



MEETING NOTES

Meeting Location: In Person

Project: Design Review Board – May 2025

Date/Time: 5/20/25 – 9:00am

Re: DRB Meeting Notes

Notes By: Janine Glaeser, UW-Madison
FP&M, CPLA

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MEETINGS\05-20-25 MTG\

Agenda (In Person):

1. **Science Hall Renovation (0053-2425)**
Preliminary Design Review – DRB #2 Schematic Design

Committee Attendees:

Heidi Natura
Mary Czyszczak-Lyne
Kevin Firchow
Rafeeq Asad
Terry Steelman
Tonia Pittman
Ex Officio: Scott Utter
Ex Officio: Peter Schlecht
Staff: Janine Glaeser

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

APPROVAL OF MEETING NOTES

- April 18th DRB Meeting Notes were approved.
- Czyszczak-Lyne motioned to approve; Steelman seconded motion

DISCLOSURES AND RECUSALS

- None

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

- Utter read the Land Acknowledgement
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DRB Item #1: : Science Hall Renovation (0053-2425)

Preliminary Design Review - DRB #2 Informational Presentation

Attendees:

- Bo Muwahid, FP&M PM
- Stacey Keller, InSite Consulting Architects
- Rebecca Holmquist, InSite Consulting Architects
- Dan Sheen, CannonDesign
- John Reed, CannonDesign
- Evan Gambino, CannonDesign
- Christopher Sina, Saiki Design
- Lexie Baslington, FP&M
- Paula Veltum, Real Estate FP&M
- Aaron Williams, CPLA FP&M
- Jonathan Bronk, CPLA FP&M
- Rhonda James, CPLA FP&M
- Van Van Wyk II, CPD FP&M
- Rex Loker, OS FP&M
- Mitchell Mayer, FP&M
- Brenda Gonzalez, FP&M

Project Description: The UW Letters & Science team is working with InSite Consulting Architects and Cannon Design on a plan to preserve Science Hall to showcase its historic characteristics and features as well as upgrade, renovate, and modernize this facility. The scope of work will encompass a comprehensive renovation of and addition to the existing facility. This is the second time the DRB is seeing this Science Hall Renovation project.

DRB Review & History - Anticipated:

- | | |
|------------------------|---------|
| - DRB #1 | 2/18/25 |
| - JCAC Introduction | 5/22/25 |
| - DRB #2 | 5/20/25 |
| - JCAC Referral to DRB | 8/28/25 |
| - DRB #3 | 8/19/25 |

Project Schedule:

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|--------------------------|---------------|
| - Schematic Design | April 2025 |
| - Design Development | June 2025 |
| - Construction Documents | August 2026 |
| - Construction Start | February 2027 |
| - Completion | February 2029 |

DRB comments:

- Asad Comments:
 - Inquired about the material used for the proposed box structure.
 - The design team responded that it would be a curtain wall system composed of two types: vision glass and shadow box. The intent is to create a contrast between the heavy masonry of the existing building and the lighter, more modern insertion.
 - Noted the architectural scheme felt somewhat forced and emphasized the importance of allowing the historic structure to remain true to itself while ensuring that any new additions are clearly distinct. Noted preference for the first design scheme featuring a

flat roof, describing it as a purer and more successful form compared to the arched or barrel-roofed alternatives, which he felt did not relate well to the existing building.

- Appreciated the use of terra cotta in the additions, calling it a successful application. Noted that the flat roof design was more striking and clearly represented a contemporary 2025 addition, which worked very well.
- Czyszczak-Lyne's comments:
 - Agreed with Mr. Asad's preference for the flat roof over the arched version. Supported the idea of incorporating a green roof, noting that it would reflect the educational mission of the school.
 - Requested clarification regarding the new roof material, and it was confirmed that the existing tar roof would be replaced with slate.
 - Raised a question about how stormwater would be managed, particularly from the addition's roof.
 - The design team explained that collectors would direct water to the main storm drain.
 - Suggested exploring the possibility of using collected water to irrigate the green roof or nearby landscaping, such as trees and other plantings. She concluded by stating that she really liked the overall design.
- Firchow Comments:
 - Noted the city's historic preservation planner had initially expressed a preference for the arched roof scheme. However, he acknowledged that this opinion was based on earlier, less developed design images.
 - Noted the arched roof better related to the existing window forms, while the flat roof offered a different but also successful relationship.
 - Regarding the parking area, he asked whether rotating it 90 degrees would impact the adjacent green space.
 - The design team responded that multiple configurations had been tested, and the current layout was chosen to avoid having cars visible at the end of the street while also accommodating snow storage and turnaround needs.
- Steelman Comments:
 - Appreciated the design team's efforts to "touch the building lightly," and noted that this sensitivity was evident in the design. He found the interior space created by the arched roof to be particularly striking and questioned whether there was an opportunity to occupy the roof or create a space that would offer views of Bascom Hill.
 - Echoed Mr. Asad's sentiment that the arched forms felt forced and expressed a preference for the simpler flat roof design, which he described as a "jewel box." He also questioned whether the side entries were part of the pavilion or extensions of the terracotta towers, suggesting that removing them might enhance the purity of the pavilion's form. He felt the flat roof might benefit from being slightly taller.
- Natura Comments:
 - Appreciated simpler flat roof approach, citing long-term maintenance concerns with the barrel-arched roof. She found the flat-roofed "jewel box" design more compelling aesthetically.
 - Acknowledged that the arched option offered the best interior view and asked whether it would be possible to combine the flat roof with an arched interior. She also

questioned whether there were constraints that required the skylight to be pressed against the façade. Additionally, she complimented the granite bench detail on the west façade.

- Pittman Comments:

- Expressed some confusion about the visual and spatial connection between the interior and exterior of the box structure. She questioned how feasible it would be to maintain the large window areas and what that would feel like from the inside.
- Agreed with previous comments and suggested that elevating the flat green roof might improve its performance. However, she also expressed concern that the roof might not receive as much sunlight as depicted in the renderings.

- Schlecht comments:

- Acknowledged many of the comments raised by the DRB had already been discussed internally by the design team. He asked how the design communicates the identity of the Nelson Institute and noted that this aspect still needed to be addressed more clearly.

- Asad Comments:

- Questioned why Scheme A could not be raised to the same height as Scheme B, given that the structure is pulled away from the building and does not obstruct any windows. He asked for clarification on why one scheme slightly cuts off the three arches while the other extends above them.
 - Design Team explained that the side windows adjacent to the central three-arch windows are part of important rooms with fireplaces. Raising the roof further would block light into these rooms. They emphasized that the design was carefully calibrated to preserve as much light as possible while maintaining architectural harmony.

- Steelman Comments:

- Asked if the black roof elements could remain at their current elevation to avoid visual intrusion.
 - Design Team responded that doing so would make those elements visible below the ceiling, which they found undesirable. They had explored many versions and concluded this was the best solution.
 - They elaborated on the orientation of the arched roof, noting that turning it 90 degrees would create a dated aesthetic. The current design aligns with the building's proportions and window placements, creating a cohesive architectural language.

- Asad Comments:

- Asked if the windows being preserved were not already covered in the current view.
 - Design Team clarified that in the arched version, the windows are partially covered but still allow light through side gaps. In the flat version, the view is outward over the roof. They defended the arched design as an organic evolution of the building's form.

- Steelman Comments:

- Questioned why two schemes were presented if the team strongly favored one.

- Design Team explained that both schemes were developed with equal care and shown in response to previous requests. They acknowledged the confusion but emphasized their commitment to transparency.
- Schlecht comments:
 - Noted the value of committee feedback in identifying potential blind spots.
- Natura Comments:
 - Asked why the flat roof couldn't incorporate the benefits of the arched interior while simplifying the exterior. She sought clarity on the limitations related to the windows.
 - Design Team acknowledged the idea and said a green roof on the arched version had been preliminarily explored. They clarified that Heidi was suggesting an arched interior beneath a flat exterior, which they had not fully considered.
- Schlecht comments:
 - expressed concern about the viability of a green roof in a shaded courtyard and asked for expert input.
 - Design Team clarified that the roof is west-facing and receives afternoon sun. Solar studies had been done for interior light but not for the green roof's viability.
- Steelman Comments:
 - Summarized the debate as one between a simple, jewel-like insertion and a more expressive, volumetric solution. He suggested that more effort in the flat roof design might have made the conversation easier.
 - Design Team reiterated that the interior experience of the arched scheme was the primary reason for their preference. They believed it offered a more uplifting and respectful integration with the historic building.
- Schlecht comments:
 - Emphasized that the interior space of the arched scheme was more successful and questioned whether the flat roof could achieve the same effect.
 - Design Team explained that raising the flat roof would still result in losing either the central or side windows due to elevation differences.
- Asad Comments:
 - Noted that both schemes preserved the windows adequately and that the flat roof design was not inherently flawed. He preferred the simpler form for its contextual fit and elegance.
- Natura Comments:
 - Suggested lowering the flat roof to align with the window sills and pulling it back slightly to better reveal the arches.
 - Design Team said this had been tried but resulted in cutting off the tops of the arches from most viewpoints. They maintained that the arched scheme better respected the historic architecture.
- Schlecht comments:
 - Supported the arched scheme for its creativity and alignment with the building's character, arguing that the flat roof felt more like a generic infill.
- Natura Comments:
 - Emphasized the importance of sustainability, referencing the Nelson Institute's mission. She questioned whether the complexity of the arched roof was justified given maintenance concerns.

- Design Team noted that sloped roofs drain better than flat ones and that the arched scheme had been designed with effective drainage in mind.
- Steelman Comments:
 - Expressed concern about reaching an impasse and asked how to proceed.
- Schlecht comments:
 - Acknowledged the feedback and said the team would take time to respond thoughtfully. He noted the importance of donor input and city preferences, which had previously leaned toward the arched scheme.
- Firchow Comments:
 - Confirmed that the city's preservation planner had initially preferred the arched scheme, though those versions were less developed.
- Schlecht comments:
 - Emphasized the need to better address sustainability and the Nelson Institute's goals in future presentations.
- Asad Comments:
 - Asked for clarification on the window heights and whether raising the roof would truly obstruct views.
 - Design Team Explained that the windows are tall with high transoms, and raising the roof would only partially obstruct the upper portion.
- Steelman Comments:
 - Compared the flat scheme to Renzo Piano's JP Morgan Library insertion, suggesting it could stand as its own architectural expression.
 - Design Team noted that both schemes share the same floor plan, with the only difference being the roof shape, which significantly affects the interior experience.
- Pittman Comments:
 - Requested visuals showing the view from inside the building looking out over the roof, as this perspective was central to many design decisions.
 - Design Team agreed to develop those visuals for the next meeting, acknowledging the importance of understanding both interior and exterior experiences.

Public Comment:

- UW Staff provided comments emphasizing sustainability and roof design importance.

June 17th, 2025 is the next DRB meeting.

These notes are what the writer understands of the proceedings. Please contact or email any changes to the writer within 5 working days if not in concurrence. End of meeting notes.