

## DRAFT MINUTES

### **BOSTON CIVIC DESIGN COMMISSION**

The meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was held on Tuesday, November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016, starting in the O'Neill Room (#801), 8<sup>th</sup> Floor, Boston City Hall, and beginning at 5:18 p.m.

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

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 Thursday, October 20, in the BOSTON HERALD.

The first item was the approval of the October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016 Meeting Minutes. A motion was made, seconded, and it was duly

**VOTED: To approve the October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016 Boston Civic Design Commission Meeting Minutes.**

Votes were passed for signature. The next item was a report from the Review Committee on **The Residences at Forest Hills Project**. David Carlson (DAC) noted that this was a residential Project at a significant corner near Forest Hills Station, not far from several other Projects reviewed by the Commission. It is outside of the JP/Rox Planning area, but was part of a 2010 study. At about 280,000 SF, it exceeded the BCDC threshold, and review was recommended. It was duly moved, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the proposed The Residences at Forest Hills Project at 3694 Washington Street in the Jamaica Plain neighborhood.**

The next item was a report from the Design Committee on the **Marine Wharf Project**. Andrea Leers (AL) noted that the issues were resolved well in Committee. MD asked for an updated presentation. Eamon O'Marah (EOM) of Harbinger Development noted that the review with the BCDC improved the Project a lot - it was an exercise in placemaking. Robert Brown of Perkins + Will presented the Project as it was now, noting first the site plan, and pointing out the hotel functions and retail shown. He noted that loading was a part of the

discussion and described the revised operations, showing the view from Summer. The parking ramp was shortened, the loading moved around the corner. He noted the discussion about the fencing along Summer (the views depicted an open treatment). (Shows floor plans, day and night views, an aerial view.)

Bill Rawn (WR) asked about the rationale for a landscape separation, or not, from the loading. AL: We looked at a series of treatment options; we felt that a simple, green buffer would be best. MD: The loading had been moved away, so it was more well-treated. LE: A section and view would help you, Bill. The plantings should help hide car headlights, etc. (To Proponent) Work on that. Deneen Crosby (DC): And hiding the necessary backups, hammerheads, etc. Chris Lemon: We can work on a berm (shows the turning movement diagram). Daniel St. Clair (DS): Can you just move the building? MD: The notes should show that the team should work to get a little more landscaping depth on Summer Street with BPDA staff. EOM: We can't really move the building; we're shoehorned in with the property and Chapter 91. But we can work on the treatment. The discussion in Committee was to open it up as much as possible to view this moment of the building. WR: The loading dock facing Summer Street is an unusual condition. EOM: The trucking and traffic flow in the Marine Park is critical; it's difficult to have that in other places. With that, and not hearing any public comment, it was duly moved, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the schematic design for the Marine Wharf Project on Parcel A, at the corner of Drydock Avenue and Summer Street, in the Raymond L. Flynn Marine Park in the South Boston Waterfront District, with the condition that the Proponent continue to work on the appropriate screening of the loading dock area from Summer.**

The next item was a report from the Design Committee on the **South Station Project NPC**. MD asked Commissioners - then hearing none, the Proponent to report the Committee's results. David Perry (DP) of Hines Interests introduced Ed Dionne (ED) of Pelli Clarke Pelli, who noted that there was a good discussion in Committee addressing the issues, and modifications - which will be part of the presentation. Fred Clarke (FC) of PCP: One issue was the residential entry (shows changes). We think it's much better, more generous. Cody Klein (CK) of OJB noted that the streetscape there used the City's Complete Street Guidelines. He showed existing, then the proposed conditions: a single row of trees, with space for sidewalk dining adjacent to the retail space next to the shuttle lobby.

ED: A real takeaway from Committee was where we mark the entry into the station. AL asked about the existing condition. FC showed a photo of the existing condition, which would be opened up. DC: What about the change in plane? ED: It's all flush, a smooth transition up. The paving reflects the canopy above. CK: That was discussed...we've developed views (shows).

Linda Eastley (LE): Not just looking up, but down - which you've done; and, a warmer material - which you've also done. CK showed the same drawing perspective, with yellow pavers going out, and then their preferred design, which favors pedestrians. Then an image of the current design. ED: You'll see the canopy in a moment - and the stairs,

ramp. FC showed a series of canopy studies: raising it, making two, using glass, making it solid with an oculus. They preferred the straightforward choice. ED: WE looked at the stair, ramp, and handrails, and wanted to clean that up. (Shows a perspective of the stair/ramp combination. Shows a wall separating the stair and ramp, which cuts down on the railing complexity.) AL: The existing, despite the wider opening you show, is a very wide stair, with a very large flow. Could the office lobby swing, to give it more space? DP: The limiting factor is the shuttle elevators. Kirk Sykes (KS): Why not just one big ramp? LE: I agree. You could move the entry - that's just a sill detail for you (threshold to the ramp, a drain.) ED: A sill detail is doable. WR: And move the office door to the street. ED: What happens downstairs is a mess (structure). MD: We're just suggesting a wide ramp. DC: And a wide sidewalk. KS: Wayfinding - if there's some disruption of the planar surface at that particular spot that says, go here. AL: I thought you were alluding to the skylight that's there, but deeper, not out on the sidewalk. WR: There are doors that open out onto the narrower egress stair (they will check on this).

FC: On to the structure. The concourse that exists today has a certain character. The question was asked, should that influence the character of this design? He showed a photo, noting the canopy (which will be eliminated) and wall (which will be more than twice the height). He showed the proposed parabolic arch, reminding Commissioners of the necessary change in structure. FC: The Engineer had something less elegant. The material under the arched space will likely be metal. If we kept the [existing] character, the beams would be large (shows this version). We feel that the pendentive arches give more character to the arrival. (Shows a rendering of what it could be like: a diamond metallic grid, membrane-like, with the lighting of the sky above.) Paul McDonough (PM): How many piers reach the ground? ED: They all do. 8, all using the same structural system. KS: It's translucent? FC: Reflective. ED: The idea allows for the insertion of necessary items such as speakers, etc. FC then did a walk-through animation - first along Atlantic, then from Dewey Square. KS asked about the fascia: 'The contrast between the two is not good.' It's an interesting question: there's contrast, a lack of revolution. MD: Who owns that? DP: The MBTA (Shows a walk-through). We don't control that real estate. KS: We're trying to extend the experience, so that it doesn't stop at the train hall. We're trying to extend the experience, so that it doesn't stop at the town hall. (More walk-through runs are shown.)

LE: I applaud your studies on Atlantic, marking the entry. The simplification of the ramp would make it even better, and with the train platforms pushed back, a better scale. I'm not sure why that stair would remain. I like the warm paving a lot. A column inside the lobby could be the vertical element. I would much prefer that over a sign on the building. The interior arches...I like the rendered scheme. They should even glow - but I'm not looking at any one part. It's cleaner, more celebratory. WR: Pretty exciting. KS: I would like to formally say to the State that we would like the resolution of the two facades. MD: The public would be served by such a resolution. PM: What is your timing? DP: Due to the complexity, about four years. DS: Is the plan still the same for loading? DP: We're working with the State; that's an older version. MD: Simplify the ramp more. And the BPDA Board should advocate for the resolution of the designs. With no further questions, and none from the audience, it was moved, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the revised schematic design of the South Station Air Rights Project as contained in the Notice of Project Change dated July 29, 2016, with the continuing condition that the Proponent or their assigns return as the hotel/residential and research building air rights components and the corresponding Atlantic Avenue facades become more fully developed to present resolutions of these components to the Commission for review and vote.**

The next item was a report from Design Committee on the **101-105 Washington Street Project**.

KS reported: We think the architects did a good job of addressing the scale of the buildings and spaces. A good analysis and argument for the treatment of the Synagogue and Mikvah. We discussed the relationships with the spaces they didn't control, talking about access, and jewel boxes in the green, with roofs, too. Eric Robinson (ER) of RODE: Kirk nailed the points. OJB helped to bring the landscape together. I'll just show where we are (shows site). We reduced the drive slightly, moved the tree, separated the parking space(s) in the rear. We are looking at (vs. the BHA space) having a more landscaped buffer, with no fence. Lighting (the path has to be safe) will be on the path, and low. It's the 'borrowed landscape' idea. (Shows a view at the rear, but not including the view beyond.) At the rear, they will likely need a fence because of privacy issues (vs. the BHA 'garden' area) with the Mikvah use. (Shows a view from the rear in, showing the fencing.) There's a suggestion of small spaces created, and a [handsome] fence separation. The Synagogue will have a landscaped roof. The Mikvah cannot, for religious reasons. ER briefly showed the architecture in axons, detailed axons, and updated views. He showed the entry from Washington, a view of the complex, noting the two small buildings.

AL: The site plan has evolved in a really good way. This is residential in an area where all the materials are consistent, from the ground up. Your piece at the corner has a 2-story, light base - it just seems an exception to me. ER: It's a nod to the massing move, anchoring the edge. The building across the street has a similar base. AL: The massing is better. This just feels funny. LE: I haven't seen this since the presentation. There are a lot of good choices. It's good not to preclude the connection to the garden. What about the path shown (points) to the Mikvah? ER: There's inconsistency in the views. LE: The path, it looks to be the same as the apron around the Synagogue, makes it feel more of the family. DC: The resolution of the pathway is really nice - I like the idea of the lower lighting. MD: Break down the line between the properties. NO other comments? I think this will be a real gem. It was moved, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the schematic design for the proposed 101-105 Washington Street Project in the Allston/Brighton neighborhood.**

The next item was a report from the Design Committee on the **480 Rutherford Avenue Project NPC**. AL: You were working on how to bring people into the entry...you made a lot of changes. DC: The open

space modifications were responsive and good. MD: The Proponents took great pains to bring the broader context into the picture. Geoff Lewis (GL) of Colliers: And the separate retail and residential entries. Mark Rosenschein (MR) of Colliers: We are trying to transform from a suburban office park to something which brings streets through, makes connections. There was a BTD conversation on 10/26 which allowed for the retention of the Rutherford underpasses. We want to push that back to here, for that intersection to be made possible across here. Chris Hill (CH) of CBT showed the perspectives, noting questions about the corner, the expression of the entry, and the contrast with the rest of the development. CH: The landscape is along Rutherford, and on our drive opposite. We think the corner element still needs to be darker, dominant. It was originally metal; now it's fibreC [the same as the rear, on B Street]. We reduced the size of the corner window. Now it's living room sized, and inset [still with a yellow edge]. We've extended the canopy to the entry, and brought a column down. The underside of the canopy is wood. CH showed a series of before and after views, noting the relationships.

DS: Where is the parking - in the building? CH: There's 90 spaces in the building now. MR noted a surplus of parking on the overall site of about 300 spaces, some of which can be reserved for the retail or visitors. The landscape architect showed the older and new site plans, noting the street trees along their drive and along Rutherford. MR: This is all interim. (Shows a view of a different scheme with modified drop-off across the drive, and a stronger green connection by the boiler building. MR: This could produce a real intersection, our shot at a future condition. The overpass removal [Sullivan/Rutherford] means that the underpass can be moved north. Spice Street will be more compromised. BHCC will be a surface connection. LE: Do you have a Masterplan? MR: No. LE: How important is B Street in the future? This image is so inspiring, it would be terrific. B Street still doesn't feel like it's been tended to. MR: In the back, there's another owner. In this scheme, B is a service corridor, feeding our other building. We depend on the BDA to have our neighbor do the same. LE: You can do something better for the pedestrians, but you can still have the loading docks, garage, etc. Have another look. See what is possible. MR: We will take a leap of faith with you.

AL: Scaling down the corner makes it more residential. The canopy brought around is a good move. I appreciate that you heard that you could relate the corner to the rear. But that is a different window pattern, with vertical windows rather than horizontal. The suggestion was the *language*. (CH shows a view of the rear.) AL: That's what I was suggesting - *this* vocabulary. But I do appreciate your attention...it could be metal panels. CH: The pattern wouldn't be that varied...this material is closer. WR: Retail that works is usually on two sides of the street. That's never going to happen here. What if it doesn't work? Is there a Plan B? MR: We feel there will be sufficient traffic along Rutherford...we feel this is supportable. This will never be Main Street, but we think it's okay - there's *no* retail in the area. WR: Plan B? MR: We don't like answering in the negative when we feel positive. But we think it could be a fitness center, marketing center, etc. KS: Set aside a few spaces for short term parking. Grab'n'Go is most viable. With that, it was moved, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the revised schematic design for 480 Rutherford Avenue in the Hood Park Master Plan PDA, in the Charlestown neighborhood, with the condition that BPDA staff continue**

**to work on the issues discussed in the minutes.**

The next item was a presentation of **The Residences at Forest Hills Project**. Jack Englert (JE) of Criterion Development introduced the Project. JE: We've done 3500 units. One project is Hub 25, on Morrissey Boulevard. Another is on Route #2 (the old club site) in Cambridge. Here, we've met with the neighborhood a lot; we have not been able to meet with all. Nancy Ludwig (NL) of ICON presented the design. NL first noted the nearby Parcel U and Metromark (the Commons) projects nearby. She then showed an illustrative from the 2008 BRA study for the site, which suggested a multi-building development, a 'street' coming in, a courtyard, and the preservation of trees at the rear. She showed a photo of the existing area, noting the 'historic' 1-story commercial spaces, many recently renovated. She noted Tower Avenue, stepping up. And another view showing strong trees, and the hill. An easement precludes the developer from building over the Stony Brook conduit. She showed a diagram of the site, featuring vehicular entry from Washington Street, pedestrians from the Arborway, and green spaces at the corner and in the courtyard, with trees on the slope at the rear.

NL: There is up to a 30-foot drop from Orchard Hill. Building A was dropped back to provide [surface] parking behind, so that the funeral home can use it when needed; they use that area now. (Shows the site plan detail at the entry.) The driveway in has parking to either side for the retail. (Shows the site plan.) Buildings A, B, and C are each branded differently. 126, 80, and 45 units. A is the biggest, so it has a pool, with an amenity space surrounding it. We have parking below A and B, utilizing the grade shift. C is too small, so that has retail instead. On the upper floors, A steps back. (Shows perspective views from across the Arborway.) WE are planning playful interventions I think of as 'tree houses'. We have a brick base with metal shingles above. At the Orchard Hill corner, we have playful columns and shadow lines. There's a view into the courtyard from the Arborway. (Shows a view of the corner.) Here, there's an inset. NL noted the graphic on the neighboring store, and showed the view from Tower Avenue, and a view of the courtyard.

John Copley (JC) of CWDG briefly showed the DCR pocket park as a space serving the retail. JC: there's a 4-5' grade change, with circular flairs. And an ashlar pattern on the walls. DC asked about the nature of the space, with the grade change. JC pointed it out....DC: We will discuss in Design Committee. JC continued: There is a path through from the Arborway. The grade changes require ramps - here, and here; we are adding feature walls there. NL explained the idea of this building relationship. JC showed sections through the sidewalk and courtyard and its 'mounds'.

KS: I'm most interested in the front and back of the pie-shaped parcel (C). Retail - I'm not sure how that works. NL: DCR does not want their property used for commercial purposes. So we thought that people could enjoy the courtyard space; there's less retail used at the corner. KS: Help us understand better how that works. NL: The space on the sidewalk can't feel like it's part of the building. MD asked about that, gesturing at the model: It seems like there's a layer going through the [courtyard] space - the stoops, and other things. The uses are not engaging. AL: Clearly, there is complex topography and

ownership. The setting of the ground floor up a full floor - (NL: Not a full floor, 4') - and entries here, feel more like a barrier. The space is surrounded by ramps and stairs. What is the experience of arrival? A second big issue - the building looms large, and massive. The fact that it's about the same as the neighbors' ridges doesn't help. It feels *very* large. NL defended the scale in the area. AL: You'll come from the station, and see a large wall over the restored retail.... MD: Are you seeking height and FAR variances? NL: Yes. MD: Then setting up a different streetscape - I might buy that. But when I get there, there's nothing there. DC: The whole space doesn't set back, up against the buildings. MD: There's a blank wall of parking in back of the perimeter spaces.

LE: The idea of the landscape is very clever. What I'd love to see, are options to make the landscape more dominant. Buildings A and B should engage...I like the mounding, it helps with privacy issues. NL: But the floors aren't at grade. LE (echoed by DC): Bring elements closer, they're too separated. We need to understand the constraints. Getting to the crosswalk [at Arborway] is a desire line through your pocket park. You're urban, you go through an amazing park, then you're over the Arborway. It would be incredible to have a small reflective space there.

WR asked about the elevations: Have you studied options? It's your choice. I want to compliment you on how you've broken the space up. I don't want to be too critical. I have a question about the space in back, at the corner. JE: There may be an opportunity to make that better. That space is a mess now, all dumpsters. KS: The plan organization is quite good. It's challenging; there's a lot going on. You have freedom at the corner. Carve it away. Start to think about the context, and carving away the mass. DC: I do think that the desire line to walk through the space could be interesting. JE: The neighborhood had wanted the space for them, they feel they are not getting enough from the developments around the area. MD: If I looked at a figure/ground, I would imagine this as a great urban courtyard. But that dissipates as you walk through. It's not legible, not working. NL: Do you think it's public/commercial space? MD: You need to persuade us of the space. DC: It needs to be accessible. AL: I would allow the ground to be normal. I'd like to see a massing of A 1-2 stories lower, and B 2 stories higher. PM: A dialogue with the neighbors.... With that, and hearing no public comment, the Residences at Forest Hills 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 8:17 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was scheduled for December 6, 2016. The recording of the November 1, 2016 Boston Civic Design Commission meeting was digitized and is available at the Boston Redevelopment Authority.