

## DRAFT MINUTES

### BOSTON CIVIC DESIGN COMMISSION

The meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was held on Tuesday, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2014, starting in the BRA Board Room, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor, Boston City Hall, and beginning at 5:20 p.m.

Members in attendance were: Michael Davis (Co-Vice-Chair); Linda Eastley, David Hacin, Andrea Leers, David Manfredi, Paul McDonough (Co-Vice-Chair), William Rawn, Daniel St. Clair, Kirk Sykes, and Lynn Wolff. Absent was Deneen Crosby. Also present was David Carlson, Executive Director of the Commission. Representatives of the BSA were present. Michael Cannizzo and Raul Duverge were present for the BRA.

The Co-Vice-Chair, Mike Davis (MD), announced that this was the meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission that meets the first Tuesday of every month and welcomed all persons interested in attending. He added thanks to the Commissioners for the contribution of their time to the betterment of the City and its Public Realm. This hearing was duly advertised on Tuesday, February 18, in the BOSTON HERALD.

The first item was the approval of the February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2014 Meeting Minutes. A motion was made, seconded, and it was duly

**VOTED: To approve the February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2014 Boston Civic Design Commission Meeting Minutes.**

MD asked for a report from the Review Committee. Votes were passed for signature. The next item was a report from the Review Committee on the **Excel Academy Project**. David Carlson (DAC) reported that the Excel Academy had submitted a PNF in December and, because it was well below the BCDC threshold, review by the Commission was not contemplated. However, after some further study and improvements in the Project, and because of the adjacency to the new East Boston Library, a non-voting Advisory review was recommended. The Commission has, via a majority vote of the full Commission, the ability to vote to review, but the BRA Board was also acting this month. The BCDC has given an Advisory review a few times in the past, so this is not without precedent. BRA staff will carry through with any suggestions made in the conversation. MD: So, we will see them later, and no vote is required.

David Hacin (DH) was recused from the next item. The next item was a report from the Review Committee on the **Seaport Square Parcel H Project**. DAC reported that the Project was originally part of the first Phase of Seaport Square, and is now being advanced on a neighboring parcel. Relocation of the church is required for another Parcel to move forward. Although the SF is small and well below the normal threshold, review of every subsequent parcel was a requirement of the original approval. A vote affirming this review was recommended. It was duly moved, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the Seaport Square**

**Parcel H Project in the Seaport Square PDA in the South Boston Waterfront District.**

DH remained recused. The next item was a report from the Review Committee on the **Seaport Square Parcel F Park Project**. DAC reported that this Project had even less SF, but as a public open space and similar to Fan Pier Green or Parcel Q Park, review would be recommended and, as just stated for Parcel H, review was a requirement of the original approval for the PDA. A vote affirming this review was recommended. It was duly moved, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the Seaport Square Parcel F Park Project in the Seaport Square PDA in the South Boston Waterfront District.**

DH remained recused, and Daniel St. Clair (DS) was recused from the next item. The next item was a report from the Review Committee on the **45 West Third Street Project**. DAC reported that the Project, not far from another Project under review in the area, was, at about 144,000 SF, above the BCDC threshold; review was recommended. It was duly moved, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the proposed 45 West Third Street Project in the South Boston neighborhood.**

DH and DS returned. The next item was a presentation of the **Excel Academy Project**. DAC reviewed the options again. MD asked about the adjacency to the highway and visibility. Bill Rawn (WR) noted it was near a park. DAC noted again that no vote was requested, but comments welcomed, and as with the recent Ink Block change or vote on the MATCH School by the same team in Hyde Park (there partially triggered by a condition of a vote NOT to review), could decide further after seeing the presentation.

Tamar Warburg (TW) began by noting the locus: This is behind WR's East Boston Public Library gem, which fronts the (Bremen Street) Park, a wonderful urban space. This site is behind that, on the other side of the Library's parking lot. The context of Day Square is a frayed urban fabric, with residential behind it. She noted the highway and showed context photos; she noted the East Boston Greenway path, and its dense screen of trees, and then showed an elevation and plan. TW: We responded to a BRA request by bringing the Bremen Street trees across our parking lot. Our positioning the building on the site generally solves the issue of access for the developer on the *other* side, a requirement of the sale of the property to Excel. There is a strategy in facing the highway; we have our courtyard there, but also uses (gym, etc.) which don't require windows. (Shows views, distant then close. Returns to a site plan.) There is access to the courtyard from the Greenway via a gate. The original plan called for a loop road (a fire lane issue), but we were able to eliminate that. There is a billboard, but that's outside of our site, on the Greenway. The material of the building is high-density fiber cement.

WR asked about the window strategy. TW: Noise is a factor, between the highway and airport.

But also our existing locations don't have good windows at all. The school itself here will become a buffer for neighbors. And the BRA had asked us to reverse the scheme, so the courtyard faced the street, but then the students would be facing the highway 60' away directly, and we were able to convince the BRA otherwise. Linda Eastley (LE): I'm glad you have the courtyard facing the Greenway. The nature of that relationship could be good - you'll work out the interface with the Friends of the Greenway. MD: What about the parking you show? Is it needed? TW: The code says 49 spaces; we have 45 (some lost for the trees). The school wanted more. DH asked about the security for the courtyard: It all sounds good, but that's a worry. TW addressed the security question (school would limit access). TW: Also, the Greenway will be under further construction to Wood Island, and it will be more populated then. DH: Room for bicycles? TW: In the parking area. Lynn Wolff (LW) asked about the flood plain provisions. TW: We were okay. There's a new flood line, and we are working to adjust elevations; we will have to go back to the Greenway about the layered elevation. DH: The parking lot - I know budgets are an issue, but it would be great if it could be used for school events, etc. It just looks like a striped lot now. TW: That's a good point, and many associations, including the Public Library, have asked about using the lot in off hours. There are so many other considerations.

DS asked about the rear elevation. TW showed an oblique rear view. TW: The windows face 'inward,' into the courtyard, due to the highway and airport. There are none on the ground floor in the back. Also, the facility itself (not just parking lot) might be used by others. Andrea Leers (AL): This is an amazing transformation of the area, taken together with the East Boston Public Library, and there is a good relationship with the Greenway. On the parking, since it's against the Public Library parking, it becomes a big expanse when aggregated. You should have some kind of physical barrier - trees, etc. TW: A good idea. There is also the presence of a WPA-era puddingstone wall. DS moved to approve, but MD noted there was no vote required. MD (to Tamar): Was this helpful? TW: Yes, there are some good ideas. Thank you.

The next item was a report from Design Committee on the **Hood Park 500 North Project**. MD requested a report. AL reported: Additional information allowed more suggestions about layering the facade near the entry, and the notion about thinking of the Park as a *campus*. MD: Were further studies requested? AL: I'm not sure, but we asked about making it more campus-like. DH: The entry was much improved. We talked about the notion of adjusting the entry area to better accept a connection from across the site. Yanni Tsipis (YT) of Colliers: Thanks. (Notes presence of the owner, Chris Kaneb of Catamount Management.) The idea of a campus was behind the original Plan: the older 500, 480 Rutherford, and now this, as a complement to the southern portion. Many of the comments about this (500 North) existing section suggest that it's seen as boring and architecturally lacking. We emphasized the notion of entry, establishing an address. (Shows an earlier view, toward the entry. Then shows studies.) The entry is not just a point, it's more like a zone, and more visually interesting. (Goes to SketchUp, notes the Rutherford facade, the corner, then back to the entry, noting the angled orientation toward Spice Street, and the landscaping along the edge.)

LW: Rutherford Avenue treatment....? YT showed a larger view, then one of 480 Rutherford

with similar notions, and the old 500, with its central entry, which set a theme. YT: There is a similar palette in the north, a variation on a theme. Kirk Sykes (KS): Have you thought about the next level of detail? Along Rutherford, using facade patterns, textures, and fixtures. YT: A good comment. We have brick details that do that. DH: We brought that up in the first meeting. Some ideas on the North section could be applied along Rutherford. That would be welcome. The brick at the entry, the metal peeling back - the brick next to the entry - I wonder what that's doing for you. The peeling-away idea then would be extended. WR: Is there a reason this is not a 3-story building? YT: We should have mentioned that was contemplated. The structure doesn't allow it. Greg Downs of SMMA noted the trusses and bearing walls of the structure. WR: Have we seen the garage? YT: It's a part of the Master Plan; not yet. With that, it was moved, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the schematic design for the proposed 500 Rutherford Warehouse Conversion Project, in the Hood Business Park PDA, in the Charlestown neighborhood.**

David Manfredi (DM) arrived and was recused from the next item, as was DH. The next item was a presentation of the **Seaport Square Parcel H Project**. John Hynes (JH) of BGI introduced his team, and noted that Parcel H was the first block over the Moakley Bridge. JH: It's a sliver parcel, currently a parking lot. Three years ago, we arranged with the Archdiocese an agreement, an installment sale of their property on Block (Parcel) D. That transaction has closed; we requested they consider three locations, one of them in (Parcel) L1...fast forward to now. The Archdiocese has chosen this location and blessed this design, and the BRA is okay with it being ready to go to BCDC.

Tamara Roy (TR) of ADD Inc. showed the locus, then the site plan. TR: We will have to go to the FPCLDC after the BCDC; this is in the Protection Area of the District. We will show the buildings, and Gary Hilderbrand (GH) will show the plaza spaces. (Shows view of the proposal, then precedents, then a closer view, noting the form.) The Archdiocese wanted something simple, iconic; the BRA wanted something contemporary. Mayor Walsh asked the Archdiocese what *they* wanted. So we have 'contemporized' the building by keeping it simple. (Shows notion of wood, an ark.) We are doing this expression in brick; Kairos had strongly urged that we push this further, so we are using Roman brick, with a rough detail texture (stacked corbels). The retail building (shows) is simple, with an oko skin. (Shows perspective view, then elevations, noting the break in the building masses, the built-in bench, and the skylight over the altar.) GH: There is a grade change of six feet, so the ramp strategy is important on one (east) side. The other, facing west, also has a complex grading, at an intersection which is going up. Children's (Museum) Park is advancing, so the idea of the space as a plaza outside the church seemed good. Tamara noted the bench along the building; that continues into the plaza, and creates seating. (Shows details of the plaza.) There is an alley to the south; we have seatwalls facing each other. The plaza overall is in tones of concrete, pavers and not, in gray colors common in the district. (Shows an example of the proposed screenwall, and a grand *palazzo* version of a building seatwall.) The casual open associated use with a religious building is a strong precedent. (Shows a perspective which highlights the steps and grade change.) On the

east side, we have aligned the west edge with the Courthouse Square crosswalk. (Shows line drawing views.)

AL: This is such an interesting challenge. Who gets to put a chapel and small office building in this environment? This is very good; the plaza at the church is appropriate. The joining of the two (buildings) is awkward. If the church didn't have a gabled roof, it would be easier. Or if they were separated. Something - setting it in, for example - might help; it so wants to be freestanding. TR: We could do that. AL: You could also add a floor to the office, if it would help the separation. On the open space, Farnsworth comes to this point, then there's a row of bollards - some kind of treatment here.... LW: Maybe you could strike the line further back, so the pedestrian way is stronger. On the church side, I know you've offset the crosswalk, Gary said you couldn't move it, but maybe put a wall there. DS: I like it as it is. WR: The landscape is handsome. How did you arrive at the placement (of the church)? JH recapped the history of the decision. JH: The Cardinal got involved. It had been below a residential use, but we couldn't do that use, only office. Putting it below *that* didn't work. The Cardinal wanted something separate, simple, humble, iconic. Zoning (FAR) was left on the table. We looked at higher versions of the office. We will be in, in 2-3 months, with a hotel on Parcel J.

Kirk Sykes (KS): What about the transparency of the windows? JH: They are stained glass. TR: The inventory of the Diocese varies, but the idea may be to have clear glass inside. JH: They do *not* want people looking in. MD asked about the program adjacent, and to the east. JH: We had about 4,000 SF left on the site, we have to keep the line of Farnsworth. TR: You meant the space in the corner of 51 Sleeper? MD: A lot of people would like to see that improved. Charlie Reed (CR) of BGI noted that all the space was being raised due to flood level increases. GH: When it was lower, the plaza would have helped the use in 51. Raised, it doesn't. AL: Gary, you noted how the landscape might help the scale transition. In terms of the street, and the separation - it might offer a good contrast. GH: There's a good argument for that. A jewel box in a canyon, like the Old State House, and others. A discussion arose about the idea of raising the office building 1 or 2 stories. TR: And raise the skylight connector too? NO. LW suggested shifting the stair (at the church plaza); LE suggested a slightly different notion. With that, the Seaport Square Parcel H Project was sent to Design Committee.

DM and DH remained recused for the next item. The next item was a presentation of the **Seaport Square Parcel F Park Project**. JH noted the planning context, also saying other things would be coming this year. JH: The Innovation use was originally planned in Parcel A, then the thought was to place it in F, adjacent to the church, defining pathways, etc. We had 9,000 SF of retail along Seaport Boulevard, but when discussing Parcel L1 with Skanska, we reoriented the building to frame the green space. The park needs to get started before they open. The area has restaurants, white-tablecloth facilities, etc. - but little takeout. So this became an airport concept, with several options, and one can eat inside or outside. And the Massachusetts Fallen Heroes group - we have lost 187 (and counting) servicemen and women - is looking for a spot to honor the locals lost in recent wars. They came to us; we were comfortable with them here. We have signed off on the idea of a monument and an interactive kiosk.

GH: In seven years of work, we see this as kind of a pinnacle of the Seaport Square district: we see this *as* Seaport Square. We are in a collaboration with Jamie Carpenter. I will give the urban design context and the design of the Square, Scott will present the pavilion, and then I will discuss the memorial. (Shows plan in context, notes preliminary massing of the G block, and the D block, proposed as office. Notes District Hall.) The retail pavilions fit within the larger Square, with the parts to the sides being built with their adjacent Projects. A Silver Line entry near District Hall is proposed. (Shows scale comparison precedents.) At Post Office Square, the lawn area is very similar. Union Square is another - more square than park. (Shows diagrams.) We have drawn 'zone' line extensions of building faces here. The water feature runs the length of the Square, and virtually along the building to the north. The crosswalk, and the diagonal skew is struck to connect to that. There are subdivisions - we see this populated, and wanted a meander. The diagonal fits with the diagonals of District Hall. (Shows precedents of tilted grass planes, Bryant Park, Baden Baden.) The water feature is a long canal with varied features. (Shows a long section and the corresponding plan relationship, an aerial perspective, an eye-level view along the canal, a view across, then looking southeast in the memorial space, with a shallow, tilted plane which is also a plinth. Shows the pavilion and notes its basic program.)

Scott Thompson (ST) of Hacin+Associates showed the pavilion in more detail. ST: There is a two-story restaurant space, opening to a deck, with stairs down. This is the same team as at District Hall - we want to relate to that, not copy. Materials are wood and black granite. It opens to the park, with a lot of glass, and transparency through the structure, breaking up the facade with different elements. (Goes through elevations and sections; shows views of the pavilion in the park, along the edge facing the canal.) LW: What were the materials used at District Hall? ST: Metal panel in different colors - gray, white, and black. (Shows more views.) The passage through the building aligns with the path in the park. JH: Also, we are thinking the space will continue into the G block. ST continued with views looking northeast, and of the interior. ST: It's open, bright, indoor-outdoor space, with seating spilling into the park. (Shows plans.) GH: And now, the Massachusetts Fallen Heroes. In the District, everyday life is a busy affair. The memorial use co-exists nicely. (Shows a diagram of the Memorial, with its relationship to a room in the pavilion, and a plinth along the front.) Jamie Carpenter envisions it as a 5-sided tower, representing the 5 service divisions. There's a twist on the top, a form within the form. (Shows examples of day and night lighting effects.) It's meant to be evocative, a beacon.

LE: I have a series of questions...I'm so excited about the space. The pedestrian sequence - I want to understand that better. I wonder about those who want to go west, across the park. The whole area could be a compelling laboratory, a sustainability laboratory. The pavilions - a long, western facade. And the winter dimension. We've all seen spaces that change in season, allow for plowing, etc. And the memorial room under the stair, pinned to the space - that could become more prominent. LW: When the Fan Pier was designed, on the edge along Harborwalk, the question was seating. Your planting slopes; I wonder if it's tall enough to use that way, aside from the seating wall. The building seems heavy - the granite is a heavy material. Steel and wood - should there be more of a relationship? KS: When you come back, maybe more information on lighting on the building...I see the memorial ideas. JH: This will have longer

hours than Post Office Square. GH: Jamie Carpenter is working on the lighting. AL: There are so many really terrific things - two pavilions framing the space - it would be fine as is, in many ways. Refinements...there is something about the scale, related to District Hall, which has large volumes. The pavilion is fussy, more about textures. Some of District Hall might find its way here. There might be some dialogue of materials across the space. And volumetric moves. These things are more alike than different, because of the scale beyond them. Let them be more alike. I remember large planes of grass in the middle, and paths at the perimeter, at Baden. JH: This is a little different, because there are so many places to go. Post Office Square - the size is close, but it's different. GH: We had a large lawn, but its subdivision created a kind of meander. WR: I personally take the stance - if I were doing it, it might be different, but I want to be sure that if we send this to Committee, that there are things to address. Often when we send, there are things to address. But here there are minor things, quibbles. LW: I think it's important to discuss this more. With that, the Seaport Square Parcel F Park was sent to Design Committee.

DM returned. DH remained recused, and DS was recused for the next item. The next item was a presentation of the **45 West Third Street Project**. Kevin Kerr, the Project attorney, introduced the team, noting that Spaulding & Slye was the Developer (Daniel St. Clair, its Director) and Hacin+Associates the architect. He noted Scott and Josh from that firm and David Warner (DW), landscape architect. ST showed a context model with an older massing, as well as a larger updated model. Using slides, he showed the locus, and the idea of corners. ST: Our approach has several principles: 1) separate 'buildings,' 2) special corners, and 3) (responding to) multiple contexts. The building has different roles to play; it's connective tissue. The Project has a '3' shape, with 5 stories above a parking podium. (Shows ground floor plan, then a series of context photos, with 'before' and 'after' inserts; then, views along West Third.) WR: Is anything we see, the garage? ST: No. Well, you see louvers. (Shows sidewalk along West Third.) DW described the wider sidewalk proposed, showing new trees and a section. DW: The sidewalk needs to be a conduit. Around the corner on A Street, it is also set back and indented, but more limited - so no trees. ST then showed an aerial view of the Third Street facade and described the strategy at the corners. He showed a before and after at the KO Pies corner, then A Street, then an oblique view down Athens. WR asked about Athens Street, and ST obliged by providing more context. ST then showed views from the south, and noted the courtyards and amenity program. DW showed details of the courtyard spaces: One is meditative, the other more active. Greener, and less so. ST showed more developed views - toward the SW from the West Third Street bridge, and then toward the east from A Street.

MD: Comments for subcommittee? WR: So many parts of this project are thoughtful, pretty good. The real issue is the parking on the ground floor. You've solved it on two streets; there is more to do on Athens. LW: I'm not convinced the planters (on the north) will work - I would rather have the space. LE: It would be helpful to understand more about the adjacent sidewalks in the area. DM: Bill is right, there are a lot of good things. But Athens is a tight, dead-end alley. The thing which is most disappointing is the Third Street side - I'm not sure if it's one, or several parts. I'm not sure I have a prejudice one way or the other. But that street could hold a single elevation. KS: Colorized, with color panels - the devil is in the details. I would like to

see precedent examples. AL: Your strategy - making it in blocks. Does that mean it needs to be in different materials as well? There could be two material strategies which alternate. This is one building. You are trying to find a strategy balanced between continuity and articulation. The piece in the middle is not convincing on its own; it should be more separated, or part of a bigger whole. The piece next to the house seems out of character, unresolved. Setting back the attic makes a lot of sense. There is a lot of expert handlings of difficult conditions. ST: It is very episodic. With that, the 45 West Third Street Project was sent to Design Committee.

There being no further items for discussion, a motion was made to adjourn, and the meeting was duly adjourned at 8:32 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission is scheduled for April 1, 2014. The recording of the March 4, 2014 Boston Civic Design Commission meeting was digitized and is available at the Boston Redevelopment Authority.