

MINUTES

BOSTON CIVIC DESIGN COMMISSION

The meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was held on Tuesday, May 7, 2019, starting in Room #900, Boston City Hall, and beginning at 5:19 p.m.

Members in attendance were: Deneen Crosby, Linda Eastley, David Hacin, Eric Höweler, Mikyoung Kim, Andrea Leers, Anne-Marie Lubenau, David Manfredi, Paul McDonough, William Rawn, and Kirk Sykes. Elizabeth Stifel, Executive Director of the Commission, was present. Representatives of the BSA attended. Meghan Richard, Michael Cannizzo, Matt Martin, Corey Zehngebot, Alexa Pinard, David Carlson, Mike Sinatra, Lauren Shurtleff, 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, **April 21**, in the **BOSTON HERALD**.

The first item on the agenda was the approval of the April 2, 2019 Monthly Meeting Minutes and the Design Committee Minutes from meetings on April 9, 16, and 23. A motion was made, seconded, and it was duly

VOTED: To approve the April 2, 9, 16, and 23, 2019 BCDC Meeting Minutes.

Votes were passed for signature. The next item was a report from the Review Committee on the **99 A Street** project. The proposed project is located at the meeting point of the South Boston residential and industrial neighborhoods at the block bounded by A, West Third, West Second and the South Boston Bypass. At 6-stories and 210,000 SF, the project exceeds the 100,000 SF BCDC review threshold. Review is recommended. As such, it was moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the proposed 99 A Street on the site bounded by A, West Second, West Third Street, and the South Boston Bypass in the South Boston Neighborhood.

The next item was a report from the Review Committee on the **1252-1270 Boylston Street** project. This project is a non-affiliated dormitory is proposed at this site on the south side of Boylston Street in the Fenway. At 15-stories and 233,000 SF it exceeds the 100,000 SF BCDC review threshold and therefore review is recommended. It was duly moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the proposed 1252-1270 Boylston project tin the Fenway neighborhood.

The Review Committee presented a report on the **Massachusetts General Hospital Clinical Building** project. MGH is here with a new IMP and associated projects in the main campus including a new clinical building of over 1,000,000 SF. Review of the IMP and associated projects is recommended. It was moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission review the MGH IMP and associated schematic designs for its IMP projects (Clinical Building on Cambridge Street and bounded by Parkman, Blossom and North Grove Streets in the West End Neighborhood).

The next item on the agenda was a report from the Design Committee on the **Parcel 25 Mission Hill Phase 2** project.

Rob Chandler, Goody Clancy: This project is a 46-unit 100% affordable residential building. In response to feedback from the Commission, we revised the façade pattern to highlight building entries. The building

corners now stand out architecturally to highlight the entries and bring material around the corners. We've been increasingly focused on materiality. Most of the outdoor space on this site will be built out during Phase 3.

Linda Eastley (LE): I want to compliment the changes.

Eric Höweler (EH): Well done!

Andrea Leers (AL): You've been responsive. This will be a good project.

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

VOTED: That the BCDC recommend approval for the Mission Hill Parcel 25 Project and PDA on the corner of Tremont and Gurney streets in the Mission Hill neighborhood.

Prior to the proponent presentation, Matt Martin, Urban Designer at the BPDA, presented one slide on the context of 99 A Street. In 2017, this area was rezoned as multi-family residential in an area formerly zoned for manufacturing. BPDA Urban Design staff are primarily concerned with the large mechanical penthouse, as the building is already larger than its surrounding context, as well as the detail of façade materials.

The project team set up a physical model for the presentation of **99 A Street**, a new life sciences building project in the South Boston neighborhood. William Rawn arrived.

Mark Sardenga, Elkus Manfredi Architects: In context, our site is bounded by A, West Second, West Third Street, and the South Boston Bypass. Currently 2 parcels, this site will be filled and transition in scale between a small residential and medium mixed-use scales. The building steps down in scale to defer to Flaherty Park with green roofs on each terraced level. Ground floor will be cast in place concrete; curtain wall system with copper on the upper floors. Primary entrance is on A and Second Street.

Chris Jones, CRJA-IBI Group, landscape architects: Our site creates three different streetscape typologies: an urban experience along A Street, residential along Second and Third Street, and a buffered streetscape along Haul Road (South Boston Bypass). Street wall creates an end to the nose of the building. Buffering along Haul Street for a more pedestrian friendly environment.

David Hacin (DH): The residential building across Third Street (Port 45) is detailed with residential scale and character. When you return to committee, the Commissioners need to understand both sides of Third Street. I appreciate the setbacks that were done to preserve light and air to Flaherty Park and transition the scale to the neighborhood. I know the issue of height in the neighborhood has been hard-fought, and this is significantly taller than was expected. I'd like to understand all of the street sections in relation to the existing conditions around the building.

LE: I'm intrigued with the relationship of this building to Haul Road. It's hard to tell if A Street is wide enough to accommodate all the program and character that you have proposed for the public realm (street furniture, etc.).

Deneen Crosby (DC): Will Haul Road ever become a street?

Kirk Sykes (KS): This is important as an edge building, and I'd like to understand this better with more views.

AL: A Street wants to be more open and accessible as a street front to the neighborhood. Right now, A Street is pinched and steep, not a place you want to pause and drop off. I'm interested in the difference between Second and Third Streets. Through connector to park is nice. Third is lined with mechanical but wants to be more open to the neighborhood.

DH: You might consider creating a lobby that connects Third Street to Second Street through the building; this would allow pedestrians and residents along Third Street to engage with the scale of a building lobby that they could potentially cut through without navigating A Street. It would be worth understanding what the challenges are here in exchange for an amenity.

Kirk Sykes (KS): The lobby could also serve as an indoor winter garden or a place to get coffee, and its use would likely increase if it connects Second and Third Streets.

Matthew Kirk, resident abutter: I live across the street at Port 45. This will be my view, and access to light will be blocked by this building. My expectation is that this will be a noisy building. The building is a big wall as far as the residents are concerned, and we'd like to see it step or slope back in some way.

Derek Pagikowski, West Broadway Neighborhood Association: This building creates an edge to the neighborhood, and we feel that the current proposal does not address this transition to the residential area well. It's concerning to hear that this height is reasonable in the neighborhood because as proposed this project is almost twice as tall as the building across the street. The project will continue in Design Committee.

Before the next project presentation, Corey Zehngebot, Senior Urban Designer at the BPDA, offered information about zoning and development along Boylston Street in the Fenway neighborhood in preparation for the presentation of 1252-1270 Boylston. The Fenway neighborhood zoning, passed in 2005, permitted PDA developments to encourage large-scale development in exchange for public benefit; this provision has now sunset. This site does not meet the 1-acre threshold required to be a PDA but does meet several of the specifications identified in the original zoning; the proponent is considering the principles provided for PDA development in the Fenway neighborhood in the proposal. Primary internal conversations have focused on building height, massing, and façade depth. Public realm conversations have focused on the integration of the baseball tavern site and expression of the 2-story podium. The current zoning height is 70' and FAR is 4.

Andrew Flynn, CEO of Scape Student Housing, introduced the project team for **1252-1270 Boylston Street**.

Alex Fernandez, Gensler: The existing character of Boylston includes a number of transitions and steps in height. The massing of this project creates a south-facing U-shaped courtyard for residents. The building patterning mimics the rhythm of bays to transition in relation to neighborhood scale. Upper story amenity deck and internal spaces will be communal spaces for the students who live here. Building materiality is diverse along Boylston, with brick serving as the predominant material in the residential neighborhood. Our palette includes brick, copper, metal panel, and pre-cast concrete.

Jaya Finn, Gensler: Our proposed streetscape employs the Boston Complete Streets Guidelines. At the corner of Boylston and Private Alley 937 at the eastern edge of the site, we have pushed out the cycle track to accommodate a pocket park that provides a visual terminus to this portion of Boylston Street. The building's street wall has a rhythm of step backs to provide relief. At the request of the community, we have minimized the number of units that look out onto Peterboro Street.

Mikyoung Kim (MK): I would love to know more about the generous space created for the public realm and why the building steps in and out.

DC: This section of Boylston is a great street that has developed over time. Understanding this section relative to the whole street (regarding trees, materials, parklets) is important because it will be difficult to achieve continuity as piecemeal development continues.

DH: This still reads like a big building, particularly in height. You may need to look at this in a finer grain with its neighbors. How can the façade be broken up?

AML: I appreciate your attention to material and context. I would like to understand the massing in relation to its immediate neighbors and the adjoining facades.

LE: I'm having a hard time understanding the scale in relation to Peterborough Street. I feel like there is a disconnect between this building and the massing across the alley. I'd like to see some of the massing from the perspective of a pedestrian in this alley. The Commission has been concerned with making alleys in the city a pedestrian destination with public use.

AL: I was struck by the goals of the original zoning: fill void spaces with an added variety of heights. Even though height has been modulated within the body of the building, this project continues the wall-ness of Boylston Street. Can the height be reduced in any way?

KS: I would look at an intermediate datum between the top and podium base on the neighborhood side.

DH: It would be great to hear about the theater in this building as it brings in diverse users and creates a relationship to the public realm. Let's understand how this is expressed on the façade and contributes to the streetscape.

Tim Orange, Fenway Civic Association and Fenway Resident: I sat on the zoning commission over a decade ago. The PDA use was meant to jumpstart development for the first investors of this neighborhood. Only specific sites were eligible, and those projects have been successful. When the Harlow, a non-eligible site came in, it was granted excess height because its design responded to community needs for a health center and provided more residential units. This proposed project is a forbidden use. Fenway Civic and Fenway CDC planned with institutions to create dorms on university campuses. Anything developed on this street that does not house any and all residents is removing opportunity for new residents of the Fenway neighborhood. If these were microunits, these could serve students or professionals, but this housing is restrictive.

Pam Beele, IAG member and part of original zoning conversation: The point being made now is that we didn't envision a use this clever that has taken off around the world. We should have the opportunity to think about an innovative program that serves a large population of Boston.

The project will continue in Design Committee.

William Rawn and Paul McDonough left. David Manfredi arrived. Elizabeth Stifel is the Urban Designer responsible for the review of this project. As such, she gave a one slide introduction to the MGH IMP. Key concerns of the BPDA include the location of curb cuts, pedestrian and bicycle accommodations, the relationship of massing along Cambridge Street, the view to the Ether Dome and related open space, and the aesthetic similarity of the new MGH in patient buildings.

Dave Hanitchak, VP for real estate at MGH: Our internal drivers are program based. MGH needs to modernize the campus and meet growing demand for care. We are at 95% occupancy most of the time and are challenged by our existing double patient rooms.

Tom Sieniewicz, NBBJ: We studied 12 possible locations on the campus for this building and settled on this location as it does not displace any patients and fills a profound missing tooth along Cambridge Street. The Master Plan features a green roof, as sustainability and resiliency are a key focus. A bridge connects the two inpatient buildings over North Anderson. The building includes 456 new beds, but 203 total new beds, an active retail function on the ground floor, and relocated below grade parking. All of the street frontage will be beautifully detailed to support the lobby and retail functions at the pedestrian scale. There are three existing buildings on this site and we are working with city and state agencies to determine how to incorporate these buildings on the campus. The two buildings are meant to be similar but not identical.

Kirk Sykes: How does the community access these proposed public spaces and/or green roofs?

David Hacin: I recall discussion of relocating the parking garage that is adjacent to this project and the museum on campus. Will this be going away? It seems this site could contribute to the public realm on campus.

Dave Hanitchak: This redevelopment will occur much farther in the future

Deneen Crosby: I'd like to better understand the central axis along North Anderson. North Anderson should look like a street even if you don't encourage walking along it, and there are so many beautiful trees throughout the MGH campus that should be incorporated here. Can that be a public way?

Anne-Marie Lubenau: When you come to committee, we need to understand what areas are accessible or not. What are the view corridors around this project? And how is the bridge experienced from the public realm? In regards to the massing, I encourage you to think about the articulation at the upper levels to create variation.

Linda Eastley: This can be a really beautiful project. I'm struck by the hierarchy of the streets that enclose this project and what creates the sense of a campus. Grove Street feels like a dark, internal campus street. Think about this experience. Blossom feels like a City of Boston Street that welcomes you to the campus. I think these streets in addition to North Anderson should be considered carefully and each treated differently from the pedestrian scale.

Kirk Sykes: I'd like to see massing studies that explain how you arrived at two mirrored boxes. You have a variety of heights on campus, so why not here?

Eric Howeler: The section concept is exciting—you proposed to create a vertical campus. I'm interested to see how this works with the urban scale at the exterior.

Andrea Leers: The basic decisions in this project are sound and thoughtful. I appreciate the moves at Grove Street. I am concerned about the axis between these buildings at North Anderson, which bring you to the Bullfinch Green. In this proposed condition, you wouldn't know a park lies at the end.

Greg Gailer, Boston Preservation Alliance: The proposal calls for the demolition of 3 historic buildings, some of the last remaining in the West End. We met with the team and encouraged them to move them on site.

Chris Hart, Boston Landmarks Commission: Echoing Greg's comments, the work you did with museum and the Charles Street Jail (now the Liberty Hotel) needs to be done here too. We need to retain what little is left of the West End. Existing tripping hazard (of what) on Cambridge Street needs to be addressed, as does the pedestrian connection to the Red Line. The project will continue in Design Committee.

The final presentation of the evening was a revised proposal for the **Dock Square Garage project**. Kirk Sykes and David Manfredi were recused.

Elizabeth Stifel, Executive Director of the BCDC: In March, the Commission voted NOT to approve the Dock Square Garage Project. The proponent has returned to the Design Committee with the following proposed changes: reduced building height, convertible top floor of garage, massing altered to defer to Quincy Market, and more contextual material choices. Staff encourages you to engage with the presentation that we feel responds to the concerns that the Commission has raised.

BK Boley, Stantec: To get to a reduced height below 125', we will demolish the top two levels of the garage, creating a structural deck above the garage that provides space for stacked parking and a convertible top floor. Also allows for tall windows along the garage perimeter. Our new scheme comes to 55' at the terrace level (6' lower than existing garage) and 124'-8" overall. Warmer materials wrap around to the greenway. Our first proposed scheme started at 200' and stepped down in height in a C-shape; we now have a more inward looking building. Masonry wraps the north side of the building around to the greenway. Balconies respond to those across North Street. The interior of the residential shell is glassy. The massing has been pulled back and mechanical penthouse moved. Material matches the existing brick of garage as best as possible, with darker mullions and a darker frame to be added to the existing garage. The nose on corner from City Hall has been made as small as possible.

A motion was made to vote to review the project. It was seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission review the proposed Dock Square Garage project in the Downtown neighborhood.

David Carlson, Deputy Director of Urban Design, and Lauren Shurtleff, Acting Director of Planning, were present to address questions for the City of Boston.

LE: I think this is very successful in improving the public realm all the way around it; the simplified grade changes and pedestrian scale are successful. There is potential for retail or opening of glazing at the ground level. I wish I could be more comfortable with the scale/height. The project is well thought through but in the wrong place. But I want to thank the team for listening and making these nuanced moves.

DH: I want to thank the team for working so hard to come back to us with something that addresses the issues that have been raised throughout this process. It's helpful to see the new hotel on the adjacent site in your renderings. I believe the building now sits in the district much better than it did. I like the duality of the brick frame and contemporary façade. You have met the Greenway Guidelines threshold at 125'. I would like to see this in subcommittee in model form with a bit more development of the contrast between the contemporary and traditional expressions. I think it's great that you've lowered the height of the parking garage.

EH: I had asked if this is a foreground or background building. I appreciate seeing it in context with the city. You've done a good job at compressing the building. I was surprised that the new part of this building was so similar to the old (with brick materials and a similar fenestration pattern); I enjoyed that the

previous scheme contrasted the old and new. I hope the reduction in height doesn't reduce the quality. I miss the excitement of the architecture at the top.

AL: I appreciate the changes you've made to this. Thank you. This is comfortable enough for me as a volume. I think that now this is a massing study and not a fully formed design. It has good bones but as a piece of building in a sensitive and important place it wants more thought and refinement. I find the nose to be strange.

Resident on Broad Street: We liked the original design, but with this proposal the streets around Quincy Market will be more approachable.

Mark Margulies, IAG Member: The other proposals had a better knitting of the architecture of old and new.

Victor Bragna, North End Waterfront Residents' Association: At an earlier meeting, someone pointed out that Greenway Guidelines [which propose a height of 125'] were only guidelines. You can go lower than this height. The elephant in the room is that there is no view shown from the pedestrian view of Hanover and Cross Street.

Greg Gaylor, President of the Boston Preservation Alliance: I want to thank the team for continuing to improve this project. I look forward to further work in subcommittee.

Yvette Tetreault, developer & owner of the Haymarket Hotel: I am speaking in support of the project. The street retail is important to us. Dock Square's activation along the Greenway will be key to making this work. Parking here is important.

Michael Glenn, Doug Glenn Hospitality and IAG member: We want to keep parking in this downtown location. Please vote in favor of the project.

David Carlson: Thank you for your patience in listening to all of the stakeholders in this project. We think this is a breakthrough. This is a project that fully meets the intent of the Greenway Guidelines. We agree at the BPDA that this design needs work as this is a new design proposal. We would ask the permission of the commission to continue in committee with the approval for the proponent to proceed.

AML: I am eager to see this model with the context of the city model. I still have issues concerning the massing (large expanses of wall).

LE: I would feel most comfortable if we reviewed this project at Design Committee in May before issuing another vote of recommendation.

With that, it was moved, seconded, and

VOTED: The Commission propose to review one more time in committee, either next week or in two weeks as you chose, with the expectation that the issues that have arisen here will be addressed, the excitement will come back, the chance to really develop the idea that you have done quickly, and with the anticipation that we will bring it to the June meeting.

A motion was made to amend this vote, and it was seconded and

VOTED: The vote is amended to acknowledge the work that the proponent has done to deal with the issues of massing and the amelioration of the parking garage issues and the improvement of the public realm in their revised submission which will be reviewed as previously voted upon.

There being no further items for discussion, a motion was made to adjourn, and the meeting was duly adjourned at 8:45 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was scheduled for June 4, 2019. The recording of the May 7, 2019 Boston Civic Design Commission meeting was digitized and is available at the Boston Planning and Development Agency.