

MINUTES
BOSTON CIVIC DESIGN COMMISSION

The meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was held on Tuesday, July 6, 2021, and was held virtually via Zoom to ensure the safety of the public, staff members, and the BPDA Board Members during the COVID-19 pandemic, and beginning at 5:00 p.m. Members in attendance were Deneen Crosby, Jonathan Evans, Eric Höweler, Mikyoung Kim, Kathy Kottaridis, Andrea Leers, Mimi Garza Love, David Manfredi, William Rawn, Kirk Sykes. Absent were Linda Eastley, David Hacin, and Anne-Marie Lubeanu. Elizabeth Stifel, Executive Director of the Commission, was present. Representatives of the BSA attended. Natalie Punzak and others were present for the BPDA.

The Chair, Andrea Leers, 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. She 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 June 25, 2021, in the BOSTON HERALD.

The first item was the approval of the June 1 and 8 Monthly Meeting Minutes, and the Design Committee Minutes from meetings on June 22 and 29. A motion was made, seconded, and it was duly

VOTED: To approve the June 1, 8, 22, and 29, 2021 BCDC Meeting Minutes.

Votes were passed for signature. The next item was a report from the Review Committee on the BMS Paper 3390 Washington Street project. This site has been the longtime home to the BMS Paper company, the owner of which now looks to expand that operation while building housing and restaurant space. Over the 100,000 SF review threshold at ~254,000 SF, review is recommended. It was moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the proposed BMS Paper 3390 Washington Street project in the Jamaica Plain neighborhood.

The next Review Committee report was for the Landmark Center Redevelopment Phase 3 project. The project proposes 490,000 SF of office/life science and a grocery store, on a site that has been undergoing redevelopment for decades and come before the Commission multiple times, for the redevelopment of the historic 401 Park building, The Pierce residences, and 201 Brookline Ave. Given the size of the project, review is recommended. It was moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the proposed Landmark Center Redevelopment Phase 3 project in the Fenway neighborhood.

The third item was a report for the 100 Hood Park Drive Addition project. Hood Park, LLC is seeking review and approval of a vertical addition to the existing 100 Hood Park Drive parking garage. The BCDC last saw this project in 2018. At that time, the project contemplated a performance venue in

the base building. The addition contemplates ~155,000 SF of office/lab space, so review is recommended. It was moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the proposed 100 Hood Park Drive Addition project in the Charlestown neighborhood.

The Commission moved into Votes of Recommendation for projects from Design Committee. The first and only presentation from Design Committee was for **Herb Chambers Honda of Boston**.

James Mullarkey, Curtis Architectural Group: Throughout the Commission's review, we've revised the site plan to increase landscaping and widen the sidewalk and reconfigure the curb cuts. Added trees and a 10' sidewalk along Freeport St to connect with the future DCR bike path. Regarding the architecture, we distinguished the showroom from the rest of the building, lowered the canopy to improve the sense of scale and proportion, increased transparency along Morrissey Blvd, engaged the pedestrian scale. The façade design and scale of the Honda elements and windows was central to our conversations with the Commission, and there have been many modifications to improve the sense of scale and balance on the façade.

Deneen Crosby: The site plan has greatly improved since the last time I saw this project. The relocation of the curb cuts has helped make the public realm more continuous and safe.

David Manfredi: The proponent have been incredibly responsive to us. I know this was a challenging process. I appreciate the before and after images. The building is much improved.

Public comment:

Maria Lyons: There is no master plan for the Neponset path. This building is taller than zoning allows. This compromises the Dorchester waterfront. The windows are acting as billboards. Many climate concerns for this neighborhood that this project does not engage with. This is not the vision for Dorchester that residents want.

Hearing nothing else, a motion was made, it was moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the BCDC recommend approval of the schematic design for the Herb Chambers Honda, 710-720 Morrissey Boulevard, Dorchester project in the Dorchester neighborhood.

The Commission moved to project presentations, the first being for **BMS Paper 3390 Washington Street** in the Jamaica Plain neighborhood.

Elizabeth Stifel gave a brief introduction: Key concerns during staff design review so far regard the location of the entrance to the residential building, the complexity of the massing overall, and the density of the project as it relates to PLAN: JP/Rox.

David O'Sullivan, O'Sullivan Architects: This project proposes an expansion of the existing BMS Paper business and a residential addition. The massing follows the guidance on height and setbacks established by PLAN: JP/Rox. The existing driveway will remain and connect to the residential addition. Ground floor plan is connected as retail with adjacent loading and parking. The residential

parking garage is dug into a hill. Renderings showing restaurant, inside courtyard with various entries, relationship to Pine Street Inn new development, and concept images for the courtyard.

William Rawn: This is a complex project that would benefit from a three-dimensional model for use at design committee.

Mimi Love: For such a simple, relatively flat site, this project seems overly complex. I'd like more understanding at Design Committee about the choices about ins and outs at the ground plane and the need for such complexity.

Deneen Crosby: I'd like to know more about the planting area at the rear of the site. I'm interested in what one sees from Washington Street as they look into courtyard areas. I want to know more about the open space network and how the architecture relates to it.

Kirk Sykes: This seems to be a hyper contextual project. I want to know more about color, texture, scale, windows, and how these relate to the surrounding context.

Mikyong Kim: It would be good to see more at Design Committee about the various landscape elements you are creating in three-dimensions, as well as precedent imagery for these spaces.

David Manfredi: Concerned with how close this building is to the Pine Street Inn project. Want to see how this project relates to buildings around it in three-dimensions. Seems like you are making an effort to preserve the tree canopy but we need to understand the details.

Kathy Kottaridis: I'd like a better understanding of what is being removed/demolished, especially as it relates to trees, as well as for plans for in and outs of curb cuts and drive ways from what you know about the program and neighbors. Why these choices in color and articulation of the new project? Existing conditions information would help us.

Andrea Leers: Look at some alternatives in a fundamental way. The existing building that is being expanded has lost its integrity and has become confusing. Make the new and old clearly distinguished. There is a tremendous blurring between the new residential piece and this should be more clear and simplified in massing.

Public comment:

Jennifer Uhrhane, IAG: a few key issues we've raised through the article 80 process which are in line with Commission's comments: aside from being very dense and busy, it feels like this project is being designed to maximize an awkward parcel and not as a project that works on its own. There are a lot of trees in the byway behind the project that this project will demo. Want to see a project in at least two parts and a project that utilizes the landscape, respects the existing building,

Sarah Freeman: removing trees will have implications for the site that haven't been clearly presented. Want to urge for preservation of existing trees and topography

The project will continue in design committee.

The next project presentation was for **Landmark Center Redevelopment**. David Manfredi was recused.

Elizabeth Stifel: Issues that have come up during review of the project to date are the facade treatment, the amount of surface paving, and the relationship of the project to the adjacent multimodal path.

Abe Menzin, Samuels & Associates: This project is part of a 10 year journey. Phase one of Landmark Center Redevelopment was the restoration of 1920 Sears Roebuck building. Phase two under construction. This is phase three, and when completed will be one of the first net zero life science projects.

Mark Sardegna, Elkus Manfredi: Phase three consists of the north side of the site, which today is an asphalt open loading dock, six story parking garage, Bed Bath and Beyond, and a surface parking lot. The new building will have enclosed loading, grocery, and open space in front. The massing is shaped to maximize sunlight and on the multiuse path and neighborhood next to the building. Upper facade relates to 201 Brookline. The open space and plaza in front must accommodate fire truck turnaround, an accessible route to T, office entry, and grocery store entry. The street along the back will be a more pedestrian friendly connection to the Fenway. We have a model that we can use at design committee.

Keith LeBlanc, LeBlanc Jones Landscape Architects: Diagram of ped and bike connections established during the first two phases. Entrance to parking and vehicular entrance is separated from the pedestrian connection to the T. Piazza turn around access at the front of the building has been made as small as possible. This phase will complete the landscape design around the entire site.

William Rawn: The black frame of the phase two building (401 Brookline) with the tall narrow tower is compositionally interesting. As you looked at this addition as a composition, did you consider ways to integrate the new building into that composition instead of creating something with a different color and curtain wall? I'm less concerned with the shaping of the building.

Kirk Sykes: The images of the model really underscores how turning down the contrast in color/material makes the historic Landmark building that much more important. The Brookline Ave building is really successful, and I would like for this building to provide a better composition that holds the Landmark building.

Mikyoung Kim: I appreciate the programmed open spaces at the front of the building. It would be helpful to understand programmatically how this building complements the highly successful spaces you've already made. And I'd like to see the diagram of the truck turn around to see if it's possible to break down the scale of the plaza.

Deneen Crosby: Walk me through the users and how they use the space. Circulation seems confusing—what's the thinking of how the multiuse path connects to the project at a larger scale?

Jonathan Evans: Is there opportunity for a more welcoming public space in front of the building? Access to daylight can push the project.

Andrea Leers: Mass, height, and footprint are sound. I remember how they evolved from earlier studies. My questions have more to do with architectural expression. This is the same height and use as phase two building and frames the Sears building in the same way. Why does this need to be so different in architectural expression and material?

Public comment:

Alison Pultinas: How do pedestrians and cyclists interact with vehicles? This seems hazardous. Also want to know about the plantings that are parallel to the path.

The project will continue in design committee.

The **100 Hood Park Drive addition** project was the next presentation. David Manfredi was recused.

Elizabeth Stifel: Design review discussions so far have confused on the transition between existing lower and new upper addition, the integration of the public realm, and the rigor of the fenestration on the addition.

Mark Rosenshein, Trademark Partners: We've worked closely with the Commission over the years on the masterplan for Hood Park, and for the design review of the 100 Hood Park Drive building. This proposal considers a six story addition on top of the parking structure and retail podium.

Mark Spaulding, SMMA: The parking garage creates a public edge on the street, but the goal of this addition is to balance the master plan with a sense of quiet instead of creating a new architectural geometry and language. Looking at this as a terminus that blends with the existing building. Parking structure dictates massing for structural reasons. Facade patterning is designed with parametric modeling. At the top floor of the garage and between the addition we envision some public programming to enliven the space between the lower and upper addition.

Mimi Love: Appreciate the constraints and context. The architecture above seems to dwarf the base, though. At design committee, I'd like to hear more about the band between the podium and addition, the setback, and about programming at the roof of the garage.

Jonathan Evans: The fin and articulation strategy seems interesting—is it different on each side? This is a statement building within a complex composition, and the formal expression should respond to the different contexts on each side of it.

Kirk Sykes: The approach to this garage has evolved, and if we were considering this as a new project we might be looking at more façade wrapping at the podium. I'd like to hear a bit more about this.

Deneen Crosby: At subcommittee, let us know if there are shadow impacts on the public spaces.

Andrea Leers: Good start on bringing unity to an otherwise disparate collection of buildings.

Challenging entryway condition for this project to engage with. I would have expected the shifting of the grid to have responded to orientation in how you shape the fins.

Public comment:

Johanna Hynes: I feel like this project blocks the sky. Employees will have 5-star views, how will the people of Charlestown engage with this neighborhood edge? How much of the acreage is hardscape? How many mature trees are going in here?

The project will continue in committee.

There being no further items for discussion, a motion was made to adjourn, and the meeting was duly adjourned at 7:00 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was scheduled for August 3, 2021. The recording of the July 7, 2021 Boston Civic Design Commission meeting was digitized and is available at the Boston Redevelopment Authority.