



Williamsburg
Unitarian Universalists



Exterior Spaces Small Group Meeting Notes

February 25, 2014

General Thoughts on Site/Landscaping/Exterior Space

- Maintain as much green space as we can, including “wild” green space – untouched land should be preserved
- Organic space – existing development is “sharp” – more natural, organic spaces, shapes that address the land/site
- Find a way to enjoy wild green space – trails, enjoyment of nature
- Utilize native plants
- Overall master plan/planting plan should have future plants and existing – remove/replace non-native plants
- Provide a natural sanctuary for wildlife, animals
- Water feature? Possible Japanese garden – visual and audio senses
- The plants are for a natural experience, not just to “have”
- Outdoor spaces for members, children – inviting, welcoming
- Currently, no synthesis on-site – how to integrate it all together
- Sculpture, art throughout campus outdoors – soften site – leave something creative behind – i.e., downtown Denver – ownership, conveys an image to community about who WUU is – yet, still cohesive to site (or does it convey diversity?)
 - Alternatively, could be one outdoor signature piece to signify who WUU is – sculpture, etc.
- Pathways – how to maintain fountains, paths, etc. – need to be low-maintenance for members – need to be mindful of maintaining what is designed and implemented – simplicity – self-sustaining concepts
- Permanent labyrinth – plant-based or bricks, stones, etc. – slightly smaller than Maypole
- Creek or water feature that children are encouraged, free to play in and around
- Small garden spaces for Religious Education groups to work in
- Directional signage – indicates where to go
- Make it obvious that it’s back here
- Nighttime approach – sign and front of sanctuary are lit – however, be mindful of light pollution – problem with birds at night currently
- Memorial circle needs to remain intact, in place – fountain is moveable, however – paths could possibly be altered
- *GTA would like to get input from WUU on what needs to be preserved when planning structures, development – Les can help provide this*

Exterior Aesthetics of Buildings

- There needs to be a center of activity that appears “open” all day, unlike sanctuary closed now, offices open across the campus – life in the building
- Replicate architectural style – conceptually cohesive – worship center is not the main focus – logical approach to activities center, fellowship, etc.
- Current covered entrance creates a welcoming approach – maintain this concept
- Logical entrance, layout of complex – make it obvious where to go when approaching
- Connect “campus” building layout with covered walks, ADA compliant

Outdoor Worship/Programs

- Outdoor amphitheater – how much room? Seating in-ground or elevated – music program?
- Worship service – circular space – connection with earth and four cardinal directions – changes in season
- Seating for May Day celebration – about 100 people
- Used to have fire pit
- Flat multi-purpose area – ceremonies, outdoor weddings, worship service, Maypole (40’ diameter with no obstructions in that circle, can go barefoot), spaces for camping (Navigators), labyrinth, picnics – immediately accessible to the church to allow connection, flow between sanctuary and outdoors – could accommodate tent (built-in utilities – power and water)

Parking

- Reduced pedestrian-traffic mix
- Better suit campus layout
- Safety issues for children currently
- Consolidate parking?
- View at front of church is currently parking lot – what about green space instead?
- Green parking – permeable parking pavers, driveable grass (maintenance)
- JCC requirement “underparks” – currently, WUU is overparked, parking at Parker, Fahs House, people leave if can’t park
- 104 parking spaces – plan for 200 attendees in 5 years
- Need current count for a “large event” Sunday/day
- About 150 spaces
- Having green space at current primary parking – expensive to remove asphalt, regenerate green
- What is the cutoff that dictates needing/requiring a turnoff from Ironbound Road? Traffic study
- Ironbound Road plans – JCC – sidewalk? Curb? Widening? What would be required of WUU?

Neighbors

- Try to keep buffers, privacy from neighbors – away from street
- Natural fences (preferred) to separate from neighbors
- BMP is fenced off per insurance carrier's request, JCC requirement
- Access across boundary to school – path? Can WUU connect to that? Park and bike or walk from school? Bike racks...

Site/Grounds/Building Maintenance

- Provide a built-in maintenance fund as part of building fund campaign to assure that proper stewardship of the complex will be upheld
- Outdoor maintenance storage – outbuilding? Accessed from outdoors?
- Be mindful of delta between different concepts – maintenance, building systems – need current operating costs and maintenance budgets for a comparison

Income generating options

- What income could be generated to increase use of buildings to constant use instead of just on Sundays?
- Fahs as a preschool, or preschool elsewhere – maintenance cost goes up, but viable income
- Renting facility for various uses (enhanced facilities help this)
- Educational uses – classroom spaces – Head Start or preschool
- Multi-use of church property – examples?
- Coffeehouse – music, concerts
- Chapel for special events
- Keep in mind the tradeoff of social justice work, which is not an income generator
- Stay focused on serving the mission first, rather than revenue first – build connections

Sustainability

- Sustainability – long-term life cycles of systems
- Richmond UU – over 40% of renovation cost was spent on sustainable building technologies
- What impact would solar harvesting have on budget? Payoff, etc.
- Congregational workshop – present green technology options, also, what features WUU considers that could be costly energy/sustainability wise
- Well-insulated buildings are very efficient, biggest “bang for your buck”