

## Advisory Planning, Architecture, and Aesthetics Committee

### JAN 19, 2009 - MEETING OVERVIEW AND CONCLUSIONS

#### IN ATTENDANCE:

**Committee members:** Kathy Lowery, Susan Phillips, John Delano, Janet Riker, David McCaffrey, Dan Truchan, Joe Ferguson, Fardin Sanai, Catherine Lawson, John Giarrusso.

**Staff:** Errol Millington, David Laccetti, Randall Olocki, Steve Beditz

**Guests:** Chris McGrath (State University Construction Fund), James Cohen (Mesick-Cohen-Wilson-Baker Architects), Shawn Hamlin (Hamlin Design Group)

#### 1. Getty Heritage Plan Update

*APAAC is being updated on the summary draft conclusions of the heritage/preservation study. The study is intended to provide a reference overview of the architectural heritage of the uptown campus and to provide broad guidelines for architectural preservation standards.*

- James Cohen, the historic preservation consultant on the Heritage Plan, provided an overview of summary conclusions and selected pages from the document were shared.
- He described the in-depth research behind the study, including review of prior building plans, analysis of archival materials, and a thorough assessment and critique of general building conditions, including renovations performed since original construction.
- He underscored that the Heritage Plan is intended to provide guidelines for future consideration and not to be a "step-by-step" instructional manual for the breadth or scope of future renovations. A web site is being planned that would be the repository for such information.
- The APAAC group, he explained, is the very type of campus entity that should continue to be involved in overall planning and guidance for major architectural and aesthetic decisions on the campus. He was pleased that such a group is currently active.
- He explained that one of the primary conclusions in the report, consistent with the 1998 Master Plan, is the creation of "zones" on the Uptown campus which would exact differing levels of architectural and aesthetic freedom depending, largely, on the distance from the Podium.
- Considerations of "symmetry and composition" are critically important, he explained, as construction gets closer to the Podium so as to preserve the original Edward Durell Stone intent for the Podium and its surrounding green spaces.
- The APAAC committee would be receiving electronic copies of the entire Getty Heritage Plan and be asked to comment further at a later date.

#### 2. Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS): Update

*APAAC was updated on the GEIS process which is currently underway.*

- The University, consistent with State environmental laws, is undertaking a GEIS to address potential environmental impacts associated with various planned and contemplated projects. The process should be completed in fall 2009.
- John Giarrusso explained the overall process, reviewed the 20 projects studied in the analysis, and outlined the various levels of public notice and community involvement.
- He also explained that there will be a University website that will collect and hold the various documents produced as part of the GEIS. Catherine Lawson suggested that the Getty documents (and landscaping documents, too) also be included on the University website.

### 3. Lecture Center Concourse: Place Making

*APAAC is being briefed on conceptual plans to improve the aesthetics and functionality of the circulation and other spaces around the Lecture Centers.*

- Shawn Hamlin, consulting architect for the project, presented various concepts to improve the Lecture Center area, including new seating areas, co-located vending areas, ITS kiosks, etc.
- The need for such a study is related to analyzing the space in light of recent building codes and to arrive at creative ways to improve – and make more inviting – large areas of open floor area.
- Additional study and thought is necessary, for example, on questions of how loud or how casual the spaces should be. Should seating be clustered to foster interaction or more secluded for quiet study? The fact that these areas are adjacent to instructional rooms must be considered.
- Catherine Lawson suggested that various seating and design approaches be studied, perhaps as part of the research curriculum, to ensure the best solution is implemented.
- Sue Phillips feels the space should not be designed to emulate a living room or casual area; but rather it should be designed more like academic working group space given its location in an exposed, high traffic, “main street” area.
- Joe Ferguson talked of how new lounge space is important for students, especially around the LCs, which suffers from a lack of such space.
- Janet Riker suggested that student art projects could/should have a place in this area.
- Dan Truchan reminded the group that the LC area is often populated with tables for events, whether large scale (Open House) or smaller scale (student group selling bagels). Whatever the solution is must factor-in this need.
- The APAAC group generally agreed that improvements in this area would be well received and that further study should progress. John Giarrusso explained that these improvements are not yet funded; and David McCaffrey expressed hope that such improvements will happen soon.

### 4. Dutch Commons: Landscaping

*APAAC was presented a concept plan to improve the roughly five acre plot of land between Dutch Quad and the Podium. Specifically, the plan would focus on improving the quality of the pedestrian experience by reducing cars and improving plantings, lighting, etc. This concept plan is consistent with principles laid out in the Getty Heritage Plan and the ongoing Landscaping Master Plan (both plans introduced and discussed with APAAC).*

- Errol Millington presented the Dutch Commons concept plan. Parking would be reconfigured so that it would be limited to the area closest to the Podium with most of these parking spaces devoted to handicapped spots. The exact number and allocation of parking is still being studied.
- In addition to parking changes, pedestrian paths would be better defined/paved, better lit, and improved with seating areas and upgraded landscaping. The current roadways that cut through this site would be converted to pavers to allow unfettered walking, bike riding, etc., but would be engineered so that cars could drive on them during move-in and move-out of the residence hall. The trees in this area – many of which are dying – would be replaced and the green areas enhanced. In addition to this work, the University would excavate and repair/upgrade its network of deteriorating site utilities.
- John Giarrusso explained that the project would encompass two years. The first year (summer 2009) would be devoted to expanding the existing adjacent faculty/staff parking lot to offset the loss of parking in this area. The second phase, which is more involved, would conceivably commence in spring/summer 2010. More engineering and planning is necessary, he explained, as site utility improvements are under

design and whatever work is planned must be coordinated with emerging plans on how/where to expand the nearby Campus Center.

- APAAC members were generally very positive about the changes. All agreed that the current conditions need overhaul.

#### 5. **Light Wells: Update**

*APAAC was presented an update to the plans to renovate and enhance various "light wells" on the campus.*

- Errol Millington presented the final designs for the light well improvements, specifically, the light wells located between Humanities and Education and between Physics and Chemistry.
- Both light wells are currently glassed-in shafts that allow light from the Podium deck to reach the ground floor level. They've been described as "terrariums" with overgrown, unsightly plantings.
- Consistent with prior presentations embraced by APAAC, the construction plans involve removing these glass shafts and repurpose the space for interior lounge areas. Light would pass through the Podium deck area to these revitalized spaces below with a new "roof-like" design to cover the opening. The final design, selected by the President, was shown.

#### 6. **Athletic Multi-Use Facility: Promotional Fly-through**

*APAAC was shown the draft final "promotional fly-through" for this project, completed as part of the concept study, and intended to assist with fund raising. The fly-through is a first-person, three dimensional digital rendering of the concept athletic facility, from all angles, in its planned Uptown campus location.*

- The fly-through was viewed by the group.
- No action or discussion on the project ensued.