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October 6, 2021

Urban Design Commission  
City of Madison, Planning Division  
215 Martin Luther King Blvd. #017  
Madison, WI 53701-2985

**Re: West High School Additions and Renovations  
Letter of Intent – Project Description  
EUA Project No.: 320535-01**

**Contacts:**

**Owner:** Madison Metropolitan School District  
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**Civil Engineer:** Wyser Engineering  
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**Landscape Design:** Saiki Design  
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Madison, WI 53715  
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**Architect:** EUA  
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Madison, WI 53703  
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Dear Commission Members:

The MMSD West High School renovation and addition was approved by the UDC on July 28 with the motion to address the landscape wall comments, and to accept the potential changes with the fundraising campaign as there are no concerns with those small additions. The Plan Commission approved the submittal on August 11<sup>th</sup> with the conditions outlined in the disposition letter. On August 12, 2021 Jay Schlimgen notified the District via email that City Engineering received reports that the western retaining wall along Highland Avenue at West High School was failing. The email further states that City Engineering has concerns of it eventually affecting the storm sewer running parallel to the wall in the terrace area and have noticed that it is starting to affect the sidewalk area.

Pursuant to the conditions of approval, reuse of the existing wall was investigated by EUA, Wyser Engineering and the Construction Manager. The current retaining wall along Van Hise Street is required to move closer to the property line to accommodate the building and site design. The wall along Highland Ave should not be used in the current condition due to the current wall engineering, deterioration, heaving and rotating as noted by City Engineering. Reconstruction of the athletics field will also impact this wall, and it is unlikely that it would survive. Options investigated were:

1. Rebuild and re-engineer as a retaining wall using existing material is not possible due to age and condition of the stone. Structurally, it is a non-engineered wall without reinforcing and there is degradation of mortar and block. According to a structural review this should not be re-built as a retaining wall.
2. Remove. Pour a new concrete CIP reinforced cantilever retaining wall with the reclaimed stone used as facing. To accommodate the setback on Regent street for the Athletic addition, the field and retaining wall are required to move north. The thickness of this wall configuration could impact the location of the wall to the property line along Van Hise Street. Furthermore, removing mortar and preparing the stone for re-installation is cost prohibitive according to the Construction Manager.
3. Engineered Precast Modular Blocks. Redi-Rock LedgeStone selected as the Basis of Design. Pattern and color will reference the historic aesthetic of the current wall. Remove and salvage the existing stone wall along Highland Ave and Van Hise Street. Repurpose the existing stone as landscape features on the West High School property in addition to select landscape uses as Southside Elementary on Rim Rock Road.

Upon review by MMSD, Structural Engineer, Civil Engineer, and EUA, we recommend Option 3 as a cost-effective option that meets the referendum budget while addressing the aesthetic drivers, safety and requirements of the City. The existing stone will be repurposed in visible locations on the campus as a nod to the historical nature of this material. Drawings and supporting information are included in this submittal.