

DRAFT MINUTES

BOSTON CIVIC DESIGN COMMISSION

The meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was held on Tuesday, October 4th, 2016, starting in the BRA Board Room, 9th Floor, Boston City Hall, and beginning at 5:18 p.m.

Members in attendance were: Michael Davis (Co-Vice-Chair); Deneen Crosby, Linda Eastley, Andrea Leers, David Manfredi, Paul McDonough (Co-Vice-Chair), William Rawn, and Kirk Sykes. Absent were David Hacin and Daniel St. Clair. Also present was David Carlson, Executive Director of the Commission. Representatives of the BSA were present. Michael Cannizzo and Andrew Grace were present for the BRA and City.

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, September 22, in the BOSTON HERALD.

The first item was the approval of the September 6th, 2016 Meeting Minutes. A motion was made, seconded, and it was duly

VOTED: To approve the September 6th, 2016 Boston Civic Design Commission Meeting Minutes.

Votes were passed for signature. The next item was a report from the Review Committee on the **280-290 Warren Street Project**. David Carlson (DAC) noted that this was a residential Project in the Roxbury neighborhood. At about 166,000 SF, it exceeded the BCDC threshold, and review was recommended. It was duly moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the proposed 280-290 Warren Street Project in the Roxbury neighborhood.

David Manfredi (DM) was recused from the next item. The next item was a report from the Review Committee on the **2 Charlesgate Project**. DAC noted that this project, like the Point, was at a 'gateway' location in the Fenway area and of substantive scale. At over 340,000 SF, the proposed Project was well over the BCDC threshold; review was recommended. It was duly moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the proposed 2 Charlesgate West Project, at the corner of Charlesgate and Boylston, Ipswich and Private Alley 938, in

the West Fenway neighborhood.

DM returned. The next item was a report from the Review Committee on the **480 Rutherford Avenue Project NPC**. DAC noted that this project was in the Hood Business Park in Charlestown, and had been to the BCDC twice before and approved as office/lab space. This was now proposed as residential; the Master Plan for the Park itself would be forthcoming with a change to mixed use in the future. This is also consistent with recent Projects such as 32 Cambridge and the Bridgeview nearby. Seen recently in this Park was the simple conversion at 500 North. Because of the change in building type, the size (162,000 SF), and also the condition of review when the overall Hood Park was approved by the BCDC, review was recommended. It was again duly moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission review the revised schematic design for 480 Rutherford Avenue in the Hood Park Master Plan PDA, in the Charlestown neighborhood.

The next item was a report from the Review Committee on the **One Charlestown Project**. DAC noted that this was a modest transformation of BHA-owned housing parcels over 70 years old in Charlestown - using market-rate development to support the redevelopment of new affordable housing replacement on a 2-to-1 basis. Total units would number over 3,000. At well over 3 million SF, there was little question of thresholds, and a vote to review was recommended. It was duly moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the One Charlestown Project in the Charlestown neighborhood.

DM was recused from the next item Kirk Sykes (KS) arrived. The next item was a report from the Design Committee on the **General Electric Headquarters Project**. Bill Rawn (WR) suggested just proceeding, since although most Commissioners in Design Committee were okay with the design responses, not all were there. Doug Gensler (DG) of Gensler briefly re-presented the design, going through the site plan, diagrams, and a series of views. He explained the notion of the building, pointed out changes made along the way (i.e. the canopy shifting, the entry announced from Necco, and the entry atrium, neatly recessed between the two brick buildings), showing views of each. He talked about the programming, then showed GE Plaza, the central space, and the 'seawall element' that provided a direct link between Necco and the water. He showed the limits of the construction on a larger site plan. DG: The Harborwalk is now 18', allowing circulation, and now also has 'pensive' moments toward the water. On the south, we have adjusted the building and landscaping to provide for multiple connections to the future park space (shows a concept sketch). He then showed some final overall views.

Andrea Leers (AL): The changes to the Necco Street entry are very positive. WR: I appreciate the changes you made to get people closer to the water. There was a lot of discussion on this point; this is an interesting idea, and I hope the BPDA continues to work with you on this design. A lot about this is interesting and innovative; I want to

compliment the GE team on this approach to a corporate campus. Deneen Crosby (DC): I saw the landscape before. This is a big change - more usable space. The little areas at the water's edge - I'd like no railing, just a 'soft stop.' On the south, when you plant the slope, think about when you connect, and what you put in, so that you don't remove trees, for example. And make it a pervious edge, so activities can spill out.

MD: I agree with Deneen and Bill - there is a lot of innovative design. The central space has a lot of smaller details, but it just wants to be a large civic space. Linda Eastley (LE): A lot is very good. It's innovative, but I'd like to push you more. If the canopy collects water, celebrate that. The pieces coming out from the museum - I'd like to see more of that living laboratory aspect. KS: I like what you've done with the canopy. What is its relationship to the street? DG showed the Necco edge, noting the elevation above sea level. DG: The garage and louvers are the only places not glass. KS: It's a little hard, with that on the street side. Jonathan Ginnis: We have tried to activate the corner while working on the elevation change. DG noted the museum windows running to the left. A brief back and forth ensued, with KS asking a bit more. MD: Just one closing comment. Resilience is more than just rising above the flood plain. It includes social resilience - providing a place of refuge in an emergency when the lights go out. The social dimension - keep that in mind.

With no further questions, and none from the audience, it was moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the schematic design for the proposed General Electric Headquarters Project in the 100-Acre PDA Plan Area, within the South Boston Seaport District.

DM returned. The next item was a report from Design Committee on the **RLFMP Parcel Q1 Project**. John Sullivan (JS) of Spagnolo Gisness Associates presented the Project, focusing on the issues discussed, with a model placed on the table. He showed a perspective view, then a view looking through the park area, noting the opportunity for an interested architectural treatment in the background. He then showed plans, and the garage. JS: The difficulty in the conversion we discussed is the floor-to-floor height. One option is to remove a floor, leaving just one of parking. Another is to do that, but also to adjust the remaining floor height to allow a use on that third floor. (Reprises the shadow studies shown in Committee.) The park/plaza gets a fair amount of light. (Shows the alternative massing studies.) Rotating the massing crippled our ability to do parking. And the 65' wide opening created doesn't lead to anywhere, making a real challenge. The plaza is better located not at the corner, but across from the retail proposed along the hotel edge. (Shows more massing diagrams, and views. Notes how the buildings [Q1 and A] frame the Park entry, then pull apart. Shows a view from Dry Dock Avenue of both.)

DC: What is the path in from the bridge? JS indicated the route, via the park adjacent to the hotel. He noted their kiosks in the back. WR: I want to compliment you. This is really innovative; it feels right. Your chosen orientation to the railroad is much more interesting. One remaining question is the reuse of the floor of the garage. MD:

Commitment to that plate is key. AL: Are you tilting toward the second option? Mark McGowan of Skanska: We're willing to come back to present that choice. DM: We're interested. I was skeptical of the orientation, and now I'm convinced this is a better footprint. I'm feeling better about the 'gateway,' looking at the model. I have every reason to believe that the kiosks can work - we have four nearby.

LE: Lighting is the key to success - your front, the parking floors, your kiosks. Lighting, and animating, so it's safe as people exit. Lighting into the plaza to make it an interesting experience. Is there a crosswalk at your chamfered edge? JS: The ground floor is recessed there to give it more space. LE: Again, lighting is key. KS: Your park is what I appreciate the most. There's so much asphalt here. To change that, right at the park entry - I hope more pick up on that. That's more important than the facades, face to face. I appreciate the convertible parking. With that, and hearing no questions from the audience, it was moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the schematic design for the Parcel Q1 Project in the Raymond L. Flynn Marine Park, in the South Boston Waterfront District, with the condition that the Proponent return to give an informational update on the garage floor conversion decision.

KS was recused from the next item. The next item was a presentation of the **280-290 Warren Street Project**. Micheal Washington (MW) presented the design. MW: We have been pursuing the Project for some time, and it will make a difference in the community. (Notes location.) We are halfway between Dudley and Blue Hill Avenue, one of a few blocks that are abandoned. (Shows the 3 parcels that form the site, noting one is DND. Shows site photos and its existing buildings.) Warren Street is characterized by 3-4 story structures with commercial on the ground floor. (Shows area context photos.) The buildings in the area...argue for the scale and character of our proposal. There's residential beyond that, that's period architecture. And a Verizon building across Waverly Street. MW: We are trying to use the basic language of the site configuration, and grades. There's primary pedestrian interest at the corners, with vehicular entries off the side streets. There's a courtyard in the center (shows site plan) for residents, and others. (Shows a basement plan with one tray of parking, then the ground floor - notes the parking here.) Cruz will occupy the commercial space in the first phase building; there'll be retail in the second phase. (Notes the lobby, and the mix of units on the upper floors. Notes Phase 2 will consist of elderly units. Shows the elevations.) We are using basic materials, a traditional expression. There's storefront at the base, expressing clarity, invitation, seeing in. (Describes a series of perspective renderings and vignettes.) On the canopies shown, although the view suggests that the ground floor protrudes, it does not. The Verizon building on Waverly is higher than our 5-story building (shows a view down Waverly, then in the courtyard space).

LE: It looks like the parking is open to the courtyard - on all sides? MW: We plan a half wall in Phase 1. Then it varies along Waverly, and facing the neighbors. AL: Are the bay windows projected on all sides? MW: Yes (shows views). DM: There are a lot of very nice things here, it's a very nice Project. I have questions on the ground floor...I'm not sure I really understand - what the storefronts look like,

what the canopies are doing. MW: It's a 10' sidewalk. The bays project 2'. The canopies go further. DM: Warren faces west...there's parking on Waverly, which also has a half wall. Can I climb over that? MW: There'll be some kind of screen there to prevent that. DM: You should do something that creates a streetwall, and prevents you from entering. And the entries? I couldn't really find them on the elevations. MD clarifies the question to MW. DM: Straight elevations, maybe a section. On the east side, what the edge feels like.

AL: There's just a lot of good thinking here - the disposition, the scale. Some of the architectural elements - I wonder about the little window dormers. A whole block of that. You might look at grouping them - say, above the bay windows. The other question is your need for canopies *everywhere*. At the retail, but maybe not at the other block. You could celebrate the entry more. I'm just suggesting studies. LE: The landscape spaces along Warren, in the courtyard, and the aperture into the courtyard. I wonder if the retail treatment might not wrap into the courtyard. Invite, make the turn. Understand who looks in, and who has access. The courtyard is compact, so it will be in shadow all the time. So how is it used...how do people inhabit it. DC: Only one side is activating it - the rest is parking. MD: I don't want to burden you with a model, but how it meets the single family homes on [Waverly] should be shown. I know there will be some change. I just want to make sure of that [impact]. This is a great Project. Paul McDonough (PM): It looks very much like a project proposal for this [urban renewal] site half a century ago. With that, and with no comment from the public, the 280-290 Warren Street Project was sent to Design Committee.

DM was recused from the next item. The next item was a presentation of the **2 Charlesgate Project**. Justin Krebs (JK) of Transnational introduced his team, including Brian Kessler (BK) of Elkus/Manfredi and Chris Jones (CJ) of Carol R. Johnson Associates. JK: This site had a 'gateway' designation in 2002 in the Fenway Plan. We looked at the Pierce, and saw this second location here, allowing more height and FAR. (Notes the program and gives program numbers - units, SF, uses - rental, ownership, retail/restaurant, office/community space.) We engaged the community early. We've proposed key improvements - the park space, the DCR space, along Ipswich. We have started with some ideas on the Ipswich corridor working with AFH and the Boston Arts Academy nearby...murals. Many elements are shaped by the neighborhood, and by the winds and waters of the Muddy River.

BK noted the Charlesgate West confusion, and showed a historic map, then an old pre-highway aerial, then a current aerial. BK: The Transnational Building was built in pieces. (Shows context photos.) There's a wall that's a remnant of the old Charlesgate on Ipswich. Our existing building has a backside...but the Boston Conservatory building kicked off an opportunity. (Shows more views; shows design diagrams. Notes location on the Back Bay Fens, and on an axis along Commonwealth Avenue.) There's a 60' residential block next door; we've made our building podium slightly higher, to relate to that. On Ipswich (shows plan, notes parking access), we've activated the street. Queuing is not anticipated to be a problem. On the second floor, the Boylston level is 100' from the road; the restaurant there overlooks Ipswich as well. On the third floor, there's mechanical, storage, and office. Four and five are parking. These are flat plates, 15' floor-to-floor; we're using stackers, and the floors can be repurposed. The

upper residential floors have terraces, and shift to condominium uses at the top. A 16,000 SF floorplate tapers down to 9,500 SF at the top. (Shows views down Boylston, before and after.) The green connection is critical - the perceived flow of the natural environment. LE asked about the background zoning. BK: The 'Gateway' zoning in the Fenway allowed 250' and FAR 12 at the Pierce site; here, it's 135' and FAR 9. (Shows Ipswich view, before and after.) There are a number of improvements possible - paths, fences, artwork. And activation of the street. The restaurant is a farm-to-table concept from Lookout Farm. The garage floors are treated with windows. At the base, it's a brownstone building, taking off as rough to relate to the old walls. (Shows a view of the Project, looking toward the Pru. Shows an aerial photo with the Project set in. Shows modeled [shaded] elevation views, notes the idea of connecting to the wall.

CJ noted four key points. The property is small. The bulk of the enhancements are on the adjacent space, at the intersection, and along the walkway/passage down through the space to the east. He himself was guilty of suggesting the removal of a tree, to let light in, to make it safe, without being heavy-handed. But there is an Olmstedian flow through the space, and a walk-up environment toward the restaurant. On Ipswich, the sidewalk is only 4-7 feet wide, and the visual connection to the Muddy River has been lost. Could we transform the screen fence into something - more kinetic? Reflective? A faux visual connection? We will work with an artist. WR: Have you given any thought to widening the passage to the Boston Conservatory? BK: We have looked at making it 8-10'. Right now, it's 5-6'. WR: What are the impediments to widening it further? It seems like an opportunity. CJ showed more views. He noted that there was no parking and no sidewalk along parts of the north side of Ipswich. DC: It's really inadequate there now. CJ: The art installation relocation...

PM asked about the MDOT parcel at the Bowker Overpass. JK noted that they did not control that; nothing was moving forward. LE: This was a very nice presentation. The improvements to Ipswich are a great gain. The Boston Conservatory adds to that. On the [lawn], I have a different direction than Bill; students may want to go down through the restaurant to the Ipswich level. JK: Most students go down the path on the east. It's much faster to do that than to cross the intersection. The BAA students also find that a useful cut. DC: With circulation, we should have a better understanding of the topography. With DCR, lighting interior paths will be difficult for them. JK: They do view it as a win-win. The celebration of the bridge, lighting that in the evening - that may not violate the park mandate of the DCR. There's green space and connectivity. LE: It's a park setting, but also an urban space. MD: We are running late.

AL: I'm interested in seeing the views from the highway, in both directions. Boston College is a very prominent building. Show us more of that. I recently went down the path, and discovered Ipswich. I would like to know more about *that*. JK: The real killer is that bridge, going down to 4' (sidewalk). (Notes other constraints, embankments.) AL: I don't think you need to align with the Boston Conservatory, if there are other benefits. MD: I'm interested in the presentation, the suggestion of shaping, how it fits in the context. A suggestion of height, that connects to the high spine. The view from Boylston. The connection to Mass Ave. WR: I assume that the BBAC jurisdiction ends at the bridge. [Yes.] KS: The height means shadows, and wind. The first three floors are my interest. I look to the BPDA for guidance

on height. WR: You want the best front door possible, on Ipswich. The things you've thought about. JK: We have worked on that...how far you go up, or back, with the storefront, etc. With that, and again hearing no public comment, the 2 Charlesgate Project was sent to Design Committee.

The next item was a presentation of the **480 Rutherford Avenue NPC** Project. Geoff Lewis (GL) of Colliers introduced the team: Mark Rosenschein (MR) of Colliers, Steve Kaneb (owner), Andy Elliot, Chris Hill. GL noted that this was a PDA Master Plan. GL: We have designed the building to recognize the Sullivan Square and Rutherford Avenue studies. We've reshaped the road, made it less suburban, focused on making connections. (Shows the old Master Plan, notes which buildings have been built.) WR: Can we hear more about the Master Plan? If it's changing, can we ask you more about that? GL: We are not changing at this time the overall Plan - except for the use of this site. Chris Hill (CH) of CBT presented the design, first noting the context on the west side of Rutherford and introducing landscape architect Andy Elliot (AE). AE: We sited the building close to Rutherford so that we can have a closer relationship. The retail, which can engage the street, is placed there in anticipation. The building is about 20' from the curb. We're proposing to eliminate the guard shack, tighten the curb cut, and make the driveway more of a street, with a minimum 10' sidewalk. The entry to the potential retail is at the corner. Then further, there's the lobby, and the rental office. There's a common green space in the [elevated] courtyard, with private spaces to the edge. CH: We are treating the edges as streets, including B Street (shows). LE: Do Rutherford plans contemplate parallel parking? MR: One option has that. We are trying to set this up so that nothing is precluded. DC: Is there a chance that the curb would come closer? MR: Not in the iterations so far. It's more likely further away. AE: The alignment here is similar to that at the 32 Cambridge Street edge. MR: We are setting this up, investing in trees, etc. (CH shows the ground floor plan, then a typical upper floor. He notes the loading and parking. Shows an aerial view of the design, describing elements. Notes the corner, and materials, including terra cotta.) CH: There's a different 'bar,' a different expression, at the back. (Walks Commissioners through views, of building, courtyard, closer in. Notes retail at the base, and signage locations.) [DM left.]

AL: The shift in use for this site...I'm trying to turn my head...trying to understand how housing fits into a business park. I'm puzzled by how this can be housing. It's an island...maybe the courtyard should be on the other side. I want to know how it came to be housing, how that might change the plan, and how this fits. MR: This was a little like a suburban office park - that was an older conversation at that time, before the Casino and other nearby developments. We are extending the residential nature across Rutherford; Charlestown is expanding a couple of blocks. It's more of a problem to integrate residential against the highway with the infrastructure and industry there. The idea is to look at change which extend more residential through this area. About the courtyard, the southern exposure gives more sunlight.

KS: Is the retail parked internally? MR: No. 40 spaces are designated as visitor parking across the driveway. There are 300 surplus spaces now overall. So there's enough for the retail; we're thinking a small grocery. MD: I'm encouraged to hear 'a small grocery store.' MR: This is more of a mixed-use area, not a business park. KS: You're

trying to do building by building master planning on a boulevard. It doesn't make sense, if the retail fails. MR: There's a potential future connection across Rutherford at that corner. It's a question of time. Wynn (Casino developer) has to do significant sections of Sullivan Square, and consensus on that [configuration] has to happen within a year. The City wants the change to happen. LE: That's a leap of faith - Baldwin coming across. MR: The average lease is 2-3 years.... LE: The question is really about the western facade. Would you want to animate that, to respond to development across B Street? Landscape treatment.... AL: One of the things that's really intriguing is the conversion into a mixed-use project. What would that take? More green space? Amenities that would work. Housing up next to the industrial seems incompatible. MR: We're happy to explore the notion, but we're not bringing the Master Plan [amendment] forward now. LE: It would be very helpful to have an axon of this in the Master Plan as it stands now. How the massing helps. The relative heights. MR: We can have that discussion. KS: My thought, is not so much massing, as uses. Focus more on Rutherford. With that, and hearing no further comment, the 480 Rutherford NPC was sent to Design Committee.

The next item was a presentation of the **ONE CHARLESTOWN Project**. Sarah Barnat (SB) of Corcoran Jennison introduced the Project. SB: This BHA housing site has 1,100 units, the largest in New England. We will redevelop this over 10 years, adding 1,500 market rentals and 600 condos to pay for the replacement affordable units. The model is Columbia Point, also done by Corcoran Jennison. (Shows site locus.) LE: What is the out parcel? SB: That's a church, and the Kennedy Center. We are only doing the BHA property. (Shows a diagram, indicating the 1/3 - 2/3 mix.) We have an extensive team, including David Dixon (DD) of Stantech on the Master Plan, Tamara Roy (TR) and BK Boley (BKB) of Stantech, firms such as DiMella Shaffer, Studio Luz, Deb Myers, and ground. We've had resident and community engagement, meeting over the course of the summer. Almost every architect will be involved. TR: There was a community response to the architecture approach. When people looked at the context, they liked the idea of different architects, a variation.

DD: This is an exciting Project. This has been two communities for some time; it's time for it to be *one* Charlestown. We are extending streets, creating two new public parks. Bunker Hill Street emerges as a seam, with retail, and a square. We are working with Graffito on the retail, and are encouraged. (Shows the massing diagram.) We are not just creating streets, but also stoops, etc. - the character. Taller buildings are introduced toward the [Tobin] bridge. Charlestown is not monolithic; we paid attention to the historic fabric. Monument Street is walkable, there are inviting courtyards, there's another park, with a different character.

TR: The Charlestown Preservation Society gave guidance. BKB: We looked at Monument Square, and wanted compatible materials - brick, but perhaps not just that - to mesh. And using those to frame the park. We discovered a 'Morse Code' of Charlestown building cadence. The new development should represent this. The firms as a team were assigned facades and elements. Tamara and I were editors-in-chief (notes other members of the extended team). TR: A kit of Charlestown parts was given to all. There's an example in your informational booklet, Block B, showing the variety that resulted. BKB: The parking

is underground. There are stoops into duplexes. LE: How do the affordable and market rate mix? BKB: There's no visible change in the finishes; they are 100% flexible. TR: 50% of the doorknobs on the street are affordable. BKB: There's a multi-generational feel. And an elderly component. TR: Bunker Hill Street is the seam, and we've reduced that scale. We've taken 6 stories to a variety, 5 stories, etc. We're using elements to bring the scale down according to what's across the street. We're trying hard not to lose area, pushing and pulling.

Shauna Gillies-Smith (SGS) of ground: We're intrigued by, mapping into the Bunker Hill diorama, telling stories of the history. There are significant parts of that battle that took place around the site. This is a way of tying to Charlestown and to the broader population. Monument Street Park...has the idea of the shadow of the monument...as a splash pad. And there are other stories. A café, in Building C. Streets, courtyards, and parks are being designed. Streets, which are a Deb Myers focus, give different characters to the different streets. The courtyards are private, but in the public realm. There are traces of old stone walls.... The Phase 2 Park will be more active. The street goes through it, but vehicles pause.

AL: The courtyards across from each other - why did the model change? BKB: The blocks are bigger. SGS: Also, they are above retail there, so elevated. DC: It would be good to understand what's visible. KS: The Morse idea, up and down - you show five blocks, then one.... SGS: We have a fly-through. (TR runs that.) AL: This is very well thought through, from the streets to courtyards, to ways through. Mixing it up, the kit of parts, is terrific. You wouldn't get that from a single hand. MD: I'm inclined to talk less about the architecture, and more about the process. This is terrific. Is the BHA involved? SB: The whole approach is part of their idea; this could be a model. DD: A model you will see repeated. AL: As you go along, how the big buildings work will need some design. Everyone has to love the big stuff, too. TR: We will go through the first phase in detail, but we'll be more at the guidelines level for the big buildings. LE: I'd like to learn more about how that's conceived. MD: And interim phases. AL: Topography - sections, of streets and courtyards. LE: I'm impressed by how playful it is; that's really great. What happens north of Medford? You intentionally decided not to line up with the co-op across the street. I'd like to see one or two streets connect there. DC: Who is moving north-south. Destinations. And materials. With that, and hearing no public comment, the One Charlestown 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 9:12 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was scheduled for November 1, 2016. The recording of the October 4, 2016 Boston Civic Design Commission meeting was digitized and is available at the Boston Redevelopment Authority.