October 23, 2014

MEMORANDUM

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

SUBJECT: CBE Recommendation: South Side Commons Renovations & Additions

The Council for the Built Environment (CBE) received a request from Residence Life to request approval to proceed with significant renovation initiatives in the South side Commons. The project includes renovation to existing space and a new addition. Renovated and new program spaces include a dining facility, a community learning center, a recreation and games space, mail and package center, student leadership space, offices, C-Store, grab-and-go dining facility, and a multipurpose room.

The proposal includes elimination of the drop-off lane on the north side to allow for the addition of much needed program space. The design for the north side creates a large “front porch”, providing useable, shaded outdoor space for students. The porch will contain moveable furniture. An oculus is proposed in the roof of the front porch entry to allow more light in toward the doors, as the porch is very deep. A new penthouse towards the front of the new addition will house mechanical equipment to support the dining facility. The exterior material for the penthouse is proposed to be metal panels in a champagne color. As shown in the proposed site plan for the north entry, green screens and other landscaping will provide screening for the bike racks while still allowing open paved area for gathering. Current bike capacity is 507, and the new design will increase the capacity to 950. The ground plane is proposed as scored concrete with concrete pavers to denote primary circulation paths. Columns at the front porch will be exposed concrete and not clad with masonry. Improvements to the south side include the elimination of one existing ramp entry to create a more formal entry. A green screen at the concrete retaining wall is proposed to help block view of the loading dock. Mosher Street would be slightly widened to accommodate limited/loading zone parking. Existing trees along the street would be maintained.

Recommendations from the Sub-Councils:

- Design Review Sub-Council (DRsc) – The DRsc unanimously voted to recommend approval of the South Commons Renovation and Addition project and 100% Schematic Design as presented with the following comments and caveats:
  - Further study needed on the oculus, including alternative ways to introduce light into the shaded front porch area.
  - Further research needed on the potential for mildew in the deeply shaded front porch area. DRsc members recommend study of Agriculture Life Sciences building as an example.
  - Encourage incorporation of artwork into the front porch/oculus element, including installation of nearby hose bib for cleaning.
  - Further refinement needed on bike screening area and proposed plant materials.
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- While the installation of a new water line will solve the basement flooding problems, it should be noted that Utilities & Energy Services is currently studying the entire south side area to provide a holistic approach to the storm water needs. Confirmation of the report and its resolution is requested by the DRsc.
- Further review of the design will be presented to the DRsc at 100% Design Development phase, including material and color selections.

Technical Review Sub-Council (TRSc) The TRSc supports the South side Commons Renovation and Addition and recommends approval, provided the following issues/concerns are addressed and funded.

- Facilities Services:
  The design team needs to ensure that the project does not increase the rate of storm runoff into local creeks.

  The project team should coordinate with Grounds Management for landscaping and irrigation concerns.

  The project team should ensure that the facility is designed to minimize, as much as practical, the effort needed for future maintenance. It is preferred that items requiring maintenance be easy to service, be easily accessible from ground or floor level, have generous clearances and be easy to isolate from energy sources with minimal impact to the rest of the facility. Elevated items requiring maintenance that are difficult to service by ladder or lift should have permanent maintenance access platforms with permanent stairs or ladders, built-in fall prevention, and davits for hoisting parts and tools.

- EHS and SASE:
  The renovation must solve past flooding issues the facility has experienced.

  The commons facility must include a full fire suppression system.

  The commons facility must include a fully addressable fire detection system.

- Utility & Energy Services:
  TAMU UES personnel have been involved in the design of this project from the beginning and are working closely with Res Life and the design team.

  UES will need to continue to review any changes to the proposed design as they occur.

  UES personnel have reviewed the expansion on the north and south sides of the complex and do not see any utility conflicts not previously identified.
The project and design team will need to follow the TAMU policy on digging on campus prior to any excavation.

The project and design team will need to follow the applicable TAMU UES Design Standards.

The CBE voted to recommend the President's approval, with noted caveats, the renovations and additions for the South Side Commons area.

Karan L. Watson 10/29/14
Provost and Executive Vice President
Co-Chair, Council for the Built Environment

Jerry Strawser 10/22/14
Vice President for Finance and Administration
Co-Chair, Council for the Built Environment

Concur or not concur with CBE’s recommendation:

Mark A. Hussey 11/1/2014
Interim President

cc: Sub-Council Chairs, Council for the Built Environment
DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS
Department of Residence Life
Central Administrative Office

September 8, 2014

To: Co-Chairs of the Council on the Built Environment
   Dr. Karan Watson, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs
   Dr. Jerry R. Strawser, Vice President for Finance and Administration and CFO

Through: Mr. Tom Reber
   Interim Vice President for Student Affairs

   Dr. David W. Parrott
   Executive Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and Chief of Staff

From: Charey Rov
   Director of Residence Life

Subject: Proposed South Side Commons Renovation and Addition

This memo is to request approval to proceed with significant renovation initiatives in the South side Commons. In July, 2014, The Texas A&M University System Board of Regents approved the System Capital Plan for FY 2014-FY2019 (System Policy 51.01 Capital Planning) and authorized the appropriation of up to 10 percent of the planning amount indicated for all FY2014 projects. One of the proposed projects to begin in FY14 is the South Commons renovation and addition project with a total planning amount of $32M.

The Commons was originally constructed in 1971 along with Dunn and Kruger Halls. Aston and Mosher Halls were completed a few years later, completing the complex. The Commons serves as an important hub for Residence Life on the south side of campus, both as a center for administrative operations and a locus for activities. The facility houses offices for Residence Life staff, provides important places for student groups to hold activities, and is a popular place for students to study and hang out. While the Commons is currently available to support these functions, lack of space and proper adjacencies present challenges.

The Commons was intended to serve the students of the four adjoining residence halls but has come to serve other residence halls in the vicinity including Wells, Rudder, Eppright, Appelt and Underwood. As these additional halls were constructed, demand for services in the Commons increased leading to an expansion and renovation of the original structure in 1988. The structure has remained largely untouched over the past 25 years. For much of its history, it was one of the primary University Dining facilities on campus, until concerns about the kitchen equipment and infrastructure on the lower level caused it to be partially closed. Since that time, University Dining has been operating out of an improvised and undersized space, offering a more limited level of service than desired. The Commons has evolved and adapted as the University has grown, which has led to a series of ad hoc solutions. The current organization and appearance of the Commons is the product of all these aggregated changes, and while it functions, it is not well suited for its current use and occupancy.

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College Station, TX 77843-1283
Tel. 979.862.3158 Fax 979.862.2434
Email: houslrg@tamu.edu | Website: realife.tamu.edu/
University Dining, which is now contracted to Chartwells as Food Service Provider, currently serves approximately, 5,000 meals per day out of the food service facilities in the Commons. Current facilities are not sufficient to support that level of traffic, and students often experience long lines and wait times. In addition to this inconvenience, dining areas in the Commons only offer 200 seats for diners, which makes it extremely difficult for students to find seating at peak meal times. Furthermore, much of the lower leave that was formerly sued for food service and dining has been either shut down or temporarily reallocated to other departments.

A newly renovated Commons would continue to support the Residence Life functions that currently exist, but with facilities that are more efficient and appropriate. Updating and reorganizing the interior spaces will make the Commons a more appealing destination for students, while additional spaces such as outdoor areas, tutoring/mentoring space and meeting/conference space will enable new and expanded programs and activities to be developed. Despite its current limitations, Commons remains a beloved and essential part of residential life on the South side of campus.

The renovation will include comprehensive architectural renovations to the Commons, upgrades necessary to meet applicable codes, and system replacements. Only the structural framework and building envelope will remain. Most other building systems will be replaced in their entirety. The addition would include expanding out the front of the Commons towards Lubbock Street.

I would be happy to meet to answer any questions or address concerns. Thank you for your consideration.
MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Jerry Strawser  
Co-Chair, Council for the Built Environment

Dr. Karan Watson  
Co-Chair, Council for the Built Environment

FROM: Ms. Lilia Gonzales, AIA  
University Architect and Chair, Design Review Sub-Council

DATE: September 25, 2014

RE: Design Review Sub-Council (DRsc) Report  
South Side Commons Renovation and Addition

The Design Review sub-council (DRsc) reviewed a request from the Division of Student Affairs for renovation of and addition to the South Side Commons facility. The project was reviewed for project approval and 100% Schematic Design.

The project includes renovation to existing space and a new addition. Renovated and new program spaces include a dining facility, a community learning center, a recreation and games space, mail and package center, student leadership space, offices, C-Store, grab-and-go dining facility, and a multipurpose room.

The proposal includes elimination of the drop-off lane on the north side to allow for the addition of much needed program space. The design for the north side creates a large “front porch”, providing useable, shaded outdoor space for students. The porch will contain moveable furniture. An oculus is proposed in the roof of the front porch entry to allow more light in toward the doors, as the porch is very deep. A new penthouse towards the front of the new addition will house mechanical equipment to support the dining facility. The exterior material for the penthouse is proposed to be metal panels in a champagne color. As shown in the proposed site plan for the north entry, green screens and other landscaping will provide screening for the bike racks while still allowing open paved area for gathering. Current bike capacity is 507, and the new design will increase the capacity to 950. The ground plane is proposed as scored concrete with concrete pavers to denote primary circulation paths. Columns at the front porch will be exposed concrete and not clad with masonry. Improvements to the south side include the elimination of one existing ramp entry to create a more formal entry. A green screen at the concrete retaining wall is proposed to help block view of the loading dock. Mosher Street would be slightly widened to accommodate limited/loading zone parking. Existing trees along the street would be maintained.
The DRsc expressed concerns over the oculus, in relation to rain and mildew issues. The DRsc did note that it provided an opportunity to incorporate artwork within it. The DRsc suggested to further explore other opportunities to allow light within the space such as use of two oculus’s or by eliminating the oculus and punching holes along the perimeter.

DRsc members noted that the South Commons area has flooded twice within the past year and asked if there is plan to resolve these flooding issues. Res Life reported that a study has been conducted by a consultant through SSC, and as a result of the study a new water line will be installed down Lubbock Street and East Bizzell to the drainage area. This should mitigate flood issues. The project team was encouraged to obtain a final copy of the drainage study report from Utilities & Energy Services and review to ensure this project’s coordination with the separate storm water project.

Recommendation
DRsc members unanimously voted to recommend approval of the South Commons Renovation and Addition project and 100% Schematic Design as presented with the following comments and caveats:
- Further study needed on the oculus, including alternative ways to introduce light into the shaded front porch area.
- Further research needed on the potential for mildew in the deeply shaded front porch area. DRsc members recommend study of Agriculture Life Sciences building as an example.
- Encourage incorporation of artwork into the front porch/oculus element, including installation of nearby hose bib for cleaning.
- Further refinement needed on bike screening area and proposed plant materials.
- While the installation of a new water line will solve the basement flooding problems, it should be noted that Utilities & Energy Services is currently studying the entire south side area to provide a holistic approach to the storm water needs. Confirmation of the report and its resolution is requested by the DRsc.
- Further review of the design will be presented to the DRsc at 100% Design Development phase, including material and color selections.

I have attached selected images from the presentation. Please let me know if you need additional information.

cc: Dan Mizer
    DRsc Members
    Bettyann Zito
Master Plan Compliance

- Consistent architectural identity and compatibility
- Primary Building Entrance
- Masonry Construction
- Building Height
- Definition/Reclamation of Outdoor Space
- Limited Surface Parking
- Connectivity
Context
SITE

TAMU South Commons
Council for the Built Environment – Design Review
Sub-Council Presentation 09.10.2014
Context
SITE

TAMU South Commons
Council for the Built Environment – Design Review
Sub-Council Presentation 09.10.2014
Architectural Inspiration
DESIGN ELEMENTS

TAMU South Commons
Council for the Built Environment – Design Review
Sub-Council Presentation 09.10.2014

BarnesGromatzkyKosarek Architects
South Commons
SITE PLAN - PROPOSED

TAMU South Commons
Council for the Built Environment – Design Review
Sub-Council Presentation 09.10.2014
South Commons
SITE PLAN - EXISTING
South Commons

NORTH ENTRY

TAMU South Commons
Council for the Built Environment – Design Review
Sub-Council Presentation 09.10.2014

Barnes Gromatzky Kosarek Architects
South Commons
NORTHWEST VIEW
South Commons

ENTRY PORCH

TAMU South Commons
Council for the Built Environment – Design Review
Sub-Council Presentation 09.10.2014
South Commons
OUTDOOR SPACE BETWEEN KRUEGER AND COMMONS
South Commons
NEW SOUTH ENTRANCE
MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Karan Watson
Co-chair, Council on the Built Environment

Dr. Jerry Strawser
Co-chair, Council on the Built Environment

FROM: Tom Reber
Chair, CBE Technical Review Sub-council

DATE: October 14, 2014

SUBJECT: CBE TRsc Recommendation: Proposed South side Commons Renovation and Addition

On October 6, 2014 Charen Rydl, Director of Residence Life, presented to the CBE’s Technical Review Sub-council on the proposed South side Commons Renovation and Addition. The request was for approval to proceed with significant renovation initiatives in the South side Commons. The Commons serves as an important hub for Residence Life on the south side of campus, both as a center for administrative operations and a locus for activities. The Commons was intended to serve the students of the four adjoining residence halls but has come to serve other residence halls in the vicinity including Wells, Rudder, Eppright, Appelt and Underwood. As these additional halls were constructed, demand for services in the Commons increased leading to an expansion and renovation of the original structure in 1988. The structure has remained largely untouched over the past 25 years.

Chartwells as Food Service Provider, currently serves approximately, 5000 meals per day out of the food service facilities in the Commons. Current facilities are not sufficient to support that level of traffic, and students often experience long lines and wait times. In addition to this inconvenience, dining areas in the Commons only offer 200 seats for diners, which makes it extremely difficult for students to find seating at peak meal times.

A newly renovated Commons would continue to support the Residence Life functions that currently exist, but with facilities that are more efficient and appropriate. The renovation will include comprehensive architectural renovations to the Commons, upgrades necessary to meet applicable codes, and system replacements. Only the structural framework and building envelope will remain.
Recommendation
The Technical Review Sub-council supports the proposed South side Commons Renovation and Addition and recommends approval, provided the following issues/concerns are addressed and funded.

Facilities Services:
The design team needs to ensure that the project does not increase the rate of storm runoff into local creeks.

The project team should coordinate with Grounds Management for landscaping and irrigation concerns.

The project team should ensure that the facility is designed to minimize, as much as practical, the effort needed for future maintenance. It is preferred that items requiring maintenance be easy to service, be easily accessible from ground or floor level, have generous clearances and be easy to isolate from energy sources with minimal impact to the rest of the facility. Elevated items requiring maintenance that are difficult to service by ladder or lift should have permanent maintenance access platforms with permanent stairs or ladders, built-in fall prevention, and davits for hoisting parts and tools.

EHS and SASE:
The renovation must solve past flooding issues the facility has experienced.

The commons facility must include a full fire suppression system.

The commons facility must include a fully addressable fire detection system.

Utility & Energy Services:
TAMU UES personnel have been involved in the design of this project from the beginning and are working closely with Res Life and the design team.
UES will need to continue to review any changes to the proposed design as they occur.

UES personnel have reviewed the expansion on the north and south sides of the complex and do not see any utility conflicts not previously identified.

The project and design team will need to follow the TAMU policy on digging on campus – prior to any excavation - https://utilities.tamu.edu/digging-campus/.

The project and design team will need to follow the applicable TAMU UES Design Standards - https://utilities.tamu.edu/design-standards/.

TAMU UES looks forward to working closely with the project and design team to ensure that all campus requirements are met and that the project is successful.
Capital Financial Planning:
No concerns.

University Police:
No concerns.

FCOR/GIS, Telecommunications, Transportation Services, CIS, and Procurement:
No concerns expressed.

Xc: CBE Technical Review Sub-council
CBE Support Staff