



## **SOSNA Architectural Review Committee (ARC)**

February 12, 2014

Meeting Notes and Recommendations

### ARC Members Present:

- Christopher Stromberg (Chair): Principal at S2 Design & Adjunct Architecture Faculty Temple University
- Andrew Svekla: Senior Planning and Design Analyst at DVRPC
- James Templeton: Director of Architectural Services at Temple University
- Michael Burlando: Project Manager at Columbus Construction
- Dane Danielson: Senior Associate at STPCx Commissioning
- Nicole Hermo: Founding Principal Primer Design Group
- Mark Sanderson: Principal at DIGSAU Architects
- Jeff Pastva: Project Architect at JDavis Architects

### Zoning Committee Members Present:

- Greg Lugones (Chair)
- Charles Williams: Senior Structural Engineer at The Burns Group
- Murray Spencer: McIntyre Capron & Associates P.C.

### **Meeting Highlights:**

- *Phase I "Café" Space:* Space needs more definition, must handle 2000 employees and public.
- *Trail Access:* SOSNA dismayed trail bridge removed from Phase I; request re-inclusion.
- *Schuylkill Avenue Entrance:* No activation on Bainbridge Place.
- *The Tower:* Elegant overall design but request differentiation of façade articulation.
- *Access for all modes:* Extensive planning needed for SEPTA, bikes, bike share, and peds.
- *Drop-off:* Serious concerns of additional curb cut on SSB and drop-off lane as cut-thru.
- *West wall along tracks:* Veil this sizable wall somehow so it is not a magnet for graffiti.
- *27th and South:* Need renderings of what peds crossing SSB at 27<sup>th</sup>/South will see.
- *27th and South Retail:* Highly visible corner of the project needs active retail, not parking.
- *Green screens:* Over-reliance on these screens.
- *Garage roof:* Activate roof of garage during Phase 1.

### **General Comments:**

We are extremely excited and enthusiastic about this incredible project coming to our neighborhood and want nothing more than to be supportive in any way we can. However, when asked about the many important elements of the design (the café, the commercial space, the garage, Phase 2, 3, 4, etc.) the design team often responded with "we're just not there yet" and offered little certainty about the future plans for these elements. We understand the complexity of a multi-phase project of this scale but we also have tremendous confidence in the design team's experience and their ability to illuminate some

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of the real possibilities. As one can imagine, it's difficult to fully support Phase 1 (which is inevitably tied to future Phases) when so many questions are left unanswered.

The previously unknown jump from 1000 to 2000 employees in Phase 1 is troubling. We continue to be extremely concerned with the traffic congestion that will come to this area and would strongly suggest exploring alternate (non-individual automobile) ways to access the site such as remote lots with shuttle buses, etc.

## **Recommendations:**

### Phase I Tower:

- Phase I "Café" Space - 3,500 SF:
  - Space needs more definition - still unanswered questions about total square footage, how much of space is seating in the lobby and how much is for "café/restaurant" operations.
  - Space should be bigger to handle traffic from 2,000 employees and public
  - Use should be active morning, noon, night 7-days a week.
  - Include windows/doors along promenade side of space
  - World-class restaurateur/operator: Attracting world-class researchers to this campus requires a world-class operator who can provide for the 2,000 people (+ public) who will eventually work here.
  
- Trail Access:
  - ARC dismayed to learn the access bridge and stair to trail is not going to be included in Phase I after being represented as such in all previous meetings.
  - Request trail access be provided as part of Phase I.
  
- Schuylkill Avenue Entrance:
  - Lack of activation along Bainbridge
  
- The Tower:
  - We feel the overall design of the tower is elegant with nice proportions but is feeling a bit like a spec office building rather than a world class institution. We suggested the design team consider differentiating the articulation on the various facades of the building relative to their cardinal directions. For example, sun-shading components on the south side would help reduce heat gain as well as offer a nice educational opportunity for expressive sustainable design on this gateway building.
  - Density of façade articulation near the base appears somewhat impenetrable. Would like to see more transparency.
  - The roof slopes slightly in elevation but it's very subtle. We feel it will never be noticed. This effect may have more impact by increasing the slope.

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Phase I Traffic/Access:

- Access for all modes:
  - Include Route 40 bus stop and LUCY stop at new stop light on SSB.
  - Exterior bike parking
  - Space for bike share
  - Consider pedestrian commuters who will walk through the site to-and-from work in University City
- Drop-off:
  - Continued worries about drop-off lane along east edge being used as a cut-through
  - Two curb-cuts into South Street Bridge
- West wall along tracks:
  - We feel the 30' tall by 800' long wall along the CSX tracks, which is incredibly visible from the bridge and the expressway, will end up being a graffiti covered concrete wall in their proposal. As long as there's a crash wall in place, we believe CSX would allow a different façade or "veil" in front.

Parking Garage:

- 27th and South:
  - Need to see what the pedestrian crossing SSB experiences at 27<sup>th</sup> and South corner of the garage building - CHOP asked to provide renderings from this perspective
  - Interaction along SSB at pedestrian level should not simply be a green-screened parking garage
- Retail:
  - The Phase 1 build-out on the corner of South & 27<sup>th</sup> Streets, the most visible element to the neighborhood at street level (which could exist without the Phase 2 building above for 5-15 years,) is a concrete parking garage. The garage rises 17' at the corner and 29' down Schuylkill Ave. It represents several hundred linear feet of blank wall. Commercial space on this corner is essential and the development team implied it was feasible. Put the Au Bon Pain here!.
  - Currently a place-holder of additional parking spaces before becoming "Program" space for Phase 2 - use it as retail now. May need to renegotiate floors heights/levels to make it work.
- Green screens:
  - Over-reliance on simply green-screening every wall of the parking garage, especially on drop-off aisle and South Street sides.
  - Needs more life than vines...which won't grow well on the visually prominent east and north walls of the garage.

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- Garage roof:
  - Activate the roof of the garage off the South Street Plaza with temporary structure to house retail activities - test the waters!
  - Do not make this space like Penn's Landing - great views but nothing to do.
  - Consider erecting a structure accessible at grade off the Plaza and farm out operations to a restaurateur, retailer, PHS pop-up, food trucks, etc.