

Frank Zwart, FAIA, FAUA

530 Spring Street  
Santa Cruz, California 95060

May 9, 2018

Senior Environmental Planner Alisa Klaus  
University of California  
1156 High Street, Mailstop: PPDO  
Santa Cruz, California 95064

Re: Student Housing West Project  
Draft Environmental Impact Report

Dear Alisa:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft EIR for Student Housing West. I write from a dual perspective: as an early alumnus (Cowell '71) and as UCSC's Campus Architect Emeritus, having headed the Office of Physical Planning and Construction from 1988 until my retirement in 2010.

The campus is to be applauded for its aggressive and ambitious efforts to confront the vexing challenge of providing more, and more affordable, student housing. If built as currently proposed, however, Student Housing West will represent a drastic change from the planning principles that have shaped the campus for over 50 years, radically re-shaping both entrances to the campus and permanently transforming the sweeping meadow vistas unique to UC Santa Cruz.

### **BACKGROUND - UCSC CAMPUS PLANNING AND PROCESS**

The tradition of campus planning at UCSC begins with its remarkable site. It is summarized well in UCSC's *Physical Design Framework*, a document which was accepted formally by the University's Board of Regents in March 2010 and with which, under University policy, all projects are to be consistent prior to approval of design:

The importance of the *1963 Long Range Development Plan* in shaping the fabric and creating the character of the UC Santa Cruz campus has already been noted. Indeed, all planning and architectural design during the intervening years have their roots in that document's commitment to marrying the campus's academic aspirations with a profound respect for the variety and splendor of its site. As a consequence, physical planning at UCSC begins by studying the interwoven elements of the campus's natural fabric and moves toward principles and strategies that guide development of the facilities required by its academic mission. UCSC's planning enterprise is ongoing, continually working to understand how to build a

May 9, 2018

complex campus community within the surrounding natural systems, respecting them during all stages of design, construction, and daily campus operations. Each planning effort builds on those that preceded it, and each project moves the campus toward increased comprehension, and appreciation, of its surroundings.

*(Physical Design Framework, p. 4)*

The UC Office of the President's description of how the *Physical Design Framework* is integrated into University procedures can be found in the University of California Capital Resources Management *Delegated Process User Guide*, published in June 2014:

Physical Design Framework (PhDF): The PhDF identifies the campus' planning principles and objectives for design of the physical environment; how the PhDF relates to the campus LRDP; and how objectives will be integrated into project planning and design. The PhDF is *a comprehensive document with both visual and textual elements* and includes key planning requirements such as density parameters, sustainability guidelines, circulation guidelines, *vistas and sightlines*, physical connections to the adjacent community, and design guidelines. The guidelines may include *building heights*, build-to lines, building orientation, building materials and colors, site furnishings, landscaping and hardscaping, and architectural style guidance. *The PhDF also describes the campus design review and approval process.* The PhDF guides campus development in a coherent manner, ensures stewardship of the campus environment, and informs design professionals of design principles and objectives important to the campus. *(Italics added.)*

UCSC's *Physical Design Framework* addresses the campus's design review and approval process in its description of the role of the Chancellor's Design Advisory Board:

The **Chancellor's Design Advisory Board**, comprising three outside design professionals and established to satisfy The Regents' *policy requirement for independent design review*, meets regularly to review projects and make recommendations about their design, assisting the campus in the achievement of planning coherence and high design standards. Convened by the Campus Architect, *the Board's involvement begins prior to the initiation of design work, when the Board typically meets on site with executive design professionals and involved campus staff to define design goals necessary to satisfy the project program, the 2005 LRDP, and the planning and design guidelines of this Physical Design Framework.* Continuing dialogue with the Board at several stages of project development ensures that both building designs and campus planning studies are presented in a broad context, with due consideration given to issues of landscape design, circulation, and the environment, and that they meet the requirements of the 2005 LRDP..., the Framework, and relevant planning studies. The Board also identifies and articulates to the campus community planning and design issues critical to ongoing campus development." *(Physical Design Framework, pp. 7-8. Italics added.)*

## **STUDENT HOUSING WEST**

Section 5.2 of the Draft EIR (pp. 5.0-2 ff.) sketches a complex project history during which, after initial design proposals had been prepared, consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service established the need to protect California red legged frog habitat, reducing the site available for construction from 50 acres to 13 acres, or to 26% of its original size.

Other than the CEQA-mandated analysis of the Reduced Project Alternative (DEIR, p. 5.0-19), the Draft EIR gives no indication of serious consideration being given to reducing the originally program requirement for 3,000 beds and a childcare center. This inflexibility, along with schedule constraints that the DEIR mentions but does not describe (DEIR, p. 5.0-5), resulted in the decision to expand the project site by adding 15 acres at the south end of the campus's East Meadow—the Hagar Site—for 148 family student housing units, and to increase the height of the undergraduate student apartments on the Heller Site to as many as 10 stories. The resulting proposal, on both sites, is not consistent with a number of the guidelines and procedures set forth in the *Physical Design Framework*, as discussed below.

## **HELLER DRIVE SITE**

### **Building Height and Configuration**

The Draft EIR (p. 4.1-10) cites the following two guidelines for buildings at the forest edge from the *Physical Design Framework*:

Consider the visual continuity of the forest edge as seen from a distance when designing buildings there. Maintain heights of buildings and infrastructure elements significantly below the tree line.

Arrange building elements and clusters to create an irregular building profile against the forest edge. Avoid long, unbroken horizontal roof lines.

It goes on to say (p. 4.1-24) that “The new housing, although visible due to building mass and heights, would not extend above the tree line that forms the backdrop of the view...” On page 4.8-10, in its discussion of SHW Impact LU-1, it says that “...the new student housing has been designed and clustered to remain almost completely within the boundary of existing development and not exceed the height of the existing tree line of the forests to the west of the proposed housing.”

These descriptions seem to be contradicted by the visual simulations shown in Figures 4.1-3, 4.1-5, and 4.1-11 of the Draft EIR, as well as by more recent images of the proposed 100% schematic design presented to the Design Advisory Board on April 16, 2018 (available at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1NNUZXXn-W7Xe3cQ5glbiURB65orofrrg/view?usp=sharing>).

May 9, 2018

- What are the heights above ground level, in both number of stories and feet, of the buildings at the Heller site?
- The discussion beginning on p. 4.1-30 of SWH Impact AES-3 as it relates to the Heller Drive site should include an analysis of how the project is consistent with the above guidelines for buildings at the forest edge.

## **HAGAR DRIVE SITE**

### **Design Advisory Board Review**

On page 4.1-33, "...consistent with LRDP Mitigation AES-5A, the UC Santa Cruz Design Advisory Board has conducted a preliminary review of the project design and would conduct further review of the project designs for consistency with the valued elements of the visual landscape identified in the 2005 LRDP, and the character of surrounding development so that the visual character and quality of the project area are not substantially degraded."

To date, the Board has reviewed the Student Housing West project on five occasions: November 1 and December 6, 2017, and February 26, March 26, and April 16, 2018. (Copies of the notes of the first four of those meetings related to Student Housing West are attached.)

As noted above, it has been standard campus practice for the Board to meet on site with project designers and proponents at the very beginning of design: "the Board's involvement begins prior to the initiation of design work, when the Board typically meets on site with executive design professionals and involved campus staff to define design goals necessary to satisfy the project program, the 2005 LRDP, and the planning and design guidelines of this Physical Design Framework." For the Hagar Drive site, that did not occur, although it could have; the Second Notice of Preparation for the project's Draft EIR, which announced the addition of the Hagar Drive site to the project, was published on October 31, 2017, a day before the Board's first consideration of the project. The notes of the November 1 meeting record that "Capstone [the P3 developer] will return at a later date to present the proposed Family Student Housing development on the Hagar site," but has no record of any further discussion of the site. At the December 6 meeting there was likewise no discussion of the Hagar Drive site.

Meeting notes are clear about the Board's strong opposition to the use of the Hagar Drive; for example, the notes of the February 26, 2018 meeting say:

In conclusion, the Board wanted to be recorded that they are unanimously opposed to the selection of this site for the FSH development. They questioned what alternative sites had been evaluated and expressed concerns that the low-density program, located at such an iconic gateway intersection, undermines the careful approach and purposefulness of campus planning, and were alarmed by the

potentially inhospitable interruption to the visual character of the open meadow in that specific location.

The March 26 notes say:

...the Board reiterated that they were still opposed to the selected site and felt that the campus was “making a big mistake.” They also strongly urged for an analysis of alternative sites.

While Capstone [the P3 developer] observed that past LRDP plans, including Thomas Church in 1963, had suggested the East Meadow to be considered for development, the Board commented that low-cost housing and the proposed landscaping was programmatically incongruous for the site. The Board accepted that all of the campus resource lands are available options, citing the recent Ranch View Terrace development as an example of how the campus entry has evolved. However, they maintained there are other spaces on campus better suited for student housing and that the East Meadow site would be more suitable for other uses.

The Board felt the need to reiterate that the enduring quality of the open meadow was well understood by all and underscored that there was a storied sequence into the campus. They emphasized that “we need to start and end our discussion with those points.”

- The EIR should reflect those strong recommendations of the Design Advisory Board.

### **Impact on Adjacent Meadows**

The Draft EIR (p. 4.1-7) states: “...the Hagar site is not visible from locations in and above the northern portion of the East Meadow, such as the East Remote Parking Lot and Cowell College Plaza.”

- Will any development on the site be visible from such locations? If so, how much will be visible and from what viewpoints?

Beginning on page 4.8-13, in a discussion of SHW Impact LU-2 - Implementation of the proposed project would not result in development of land uses that are substantially incompatible with existing or planned adjacent land uses, the Draft EIR says:

With regard to concerns that the proposed project would place development pressure on the surrounding lands, it would be reasonable to assume that the meadow area west of Hagar Drive that is currently designated CRL would be developed sometime in the future. This is on account of both its land use designation which does not protect the land from development and its location adjacent to existing facilities as well as the proposed project. With respect to PL lands to the north and east of the Hagar site, it is unlikely that these lands would be

developed because these lands are valued by the Campus for their scenic value and are protected lands. *Changing the land use designation to develop any portion of these lands would require a major LRDP amendment*, which would require concurrence and approval from the Regents. Furthermore, the lands are underlain by marble and are mapped as karst hazard level 3, with pockets that are karst hazard level 4, which impose constraints on the type of development that may be placed on these lands and increases the cost of projects. *(Italics added.)*

- The campus is beginning work on updating its Long Range Development Plan; information is available at <https://lrpd.ucsc.edu>. Under these circumstances, it is premature for the EIR to conclude that : “With respect to PL [Protected Landscape] lands to the north and east of the Hagar site, it is unlikely that these lands would be developed because these lands are valued by the Campus for their scenic value...” Building on the Hagar Drive site would alter that scenic value permanently, and may make it more likely that an updated LRDP would take a more permissive view of development in that area. The EIR should acknowledge that possibility.

### **Relationship to Cowell Lime Works Historic District**

The Draft EIR in both Section 4.1 (Aesthetics) and Section 4.4 (Cultural Resources) notes the proximity of the Hagar Drive site to the Cowell Lime Works Historic District and also mentions that the Historic District is included in both the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and the California Register of Historic Resources. It was listed in 2007.

- What is the status of the management plan drafted at the time of NRHP listing? Do any of its requirements or guidelines affect the Hagar Drive site proposal?
- The *Physical Design Framework* (p. 59) includes among its Guidelines for Areas in and near the Historic District: “Preserve significant vistas in order to retain the historic landscape character. Retain the architectural character and spatial relationships among buildings and features that have a high degree of historic integrity.” This guideline clearly applies to the Hagar Drive site and should be added to those listed in Section 4.1.3.2 - REGULATORY CONSIDERATIONS - Regional and Local Plans (pp. 4.1-9 ff.) and used to evaluate the consistency of the proposed project with the guidelines and requirements of the *Physical Design Framework*.

## **PROJECT ALTERNATIVES**

### **5.4.1 - ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT NOT EVALUATED IN DETAIL - Heller Site and East Campus Infill Alternative**

The DEIR excluded the Heller/East Campus Infill alternative from further consideration “...due to a very high per bed cost of construction on a site underlain by karst as well as determination made by the Campus that locating unaffiliated housing in an area surrounded by housing affiliated with colleges was not desirable.”

May 9, 2018

While the DEIR is correct in asserting that the per bed cost of construction was high, due in large part to the site's complex karst geology, as well as its stormwater management requirements and limited working area, the project almost proceeded to construction. It was not canceled until (1) the design had been approved and its EIR certified by the Regents in July 2009, (2) a construction manager/general contractor had been selected and placed under contract and (3) bids had been received on five subcontract packages: structural steel and miscellaneous steel, abatement and demolition, earthwork, drilled concrete piers, and concrete, representing 20% to 25% of the total construction budget. Those bids were 19% below budget, continuing a downward trend in anticipated project construction costs; a series of cost estimates prepared for the executive architect between October 2008 and July 2009 showed a steady decline in projected costs, due both to cost efficiencies incorporated into the evolving design by the architect and to declining construction costs throughout northern California.

It was only at that point that the campus chose not to proceed. It has always been my understanding that this was due to concerns resulting from the economic downturn following the 2008-9 subprime mortgage crisis and related stock market decline. There was considerable uncertainty about what effect the downturn would have on UCSC's enrollment and on campus housing occupancy. Simply put, there was concern that the campus would build nearly 600 new beds and then not be able to fill them.

Likewise, I have never heard that a determination had been made that "locating unaffiliated housing in an area surrounded by housing affiliated with colleges was not desirable." In fact, locating housing near existing colleges was anticipated by the 2005 LRDP which states that "The campus will develop additional infill housing in or near existing colleges where appropriate. New infill housing will be affiliated with the adjacent residential college if possible, and will likely be apartment-style." (2005 LRDP, p. 72) Similarly, the Regents Item concerning project budget approval prepared for the March 2009 Regents meeting states: "The project design would create a social and physical link between the Crown-Merrill Apartments and Crown and Merrill Colleges." At that point adjacency to the existing colleges was clearly seen as desirable.

Given that (1) the proposed site is already developed and is served by utilities, (2) Regental project design approval and EIR certification has been completed, and (3) construction documents are complete or nearly complete, the Heller Site and East Campus Infill Alternative is at least as feasible as Alternative 4 (the Heller Site and North Remote Site Development Alternative) and should be evaluated more thoroughly.

### **5.6.2 - Alternative 2: Reduced Project Alternative**

In its discussion of the Reduced Project Alternative, the DEIR states that "...this alternative would not achieve the University's objectives of providing the number of beds needed to meet the terms of the Settlement Agreement..." (DEIR, p. 5.0-25) This is contradicted by the figures presented in Table 3.0-5 - UCSC Student Housing Summary

Senior Environmental Planner Alisa Klaus  
May 9, 2018

(DEIR, pp. 3.0-31) which shows 10,125 student beds projected by the Settlement Agreement and 11,512 student beds of University-controlled housing by 2023 if the Student Housing West project is completed as proposed. The Reduced Project Alternative proposes to reduce the student bed count by about 900 beds, resulting in a net bed count of 10,612 by 2023, which is about 500 beds more than required by the Settlement Agreement. Please clarify.

#### **5.6.4 - Alternative 4: Heller Site and North Remote Site Development Alternative**

Adoption of this alternative would reduce the height of the buildings on the Heller site to five or six stories, likely bringing their rooflines well below the tree line behind them, thus conforming to the design guideline for Forest Edge that appears in both the Physical Design Framework and the Student Housing West Design Guidelines: "Consider the visual continuity of the forest edge as seen from a distance when designing buildings there. Maintain heights of buildings and infrastructure elements significantly below the tree line."

In conclusion, the additional beds to be provided by the Student Housing West project will benefit both the campus and the local community. Public discussion of the project to date has paid too little attention to its serious commitment to sustainability and triple net zero goals incorporated into the project's design, which fits so well with the campus's values and traditions, but the discussion of a variety of alternatives to the current configuration has the potential to be both healthy and productive. I urge the campus to give it serious attention: UCSC deserves no less.

Sincerely yours,



Frank Zwart, FAIA, FAUA  
Campus Architect Emeritus  
University of California, Santa Cruz



## **NOTES FOR DESIGN ADVISORY BOARD**

**University of California Santa Cruz**

Wednesday Nov 1, 2017

**11:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.**

Physical Planning & Construction Conference Room 151 (Barn G)

CHAIR: Richard Fernau

Developer: Capstone Development Partners (HED, Architects of Record; Walker Macy, Landscape; Sundt Construction)

Board: Richard Fernau, Tito Patri

### **Student Housing West Public-Private Partnership Development**

Capstone briefly introduced their firm's background and portfolio of past and current projects. The team further reiterated their approach and commitment of affordability for students as the primary goal of the Student Housing West Project and to deliver beds that are 1.5-3% lower than UC's targeted goal.

The project's sustainability goals are triple-net zero; Capstone believes that it is very achievable and aims to set a new standard for the campus with this project.

Discussion raised the issue of connectivity of the new development to the existing residential colleges in identity and feeling.

Issues to consider were integration of vegetation, the beautiful forest edge, view shed, forested environment, and the meadow, adding habitat value, views from Heller Drive and scale of existing trees to the new buildings.

Capstone introduced the RFP submission scheme and the current 'hybrid' proposal. The original plan comprised of taller buildings along the forest edge; these were broken up to allow students to flow between as well as under breezeways of the buildings.

Public spaces were organized around the end points of the buildings including the Marketplace, Wellness and the Student Commons. Family Student Housing is organized as a stepped terrace. Distributed Commons spaces throughout the development will be important for student living.

The Board asked if the team had considered siting denser, taller buildings against the forest edge. The proposed buildings are seven levels compared to six levels at Porter Residence Halls.

The team explained the reduced site boundary because of the dispersal habitat of the protected red-legged frog species.

The Board noted the need for more porosity/perforation through the buildings. They've noticed that the students have already taken possession of a number of natural assets out there, eg, an existing rock outcrop as a contemplative space. Is there any possibility of working these existing resources into the design?

The Board commented that the earlier concept was stronger as there was a greater interface between the forest and the meadow. The new version appears to have negated that feature. The slope of the meadow should be checked as it appears naturally to slope away from Heller. The proposed massing may be counter-intuitive to what is actually out there. The pedestrian spine could be closed off more than is desired. The Board reiterated that porosity through the buildings is very important. Getting an arborist to be involved early to initiate a tree survey was encouraged.

The Board noted that all the scheme variations displayed a number of small open spaces in the middle and asked whether instead a larger gathering space had been considered. A big landscape move is encouraged as the campus does not have an opportunity to develop at this scale.

The Board suggested that the buildings need not be hidden. As a main entry, it is expected to make a big statement. The original concept was an institution at the edge of the forest; it does not necessarily mean that it is not seen. If there is a way to increase square footage into one building, in order to free up more open space, it would be desirable.

The Board recognized that it would be important for the development to be a destination place for the residents as well as other students across the campus. Recognizing that this development will be a big change, the team was encouraged to do less with the landscape. Do more with less and not overdo it. What generally looks good in plan does not necessarily translate well experientially in the landscape.

The team presented some ideas for elevation treatments of the buildings. The Board suggested Porter Residence Halls as a good example of having a non-institutional quality to the buildings. This feature is unique to the campus and should be important to maintain. The challenge is to break down the scale and Porter has been a successful example. The Board remarked that there were too many types of elevations. Limit to three. Type B was not a good solution. The weathering possibility is desirable, mixing with other metals. Use window frames for more relief and create some articulation with the middle scale.

Capstone will return at a later date to present the proposed Family Student Housing development on the Hagar site. The date for presenting the SHW 50% Schematic Design will also be determined pending finalization of the project schedule.

*The meeting adjourned at 1.30pm.*

**NOTES FOR DESIGN ADVISORY BOARD**

**University of California Santa Cruz**

Wednesday Dec 6, 2017

**12:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.**

Physical Planning & Construction Conference Room 151 (Barn G)

CHAIR: Tito Patri

Developer Team (SHW Project): Capstone Development Partners (HED, Architects of Record;  
Walker Macy, Landscape; Sundt Construction)

Consultant Team (LRDP): Page, Planning Consultants

Board: Richard Fernau, Tito Patri

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**Student Housing West Public-Private Partnership Development 50% Schematic Design Review**  
A presentation was given on the 50% schematic design. The current site plan was revised in response to comments from the DAB at the November meeting, incorporating larger open spaces, simplifying the massing, and adding height to the western buildings. The “big idea” in the site planning maintains the forest edge on the west and allows the meadow to wrap into the complex from the east.

The Board inquired about how the massing is perceived from Heller Drive, and noted that it's not a great sin if you see a ten story building, as this fits within the philosophy of the campus. Color, texture, shadowing can make that sort of image acceptable.

The Board asked about the programming and grading at the southern courtyard. Capstone described the terraced amphitheater seating and the hub, which includes programs accessible to all, not just the residents. The pedestrian connection to the existing bridge is still being studied with regard to grade.

The Board expressed concern about the substantial change in grade between the undergrad site and the graduate community, buffered by a large parking lot. They suggested bringing some of the spirit of the planning of the undergrad community down to the graduate community, namely the landscaping, pedestrian circulation, and sense of anticipation and arrival. They wondered aloud what would draw people there, and what opportunities there might be to conceal or minimize the parking lot. The Board noted that the extensive grading required is not in the tradition of the campus and its design principles, and suggested studying the parking to the south of the grad buildings instead. They felt the extreme grading created a more pronounced cultural divide than was necessary. The consultants noted that trees will be used to screen the parking lot.

The board asked about the sequence of pedestrian circulation from north to south and access to views – of both the natural environment and the bay at the south end. The board thought the siting of the hub and gathering spaces at the south end were a missed opportunity and should take advantage of both light and views. There was discussion about the size and scale of the breezeways and if they were adequately contributing to the circulation concepts and design intent.

The Board asked if the team had studied higher density and a smaller footprint for the graduate program, how trees could help screen the parking lot, and how materiality and texture will affect the grad building massing. The design team had not yet studied materials for the graduate buildings.

The Board asked how a sense of verticality could be used, in both open spaces with redwood trees and in building massing with double height spaces, to punctuate open space and break up building massing. A discussion took place about using the ends of buildings as common space, in order to contribute to the overall open nature of the complex and democratization of views. At the moment the ends are units with primarily opaque walls on the exterior; it is a missed opportunity, where instead the ends could act as beacons of light.

The consultants presented the material palette concepts and façade patterns. The Board noted that there should be something on the building, in a modern vocabulary, to denote the top, other than PV panels.

### Summary Recommendations

- Emphasize the view corridors by allowing them to cut through entire complex.
- Consider shifting building to
  - Minimize retaining walls where possible
  - Obtain southerly open space
  - Make more of a gateway by moving buildings six and seven
- Study the massing
  - Not only looking at finishes and materials for variety, but to reflect program and function within
  - Consider how materials can reinforce the section, by creating a vertical reading on the façade.
  - Consider the idea of base, body, and head in the façade of the building, via a modern vocabulary.
  -

*The meeting adjourned at 3pm.*

## NOTES FOR DESIGN ADVISORY BOARD

### University of California Santa Cruz

Monday, February 26, 2017

Physical Planning & Construction Conference Room 151 (Barn G)

CHAIR: Richard Fernau

Board: Richard Fernau, Louise Mozingo, Tito Patri (Absent)

9:30am *Family Student Housing - Introduction through 100% Schematic Design*

**UCSC Traci Ferdolage, AVC, PPDO**

**Developer Capstone Development Partners (Katterra, Building Technology;  
Walker Macy, Landscape)**

Capstone introduced the Family Student Housing (FSH) development proposed at the site where Hagar and Coolidge Drives intersect, explaining that the project is on an exceedingly fast schedule, with Design /CEQA approval targeted for July 2018, and construction starting immediately following the public appeal period. This project phase is currently at 100% Schematic Design.

Some of the site planning decisions are currently informed by conditions related to the CEQA review, including the storm water drainage design strategy, the proximity of the development to an existing sinkhole feature and an attempt to maintain the delicate balance of forging a new living community yet complementing the existing natural environment. Walker Macy explained that some intrusive cuts may be necessary to achieve a universally accessible site, but that has yet to be determined. There is an overall 80-foot drop from the top to the bottom of the Hagar site.

The primary access to FSH will be off Hagar Drive, with a second entry planned off of Coolidge Drive. An Early Education Center (EEC) will be also be developed at FSH but has yet to be designed. Capstone is partnering with Katterra, a technology company that efficiently fabricates workforce housing, as the cost-effective solution to design and deliver the FSH units. These will be structural components that are manufactured and assembled offsite to expedite construction. On their visits to the campus, Katterra is keenly aware of the sense of importance in the sequence of approach from the campus's historical district to the proposed site.

Katterra explained the unit plans and how the schemes have evolved. One design strategy was to create two-foot 'slips' in plan and section to give some articulation and depth to the building profiles. For exterior finishes, cementitious panels are being considered in reference to the natural limestone formations commonly found on campus. Katterra acknowledged that the units with the side walls exposed to Coolidge Drive currently look starkly opaque with limited openings, which would be a problem when it's in full view. They are looking at some options to articulate that elevation.

The Board raised a collective concern on the noticeable lack of interior and exterior storage amenities for the residents. In particular, as the project is sited prominently at the gateway to the

campus, unkempt personal property left out in the open would be visible from the main road. Capstone acknowledged that while this being a concern, they also have to balance cost against program needs as FSH is currently the most subsidized component of the entire Student Housing West development. At 140 units currently, the program is very compacted. The Board commented that the designers should look at screening opportunities, either using low-screens, planting, or offsetting the public-private transition areas by a couple of feet.

The Board noted that the grading shown around the perimeter looks very infrastructure-like and imposing; it is currently proposed at a 4:1 slope which is similar to a typical CALTRANS embankment standard. They recommend that the slope be eased considerably, both to better align with the existing natural grades of the meadow and to render the approach to the Hagar / Coolidge intersection as more welcoming and inviting. The corner of Hagar and Coolidge presents an iconic view of the entire development, and acts as a gateway to the larger campus itself.

The Board also queried if it was feasible to create two ADA zones, instead of a single one across the site, to complement more of the existing site gradient. Walker Macy explained that the goal was to achieve accessibility across the entire development.

The Board also recommended considering another location for the maintenance building to minimize the amount of cut and fill needed to conceal the structure. They thought that it could be given a unique architecture treatment to complement the history of the campus.

The Board pointed out that one of the ways to look less like a developed compound is to “expand the landscape beyond the boundary, let the trees drift off-site, which will help the site considerably.” The use of a clever tree pattern could also help to mitigate the elevation changes and more landscaping on the inside of the walkway paths is highly encouraged. Some figurative attention should also be given to the EEC. Another observation was that the scale of the Commons open spaces “feel too big.” It would allow more give in the site plan to scale down the open spaces.

On the selection of materials, the Board indicated that dark and absorptive colors would be preferable to a bright palette and durability would be a strong consideration. The use of weathered steel panels could also be considered.

The Board also noted that the child care center siting would be extremely important, and asked how it would relate to the housing project aesthetically.

In conclusion, the Board wanted to be recorded that they are unanimously opposed to the selection of this site for the FSH development. They questioned what alternative sites had been evaluated and expressed concerns that the low-density program, located at such an iconic gateway intersection, undermines the careful approach and purposefulness of campus planning, and were alarmed by the potentially inhospitable interruption to the visual character of the open meadow in that specific location.

An absent Board member, Tito Patri, submitted his written comments on February 24th in advance of the DAB presentation and requested it to be added to the meeting notes:

1. This is the University of California and this campus was established with the uniqueness of this overall site very much in mind - this special example of the ecosystems and geomorphology of the California Coast, as an integral part of its mission. The idea of the colleges at the edge of the forest, keeping these very meadows (ancient sea terraces) free of development and forever "readable" for educational purposes, is at the core of that mission. This FSH project will signal that it's OK to start filling in the rest of the meadow with more development. With up to 20-foot cuts and 15-foot fills it will permanently disrupt the visual understanding of the terrace formation. This will be especially prominent because when approaching the upper campus along Hagar the meadow terraces are seen as the skyline because of the drop-off to the east. I'm not even touching on the stylistic disruption of the prefab architecture. Planting native grasses on these steep slopes will not mask this error. Nor will trees popping up in the middle of the meadow designed to hide these buildings.

2. A preferable site would be downslope of Ranch View Terraces, west of the campus entrance, an area that is no longer "virgin" and in the low karst hazard category as opposed to the Hagar site which is in the moderate karst hazard category. Development there if sited properly and with "suburban" tree patterns would reflect the privately developed properties across Empire Grade. Another alternative would be to straddle Hagar and place some units close to the residential (faculty) houses to the south. These would then be in area zoned as Employee Housing - why not FSH?

3. The project's extensive road circulation looks as though it is driven by fire department requirements and the by(sic) extensive cost saving e(sic) overall site grading and flat building sites. Instead of creating an island of development smack in the middle of the view, buildings could follow Hagar (perhaps there is even room on the south side of Hagar) and more importantly should follow the existing slope. Exclusive fire department access could be provided off of Hagar cutting down on the amount of interior roads. This would tie the project more closely with the faculty residential area to the south. In fact the project could be integrated with the edges of that development so it appears as an extension of it. The open space east of our parking area also comes to mind (also zoned as EH).

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

## **NOTES FOR DESIGN ADVISORY BOARD**

**University of California, Santa Cruz**

**Monday March 26, 2018**

**9.30am – 12.00pm**

**PPDO Large Conference Room 151**

**CHAIR: Tito Patri**

DAB Members: Richard Fernau, Louise Mazingo, Tito Patri

### Capstone Development Partners

Bruce McKee – Capstone Partners

Jason Jones – Capstone Partners

Mike Zilis – Walker Macy Landscape Architects

Cameron Hall - Katerra

Alyse Winterscheid – Katerra

Chad Zettle - Katerra

### UC Santa Cruz

Traci Ferdolage – AVC, Physical Planning, Development and Operations

Felix Ang – Campus Architect, PPDO

Jolie Kerns – Interim Campus Planner, PPDO

Adam Shaw – UCSC Project Management Consultant

Shannon Percy – UCSC Project Management Consultant

### Site Context and Landscape Strategy

Walker Macy began with a contextual overview of the project area, describing the surrounding meadow landscape procession through the campus historic district before arriving at the Hagar Drive site. The idea was to conceptually knit the forested vegetation at the campus edge into the housing project by extending the tree vegetation from across Hagar Drive.

Taking cues from past LRDP development ideas and also from existing embankment slopes between 2:1 and 4:1, Capstone felt the grading plan has been modified adequately to address the Board's concerns from the last presentation. The proposed slopes now are flatter and more undulating compared to CALTRANS standards, providing a more dramatic edge condition and suggesting a forested landscape that has been naturally restored from its cattle-grazing history.

Some of the revised landscape design features include accessibility across the entire site; blending in the northern contours and at the same time, greatly reducing the fill on the southern edge to achieve slopes at gradients between 5:1 and 6:1. The palette for the plant material are selected to be native and climate-adaptive.

Within the site, the two central commons have been tightened in scale to intensify their use. The maintenance shed has been tucked down, reducing the severe grading cut that



was last presented. Capstone felt that a lot of work has been done to connect the units to the two central commons. Two exterior renderings were shown: one from the commons looking south and another from a parking row looking up north.

The perspective renderings shown illustrated vegetation of a twenty-year maturity. By comparison, the project's Environmental Impact Report renderings indicate five year-old vegetation.

Attention has also been given to how views open and close in the development. Slides with 'before' and 'after' views down Hagar Drive attempt to illustrate the housing units have been tucked in considerably to maintain views of the bay. The Board disagreed with Capstone that the buildings have been sited appropriately to remain hidden.

### **Architecture and Material Selection**

For the residential buildings, Katerra briefly presented two facade options for the exterior: a vertically continuous black-coated metal panel system extending to the roof alternating with enhanced wood panels; a second option of either cementitious panels or cement plaster system in lieu of the metal panels. Precast deck slabs and metal channel stair stringers are currently explored as structural possibilities. Tipping Engineers are engineers of record for the structural foundation, while Katerra is responsible for the super-structure.

PPDO and the Board jointly noted that the option which alternated contrasting materials that extended from ground to the roofline, read more texturally at a larger scale. This was a critical distinction given that the building exterior will be viewed largely from a distance and was preferable to the simple cementitious form with punched fenestrations.

Compared to the lighter values presented at the last presentation, the material palette presented was revised to earth tones that were more aligned with the Physical Design Framework guidelines. Following comments from the last presentation, Katerra introduced more asymmetry to the plans, each module having a 2-foot offset with a 10-foot separation between the pairs. Clerestory translucent windows have also been added to the bathrooms and exterior storage units are being studied. Katerra will explore further locations for storage areas on the upper level units.

The rooftop photovoltaic panels are currently designed as low-tilt; Katerra is collaborating with Puttnam Infrastructure to configure the arrays and possibly, create roof overhangs. 140 parking spaces are being considered for the residential portion and up to 40 for the childcare facility. A traffic study for the Environmental Impact Report is currently under review, which will inform the Hagar Drive and Coolidge Drive intersection, but more study is needed for a 2nd Coolidge Drive exit.

The Board commented that the site is on a moderate karst hazard zone. Capstone noted that close to 100 borings have been made so far. The building foundation method would

likely comprise of 12” to 18” mat slabs over lime-treated soil with engineered fill. At this time, the geotechnical consultant is studying the general massing and the weight of the doline fill, which may potentially erode the existing geology.

Walker Macy noted the trash enclosure design is being incorporated into the next design review.

### **Comments on Overall Planning Strategy**

The Board felt that the strategy of contour treatments, slope modifications, scale reduction of the interior commons and the drift of trees across the Hagar landscape have made the best of a difficult situation. Even then, the Board reiterated that they were still opposed to the selected site and felt that the campus was “making a big mistake.” They also strongly urged for an analysis of alternative sites.

The Board further questioned whether the plant varieties, while visually pleasing, were child-appropriate as the selection appeared too delicate and possibly even, challenging to maintain over time. At present, Capstone Management Partners are contracted to manage the landscape; details on the custodial and grounds services are being worked out. The Board felt the overall landscape looked very suburban and Capstone agreed it would not be desirable to rely solely on maintenance to protect the landscape. The Board felt the issue of maintenance is a priority.

While Capstone observed that past LRDP plans, including Thomas Church in 1963, had suggested the East Meadow to be considered for development, the Board commented that low-cost housing and the proposed landscaping was programmatically incongruous for the site. The Board accepted that all of the campus resource lands are available options, citing the recent Ranch View Terrace development as an example of how the campus entry has evolved. However, they maintained there are other spaces on campus better suited for student housing and that the East Meadow site would be more suitable for other uses.

The Board advised the team to treat the entire area across Hagar to Jordan Gulch as one single zone. Capstone agreed the landscape design may have been too contained and they will consider letting the landscape reach out further beyond the limit of work. The Board would like the site plan to be brought back for more improvement.

The Board felt the need to reiterate that the enduring quality of the open meadow was well understood by all and underscored that there was a storied sequence into the campus. They emphasized that “we need to start and end our discussion with those points.”

### **Early Education Center**

The Board expressed concern that design for the Early Education Center (EEC) is still pending while the rest of the housing development has already been designed. Capstone clarified that the initial siting of the EEC dictated the planning of the housing development, not the other way around. They assured there will be some latitude to move the EEC around within its boundary limit. Capstone has retained the services of Indigo Architects as designers of the EEC, noting that the principal, John Hammond, had studied with Thomas Church at UC Berkeley.

The EEC will be approximately 13,000 SF and the proposed outdoor space will double that area; the childcare program is expected to serve 140 children and will be available to the families of all staff and faculty on campus, not just the immediate neighborhood. The Board stressed the important relationship between the interior and exterior programs and identified an opportunity for good architecture.

### **Adjourn**

The meeting ended at 12.00pm. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 16.