

## DRAFT MINUTES

### BOSTON CIVIC DESIGN COMMISSION

The meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was held on Tuesday, January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2014, starting in the BRA Board Room, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor, Boston City Hall, and beginning at 5:19 p.m.

Members in attendance were: Michael Davis (Co-Vice-Chair); Deneen Crosby, Linda Eastley, David Hacin, Andrea Leers, Paul McDonough (Co-Vice-Chair), William Rawn, Daniel St. Clair, Kirk Sykes, and Lynn Wolff. Absent was David Manfredi. Also present was David Carlson, Executive Director of the Commission. Representatives of the BSA were present. Michael Cannizzo and Corey Zenghebot 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 Thursday, December 19, in the BOSTON HERALD.

The first item was the approval of the December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2013 Meeting Minutes. A motion was made, seconded, and it was duly

**VOTED: To approve the December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2013 Boston Civic Design Commission Meeting Minutes.**

Votes were passed for signature. MD asked for a report from the Review Committee. Paul McDonough (PM) was recused from the next item. The next item was a report from the Review Committee on the **Pier 4 Phase 2 NPC (Office) Project**. David Carlson (DAC) reported that Pier 4 was a PDA, and this was a significant change, yet somehow balancing the change in Phase 1 from office to residential. Such a change merits new review, and the square footage alone would ordinarily merit such. A vote to review was recommended. It was duly moved, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design and PDA Plan changes for the Pier 4 Project Phase 2 NPC in the South Boston Waterfront District.**

PM returned. The next item was a report from the Review Committee on **The Skating Club of Boston Project**. DAC reported that the Project was replacing a building (shell) approved by the Commission in 2000. This would be demolished, and new rink facility built. This also helped to accomplish Allston planning objectives. At about 190,000 SF, it was more than the BCDC threshold and a vote to review was recommended. It was duly moved, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the proposed Skating**

**Club of Boston Project at 176 Lincoln Street in the North Allston neighborhood.**

The next item was a report from the Review Committee on the **61-83 Braintree Street Project**. DAC reported that the Project, located near the last but within the Brighton Guest Street Planning Area in Brighton, was slightly under the BCDC threshold at about 93,000 SF, but in a highly visible location along the Mass Pike and not far from the New Balance HQ under construction. A vote to review was recommended; it was duly moved, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the proposed 61-83 Braintree Street Project in the Brighton neighborhood.**

Andrea Leers (AL) arrived. The next item was a report from Design Committee on the **600 Harrison Project**. After a brief prompt from MD, no one actually reported out, and Michael LeBlanc (ML) of Utile, Inc. introduced himself and noted that he would recap the issues studied. ML: The sense of the Committee was that the Project was headed in the right direction. (Shows some perspective views, notes materials, shows a view along Malden, shows elevations.) We modified the Malden Street treatment (shows the revised section, precedents, and notes the size of the sidewalk). The area is charming, but you wouldn't build a sidewalk like the existing, now. We looked at the parking lot section (shows); the headlights don't go into the restaurant space, and there's a low wall and plantings that will screen the view of cars. On the St. Helena's Park side, we have more on the path and fence; there's planting along the fence at the building. We have better defined the edge. Our preference is to connect the path into the park, and not along the edge. Kirk Sykes (KS) asked about the section at the ramp; ML noted the fence was outboard of the ramp wall and also screened with plantings. David Hacin (DH): Is there a material change at this corner? ML: Yes, it's metal, like at the front. There was no further discussion and no audience questions; it was moved, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the schematic design for the 600 Harrison Avenue Project in the South End neighborhood.**

Lynn Wolff (LW) was recused from the next item. The next item was a report from Design Committee on the **345 Harrison Avenue (Graybar Site) Project and PDA**. Daniel St. Clair (DS): In summary, we got to a place where the members of the Committee felt comfortable in approving the Project; a lot of small changes added up to a significant improvement. The change in treatment of the space, and a walk-through helped to convince. On the treatment of building facades, they had a calmer version, and then one which struck a better balance. How the building met the streets - we were comfortable with that. DH had a question about the model. MD noted there was a presentation from BRA staff about the area plan. Chris Hill (CH) of CBT Inc. showed the plan modification on the screen, then also noted the changes on a small context model. CH: The program on the ground floor has a substantial amount of retail. (Shows a series of views.) KS: Could you go a little slower? What are the materials? CH: Precast, and brick. CH then showed views along Harrison from two directions, then along

Traveler, and then Washington. Day and night views were alternated. He showed views through the passage, then a view looking into the Traveler space, then the same space from the inside, noting how open it seems. He showed another internal view, looking at the green wall at the back, toward Ink Block in the distance.

KS asked about the transparency of the 'bridge' element. CH: It's thin, about 6 feet, and not tinted but clear, and lit. Linda Eastley (LE) asked the team to make sure of the retail shown in the ground floor in that view. CH showed more views, and a sectional cut along the passage. John Copley (JC) of the Copley Wolff Design Group showed the updated site plan, and then the revised internal design, which is now normalized to the local grid. JC: Some details were prompted by utilities under the sidewalk, such as with the expanded Harrison Avenue (at Ink Block). Bill Rawn (WR) asked whether this detail was seen before. JC: It's newly developed. JC then showed an enlargement of the plan, noting the double row of trees, with the inner row in a flush setting and the outer edge having raised planters, a combination of raised concrete and thin metal. LE: Can you use it as a seatwall? JC: We could do that. Deneen Crosby (DC): How often will it be used? JC: It's similar to other such details (across the street at Ink Block, i.e.). (Shows variations in the proposed treatment, and precedents.) AL asked about the larger urban framework: Why is that a desirable path? CH showed a diagram they had prepared. He described the idea, that there is a passage through all 3 blocks, and reinforced by other similar passages and connections.

KS: I appreciate the work you've done. Given your FAR, the quid pro quo is creating a special place. You did a very elegant job of carving up the density. Good work. DH: The opening up of the square is a good improvement. So is the height, and the reference to the neighborhood. But some of the corner views looking from Downtown look really big, and sheer. I appreciate the carving, but I wonder if there isn't an opportunity - the wall along Harrison especially is pretty long and sheer. More bays and balconies. Some overlay of language that breaks the massing down into a residential scale. It's more a Fenway scale now; I'm still trying to get used to the scale here. It might be nice to acknowledge the datum of the Ink Block, which is really the industrial scale of the area. On Washington, you have a similar issue, but it's more successful. The view down the street toward the City is nice - you might enhance those units with bays. CH: Those are good comments; we'll work with the BRA to incorporate them. AL: The development of the open space is a strong point here. David is right, but Harrison may need an even stronger push. MD: We could have them return. WR: Will that have any effect? Michael Cannizzo (MC): I am seeing this version for the first time, but I agree with your comments. With that, and after a brief discussion, it was moved, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the schematic design for the 345 Harrison Avenue Project and PDA on the block bounded by Traveler and Washington streets, Mullins Way, and Harrison Avenue, in the South End neighborhood, with the condition that the team return to give an informational update to the Commission once the issues discussed have been worked out through the BRA review process.**

LW returned. The next item was a report from Design Committee on the **Coppersmith Village Project**. DC reported that the discussion had focused on the central space and its treatment. There was also a comment about bicycle storage. LE: And the lobby space as a connected part of the space. DC: And there was some discussion about whether that would continue to Liverpool. Bob Wegener (BW) of The Narrow Gate noted the locus, showed an aerial view, showed a view of the central space, and then the overall site plan. BW: We have developed a series of tree planters in the central space. We tried to combine them, but that resulted in wider facades above. So we have varied the spaces, and also set up a break at the lobby position with an entry into its rear court. We studied the connection through to Liverpool, but we lose the important landscaped edge along Decatur Street. The connection was also mid-block; it didn't lead to anything. And at its maximum it was only 8' wide, which we felt to be an uncomfortable space. We have modified the treatment along Liverpool Street, now featuring street trees - larger trees along the street, smaller against the buildings - and have made a modification to allow benches, etc. as personal space. We have allowed for this along the plinth, where one can look out across the street. (Shows another view looking into the central courtyard; shows a view from a balcony in that space, noting that the trees helped the image.)

LE: What is the treatment of the roof? BW: White TPO membrane is shown. AL: What is the distance between the buildings? BW: About 40'. LW: Did the cut-through study have two 8' cuts? BW: No, it was either/or. LW: That wasn't an issue with me, I wanted more street trees. MD: I'm not sure of the passage, unless they came in here with that. AL: I agree. At 40' apart, as outside space - it's too bad you couldn't gang the trees - it's very intimate. If you could make it feel more intimate that would be good - put paving across, i.e. The potential is there for that, but not if you have two sidewalks and asphalt. Think of it as a mews. BW: Would there be a curb? AL: Not necessarily. LE: I like that idea; it would go far to address the space. AL: You could have seating, to separate the cars. KS: If a couple more spaces were lost, more trees would really help. It's a tough problem. If there were something to modulate.... We know it's not Beacon Hill. Somewhere between there and asphalt. The kneewall around the project - the character as it goes around becomes important, more so on the townhouses. But it's also at the bottom of the café. So its treatment is important. BW showed a view of it. KS: About 2 or 3'? BW: Yes - there's a variation along Decatur. KS: I'm suggesting more the texture, not questioning the fact of the wall. LE: The bicycles? BW: We looked at hanging racks, but our space is too tight. So we are still looking at spaces. (Shows a picture of a product precedent they are considering for outside use.)

WR: This is so much a nicer Project than many we see, and some we've seen tonight. So we shouldn't fuss too much. KS: You just need to be relentless; the details of this simple treatment are important. BW: We appreciate your comments. LE: The treatment of the corners are a good part of this. DC: On the trees, provide good subsoil, so the trees will prosper and do well. MD: I agree with the comments on the mews, and the character of the kneewall. With that, it was moved, seconded, and then

**VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the schematic design for the Coppersmith Village Project on the block bounded by Border, Decatur, and Liverpool streets, and Coppersmith Way, in the East Boston neighborhood.**

DH left. MD reminded the Commissioners that no action was required on the next item; it was an informational update. The next item was an update required by a condition of the vote on the **Emerson College 1-3 Boylston Place Project**. Peggy Ings (PI): We have incorporated the ideas from your comments made at your midnight session. MD: It wasn't *that* late. Ross Cameron (RC) of Elkus/Manfredi showed the locus briefly, then the site and floor plans. RC: Note the core position - that, and the bathroom elevation minimize window proximity to the neighboring dorm. Note the terrace on 14. (Shows the elevation along the alley.) This is shown as existing, then proposed, with the Piano Row dormitory in the background. We bring over the scale of the 'Ancient Landmark Building,' and the overall scale of the building picks up on the scale of the Walker Building across the alley. There's an active lounge area at the base. AL: Can we see the prior design? RC complied. RC: There's a much more direct correlation now, and a reference to the building at the street. (Shows views with the existing, then proposed condition looking out of, then into the Boylston Place alley.) PM: There are no changes to the Tavern Club? RC: No.

LW: This is a very public entry to the State Transportation Building. It should not feel like Emerson Row. PI: We've heard that. Some would prefer no students, but more feel that it's important that activity spill out. RC then showed the elevation from the Common. PM: Are there any shadow impacts? RC: There are none; we are in compliance, and there is no withdrawal from the 'bank'. We have simplified the material; it's now brick (not metal), as it is below. (Shows views.) The BRA comment was not to stick your head up, keep it down low. We think we've done that. (Shows fly-around animation.) KS: What about activating the space above the alley? RC: It's only a 3' setback. KS: You've done a good job maintaining the scale. I like what you've done. PI noted the space at the 14<sup>th</sup> floor would be available off-season. PM: Book us for June! MD: 2016. Thank you for your presentation.

PM was recused from the next item. The next item was a presentation of the **Pier 4 Phase 2 NPC**. John Twohig (JT) of Goulston Storrs introduced the Project, noting he has been working on it with Bill Cronin (of New England Development) since 1998. JT: There are three buildings in the PDA, each with severe limitations - overall SF, uses, height, setback distances from the water, etc. You've seen the change from office to residential; now it's residential to office. Today the Hanover building is under construction, with the required "water commons". Also, we have a specific amenity schedule depending on the the phasing, and we are obeying that. We have a single user tenant. We'll show the changes to the building now. Sam Norod (SN) of Elkus/Manfredi showed a large model, noting that the BCDC's Arrowstreet package was intended as background; the presentation tonight is focusing on the building. SN: The building on this site is slightly lower than the FAA limits, so we have some flexibility. WR: What governs? JT essayed an answer, but SN showed the Massport/FAA TERPS height limitation diagram. JT: Really Chapter 91 and the PDA govern the restriction now. SN showed the site/ground floor plan, then the upper floors; axonometrics were used to show the massing composition. Christian (of E/M) then showed a rendered perspective, noting: the facade change, and its relationship to the podium and the composition of the (west) facade; the podium view from Pier 4 Drive, giving a sense of the treatment of the south wall; horizontal gestures, with a

vertical interruption at the podium, a more vertical expression on the tower, with a shifted facade toward the water (east). He showed elevations, noting the west has vertical fins. That facade deflects, making a point of change. The north featured discrete ribbons relating to the east; the roof terrace was noted. Then neighborhood scale elevations, line drawing vignettes studying viewpoints and view corridors around the building, and details, including one for the fins.

DC: Does Northern Avenue connect to this? SN: No. LE: To pick up on that, it seems like such an important journey to the water. There should be more of a presence; I would prefer the loading to be on the same side as the parking garage entry. SN: We can have that conversation. DC: I see more people on Old Northern Avenue, coming over the Old Northern Avenue Bridge - more than on Seaport Boulevard. It's a shame to have delivery be on both sides. Were it not for that, it could be more pedestrian-oriented. This issue was then discussed further between SN, Christian, LE, and others. MD: The conversation will continue in Design Committee. AL: Let's take a broader look at that issue. The building you've made has zones in the north/south. I was with you until you put the entry at the corner. Why not put an entry on Old Northern? I think that entry placed there, with the taller mass above, makes sense. Especially with all that's going on, on Old Northern Avenue. KS: I would then talk about the east and west elevations. The west is successful. But the east is all about the big moves. The ground level looks crushed. The first undulating plane - could that define the pedestrian realm, similar to the other side? You're a little lost along the water. SN: And that's a conversation we're having anyway, because of the Chapter 91 26' setback issue. KS: It's all big moves. I'm looking for an intermediary move. WR: I think that what Andrea has raised is a fundamental question, but we all recognize this is challenging. This is a major street. The next street up, the ICA and Parcel I have loading; one will tend not to go straight. And I'm more concerned about the loading than I am the HVAC. LW: We need more information, on how the curve is working along the street. And the park at the ICA. MD: The renderings have a depth, and a richness to the facade we haven't seen a lot of here - there's more articulation than we've seen in other projects. I would like to see a step into something more progressive. LW: I like the sculptural quality of the west. It's nice not to see a square box. Tell us more on how it hits the ground. LE: And how it hits the water. With that, the Pier 4 Phase 2 NPC Project was sent to Design Committee.

PM returned. The next item was a presentation of **The Skating Club of Boston Project**. Phillip Laird (PL) of ARC introduced team members and began the presentation. PL: The Skating Club is one of the largest, and the only one that owns its own ice. He noted the locus, and the likely path of travel for arrival: down Lincoln Street from the Allston Pike exit. He showed a picture of the existing empty building, and noted the Club's program of 160,000 SF with 3 ice sheets. PL: The orientation of the prior project was to the Pike, with parking in front, and its back to the neighborhood. We face Everett and the neighborhood. (Notes entry points, and future expansion space, possibly used by the Bruins.) The rink is Olympic-sized in the middle; the others are NHL or American-sized rinks. Support spaces lie between. The front has the more active spaces; the (event) lobby is off of Lincoln. There is gallery space above, with a function room and support space. On the exterior, we are articulating the masses with a series of nesting shells. It steps down to articulate program spaces, but also the rinks. There is translucent glass along Lincoln and the 'front.'

LE: While on this view, where does Everett meet grade? PL showed the point near the base of the bridge. LE asked about the view under. PL: It's actually a granite wall; the bridge exists only at Lincoln and the Pike. We have been thinking about the building experienced from the Pike - the 60mph view. There is building ID on this side, but also pedestrian-scaled amenities. The City has been talking about expanding Telford Street; we have given up 14' of our property to allow for that expansion. MD: How does that work? PL: You have to move the fire department building and push past Holton Street; we allow that to happen. The design has evolved since the PNF. The existing office building really hides our building (when approached from the east). So we want to respond, and add movement to the facade. MD: Materials? PL: Oko, and metal panel. We are trying to do a better job identifying the main entry, using more glass. (Shows new views.) We have a spire at the entry, and graduated Oko colors, slightly angled - the shell's roof gesture accentuates the dynamic. (Shows night view.) There's more light and glass at the entry.

DC: Can you move the building closer to Everett? Now, it seems like a two-sided street. Here, you're at some distance, and it's harder to see from that distance. PL: we looked at a t different variations. We did look at that, but that would place the back facing the neighborhood and the front facing a storage warehouse - not a good public entry. DC: But the parking field is still an issue. Yannit Tsipis (YT): The geometry makes it difficult. AL: You have faced the building properly, toward the highway, but you also have that distance, and then make it look like a mall parking lot. It's a bit unfair to make people walk across that lot to the entry. You have a public face worthy of something, but it's facing a parking lot. KS asked about the entry - what you see.

PL: The entry in the center controls the view - you can see into the major rink. KS: If you start to move away from an industrial building expression, like New Balance, you could have some fun. You do see the building coming from the west, but now you're talking about the east. PL: We had started from the west, and are now working east. KS: So, if you don't articulate the roof, it blends into the landscape of low buildings. I'm thinking of the Greater Boston Food Bank building - the red fins changing take your attention away from the mass.

AL asked about the 8' fence along the highway. PL: It's a serpentine wall; I'm not sure why it is or starts where it does. PM: Cabot, Cabot & Forbes convinced the State it would be good sound attenuation. LW: Consider moving the entry to the other side. And instead of wood, a glowing white material, more like ice. PL: It's Oko, not wood. And the glass is frosted. LE: I would like to see how the facade evolved - your studies. This seems subtle; I'd like you to investigate a more animated facade. Your main entry - if I hadn't heard otherwise, I'd think it was a church, with a spire. I don't understand; if it connects to the neighborhood, why is it not entered in the middle, or the other side? PL: The main entry really is in the middle. LE: Then what is the real connection between the entry and people crossing? Experiment. MD: The community boating building is more fun. And expressive. Where you're going - an iconic gesture, good execution is all you need. You are a lot closer than the comments would suggest. The nested shell is a good approach. I agree with the mall look comment, but you have to deal with it. KS: How are people dropped off? What is the sense of arrival? PL: We've been squeezed; a lot of space we had as landscape has been taken for Telford. AL: This is such a fabulous opportunity. There are three rinks; you could have three vaulted structures. The nested shells is an interesting idea. But one might think it's a corporate headquarters, or an industrial building. The difference in

heights is pretty small, but can you really express that? I'm thinking of the old MDC rinks. You knew immediately what those were. Not excitement for its own sake, but instant legibility. With that, the Skating Club of Boston was sent to Design Committee.

DAC replaced batteries. MD encouraged the next item's team to start even while they were setting up. The next item was a presentation of the **61-83 Braintree Street Project**. Rodney Sinclair (RS) began, describing the site locus in terms of its proximity to Cambridge Street and its Pizzeria Regina. RS: One can think of this as a 'Back Street.' 119 Braintree is 7 stories, and filled with artists. The developer is Ed Champy, Waypoint Construction, who has been helpful working out LEED strategies. It's 80 units, 69 parking spaces, about 93,000 SF. The existing site has about 30,000 SF of plumbing supply space. The site as a whole has a lot of different elements. There is residential across the street, but also industrial buildings of 1-3 stories, with a variety of businesses, and commercial uses along Cambridge Street, starting at Harvard Ave. We have designed the building with two faces; we think we're going in the right direction. We have tried to follow the planning - the Brighton Guest Street Planning Initiative. That has informed our building scale, and program, and street treatment. We have also tried to make the building a piece of art, with elements in the building that bring that in. There is support from the community; the parking number is not too much a concern. We are proposing this to be an option for young folks; we have studios and one-bedrooms, it's less family-oriented. The commercial space is meant to be a supportive amenity, possibly an incubator space. And the social space in the lobby might have a Starbucks, and wi-fi.

Linda Neshampkin (LN) of Neshampkin French was struggling with their projector. It was suggested that the boards were okay to use. LN (using boards) then noted the location. LN: Braintree will, once it reaches the Stop'n'Shop, act as a neighborhood connector. (Shows site plan.) The existing sidewalks are very narrow. We have pulled back the first floor, so creating a colonnade at the base of the building, with a 5' recess. The garage goes down, and is masked at the east end by art installations. It's a narrow lot, but we have managed a courtyard space, and you'll be able to see through into the rear courtyard as well. (Shows elevations.) It will be hard to perceive in one shot from many locations. In order to break up the length, we have introduced vertical bays, which project out over the sidewalk. The materials are Oko and metal. It makes sense to us that the upper building is light. The Oko color palette is limited...it's a little dark now, but is a work in progress. We have pulled the building back so it can have windows (facing 119). On the other side, it's more industrial, so we're less sure. On the north, we have to preserve the view of the billboard from both directions. We are proposing a new monopole, so that the structure will be out of the building. There is a hallway along the roofdeck by the billboard; we will add clerestory windows there.

KS: Where will most of the people come from? RS: It's rental; most will come from Cambridge. LN: In the future, once the connector is built, there will be more traffic from there. And this is near the proposed commuter rail station. LW: How did you establish the view lines for the billboard? LN: Google, etc. But it's also in the restrictions from the landlord - the owner of the billboard. LE: It strikes me - this is the first housing directly on this side. So it's pioneering. This is a pretty inhospitable site; I wonder if you thought about that, and where you

created the open space. On the north, and in shadow, and very noisy. So I wonder if it might not be better on Braintree Street. I would like to hear more, and maybe see more open space solutions. DC: And a really brief summary of the Guest Street study. MD: We saw that when we reviewed New Balance; bring that back. LN: We have done sound studies with Tocci; that's why we pulled away from the Pike. LE: So, if that 20-30' makes a difference in the sound, I want to hear more. AL: I'm happy to go down this area a lot. The potential - this is a back street area, but could be interesting. There are a lot of good things here. I want to see a section - the relationship to the Pike, plantings, how that might help. I'm interested in Linda's comment about where you might have an open space - if you chose it. As you approached the site from Harvard, the southeast might be best. I know you have dimensional constraints, but that's your 100% corner. But you have the garage and HVAC there. The project we saw before (Coppersmith) had a restaurant use in its best corner.

MD: If we are to attain the goal of units set by the prior mayor, we need to figure this out. There are 100 sites like this. You need to think about the residential expression - not industrial, etc. LW: Think about Linda's comment, and a buffer. It's okay to have something green. But I'm not sure you'd want to sit there. LN pointed out the orientation. KS: Those blank spaces - are you really going to have art in there? And the commercial space; tell us more about that strategy. With that, the 61-83 Braintree 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 8:55 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission is scheduled for February 4, 2014. The recording of the January 7, 2014 Boston Civic Design Commission meeting was digitized and is available at the Boston Redevelopment Authority.