July 15, 2014

MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Mark A. Hussey
Interim President, Texas A&M University

SUBJECT: CBE Recommendation: Decommission of ARCA 107A

At its July 8, 2014 meeting, the Council for the Built Environment (CBE) discussed a request from the College of Architecture to decommission ARCA 107A as a regular classroom. The space was originally used as a design studio space, and subsequently, it was converted into a regular classroom. An adjacent space, ARCA 107B, is currently used as a design studio space, and a third space, ARCA 107C, is the current home for the Azimuth Dining Facility, which is scheduled to move to a new location in the building during the Spring of 2015.

Given its proximity to the electrical transformers, the room has always been a less than ideal space due to the audible constant hum. Professors typically refuse to teach in this space, or do so under protest. Given the College's unprecedented growth over the past 5 years, combined with their expected continued growth over the next 5 years, the College is in definite immediate need of additional studio space.

Since ARCA 107A shares a non-load bearing wall with ARCA 107B, which in turn shares a non-load bearing wall with ARCA 107C, the proposed plan would be to convert these three spaces into a single open space by (1) removing the two non-load bearing walls to create an open flexible space of over 3500 contiguous sq. ft., with the additional appeal of having natural light and outside access; and (2) ameliorating the hum of the electrical transformers with sound attenuating materials that would significantly reduce the ambient noise levels. If approval is granted, it is anticipated that construction would be completed during the semester break between Fall 2014 and Spring 2015.

Recommendations from the Sub-Councils:

Facilities Utilization Review Sub-Council (FURsc) - The FURsc recommends that the CBE support the request by the College of Architecture to decommission and repurpose the use of room #107A located the A-building of the Langford Architecture Complex. The FURsc believes the proposed use to be justified.
The CBE voted unanimously to recommend the President’s approval to decommission and repurpose the use of room 107A of the Langford Architecture Complex.

Karan L. Watson 7/24/14
Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs
Co-Chair, Council for the Built Environment

B. J. Crain 7/17/14
Vice President for Finance and Administration
Co-Chair, Council for the Built Environment

Concur or not concur with CBE’s recommendation:

Mark A. Hussey 7-31-2014
Interim President

cc: Sub-Council Chairs, Council for the Built Environment
MEMO

Date: May 06, 2014

To: CBE Subcommittee on Facilities Utilization

Through: Dr. Karan Watson, Provost and Executive Vice President
          Ms. B.J. Crain, Vice President for Finance and Administration

From: Jorge A. Vanegas, Dean
       College of Architecture

Subject: Request to Decommission of ARCA 107A

To all:

Howdy! The intent of this memorandum is to formally request the decommissioning of room ARCA 107A as a regular classroom. This space was originally used as a design studio space, and subsequently, it was converted into a regular classroom. An adjacent space, ARCA 107B, is currently used as a design studio space, and a third space, ARCA 107C, is the current home for the Azimuth Dining Facility, which is scheduled to move to a new location in the building during the Spring of 2015.

The problem with ARCA 107A as a classroom is that, given its proximity to the electrical transformers, this room has always been a less than ideal space due to the audible constant hum. Professors typically refuse to teach in this space, or do so under protest. Given our College's unprecedented growth over the past 5 years, combined with our expected continued growth over the next 5 years we are in definite immediate need of additional studio space.

Since ARCA 107A shares a non-load bearing wall with ARCA 107B, which in turn shares a non-load bearing wall with ARCA 107C (please see attached), our proposed plan would be to convert these three spaces into a single open space by (1) removing the two non-load bearing walls to create an open flexible space of over 3500 contiguous sq. ft., with the additional appeal of having natural light and outside access; and (2) ameliorating the hum of the electrical transformers with sound attenuating materials that would significant reduce the ambient noise levels. If approval is granted, we anticipate that construction would be completed during the semester break between Fall 2014 and Spring 2015.
MEMORANDUM

To: Dr. Karan Watson  
    Chair, Council for the Built Environment  
    
Ms. B.J. Crain  
    Chair, Council for the Built Environment

Subject: Request to Decommission Classroom ARCA 107A

RECOMMENDATION

The Council for the Built Environment’s (CBE) Facilities Utilization Review sub-committee (FURsc) recommends that the CBE support the request by the College of Architecture to decommission and repurpose the use of room# 107A located the A-building of the Langford Architecture Complex. The FURsc believes the proposed use to be justified.

SCOPE

The FURsc met this morning to consider the request by the College of Architecture to repurpose the ARCA 107A space and adjacent rooms into a larger studio space. 107A is currently a Registrar General Classroom which was used 19.5 hours per week (THECB expectation: 38 hrs per week) in the Fall 2013 semester. The room is poorly used in part due to the fact that it has poor acoustics and is noisy from the shared wall with the building’s mechanical spaces. The conversion will allow the College to address the large demand for student studio space. If approved, the renovation of the space is planned to occur during the up-coming winter break. Classes will be supported through the Fall 2014 semester.

The Registrar’s Office is generally supportive of the decommissioning, noting that due to poor condition of the space, the room is not popular with faculty making it typically difficult to schedule. There are scheduling concerns stemming from the impacts of the plans of the College of Engineering to close the Zachry Engineering Center for renovations and the associated loss of campus-wide classroom capacity. It was noted that the short-term strain on campus-wide classroom use should be mitigated by the return of the classrooms in the newly renovated Francis Hall and planned conversion of the Lubbock Street Greenhouses to classrooms.

Based on the request by the FURsc members, the College confirmed that the proximity to the adjacent mechanical spaces has not been and is not a health hazard to the on-going use of the spaces. The report from the University’s Office of Environmental Health & Safety, noting such is attached.

We are pleased to offer this recommendation and welcome further inquiries related to this analysis.

Sincerely,

James Massey  
Chairman, CBE-Facilities Utilization Review sub-council  
Interim Associate Vice President for Facilities

Attachments
CC: CBE-FURsc members
Hi James:

Based on NKs concern about possible radiation exposure in the classroom slated to be decommissioned I requested someone from Environmental Health and Safety to perform a radiation check. They recently did so and I’ve attached the documentation they sent. Basically the levels in the classroom do not exceed the expected background levels. If this is sufficient, I’d appreciate receiving the official approval to decommission as soon as possible so that we can begin to get estimates for the renovation over the xmas break.

Best,

lou

Louis G Tassinary, PhD JD
Professor, VIZA
Executive Associate Dean, CARC
College of Architecture, TAMU

We're imprisoned by misperceptions and all kinds of tribal animus. It's exhausting. [Teresa Wiltz]
6-12-14 11:00 a.m.
Radiation Survey - Bicron Micro-Ren
Architecture Bldg. SN B 854/F

All readings are gross background = 0.2 mR/hr
Typical background varies from 0.2 to 0.5 mR/hr.
Performed by Luis Rodriguez, Derek Phillips

Rm 107       Rm 109       Rm 108

classroom

Hallway 2 jir/hr

Results: Levels in classroom, closest to electrical/utility
rooms were background. Slightly elevated levels in server and transformer rooms but not a radiological concern.

Luis Rodriguez - Safety Supervisor - Radiation Safety