

Westminster College - Gillmor Hall Design Review Planning Narrative

Architect: VCBO Architecture

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Architectural Narrative:

The proposed, new Florence J. Gillmor Building is a 27,850 square foot addition to the existing performing arts building that is ‘modest in size,’ but highly impactful in providing greatly needed performance spaces. Where once there was an under-utilized, outdoor amphitheater that was too steep to hold events, there will be a small triangular-shaped powerhouse of a building with the primary entrance facing the existing public sidewalk with similar architectural language to the existing adjacent building. The exterior is planned to be clad with brick masonry, metal panel, and curtain wall glazing which evokes the material language already present on campus. The current scheme includes exterior glazing which accounts for thirteen percent of the new building envelope. Although the overall building length will only be increased by about 9’ in total, the addition features massing, material, and plane changes to induce interest and intrigue.

This new addition to the Jewett Center for the Performing Arts will include a recital hall with 102 audience seats and a dance performance studio that will invigorate the music, dance and theatre programs at the College and is situated due south of the existing performing arts building.

To create a truly successful recital hall and dance studio and interest surrounding these spaces, height and volume in these spaces are necessary. Westminster College is asking the City to grant a request to add ten feet to the zoning baseline of allowable height (35 feet) to be able to achieve successful proportions for these performance spaces. This will allow the recital hall to become a performance space that will be visible from the pedestrian walkway and parking area to the east and allow it to achieve the desired acoustical properties of the space. This increase in height will also allow the performance studio located on the main floor to be visible from and connect to the pedestrian sidewalk and parking area. Currently on the campus there are taller buildings than the proposed forty-five (45’) height of the Gillmor Building, and those buildings front major city streets. This new building will be internal to the campus and will have no impact on the surrounding neighborhoods.

The total parking count for the campus exceeds the required number of stalls as defined in Title 21A, and the existing open space for the campus is nearly 20% higher than what is defined in Salt Lake’s zoning requirements.

Providing additional performance venues at the College is a win-win, and will be a tremendous asset not only to Westminster, but also to the surrounding community.

Salt Lake City Zoning Requirements:

21A.32.080: I INSTITUTIONAL DISTRICT:

A. Purpose Statement: The purpose of the I Institutional District is to regulate the development of larger public, semipublic and private institutional uses in a manner harmonious with surrounding uses. The uses regulated by this district are generally those having multiple buildings on a campus like setting. Such uses are intended to be compatible with the existing scale and intensity of the neighborhood and to enhance the character of the neighborhood. This district is appropriate in areas of the City where the applicable master plans support this type of land use.

21A.59.050: STANDARDS FOR DESIGN REVIEW:

The standards in this section apply to all applications for design review as follows:

For applications seeking modification of base zoning design standards, applicants shall demonstrate how the applicant's proposal complies with the standards for design review that are directly applicable to the design standard(s) that is proposed to be modified.

For applications that are required to go through the design review process for purposes other than a modification to a base zoning standard, the applicant shall demonstrate how the proposed project complies with each standard for design review. If an application complies with a standard in the base zoning district or with an applicable requirement in chapter 21A.37 of this title and that standard is directly related to a standard found in this section, the Planning Commission shall find that application complies with the specific standard for design review found in this section. An applicant may propose an alternative to a standard for design review provided the proposal is consistent with the intent of the standard for design review.

A. Any new development shall comply with the intent of the purpose statement of the zoning district and specific design regulations found within the zoning district in which the project is located as well as the City's adopted "urban design element" and adopted master plan policies and design guidelines governing the specific area of the proposed development. **N/A**.

B. Development shall be primarily oriented to the sidewalk, not an interior courtyard or parking lot.

1. Primary entrances shall face the public sidewalk (secondary entrances can face a parking lot).
2. Building(s) shall be sited close to the public sidewalk, following and responding to the desired development patterns of the neighborhood. **N/A**.
3. Parking shall be located within, behind, or to the side of buildings. **N/A; the parking is existing and is adjacent to the building and exists on the east and west sides of the building.**

C. Building facades shall include detailing and glass in sufficient quantities to facilitate pedestrian interest and interaction. **Provided**

1. Locate active ground floor uses at or near the public sidewalk.
2. Maximize transparency of ground floor facades.
3. Use or reinterpret traditional storefront elements like sign bands, clerestory glazing, articulation, and architectural detail at window transitions.

4. Locate outdoor dining patios, courtyards, plazas, habitable landscaped yards, and open spaces so that they have a direct visual connection to the street and outdoor spaces.

D. Large building masses shall be divided into heights and sizes that relate to human scale. **N/A**

1. Relate building scale and massing to the size and scale of existing and anticipated buildings, such as alignments with established cornice heights, building massing, step-backs and vertical emphasis.

2. Modulate the design of a larger building using a series of vertical or horizontal emphases to equate with the scale (heights and widths) of the buildings in the context and reduce the visual width or height.

3. Include secondary elements such as balconies, porches, vertical bays, belt courses, fenestration and window reveals.

4. Reflect the scale and solid-to-void ratio of windows and doors of the established character of the neighborhood or that which is desired in the master plan.

E. Building facades that exceed a combined contiguous building length of two hundred feet (200') shall include: **Understood; the addition will add less than 9' of length to the overall building**

1. Changes in vertical plane (breaks in facade);

2. Material changes; and

3. Massing changes.

F. If provided, privately-owned public spaces shall include at least three (3) of the six (6) following elements:

1. Sitting space of at least one sitting space for each two hundred fifty (250) square feet shall be included in the plaza. Seating shall be a minimum of sixteen inches (16") in height and thirty inches (30") in width. Ledge benches shall have a minimum depth of thirty inches (30"); **There is existing benches/ seating areas adjacent to the site.**

2. A mixture of areas that provide seasonal shade; **There is existing trees adjacent to the site.**

3. Trees in proportion to the space at a minimum of one tree per eight hundred (800) square feet, at least two inch (2") caliper when planted; **there is existing trees adjacent to the site. This building will be an infill of an existing grass landscaped area.**

4. Water features or public art; **There will be art located within the building.**

5. Outdoor dining areas; and **n/a**

6. Other amenities not listed above that provide a public benefit.

G. Building height shall be modified to relate to human scale and minimize negative impacts. In downtown and in the CSHBD Sugar House Business District, building height shall contribute to a distinctive City skyline.

1. Human scale:

a. Utilize stepbacks to design a building that relate to the height and scale of adjacent and nearby buildings, or where identified, goals for future scale defined in adopted master plans.

b. For buildings more than three (3) stories or buildings with vertical mixed use, compose the design of a building with distinct base, middle and top sections to reduce the sense of apparent height. **n/a**

2. Negative impacts:

- a. Modulate taller buildings vertically and horizontally so that it steps up or down to its neighbors. *n/a*
- b. Minimize shadow impacts of building height on the public realm and semi-public spaces by varying building massing. Demonstrate impact from shadows due to building height for the portions of the building that are subject to the request for additional height. *n/a*
- c. Modify tall buildings to minimize wind impacts on public and private spaces, such as the inclusion of a wind break above the first level of the building. *n/a*

3. Cornices and rooflines:

- a. Cohesiveness: Shape and define rooflines to be cohesive with the building's overall form and composition. **Proportion of new building entrance pays homage to the existing building language.**
- b. Complement Surrounding Buildings: Include roof forms that complement the rooflines of surrounding buildings.
- c. Green Roof And Roof Deck: Include a green roof and/or accessible roof deck to support a more visually compelling roof landscape and reduce solar gain, air pollution, and the amount of water entering the stormwater system. *n/a*

H. Parking and on site circulation shall be provided with an emphasis on making safe pedestrian connections to the sidewalk, transit facilities, or midblock walkway. *n/a; existing infrastructure*

I. Waste and recycling containers, mechanical equipment, storage areas, and loading docks shall be fully screened from public view and shall incorporate building materials and detailing compatible with the building being served. Service uses shall be set back from the front line of building or located within the structure. (See subsection 21A.37.050K of this title.) *n/a; existing infrastructure*

J. Signage shall emphasize the pedestrian/mass transit orientation.

1. Define specific spaces for signage that are integral to building design, such as commercial sign bands framed by a material change, columns for blade signs, or other clearly articulated band on the face of the building. **Understood; refer to rendering on main cover to see signage planned for the building**
2. Coordinate signage locations with appropriate lighting, awnings, and other projections. *n/a*
3. Coordinate sign location with landscaping to avoid conflicts. *n/a*

K. Lighting shall support pedestrian comfort and safety, neighborhood image, and dark sky goals.

1. Provide street lights as indicated in the Salt Lake City Lighting Master Plan. ***n/a – existing site lighting will remain***
2. Outdoor lighting should be designed for low-level illumination and to minimize glare and light trespass onto adjacent properties and uplighting directly to the sky. **Understood; design will comply**
3. Coordinate lighting with architecture, signage, and pedestrian circulation to accentuate significant building features, improve sign legibility, and support pedestrian comfort and safety. **Understood; design will comply**

L. Streetscape improvements shall be provided as follows: **n/a**

1. One street tree chosen from the street tree list consistent with the City's urban forestry guidelines and with the approval of the City's Urban Forester shall be placed for each thirty feet (30') of property frontage on a street. Existing street trees removed as the result of a development project shall be replaced by the developer with trees approved by the City's Urban Forester.
2. Hardscape (paving material) shall be utilized to differentiate privately-owned public spaces from public spaces. Hardscape for public sidewalks shall follow applicable design standards. Permitted materials for privately-owned public spaces shall meet the following standards:
 - a. Use materials that are durable (withstand wear, pressure, damage), require a minimum of maintenance, and are easily repairable or replaceable should damage or defacement occur.
 - b. Where practical, as in lower-traffic areas, use materials that allow rainwater to infiltrate into the ground and recharge the water table.
 - c. Limit contribution to urban heat island effect by limiting use of dark materials and incorporating materials with a high Solar-Reflective Index (SRI).
 - d. Utilize materials and designs that have an identifiable relationship to the character of the site, the neighborhood, or Salt Lake City.
 - e. Use materials (like textured ground surfaces) and features (like ramps and seating at key resting points) to support access and comfort for people of all abilities.
 - f. Asphalt shall be limited to vehicle drive aisles. (Ord. 14-19, 2019)