February 10, 2016

Memo to File: CSE II Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement

FROM: Jan Arntz – SEPA Responsible Official

The attached letter and response are included in the environmental documentation for the above referenced project.

In addition, the Final SEIS identified the letter from John Gaines as comments from CUCAC. This is an incorrect reference. CUCAC did not take an action; his letter is in support of his own personal views.
Dear Ms. Arntz,

I am writing to express my concerns regarding the UW Draft SEIS proposals for the demolition of The Nuclear Reactor Building to make way for a new Computer Sciences annex.

I am a second-generation UW graduate, the son of architect Abner Baker, who studied in the post-war architecture program with the designers of the Reactor Building, and the nephew of four additional graduates. I possess BFA's in painting and printmaking, earned in 1992 and 1993, and I had the privilege of studying under Spencer Moseley (the artist member of the design team) during his later years in the painting department. In short, Husky purple and gold runs through my veins and I have a deep and abiding love for all topics University of Washington. It is for this reason that I find the preferred options for demolition or obfuscation of More Hall Annex to be both disappointing and unacceptable.

The Reactor Building is nothing less than an exquisitely refined work of functional sculpture – one that sought to celebrate the technology that it housed, rather than hide it. It is an amazingly cohesive collaboration between several of the most respected architects and artists of its era, and it stands as a statement of pride for the experimental technology it held during an historic period of discovery and growth. I still hold fond memories of engineering tours and campus walks with my father, who couldn't wait to show off this temple of the future. To anybody aware of The University of Washington's status as an elite hub of research and engineering, the Reactor Building represented the pinnacle of what the school could achieve. Erasing this dynamic period of UW history would be a tragedy.

As I understand it, the Computer Sciences addition could be built slightly north of the preferred location, sparing the Reactor Building from an ignominious end and only requiring a one minute longer walk for students between facilities. Given the Reactor Building's heavy construction and unique shielding, it seems that it could be adaptively reused in a manner that preserves its structural grace, yet imbues it with new purpose for one of the UW's esteemed science or engineering programs. In purely pragmatic terms, it would be a tremendous waste to see the removal of that much physical material, sunk cost and intellectual energy when another location is perfectly viable.
In the world of historic preservation there is a concept that is starting to gain traction: It is much more environmentally conscious to renew an existing structure with all of its captured human energy and resources than to simply knock it down and replace it from scratch. I hope that The University of Washington will see the logic and lesson in this idea and choose to set an example of sustainability for its students and the surrounding community. The Reactor Building is too beautiful and historically important to relegate to the scrap heap of history.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter, and please consider the option of preserving this singular building.

Sincerely,

Alex O. Baker

UW Classes of 1992 and 1993

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----- End of Forwarded Message
RESPONSE TO DSEIS LETTER 42

Baker, Alex

1. The comment regarding the More Hall Annex building and opposition to building demolition is noted. Please refer to the Draft SEIS Section 3.2 and Draft SEIS Appendix B for a detailed discussion on the design history of More Hall Annex.

2. The comment regarding the historic nature of the More Hall Annex is noted. Please refer to the Draft SEIS Section 3.2 and Draft SEIS Appendix B for a detailed discussion on the design history of More Hall Annex.

3. The comment regarding placing the CSE II Building on an alternative site is noted. The Draft SEIS analyzed placing the CSE II Building on Site 14C located north of the proposed site. In regards to Site 14C, the Campus Master Plan allows for a 105 foot tall, 360,000 GSF building at this site, however, a planned expansion of the campus power plant limits the developable site area. Alternative 3 Scenarios 3.1 and 3.2 represent two fundamentally different approaches to placing a 130,000 GSF building on this site. A third approach considered, but not carried forward attempted to rotate a seven story building away from Stevens Way and the University of Washington Club but this approach did not fundamentally improve the scale of the building compared to both the HUB and the University of Washington Club. Each of the design scenarios under Alternative 3 (Scenarios 3.1 and 3.2) create positive and negative impacts; however, the scale of the new CSE II Building could be considered to be incompatible with the University of Washington Club and would block views either horizontally or vertically on the site. Please refer to Chapter 3, Section 3.2 of this Final SEIS for an expanded discussion on alternatives considered but not carried forward.

Please refer to Letter 2 (Docomomo-WEWA), comment 2, of this Final SEIS for a discussion on the process for identifying potential sites for the CSE II Project and Chapter 2 (page 2-14) for a description of the goals and objectives for the project, including creating a unified CSE II complex ("adjacency of the new structure is a necessity in meeting this goal, and a physical connection between the two buildings (i.e., a tunnel) is highly desired and should be implemented as funding becomes available").

4. The comment regarding adaptive reuse of More Hall Annex is noted. Please note that the existing More Hall Annex floorplate is relatively small at grade, and is compartmentalized by extensive concrete walls and beams at the lower level so as to be virtually unusable for academic programming as a stand-alone building. The design of the MHA and its associated plaza do not lend themselves to incorporation into adjacent structures at the above-grade level and are very challenging at the lower level. The project architect has analyzed the structure conditions of More Hall Annex and

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determined that the structural deficiencies of the cast-in-place structure would be
difficult, if not impossible, to upgrade to current codes without the loss of the iconic
imagery of the building. Please also refer to Chapter 3, Section 3.3 of this Final SEIS for a
discussion of structural improvements that would be necessary for adaptive reuse of
More Hall Annex as a stand-alone structure.

5. The comment regarding retention of More Hall Annex is noted. Please refer to Chapter
3, Section 3.2 of this Final SEIS for an updated discussion of alternatives considered of
not carried forward, including discussion on reuse of More Hall Annex.

6. The comment regarding retaining More Hall Annex is noted.