

MINUTES
BOSTON CIVIC DESIGN COMMISSION

The meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was held on Tuesday, November 14, and was held virtually via Zoom to for the health, safety, and accessibility of Boston residents, and beginning at 5:00 p.m. Members in attendance were Aimee Chambers, Linda Eastley, Jonathan Evans, Diana Fernandez, Mimi Love, Anne-Marie Lubenau, David Manfredi, Catherine Morris, William Rawn, Shauna Gillies Smith, Laura Solano, Kirk Sykes.

Elizabeth Stifel, Executive Director of the Commission, was present. Lizzie Turac, Meghan Richard, Matthew Martin, Seth Riseman were present for the BPDA.

Cochair, Linda Eastley, 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 in the BOSTON HERALD.

The first item was the approval of the October 3rd Monthly Meeting Minutes, and the Design Committee Minutes from meetings on October 17th. A motion was made, seconded, and it was duly approved.

VOTED: To approve the October BCDC Meeting Minutes.

The next Review Committee report was for the Mildred Hailey Master Plan and Buildings 2 and 3 project in Jamaica Plain. Review is recommended. It was moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the proposed Mildred Hailey Master Plan and Buildings 2 and 3 project in the Jamaica Plain neighborhood.

The next item was a report from the Review Committee on the St Mary's Center for Women and Children project. Review is recommended. It was moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the proposed St Mary's Center for Women and Children project in the Dorchester neighborhood.

The final Review Committee report was for Parcel 25 Phase 3 in the Mission Hill neighborhood. Review is recommended. It was moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the proposed Parcel 25 Phase 3 project in the Mission Hill neighborhood.

The final Review Committee report was for 232 A Street in the South Boston Waterfront. Review is recommended. It was moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the proposed 232 A Street project in the South Boston Waterfront.

The Commission moved into Votes of Recommendation for projects from Design Committee.

**The first presentation was for the 35-75 Morrissey Master Plan.
The project was present by Louis Kraft and Christopher Bridle**

David Manfredi: Thank you for being responsive to providing setbacks. Can you explain more about the edge character and mass sculpting- how does that impact Main Street and Morrissey Boulevard?

Louis Kraft: There is a 5' setback at the podium between 20' and 80' on Morrissey and between 20' and 65' on Main Street to accentuate pedestrian-level experiences and respond to environmental factors. This is just a starting point and there will be further analysis with wind and solar—more detail in Article 80B.

David Manfredi: Most buildings show a setback at the roof. Have you included that in your guidelines?

Louis Kraft: No, we're leaving future flexibility based on lab design guidelines.

David Manfredi: I suggest two choices here: either provide a setback at the roof or be coplanar. If you are coplanar the building envelope should continue up from below. This is more than what the BPDA guidelines suggested, while the volume and height are important the quality of the envelope becomes a major massing element of these buildings.

We encourage you to bring the same detail and materiality from the lower floors to the upper floors to act as an important element of the architecture of the building.

I also appreciate the development, particularly the continuity of the red as it wraps around the corners to Morrissey. I wonder about light blue zones (labeled lab/office). I would like some guidelines encouraging active facades if not by use, then by architecture (i.e. transparency can see activity inside).

Louis Kraft: The specific guidelines state that the building should prioritize active use so that there's a rhythm of openings. If there is no active use, then the architecture of those spaces should be articulated and fenestrated. Right now, the blue graphic isn't defined and could work as a building-wide amenity. We are calling for one entry on each block, but that is flexible for each location at any point in a consistent architectural character.

David Manfredi: Okay I appreciate that. I missed that in what you submitted.

William Rawn: Why wouldn't you have three residential buildings gathered around the family park rather than separate these buildings by lab buildings?

Louis Kraft: Our goal is to cluster residential space with open space. Building C would provide grocery use with residential above. There are multiple hubs and mixed-use buildings across the

street. And the phasing of buildings coming online impacts location of residential so we can have residential in each phase sequentially from left to right.

Diana Fernandez: Louis, can you also explain the phasing a little bit that the BPDA helped work through? We worked to phase the project considering the existing Shaw's and the need for a new retail to come online.

Louis Kraft: The buildings will roughly come online left to right. The idea is that Buildings A and B, and Street A and Community Park will come in Phase 1 and the existing grocery store to the right will remain in use. Buildings C, D, and Civic Plaza will come online in Phase 2, so the new grocery will be constructed while there is access to the existing grocery. Finally, the third phase will be E, F, and G, along with the family park so there will be an active grocery on that site as it is completed and connected.

Anne-Marie Lubenau: I am curious given the scale of the development how would you describe its identity and the composition of the buildings? What gives this place its character- how does it respond to the context of the adjoining areas including the small-scale residential area?

Louis Kraft: We think of this development as being a new coastal or maritime development. There is an open space for every single block. This will connect to the harbor and the connection of Dorchester Bay Harbor due to our thoughts and attention to those long-range views.

Linda Eastley: I applaud your work since our last sub-committee discussion. The guidelines help. However, I would love to see some of the stronger recommendations embedded in the plan. I think it would be great to have more language about the activity along the street with the tricky grade changes.

Louis Kraft: We will look at further strengthening that language. Currently, we have added setbacks and active-use entry points which provide flush conditions between Morrissey and the buildings.

Laura Solano: There is considerable grade change along Morrissey. Is this the true condition that we will see? Is this an idealized condition or one that only happens in one and not the other?

Louis Kraft: There is about 4-5' roughly grade change. We've discussed ways that grade change can be softened. There will be an internal circulation demonstrated that will bring you up to the ground level. And we're using spandrel glass to have buildings come down lower on the Morrissey side.

Laura Solano: You have consistently shown the various parks, and I would just encourage you in the future to look at how topography could empower these spaces and planting. Building the Topography will make the spaces much richer.

Christopher Bridle: As you mentioned, we will get that eventually in the next phase of work. We have eluded. We will provide some perspectives and sketches on how we will use the grade change to our advantage.

Mimi Love: I'm a little stuck on the micro-scale. I am curious about the relationship of the floor elevation to Main Street. You've heard a lot of comments on the connection to Morrissey Boulevard

because the microscale is going to bring a level of character that you should include in the guidelines.

Louis Kraft: Flex zones and furnishing zones as well and you're seeing that in place here. Everything is intended to be pedestrian focused.

Mimi Love: The relationship of Building B to Morrissey. Does that also have a grade change? Curious what happens in the Southern Corner of the site.

Louis Kraft: Yes. B, D, and F all have the raised grade at Main Street. That's why we're wrapping around, sculpting those edges and providing that buffer.

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

VOTED: That the BCDC recommend approval for the 35-75 Morrissey with proviso. Kirk Sykes and Shauna Gilles-Smith were recused.

Proviso: There needs to be language in the PDA regarding activation along Morrissey.

The second presentation was for 15 Washington.

The project was presented by Tim Talun and Carl Frushour.

Anne-Marie Lubeanu: Thank you for your presentation, I appreciate the evolution of this project and I understand the focus and attention on Washington St. Elevation. How does this development respond to the building facades to Austin, Corey, and essentially the back of the building?

Tim Talun: Along Allston St. the building is four stories tall which relates to the four-story row houses across the street. They have entrances distinct from the rest of the building. Along Corey Road the building is of a similar scale to the 5 Washington development across the street but with a larger setback. At the top level, we set back the 6th story 25' feet to maintain 5 story scale along Corey Road.

Anne-Marie Lubeanu: I have high confidence in BPDA to review this with the adjoining context, particularly regarding the comments raised by the residents on how this will impact the quality and physical quality of the neighborhood.

Linda Eastley: I appreciate you being responsive on how the massing would continue to be sculpted for contextual relevance. The corner is more welcoming and becomes a gateway. I also appreciate the open space. Looking at the opposite corner of Corey and Washington, I wonder if there's more that can be done on this corner to have a welcoming presence. I trust BPDA staff to work with you on this.

Laura Solano: I am a bit concerned about the South-facing Plaza. I imagine those trees would not provide the shade that might be needed. You may work with BPDA to provide more. Another clarification question is the area behind the building. Is that a ramp and landing?

Tim Talun: Yes, a fully accessible connection ramp from Corey Street to Allston with handrails.

Laura Solano: If you could narrow that path, it would be great because those existing trees are going to need more space. You may also put permeable pavement. Also, are you taking that pathway or connecting that to the entire length?

Tim Talun: Yes, the pathway connects the full length.

Kirk Sykes: Great improvement to the facade on Washington Street and the corner with Allston. My two questions have to do with the transformation from surface to below-grade parking. How will the traffic patterns and count change? I wonder if you need three colors for the façade.

Tim Talun: Today, 3 separate curb cuts serving Citizens Bank and Whole Foods. The desire from BPDA was to reduce curb cuts to a minimum (one). What's proposed is a single curb cut on Washington Street and an exit out to Corey Road with a right turn-only restriction. This also provides access to a lower level of grade parking for whole food and residents of the residential building. With the addition of the turn lane and the single improvement, HB - our traffic engineer - is reducing queuing distance so the traffic will back up less with the addition of things and future projects than it will today. Concerns were raised about the impact on Allston Street, but already we're widening the portion of Allston Street and accommodating wider street + sidewalk while also permitting two-way traffic. We also have a right turn restriction to avoid additional queuing and back-up.

Kirk Sykes: You have done a great job mitigating curb cuts, but we want to make sure it is not squeezed into a micro-public realm because the macro-public realm is in question.

Tim Talun: We will have the same amount of 150 parking spaces.

Mimi Love : While traffic patterns are out of our purview, we trust the team will continue to work with BTD on addressing some of these concerns.

Mimi Love : I have a minor comment, I do think at the micro-level there should be lighting along the north pathway where you have those ramps so safety never feels like it's compromised.

Public Comments:

Eileen Houben: First on traffic, the traffic has not been solved yet. The Corey Road driveway is the only. So, once it's beyond one cycle that driveway is blocked so you can't use it as an exit. And Tim makes it sound like everything has been solved but it hasn't, and it makes it extremely difficult for everyone who lives here. My second point is on open space. For 200 some units the zoning open space is 40,000 square feet not 7 or 8. The open space is nice, but it's a solid building. There's very little open space and it's going to be a canyon and wind tunnel. They have not dealt with Corey Road or Open Space. There should be more open space here and a park here.

Greg Karambelas: I live nearby at 315 Allston Street, just adjacent to the site here. I like the direction it's gone in reducing the scale of the overall size and increase in trees and setbacks. I wanted to add in the concerns on the traffic increase. The back-up on Corey is a daily struggle for everyone who lives here, and the residential parking is very competitive and limited here. Seeing the addition of a turning lane is a good thing and an extended green-light time. But taking away residential parking to do that is unacceptable. I don't know if there's additional design options to be reviewed but we're very concerned about that.

Marlyin Tressel: The traffic is awful. Even with the third lane- a welcome addition- but it has become a tunnel. The whole nature of the neighborhood has changed. While the design team has added housing that's needed, it needs more setbacks. I hate to see this neighborhood change so dramatically. Please rethink and exit and entrance and how to address Corey Road.

it was moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the BCDC recommend approval for the 15 Washington. David Manfredi and Shauna Gilles-Smith were recused.

The Commission moved to project presentations, the first being for **Mildred Hailey Master Plan and Buildings 2 & 3** in the **Jamaica Plain** neighborhood. Mimi Love and Shauna Gillies-Smith were recused.

Meghan Richard of the BPDA introduced an update regarding the Master Plan. Following the development of BTM planning for the city through Go Boston 2030, the decision was made to not have vehicular traffic on Lamartine. The team will bring the master plan into alignment with that plan.

Meghan Richard presents the design context. Aimee Chambers of the BPDA presents the planning context. Zoning context for the project, deviations are approved through Master Plan. There were no staff concerns.

The project was presented by Russell Pandres, Mark Eclipse, and Andres Bernal.

Anne-Marie Lubeanu: It would be helpful to have a contextual slide that can serve through multiple presentations that show the building and site plans as it's hard to orient myself. There is a lot of emphasis on the pedestrian path, but it is very hard to comment on the design without understanding the physical context.

Jonathan Evans: Great with streamlining in general. But I think we should talk more about these projects. Some of the public choices can be discussed a bit more. Same color but rethinking the material choices.

Kirk Sykes: This site is near and dear to my home. My concerns stem from safety - passive surveillance, lighting, and ways to make these spaces welcoming and inviting from both Centre Street and the Southwest Corridor.

Laura Solano: I think it's terrific that Lamartine can be closed for much-needed green spaces, especially with the height change. The design feels a bit undercooked for the opportunity that

belongs there and BPDA should work to engage the landscape with the buildings for more thoughtful open space that engages the varied neighborhood.

There was no public comment, but the Commissioners felt uncomfortable moving the project directly to vote. There was a discussion between the Commissioners on the next steps for this project.

Diana Fernandez: I understand the desire for more time and to be fair across all building types. What I want to be is very supportive of this project VIA the mayor's order on affordable housing and moving it through BCDC so it aligns with the affordable housing process.

Linda Eastley: Rotating the building is very clever, but the shared path feels tight. I also appreciate the "eyebrow" becoming the Beltline of the building. As that eyebrow hits Centre Street, it feels successful, but as it moves back it feels a bit heavy and a bit low. Please reconsider in terms of materiality and dimension. Placing Building 3's new entry at Lamartine makes a lot of sense to me.

Anne-Marie Lubeanu: I don't feel like we have enough information, and it needs more attention.

it was moved, seconded, and

The project will continue in design committee.

The next project presentation was for **St Mary's Center for Women and Children** in the Dorchester neighborhood. Mimi Love and Shauna Gilles-Smith were recused.

Meghan Richard of the BPDA presented the design context of the project. Jonathan Law and Mike Doherty presented the project.

Jonathan: While this project is ambitious it is at a better scale to wrap your head around. I encourage you to look harder into the design research behind the accent colors as they can become an organizing decision for the building. Overall, massing makes a lot of sense. While some moves feel normative the overall feels very sound.

Laura Solano: Where is the entry to the garage in new north? The play area and blue area feel exposed to the roadway. Look at that again.

Kirk: I would love to know more about how it feels in the context. How the scale shift was interpolated into the design and how the neighborhood will take it. Overall, I don't have opposition. I think we could offer comments in advance to the future BCDC meeting to help streamline Affordable Housing review.

Catherine Morris: The tree grove, play area for children, and overall courts with seating need more connection to the public realm. The tree grove walkway is congested and has sharp edges, it needs to be softened. Maybe reposition it with still relatively equal amounts of tree covers.

Jonathan Law: We studied multiple scenarios for the tree grove walkway and chose the best solution to optimize accessibility & maximize open space.

Catherine: I would consider the story behind it, the building's relationship to each other, play and engagement, and creative wayfinding.

Jonathan Evans provides a motion to approve with proviso, second, and voted.

William Rawn leaves.

VOTED: That the BCDC recommend approval for the St. Mary's Center for Women and Children with Proviso.

Proviso: The team will continue work on facades with BPDA staff and focus on trauma informed design principles.

The **Parcel 25 Phase 3** project was the next presentation. Mimi Love and Shauna Gilles-Smith were recused.

Meghan Richard of the BPDA presented the design context of the project. Aimee Chambers presented the planning context. Nick Buehrens and Kyle Zick presented the project.

Linda Eastley: We originally saw this project when it was a PDA as an office. So, the switch to affordable housing is a new one.

Anne-Marie Lubenau: I applaud the change from office to housing. The context of concerns is very helpful, and I appreciate the explanation of the constraints. I would like to see more context of the adjoining buildings. I am a little concerned about the unrelieved base of the building. I appreciate the residential intimacy; however, I think it would benefit more diversity on the outside.

Kirk Sykes: I think most of my concerns are found in the courtyard and garage end and how it lacks to be dynamic. It is tough to animate a façade this long, so I think there needs to be more thought on the façade. I also wished for more context on the materiality of the project.

Laura Solano: The inner courtyard is very tough, and I would encourage you to make the landscape more robust. As in the depths allowed for planting. Provide variety in the sizes. I would encourage you to add green to the perspective from Tremont Street towards the entry.

Jonathan: I applaud the attempt to have the bold colors and massing. I think some views from further away would help convince us if that strategy is working or not. The overall intent of punctuating with the slit is exciting. Further, consider what landscaping makes this space feel comfortable. There is more opportunity for how you're looking at screening material. Maybe don't necessarily need brick.

Linda Eastley: I also have concerns with the façade as it feels very long. My second comment is about the shadows on that muse. How will this impact the experience of space? I enjoy the garage entry's change from PDA. The canopy trees feel too close to the facade. Maybe moved to the center.

There was no public comment.

Motion to approve with return to design committee to review the comments.

it was moved, seconded, and

The project will continue in design committee.

The **232 A Street project in the South Boston Waterfront** was the next presentation.

Matthew Martin of the BPDA presented the project Urban Design slides. Charles Klee presented the project.

Mimi Love: I don't know if we want them to have their distinct landscape with Gillette coming on board there are a lot of unknowns. Instead, the landscape could transition to the neighbors for future developments. Also, the bike pathway should be a bit more detailed for the subcommittee. The Glass facade appears like wallpaper. Is the frame below and volume the right move? What other options have you considered?

Shauna Gillies-Smith: I'm looking forward to seeing how you develop these intersections more. How do the two parcels meet, where and how does one cross the street? Consider if the connection should be smaller.

Kirk Sykes: To pick up on what Mimi was talking about the skin – I would love to see at subcommittee some of the typologies you considered. Here, in a very historical context, I would like to see a contextual argument and detailing.

Laura Solano: I think understanding the arcade and art with the right lighting would be helpful. The corridor gets stopped by the landscape, meeting the landside instead of the waterfront, because this is such a unique site one should be able to feel and see the water. The umbrella

plaza does not frame the water enough. Also, need clarification on the decision to widen Necco as it already feels disconnected. Please clarify the grades more.

Linda Eastley: The idea of having a “sliver site” is exciting and opens all sorts of possibilities. However, there needs to be more nods from building to open space and open space to building for people to experience it together. But when you look at 239 A (the building east just off the frame) the open space is on the northeastern side, and I find myself wondering if the arcade would be more appropriate on that side. Then it becomes an interesting pedestrian experience and takes you along Binford Street and the waterfront. Also, please rethink the retaining wall as it isn’t welcome.

There was one public comment by Sara McCammond.

Sara McCammond: I would like to see the connection of the waterfront to the community again. There was a lot of discussion of the arcade, and Binford street was a walk to the water but is now a loading dock zone.

it was moved, seconded, and

The project will continue in design committee.

There being no further items for discussion, a motion was made to adjourn, and the meeting was duly adjourned at 9:15 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was scheduled for December 5th, 2023. The recording of the November 14th, 2023, Boston Civic Design Commission meeting was digitized and is available at the Boston Redevelopment Authority.