

MINUTES

BOSTON CIVIC DESIGN COMMISSION

The meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was held on Tuesday, March 5, 2019, starting in Room #900, Boston City Hall, and beginning at 5:19 p.m.

Members in attendance were: Linda Eastley, David Hacin, Eric Höweler, Andrea Leers, Anne-Marie Lubenau, David Manfredi, and Paul McDonough. Absent were Deneen Crosby, Mikyoung Kim, William Rawn, and Kirk Sykes. Elizabeth Stifel, Executive Director of the Commission, was present. Representatives of the BSA attended. David Carlson, Jonathan Greeley, Lauren Shurtleff, Corey Zehngebot, Alexa Pinard, Tim Czerwinski, and Natalie Punzak were present for the BPDA.

The Chair, Andrea Leers (AL), 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 Saturday, February 17, in the BOSTON HERALD.

Before formal proceedings began, Director Brian Golden of the Boston Planning and Development Agency recognized David Carlson, Executive Director Emeritus, with the presentation of The Design Service Award. David Carlson served as the Director of the BCDC for more than 20 years and the award was presented in recognition by his colleagues past and present for his extraordinary service as the longest-serving Executive Director of the Boston Civic Design Commission. His outstanding dedication and attention to detail have been essential to the success of the BCDC and to enhancing the beauty of the City of Boston.

Following the presentation of this award, the Commission reviewed the February 5, 2019 Monthly Meeting Minutes and the Design Committee Minutes from meetings on February 12, 19, and 26. A motion was made, seconded, and it was duly

VOTED: To approve the February 5, 12, 19, and 26, 2019 BCDC Meeting Minutes.

Votes were passed for signature. The next item was a report from the Review Committee on the **Parcel 25 Update**. The PDA Masterplan was reviewed by the BCDC in September 2014. At 53,000 SF the Phase 2 building is below the BCDC review threshold but is coming for review as part of the PDA and previous vote condition. The proposed building consists of a 53,000 SF building at about 60' in height providing 40 low income units. The building is largely unchanged from the originally approved PDA. Review is recommended. As such, it was moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the BCDC review the schematic design for the Mission Hill Parcel 25 Project an PDA on the corner of Tremont and Gurney streets in the Mission Hill neighborhood.

The next item was a report from the Review Committee on the **The Residences at Readville Station (1717-1725 Hyde Park Avenue)** project. The proposal calls for about 305 residential units in two six-story buildings (one is proposed as rental and one as ownership) connected by a single level of below grade parking and around 4,200 SF of restaurant/retail space, and 221 parking spaces. This part of Hyde Park is called out in Imagine Boston 2030 as an area that should house mixed-use, transit oriented development. The Residences at Readville Station at 348,000 SF well exceeds the BCDC threshold of 100,000 SF and review is recommended, as is sending to Committee. As such, it was moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the BCDC review the schematic design for the Residences at Readville Station at 1717-1725 Hyde Park Avenue and bounded by Hyde Park Avenue, Milton Street, and the AMTRAK Mainline and MBTA Commuter Rail Tracks in the Readville neighborhood of Hyde Park.

The next item was a report from the Review Committee on the **Fenway Theater (12-28 Lansdowne Street)** project. The focus of the proposed project is a four level, 5,400 seat multi-purpose performing arts center. The proposed project fills the block that the ballpark sits on. It completes the street wall at a prominent location in Boston. The massing is generally in keeping with the scale of the ballpark, but given the historic significance of the project's context a new vote to review was recommended. It was moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the BCDC review the schematic design for the Fenway Theater at 12-28 Lansdowne Street bounded by Fenway Park, Lansdowne, and Ipswich Street in the Fenway neighborhood.

The next item on the agenda was a report from the Design Committee on the **Dock Square Garage** project. David Manfredi was recused.

BK Boley, Stantec Architects: The initial project proposal was a 200' curling addition to the existing parking garage. Through several Design Committee sessions with the BCDC, the project massing was improved to a split V-shaped building that comes to 160' that blends better with the newly clad parking garage below. The proposed vehicular drop off area was removed and now dedicated to the public realm.

David Hacin (DH): I appreciate the work you've done to make these improvements and significantly lower the building height and massing, but I still have some concerns. If this building were being built today, the parking would be accommodated with new technologies below grade therefore allowing the project to comply with the recently approved 125' zoning height suggested in the 2010 Greenway District Planning Study. This proposed massing exceeds the zoning in order to preserve an above ground parking garage in eternity. This seems to me to be short sighted and against the goals of the BCDC.

Additionally, this site sits adjacent to important historic assets like Quincy Market (a UNESCO Heritage site) and the North End (a highly regulated district of historic character). I am not opposed to a contemporary building on this site; I am opposed to the scale. This divides a holistically conceived district of historic elements into disjointed pieces. A building with this use and character should not be allowed to rise so high in this very special place. The guidelines written for this site for me are already too high, but I would like to see this proposal revised to meet those guidelines. If that can't happen, I'm willing to live with the parking garage as it is.

Linda Eastley (LE): These comments are not new. You heard all of this in subcommittee. I think the proponent has done a great job at improving the ground plane. My challenge is, as David said, that this project is too tall in such a historically important district.

Andrea Leers (AL): The zoning guidelines were set up to preserve views and experience from the Greenway, and most of the project views have been from the Greenway's perspective. I've always disagreed with this presentation and justification; the heart of the problem has been the lack of analysis and relation to Government Center and Quincy Market. We inherited guidelines that were perhaps misguided in regards to this historic center.

Eric Höweler (EH): The building, as we've said, is quite lovely. The ground floor activation is welcome as a great improvement. I'm just not sure about the height.

Anne-Marie Lubeanu (AML): I agree with many of my colleagues. I commend the design team for their work, but I must take into account to comments of preservation community and others in regards to the scale and appropriateness of this project as it's sited.

Greg Galer, Boston Preservation Alliance: We don't come with strong opposite very frequently, but our Board was very clear that this is not a proposal that we can support. The area is too sensitive to move forward, and it would be better to reconstruct this project with below grade parking or wait until the nature or number of parking needs Downtown has changed.

Joe O'Malley, Fanueil Hall Marketplace: Residents of this project will support local merchants. We find that parking here is imperative to Fanueil Hall businesses and we support this project.

Victor Brogna, North End/Waterfront Residents Association: I want to echo what Greg Galer said, as well as the comments from the Commission. The North End/Waterfront Residents Association voted to oppose this project.

Hearing no further comments, a motion was made to disapprove the project. It was then moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission NOT approve the proposed Dock Square Project on the Dock Square Garage site, bounded by the Greenway (southbound Fitzgerald Surface Road) and North and Clinton streets in Boston's Market District.

David Hacin departed. Next on the agenda was the Design Committee report from **Dot Block** project.

Doug Jones, LeBlanc Jones Landscape Architecture: Throughout the BCDC process, comments were focused on the public realm, particularly with the programming of the lawn and pedestrian use of the central plaza. In response, we've straightened the alignment of the main throughway. We took a closer look at the pedestrian and vehicle circulation in the central plaza and revised the design to consolidate the plaza and crosswalks with

a T-intersection. The green space has been expanded and programmed. The Greenmount Street experience has been revised with an 8' pedestrian zone and extensive plantings.

Louis Kraft, Stantec: Façade elements have been enhanced and developed all around, adding more variety in material and window patterning. Views were presented from around project.

LE: It looks like the plaza areas and curbs have been revised to include a double crosswalk. I'm not sure that the area you've called central plaza will ever function that way because of the curbs and pedestrian experience interrupted by a driveway. I do think the green space and crosswalks will be great.

EH: This is a huge project. The fabric could stand to be more diverse. Maybe there's a way to pull these buildings apart a bit more. The architecture feels a little consistent, and I would invite you to allow yourself to include more variation in architectural fenestration, porosity, and material. More stylistic range would feel more urban.

AL: This has been a steadily improving project. Keep going. The changes along Dot Avenue are among the best improvements. The ground plane is very well resolved. We wish to see some further development in the façade working with the BPDA.

Hearing no public comment, it was moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the schematic design for the proposed Dot Block Project on the block bounded by Dorchester Avenue, and Hancock, Pleasant, and Greenmount streets, in Dorchester's Glover's Corner neighborhood, provided that the team give a presentation update to the Commission in the future.

Next on the agenda was the Design Committee report from **Hood Park PDA Masterplan** project.

Mark Sardegna, Elkus Manfredi: Through the BCDC process, we've refined the masterplan. The park adjacent to 10 Stack Street is now capped with a bicycle pavilion, providing a terminus to views and park programming. As requested by the commissioners, we've introduced a space between 10 and 30 Stack Street buildings. The campus is not a place of glass boxes; materials will be earth tones and masonry.

Mark Spaulding, SMMA: Turning our attention to the design of 10 Stack Street, much of the dialogue with the Commission centered on the building as a figure or backdrop on campus. We were requested to simplify the facades. This has been done in both material color and in form. The top of the building has been revised, stepping down to the park. The building and ground plane relationship was revised in response to last week's design committee meeting, strengthening the reading of the three sloped faces of the façade.

LE: This is heading in the right direction. Before you gave us the narrative, it's very clear from the architecture on the ground plane that there is something to anticipate at the end (the 10 Stack Street park). You're announcing the public space with light and void. The closure at the end of the long view at the end of Hood Park Drive with a bicycle pavilion is a good idea, but I think a larger building (maybe double the height) could be even more successful.

AL: Your many iterations were not for naught. Sometimes you have to take a step back to go forward.

Hearing no public comment, it was moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the proposed amendment to the Hood Park PDA Master Plan, including the schematic design for 10 Stack Street, with the condition that all future phases (including major open space design) return to the Commission for review and approval.

Next on the agenda was the Design Committee report from **Alexandra Hotel** project. David Manfredi returned. David Nagahiro, CBT Architects: responding to comments from the Commission, we've been thinking about this building as an object. Through a series of studies done through the Design Committee process, we have revised the façade designs, particularly western façade which acts as a partiwall but has now been perforated and patterned. We've also added a screening system to the western portion of the façade along Washington Street, the new addition adjacent to the existing structure. When we began the project, the preservation of the historic building was paramount to our design scheme. The addition has been set back even further to act as a backdrop to the historic façade.

AML: This building is quite elegant. I appreciate the community support. I'm still having a hard time understanding the relation to the neighborhood scale.

Elizabeth Stifel, Executive Director of the BCDC: This is located in the South End Landmark District. From both the BCDC, BPDA, and Landmarks leadership, there is understanding that this will be one site where height is appropriate and not a precedent for scale in the neighborhood.

EH: If you're going to do this, you need to be even more background to the existing structure than you are now. You have two types of facades—the historic and new—but the addition of a third façade strategy with the screening at the ground plane feels like too much.

David Manfredi (DM): I agree with Eric, this needs to be thoughtfully done. I think you've been incredibly responsive to a series of iterations and rethought the core and ground plane organizations. The partiwall is tricky. Through the work with the Commission, the building has become simpler and more regular which allows the historic building to stand on its own. You've done a really nice job.

LE: I appreciate the additional setback that you've added along the front. It picks up more of the verticality of the existing building. The ideas you have about joining the lobby and improving the pedestrian and Silver Line experience are great improvements to the public realm.

AML: If the goal is to preserve an important building on this block, then you should let the existing building have precedence. The screening system and massing projection on top are a bit too much.

Lloyd Fillian, resident of Chester Square: I know there are a number of people who are not pleased with the height of this project. The community feels this building is close to collapse, and we are not sure how viable this proposal will be during construction.

Steve Jerome, former executive secretary of the SE Landmarks District: This will be a new part of the view toward the South End. I know CBT has done excellent work in historic districts. This feels like a facadectomy, which preservationists do not typically support. This is the wrong site for a hotel like this, however great the hotel might be.

Alison Polinos, sharing comments from a North Hampton resident: The project is actually in the Roxbury neighborhood, not the South End. You should not replace a bus stop with valet parking. The bus stop is now far from the cross walk and replaced with a private interest.

Resident: The review process thus far has left Roxbury and its neighborhood associations out of the process.

Greg Galer: Reiterating comments from Landmarks, there is a conundrum. We want to preserve this building, but the bar is high. I'm not sure anyone is convinced that this height is the necessary solution required to preserve the Alexandra Hotel.

AL: Given these comments, I lean toward the continued development of this project so that it can provide a new life to the Alexandra Hotel. Whatever we decide, we should ask for a review after the project has been further developed, especially on the infill portion and upper enclosure.

With that, it was moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission recommend approval of the schematic design direction of the Alexandra Hotel Project on the corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Washington Street in the South End, with the condition that it return to the Commission after modification and review of the South End Landmark District Commission, and that the proponent continue to work with the BDPA staff on the suggestions brought forward today.

The next item was the presentation of **Parcel 25** in Mission Hill.

Patricia Flarity, Mission Hill Neighborhood Housing Services: This is the second of a three-phase development at Parcel 25. The site was owned by the MBTA, and we purchased the site in 2012. In 2014, we came to the BCDC for approval of the PDA Masterplan. The site is located across from Roxbury Crossing Orange Line T station. We are here to discuss Phase 2, an all residential project consistent with community vision and original master plan. It will house 46 units, 100% affordable, with 5-stories above a below grade parking lot. We will be rebuilding Gurney Street as a walkable residential street.

Rob Chandler, Goody Clancy: The residential character of the neighborhood consists of multi-entrance walkups. Light will be captured by the shifting bays and metal material.

AML: I am struck by the diversity in scale and character of the surrounding neighborhood. I'd be curious to see you explore some diversity of design in material color or pattern.

Rob Chandler: We look forward to developing the design further and including more texture.

LE: Curious to know more about the Station Street façade. This should not operate as a dead end street, so think about it as a place to walk around and through to access the open space onsite.

DM: I applaud you for doing this, both for the diversity of the architecture in the phases and for 100% affordability. I'm not convinced by the corner entry, or the north side that Linda mentioned. Something special happens at the end, so think about the end cap as entry to balance the north elevation.

AL: Maybe you can get more bang for your buck by different grouping of windows along the façade instead of bending/folding them in plan. Celebrate the duplexes existing in the neighborhood. You've done something excellent by bringing door and stoops to the ground level.

Hearing no public comment, the project was sent to BCDC Design Committee.

The next project presentation was for the **Residences at Readville Station, 1717-1725 Hyde Park Avenue**. Mike Doherty, The Architectural Team: This part of Hyde Park is called out in Imagine Boston 2030 as an area that should house mixed-use, transit oriented development. We are the first development in the area so far. Two U-shaped buildings wrap a central courtyard, programmed with resident amenity space. A ~25' grade change crosses the site and courtyard.

Marcus Cantu, Copley Wolff Design: The existing condition along Hyde Park Ave is tight, so we will be converting a 8' sidewalk to 17' with a furnishing zone. Two entries off of the auto court fronting Hyde Park Ave act as the entry sequence to the project. There is an existing WPA wall along Milton Ave; this is an industrial site with a lot of history and we plan to add some WPA murals.

AL: Managing the site drop with a protective zone amid a busy, previously industrial area is smart. I like the inside better than the outside. I think there's work to be done on the building envelope; you've made something very institutional looking. Take a step back and think about how you want to articulate the two buildings.

LE: Is there a way to soften some of the massing so it doesn't feel so much like an island? I like the cascading effect of the topography. Look at the entry court in a couple different ways. Drop off from the pool/amenity level could be improved with a wall or landscape structure.

AML: I appreciate the diagram approach you've taken to this site. How we break down massing and facades is important. There is something reminiscent about this project with garden apartments. Your development is setting a tone for an area that hasn't seen much development to this point. You might need to address the way living units meet the ground plane in terms of how open/transparent these units are.

DM: Your opening comments alluded to your sense of obligation as the first of many projects to come in this area adjacent to the Orange Line station. I am fascinated by the rendering of this massing among the existing conditions. We agree that you have the section relationship figured out and you're taking advantage of the site grading.

AL: Think carefully about the curved nose of the building. We can take a closer look at this in subcommittee. With that, the project was sent to BCDC Design Committee.

The final project presentation of the evening was the **Fenway Theater, 12-28 Lansdowne Street**.

Chuck Isso, DAIQ: This project is an extension to Fenway Park, replacing the media lot at the corner with three major programmatic elements on site: 30,000 SF of Red Sox concessions at the back of the bleachers in the right field grand stand, a proposed 4-level performing arts theater (80,000 SF), and underground media connection from 189 Ipswich (largely just surface lot improvements).

AL: This is going to be used a lot more than the stadium. It's a different rhythm of activity from game days. I think it's an interesting idea for this portion of the site and a complimentary use to the rest of the block. It seems like a small backstage. A portion of this form resembles the park and the front becomes livelier. I want it to be more expressive of being a theatre than a partial repetition of the old garage adjacent to it.

AML: I was curious about your approach. You are taking an underutilized existing space and transforming it in a way that continues the character of Fenway Park.

DM: I love the view from the corner of Ipswich and Lansdowne; it's understated. The blade signs remind me a little too much of the House of Blues.

LE: Understanding that you are keeping a portion of the existing building, is there an opportunity to bring the façade in from Lansdowne and Ipswich. Put in some canopy trees where it makes sense. Set this apart as a marquee.

AL: The nose of this on the first floor could come back and produce a plaza out front. With no public comment, the project was sent to BCDC Design Committee.

There being no further items for discussion, a motion was made to adjourn, and the meeting was duly adjourned at 9:22 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was scheduled for April 2, 2019. The recording of the March 5, 2019 Boston Civic Design Commission meeting was digitized and is available at the Boston Redevelopment Authority.