

Office of the President

TO MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON GROUNDS AND BUILDINGS:

DISCUSSION ITEM

For Meeting of July 19, 2016

PLANS FOR THE WARNER GRADUATE ART STUDIO RENOVATION AND ADDITION, LOS ANGELES CAMPUS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The proposed project would be for renovation of the 21,000-gross-square-foot (gsf) warehouse building at the Warner Graduate Art Studio and construction of an 18,500-gsf addition for use by the Department of Art. The project would also provide 5,700 gsf of covered, unenclosed space to accommodate art production, commons space, and a garden on the exterior of the building.

The facility is located at 8535 Warner Drive in Culver City, approximately 4.5 miles south of the UCLA campus. The property, used for the graduate art program since it was acquired by the University in 1985, is located in a light-industrial area that is rapidly evolving into a creative business and arts district. The 42,000-square-foot parcel currently accommodates a 21,000-gsf warehouse structure originally built as a factory in the 1940s and two smaller additions totaling 9,000 gsf that would be demolished to create the site for the new construction. Upon completion, the facility would be increased by approximately 15,200 gsf, from 30,000 gsf to 45,200 gsf.

Little has been done to improve the property since its acquisition. The proposed project would be to replace infrastructure, correct life-safety and accessibility deficiencies, and improve space utilization. The project would include reconfiguring individual studios for graduate art students; providing the facility with appropriate shops, laboratories, gallery, work areas, and commons space; replacing building and telecommunications systems at the end of their useful life; and improving lighting and ventilation in the facility.

The campus expects to request approval of preliminary plans funding at the September 2016 meeting. The project will be funded by gift funds.

BACKGROUND

The graduate art studios have been located in this former warehouse space in the Hayden Tract of Culver City since the University acquired the property in 1985. The facility currently houses arts production and exhibition space for approximately 40 students enrolled in the Master of Fine Arts program. It accommodates graduate student art studios; photography, sculpture, ceramics,

and computer laboratories; exhibition space; and open teaching space used for lectures and classes. The Hayden Tract is evolving from a light-industrial area to a creative business and arts district. A renovated and expanded studio art facility in this area will support the leading role of the program within the local and national arts communities.

The Warner Graduate Art Studio is in need of significant investment to allow for continued use by the Department of Art in the School of the Arts and Architecture. Renovation and expansion of the existing facility is necessary to: provide graduate art students with productive studio and lab space; improve the utilization of space within the existing facility; upgrade mechanical and ventilation systems to support the making of art with contemporary materials and equipment; and provide natural lighting in the studio and exhibition spaces. The existing site has underutilized adjacent exterior yard space that has become occupied over the years by a disparate collection of storage enclosures and other temporary uses. Removal of the additions and *ad hoc* shed structures would allow for expansion of the facility to better serve the needs of the graduate arts program.

Master of Fine Arts Program

The Master of Fine Arts (MFA) program offers six areas of specialization: ceramics, interdisciplinary studio, new genres, painting and drawing, photography, and sculpture. Studios in these areas are supplemented by seminars and lectures in contemporary critical theory. Encouragement is given to explore a wide range of media, with group critique and peer review as integral components of the program. Graduate students are taught by a faculty headed by internationally recognized artists as well as distinguished visiting lecturers who provide professional art training in the context of a liberal arts education. Two to three years of residency culminating in a graduate exhibition is typically required to complete the program. The MFA program is currently ranked number two in the nation by *U.S. News and World Report*.

Project Drivers

The Warner Graduate Art Studio has not been upgraded significantly since it was acquired 30 years ago. Studio space is inadequate for the number of students; upgrades to the studios are needed to accommodate current materials and practices; laboratories are undersized and equipped with obsolete technology; changes in floor levels between the main building and the additions result in inefficient circulation and workflow; old mechanical and ventilation systems limit the use of materials and equipment; and the studios and exhibition spaces lack natural lighting. The exterior yard is not fully utilized because of the location of the additions and shed structures. There is a lack of covered work areas, exhibition space, and commons space for students, and unclear points of entry to the site. Removal of the obsolete additions and upgrades to the main building are needed to improve the facility for the next generation of use.

The renovations proposed for this project will extend the building's longevity and provide facilities appropriate to a top-ranked art school. The improvements will support the following goals:

- Provide state-of-the-art graduate art studios and related support facilities commensurate with the talented artists who teach and study there.
- Establish a new artist-in-residence program with dedicated live/work space that will allow students to engage and receive feedback from visiting artists who can live and work in the facility for extended stays.
- Establish a gallery for exhibition and curatorial programming of student work, open to the public, to create an important link to the design/fashion/architecture/technology community in Culver City and the greater Los Angeles area.

Project Description

The proposed project would be for renovation of the 21,000-gsf existing warehouse building; demolition of the two 9,000-gsf additions; construction of an 18,500-gsf addition; and construction of a 5,700-gsf covered, unenclosed canopy structure to provide additional program space on the exterior of the building. Upon completion, the facility would accommodate 48 artist studios and related support in approximately 45,200 gsf. The table below summarizes existing and proposed building areas.

Existing and Proposed Building Areas

Areas	Existing GSF	Proposed GSF	Change GSF
Original Warehouse	21,000	21,000	0
Existing Additions	9,000	0	(9,000)
New Addition	0	18,500	18,500
Subtotal	30,000	39,500	9,500
Covered-Unenclosed at 50%	0	5,700	5,700
Total	30,000	45,200	15,200

The various program spaces proposed for the building include:

1. Artist Studios: Individual studios are necessary to provide each graduate student artist with an appropriate creative environment. Studios would be clustered to facilitate interaction with the larger community of artists in the facility.
2. Critique/Meeting Space: A central space with natural light is needed for critiques and meetings proximate to the studio clusters.
3. Laboratories: Laboratories designed and equipped for ceramics, photography, sound, digital media, woodworking, and welding are needed to support the production of art in a variety of mediums and materials.

4. Gallery: A gallery with public access is needed for exhibitions and curatorial experimentation.
5. Classroom: A technology-enabled room is needed for multimedia presentations and seminars by faculty and visiting artists.
6. Live/Work Unit: A private living unit is needed for visiting artists from around the world to teach and work within the studio environment.

The renovated warehouse space would accommodate individual student artist studios and a central open area for exhibitions and critiques. The addition would house: student artist studios; laboratories for ceramics, photography, sound, digital media, woodworking, and welding; gallery and exhibition space; a classroom/library; a live/work unit for visiting artists; administrative offices; and equipment storage. A covered, unenclosed canopy structure would provide useable outdoor areas for the production of art, a commons area for students and faculty, and a garden. Approximately 14 existing parking spaces would be retained on the site.

Location

The Warner Graduate Art Studio is located approximately 4.5 miles south of the UCLA campus at 8535 Warner Drive in Culver City. This UC-owned property is in an area of the city that is becoming more connected with the rest of the metropolitan area because of the recent extension of the Expo line that runs from downtown Los Angeles to Santa Monica. An Expo line station is less than a block from the property.

Key to Acronyms

CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
GSF	Gross Square Feet
MFA	Masters of Fine Arts

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: Location Map

Attachment 2: Site Map

Attachment 3: Alternatives Considered

Location Map



Site Map



ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Three project alternatives were considered: 1) a no project alternative; 2) renovation of existing; and 3) renovation and addition.

No Project: This alternative would be to not renovate the existing warehouse building and construct an addition. While long-term maintenance investments would continue, the functional issues of the existing warehouse studio space would not be addressed. The graduate students would not benefit from new studio, laboratory, classroom, and exhibition spaces.

Renovation of Existing: This alternative would be to make incremental improvements to the existing warehouse and additions over time. While upgrades would improve the use of individual studios and laboratories, and the mechanical and ventilation systems could be repaired and updated, major improvements to address space and building system deficiencies would not be addressed. Existing laboratory functions would remain in improvised shed structures in the exterior yard.

Renovation and Addition: The recommended alternative would be to renovate the existing warehouse building, and construct a new addition of approximately 18,500 gsf that will provide additional studio, laboratory, classroom, and exhibition space. The overall utilization of the site would be optimized by the removal of obsolete building additions and construction of a covered, unenclosed canopy structure to provide functional outdoor space for the production of art on the exterior of the building.