

University of Washington Ethnic Cultural Center

Site & Program Analysis

May 2, 2008

MITHŪN



University of Washington - Ethnic Cultural Center

The intent of this study is to determine how to best address the needs of the University of Washington Ethnic Cultural Center (ECC) on its current site.

Site Analysis

The existing ECC parcel is part of a larger site identified as “38W” in the UW Campus Master Plan, which includes the area bound by Brooklyn Avenue NE, Lincoln Way, Cowlitz Road, and the Burke-Gilman Trail. Site “38W” is zoned for a 65’ height limit, and is projected to have the development potential of 208,000 sf. There are currently four small-scale structures residing on the site. In addition to the ECC, are the Staff Services Building, the Facilities Services SW Maintenance Shop (3902 Cowlitz), and the Children’s Center. The long-term prospects for a full-site development are unknown at this time, as all four buildings are being fully utilized. The Children’s Center underwent major renovations within the last ten years, and the Maintenance Shop was more recently upgraded in 2006. (see Exhibit ‘A’)

The ECC is located at the southwest corner of Brooklyn Avenue NE and NE 40th Street. Directly across the street to the east is the ECC’s Theatre and the Instructional Center (IC). Many of the students prefer that all three programmatic components reside on a single site. The ECC also has a small outdoor gathering space, with a BBQ pit and outdoor seating. It resides west of the ECC building, adjacent to the current Children’s Center. Due to the needs of the child care program a fence has been built around their play yard, enveloping the BBQ area and rendering it inaccessible to the ECC students. (see Exhibit ‘A’)

The ECC parcel as identified by University records is 160’ x 103’; 16,480 gsf. A survey of the existing building was not available, but it appears that the building footprint is approximately 10,713 gsf; occupying 65% of the site. From the information available, it also appears that the Staff Services Building to the south resides directly on the property line between these two structures. The ECC site slopes down from the northeast to the southwest, approximately 10’. (see Exhibit ‘B’)

There are numerous mature trees of varying species on all four sides of the ECC property, including five large street trees in the right-of-way along Brooklyn Avenue NE. The University Landscape Architect performed an assessment of all of the trees, and noted that most of them are healthy, contributing trees that should be saved. The exception is one tree along Cowlitz Road that is crowded out by other planting, and may be removed. The University Landscape Architect also noted that Seattle’s Urban Forester should be contacted for an assessment of the City’s street trees, which she found to be equally healthy and worthy of protection. A physical survey of the trees was not available, so the illustrations in this report indicate their approximate locations. A visual assessment was made to determine the diameter of each tree trunk, so that the critical root zone of each tree could be generally represented. The potential root areas indicated are based on a 1 foot radius, per 1 inch diameter of trunk. This information was not prepared by an Arborist, and is offered only as a diagram to indicate the potential impact of construction on the existing trees. (see Exhibit ‘C’)

Potential Development Strategies

The existing ECC building is a single-story, light wood framed structure completed in 1970. Its construction type is similar to a single family home. The building’s integrity and structural capacity are explained in more detail in a Building Assessment prepared by the University of Washington Engineering Services. In a separate Analysis Report prepared by the University of Washington Capital Projects’ Design Services, all of the building’s remaining physical systems and conditions are outlined. This same report concludes that a substantial alteration of the

existing building, or any large addition to it, will likely trigger numerous, holistic upgrades; i.e. seismic retrofit of the structure, improving thermal performance of the building envelope, improving energy efficiencies of mechanical/electrical systems (or simply replacing them), satisfying accessibility criteria per the Americans with Disabilities Act, and conformance with the City's current Fire and Life-Safety codes.

The following is a summary of potential development options, taking the existing building assessment and the limitations of the site into consideration:

1) Modifications to the Existing Building: The proposed ECC program (see Exhibit 'D') cannot be accommodated within the parameters of the existing facility. The total amount of additional square footage required, and the physical attributes of the desired spaces are not consistent with the building's scale, form, or means of construction.

2) Addition to the Existing Building Vertically: Due to the type of construction and structural capacity of the existing building, it is not feasible to add more floors, without providing a new, redundant structural frame, or matching the layout of structural walls on the first floor. A new structural system would penetrate down through the first floor to new foundations below the building, taking up additional space, and likely creating obstacles to a desirable first floor layout. This approach is very invasive and more costly than new construction. The second option of trying to match the bearing wall layout would limit the flexibility of both floor plans, and may not accommodate the entire proposed program. Any scenario to provide additional stories would require removal of all of the saw-tooth roof monitors, lowering the actual and perceived ceiling heights in all of the existing conference rooms. The resulting interior spaces would be compromised, and the top thirds of the mural walls cut off. This radical change to the roof form would also eliminate the only remaining architectural vestige of Ben McAdoo's original design.

3) Addition to the Existing Building Horizontally: The existing site is nearly developed to capacity. There is little or no opportunity to expand to the north or south, due to the adjacent road and Staff Services Building respectfully. (see Exhibit 'B') Expansion to the west is limited due to the existing parcel line and the Children's Center's use of the adjacent yard. However, the ECC's computer lab currently protrudes from the building's west elevation approximately 12'. The two slivers of land immediately north and south of the extension of the lab are potential areas that could be captured for additional space. Combined they total 1,260 sf of area. Taking into account the hallways to serve these spaces, 8-10 new student offices of approximately 80 sf each could be accommodated. On the east face of the building there is a long narrow strip of land available, if it is not a required setback. This accounts for 2,527 sf of area. Utilizing this space would require the removal of several mature trees. It also eliminates the architectural identity of the original building form, and brings the face of the building and the entry very close to the street, which has several disadvantages. Programmatically it could provide some additional Staff or Student offices, and partial expansion of the Black Conference room, adding approximately 75 seats. These small additions would total 3,787 sf of gross area, with about 1/3 of it assigned to circulation. Small interventions of this kind will not be a substantial improvement, unless a major internal reorganization is undertaken, to improve the plan's efficiency.

4) Expand onto Adjacent Sites to Increase Buildable Footprint: The potential to expand the site requires displacement of occupants in the neighboring buildings. There is limited space available in other campus buildings to accommodate these programs, making this an operational challenge, in addition to the real cost of relocation. As noted above, the UW Campus Master Plan has designated site 38W for a marked increase in density when redeveloped. Due to the proposed size of the new ECC program it would be more consistent with the growth plan to remain on the existing site and create a multi-storied building, unless the redevelopment combined with other programmatic uses to substantially increase the scope of the project. There is an opportunity for the ECC to pursue a joint venture with the University's Housing and Food Services, but the students have recently voted against it.

5) Partial Demolition and Large Multi-Story Addition: To be viable, an addition would occupy approximately 2/3 of the existing building footprint. Due to the size of the proposed program, the new addition would be 3-4 stories in height. Although it may be possible to accommodate all of the programmatic elements, the building form and program become unbalanced when divided between the remaining single story, and new multi-storied structure. As noted above, what remains of the existing building will require major renovations. The cost of this investment will have to be weighed against the cultural value preserved in the existing portion of the building.

6) New Building on the Same Site: This option has the potential to satisfy the new ECC program. It is also more consistent with the Campus Master Plan's objective to increase density, especially if the potential to include supplemental uses is pursued. It will however result in the loss of the existing building, whose inception and lineage has been the foundation of the Ethnic Cultural Center, and a place that holds personal memories for Students, Staff and Alumni. It should be noted that the building may also possess individual significance for its association with the original Architect's legacy, as indicated in the University's Building Analysis Report.

All of the scenarios outlined above have operational impacts to be considered. Major renovations to the existing building or replacement with a new structure will require temporary relocation of the ECC program for 12-18 months. Small additions are less of an impact, and could be qualified further based on the extent of work proposed. During construction there will be disruptions to the program's operation that need to be managed, as well as a loss of revenue.

It's important to note that the existing ECC building is not obsolete. As outlined in the separate Building Analysis Report, upgrades to the facility systems in the last ten years are still functioning as designed, and the building possesses several programmatic spaces and attributes that are beneficial to the building occupants. Unfortunately in its current state, the building does not appear compatible with the future of the ECC program. Were the structure to remain intact and function in a similar capacity, it could be used by other organizations or agencies whose program may be more appropriate for a building of this type and scale. There is also an opportunity to move the building to another site, to preserve its history and utility.

Following the presentations of the development options to the ECC Building Committee, they determined that Option # 6 will be the direction pursued for the purpose of this study.

Among the Students and Staff overall there are varied opinions on where the future home of the ECC should reside. A separate analysis would be required to address the potential for other development sites.

Site Parameters

To establish the parameters for potential redevelopment of the ECC parcel, a number of assumptions were made. These require further review during the Pre-Design phase, by the Architect selected. (see Exhibit 'C')

- The future use of the adjacent parcels is unknown, with the exception of the recommendations outlined in the Campus Mater Plan. Dense development of the adjacent sites may adversely impact the west and south sides of the ECC site. For the purposes of this study a minimum separation at the property lines is indicated, to permit a 45% glazing area; for a fully sprinklered building. It is the hope that redevelopment of adjacent building's will be made to further increase this buffer by pulling back from the property lines in a similar manner. On the north side of the site, the existing setback is maintained. On the east side, the buildable footprint steps out just beyond the existing building line. The location of this boundary may need to be adjusted to better address the tree line. However,

it is recommended that the building not move any closer to the road, providing minimal relief from street noise and activity.

- The broadest parameters shown on the site plan will result in a loss of trees. It is assumed that the mature trees on the east side have the highest priority for preservation. As noted above, this will need to be reviewed with the appropriate parties from the University and the City of Seattle.
- The southeast corner of the site has been identified for service drive access off Brooklyn Avenue NE; taking advantage of the setback between the two buildings. A second option is to utilize the northwest corner of the site, although the median and narrow drive lane on Lincoln Way make this more challenging. This requires further study by the Architect in the Pre Design phase, and coordination with the University's Engineering Services.
- The northeast corner of the site is identified as the most desirable location for the building entry, due to its proximity to the intersection and crosswalk. If the ECC, Theatre and IC remain separated by Brooklyn Avenue NE, it will be critical to strengthen this link.

Program Analysis

To evaluate the ECC's current program and use of space the team toured the building with the program's Director. An existing floor plan provided by the University was used to generate the current area take-offs, with a limited amount of field verification. This information was compiled in tabular form, for comparison to the proposed program being developed. In order to comprehend the needs of the ECC, the team met with the Building Committee, as well as the Office of Educational Assessment to hear the findings of the Student and Staff Focus Groups. This data was supplemented with general operational information conveyed to the team by the Director of the ECC. There were presentations made to the Committee illustrating options of varying size and cost, and a summary presentation of one scheme made to the Forum. Following this presentation the students met to prioritize their needs and reshape the proposed program. The following is a summary of our final meeting with the Building Committee, and some of the ECC students.

The proposed program outlined in this narrative is meant to quantify the amount of area needed to better serve the current and future needs of the Ethnic Cultural Center. There are detailed requests from the Students and Staff, as well as spatial relationships that should be included in the final building program, which will be further developed in the Pre Design phase by the Architect selected. They cannot all be identified in this document, but it is important to mention one critical element that has been discussed at length, and that is the value of the painted wall murals in the existing ECC building. A number of options have been reviewed, including physically removing the walls to protect and save the murals, carefully documenting the murals so that they can be reproduced in some form, and possibly commissioning the original student artists to return to the University to replicate the murals or compose new ones. The preferred scenario will depend on what direction the larger building project follows.

The existing building has been home to the Ethnic Cultural Center for nearly forty years. It has undergone numerous modifications and small additions to adapt to the growth of the program. But at present, it is difficult to serve the programmatic needs of the Staff and Students within the current facility. The following is a summary of how the building's programmed spaces will be changed to better address the ECC's concerns now and in the future. Detailed square foot areas are outlined separately in tabular format. (see Exhibit 'D')

Proposed ECC Program

Lobby/Entry: The current condition is sufficient for the size of the existing building. It is increased in size in the new program to address the needs of a larger building and the growing number of building occupants.

Information Center: The Students have requested an area dedicated to providing and displaying information. The new, larger Lobby should have sufficient space for a computer station or small kiosk.

Reception: The existing reception desk will be enlarged slightly, with more usable work space in proximity to it. Currently much of that area is lost to circulation.

Administrative Support Workspace: The current workspace is quite limited with essentially no lay-down area. Similar to the Reception desk it is in the midst of the circulation space. This area should be increased in size to address growth, and located outside of the flow of foot traffic.

Administrative Offices: At present there are 7 full-time staff with private offices. The staff anticipates needing 3-5 additional offices for future staff, however only 1 additional office is proposed at this time. Most of the existing offices are undersized to varying degrees. New offices should be slightly larger; however the current program does not accommodate this. The Director's office will be increased in size to allow for a small conference table. It is recommended that during the Pre Design phase, the Architect revisit the Administrative program with the Committee and compel them to allot more space to this part of the program.

Administrative Conference: There will be a new conference room for use by the administrative staff only, to accommodate 10-15 people.

Student Offices: There are currently 22 student offices; serving only a portion of the 62 organizations. Most of these spaces are approximately 50 sf and are shared by more than one individual. As such they are undersized and essentially unusable as offices, because the students also use them for storage. The students prefer to maintain private offices as reflected in the proposed program, but do not feel that all organizations will need an office. The program calls for 40 offices each with a single desk, including a large storage unit or closet.

Student Open Workspace: The students want their offices to be organized in a communal way, surrounding shared, open workspace, potentially looking down into the Lounge below. As this workspace is also used for circulation, we've used a factor of 40%, in addition to the programmed office area.

Student Storage: As noted above, not all of the organizations will have offices, so the students have requested additional storage closets for those users. The program includes 25 units, to be outfitted with shelving or racks as needed.

Computer Lab: The Students feel that it is currently undersized, although the Staff has not observed this. To address growth, the current proposal is to enlarge the lab space by 30% to allow for more workstations. There is currently an adjacent office utilized by Student Staff. A similar office is provided, but made only slightly larger.

Performing Arts Practice Room: There are Student requests for music and/or dance practice space with a mirrored wall. One room has been provided in the program to accommodate this, and should be appropriately attenuated for sound.

Student Project Workroom: The students have requested an additional workroom that is adjacent to the Lounge.

Quiet Room / Library: The existing Library resides within the central gathering space, which is also the main social venue. In its present configuration there is not enough shelving to make the entire book collection available to students, and much of it remains in storage. The Library will be given its own enclosed room, to offer the Students a quiet place for studying, and provide the appropriate space for stacks. It is similar in size to a medium conference room, as the students anticipate the option to convert this to an additional conference space in the future, if necessary.

Lounge / Community Gathering: The existing building has an inviting, centrally located gathering space for the Students and Staff. This has been fundamental to the success of the ECC and is included in the proposed program; enlarged slightly. This communal space is an organizing element within the building that will require further study in the final program, as many other uses and functions will benefit from having proximity to it. For example, the students have expressed an interest in having their offices more centrally located with better visibility to the public areas. There is also a desire by Staff to have feature walls surrounding the community space to be used for permanent art installations, and rotating exhibits. The students have also requested a kitchen space dedicated for their use. This will be located directly adjacent to the Lounge, and may house the vending machines as well. It would be beneficial in a multi-storied building, for the Lounge space to open to the floor above, providing visual connectivity of the program.

Kitchens: There are currently three kitchens, two of them rather small. The recommendation is for a total of 3. One kitchenette associated with the Lounge as outlined above, and two other kitchens that are essentially twice the size of the existing spaces. These kitchens are typically used to prepare food for large functions housed in the conference rooms.

Small Conference Rooms: There are currently no rooms that are sized for meetings of 8-12 people, which are regularly in demand. The proposed program includes two. It is recommended that this be revisited during the Pre Design phase, as students may benefit from adding another two to three additional rooms of this size. This will allow the larger conference rooms to be used more appropriately.

Mid-Size Conference Rooms: This term is being used to describe the three existing conference rooms named Asian, Chicano, and Native American. They are currently in high demand and are booked from approximately 1 pm until closing each day. The proposed program includes three similar spaces, with one additional.

Large Conference Room: Similar to the existing Mid-Size conference rooms, the historic Black Room is in constant use throughout the afternoons and evenings. The proposed program includes a conference room of similar size, and provides one additional. It is desirable for these two conference rooms to be adjacent, with a movable wall that will allow them to be combined into a single space.

Administrative Storage: Storage is currently distributed throughout the building, making it difficult to manage. The existing spaces are also not well proportioned so they're difficult to utilize. With a more efficient layout and better infrastructure (racks, shelving, etc) the existing areas could be better used. To address the growing size of the overall program and facility, there is slightly more storage area included.

Restrooms: In the proposed program, the fixture count has been increased to address the facility's growth, in number of occupants and assembly type spaces. There was a suggestion from the students that the restrooms be communal and non-gender specific. In lieu of conventional stalls, the compartments would have walls and doors, and the users would share the lavatory areas. This should be discussed further during the Pre Design phase, with the Building Committee and Engineering Services.

Custodial: The existing sizes are increased to accommodate a larger building, and satisfy the University's operational criteria.

Trash & Recycling: Currently there is no dedicated space for this use. To meet the University's operational criteria this is addressed in the program by dedicated interior space. There will also need to be adjacent exterior facilities, and a potential dock.

M&E Core Services: Planning for new mechanical, electrical, data, tele/com etc is difficult to assess, and Engineering Services was not able to make a specific recommendation. An area equal to 10% of the proposed programmed space has been assigned to accommodate the University's operational criteria, and the equipment needed for a larger building.

Circulation: An area equal to 20% of the proposed programmed space has been assigned. This factor may appear low, but much of the circulation for the Student Offices has been separately programmed, as part of their Open Workspace outlined above.

Outdoor Gathering Space: Currently there is a BBQ pit and small seating area that is directly north of the neighboring Children's Center, located within a fenced yard. Due to the child care's operational criteria, the BBQ pit has limited access and is essentially unusable by the ECC. The Students and Staff regret the loss of this outdoor space, once used for social gatherings and small impromptu performances. The proposed program includes a similar outdoor venue directly adjacent to, or a part of the building. Due to its popularity and the expected growth of the facility it is larger in the new program. The potential of providing this as a roof terrace has been discussed.

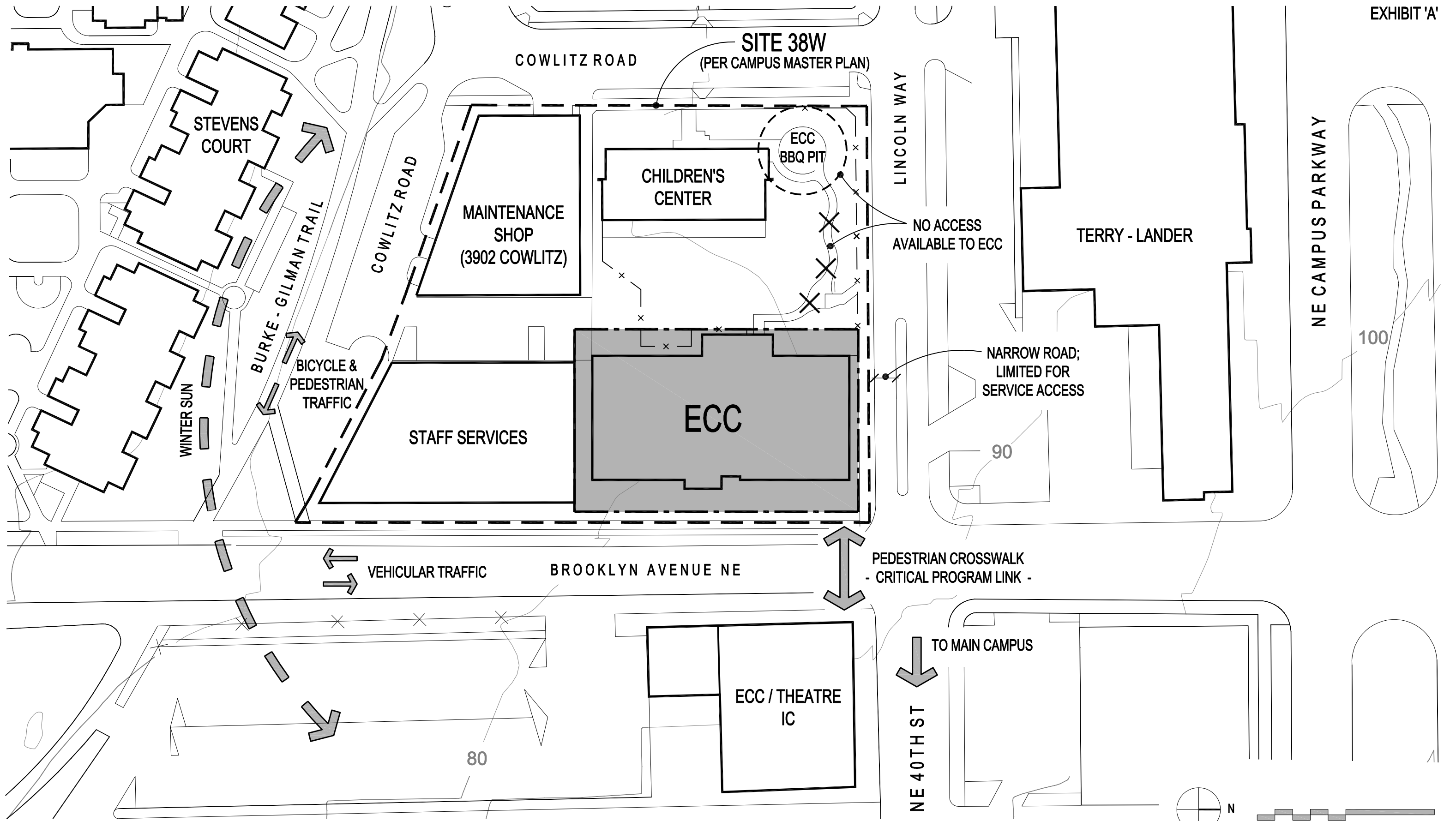
Banquet Room / Flexible Conference Space: This was a new use proposed for the building, but has since been removed from the program. The students decided that they would prefer to dedicate this area to student offices and student workspace. When the University's new Longhouse is complete it will have a Banquet facility available to accommodate 300, similar to the preliminary ECC recommendation.

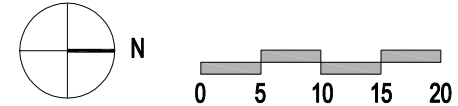
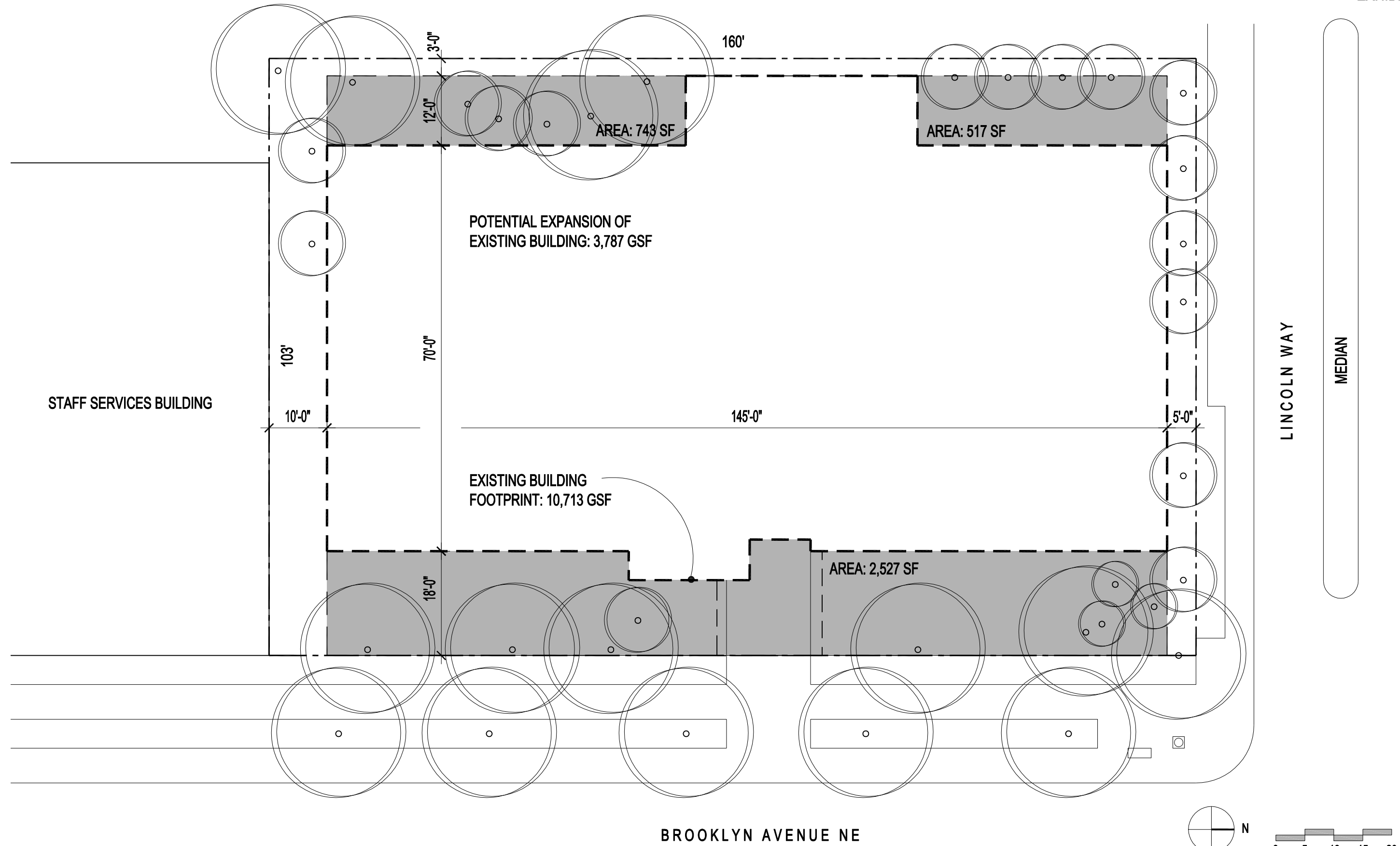
Theatre: This has not been included in the program. It was both the Students' and Staff's hope that this part of the ECC program could be incorporated in the new building, but it posed to be too challenging from a budget and program perspective. Due to the size of the site the Theatre occupied the majority of the first (and potentially second) floor, changing the overall identity of the building, and separating all of the student communal spaces from the entry/street level.

In summary, the proposed program for the ECC is a little more than twice the size of the existing building. The new program could be accommodated in a two or three story structure, an aspect that should be studied further in the Pre-Design Phase. During the process of this investigation, a three story building was recommended to the Building Committee for the following reasons:

- Reduced foundation work and shoring, for a potential cost savings;
- Ability to maintain more of the mature trees;
- Better proportion of building to size of the site;
- A smaller floorplate is more communal;
- All programmatic spaces can have access to windows / natural lighting; and
- More efficient circulation means fewer hallways.

A two story building will offer some savings for a reduction in a level of stairs, and an elevator stop. But further study will need to determine if there are other benefits. The increase in roof area for two stories will be less costly than the amount of wall area for a three story building, but the increased structural spans may eliminate these savings.





ECC - EXISTING SITE

SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"

Existing Bldg Program Space		GSF	Proposed Bldg Program Space		GSF	(+/-)
Lobby / Entry		187	Lobby / Entry		250	63
Reception/Support Workspace - Admin		241	Reception - Admin		150	-91
n/a		0	Support Workspace - Admin		80	80
Private Office - Director		99	Private Office - Director		170	71
Private Offices - Admin		465	Private Offices - Admin (8 @ 10x10)		800	335
n/a		0	Conference - Admin		275	275
Private Offices - Students (22 @ varied)		1,279	Private Offices - Students (incl. closet) (40 @ 10x10)		4,000	2,721
n/a		0	Student Open Workspace / Circulation at Offices		1,600	1,600
n/a		0	Storage Closets - Students (25 @ 4x3)		300	300
Computer Lab		616	Computer Lab		800	184
Support Office to Lab		126	Support Office to Lab		150	24
n/a		0	Performing Arts Practice Room		375	375
n/a		0	Student Project Workroom		400	400
n/a		0	Library / Quiet Room		500	500
Community Gathering / Lounge / Library		700	*Community Lounge (incl. adj. kitchenette)		800	100
Kitchen		87	n/a		0	-87
Kitchen		87	Kitchen		130	43
Kitchen		142	Kitchen		130	-12
n/a		0	Conference - small		150	150
n/a		0	Conference - small		150	150
Conference (Asian)		494	Conference - mid		500	6
Conference (Chicano)		516	Conference - mid		500	-16
Conference (Native American)		625	Conference - mid		500	-125
n/a		0	Conference - mid		500	500
Conference (Black)		1,141	Conference - large		1,000	-141
n/a		0	Conference - large		1,000	1,000
Storage - Admin		369	Storage - Admin		500	131
Restrooms - Total for Building		470	Restrooms - Total for Building		1,000	530
Custodial		94	Custodial		450	356
n/a		0	Trash & Recycling		150	150
M&E (estimated beneath building)		200	M&E / Core Services (10% factor)		1,731	1,531
Circulation (approx 35%)		2,665	Circulation (20% factor)		3,462	797
Interior ECC Program GSF		10,603	Interior ECC Program GSF		22,503	
Outdoor Program: BBQ Pit		450	**Outdoor Program: BBQ Area & Seating		800	
Total Program:		11,053	Total Program:		23,303	
			* preference for a double height space			
			** potential as rooftop terrace			
Interior Space			Interior Space			
Administrative		805	Administrative		1,475	670
Student		2,021	Student		7,225	5,204
Communal		3,792	Communal		6,260	2,468
Support / Services		1,133	Support / Services		3,831	2,698
Circulation		2,852	Circulation		3,712	860
		10,603			22,503	11,900