

Advisory Planning, Architecture, and Aesthetics Committee

SEPT 16, 2008 - MEETING OVERVIEW AND CONCLUSIONS

IN ATTENDANCE:

Committee members: Kathy Lowery, Chris Bouchard, Susan Phillips, Fardin Sanai, John Delano, Janet Riker, Ray Bromley (in for David McCaffrey), Catherine T. Lawson, Dan Truchan, Joe Ferguson, and John Giarrusso.

Staff: Errol Millington, Robert Prendergast, David Laccetti, David Lcomb

Guests: Robert Siegel and Brad Burns (Robert Siegel Architects); Robert Kanarkiewicz, Pearse Murray, Chris McGrath, and Kevin Lippit (State University Construction Fund)

1. Robert Siegel Architects presentation of Podium "Skydomes" options

APAAC is being asked to comment, generally, on the notion that there can be varying designs for planned skydomes (coverings of openings on Podium) and to indicate their preferences on the designs created to date so that this input can guide the architect in the next phase of the project and narrow the number of options for selection by the President.

- The skydomes project has funding in the capital plan, but the number of skydomes that will be constructed will be dependent on the final design and cost estimates.
- The skydomes are intended to help waterproof the areas under the Podium canopy, providing a better quality of life for the campus community and address ongoing issues of maintenance, operations, and repairs to uncovered stairwells, Podium deck, and mechanical systems.
- The construction plans for the Edward Durrell Stone campus had envisioned installation of more than the three skydomes currently on the Podium (over the Campus Center, PAC, and Library); but they were removed from the original construction for budgetary considerations.
- Robert Siegel (Robert Siegel Architects) presented the concept plans for this skydomes project; he explained that his firm is working on engineering and design solutions to cover the openings on the four corners of the Podium and for the large opening over the main entrance to the Podium (between Fine Arts and Arts and Sciences). He discussed that the main entry opening should be treated differently than the other four openings and that there could be a different treatment for the north versus the south portions of the Podium.
- Mr. Siegel presented an option for the main entry opening that steered away from a traditional dome, explaining that a traditional dome would compete with the entry area's view line to the campus center dome. He instead provided a patterned, circular skylight option that not only allowed light through smaller circular openings, but also bored into the roof and created multiple other smaller circular openings. The result was a wide span of openings that created far more light under the canopy while minimizing the scale of a traditional dome.
- APAAC members were generally intrigued by this design approach, agreeing that a standard dome at the height of the existing domes may compete with the entry view; but the committee was concerned with the notion of cutting additional holes in the roof. Comments were made that making such cuts would violate preservationist ideals. Cost was also a concern. It was generally agreed that the architect will continue to work cost estimates for the expansive circular option and also on design solutions (and cost estimating) for a more traditional, but less obtrusive dome.
- For the 4 corners of the Podium; Mr. Siegel presented 3 design solutions: (1) dome; (2) tension ring; and (3) "pillows".
- The first option, the dome option, could be some replication of the original E.D. Stone concept (as seen elsewhere on the campus), but a dome could be modified any number of ways, with different designs, for example, in the mullions between the glass or in the way it is lighted or glazed. There was a suggestion

that a dome of some kind could potentially include photovoltaics to assist campus energy needs. Mr. Siegel explained that adding them would be inefficient, with very long paybacks. The facilities office, nonetheless, will explore it.

- The second option, the tension ring option, would be an engineering solution to distribute weight and forces into the center of the opening with some type of structure that would hang down the center.
- The third option, the “pillows” concept, would primarily employ a fabric structure over the opening with myriad options for use of lighting, opaqueness, color, and shape. Mr. Siegel provided rendering that displayed how the “pillows” could be backlit at night and provide color and wayfinding for the campus.
- APAAC members were not interested in pursuing the second option (tension ring), as it wasn’t as compelling as the other two options and, with its drop-down design, seemed to close the spaces. It was generally agreed by all that the first option (dome option) should be pursued further, with variations on design elements further explored. The third option (pillows) should also be advanced further. APAAC members were generally interested in the creative lighting and more inviting “feel” that the pillow option provided in comparison with the dome or the tension ring. Serious concerns were expressed, however, with the life cycle costs of the pillow solution, specifically with maintenance, cleaning, and eventual replacement needs.
- With regard to the notion of having different skydome solutions at different Podium locations, APAAC members agreed that having a different solution for the main entry was generally acceptable. There was general agreement with Mr. Siegel’s assumption that the north side of the Podium can have a different solution than the south side, largely because these sides have different sun conditions, stairway access, and will not be in the same pedestrian field of vision. Concerns were voiced about the need for symmetry on campus; but counter arguments were made regarding E.D. Stone’s intent not to have perfect repetition, examples being the placement of the Carillon and the bump out of the Campus Center building. In conclusion, it was generally agreed that different design solutions will be considered for the north versus the south of the Podium, but the solutions would be more subtle, employing the same engineering option, but perhaps varying light levels, colors, planting, or other features.
- A skydome’s progress presentation will be provided to APAAC at a later date.

2. Multi-use stadium update

APAAC was updated on the progress of the stadium concept design; and the committee was asked to comment on the draft renderings and the look, “feel, and color” of the stadium. This input would help finalize concept documents for production and marketing.

- Robert Prendergast, senior planner at UAlbany, presented the stadium concept and various renderings and animated “fly-throughs”.
- Mr. Prendergast updated APAAC on the site selection, explaining it was the preferred site voiced at the July 2, 2008 APAAC meeting. He also explained that the multi-use stadium project is not funded for design or construction, but has gone through the site, building programming, and cost estimating process. Phase one of the project would provide approximately 10,000 seats, full stadium amenities, athletics spaces for education, and locker facilities. Phase two would expand the facility to as many as 24,000 seats.
- APAAC members discussed the site and asked for clarification on what green spaces may be taken away from recreation purposes. It was explained that the space taken was the varsity soccer practice field, a function that would be moved or shared in the future with another varsity field.
- APAAC members generally approved of the look and feel of the facility. Most of the comments focused on the desired planning element which created a strong north-south walkway from the planned stadium to the Podium. It was explained that the continuation of this walkway was not part of the budget or scope of the stadium project, but would be a potential design principal for future campus planning.

3. Senior class gift: Great Dane sculptures at the Entry Plaza

APAAC member Fardin Sanai, Vice President for University Development, asked generally about the next steps to consider a class gift that may involve sculpture on campus.

- Mr. Sanai is aware that the senior class may be interested in fund raising for Great Danes to be installed on the two plinths that are on both corners of the new Entry Plaza.
- John Giarrusso explained that the notion of placing Great Danes on those locations was something that piqued the interest of many in the campus community after the architect who designed the new plaza inserted the Great Danes in the official rendering. There was no funding or general consensus, however, on whether the Great Dane should – or would ever – be located there.
- There was general discussion among APAAC members that if sculpture is considered for this location, it should be a “forward looking” type of serious message or image. Some APAAC members like the idea of school spirit that would be transmitted with such Great Dane sculptures. Others thought that if the sculptures were a cartoonish image, it wouldn't be acceptable. Some wanted to see it first before providing an opinion, while others suggested that the better site would perhaps be in front of the new stadium.
- As a next step, Mr. Sanai will share with the group what the sculptures may look like.
- Further action on this item would need a broader sculpture policy that was suggested a need at the July 2, 2008 APAAC meeting.

4. Site location for Milkowski sculpture

As a follow-up to the July 2, 2009 meeting, APAAC is being asked to select a site for this sculpture.

- Janet Riker presented two sites for the placement of “Fives”, a 1968, 4x20x4 stainless steel rectangular prism work that once was located on the Uptown campus. The University has an opportunity to accept the piece as a permanent gift from the artist's family.
- Site selection considered safety, vandalism threats, permanence, and the need for “placemaking” on campus. The first site was in green space in the upper northwest corner of the field between Dutch Quad and the Science Library. The second site was in the Social Sciences or “west” garden of the Podium.
- The Social Sciences site was strongly preferred, as it provided the greatest security and safety for the piece (and for students as well); and the sculpture seemed to best compliment this garden area.

5. General overview of upcoming dates and project

John Giarrusso explained that, starting in November 2008, APAAC meetings would be scheduled monthly to meet the need to receive guidance on myriad project and planning efforts, including the Getty preservation study, the Business School project, the landscaping master plan, etc.