

## DRAFT MINUTES

### BOSTON CIVIC DESIGN COMMISSION

The meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was held on Tuesday, July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2016, starting in the BRA Board Room, 9<sup>th</sup> 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), Daniel St. Clair, and Kirk Sykes. Absent were David Hacin and William Rawn. Also present was David Carlson, Executive Director of the Commission. Representatives of the BSA were present. Elizabeth Stifel, Michael Cannizzo, Johanna Deegan, and Phil Cohen 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, June 19, in the BOSTON HERALD.

The first item was the approval of the June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016 Meeting Minutes. A motion was made, seconded, and it was duly

**VOTED: To approve the June 7<sup>th</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 **321 Harrison Avenue Project**. David Carlson (DAC) noted that this project, across from the Ink Block, was a new addition to the old Teradyne garage adjacent to a building the Commission passed on as a rehab a number of years ago. This was a new Project, at about 230,000 SF well over the BCDC threshold, and review was recommended. It was duly moved, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the proposed 321 Harrison Avenue Project and PDA (on the old Teradyne block bounded by Washington and Herald streets, Harrison Avenue, and William E. Mullins Way), in the South End neighborhood.**

The next item was a report from the Review Committee on the **2 Oxford (73-79 Essex) Street Project**. DAC noted that this project on the edge of Chinatown proposed to take down the existing light industrial building in the historic Textile District and build a hotel. At about 137,000 SF, the Proposed Project was over the BCDC threshold and review was recommended. Again, it was duly moved, seconded,

and

**VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the proposed 73-79 Essex Street (2 Oxford Street) Project on the corner of Essex and Oxford streets in the Chinatown neighborhood.**

MD, Linda Eastley (LE) and David Manfredi (DM) were recused from the next item. The next item was a report from the Design Committee on the **Boston College Recreation Center**. Colleen McKenna (CM) of Cannon Design introduced the team; Glen of Stephen Stimson Associates presented the landscape changes. Glen: One issue was the landscaping, creating social spaces along the path. (Shows the larger plan; CM shows views of the modified entry.) We made modifications and added benches to the updated landscaping plan as part of that (shows). CM then went through the changes in the facade, showing the view from the campus. CM: The fire stairs have been embedded in the composition now as well. Along St. Thomas More, we shifted the fire stair and facade and diminished the expression of any door at the center point, simplifying the composition (notes minor egress doors, notes studies done and some work on the north facade).

Paul McDonough (PM): This is much improved. Deneen Crosby (DC): The landscape is much improved; I appreciate the changes. Andrea Leers (AL): I appreciate the changes made, differentiating the front from the back, and clarifying the design. And the honesty in considering precast vs. glass at the base, adding glass where possible. It still appears as a bustle on the north; I would wish more had been able to be done there. I know that was a concern of Bill - I urge you to continue to work on that. Kirk Sykes (KS): This has improved within the vernacular...we talked about options and precedents. With that, it was duly moved, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the schematic design for Boston College's Recreation Center Project and the associated amendment to it Institutional Master Plan, in the Allston-Brighton neighborhood.**

Daniel St. Clair (DS) walked in and joined the vote. MD, LE, and DM returned. The next item was a report from the Design Committee on the **Waterside Place Phase 1B Project**. DM reported that the Proponent showed variations they had studied in response to comments from the Commission, and the Committee also looked at the treatment along Congress Street. John P. from the Drew Company noted that they thought the Project had improved. David Nagahiro (DN) of CBT presented the design changes, first noting the full context in axonometric. He showed the prior design, then noted the issues, including the treatment of the mass and podium, the adjacency to the Silver Line entry, the activation along the edge. He showed the massing variations. DN: We went from a 28' to a 53' separation. We looked at faceting to break up the orthogonal block; one thing that came out of that was a separation from the World Trade Center stop elevator, and stair up; the building became more of a point tower. (Shows new design, noting changes; shows ground floor plan, noting changes and issues. He showed new views indicating variation in the storefronts, and the new entry stairs between levels. DN: We are

studying a potential part of a covered connection sequence between Summer and Congress, with Massport and David Gamble; this could be key. We looked at variations of the facade treatment, to go with the faceted massing, but ended up with something similar to before. We tried a vertical scheme and variations on the grid size and orientation. (Shows night view.)

DS and KS asked if the team had been able to do anything on the garage; that had been discussed quite a bit. DN showed that plan, and noted the shifts made, and reminded about the constraints. AL: The changes made, and the stairs, really ameliorate that condition; they change its nature. There's a reward at the end. I appreciate the consolidating of the building to one that's faceted, of even height. That is much improved. I wish the envelope treatment had evolved as much as the form. It's still somewhat gritty; you should study it more. But you have come a long way. DM: I appreciate your client's willingness to show the studies, and make it a transparent process. Back to Daniel's comment, and a note to David and his staff - it's very important how you treat the garage. The opening ramp...it should look designed for its use, and protect (the public) from headlights; there's more work to do at that level. DC: The night view is really important; you'll notice [the parking] more at night. KS: Where does the separation between the buildings occur? This is a selected view.... (DN shows.) I appreciate what has been done, the effort you have made. LE: What I appreciate is the movement on the sidewalk, the pockets of interest. It's really beautiful. On the parking vocabulary, that could be toned down; a less dramatic language would soften that. With that, and hearing no public comment, it was moved, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the schematic design for Phase 1B of the Waterside Place Development at 501 Congress Street, on the Core Block parcel bounded by Congress, D, and Summer streets, and World Trade Center Avenue, in the South Boston Waterfront District.**

The next item was a report from the Design Committee on the **Jackson Square Phase III Project**. Nancy Ludwig (NL) of ICON: We last saw you in January. There were issues on the site, which became a long discussion with abutters and others. We are back before you tonight to show the resolution. We have two clients - JPNDC, and The Community Builders. The buildings will have separate ownership. (Shows a section, then shows the site plan.) The BCDC had not liked the parking in the courtyard and the strategy before. And BTDC will not allow the Amory-Centre connection, which we discussed. (Shows views of Building M on Amory, then a view of 250 Centre Street, and its precedent images.) This hasn't changed much. There is a program change at the headhouse, which has 3BR 'innovation' units with a different direction off the elevator, and an open space defining that. (Shows a view from the Columbus intersection.) Deb Myers (landscape architect) continued the presentation with the site plan, pointing out the programmed areas, and noting the social spaces in the courtyard. Deb: There are MBTA requirements for access to their building, with a fencing separation. (Shows a view of the linear park heading up to the MBTA building, then a view looking back, down the Green Corridor.)

AL: Can you explain how the doors work, how people get into the space. In the courtyard. NL complies: (Indicates on plan) There is one door into the courtyard from M. There are no stoops, and balconies on 250 Centre. The retail space opens at the Centre corridor. There are no entries along the green linear park space. AL: How does one get into the courtyard? NL: From the lobby [of either building], you can go directly into the courtyard. DC asked about the grades. Deb: There is a gradual slope the length of that linear park space. The high point is on Centre, and there are variations (which she indicates) between 250, M, and further down Amory. The floor at 250 is elevated from the courtyard view, but cars are not visible. The tip of the courtyard is level, but then it slopes down to the New Jackson Street side.

LE: What about the area between the MBTA shed and 250? Deb: We took your comments and made improvements, so that it's easier to move into the park from the T's crosswalk. We have also had to retain the pedestrian treatment and plantings along Centre per BTB's refusal to allow an Amory connection to Centre. AL: What is the point of the [remaining] road there? NL: It serves the NStar station, and it's parked up now. We'll improve that. LE: This was discussed in Committee. You should do nothing to preclude the connection - i.e., no community gardens, so there's less an impediment for a future connection. AL: Can you increase the green space? NL: That option is limited; NStar requires access. (A discussion of tree plantings, etc. ensued.) DC: What worries me is the visibility along the green park, with the MBTA shed and fence cutting off visibility. That's the worry, it needs activity. NL noted that the 75 Amory Avenue project, and another potentially further along that path, would increase use. DC: Is it lit? Deb: Yes, it will be well-lit at night.

AL: Back to the courtyard. Who do you imagine will go in there? Deb: There's no fence. It's meant to be a family space, and secure, but there are no fences. AL: If you can only get in there from one door in each building, it seems less certain. If it had more entries, or opportunities to enter, it might be better used. NL: We do have balconies. We can't have entries into the flats, per MAAB. But it will be a nice space. AL: Think about how it's used. It's meant to be used by those two buildings, but it's hard to get into. DC: It could be more private, with a more defined public access area. MD: You could fence it later. DC: Or step it. Deb: An undulating wall... KS: I would advocate directing the public to go to the Greenway. You want that dynamic, lit, with foot traffic, etc. That will help. So I'm not opposed to the courtyard being more private. MD: Let the meeting notes stand as commentary on the design. The client group is experiencing these issues. Is there any public comment? (None appeared.) KS: The building is becoming really exciting. It will help to activate the neighborhood. Keep going. With that, and having heard no public comment, it was duly moved, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the schematic design for Phase III of the Jackson Square Project, at Amory and Centre streets in the Jamaica Plain neighborhood.**

The next item was a presentation of the **321 Harrison Avenue Project**. Og Hunnewell (OH) of Nordblom Development introduced the team and Project, noting their prior acquisition and repositioning of

1000 Washington, now 95% occupied. OH: We looked at opportunities during the Harrison/Albany Planning process, considering different uses, and circled back to office. Symmes Maini McKee are our architects. Mark Spaulding (MS) of SMMA presented the design, starting with existing condition photos. MS: 1000 was a 1917 building known later as the Teradyne Building. (Notes and discusses locus, shows diagrams.) We had the idea of not being totally parallel to the existing building, and working off of existing spaces, and keeping the existing parking access. (Shows a neighborhood site plan, then a site plan / ground floor plan, then an upper floor plan.) We have an offset core, to take advantage of the views. This is a continuation of the address, so we had the notion of taking aspects of the existing building and extending them out. (Shows a vertical scrim added to the existing garage.) On Herald, the building facade is modulated with a pleated glass plane, to mark its presence on the Pike, and from the City. And as a 'familial' with the first Ink Block building (it's 'headhouse'). At the ground, we have brought the pleated glass facade across on Harrison, representing a commercial presence. And further, a pocket park, that's also a forecourt to the entrance. (Shows a series of views focused on the open and courtyard spaces, with the lobby a passage, as open as possible. Notes the curtainwall of the new building, coming to the ground and swooping out, and talks about the notion of this, and the two courtyard spaces, toggling between plans and views.) There are some issues with the ground floor program; we are working on improving, opening that up.

LE: I really appreciate the notion of the open space, relating to the Ink Block. At the back of your plaza, is that an electrical building? It feels unfortunate in that location. Bring ideas about how to treat that; it feels unresolved. I'd like to know more about the lower piece facing Washington, how the landscape meets the sidewalk. MD: Why can't you move the lobby closer to Washington? MS: It's existing. LE: I'm more convinced on the other side. This feels like an alley. MD: Just bring the entry closer. DM: It sounds like you've been encourage to break away - I'd encourage you to break away - you can do something special, and somewhat buffer the view. This has almost a suburban feel on how you're treating the edges. There's more connectivity coming to the area, like your idea about making the space a place to hang out with stuff from Whole Foods. Why not put something there that would help activate it? Some kind of food service. The same with the gallery. Harrison is wide, but it's improving. You can add spaces that feed off of Harrison (not Herald). I'd hate to see the gallery empty. I agree with Mike, if you can pull that out. Both streets have changed, and some day that bridge will be through air rights.

AL: I wonder about the location of the massing. I had thought it would be great to bring it forward. I'm not sure it will be nice to find those spaces, a pocket park, right there. You could position the entire mass more toward Washington, and add retail along Harrison. The benches on the wider street are not a part of it (they are at Ink Block). It's big already on Washington. MD: That would block the existing tenants. KS: The treatment of the spaces - I'm not sure it couldn't work. Think about the facade, scrim, elevations...it's like the building starts 30' up. Could be more [together]. MD: Three really good things are possible. Progressive new architecture - it shouldn't look like a cousin [to the existing]. Second, ameliorate the parking - that would be a public benefit. Third, really help us to activate Washington. This is the ancient spine of the City. If you can do these, the other things work. I'm not sure that 20% open space is needed. DC: I'm not sure yet that the open spaces work here. I want to understand how people move

through here. DM: Continue the activation of Washington and Harrison; those connections will be the most useful over time. DS: Did you study other ways of entering the building? It strikes me that the first move takes away from your flexibility. MS: The structure of both buildings limit what we can do. DS: Share your studies. DM: I'm fascinated that you have a side-mounted core. I give you credit for that, it makes a lot of sense on this site. To Andrea's point, if there aren't other issues, it could be longer, narrower, with the same SF. AL: Or you could occupy the entire garage plate. MS: We did not look at that. With that, the 321 Harrison Avenue Project was sent to Design Committee.

The next item was a presentation of the **2 Oxford (73-79 Essex) Street Project**. Harry Wheeler (HW) of Group One presented the design, first noting that the address change was due to BTM (to indicate access). He noted Project information and showed context photos, then the basement and ground floor/site plans, then noting the loading/drop-off area. HW: We are pulling back from the property line at the base; the valet and loading zone is to the side of a widened Oxford Street there. (Describes the planned operation.) This will allow a 11' drive lane, which improves the operation of Oxford. The second story, also set back, has a lounge and bar. (Shows typical upper floors and a section.) We looked at neighborhood datum lines and patterns. We wanted to embody all the elements of these compositions in a new architectural language. All the elements in one architectural expression. The view corridors are narrow; there's not a lot of views of this. It's one bold statement, not tripartite. (Notes the depth of the gray texture, shows the base, and views from Essex and along Oxford. Shows a detail of the facade, noting its depth and randomized [but repeated] window pattern. Finally, a view showing the proposed building lighting in the evening. Another view was from Avenue de Lafayette, looking through existing buildings.

KS: What are the adjacent buildings? HW explained and indicated heights, etc. KS: We'll need to understand better how this fits in, in Design Committee. MD: And what the benefits are to the City for something twice the height and FAR allowed. DC: Any more views... KS: On the second floor, are there ways to engage the street? How could this be different? Chinatown is an ever-diminishing area. But the second floor activity has precedent, and could make it more of Chinatown. LE: Have you built a model? That would be of benefit in understanding what you see, when. Walk us down several streets to see how the building changes, what you see.

AL: It's a very good thing you've done for starters. The base, second - and third? Floor. It could be (set back) one more. The strategy of a glazed bottom with a textured thing above is good for this site. You'll never see this as you show it, you're right. It's all about how engaged the first few floors are. It just wants to be wonderful when you interface. Look at the height of your base, given the palazzo next door. DM: I agree, there are a lot of nice things. But I also agree with Mike - show us what you're doing. And shadow studies. Andrea's point is important - the texture is important, and the depth you've created. If it gets flat, you'll have lost that quality. KS: Juliette balconies...how the skin changes. HW: It's denser at the corners. AL: The disparity between Essex and Oxford is huge. This is a building facing Essex, not so much the corner. PM: How do you plan to stage the demolition and construction? And have you talked with MHC and

BLC? HW: We are working on that material for those processes. And as for the demolition/construction, we are preparing a more detailed analysis. There's not much we can do; it will be complicated. KS: The second floor will be incredibly important. How you spill light, air, etc. on a small street.

Greg Galer of the Boston Preservation Alliance: I wanted to follow up on the BLC comment. This is a contributing building in a National Register District. I would note the success of the Godfrey - you could do that here. That [option] has not been explored sufficiently. There is some concern in the neighborhood about their losses. I urge the Commission not to dismiss the existing structure and to consider alternatives. Article 85 is limited; we need to be careful. AL asked to see the existing building photos again. MD: We'll talk. With that, the 2 Oxford Street 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 7:32 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was scheduled for August 2, 2016. The recording of the July 5, 2016 Boston Civic Design Commission meeting was digitized and is available at the Boston Redevelopment Authority.