

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON
Campus Facilities Planning Committee
Agenda Item Description Form

1. **Item:** *The University Center Transformation Project Exterior Design*
2. **Requesting Department:** *Student Affairs/Student Life*
3. **Contact Names & Phone Numbers:** *Keith Kowalka, x3-5280*
4. **Presenter:** *Keith Kowalka*
5. **Recommendation/Action Requested:** *Approve Exterior Design, Material Palette*

6. Summary:

The University Center Transformation Project's complete scope and site utilization was submitted to and approved by this committee in May, 2011. Prominent features of this plan included a North Addition over the UC Underground and an East Addition which extended the UC presence along University Drive. Relocating many of the current functions to new space allowed the existing UC to undergo a complete renovation and redress of deferred maintenance and code compliance issues.

Two notable changes to preliminary planning have occurred. First, the UC underground will be completely demolished and two stories (not one) will be constructed within its footprint. This change preserves more outdoor space and allows for more design flexibility and a more efficient floor layout. Second, the UC's exterior tile wall and precast concrete panels will be completely removed or obscured. The design team felt that early schemes which partially re-clad the existing building never produced the desired effect and presented a visual identity markedly different from the look of new building elements.

Description:

The proposed renovation design of the UC satisfies the project's stated goals: overhaul of its existing drab and dated appearance; strengthening of the facility's presence along the campus' main entry, provision of public gathering, performance and dining space, visibility of student organizations, and engagement and integration with the campus community.

Double height glass volumes and terraces positioned at the arbor's south end and at the lobby of the new theater/conference center accentuate the

primary entrances to the building along University Drive and present an active and welcoming image of the facility to visitors. New balconies, bridges, and monumental stairs allow the once inward-looking box to address the adjacent buildings and outdoor spaces.

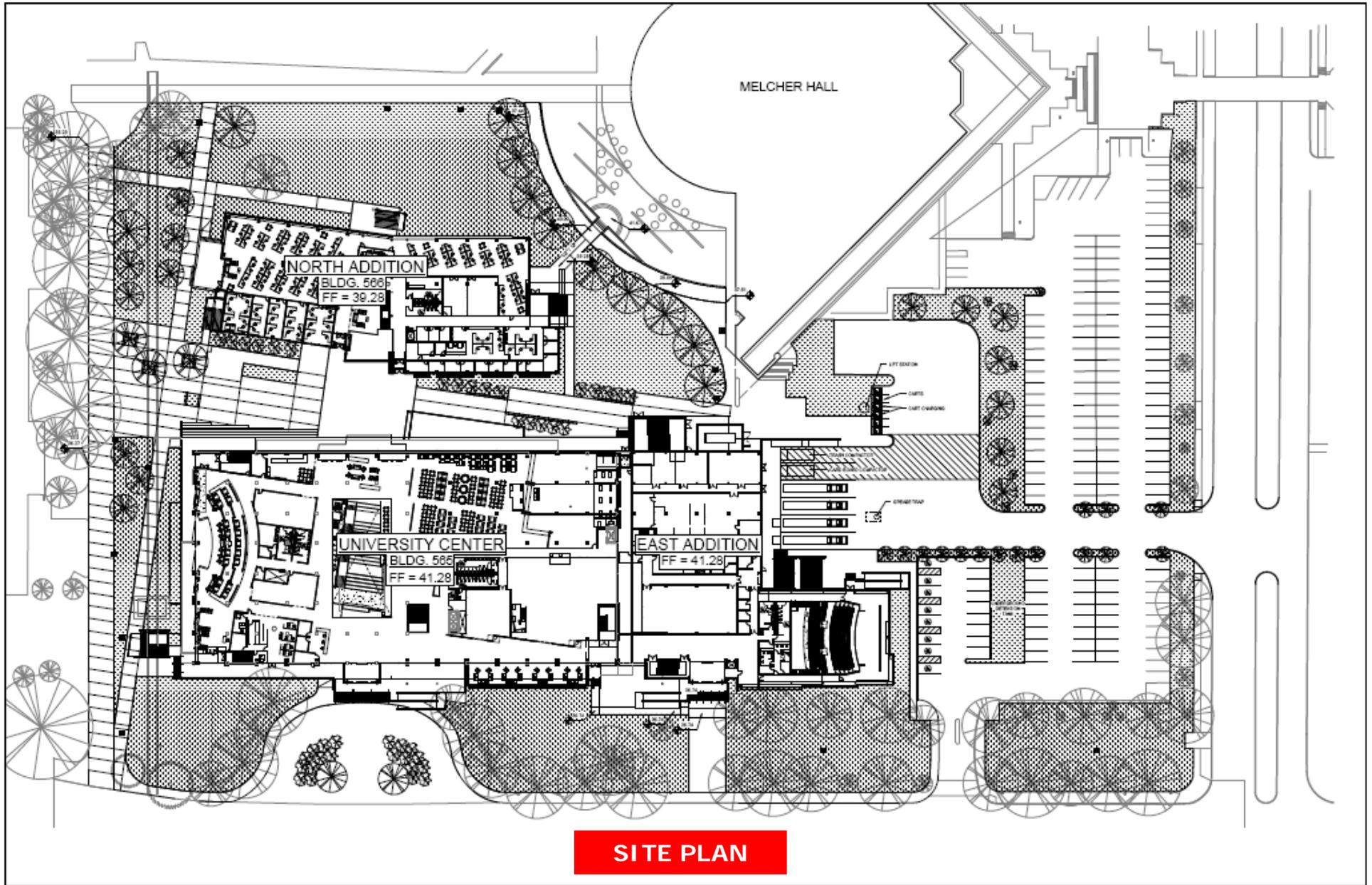
The well-traveled pedestrian and service vehicle route west of the site will be upgraded to function both as a north-south fire lane and as an attractive pedestrian promenade. Reinforcing this attractive new streetscape, a west-side plaza incorporating a stage, terraced seating, and outdoor dining space is planned. Connected to this public plaza by a shaded breezeway will be a more secluded outdoor space located between the existing UC and the North Addition.

Curtain wall glazing and metal panels will replace portions of the existing precast panels on the north, south, and west facades thereby establishing a fresh, contemporary aesthetic for the new UC. The balance of the existing precast will be concealed behind a perforated metal screen wall. Black mosaic tile at the lower level will be replaced by a combination of glass, buff-colored brick and burnished block. The extensive glazing will not only bring more natural light into the interior, but will allow the activities inside the building to be visible to the exterior.

Exterior materials include the following: campus standard buff-colored brick, shell limestone, zinc-colored aluminum panels and stainless steel screens; burnished block (matching limestone), curtainwall/mullions (matching aluminum panels); and vertical fins/banners for color and branding elements.

7. Proposed Start Date: *Upon Approval*

8. Supporting Documentation Description: *Site plans and renderings, attached*





**UNIVERSITY DRIVE
VIEW**



SOUTHWEST CORNER VIEW



WEST PROMENADE VIEW