

MINUTES
BOSTON CIVIC DESIGN COMMISSION

The meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was held on Tuesday, December 7, 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 Andrea Leers, Deneen Crosby, Linda Eastley, Mimi Love, Mikyoung Kim, Jonathan Evans, David Manfredi, David Hacin, Kathy Kottaridis, and William Rawn. Absent were Jonathan Evans, Anne-Marie Lubenau, Kirk Sykes, and Eric Höweler. Mikyoung Kim arrived at 5:25pm. Elizabeth Stifel, Executive Director of the Commission, was present. Representatives of the BSA attended. Alexa Pinard, Scott Slarsky, Matthew Martin, Nick Carter, Edward Carmody, 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 November 25, in the BOSTON HERALD.

The first item was the approval of the November 9, 2021 Monthly Meeting Minutes, and the Design Committee Minutes from meetings on November 16, 23, and 30. A motion was made, seconded, and it was duly

VOTED: To approve the November 16, 23, and 30, 2021 BCDC Meeting Minutes.

The Commission moved into Votes of Recommendation for projects from Design Committee. The first presentation from Design Committee was for **109 Brookline**. David Manfredi is recused.

Chris Haynes, Gensler: The project team has simplified the podium massing, updated the tower design, lightened the materials of the penthouse mechanical screen, and redesigned the streetscape.

Deneen Crosby: Appreciates the setback on Brookline Avenue, since the sidewalk is so narrow along the street. Confirms that 6'-6" is maintained as a consistent sidewalk width minimum.

David Hacin: Commends the design team on the progress the project has made and the language that has been developed. The team explored and presented a compelling idea for the corner of Brookline Ave and Overland Street, and would like this concept to be communicated by the BPDA to the other projects being developed at that intersection.

Linda Eastley: Agrees with David and appreciates that corner urban design move and the importance of at least one other project at that intersection picking up that same move. Also

appreciates the step back from Overland Street. The interface of the streetscape with the face of the Marriott seems like it could be a moment for a design element to soften that relationship.

David Manfredi: Asks for clarification on the colors of glass on the tower, and if the darkness of the spandrel panels shown in the renderings is accurate. Agrees with the previous comments that the design has made good progress.

Chris Haynes: The intent is for the colors to be different.

Public comments:

Dolores Boogdian: Why is the zipper what defines the relationship between the building and the Marriott? I don't believe this project relates to the Fenway context well enough.

David Read: Asks for consistency in representing the bike lane.

Pam Beale: Would like to go on record in support of this project.

Alison Pultinas: For the seatwalls in the landscape design, can some of the material from the existing building be reused?

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

VOTED: That the Commission recommend approval for the 109 Brookline Street project in the Fenway neighborhood.

Government Center Garage Redevelopment, East Parcel [Bulfinch Crossing] was presented for a vote next. Commissioners Andrea Leers and David Manfredi are recused. Commissioner Mikyoung Kim arrived at the meeting.

Thomas O'Brien, HYM: Introduces the project. Recap of the design context - PDA, MBTA tunnel, bus relocation,

David Nagahiro, CBT: Reviewed the reduction in floors and height, the daylighting of the MBTA bus way, the opening of view corridors, and design of the new plaza.

David Hacin: This is a very good presentation. The before/after of the approved PDA to now was extremely helpful. The team has done a good job of addressing our concerns over building form and height, and makes a significant difference. To the extent that the mechanical penthouse can be minimized, that would be appreciation, in consideration of the Greenway Guidelines.

Deneen Crosby: Would like to see the design in the model. Also has concerns about the roadway and the need for street edge safety measures, especially along Surface Street.

William Rawn: The opening of the pathway between the civic space and the lobby is a great improvement.

Linda Eastley: Appreciate seeing the evolution of the building. The 2013 PDA massing was claustrophobic, and the new, pulled back approach is elegant. The sidewalk is going to have active edges, and the building is dynamic.

Mimi Love: The presentation was very clear and convincing. The reduction in height goes along with the Guidelines. I believe the ground plan passageway will be very popular and is well placed. Is there any difference in program between the more transparent and less transparent floors? And are there too many bands now that the height has been reduced?

Kathy Kottaridis: Appreciate the commitment the team has made to providing cultural space. Would like to invite the team to come back later on to present again to the Commission for later updates.

Public Comments:

Jay Walsh: On behalf of the Downtown neighborhood association wants to go on record in support.

Louise Thomas: Could we see a comparison view of from the DPIR to the current proposal, down Merrimac Street.

A motion was made, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission recommend approval for the Government Center Garage Redevelopment, East Parcel [Bulfinch Crossing] project in the Downtown neighborhood, with a proviso that the project team return to the Commission to present on the redevelopment of the project in the context of the Greenway, and the addition of safety measures for surface road.

The Commission moved to project presentations, the first being for **400 Guest Street, Allston Yards Building B** in the Allston neighborhood. Commissioners David Manfredi and Linda Eastley left the meeting.

Matthew Martin, BPDA: Introduces the project.

Risa Meyers, New England Development: Introduces the project team, the project site, and the program.

Michael Giardina: New design since the PDA was approved in 2019 has relocated parking below grade, reduced the building height by 40', and steps the base with a series of setbacks. The design incorporates wider sidewalks along Everett Street, an activated corner at Everett, a terraced facade facing I-90.

Mikyoung Kim: Would be helpful to understand the site grading, if any of the context or streets are being regraded, and would like to see some sections, especially at where the project meets Everett Street. I'm also skeptical of the plaza space at the corner of Everett given the speed of traffic on

Everett. I would also like to see a circulation diagram of how someone could get to the other side of the tracks from your development, how someone would come to and leave the project, etc.

Deneen Crosby: What is happening with the plaza at 119 Braintree Street? And what is happening with the connectivity to the Commuter rail station? Need a more thorough understanding of the access and network. Also curious if the thermal comfort for the green spaces proposed on the roof.

Mimi Love: Intrigued by the program and design of the terrace green spaces facing I-90, the viability of the greening of the terraces, and where the mechanical equipment is proposed.

David Hacin: The massing is refreshing for a lab building. The expression along the pike is intriguing and I am skeptical that the green spaces will be comfortable. Appreciate the moving of the parking below grade. I would like to understand the project in context better. How does the elevation fit into the longer street elevation - new and proposed projects on the street? What does the project look like while traveling along I-90? It would be helpful to get a better 3-dimensional sense of the project. Like the idea of the facade shifting tone and color based on it's orientation.

Andrea Leers: I would like to understand the proposal in the context of previous studies done in this area. I recall previous massings in other studies being more perpendicular to I-90 in order to allow more light and air to filter through. I am concerned about the massiveness and the proportion of this project on this site. The square-ish building up against Guest Street and the stepped building facing I-90 are working at odds with each other. I'm interested in seeing massing options with a short front on Guest street and a deeper footprint facing the pike.

William Rawn: I agree with Andrea. The stepped volume is intriguing, but it is a very human scale element desperately needed in this area, but shouldn't it be facing on the pedestrian street side, as opposed to the I-90 side? The form does not feel light and airy yet. This development also doesn't provide much open green space, and I would like to see this project propose more green, publicly accessible open space, at grade, than what is currently shown.

A motion was made, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission recommend the 400 Guest Street Allston Yards project continue in design committee.

There being no further items for discussion, a motion was made to adjourn, and the meeting was duly adjourned at 7:00 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was scheduled for January 4, 2021. The recording of the November 9, 2021 Boston Civic Design Commission meeting was digitized and is available at the Boston Redevelopment Authority.