

## DRAFT MINUTES

### BOSTON CIVIC DESIGN COMMISSION

The meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was held on Tuesday, January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2016, starting in the BRA Board Room, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor, Boston City Hall, and beginning at 5:19 p.m.

Members in attendance were: Michael Davis (Co-Vice-Chair); Deneen Crosby, Linda Eastley, David Hacin, Andrea Leers, David Manfredi, Paul McDonough (Co-Vice-Chair), William Rawn, Daniel St. Clair, and Kirk Sykes. Absent was: Lynn Wolff. Also present was David Carlson, Executive Director of the Commission. Representatives of the BSA were present. Michael Cannizzo and Christopher Tracy 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 Sunday, December 20, in the BOSTON HERALD.

The first item was the approval of the December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015 Meeting Minutes. A motion was made, seconded, and it was duly

**VOTED: To approve the December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015 Boston Civic Design Commission Meeting Minutes.**

Votes were passed for signature. The next item was a report from the Review Committee on the **Jackson Square Phase 3 Project**. David Carlson (DAC) noted that this was the final component of the Jackson Square Master Plan: When the BCDC voted approval in 2007, that was conditioned on seeing future changes and phases beyond the first. The two-building Project contains over 140,000 SF on its own, and would be over the review threshold in any case. For these two reasons, review was recommended. It was duly moved, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for Phase III of the Jackson Square Phase 3 Project, on the block defined by Centre, Amory, and future Jackson streets and the Orange Line ROW, in the Jamaica Plain neighborhood.**

The next item was a report from the Review Committee on the **Boston University Myles Standish Hall Project** at 610 Beacon Street. DAC: Review of BU's IMP Projects was made a condition of BCDC approval of the BU IMP in 2013. However, most conversation leading to this

condition focused on the new Projects, and this is essentially a pure rehabilitation. The square footage, at over 200,000 SF is also well over the BCDC review threshold. Normally the argument would simply be made for a recommendation NOT to review, and that is the case here. However, given the stricture of the prior condition, the BCDC would be undoing an applicable condition of the prior vote, and so it is suggested that the vote be taken after the Commission has had the benefit of a presentation by the Proponent.

Bill Rawn (WR), Daniel St. Clair (DS), and Kirk Sykes (KS) arrived. After some discussion, this notion was accepted, and so the next item became the *presentation* of the **Boston University Myles Standish Hall Project** at 610 Beacon Street. Paul Rinaldi (PR) of Boston University introduced the Project: The Project is a full rehabilitation; we are losing only 20 beds. In IMP projects, 610 Commonwealth is topping off next week, and the Sert Law School Project is complete. James Loftus (JL) of Miller Dyer Spears presented the design, noting the locus, showing historic photos, then focusing on details (windows, i.e.). JL: Boston University shifted the entry in 1980. The cast stone on the building is deteriorating and falling off, thus the sidewalk protection (seen in existing condition photos). We are working with SGH and masons.... MD: The mission of the BCDC is not historic preservation; you should focus on the changes, and on the public realm. JL then showed a proposed new canopy, and noted they were re-cladding with new limestone. Jim Heroux (JH) of the Copley Wolff Design Group presented the site plan. JH: It's mostly the same. At the corner we are changing from striping to a parklet that allows a better pedestrian connection across toward Kenmore Square. (Notes the materials/landscape palette.) We are using brick, a permeable system at the edges, and gray stone in the parklet. With that, it was moved, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission NOT review the schematic design for the Myles Standish Hall Renovation Project at 610 Beacon Street in the backdrop of the Institutional Master Plan for the Boston University Campus in the Allston-Brighton neighborhood.**

The conversation continued beyond the vote. Deneen Crosby (DC): A question - if a pedestrian comes down that side, crossing over Beacon itself is difficult. JH: We considered that [movement], but there's no reason for the move, it sets into nowhere. Linda Eastley (LE): A very important part of this is the parklet; this is an important entry to the BU campus. WR: I've a question about the sidewalk at the entry. 12' seems narrow, given the activity there. PR: It's the condition that exists now with the use. KS: If you look at the site plan, the parklet is lush. But in the internal view, it looks more open. JH: We propose elms; they are quick-growing, and will form a canopy. It's more of a distortion [in the view]. KS: there's an opportunity for public art; it's a found space. MD: The motion [to NOT review] carries. (To Audience:) For reports from Design Committee, please note that we are inclined to approve; set a brisk pace. If you could focus on the items discussed in the last Design Committee, please.

David Manfredi was recused from the next item. The next item was a report from the Design Committee on the **Emmanuel Julie Hall Project**. Rayford Law (RL) of Elkus/Manfredi: There were three

primary issues. First, the character of the building, with buff brick as a counterpoint. We feel good about the massing, but it's too big to be all one color. There is buff in the courtyard, but the tall portion is now all red brick. (Shows elevation, then the view from Brookline Avenue.) On the east elevation, the horizontal band was dropped in the center. Second, as many pieces as possible of HVAC equipment were moved to the upper roof. We are working to make that HVAC smaller on the low roof. Third, the public realm - we have upgraded that along Brookline Avenue, and everyone can enter [the building] from the same point on campus. Along Brookline, there are a series of outdoor spaces that are extensions of interior spaces (such as common rooms), including the statue of Mary that's in front of the existing Julie Hall.

Andrea Leers (AL): I appreciate your looking at this; the mix of materials is much more persuasive. The spaces are much better. It works for the pedestrians as well as the building. Paul McDonough (PM): Keep pressing on the mechanicals on the low roof. With that, a motion was made, seconded, and it was

**VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the schematic design for Emmanuel's Residence Hall (Julie Hall) Project on Brookline Avenue in the Emmanuel College Institutional Master Plan area, in the Longwood Medical Area.**

DM returned. The next item was a report from Design Committee on the **1235-1237 VFW Parkway Project**. Jai Khalsa (JK) of Khalsa Design: The areas suggested to change were the facade materials and details, the elimination of the drop-off [in front], and work on the site. The drop-off is now in the rear. (Shows aerial view/site plan, noting the drive at the side, and reminding of the grade change. Shows and describes a series of views. Notes the landscaped site plan, indicating the shift of the building forward towards VFW Parkway. Notes the landscaping and the entry.) We are using Nichiha materials primarily; the bays now come down to the ground. A trellis reinforces the main entry. (Shows more rendered views.) There is some shifting of the balconies atop the bays, for variation (i.e. height varies). (Notes the interior drop-off view.) The bays are treated as 3-season porches. (Shows a closer view of the edge along the parking field. Shows another view along Gardner, looking toward, and then from, the VFW. Shows a material diagram.) We are using 18" and 36" panels; this system has good corner details. (Shows elevations. Notes the tot lot in the rear, notes the direction of traffic flow.)

DM: This is improved a lot from where we first saw it. It's really much improved. The bays coming down make the 'back yard' issue go away. One issue is that the views are dark; I hope the building will be lighter. JK: It's the bulb [in the projector]. AL: I agree. A question about the bridge / entry. Who goes there coming from the VFW Parkway? It [should give] a sense of entry. JK: the idea is to set up a formal entry, even if few actually use it. Actually, it's more populated than you think. MD: As a West Roxburian, this will set the stage for more activity. KS: It makes the statement that it's not all a car environment. It's a visible corner. The elevation along Gardner is more balanced, and VFW is more frenetic. But that'll be worked out. This is much better. LE: Work on the entry space. Make it more inviting, not dark under the bridge. With that, it was moved, seconded,

and

**VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the schematic design for the proposed 1235-1237 VFW Parkway Residential Project, at the intersection of Gardner Street, in the West Roxbury neighborhood.**

DM was recused from the next item and left. The next item was a report from the Design Committee on the **Boston Landing Residences Project**. Mark Sardegna (MS) of Elkus/Manfredi: There were several issues: the east end of the building vs. the street edge, the language and detail of the residential expression, and the treatment of the second floor parking. That facade appears as part of the building, not as a parking garage. We have continued to work on those three topics. The east end, and why it's not fronting Arthur.... At some point in the future, we will make the connection across Arthur. One option is a roundabout, allowing free [vehicular] movement. (Shows plan, then the overall Master Plan, to illustrate.) The site plan is much as seen; it's the public realm as it exists today (what is shown has already been built). That's why the building responds that way; it's anticipating that future condition. There is landscaping at the corner; a small plaza. The roof terrace is a little more developed. (Shows views.) On the east, we have calmed down the intersection of the masses. We have introduced vertical blue light fixtures (fins) based on similar elements at the garage. (Shows a view along Guest, noting the brick frame, a high first floor, louvers above. Shows views down Arthur, then a view toward the tower from the west.) We have introduced vertical bands to add rhythm. (Shows details of the windows, then of the base, with a section showing the retail and garage.)

LE: I want to understand more about the proposed rotary. The Project has worked so hard to elevate the pedestrian realm; this seems to take that away. Why do the streets have to meet there that way? Keith Craig (KC) of New Balance: We are working with Stop'n'Shop. We would prefer to keep cross intersections; Stop'n'Shop prefers the roundabout, so we are showing that. DC: Why the diagonal? KC: Because it has to intersect with Everett. DC: It would be better to continue Hichborn across Arthur...Arthur is an important street, so the intersections should be normalized. MS: (Notes the Master Plan diagram.) In the Brighton Guest Street study, the BRA had *alternatives*. KC: We can only do what we can control. MD: But it's worth noting in the Master Plan. AL: In Committee, we had talked about the west wall. The color is more remedial than enhancing. It would be better to break the wall; it's a big flat wall coming to the ground. And the upper canopy seems a little odd to use as a device. It could be something else. DH: You need it branded. But that could be a sign. I agree with Andrea on both counts. The street view is a little Boylston Street-like. I wonder if it's not better to keep it a one-story retail. The one facade (west) is very broad; the change in color makes it more so. One color, modulated, might be more successful. You should go more neighborhood-y...not downtown. KS: I agree with the comments. On the corner, there are improvements based on our discussion. The outdoor dining is good; the lighting and other things help. DH: I think it's nice to pull back from the corner, roundabout or not. MD: There's a reservation about the traffic circle. The Hichborn (west) elevation. And the second floor fake awning...three conditions?

Peter Lees (PL), a resident and IAG member, spoke. PL: The New Balance Development Group has been great. A specific issue is the massing of the space. The Planning Study laid out three distinct areas, stepping down toward the neighborhood. This is in the medium area, with a range of 65-110'. Here, it's 90% or more higher. The height is not in keeping with the neighborhood; it sets a bad precedent. I agree with the sense that it's monolithic. Also, the parking ratio - spaces per unit in the neighborhood are closer to 1-to-1. I don't think the parking supports the amount of units. WR: Do other members of the [IAG] group agree? Is this the group opinion? PL: The group is divided.

DS: Can we check the chronology? KC noted that the PDA amendment was approved in 2014. MD: Perhaps we add that the Proponents should acknowledge the Guest Street guidelines. What's your timing? KC: Approval of Guest Street, then the PDA [development plan]. DH: This does not conform to the Study. And despite the PDA, this seems a problem.... AL: Rather than focus on the height, it's all the more important that the articulation be attended to, aggressively. The comments lend support to pushing more strongly. DAC noted (to a KS query regarding timing) that the Guest Street parcel was presented with the original PDA change, but was in the background. MD: Maybe a return for an informational presentation. WR: We should do more. DH: I feel like we've been [caught off guard]. KS: But if we've allowed the developer to operate for a year with this assumption.... Discussion on this point ensued. Shortly, DH suggested that the Project return to Committee. WR: What would the result be? It wouldn't be 110' along the street. DH: I'm not asking that. I'm asking for acknowledgment of the notion of stepping. I'm uncomfortable with the height coming straight out to the neighborhood. MS: The notion over time is that the 70' buildings continue, the scale of the base, back to Hichborn. I think it's part of the compilation of the District. Stepping up is very achievable. AL: This reminds me that the rink, for example, was a change in the PDA and guidelines. It's worth taking a look in Committee at alternatives that could begin to address this, since other comments revolved around the nature of that piece. With that, it was voted to send the Boston Landing Residential Project back to Design Committee - with two abstentions. If formalized:

**VOTED: That the Commission send the schematic design for the proposed Boston Landing Residences Project, at 125 Guest Street in the Boston Landing PDA Master Plan area in the Allston/Brighton neighborhood, back to Design Committee for further review.**

The next item was a report from the Design Committee on the **Government Center Garage Project Phases One and Two**. Tom O'Brien (TOB) of HYM introduced the Project, noting their work with the community and with BCDC, and introducing David Nagahiro (DN) of CBT. DN: We were asked to simplify the residential building. We have kept the stepping down idea (notes diagram) and have made the section treatments the same, but still keeping the stepped effect. (Notes a new view taken from up New Sudbury.) And Dirtworks Design in Bowker Steps Park incorporates a handicapped ramp into the landscape. We comply with Complete Streets (shows existing conditions, their proposal, a series of sidewalks as comparisons, and then a view directly along the sidewalk at New Sudbury). Mark of Pelli Clarke Pelli then showed the same for the office tower, first the

existing site plan, then their proposed. Mark: We maintain a 20' width in nearly every direction (shows a cross section). On the building lighting, we are looking to light it in a soft way. There's an outer layer and an inner core, and the core would have LEDs in the spandrel panels, glowing all the way down.

WR: I want to compliment the team on your responsiveness to issues. The sidewalk became much clearer. DC asked about the dimensions underneath, and the jog-out on New Sudbury. DN showed this, noting the focus was on the residential, and the green of Bowker Park also moved out onto the sidewalk. AL: Could you clarify the phasing, what we see? TOB: The residential may have a condition where the garage still exists. But the office requires taking it down. We would show that condition to you and the BRA. KS: I want to compliment you; this is a great contribution to the area. AL: I appreciate the changes to the residential form. It's a better foil to the office building. KS: This is one of the projects that's benefitted by having two architects. PM: Both buildings respond to two bold designs. Would you respond to the phasing issues raised in the BHCA letter? TOB: That's not before me. I can repeat the aspects of the phasing, and we have done dozens of meetings in the community. WR: I want to compliment the office; it's a tribute to Boston; it feels sophisticated, and not trite. DC asked about the green on Bowker. DC: It shouldn't be over-planted...but it's tight. TOB: It *is* tight. The idea is to have beacons at either end.

Martha of the BHCA: The sidewalk along Bowker becomes very constricted.... TOB noted the commitment to the police, and loading requirements. TOB: The street must be two-way, and open to pedestrians, to make the transition pleasant. Rachel Theriou: The view along Congress - what would that look like with the office? TOB: We said we would return. But (notes the overall site plan) there is a likelihood of developing the East Parcel at the same time as the office. There is market demand, and it's easier to finance. Ultimately we will do residential at the corner. Martha: What would you see with no development [on the east side]? DN: The garage demolition goes to a structural line. We've talked about a scrim...it could be an art opportunity. Doug Mann of HYM noted the escrow requirement. Martha: And what about the MHC determination of adverse impact? Doug: We plan to return to them to present our new designs. We've studied shadows, etc. Sometime in the next few weeks. Rachel asked about the lighting and sustainability. Doug: We are achieving LEED Gold on both buildings; that doesn't affect the lighting. DH: This is a wonderful project; I can't wait for it to get started. There will be a *lot* of pressure by the tenant in that interim condition. With that, it was moved, seconded, and it was

**VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the new schematic design for the proposed Government Center Garage Redevelopment Project Phase One (WP-B1) in the GCG PDA, in the Government Center area.**

And

**VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the new schematic design for the proposed Government Center Garage Redevelopment Project Phase Two (WP-B2) in the GCG PDA, in the Government Center area.**

The next item was a report from Design Committee on the **89 Brighton**

**Avenue Project.** David Chilinski (DChil) of Prellwitz Chilinski Associates gave a quick introduction and presented the design, noting first the locus. DChil: Several things came out of the general discussion, with more detail in Committee. The broad question of scale, in the context. The approach to fenestration; the program seemed to 'ooze out' over the entire site. The transition to our rowhouse neighbor was awkward. (Shows the context, with the Project shown in photo-insets. Shows a height study of the neighborhood, and a model.) We have removed some mass, and changed the appearance along Gardner Street, and constricted the garage entry. (Shows series of elevations. Using models, describes the elements and the intent. Shows elevations, describes materials, the intent behind groupings of windows, defining elements. Shows existing and proposed views along Brighton Ave.; shows the materials board.

DH: There is a lot of volume on the site. What is the status of your [Article 80] process? Noah Maslan: We got feedback from the community and the BCDC, and have changed the Project accordingly. We have unanimous support from the IAG and the ACA. DH: And the FAR? DChil: 3.5. DH: I appreciate the notch between buildings, but the gesture doesn't show up anywhere else. It doesn't feel consistent. KS: How are you getting relief? Noah Maslan: ZBA. DH: This is an awful amount of mass shoehorned into the block, it seems to me. But you're in the process. NM pointed out the high crime in the area. NM: This is targeted at the middle income/working class. We are trying to thread the needle; we have a lot of support. And the 0.5 parking ratio is remarkable. LE: We were talking earlier - this could be a catalyst. DS: One thing DChil is good at, is assembling pieces that work out even better when built. The one thing at the edge, is that transition.

AL: I agree - and I do remember the continuous wrapping before. The massing is now nice...I like how it wraps the corner, etc. I agree on the transition; I would bring the gray around and wrap it around. I wouldn't change the material; it brings attention to it. MD: Can the architecture mitigate the mass more than it did. And the answer is that it does; it's doing all it *can* do. DH: I agree, and agree on the focus. The party wall condition will be there for some time. Andrea's comment is worth considering. DChil noted that they are pulling off the property line, and have created windows above that in the party wall. DH: If you could resolve that end....other than that, this is very clever; I'm sympathetic. MD: A strong recommendation to staff.... With that, it was moved, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the schematic design for the proposed 89 Brighton Avenue Project in the Allston Village neighborhood.**

The next item was a presentation of the **Jackson Square Phase III Project.** Nancy Ludwig (NL) of ICON introduced the team: Teronda Ellis (TE) of JPNDC, Noah Sawyer of TCB, Deb Myers (landscape architect), and Kendra Halliwell of ICON. She noted the context, indicating the property line, and a bright blue line along the MBTA Orange Line 50' easement, and also indicated the path of the Stony Brook sewer line, which can't be built over [permanently]. NL then showed a photo of the dead end of Amory Street, a view along Centre, the earlier Master Plan, a current aerial, a birds'-eye view with the Proposed Project, views of local buildings (including 225 Centre), and

current conditions in the Master Plan (including 75 Amory Avenue). NL: We have the idea of extending the infrastructure through the site; parking is to the side, below 250 Centre, and at the edge of the courtyard. We are building a linear park along the area that can't be built upon, with a 3,000 SF plaza at Centre. JPND and TCB are co-developing the Project (shows a section, notes the program, indicating no parking below the affordable building, but below the market-rate 250). The inspiration of Building M (the affordable building) is to extend the residential scale up to the street. We have pulled the building back to give dimensions for stoops and landings. The materials, somewhat referential to this old industrial area, are corrugated metal and brick, with wood siding on the bays. 250 Centre has a simple plan; we had some fun with it, with the top suggesting residential roof forms. We have playfully added bays across the facade; a kind of staccato rhythm, a brightly colored edge. There is metal in shingles and corrugated, and cement panels, with some wood. (Shows a view of the plaza and the Centre facade.) The Amory Street connection - less than 150' from the intersection - we can accommodate in the future, if approved. TE: Based on conversations with BT and DPW, they asked for alternatives to be submitted with the original idea for the connection. We think the agencies will prefer the pure pedestrian version...we don't anticipate otherwise. (Shows a view from Columbus, then a view into the courtyard.) The flare on 250 becomes a campanile.

KS: Can one walk through the spaces? Deb: The plaza is at a high point. And Centre Street has a very wide sidewalk. We are bringing that around [toward Columbus]. (Shows a hybrid Amory scheme, with more pedestrian areas, and notes the grade change.) The linear park is 50-75' wide, a place for families to circulate, go through, bicycle, or have a picnic. The slopes are all about 3% at the plaza level. There is a little bit of play with the two walkways. And the manholes they can't move. KS: So, the character of the plaza. How do you see that? Is it like the Southwest Corridor? Deb: As a forecourt, sharing some program with the building. DH: We will want to discuss that in Committee. TE: To Kirk's question, we see it more like the Tent City plaza, folding in community activities. DC: Falling off the plaza into the wooded area could feel creepy. How does it feel relative to the street? WR: And the space between the buildings. Right now, there are people flowing on three sides. LE: I want to know where you're seeing the patterns of buildings along the linear park. It seems a shame to site the parking there. AL: A strategy for cars on the land in general - for instance, the cars and green areas. The strategy of the two buildings is very good. On the lower building, the stoops manage the slope well. Being playful is good, but it would be good to have those moves mean something, instead of just being composed. The spirit is promising. DH: I really like the sculpted quality...cutting back, the reveals. To me, it's either three buildings with a very distinct head, or just moves brought up to the street. Right now, it feels a little overwrought. If it's two, or three - clarify your strategy. NL: It's intentional, because the head is conceived as innovation units, with each protrusion being one. DH: If that's it, great. If it's half and half, not so much.

KS: It's encouraging that you are taking lo-tech to interesting effects. DH: The folded form is much more convincing. MD: I'm not persuaded that Amory Street benefits from the pedestrian treatment; what happens there is a concern. The energy from 250 is very exciting. Looking at the two together, the smaller *looks* like a

subsidized building. DH: I know these projects are difficult. The main thing is to keep a budget for the details. With that, the Jackson Square Phase III 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 8:57 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was scheduled for February 2, 2016. The recording of the January 5, 2015 Boston Civic Design Commission meeting was digitized and is available at the Boston Redevelopment Authority.