

## DRAFT MINUTES

### **BOSTON CIVIC DESIGN COMMISSION**

The meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was held on Tuesday, March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016, starting in the BRA Board Room, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor, Boston City Hall, and beginning at 5:34 p.m.

Members in attendance were: Michael Davis (Co-Vice-Chair); David Hacin, Andrea Leers, Paul McDonough (Co-Vice-Chair), and William Rawn. Absent were: Deneen Crosby, Linda Eastley, David Manfredi, Daniel St. Clair, Kirk Sykes, and Lynn Wolff. Also present was David Carlson, Executive Director of the Commission. Representatives of the BSA were present. Michael Cannizzo and Jun Jeong Ju 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 Wednesday, February 17, in the BOSTON HERALD.

The first item was the approval of the February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016 Meeting Minutes. A motion was made, seconded, and it was duly

**VOTED: To approve the February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016 Boston Civic Design Commission Meeting Minutes.**

Votes were passed for signature. The next item was a report from the Review Committee on the **32 Cambridge Street Project**. David Carlson (DAC) noted that this project, near both Sullivan Square and the Hood Business Park, and consisting of the rehab of an existing building and the creation of a new one, was over the BCDC threshold at about 140,000 SF, and review was recommended. It was duly moved, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the 32 Cambridge Street Project near Sullivan Square, on the parcel bounded by Cambridge, Spice, and D streets and Rutherford Avenue in the Charlestown neighborhood.**

The next item was a report from the Review Committee on the **Northeastern Columbus Avenue Housing Project** at Columbus and Burke. DAC noted that the Project was over 300,000 SF, well over the BCDC review threshold and in the Northeastern IMP as a Project. Review was therefore recommended both in terms of size but also as a condition of approval of the Northeastern IMP. It was moved,

seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the proposed Northeastern Columbus Avenue Student Housing Project (and associated changes to the IMP) on the Northeastern campus at 10 Burke Street in the Lower Roxbury neighborhood.**

DAC noted that the Tremont Crossing Project had submitted a revised DPIR and was in for an update on its design; last seen in 2012, no vote was necessary to review. The next item was a report from the Design Committee on the **Cote Village Project**. Cliff Boehmer (CB) of Davis Square Architects thanked the Commissioners for their input and presented with a focus on design changes. CB showed the enhanced site plan, then an enlarged portion featuring the sidewalk along Cummins Highway. CB: There is real difficulty with the grades because of the rail bridge. We are showing improvements similar to those in Mattapan Square, with street trees, parking, and steps only at the entry. (Goes to a SketchUp model.) We have changed the townhouses and modified their rhythm, which was a comment in Committee, and added openings onto new patio space at the side of the building along the tracks. (The sidewalk along Cummins is shown as seamless, using planters to help define the grade separation. CB moves the view around the building, ending at the pedestrian level along Cummins.)

Andrea Leers (AL): This is a good resolution of the issues we discussed. The on-grade sidewalk corresponds with the T crossing. Paul McDonough (PM) asked about the sidewalk slope away from the building. Rebecca Machand of Ulrich Machand noted that they are keeping to a 2% slope there. AL: There is planting on top of the podium? RM: Yes. PM: A superb job. I'd move approval. MD: Good luck with BTM (on the Cummins sidewalk configuration). The motion was seconded and it was

**VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the schematic design for the proposed Cote Village Project at 820 Cummins Highway and 30-32 Regis Road, in the Mattapan neighborhood.**

The next item was a report from Design Committee on the **South Bay Town Center Project**.

Tamara Roy (TR) of Stantech presented the project changes directly, since no one from the last Committee meeting was present. She noted that the first meetings were about the location and site connections. She showed the area site planning diagram, then a closer view of their site and selected precedents. TR: At the north entrance, the sign was discussed [as were other things] as an aid to the location, a 'there there.' (Shows views of the residential buildings.) We discussed the treatment of the facades and the experience of walking through the area. We talked about the pedestrian connection as a mews (shows precedents, the landscaping treatment, and the notion of 'porches') and its pedestrian ambience and security. This is able to be converted to a vehicular way if need be.

AL: I appreciate your attention to the conditions of the entry. You've addressed that well, and you need the kind of signage you propose.

David Hacin (DH): I missed the meetings. But I like the stoop idea - it adds aq welcome eccentricity, and the extension of landscape into the main Center. PM: You've created a comfortable, human scale. Not hearing any public comment, it was moved, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the schematic design for the South Bay Town Center Project at 101 Allstate Road, in the Dorchester neighborhood.**

The next item was a report from Design Committee on the **Goddard House Project**. David Chilinski (DChil) of PCA noted the two Committee meetings, and then showed the locus. DChil: We worked on the detailing, and the approach to the two massings. (Using a model, shows the changes made.) We have simplified the Jamaica way side, and made an adjustment along South Huntington. (Notes the landscaping and enhanced buffer.) We simplified the gesture on the right. (Goes through presentation slides to show the changes at the rear.) We are tying the buildings together with materials as well as massing.

Bill Rawn (WR) moved to approve. MD asked for public comment. An IAG member repeated an issue noted previously regarding the parking along South Huntington, wishing it were not there. MD: Your comment notwithstanding, we would recommend your taking that up with the zoning commission. We feel that the public realm has been served [by this design]. With that, the motion was seconded and it was

**VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the schematic design for the proposed Goddard House Project at 201 South Huntington Avenue, in the Jamaica Plain neighborhood.**

The next item was a report from the Design Committee on the **100 Federal Plaza Pavilion**. Robert Brown (RB) of Perkins Will introduced the team (George Needs of Boston Properties and Mikyoung Kim [MYK] of MYK Design). He started with the landscape plan. WR immediately raised the issue of the sidewalk width. MYK explained: With the wedge-shaped planter it goes from 18' to 10', 6' in the portion with trees. But this complies with Complete Streets, and uses a permeable paving which is walkable. WR: you could reduce it; we talked about this point - this is a very busy sidewalk along Congress. There is no issue now at the corner. RB then showed the through-block section, and before-and-after views from the edge, then from the corner. The [Matthews] corner showed whitish panels around the glass entries. The views went up to the sidewalk edge. RB noted the property line - MYK corrected that, noting the sidewalk actually tapers to 12-14', plus the permeable surface. MD: So, it's really 16' or walkable surface. MYK: In the area, there are many sidewalks only 9'.

WR repeated the issue of the sidewalk width, noting his office is only a block away. MD: Let the minutes show this concern, for BRA staff. AL: The planter at Matthews seems like a remnant. MYK: We are addressing a grade issue. AL: Make it longer - to the window. DH: Your changes are very good. You do not want to use the panel or planter area for signs. MD: Like the Cheesecake Factory. DH: That's

the worst possible example, but yes. AL: Lightening the structure was a very good move. WR: We said all that at Design Committee; I'm sorry to bring up the one point. MD: This is a wonderful project; it will be a great addition to the public realm. DH: So, I can walk through to Federal now? That's great. With that, and with no public comment, it was moved, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the schematic design for the proposed 100 Federal Plaza Pavilion Project in the Downtown Financial District, with a note to BRA staff to focus on the sidewalk width and planter issues.**

The next item was a presentation of the **Tremont Crossing Project**. MD reminded Commissioners that it was last seen 4 years ago. Barry Feldman (BF) of FeldCo: I am the managing partner for this Project. I appreciate the opportunity to present to you; I am proud of where the Project has come from. Gary Johnson (GJ) of Cambridge Seven: This is a very large, multi-use Project; we won't be able to cover it all tonight. (Introduces Marc Rogers [MR] of C7.) MR noted the main program elements, and the total SF of about 1.9 million. PM: What is the NCAAA? MR: The National Center for Afro-American Arts. (Notes locus, and walking radii from site. Notes MBTA access points. Shows an overlay of the site on old maps - 1872, 1915, 2016.) A lot of streets were cut off; parts of Lower Roxbury were cut off. We are reviving the notion of *connection*. (Shows connecting streets.) There is some indication that the streets still exist legally, but [some] are cut off by the playing fields. (Shows the program by massing element, including the garage.) DH: What is the parking ratio for the pieces? MR: Generally, it's a little over 1 per 1000 SF for the whole Project, but less than the BTD standards. We are meeting City requirements. (Shows pedestrian connections, in diagram layers. Then a site plan.)

GJ: We've studied circulation patterns. We've created two streets (South and East drives) and two access points. There are two loading points; these are *very large* retail big box stores. It's important to keep that traffic off the lesser streets; truck traffic is restricted to South and East drives, and not allowed on Whittier. (Notes the connection with an adjustment to the Whittier cross street. Shows the big box entries.) The smaller scale retailers (indicates) are important to the active edges. (Shows main program entries - residential, hotel, office, NCAAA, and the residential entry at the end of 'Market Street.') The NCAAA is why we say commerce and culture come together here. We have signed BJ's, but the other tenants are not defined. BJ's has been good about their windows. The residential comes to the ground along Whittier. (Goes through floor plans, noting the circulation 'pavilion.' Shows the upper floors, and the elevation as a massing/program diagram.) We have used the approximate height of the police station (67') as the podium reference. WR asked for a clarification of the location. DH: Are these rental residential? GJ: (Indicating location) Yes, 300 and 400 units. DH: And a limited service hotel? GJ: Yes, at the moment. 200 keys, 130,000 SF. MD: The parking at 1 per 1,000 SF is excessive; it will be empty.

GJ continued walking through the elevations and sections. He noted the step down to Whittier, then showed views down Market Street and more. He showed birds-eye views, then a view down Ruggles, noting the tallest element was there; the proposed Whittier Choice building was about 175'. He showed a view of the corner at the residential

entry, then the Market Street entry, noting the NCAA and hotel entries and the residential in the distance. More views, one showcasing the NCAA museum 'bar.' Then existing conditions vs. the proposed, looking toward Boston, followed by a view from the playing fields. WR: What about the boxiness of the building? ...I don't mean that as a pejorative. GJ: It's residential; we're trying to break the mass, and relate the tall part to the garage - to break up the linearity. The garage is 9 levels. DH: Where are you in the process? Team: We have been to a hundred community meetings, gone door-to-door. We intend to ask for a PDA to achieve the zoning; the zoning now allows about 2 or 3 FAR, and we propose 6. Bob Uhlig (BU) of Halvorson showed the overall landscape plan, then a focused view detail of Market Street. He noted the plaza area, and drop-off, and the vertical circulation element. BU: We carry the vocabulary across East Drive to make the residential connection, and reinforce the edges on the south side with trees. (Shows circulation paths, precedent images, an aerial view looking down Market, then a pedestrian view looking in the other direction. He noted elements featured in two more views.) WR: There is something different from most projects...you said to think of it as a retail project, with the residential, hotel, etc. added. I would like to know your philosophical approach, the big idea of [programmatic imperatives]. DH: We need a larger model. PM: But a contextual model. DH: I'm mindful of what Bill is looking for - I understand this as an economic model. It's a little like an island. How it fits into the neighborhood [is unclear] - and the scale seems disruptive. And that's mostly the podium. This would be a better fit downtown. My biggest concern is that this undermines the Dudley Square renaissance. I'd love to hear more about what is the vision and planning for the area. MD: This is 350,000 SF more than we last saw. As much as I'd love to have hundreds of units and a hotel, we have to see other site plans, and how this connects to other sites around this. There is a Roxbury Master Plan...does this support the goals of that? I don't buy the renderings. The City will be changed by this; the density is such a burden here - I'm not sure how this *adds* to the City.

PM: I want to encourage more Commissioners to come next time. AL: I echo the request to understand this in a much larger context. If there is nothing at this scale, then it *is* an island. It looks like what we see in the Seaport...the strategy is a city in the City. I'm thinking of the last project we saw there [Seaport Square M1+M2] - conceived as a whole city, with a space in the center. A good city in a city. If that's the model, then this isn't nearly thought through enough. How it connects.... The space isn't good enough. I don't see a strategy for the parcel, given its extreme disjuncture with the things around it. MD: It would be useful to compare this to the Seaport. DH: And to Fenway. MD: Given the needs of the parking there, we have to compare. AL: We considered Whittier Choice very carefully. This is a different world. Market Street is not an organizing force. MD asked if any public comments.

Alison Pultinas: I am a parishioner of the church on Ruggles. I agree with your comments - we're not seeing the connections. This is like Patriots Place with towers on top. The size of the garage is a huge, huge problem. Twenty years ago, BTM did a study, and advocated for streets with parking [vs. a drop-off]. DH: There are cities trying to keep big boxes out of the central city. We just approved Tropical Foods - there's a concern about what's being offered up. This feels like a suburban strategy. PM: We should also look at our policy of bridges over streets - even though you're creating the street. WR: And

shadow studies. Rachel Slade: You need a broader strategy for the area from the BRA. With that, the Tremont Crossing Project was re-sent to Committee.

The next item was a presentation of the **32 Cambridge Street Project**. Young Park (YP) of Berkeley Investments introduced the team and Project, noting the location. YP: The idea is to preserve the industrial building, which imbues the Project with character. Kendra Halliwell (KH) of ICON: We are happy to be here - this project is about ten times smaller than the last. This is more intimate. (Shows a historic photo, then the existing Sullivan Square area - the locus. Shows the site.) We are restoring the existing building, but not using a tax credit. To the left, that building [at the corner] used to be a school, then a Brazilian church, and it's now offices. (Shows views of the site.) D Street is a Massport street. (Notes future plans, and past future plans, such as the 1999 BTB plan. Notes the Sullivan Square Disposition study.) The Disposition study was looking at nearby parcels, not our site, but we are mindful of the uses and scale proposed. (Notes the circulation potential, and the current MassDOT study of the area. Shows the site plan, and pedestrian routes out.)

KH: We have 171 units, and 116 parking spaces, mostly under the new building. There's a roof deck on top, and retail on Cambridge. (Shows the ground floor plan.) DH asked about the zero lot line. KH: We need to get into that, but that's an existing condition. (Shows a view down the entry court, and the view along Rutherford.) We are proposing a glass connector - we want to make it interesting, with images of the site's history. (Shows a view looking north along Rutherford. Shows materials: porcelain tiles, glazed brick, and corrugated metal, with cementitious panels at the top.) Margaret Reade of Richard Burck Associates presented the site plan. MaR: We are thinking of this as three main spaces. The entry parking court, which contains a formal front door, the historic building, and retail at the corner. Then a more private entry in a path from Rutherford, with a pocket park at the connector. And the south [elevated] courtyard. We use landscape as a buffer at the entry court, with 16 mostly visitor parking spaces, but it's viewed and experienced as a single space. Drop-off is allowed at the rear. There are trees along Rutherford now, and on D.

AL: What is the distance at the courtyard? MaR: About 55-60'. AL: Retaining the industrial piece is very interesting. The decision to use one core forces the entry at the center, and blocks the idea of entry from the street. I'm wondering if your strategy couldn't treat it as two buildings, rather than trying so hard. You are at a place where the City is not right angles. The warehouse does that. You need to do that. Your new building should follow the street, like any industrial building used to. I think the entry is odd, and the link is a little strange, too - you can't go through. YP: The decision to keep the old, was to make it more like a European complex. Also, there's no 'us and them.' DH: How do you enter now? KH shows this. DH: I'm not sure why you couldn't do a small core. It would be great to have a passage *through* the site. The more contemporary windows seen at the corner...there could be more of them, rather than large punched windows everywhere. Ribbon [windows] might be more exciting. MD: You're using six different materials - and losing some of the referents. It's a little complicated. I really like this project, and would like to expedite. WR: I want to second what these guys are saying. DH: Connections.... Rachel Slade: You've done great work. Could we see solar panels on

this large roof? YP: We are doing one [project] now with Photovoltaics. But the State has removed the subsidy. And we will look, but it is not that efficient here. With that, the 32 Cambridge Street Project was sent to Design Committee.

MD was recused from the next item and left. The next item was a presentation of the **Northeastern Columbus Avenue Student Housing Project and IMP change**. Kathy Spiegelman of Northeastern: One of the most exciting aspects of this Project is that we are working with American Campus Communities as a partner. Northeastern will lease the land to them; ACC will develop and own the building. The Project is included in the IMP. This is a good model for the City to develop the needed (student) beds. So we are excited by the partnership. This has received a very positive reaction from our task force. We committed in our IMP not to do anything after the ISEC until 600 beds were created. We have increased the program here to accomplish that. (Notes location and IMP plan massing.)

Brian O'Connor (BOC) of Cube3 presented the design, first noting the campus buildings of height, and housing buildings. BOC: Urban Design points include: considering Columbus as an emerging pedestrian corridor, filling in missing teeth, and reinforcing activity along the edges. The massing and height migrates to the middle of the block. There are pedestrian connections, via bridges, back to the main Campus. We wanted to connect to gestures of the buildings, such as the ISEC. The curves of that Science building appear on the ground floor, an organic expression (they are also on the high element). (Shows plan.) There is activity along Burke. The upper stories are two masses with a connecting corridor. We have set the building back from Columbus to pick up the height of the Administration Building next door. (Shows a view of the overall Project from the west; explains the materials strategy, with masonry glass, and metal, and the lower floors a hybrid.) We have a respect for the edge of Tremont Street (shows views). We have a vertical stripe/light bar, a signal/signifier toward the Campus. (Shows a night view, then a street view showing the activity at street level.)

DH: This needs a larger model. Kathy: What scale? DH: Not sure.... It's a nice scheme, how it fits on the site. On the elevations, the one with two materials speaking to each other is successful. But the other elevations - the windows vary, there are more materials. There are three buildings talking to each other - a lot going on, as at the Van Ness. The towers would benefit by being as elegant as others on the campus. Given the amount of program, the massing is very nice. PM: the massing is sensitively done. WR: You are articulate in sharing your intentions. One interesting thing was the connection to the ISEC. I wonder if there would be more interest in bolder curves. BOC: We can work on that...we have tried different variations. DH: Aggregate the curves around the taller building; let the others be more rectangular. WR: There is the question of the mid-block. This is unbelievably dense. Share with us other locations in the City that are that dense. This is a huge project in the middle of small blocks.

AL: A few small things.... I share David's view - the other (Tremont view) side is more successful with two colors. More successful than the other, with three things, three materials, one with curves. I like the strategy of the setback. The use of the curve...it's too little, too far

away. Use more, or let it go. I worry terribly about Burke Street, with the fiercely tall thing coming down there, next to the space on the next block. The space between the slabs - what is it, is it a light well? It feels like a New York City light shaft. A lot of people have that as their primary view. DH: Think of it as an air rights project, with the height transferred to the center. Kathy: The zoning is part of the IMP; that has height as a punctuation. There was the notion of Northeastern using the space across the street. DH: You saw the conversation on Tremont Crossing, which is lacking an area plan. WR: Seeing this in the mid-block...what would happen if Burke became pedestrian? Would that make this better? DH: Interesting. AL: Bring views, and a model. DH: The 90' building...I'd like to think of the curves as a shorthand for architecture that's more foreground. What if the curves came out to Columbus?

MD asked for comments. Alison Pultinas: This is sandwiched between buildings in a National Register District. With such narrow streets, you need to respect that [pattern and scale]. Kathy: We have shadow studies. Interesting comments. With that, the Northeastern Columbus Avenue Student Housing 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 8:43 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was scheduled for April 5, 2016. The recording of the March 1, 2016 Boston Civic Design Commission meeting was digitized and is available at the Boston Redevelopment Authority.