

MINUTES

BOSTON CIVIC DESIGN COMMISSION

The meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was held on Tuesday, September 5th, 2017, starting in Room #900, Boston City Hall, and beginning at 5:19 p.m.

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

Andrea Leers (AL) volunteered to serve as Acting Chair in the absence of the two Co-Vice-Chairs and, channeling Michael Davis, 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 Sunday, August 20, in the BOSTON HERALD.

The first item was the approval of the August 1st, 2017 Meeting Minutes. A motion was made, seconded, and it was duly

VOTED: To approve the August 1st, 2017 BCDC Meeting Minutes.

Votes were passed for signature. David Carlson (DAC) noted that, due to the quorum issues at last month's meeting, ratification of two votes was required. For those non-recused Commissioners familiar with the 88 Seaport Project, signature lines were provided on the vote form for their concurrence. For Sprague Street, a routine recommendation to review, signature lines were added for all non-recused Commissioners for their concurrence.

The next item was a report from the Review Committee on the **North Point Project**. DAC noted that the Proposed Project had a prior vote to Review in 2002, but the information at that time was inadequate for presentation, and BCDC review became a requirement of BRA approval. Under the current NPC, the same requirement applies, but a fresh vote is recommended for the NPC. Even though the City boundary between Cambridge and Boston runs through the two parcels, the SF in Boston is about 300,000 SF and well over the BCDC threshold. An affirmation of review was recommended. It was moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the proposed North Point Project Parcels G and H adjacent to the Gilmore Bridge on the Cambridge/Charlestown line.

David Manfredi (DM) and Kirk Sykes (KS) were recused from the next item. The next item was a report from Review Committee on the **Summer Street Hotel (Waterside Place Phase 2 NPC) Project**. DAC noted that this was a portion of the site of the 2007 Waterside Place proposal; the BCDC had seen and approved revised phases 1A and more recently, 1B. Massport

was building a garage (the South Boston Waterfront Transportation Center) and the Summer Street site (Phase 2, Parcel D-2) was now proposed as a hotel development of over 1000 rooms. At 780,000 SF, the proposal for this site alone remained well over the BCDC threshold of 100,000 SF, and review was recommended. It was moved, seconded, and

VOTED:: That the Commission review the revised schematic design for the Summer Street Hotel Project, Phase 2 NPC of the Waterside Place Development, at 418-466 Summer Street, on the D2 parcel bounded by the SBWTC Garage, D and Summer streets, and World Trade Center Avenue, in the South Boston Waterfront District.

KS returned. DM remained recused from the next item. The next item was a report from Review Committee on the **Landmark Center NPC / North Office Project**. DAC noted that this was the fourth version of the Landmark Center project, and a significant change from the up to four residential towers approved in the last version. This, and the fact that the office building proposed is over 450,000 SF (well over the BCDC threshold), meant that review was recommended. It was moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission review the significantly modified schematic design for the Landmark Center Redevelopment Project NPC in the Fenway neighborhood.

Deneen Crosby (DC) arrived. The next item was a report from Design Committee on the **95 St. Alphonsus Street Project**. KS noted in general that the last Design Committee meeting had gone well; the Project was moving in the right direction. David Hacin (DH) noted positive improvements to the building (entry) and site (corner and auto court) in particular. Hans Strauch (HDS) of HDS Architecture handed out a new view of the courtyard and noted changes in the building plan and courtyard landscaping (compares earlier and current versions). He showed the evolution of the building facade, and the introduction of an internal woonerf (a new concept to their team) emphasizing the change to the nature of the courtyard space. Pressley Associates noted the improvements to the street edge along St. Alphonsus and at the corners at Tremont and St. Alphonsus and Worthington. At the latter, existing fencing was removed and a path into the courtyard woonerf created. All plantings were in planters due to garage structure, but they were committed to provide as much as they could introduce.

Bill Rawn (WR) asked about the parking at the corner. HDS noted it was required, but they had made adjustments, including a more directed curb cut. KS asked about improvements to the entry area; HDS walked through the changes and noted the entry was more open than before. Linda Eastley (LE): I agree with the earlier comments. This is a big improvement. Simplify it to the extent possible, especially at the corner. DH: I agree, I like the improvement. HDS: The input we got from all of you was fantastic. With that, and hearing no public comment, it was moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the schematic design for the proposed 95 St. Alphonsus Street Residential Project on St. Alphonsus and Tremont streets in the Mission Hill neighborhood.

KS: I would like the information we get on these projects to be more consistent with high standards, and also in terms of context. DM: Also, in asking for more context information and a

model. DAC: Those requirements are part of the Article 80 process. We try to reinforce them, but I also encourage Commissioners to underscore those needs when a Project is first seen.

The next item was a presentation of the **North Point Parcels G&H Project**. Mark Johnson (MJ) of DivCo West: We purchased the Project in 2015. There is no [vehicular] access from Boston, just Cambridge. We are only asking now for a height variance; the amount of building stories is the same. Kishore Varanasi (KV) of CBT presented the North Point Master Plan. KV: The Plan was conceived as a whole, trans-jurisdictional. There is a key access through Parcel H to the [Bunker Hill College] Orange Line station. (Shows existing condition photo.) The Design Guidelines are not meant to be prescriptive. The connection to the [Gilmore] bridge was already established with the Twenty/20 Project, the Brian Murphy Steps. (Shows the Masterplan with site info, notes the location of the primary park and the Murphy stairs.) Retail is focused on the First Street corridor, stemming from the relocated Lechmere station. (Shows vignettes, shows the streetscape guidelines.) Dawes Street is designed to allow the sun mostly on one side, and the public open space programming is encouraged to enliven the experience. (Notes the park insets. Shows the view from Parcels E/F looking up Dawes.) WR: What is the orientation? KV noted north on the plan, showing boundaries. He noted the height increased away from the park. DC: What is the site to the east? KV: That's the third EF site, on DCR land. WR asked about the height. KV: It's 220' for G and 150' for H, per the plan. MJ: The amount of stories remains the same. The rules for height are different in Cambridge than Boston.

Alex Krieger (AK) of NBBJ presented Parcel H. AK: Parcel H's job is to relate to the Gilmore Bridge (shows views). In addition to the Twenty/20 housing, this will be the most prominent parcel seen from Boston, more so than Cambridge. (Shows diagrams of the massing transformations.) We pivoted windows away from the residential building, then chamfered the building to make a small part frontal, and also to look more directly at Bunker Hill. (Shows a view of the site, then massings of H with G, then a closer view from the Bridge. A frontal view from the Bridge revealed the Murphy Staircase.) LE: What happens between the sidewalk level and grade? AK showed a section. DC: Who owns the Bridge? MJ: MDOT. DC: My experience is that removal of the crash barrier is difficult. DM: Does this allow a choice of walking paths? AK: Yes. (Shows a view of the existing Murphy Stair, then an expanded view.) The elevator seen will move into our building. (Shows two views, one from the Child Street park below.) Daniel St. Clair (DS): What are we looking at? AK: It's under-signed, but there's an elevator here, and parking access below. (Shows plans - ground floor, bridge level, upper stories. Then a sectional view. Shows a bird's-eye view, noting the HVAC screen and the chamfer going up.)

Patrick Cunningham (PC) of Perkins&Will presented the Parcel G design. PC: Parcel G is seen as both a termination and a part of Dawes Street. (Notes the podium.) The building has a responsibility to bring light down onto Dawes Street, which is narrow there. WR: Is that codified? KV: Yes, in the Guidelines approved by the City of Cambridge. PC then showed the evolution of the massing, the rationales for the folds and chamfers, the base/middle/top scheme, the intent of contrasts in materiality. He showed the massings within each jurisdiction, then a photo of the site, and a view from the highway. DC: Is there an elevation for sea-level rise? KV: The streets and buildings are all up about 10', with parking below. PC then shows a view from the south; a bird's-eye showing the podium terrace about a story above the Bridge; Baldwin

Park; ground and upper floor plans; a section, indicating the stepping from Dawes. PC: The ramp for the parking partially obscures the parking, which otherwise is mostly below grade.

AL: We will gather questions and send this to Committee. Even the little of Boston that is impacted has a large visual impact. The two parcels have very different jobs; H is the more difficult. The shaping responds to circumstance; it would be more okay if it were more prow than caboose. Dawes is still the main reference point, but the Stair has kind of taken over the entry. The building should sit on Dawes. Parcel G has good moves, but could engage the 'cross-park' more. LE: Should we comment as we usually do? DAC: Yes, even though they're more in Cambridge. LE: The intersection of Childs and Dawes is a unique geographic position. I'd like to understand the drop-off, the Stairs, the service road, how it peels off. The view showing the entry and Stair framing the garage terminates Dawes, and the corner there is critical. It should be pedestrian, not service. The building here is so important, because there is no pedestrian scale now. That's a challenge - so anything that can improve the pedestrian experience is welcome. DH: This is a rare moment when Boston and Cambridge touch - and so, an opportunity. The view corridor of the Zakim seen from Dawes seems like an important terminus. The facade on the Bridge is very austere. There's a lot down below. The elevation at the Bridge sidewalk could do more to evoke scale. [Look at] Images of cities seen from highways...the EF building to the east has a big cutout gesture toward the south, but the other side looks like a standard office. The G&H north facades, and both are big buildings - they feel secondary. They don't feel, at the crown, like they are addressing the regional infrastructure. The words that say 'signage' worry me; you should have architectural markers.

DC: Are there any plans for that third EF building, what you'll see? AK: It's not shown yet. DH: The graphic quality of the Twenty/20 building reads at the scale of the auto. The facade treatments you have are not reading at that level. KS: A campus like this requires public realm of a higher level. If we would time back at the Seaport, we would do it differently. There's a lot of great thought here, a great ground plane. What is the overall image? I'd like to see a "Best in Class" image form the long view. You don't get this billboard very often; this should be a good visual edge. WR: I compliment you, Alex, on your efforts for the breathing space at the bridge. The view from the highway is a powerful opportunity; I second Kirk's opinion. AL: It strikes me that the last such grouping we looked at, was Brighton Landing. DM: I look forward to Chris Matthews' response (landscape architect from MVVA); I don't fully understand the relationship of the stair. With that, and hearing no public comment, the North Point Project was sent to Design Committee.

DM, DS, and KS were recused from the next item. The next item was a presentation of the **Summer Street Hotel Project (a.k.a. Waterside Place Phase 2 NPC)**. Dante Angelucci (DA), president of The Davis Companies, introduced the project. DA: We are here because Massport issued an RFP, then later reissued it; we were designated in 2016. Parcel D2 is part of Commonwealth Flats, the Coreblock Parcel, which is why this is an NPC. We have a coterminous lease in the South Boston Waterfront Transportation Center, the garage next door. There is about 60,000 SF of ballrooms and meeting space, and 40,000 SF of retail. Sam Norod (SN) of Elkus Manfredi introduced Brian Cho (BC) of MYK Design, and David Lee (DL) of Stull & Lee as partners in the team, with others. He noted the site, which is bounded on two sides by bridges, with significant grade change. SN: We are trying to find ways to mitigate pedestrian access. DL: This is literally and figuratively a bridge. (He noted the character of the area, including emerging restaurants. BC noted the green spaces in the area; he noted the street

trees, especially honey locusts along Summer Street.) DL: A number of grade changes create challenges and opportunities. We are organizing our service on the north, and we'll have a curbside porte cochere on Summer Street. Arrival becomes Place. SN: There is a cycle track on Summer as well. We've thought about the experience of the pedestrian, all the way from the valet in the garage...we've pulled in the building open all sides to help with the grade. (Notes various connections, including the existing tunnel under Summer Street.) BC: Summer here is a continuation of work planned further down the street.

SN: There's a service drive off of the Haul Road. (Shows the lower level, with its service and the connecting tunnel. Goes up through the floor levels, describing the program.) The north side is activated by an exercise corridor stretching along the back of the ballroom. There are terraces above, with a bar along World Trade Center Avenue (zooms in). AL: Give us the big picture, Sam, rather than each space. SN showed sections, pointing out Track 61, which allowed for a potential future station; he showed an axonometric massing diagram. SN: The 'Innovation' tower has rooms that are smaller, but not Yotel-sized. They will feature cell phone operation. This also allows a slender tower along D Street. DL: The podium creates the streetwall; the towers above are similar to other towers in the context. SN shows an aerial view, then a view from Summer, showing the whole complex. He describes the approach to breaking the mass down, notes the canopy. SN: From those elements down, we use stone and other materials to make it richer. There's an expression on the facade of where the suites are; they feature floor-to-ceiling glass. The facade is a folded piece, trying to maximize height efficiency due to the FAA limit. (Shows a view of the base, then a view looking up D Street.) There's more a vertical expression on this portion - and also on the 'Cabana rooms' between the towers. (Shows a view from D at Seaport, then looking heading eastbound on the expressway, then an evening view.)

WR: Share something with us. At the urban design level, how does this respond to the Convention Center? It feels like it's crowding the plaza in the front. SN: We are trying to create a continuous streetwall along Summer. We're not bothered by the mass across the street; there are spaces to either side. WR: Could you pull the hotel to the east? DH: Is it true that Waterside Place Phase 1B pulled back from the street? (Yes.) Look at some of your urban design diagrams...you're creating a block. By the way. A lot is good. The east side is more successful. The buildings along World Trade Center Avenue are set back, so this appears to thrust into the space. I'm very sympathetic to the notion of Summer Street, and framing the space across it; there could be a more formal relationship across the street. Right now, upon arrival, you're sliding out of the picture...this is an opportunity to create a composed view. The Innovation tower is elegant, exciting. On the other side - the glass could benefit from balconies, etc. to relieve the structure. Scale really helps; the glass feels sheer and office-like.

AL: I want to echo some of those points; the space is very active. Having your front somehow engage it is a great idea. The podium level, programming - is all good thinking. The issue is the structure above; it's two bookends with something inbetween. From the airport, this will seem a big, long wall, and from the other way too. Something about the disposition needs more thinking. Maybe move it toward the middle? I'd like to see other massing strategies; this suggests you're protecting something. SN noted their structural and program (ballroom) constraints. LE: You have two blocks in one, a superblock. One might, in other areas, have a street through it. What I really want is to have this respond to the plaza - I'd like to see strategies. There's a rational place to break the expression; I don't see it yet relating to the plaza. DC: I think the setback is too tight along World Trade Center Avenue. Over time, there

will be a street, at least to the back of your building. Allow the natural flow out of the BCEC, and be more generous with the setback. DH: One of the things that strikes me, is that the edge of the tower facing the water is very important. Perhaps there's too much emphasis on the Summer Street views. The model is very helpful - it's amazing. AL: It's so far forward [on World Trade Center Avenue]. It's part of the perception...you're *narrowed* by the building. SN: Maybe there's a way to treat it architecturally. WR: The water views.... SN: Most are hemmed in, but there are fabulous views to the east. AL: I hope you'll share other thoughts in Committee. With that, and hearing no public comment, the Summer Street Hotel Project was sent to Design Committee.

DS and KS returned. DM remained recused from the next item. The next item was a presentation of the **Landmark Center NPC - North Office Project**. Mark Sardegna (MS) of Elkus Manfredi presented the design, noting the major change from 2013 - the building proposed now neither creates nor destroys parking [prior had demolished the garage and created underground parking]. MS: The park space, and improvements within the Sears building, are underway. The Muddy River is now fully daylighted. All landscape improvements are under construction (notes the location of the new office program, which replaces residential). MS then showed more views of the public realm that's underway, a site plan, diagrammatic elevations of the building as differentiated from the Landmark Center (noting the use of Hope Glass windows), and a more detailed site plan. MS: The building fronts Brookline more deliberately (shows the interface with the existing adjacent garage entry). There's retail, we hope a restaurant, to spill onto the space along Brookline. Mechanicals are on the second floor (the Muddy River floods), then there's an upper green space for office tenants on the garage roof. (Shows typical floors.) Height is 208'6".

Keith LeBlanc (KL): See (indicates) how we've made this relate to the organic nature of the park...here, there's the same flavor of street trees going around the corner onto Fullerton. The plaza is a little more urban, related to the grid. There's a generous setback, with planters and spill-out space behind, organized in a controlled way. MS then showed full elevation views. MS: This allows for the future continuation of Fullerton. The parking garage will be lined with all active uses fronting that [Fullerton]. MS then showed sections, a view of the plaza with a re-clad cinema, a view from down Brookline, several longer views.

DH: This is a nice, simple response to the prior scheme. This is a very big building, but it does more to honor the Sears building than the earlier group of [residential] structures. The neighborhood is so busy, that this seems really welcome. Is there a future phase, or is this it? We should consider that. I appreciate the need for the space, but wish that the two plazas would talk a little more. I'm a little concerned about the cinema; it seems funny to have a bite taken out of the Miesian building. MS: A lot of futures could happen, but they are far off - there's 25 years left in the big box leases. WR: I compliment you on the increased distance from the street, which was a prior discussion. I understand David's concern on the cinema. I'm not sure I understand the relationship to the Sears building, what things you've tried to do to bring the buildings together. That could be stronger.

KS: Thanks for wrapping the garage. The ground floor is headed in the right direction. In the district, the fabric is fairly fine. The Sears is a kind of Grand Dame. The Pierce was different, it was *the* object. Now, we have another. I'm not yet seeing how this works its way in, that's

the challenge. Do a contextual analysis, and see how that applies to a big building along Brookline. Context, analysis, free your thoughts about deconstructing the box. DC: Provide more information on the ground plane, how it connects.

AL: This is usually what I'm hoping for - it's simple, elegant. But you've gone too far. It's a Miesian box, but engaged with the existing at the first few levels. Maybe something was lost in the process. I'm looking for something on the first few floors that breaks out of the frame, dynamically. This is a good starting point...push at the lower level. It's not the New York paradigm. It's not Chicago. You need to push at the Miesian box, it can't be so simple. Don't try to hide it; let the life of the back inform the front. DH (looking at the view from the corner): Right now, the movie theater is 'other.' Its cladding could be reimagined; that would help.

AL: Break out of the frame at the bottom. Make it lively. It *can't be* the perfect object. KS: Other buildings have things popping out.... DH: I like the sobriety. On the elevation that faces Brookline, there are carve-outs. That's more expressive. AL: It could be much more modulated without losing the regularity of the framework. DS: It doesn't have to be re-clad. DH: Modulation should be on the other sides, not the one facing the Sears. With that, and hearing no public comments, the Landmark Center NPC was sent to Design Committee.

There being no further items for formal discussion, a motion was made to adjourn, and the meeting was duly adjourned at 8:07 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was scheduled for October 3rd, 2017. The recording of the September 5th, 2017 Boston Civic Design Commission meeting was digitized and is available at the Boston Redevelopment Authority.