

MINUTES
BOSTON CIVIC DESIGN COMMISSION

The meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was held on Tuesday, October 5, 2021, beginning at 5:00 p.m, and was held virtually via Zoom to ensure the safety of the public, staff members, and the BPDA Board Members during the COVID-19 pandemic. Members in attendance were Deneen Crosby, Linda Eastley, Mikyoung Kim, Anne-Marie Lubenau, Andrea Leers, Mimi Garza Love, Jonathan Evans, David Manfredi, Kathy Kottaridis, Kirk Sykes, and William Rawn. Absent were David Hacin, and Eric Höweler. Elizabeth Stifel, Executive Director of the Commission, was present. Representatives of the BSA attended. Grace Ng, Edward Carmody, Adam Johnson, and Patricia Cafferky were present for the BPDA.

The Chair, Andrea Leers, 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 September 19, in the BOSTON HERALD.

The first item was the approval of the September 7, 2021 Monthly Meeting Minutes, and the Design Committee Minutes from meetings on September 14, 21, and 28. A motion was made, seconded, and it was duly

VOTED: To approve the September 7, 14, 21, and 28, 2021 BCDC Meeting Minutes.

Commissioner Anne-Marie Lubenau arrived at the meeting.

The Commission moved into Votes of Recommendation for projects from Design Committee. The first presentation from Design Committee was for **100 Hood Park Drive Addition**. Linda Eastley is recused.

Mark Rosenshein, Trademark Partners: Introduces the project.

Mark Spaulding, SMMA: There were concerns over shadows, the top floor's amenity space, the garage fenestration, the facade's expression, and the existing entrance. The treatment of the facade all around the garage podium was reconsidered in terms of material, transparency, and relation to program.

Jonathan Evans: Appreciates the design evolution and fin patterning. Pleased with the progress that was made in Design Committee.

Deneen Crosby: The shadow study impacts look to be in the spring and the fall. Will the full shade to partial shade change have an impact on the landscape design? The team should consider this. Also the view from Sullivan Square to Downtown
Satisfied with the work that's been done.

Andrea Leers: The team has been responsive to the modifications suggested by the committee, and we appreciate the dedication to making the project great.

Hearing nothing else, a motion was made, it was moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission recommend approval for the 100 Hood Park Drive Addition project in the Charlestown neighborhood.

Landmark Center Redevelopment was presented for a vote next. David Manfredi is recused.

Abe Menzin, Samuels & Associates: Introduces the project. Culmination of the project, attempting to improve the public realm, connectivity, and maintenance of the public realm.

Mark Sardegna, Elkus Manfredi: Request to make the massing simpler, removing curves, and relating closer to Phase II of the project. The building is now much more in the same family as the Phase II building. There is also clearer articulation of the meeting of the new building and the historic building. The Western facade has also been redesigned to include a loggia balcony, and the public realm and entry plaza have been redesigned.

Keith Leblanc, LBLA: The multi-use path has been moved to the outside edge of the project along park drive, so the inside of the project can remain more pedestrian and green. Turnaround is minimized as possible for emergency vehicles. Greenery has been increased as much as possible.

William Rawn: Team did a spectacular job bringing the project together and the landscape architect brought a transformative solution for getting pedestrians and cyclists to the T stop safely.

Linda Eastley: Echo Bill's comments. The circulation feels effortless but took a lot of work. Will help to transform Park Drive and knit together this part of Boston.

Kirk Sykes: You're fitting a lot in, but the forms are elegant and not fussy.

Deneen Crosby: The scale and design improvements are great. Would just ask that the project team consider if the retaining wall can be terraced to decrease its height as much as possible.

Andrea Leers: The team has done a terrific job listening and transforming the design. The design plays into the ensemble of the rest of the project, building on Phase II.

Public Comments:

Dolores Boogdian: Appreciate the community benefits and attention to the circulation. Think it's fallen short of highlighting the Landmark building. Overwhelms and is not complementary. Need to also consider how 201 is affecting the Sears building.

A motion was made, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission recommend approval for the Landmark Center Redevelopment project in the Fenway neighborhood.

The Commission moved to project presentations, the first being for **MGH Clinical Building** in the West End neighborhood.

Nick Haney, MGH: Introduces the project.

Tom Sieniewicz, NBBJ: Have previously presented to the BCDC 8 times since May 2019. North Anderson Street is now an open arcade, as opposed to a service alley. Committed that the arcade will feel open to the public. Major trees have been preserved. Added an elevated porch within the arcade and a pedestrian bridge. Bulfinch Lawn has also been redesigned for a reconstruction. The massing has also changed, with a lowering of stepbacks to match with context, and the two towers changed in heights to not match each other. Keeping a portion of the Winchell school facade based on feedback from the neighborhood and the Boston Landmarks Commission.

David Manfredi: The evolution is remarkable. Have created enough diversity in the scale of the object parts that it meets the street much better.

Anne-Marie Lubenau: Great job of summarizing the process. The Winchell school preservation corner - what is happening there? Will it be an entrance?

Tom Sieniewicz: No, it will not be a door, it will be a window. Not able to make that location secure, handicap accessible, or climate controlled as we need.

Anne-Marie Lubenau: It would be nice to acknowledge the history there in some way.

Kirk Sykes: The retail on Cambridge Street - it's hard to get a sense of the character there.

Andrea Leers: Great job uniting the project and iterating on the massing. Would encourage you to make the Cambridge Street face as open and diaphanous as possible.

A motion was made, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission recommend approval for the MGH Clinical Building project in the West End neighborhood.

The next project presentation was for **819 Beacon Street** in the Fenway neighborhood.

Andrew Flynn: Introduces the project and thanks Commissioners.

Richard Curtis, Gensler: Changes to the relationship to the multi-modal path, the building massing, and the landscape. Contending with MBTA easements, MBTA exhaust vents, large grading change,

and adjacent multi-modal path. Building footprint has been reduced, interface with the multi-use path was improved, and space between project and abutters was increased. Unit mix has been changed and the project has higher affordability than IDP requires.

Andy Kirch, Gensler: Form of the building changed to consider proportion and scale on Beacon Street. Overview of context that was considered in the design. Taller massing is pushed south, stepped back from Beacon Street. Also pushed the massing back from the multi-use path.

Andrew Taylor, OBJ: Landscape was redesigned to contend with grade change and to better relate to the multimodal path, as well as other improvements.

Anne-Marie Lubenau: Concerned by the numerous issues raised by the neighborhood. How are those being addressed?

Elizabeth Stifel, BPDA: There have been multiple public meetings and negotiation is on-going.

Edward Carmody, BPDA, Project Manager: Team continues to work through a few of these issues in BPDA design review, but a few have already been addressed. The housing has been changed, the massing has been pulled back, the public amenities have been increased, and the landscaping has been updated. Additional benefits include increasing to 15% affordable units and increasing the number of accessible units. There were also concerns about the shuttle bus, and it has now been rerouted in response to concerns from neighbors. Those are the main things that have been addressed in the past 2 months.

Richard Curtiss: Increased the enclosure around the services to further shield them from neighbors.

Anne-Marie: Other concerns were height, shading, solar glare, wind, water quality, etc.

Elizabeth Stifel, BPDA: Those concerns continue to be addressed in BPDA Design Review as the project moves forward out of schematic design.

Mimi Love: This team has been very responsive. They've activated the multi-use pathway, added bike storage, etc. Would encourage them to continue exploring access to that raised terrace area. The facade has definitely improved. Very pleased with where this has gone.

Andrea Leers: Concur with what others have said. There is a long list of issues that were presented in this letter. Many of them have been thoughtfully responded to, and trade-offs were made. Pulling the wing back makes it feel more open and adds light and air, and is a fair exchange of height for more open space at the ground. Nice changes to the landscape design. This is a good example of a project that is very burdened with competing demands and is trying to be very responsive.

Public Comment:

Dolores Boogdian: Some questions on how this project will impact the neighborhood are still unresolved. Wind, solar glare, drop-off and pick-up ,etc. None of the 9/9 letter comments were addressed in the 9/25 design committee meeting.

Johanna Hynes: What is the current canopy situation? How many trees will be coming down? Will the new trees be mature? The neighborhood needs more trees.

Response: Andrew Taylor, OBJ: Planning to plant a grove of trees. Due to depth, we don't have the capacity to plant street trees, but will have planting extend out as much as possible, and trees will be planted on the terrace.

Alison Pultinas: Hope design review will anticipate possible munson street connection to the MUP

Commissioners Discuss:

Mikyoung Kim: Agrees with the public comment, that street trees are really needed here. Will the streetscapes continue to be reviewed? Think the plan looks great, but concerned about the streetscapes with majority ground cover which can die.

Deneen Crosby: Beacon street does have a lot of constraints. The courtyard is trying to balance staying accessible to the street, while also maintaining enough soil depth for trees to grow. Encourage that to be maintained as the project moves forward.

Elizabeth Stifle, BPDA: The BPDA and PIC will continue to review the streetscapes and continue to advocate based on this feedback.

Andrea Leers: We want assurance that the BPDA will continue to work with the project team to address the public concerns and concerns of the Commissioners. Should we ask to see the project again? Or assume that the project will receive enough oversight from the BPDA?

Mikyoung Kim: Supports approving

Anne-Marie Lubenau: Future presentations should address what has been negotiated with the neighborhood and what issues remain, in addition to thoroughly showing the context.

Willian Rawn: Should we ask them to come back for an informational presentation?

Mimi Love: The team has done a good job, and the site is just very complex. I believe the BPDA should be trusted to move the project forward.

Kirk Sykes: Would like to see the project again in the future, to ensure that the issues the BCDC has raised with the project are resolved, in addition to a presentation about the multi-use path.

VOTED: That the Commission recommend approval for the 819 Beacon Street project in the Fenway neighborhood contingent on BPDA staff attention to the issues raised in the meeting, in addition to a follow-up informational presentation to ensure that the issues the BCDC has raised with the project are resolved. The Commission also requests a presentation about the multi-use path.

The next project presentation was for **NEXUS at the Allston Innovation Corridor**. Kirk Sykes is recused.

Michael DiMinico, King Street Properties: Introduces the project

David Godfroy, DiMella Shaffer: Changes to Artist's Way, vehicular circulation, pedestrian circulation, massing and height, and setbacks from streets. Removal of a floor at 250 Western Ave and adding setbacks and a "cornice line". At 280 Western Ave, enclosed the parking garage to make it feel like a building. At 305 Western Ave, change to the overall design and massing, and ribbon design refinement to never touch the ground and add primacy.

Rob Adams, Halvorson: Project has been well received by the community. Nice network of open spaces and connections. Increased greenery in Artists Way, and updating of streetscape to comply with Boston's Complete Streets. King Street has also committed to seasonal planting in planter containers, but added trees also that will be permanent.

Linda Eastley: Artists Way takes car traffic at the end of the day from 4-6pm. Some of this still feels unresolved, as far as pedestrian experience is concerned. The more successful of the buildings is actually the one at the corner, number 305. Less convinced about the ribbon motif because of the way it would be experienced from the street.

Jonathan Evans: Agree with concerns about the ribbon. Has that been updated? Was there any additional thinking about materiality of the ribbon?

David Godfroy: It has been updated. And we're thinking of a metal panel in a matte finish with smaller joints, to mimic terracotta.

William Rawn: We should be encouraging this kind of project invention. Artists Way: I don't know if it will work. It's going to have traffic in the evening. But it also gives a central focus to the project that has a chance to be successful. I see the improvements to the ribbon - I don't know if it will work, but we should support these kinds of design moves. We should applaud the development team for doing the unusual.

Anne-Marie Lubenau: Appreciate the ensemble of buildings, and the attention to the parking garage. Commend the team on the attention to scale and the public realm.

David Manfredi: Agree with Bill and Anne-Marie. These buildings are complex in envelope and in massing. Worried that you may be doing too many things, but it's a design choice by the team. Would encourage the team to try to maintain the depth that the renderings show. Trying to do some interesting things - could endorse more simplicity. But it could be a very positive project.

Deneen Crosby: Because Artists Way's use is uncertain, should leave it as flexible as possible so it could evolve over time. Thinking about the tree placements, etc, if different things happen with the building's use over time.

VOTED: That the Commission recommend approval for the NEXUS at the Allston Innovation Corridor project in the Allston neighborhood.

There being no further items for discussion, a motion was made to adjourn, and the meeting was duly adjourned at 7:25 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was scheduled for November 2 , 2021. The recording of the September 7, 2021 Boston Civic Design Commission meeting was digitized and is available at the Boston Redevelopment Authority.