January 15, 2015

MEMORANDUM

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

SUBJECT: CBE Recommendation: Engineering Education Complex (EEC) and Zachry Renovation – 100% Design Development

The Design Review sub-council (DRsc) previously reviewed the Engineering Education Complex (EEC) and Zachry Renovation project on June 20, 2012 for concept and project approval and on October 8, 2014 for Schematic Design. The project was presented to the DRsc on November 12, 2014 at 100% Design Development.

The focus of this presentation was to respond to the DRsc’s recommendations from the October 8, 2014 review. Based on those recommendations, the design team identified five areas for further review:

1) Refinements to the exterior
2) Provide more rhythm and harmony to the façade
3) Emphasize building entrances
4) Context and relationship to the neighboring buildings
5) Site plan development and landscape architecture plan (will be presented at a later date)

To address items 1 and 2, refinements were made to the exterior to provide simplification to the building. The base of the building is now more consistent with what is above in terms of rhythm. Additional stone was included on the base to give more volume and the amount of mullions were reduced. To address item 3, building entrances were emphasized with the inclusion of a vertical masonry element captured by a metal panel system, which helps become an identifier for all entrances.

To address item 4, the design team explained that some of the proposed exterior materials were pulled from the adjacent buildings. An example of this is the limestone base which is used at the Emerging Technologies Building (ETB). Other proposed exterior materials are two metal panel colors, light (champagne color utilized at ETB) and a darker tone of the champagne, and three different types of glazing. The glass in public spaces like lobbies will be clear insulating glass. A
small amount of specialty glazing will occur at the top level, but the primary glazing is proposed to have a slight bronze tint.

In addition, many of the EEC’s design elements relate back to neighboring buildings. The upper portion of the EEC is very driven by the character of ETB, as seen in the similar heights and upper cornice. The base of the EEC is somewhat the reverse of the base on ETB. Long horizontal windows on the north and south sides relate to Wisenbaker, Jack E. Brown (JEB) and the Blocker Building. The open, glassy two-story entry on the northwest side relates to JEB and Cyclotron. The pedestrian edge of the EEC is similar to that of Mitchell Physics.

DRsc members asked for clarification on the application of exterior materials. The base is mostly masonry (Lueders limestone) and from that point up the building is comprised of two different shades of metal panels and glass. Any lighter color shown in the renderings above the base is a metal panel system.

The DRsc called a special session meeting on November 19, 2014 to continue discussion on the project.

In accordance with DRsc procedures the project was reviewed against the Design Checklist for New Buildings. Through this review it became clear that there are two major components that are non-compliant:

- H.14 - Exterior walls are to be primarily of masonry: stone, cast stone, and brick.
- I.4 - Larger areas of glazing, where they occur, are to consist of grouped windows, not undifferentiated curtain walls and should be located to express aspects of the building’ circulation system, lobbies, stairs, major public rooms, etc.

While there are other design guidelines identified as not aligned, these would more than likely align themselves with appropriate adjustments to the two larger issues.

The use of three different types of window glazing was discussed as another area of concern. The primary glazing as proposed has a slight bronze tint, while adjacent buildings ETB and JEB have a slight green tint. The bronze tint was selected to relate back to the materials palette of the building, however DRsc members feel that utilizing the same glazing color as the adjacent buildings is most appropriate in terms of relating to the context. Also, it was discussed that including the spandrel glass there are a total of five different kinds of glass proposed. In order to provide further simplification and not appear as busy, it was discussed that the types of glazing should be reduced.

Finally, DRsc members discussed concerns relating to the context and relationship with neighboring buildings, specifically in the massing along University Drive. JEB is seven stories along its north façade, ETB is five stories, and EEC’s most northern façade is four stories in relation to ETB and only two stories in relation to JEB. The sub-council understands that constraints related to the existing Zachry building footprint and lack of budget to increase the
building size are drivers in the design. However, the sub-council feels that the design lacks an urban feel along the north edge.

The DRsc continued discussion on December 10, 2014 to review proposed revisions in response to the concerns identified at the November 19, 2014 meeting.

The following information details the design strategy to address the concerns of the DRsc by incorporating an increased amount of masonry and reducing the areas of the metal panel system.

- The attached roof plan and perspective graphics describe the metal panel areas proposed to be redesigned as masonry. To solve structural and other technical issues some portions of panel will remain, but the large fields of panel especially associated with the existing structure will be significantly reduced and in some locations removed. (Response to H.14)

- The magnitude of the metal panel areas to be changed is depicted in the graphics. The final masonry material will be subject to approval by the DRsc Chair and is dependent on the structural capabilities of the existing building. The masonry material will either be the Lueders limestone (preferred) or brick in a color similar to the Lueders limestone.

- Inherent within this comprehensive strategy is the introduction of more vertical proportions with the use of masonry.

- The design adheres with the guideline for allowance of larger areas of glazing, but introduces larger areas of glazing in other areas to allow more light into the interior due to the limitations of the existing Zachry Building. (Response to I.4)

- Minor refinements to the horizontal metal panel system in the “middle” portion of the building at the east side-north end and the north end will be addressed.

- Glazing color will match the Engineering Technology Building (ETB) and not as originally proposed with the three different types of glazing.

**Recommendation**

On December 10, 2014 the DRsc voted to recommend approval of the Engineering Education Center – Zachry Renovation project as presented at 100% Design Development with the following caveats:

- The design strategies outlined and presented at the December 10, 2014 meeting are incorporated into the design to address the concerns of the DRsc, which includes a greater amount of masonry and reduction of the overall amount of metal panel system. The final resolution of the design shall be provided to the DRsc Chair for approval and assurance that the fundamental intent and expectations as agreed upon are met.

- Glazing color will match the Engineering Technology Building (ETB).
- A detailed site development plan and landscape plan should be brought back to the DRsc for review, in accordance with DRsc procedures.

- Any plans for exterior signage and artwork, including exterior sculptures, should be brought back to the DRsc for review in accordance with CBE procedures.

- An exterior materials mockup will be constructed for on-site review, in accordance with DRsc procedures.

The CBE voted to recommend the President's approval, with noted caveats, the Engineering Education Center – Zachry Renovation project as presented at 100% Design Development.

Karan L. Watson  
Provoost and Executive Vice President  
Co-Chair, Council for the Built Environment  

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

Concur or not concur with CBE’s recommendation:

Mark A. Hussey  
Interim President  

cc: Sub-Council Chairs, Council for the Built Environment  
Tell Butler  
N.K. Anand
10/8/2014
PREVIOUS EAST ELEVATION DETAIL

11/12/2014
REFINED EAST ELEVATION DETAIL

Consistent Roofline
Created Simpler, Stronger Base
Simplified Upper Glazing System

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
ENGINEERING EDUCATION COMPLEX

DRSC COMMENTS: REFINEMENTS TO THE EXTERIOR
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10/8/2014
PREVIOUS EAST ELEVATION DETAIL

11/12/2014
REFINED EAST/WEST ELEVATION DETAIL
texas a&m university
engineering education complex
drsc comments: refinements to the exterior
AREA TO BE REDESIGNED FROM METAL PANEL TO STONE
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