Logistics and Circulation

DRC:

- *Are the planned ~200 parking spaces adequate for future needs?*
 - SOM-M: Deferred to Josh Rohmer, who confirms 200 spaces is adequate for staff. Students will park off site if they have cars.
- *Are Zip Cars in the plan?*
 - SOM-M: Deferred to Nestor Covarrubias, who confirmed UCSB has one Zip car in the area and may add more in the future.
- *How will displaced students be accommodated during construction?*
 - SOM-M: Deferred to Willie Brown, who stated that we will manage numbers and increase density as necessary until San Benito comes online, and that we can accommodate the 412 displaced students in the current system.
- *How can traffic be controlled on the service road, and will it be multi-purpose?*
 - SOM-M: Noted they did not foresee the loop being used by vehicles except emergency vehicles, but would consider what makes sense.

- *Can the landscaped pedestrian network (open spaces) be better connected to the high-density core building, referred to as the 'central block'?*
 - SOM-M: Noted that the occupied roof is seen as a continuation of green spaces, and displacing the area for a courtyard would require providing it elsewhere in the limited/high density site. Explained that large staircases are meant to contribute to the podium as an extension of open space at grade.

Massing

DRC:

- *Do the buildings need to be so uniform in height?*
 - SOM-M: The LRDP's 65 ft. height restriction is a strict maximum for this location.
- *Can the new buildings adjacent to existing, lower level buildings step down in height to better respond to the adjacent architecture? This could improve the scale and the new project's relationship to the context.*
 - SOM-M: Density of the site and the program will require full use of the maximum height limit.
- *The current site plan has a noticeable "pinch point" where the otherwise intuitive pedestrian flow is interrupted. How can this be mitigated?*
 - SOM-M: The design team will explore ways to enhance circulation, acknowledging that the building massing could better express the continuity of pedestrian flow, perhaps by carving out the building or providing an opening/passageway at grade.

Architecture

DRC:

- *The architects were encouraged to acknowledge the historical architectural context, such as the existing 'textile' masonry blocks and roofs in the existing buildings.*
 - SOM-M: Concurred, this will be explored as the design progresses and they look forward to incorporating the architectural references.

Landscape

DRC:

- *Are there enough trees? Some slides show the project as lush, while others show it bare; we hope the final result will be green.*
 - SOM-M: The species of trees/plantings will aim to reconcile native and themed landscaping. A shift in how the campus is currently using water may allow for water reallocation strategies to grow trees and groves.
- *The architects were encouraged to be strategic and efficient with lawn areas, which should be used mainly for social spaces. The use of more trees is encouraged.*

- SOM-M: Agreed on limiting lawn area due to water use, but acknowledged that they are liked by students. A balance will be developed, with lawns in very purposeful placements. Landscape design will focus on including appropriate tree numbers and species, and consideration for incorporating more trees into the area by planting smaller trees and letting them grow.
 - *The area in the scope of work is currently designated to emphasize a theme of Australian and Central American plantings. How is this reconciled with the native, low-water use concept?*
 - SOM-M: This will be explored.
 - *Some trees are worth saving, and should be carefully considered.*
 - SOM-M: The designers will collaborate on-site with the LC in order to inventory trees that should be saved.

Sustainability

DRC:

- *Will the project be dual plumbed with recycled water for irrigation and sanitary fixtures?*
 - SOM-M: Confirmed that the intention of the project is to use recycled water for landscaping irrigation as well as dual-plumbing waste water.
- *Will the project be all-electric?*
 - SOM-M: Confirmed that the project will be all-electric, including kitchens and appliances.

Meeting Summary by DRC Staff Liaison:

Co-Chair Bahl asked Mr. Schmittgen to recap the meeting's major points.

The following summary captured the main talking points, discussion, and questions that will be shared with the CPC on July 30, 2024.

Site Design:

- How can traffic be controlled on the service road, and will it be multi-purpose?
- Are the planned ~200 parking spaces adequate for future needs?
- Can the landscaped pedestrian network (open spaces) be better connected to the high-density core building, referred to as the 'central block'?

Massing:

- Discussion about the LRDP's 65 ft. height restriction, which is a strict maximum for this location.
 - Do the buildings need to be so uniform in height? Density of the site and the program will require full use of the maximum height limit.

- Can the new buildings adjacent to existing, lower level buildings step down in height to better respond to the adjacent architecture? This could improve the scale and the new project's relationship to the context.
- The current site plan has a noticeable "pinch point" where the otherwise intuitive pedestrian flow is interrupted. The building massing could better respond to express the continuity of the pedestrian flow, perhaps by notching out the building? or opening a passageway at grade?

Architecture:

- While it was acknowledged that the architectural design has not yet started, the massing and site diagram did elicit comments about the upcoming architectural expression.
- The architects were encouraged to acknowledge the historical architectural context, such as the existing 'textile' masonry blocks and roofs in the existing buildings.

Landscape:

- Are there enough trees?
- The architects were encouraged to be strategic and efficient with lawn areas, which should be used mainly for social spaces.
- The discussion about species of trees/plantings considered how to reconcile native and themed landscaping. The area currently emphasizes a theme of Australian and Central American plantings.
- Some trees are worth saving, and should be carefully considered.

Sustainability:

- It was confirmed that the intent of the project is to use recycled water for landscaping irrigation as well as dual-plumbing waste water.
- It was confirmed that the project will be all-electric, including kitchens and appliances.

Adjournment:

Co-Chair Bahl provided a summary and reiterated:

- DRC comments that are forwarded to the CPC and Chancellor will focus on Site and Massing, which are the essential purview of the DRC.

The next DRC meeting to consider this project will be at 50% Schematic Design.