

DRAFT MINUTES
BOSTON CIVIC DESIGN COMMISSION

The meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was held on Tuesday, February 5th, 2013, starting in the BRA Board Room, 9th Floor, Boston City Hall, beginning at 5:21 p.m.

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

The Co-Vice-Chair, Michael Davis (MD), announced that this was the meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission that normally 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 Friday, January 18, in the BOSTON HERALD.

The first item was the approval of the January 8th, 2013 Meeting Minutes. A motion was made, seconded, and it was duly

VOTED: To approve the January 8th, 2013 Boston Civic Design Commission Meeting Minutes.

Votes were searched for but could not be located; it was resolved to pass for signature the following month. The next item was a report from the Review Committee on the **75 Brainerd Road (‘The ICON’) Project**. David Carlson (DAC) reported that the Commission had reviewed two other immediately adjacent Projects here, one nearing completion and another under construction. The area has been branded as a ‘Green Eco-District’ by the developer working with the City. Although the Project is slightly less at about 93,000 SF than the 100,000 SF BCDC threshold, because of its adjacency with two other BCDC-reviewed Projects and this District branding, review was recommended. It was duly moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the proposed 75 Brainerd Road (the ‘ICON’) Residential Project in the Allston neighborhood.

Bill Rawn (WR) and David Manfredi (DM) were recused from the next item. The next item was a report from the Review Committee on the **Barry’s Corner Residential Commons Project**. DAC reported that although this Project was proposed as a PDA and NOT included in this Harvard IMP seen last month, Harvard University nevertheless was teamed with Samuels Associates to redevelop the parcel. Much effort has been made to ensure the Project meshes with the Harvard IMP thinking. This primarily residential Project was at nearly 400,000 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 Barry’s

**Corner Residential and Retail Commons Project at 219 Western Avenue
(corner of Western Avenue and North Harvard Street) in the Allston
neighborhood.**

WR returned; DM remained recused and Linda Eastley (LE) and David Hacin (DH) were recused for the next item. The next item was a report from the Review Committee on the **D Street Development NPC / MCCA Hotel and Garage Development**. DAC reported that the site on D Street had been reviewed twice by the BCDC, the first time in 1999, and twice approved as housing. The planned expansion of the BCEC required hotels and replacement parking to proceed, so the MCCA acquired this parcel; because their legislation does not technically cover this parcel, it is a legal gray area as to its requirement to follow zoning restrictions, but the clearest path forward is to proceed as though it is entirely subject to zoning. Thus Article 80 and BCDC review. Between the hotel uses and the garage, the proposal will total over 700,000 SF, and so well over the BCDC threshold. Much of the information remains preliminary, but there is much background to catch up on, and so it seemed appropriate to start this evening. Because of size and the significance in the area, a vote to review was recommended. It was duly moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission review the proposed NPC for the D Street Development Project (MCCA Hotels and Garage), formerly the D Street Residences (371-401 D Street) Project, in the South Boston Waterfront District.

LE, DH, and DM returned. The next item was a presentation of the **75 Brainerd Road (the 'ICON') Project**. David Chilinski (Chil) of Prellwitz/Chilinski Architects began by noting their prior work on the recently reviewed 60-66 Brainerd Road Project, and then the locus - industrial uses in this sub-area of the neighborhood were going. (Shows context, notes plans and sections, pointing out that a slight rise of the ground floor allows the basement garage to be out of the water table.) Chil: This elevation allows a separation for the units along Redford Street. And the 'E' shape allows open space on top of the garage. The intent is for street trees (shows view along Redford). Then, resolving the two alignments of Brainerd at the corner element (brick, proud of an angled metal facade). There is a deliberate attempt to create an array of facades for a scale down Redford. (Notes the use of Nichiha panels and a green wall in the courtyard.)

LE: Do you have a section showing the building relationship in the rear? Chil explained the relationship, referencing their sections in that location. WR asked for information about the entry for the units at grade. Chil: The entry is from the garage, not Redford. WE need the elevation due to the water table, and are constrained for space. So we didn't build steps. WR: Do you see the garage? Chil: The spandrel (indicates on elevation) is the upper part of the garage. (Points out other aspects in elevation.) DM: What is the width of your courtyards? Chil: 30 feet, and about 34-5 feet. DH: I recognize the fact that most buildings here are single entry. But you have gone to lengths to break up the building; it's a shame there can't be entries. Also, why not use the simple double-loaded corridor (scheme) of your neighbor? Chil: Two reasons. One, it fits two more units per floor, so 8 more units. The other is variation. Andrea Leers (AL): The strategy is interesting, although the space of the courtyards seems a little tight.

If you could relate the strategies of the front to the back - think about that. Also, you have several variations; the piece on Brainerd doesn't quite belong. The corner is good - I'm not sure where the bays come from - but the element is clear. I'm not sure why the (corner) piece reappears along Redford.

Deneen Crosby (DC): The sidewalk width? Chil: It's about 8.5 feet. MD: I take it you don't have a specific plan to show us. Chil measured the plans to show the rough distance between facades across Redford Street - about 40'. DC: The pedestrian connection is important between Commonwealth and Brainerd. If it's a single lane, one way.... Chil: It's a private street. But the property line is where it is. The auto body shop that was there essentially used the street as their repair shop yard. Kirk Sykes (KS) asked about the garage parking ratio. Chil: A 1:1 ratio was demanded by the neighborhood, and is actually needed, based on the experience of our abutting building. KS: At the very least, develop lighting, and shift the parking to get stoops to add life to the street. Lynn Wolff (LW): If you made the street one-way, and widened the sidewalk accordingly, you could build out the stoops about 5'. David? DAC: The City can't force the configuration of a (jointly held) privately held street - only, perhaps, if it were formally opened to public travel. And ADA may be a concern.

DH: Andrea's comment was interesting. A shadow study...I can't help but be concerned about that 30-foot separation at the back. It would be more generous to simplify the building. I agree it's architecturally more interesting, but it would be better for both. LE: I agree with the concern - that space between. We need a view taken of/from that space. AL: To get more light into the courtyards, can you move them further apart? Chil: We might lose units. DH: Or vary the depth of the central wing; that would allow light in. DM: There are three fingers; if you got 10' more in each courtyard, it would help. It's a good Project. You're taking a bad thing and making it good. And the street. All that is good, but you should show a detailed plan of what the street does, as far as your responsibility goes. Chil: We are working with the City on some issues. KS: If not stoops, then Juliette balconies - things that would allow more light and activity. LE: You're in the Green District; can you talk about that? Chil: I can. I feel pretty solid our Project will be LEED gold. We are shooting for platinum. We have PV panels, etc. on 'The Edge' (60-66 Brainerd). I think we know what's needed. LW asked again about stoops for the six units. WR: Do we want to ask for a model or not? DH: It would be helpful. It can be a rough model. MD: You'll market the project, so it would be helpful. Any public comment? No? AL: Do other studies of the light wells. With that, the 75 Brainerd Road Project was sent to Design Committee.

DM and WR were recused for the next item; WR left. The next item was a presentation of the **Barry's Corner Residential and Retail Commons Project**. John Martin (JM) of Elkus/Manfredi presented the design, noting first the model, then going to a slide show. He noted the Barry's Corner locus and walking distances to Harvard Square, the Harvard Business School, the Allston Library. The intersection is important to the community. Harvard is doing its IMP; this has been pulled out of that to move it more quickly. But it's part of the area strategy. The site is 2.67 acres, 2.03 developed, the rest, streets. JM noted the mixed-use sports facility proposed on the adjacent site across Grove, and the revival of the Science Complex project, and activation of nearby retail space. JM: In total, there will be over 400,000 SF of active, community-oriented space. The 45,000 Sf of retail here contributes to that. The

Education Portal remains as a use, currently in the next property, up to the track. JM noted the street subtraction from the overall site, and showed a plan with the streets added in. He noted the retention of the Charlesview tree grove at the corner - the old Charlesview complex itself would be demolished. JM: North Harvard will be lined with active uses in these areas.

Gary Hildebrand (GH) of Reed/Hildebrand: We are the landscape architect for this PDA project, but we have also been retained for development of the street network seen in the IMP, and to develop landscape guidelines, setting the parameters for *all* the projects going forward. The improvements that we make here will be part of a coordinated package. What does it mean for this square to have landscape in the middle - and for Barry's Corner to go from low to medium density? Inman Square - West Point used to have a grove of honey locusts. Now there are new trees, growing back. Harvard Square - the trees around Charles Sumner. Mass Ave at Central Square. Mass Ave is interesting, a series of deltas, and neighborhoods. Here, there are widely varying characteristics; how do we define the area without eliminating potential character elements? GH noted the street hierarchy. The new small streets would be small, North Harvard and Western, larger. (Shows a section of a street in the Seaport District.) We don't have *that* width, but we are planning a clear passage, and then other zones.

JM then showed a retail diagram, noting public plaza zones. JM: Along Smith Field, the newer space is intended as an amenity space extension. The site should be visually and physically penetrable. The sidewalks are generous along North Harvard and Western. The buildings are eclectic, non-institutional. They look like housing. We have broken the bars down, with the taller portion to the north, and lower to the south and east. Shadows fall on Smith Field only in the morning; they are gone around 10am. (Shows an amended ground floor plan with a space facing Smith. Notes the garage entry.) There are 325 bike spaces; they outnumber cars. The roofscape, whether it's sedum, or occupied, we are still determining that. And now the space is completely open between the two (building) bars (i.e. the podium is only one story there). JM then described what was in a bird's-eye axonometric view, showed elevations, going around the building and noting differences. Switching to 3-D views, he went around the building again.

GH returned to show the site plan, noting circulation with the IMP as background, truck access, and an illustrative street perspective. The Western and North Harvard areas had trees, zone divisions, a plaza space (on North Harvard) with possible lighting catenaries and canopies, with a possible Farmers' Market use. At the SW corner, a slight grade change (up to 3 steps down) created a public seating area, perhaps with a restaurant tenant using it. GH: Smith Field Road would have a tighter sidewalk. At the amenity plaza, there would be possible catenaries again. Grove Street handles parking and loading; we see it as busy. On the roofscape, at a minimum, a pattern of grasses and herbaceous plantings.

LE: This is a really exciting Project - it adds energy to this site. A question: the gas station blocks the site, and easy access from a great neighborhood. And toward Grove...how do people get here? That's worth discussing. JM: I hope it's not like the Harvard Inn, replacing that station. Harvard doesn't control that. Density should bring people. GH: What I'm excited about is bringing clarity to the paths of pedestrians. You're right, the delta blunts that, but we can bring great clarity. The Complete Streets is helpful as a guide. There are a lot of constraints - and then *much* less. LE: What about the grove of trees? GH: We can develop more detail. Circulation would be provided around (and through) the grove, and there is the

intention of activity all around it. The trees are Norway maples; we'll use sycamores to connect them thematically. AL: What is Smith Field Road? What is its purpose? Is it simply a loop, or does it lead to something? GH: The intent is to create it as an urban street. We have a meeting with the Parks Department...we are creating a public environment. LW: I love spaces like the Portal Park you've created. But the connection on top of the parking - I'm not sure will be the same. Parks may have questions. The space at the top (roofscape) should be open to the public. It would be great to see the idea of the full build-out, to see what the impact of the open space is, and how related to the architecture. The buildings seem monolithic. The reason I want to see the build-out, is to see what is making Barry's Corner. It should be looked at comprehensively.

DH: This is a great project, well-considered. It's a large complex. The two entries are very recessive in the scheme. I appreciate the retail activation. But if I'm coming to visit or drop off, I'm not sure where to go. I'm comfortable with the street as a loop. The notch could be a wonderful space; I thought it was the entry - but it's *not*. There's a dialogue between the landscape and the architecture; the space is not inconsistent with those along Mass Ave. But many of those were built over time. The park side view is best, because it's hierarchical. But this feels very polite elsewhere. To Lynn's point, what is the counterpoint between the grove and this space that makes it memorable? AL: I'm impressed with the way the general massing defines the space. It's a good definition - and the grove is where you break the volumes. At first impression, you think you can get through the building there - but it's just a single retail space. You feel *blocked*; there's *such* a good visual connection. Like at the Charles Hotel, I'm willing to go up and over. I understand why it's this way, but it's dissatisfying. I find that aspect frustrating. The taller building is more successful than the shorter, with faces on each end. The lower building is polite, its division awkward...bring it more clarity. The high building is a bar with window ends. The low should not be apologetic. Be bold. It's the new environment, the new context.

JM: I'm encouraged to hear that line of thought. Adjacent to Harvard, should it be more demure? AL: You're the first. You set what everyone else will do. MD: That's a good way of putting it. Some kind of hierarchy, in the context of a new architecture, a new Allston. DH: I echo Andrea on the notch. KS: I'm not sure about more open space, but I am about more significant treatment of that open space. More an event; more important than the others. The roof - public, private - which is which? In the plaza, sculpture, a presence. Lighting needs to be significant. What is Grove Street? I'm not sure, it's between two buildings - but what it is doing. DC: The grove of trees is in line with Grove Street, but I'm not sure how you see the street from the grove itself. MD and DS discuss this further: Maybe the corner of Grove and Smith Field Drive is more important. Or space at the corners, and less a notch at the entries. More retail at the corner. Recognize the facade at the SW corner. On the back, the high element. DH: The principle of 'two-fer' landscape could apply to the architecture. LW: It's a great idea to look at the other corner, for the space at Grove. With that, and not hearing any public comment, the Barry's Corner Project was sent to Design Committee.

DM remained recused and left. LE and DH were recused from the next item. The next item was a presentation of the **D Street Residences NPC (aka D Street Development, MCCA Hotels/Garage Project)**. Howard Davis (HD) of the MCCA stated he would be giving a

preview of coming attractions - and their background. HD: For three years, there's been an effort to develop the BCEC expansion. We'll give a snapshot of what's been done to date, and you'll see pieces of that effort coming to fruition in the coming years. Why do we need more hotels and a parking garage? We need 4,000 hotel rooms that are closely accessible. We did not get as many hotels as we had hoped for. And so hotel development is required *before* the BCEC expansion. It's been five years since the Renaissance hotel. HD then described the process of the Convention partnership in arriving at a report, after a lot of in-depth study, setting down 29 issues. HD: The key was: until hotels appear, there will be no expansion. Currently there are about 1700 hotel rooms, vs. competition with up to 7580, and NO mid-price hotels. We are near the bottom, with LA, NYC, and Chicago. In the initial legislation, hotels south of Summer Street were prohibited. But in July of last year, legislation was passed that allowed hotels in a greater area. (Shows area site diagram; notes BCEC expansion planned on current surface parking.) D Street is NOT ideal for a garage, but we need to address the need on land that we own. We don't want to expand the numbers of parking. But 2/3 of conventioners come by car; at some events (i.e. Yankee Dental) it's up to 80%. So that number is *less* than our future needs. HD then described the Hotel RFP process. HD: We expect the developers to complete the permitting and design, to finance and develop the hotel sites. Their parking will be a contract with the MCCA, at market rates. There are two respondents: Commonwealth Ventures, with 510 rooms total in the Aloft and Element brands, and Carpenter, with 500 rooms in the Hyatt Place and Hyatt House brands. We will rank the highest by February 14. We will negotiate with the developer through April 10; this will include the preliminary design. Our goal is to have the hotels started by the end of the year. Our goal is to have these be exemplars - the best of their kind.

Tim Love (TL) of Utile went through the Guidelines. TL: One idea was to make the approach and drop-off more interesting. We had to subdivide the property, and determine where the logical breaks might be, with the possibility of a connection to E Street. D Street itself is considered a connector; it's about a mile from West Broadway to Liberty Wharf. Rather than a continuum, perhaps this is a focal point, and an urban environment immediately adjacent to the new BCEC's entry area, which fronts on a green 'event space.' We reverse-engineered the BCEC plan to get to the logics of the parcel. (Shows guideline pages. Notes Utile is subcontracted to Sasaki; the collaboration has resulted already in better, more thought-out responses.) We are creating, like at Barry's Corner, context from scratch. The materials specified are 'quality flavor.' (Shows a diagram with a red retail zone all around the entry/event area; shows a Complete Streets D Street diagram.)

LW: The mile diagram is interesting. AL: Why two hotels? TL: You could go two ways - either a single user looking like two buildings, or two *actual* buildings. And it looks like it will be the latter, which is good. AL: Why not have the two hotels separated - one north, the other south? They seem to overlap. TL: The taller hotel has a low and high part. They actually *are* separated. The diagram does look like that... AL: The masses are different. TL: One is a slab, the other arrayed around a court. Corey Z (CZ) of Utile: The uses are different. KS: I'm trying to think of projects like what you're trying to create. I understand 7th and 9th streets in Washington DC, and what that project will be; I'm not sure what *this* will be, or what it will look like. TL: An excellent question. A lot of it will be driven by the nature of the event space...piazzas, like DuPont Circle in DC, or perhaps very different. I want a reason to go here as much as anyone else does. This is place-making, city-making. If you lived in South Boston,

why would you come here vs. going to other places? Or, if a conventioner, why here vs. the waterfront.

KS asked further about the timing, and nature of the (event) space. *LA Live* is outside of that Center. HD: We didn't talk enough about that. We spent a lot of time on the process, setting things up, dealing with the hotel issue. With the hotels, we have notions about other means of financing, and expanding in the near future. TL: The stages in the near future are almost enough to set the character for the entirety. CZ: This is an unusual situation where an entity owns or controls both sides of the street. AL: So - to support the space, you have to decide what the spaces flanking the event space will be. CZ: We are thinking about that now. MD: Procedurally, since you are thinking about this, is that thinking available before, during, after the hotel conversion? KS: I don't think you're quite hearing us. What we're looking for is the vision for the public realm. CZ showed a diagram of the street and its relationship to the space. KS: When does this space come alive? When do people pour out? TL clarified what BCEC controls. KS: But the adjacent development - if you're not encouraged to walk along D Street, that doesn't work.

Daniel St. Clair (DS): This is a trade-off for a larger green space. What does the community think about that loss? TL: That was a park in the middle of nowhere. So, the trade is activity. HD: It's a great question. For 15 years, that rectangle was colored green. The community might be interested in *other* trade-offs, but not the park. A community-oriented park never made much sense. If something is substituted, what *is* that? We're not there yet. DS: Can you compare to other spaces, like *LA Live*? How and when is it active? Can it hold a concert? TL: It's about 2/3 that size. KS: How many critical nodes of activity are there? Everyone has a 'center.' But I'm not sure how many such there can be. HD: What is it we're going to do here that's active, Boston-oriented, etc. There's a Hippocratic Oath here with the hotels: Do No Harm. We start with what's going on in the ground floors. There's a token retail space next door. We want to take the vision south. AL: You're having to define the hotels, and the Master Plan is catching up. So continue: think about the massing, the street presence. When you're looking at a whole mile, you can't expect to know all. KS: We don't want a great plan to not have the economics that would support it. The Cresset development is not structured to do that. But you need to, for the hotels. DS: The garage is a big and bulky structure, even with the retail. You have to transcend what everyone thinks about a garage. (Some discussion of the 1111 Lincoln Road Garage in Miami Beach ensued.)

There was further discussion of the process. The Project could be sent to Committee, but what would be discussed? DAC noted that there would be more information on the hotels once the development team has been tentatively selected and the PDA submitted based on a preliminary design. The BRA Board would act in April on the PDA, and it would be possible that the hotel information available then would still require a vote conditioned on further review. The garage would also be a condition, and seen later. TL: So, in Committee, the hotels, with an update on the BCEC Master Plan. With that, the D Street Development (MCCA Hotels and Garage) 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 8:00 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission is scheduled for March 5, 2013. The recording of the February 5, 2013 Boston Civic Design

Commission meeting was digitized and is available at the Boston Redevelopment Authority.