

DRAFT MINUTES

BOSTON CIVIC DESIGN COMMISSION

The meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was held on Tuesday, September 2nd, 2014, starting in the BRA Board Room, 9th Floor, Boston City Hall, and beginning at 5:25 p.m.

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

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 Tuesday, August 19, in the BOSTON HERALD.

The first item was the approval of the August 5th, 2014 Meeting Minutes. A motion was made, seconded, and it was duly

VOTED: To approve the August 5th, 2014 Boston Civic Design Commission Meeting Minutes.

Votes were passed for signature. MD asked for a report from the Review Committee on the **55 India Street Project**. David Carlson (DAC) reported that the 55 India Street Project was, at about 70,000 SF, below the usual threshold of the Commission. However, its location was a prominent site on the Greenway and thus made the proposal a strong element in the public realm. Review was recommended. A motion was made, seconded, and it was

VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the proposed 55 India Street Project on the corner of India and Well streets and the Rose Kennedy Greenway in the Downtown Waterfront District.

The next item was a report from the Review Committee on the **Readville Yard 5 Project**. DAC noted that this Project was located on one of the fringe areas of the City in a semi-industrial area of rail yards. Nevertheless at 375,000 SF, it was well over the BCDC threshold, and a vote to review was recommended. It was duly moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the proposed Readville Yard 5 Project at 8 Industrial Drive in the Hyde Park neighborhood.

The next item was a report from the Review Committee on the proposed **Ashmont T.O.D. 2 (Ashmont Tire) Project**. DAC reported that the proposed Ashmont Tire site Project, with a strong workforce housing component, was an interesting and recently reported-on housing project next to one at Ashmont Station previously reviewed by the Commission. It was, depending on what one counted, very close to the BCDC threshold of 100,000 SF; review was recommended. It was duly moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the proposed Ashmont T.O.D. 2 (Ashmont Tire) Project in Dorchester's Peabody Square neighborhood.

David Hacin (DH), Daniel St. Clair (DS), and Lynn Wolff (LW) arrived. David Manfredi (DM) was called out of the room for a call. The next item was a report from the Design Committee on **Mission Hill Parcel 25**. Robb Chandler (RC) of Goody Clancy quickly presented the locus plan, and went through the various design changes. He noted the modifications using a series of views, walking around the site - first the 'Youth' Building, then the mixed-use building, then around to the Plaza. He showed the site plan. Bill Rawn (WR): What is the sidewalk width on Gurney? RC (and others): 10' - a 2' setback, 3' with trees, and 5' clear. It's wider on Tremont. Andrea Leers (AL) asked about the height of the glass 'Youth' Building. RC: The second story is higher; we did what we could within the budget. It's about 16" higher. Deneen Crosby (DC) noted the Committee's question on the pre-Phase-2 interim condition. RC: There are trees and a planter to buffer the parking lot. At the plaza near the tracks, we are using an 8-foot-high series of panels. AL: And the lighting? RC: A series of building-mounted fixtures, and possibly catenaries. Another Goody Clancy team member noted that there would also be pole lights in the interim condition. DC: In the details, you will have to be sure to use structural soil in the sidewalk. AL: And the treatment of the roof? RC: Different color (membrane) panels are shown. The exact design is not set. LW: What about the view in? RC: When you look in from Gurney, the view is focused on the entry to the nonprofit. DC: And the crosswalks? RC: We are looking at ones on both Gurney and Tremont (points). AL: The residential building is much better, the legibility of the buildings is clear. The lights, how it appears at night, the solution on the roof - I hope you will continue to work on these. MD: We'll see later Phases. RC: We appreciate the focus on light as an issue. It was then moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the schematic design for the Mission Hill Parcel 25 Project First Phase and PDA, on the corner of Tremont and Gurney streets in the Mission Hill neighborhood, with the condition that future Phases return for review and approval.

DM returned. LW and Paul McDonough (PM) were recused from the next item. The next item was a report from Design Committee on the updated **888 Boylston Street Project**. MD: While you're setting up...I was at both meetings on this, and a number of issues (plaza, building

expressions, comparative views) were studied. And the views convinced us that this is better than the prior design. The site plan is very interesting. David Stewart of Boston Properties: It's really three things - the development of the top, the podium level treatment, then the landscaping.

John Schuyler (JS) of FXFowle noted first the changes to the top. He showed views of the top, then a view from Huntington, comparing the older and new designs. He described the changes in the proportions and the variable center on the rear facade; he noted the HVAC change. JS: On the north, at the podium level, we have simply strengthened the elements at the top of the columns. WR: The earlier version seemed more clear, modernist; I'm not sure that the changes on the south or at the columns help. JS: That's on us. We made changes pursuant to a number of comments. WR: It just feels more busy. AL: Can we see the south again? JS complies. Stewart described the changes, noting the photovoltaics (PV). MD added that the impression was that this side was too boxy, at the first Commission meeting. DH: Is the PV installation intended to express sustainability? Stewart: Yes. AL: I get the sense of Bill's comments. I was satisfied with the earlier version, but these are minor tweaks/changes.

Mikyong Kim (MK) reprised the diagram of her plaza landscape design, noting major entries. MK: We allow access to all doors, but create a park/plaza area. We talked about the paving lines, and have done studies (shows adjustments). We have modified the lines so more are parallel (to Boylston), but still fold in. (Shows different views, including an overview.) We were asked to show the seating; one is still able to see the space, and paths. (Shows precedents.)

WR asked for more information on the precedent photos of paving patterns. MK then talked about the use of contrasting pavers, strongly graphic/linear patterns, using a combination of linear and hexagonal pavers. She noted the wind power link to the lighting, which would illustrate a reflection of sustainability. DS asked about the scale of the trees. MK: About 6" caliper. John of Mikyoung Kim Design noted they would be about 22' high. A discussion ensued about the scale of the trees in the planters, and of the plantings. DC asked about light and shadow on the plaza. MK explained, and Stewart noted that the sun would be at the edges mostly, with a sliver sweeping across in all seasons. DH: I had a question about how the lines meet - but also how it goes to the sidewalk. MK: As you say it, I note that we have not worked out the edges. This prompted a discussion about the street; it was noted that the granite pavers at Mandarin Oriental haven't lasted well...they were too thin, or badly set. MD: The question was a balance between street-like lines; you have toned down the contrast. Now, it's a really interesting space. MK: We have a a lot of seating. DC: I assume it's raised, because of the garage. MK: Yes (explains further). MD: Are there more questions or comments? There were not, and it was moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the revised schematic design for the 888 Boylston Office Building Project located in the Prudential PDA within the Huntington/Prudential District.

LW remained recused. The next item was a report from Design Committee on the **Boston University 610 Commonwealth Avenue Project**. MD noted the Committee discussion on the building, its program, and the space - especially the Morse relationship and Commonwealth sidewalk. Jim Collins (JC) of Payette introduced a few others on their team - Charlie Baker,

Paul Rinaldi, Jamie Fay, et al. JC: We noted the comment about the program along Commonwealth, and studied options. The simplest solution was to double the neuroscience collaborative lounge space. The second item was the sheerness of the building on the sidewalk. So we have removed the parking, and placed planters along the edge; the sidewalk went from 8' to 14' wide, more gracious. (Shows the shift on the large study model as well as in a slide.) BTD seems okay with it, but they are still studying it. Questions or comments? The last item was the scale of the space at Morse. One goal was to balance the open space of the future, with an interim view of the Communications Building entry. We arrived at a shift...(Shows the change agreed to in Committee, going from 32' to 40' wide, in plan and then on the model.) The opening is more generous, this is much better. (Shows model again.) AL: I want to thank you for listening. All these are better. The hallmark of a good designer is to take criticism and make it better. The space feels better, it's a significant change. DC: It allows more light. DH: The sidewalk issue is also a great improvement, and the program changes a nice tweak. DC: I was happy to hear that the open space in some sense depends on the future. DM: I echo those sentiments. With that, it was duly moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the schematic design for 610 Commonwealth Avenue with the backdrop of the Institutional Master Plan for the Boston University Campus in the Allston/Brighton neighborhood.

LW returned. The next item was a report from Design Committee on the **Brighton Marine Veterans Housing Project**. Ed Bradford (EB) of The Architectural Team introduced himself and his team, including Chris Fleming of Winn Development and Andrew Lennard. EB: We focused entirely on landscape elements - one point was to expand the green around the (historic) building. Andrew will also present more information on the trees and garage. We looked at several ways to access the garage, one of them off to the west, from the back area. The problem is, we can't get down quick enough...we're not able to slope it down that steeply, and it cuts off a usable area of the garage. We also looked at coming through the adjacent lot. That presented many difficulties: we were losing spaces, the Regency has control of that site; but, the utility corridor on that edge was the key obstacle and could not be moved. The garage entry will be flanked by plantings, really quite screened. Andrew: We were able to work with the client and come to a different arrangement. The green has been expanded. The handicapped ramp is a better condition now, and the trees open up to allow a view of the entry. The plantings relate to the older building also from the inside, and frame the new view from the outside. (Shows precedent photos of tree groves limbed up to allow views.) The view will be of the porch on the side of the old building. Regarding the oak trees (notes existing, then location relative to Project), we are saving the major one, and along the side, if any needed utility work doesn't allow their retention, we will plant new ones. DS: Do you have a view of the porte cochere / portico? EB shows the view up the drive, with the trees shifted. AL: Did you look at a more projected entry? It would provide more shelter, and signal the entry more. DH: I appreciate that you looked at the garage entry. I think the landscape is a huge improvement...a good direction. DC: I agree, this is much better. As you move forward, Commonwealth Avenue is so beautiful...if you can just make it a priority to save the mature trees if you can. WR: What is the lighter material shown? EB: Metal panel. WR: I wonder if too much white might conflict

with the trim on the original building, against the brick. DH: That's an interesting comment. MD: The main goal is that it's a background to the old building. DH: Taking the brick higher up might help augment the elements you have. EB: We do that on the end; we can look at that. With that, it was duly moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the schematic design for the proposed Brighton Marine Health Center Veterans' Mixed Income Housing Project in the Allston/Brighton neighborhood.

DH and LW were recused for the next item. The next item was a presentation of the **55 India Street Project**. Scott Thompson (ST) of Hacin + Associates introduced himself, John Copley (JC) of Copley Wolff Design Group, and Mike Durand of Boston Residential Development. He started with the facts. ST: We are within the height and FAR envelope. There is no basement, and no parking on site. (Shows locus.) This site was developed early in Boston's history, and shaped by other events, most recently the Greenway. The 1814 Hales map, India Wharf, the construction of the Artery. We are right on the end of India with an expression on the Greenway. (Notes the scale of the buildings in the area.) We have been working with the BRA and the adjacent developer to have a cohesive site strategy. It's important to keep that India expression. The Guidelines principles include: reinforcing the area, but also fronting the Greenway; ground floor activation; and, the terminus of the small streets in Town Cove. The building itself reflects the different goals. (Notes the frame, and the high first floor. Shows a section, and notes infrastructure constraints, including the nearby tunnels. Notes that a single column with trusses supports the entire front facade.) The restaurant space engages the entire Greenway; there will be outdoor seating in season. Equipment is elevated due to climate change concerns.

JC: The abutters were interested in maintaining their views - in, as well as out. So, we have created a 'funnel' of plant materials to focus the views. And to provide a buffer for the Greenway...the trees act as lenses through which you view. (Shows 110 Broad and 55 India together; shows a system of concrete and brick pavers behind both.) We are thinking of different trees - aspens, poplars. ST: I'll go around the building. The idea of frames - the Central Artery is divided, but the Greenway brings it all together. The two angles of the frames denote the views up and down. The principal materials are brick, glass, stone (precast), and metal. There is a 'hull line' at the cornice above the first floor. (Shows a series of street-level views, 'walking' around the building.) There is a chamfer to relieve the tight corner, but also to give the abutters their views. The small streets are out. (Shows a view from the south, then a view from inside.) We have a model....

AL asked about the floor plans. ST showed diagrammatic plans, noting the setback at the rooftop and mechanical screen. Using his hands, ST described a 5-unit typical layout, then showed elevations. DM asked how the ground floor works. ST described it: The corner is chamfered in part because it allowed a kind of inset drop-off. The streets are tabled. DC asked about that; ST described it. ST: The Greenway Conservancy is excited about anything enhancing the pedestrian experience. MD asked about the nature of the space under the overhang. WR: What I like about the scheme is how the brick locks it into the background buildings, while the frame is a very modernist approach. This is a good solution. AL: I

appreciate how the building occupies the site and makes the most of the underground constraints, allowing the free form ‘hull line.’ I like the view from the north, to Bill’s point. I like that it’s not the same on both sides. But I’m not sure about the frames. It’s kind of a graphic device. I’m not sure that you can’t achieve a good design without resorting to that. It’s the one thing that doesn’t feel grounded...even the planning is, with bedrooms at the smaller window sizes. ST: The other thing about the frames, to defend them briefly, is that we wanted to create something that read at the scale of the Greenway. AL: I’m just wondering if you can’t achieve it in a more integrated way. It’s just a personal view.

DM: I’m not sure I understand the car and pedestrian interaction. Is the drop off also a cut off? Is everything tabled? ST: We’re trying to dissuade people from using it, and encourage going straight. WR: Height of the overhang? ST: 16’ to the underside. (Describes how the paving works at Franklin.) DC: So, it’s a continuous curb cut? ST: Mostly. The existing site has a continuous curb cut (a zip car lot). DM: Wouldn’t the cars go up? ST: They could - but also, trucks are using the loading on the side. MD: This will go to Committee - to look at this and the expression of the band (edge of overhang). DC: Explain how the wharf expression (in paving) ends. Also, if Disabilities (Commission) requires a 5-foot concrete band, that destroys the idea. ST: We are thinking of colored concrete, not brick. DM: I don’t want to leave Andrea’s comment in the air. It’s worth answering; respond to that. With that, the 55 India Street Project was sent to Design Committee.

DH returned. LW was again recused for the next item and left. The next item was a presentation of the **Readville Yard 5 Project**. Tim Love (TL) of Utile noted that it was an industrial development and introduced Peter Murphy, president of First Highland, the developer. He thanked the Commission for their time. TL: First Highland owns the adjacent 700,000 SF industrial park. The pressure of success there is prompting us to develop here. (Notes locus.) The site was purchased from the MBTA; it’s an old CSX rail yard. The Dedham portion of the site is likely to be a solar array (they weren’t interested in buildings). There are houses nearby (points), built in the 20s and 40s. Many workers go to the other industrial park from Readville Station; the only other use now is school buses. (Indicates the Boston Dedham Commerce Park one property away to the south.) In industrial parks, reusing older facilities is successful. That sense is what Highland is after. The existing buffer and fence are not secure; all sorts of things happen. Our proposal is a ground-up industrial park. The idea is between the smaller Newmarket tenants (2-4,000 SF) and those on Route 128. 4-7,000 SF is the target. We are taking advantage of Readville Station, and imagining Industrial Drive as an ‘address’ street. The parking in the first building is mostly hidden. Each industrial space allows a van to enter, but there is loading outside too, and parking, for each tenant space.

WR: Explain that further. TL shows a view: Each unit has two garage doors. Loading can occur at either. We have to allow for semis for supplies. PM: Is this a public street? TL: No. There is a large, continuous canopy over these spaces. The caps (fronts) of the buildings are all brick. It’s painted; and, the tenants are all required to have painted, not manufactured, signs. (Shows a section through the site, notes the shared path.) There is the potential to extend into Dedham. MD: Is the path a public way? TL: It’s publicly accessible. (Notes improvements to

the landscape buffer.) Kate Cannon (KC) noted there was an AUL on the site. KC: The idea is to keep the site mostly impervious, capping it, but keeping the edges pervious, and adding phytoremediation species. (Shows the site plan.) The path goes back and forth, and there are small buffer landscape areas at the corners. These may also allow for swales and additional bioremediation. We are planting trees at the entry park, and adding passive stormwater treatment; we're reusing the old tracks. It's an area for the workers, but also a buffer for the community. TL: The Sprague Street bridge is high; you will see the view. (Shows the overall view, then a view under the overpass.) The [first] building is scaled to be frontal. (Shows a pedestrian level view at the main approach.)

AL asked about circulation; TL explained the strategy. WR wondered why there was the back drive. TL: For fire, but it also allows an alternative circulation if there's a semi in the lot. MD: So the park at the entry is only public realm. DH: This is a terrific project for the City. It's sustainable; it seems like the landscape is a good solution. PM: Are there traffic concerns? TL: Only political. Really the issue is of the intersection at Sprague, and we *are* improving that. PM: Signalization? TL: Maybe. DH: I'm inclined to approve this. The front space seems like a good place for food trucks, for workers at lunch. Peter M noted that one of the tenants may be a food truck commissary, which would do that. AL: I'm still trying to clarify - the rear way is mostly the way out? TL explained the circulation in somewhat greater detail. DC: One or two of the drives...does it make sense to have one drive larger, or have a way through? TL: One solution used at Massport is to stripe a pedestrian path through an area designed for trucks. Trucks are squeezed down as it is. DH: There may be a way, with your graphic package, to add paving to that. WR: I second David's motion of approval. PM: This is larger than many we've done, but it's a good candidate. Having been moved and seconded, it was then

VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the schematic design for the proposed Readville Yard 5 Project at 8 Industrial Drive in the Hyde Park neighborhood.

DC, DH and PM left. The next item was a presentation of the **Ashmont T.O.D. 2 (Ashmont Tire Site) Project**. MD: While you're setting up, can you give us some background? Kenan Bigby (KB) of Trinity complied. KB: We are proposing a residential project in the Ashmont section of Dorchester, continuing the idea of the Carruth we did on the MBTA site. This is a private site; we have a purchase & sale agreement with the owner. We will demolish the existing buildings and build a new development - mixed use like the Carruth, with about 4,000 SF of neighborhood retail. Above that, about 60% is targeted to be affordable, and the number above base targeted to working families, both renters and homeowners. There are 35 parking spaces below, and 9 on the surface. It's TOD, so we are applying those principles; parking is about a 0.5 ratio. We are in the process, and have been meeting with the community. Abutters, then groups, then community meetings, as well as the electeds and agencies. We have received positive feedback. This will be an overview; the major focus today is to look at how it sits. Here is Phil Renzi (PR) of The Architectural Team.

PR presented the design. PR: The site is in Dorchester, near Peabody Square. (Shows site plan,

notes adjacencies.) There's a drive in the back for parking and loading, two retail units, residential entries, and units along the back. There are two residential entries; the units are for sale on floors 5 and 6; 1-4 are rental. (Shows an aerial. Notes circulation, relative to the Carruth; notes the programming there.) We are interested in continuing the programming of the street as well as its scale. WR: Do you have photos of the Carruth? PR showed a series of photos of the area, which focused around (not of) the Carruth. He noted the Carruth showed clearly in the rendering. Mike Doherty will discuss the facades. (Shows a view along Dorchester Avenue looking east, then west.) Doherty: It's an industrial aesthetic; there are large areas of glass. There is a brick-clad base, and ends. The main body is a Rainscreen system, we're not sure which one. But a cementitious product. There are industrial sash windows, multi-paned; the top units are lofts with a mezzanine level. There are small roof gardens and an elevator access. There are major and minor piers in the body, of 2 and 3 bays widths. The west elevation is shaped more by the site; the east is more direct. There is a notch at the base for the access drive. AL: Are there loft units on both sides? Doherty: Yes. The headhouses are slightly more horizontal. MD: Continue your presentation, but not too detailed. Doherty then showed a series of views, including before-and-afters (with photo insets). He noted that the site slopes about 7 feet corner to corner. Doherty: The lower elevation is at the garage entry; the first floor takes up the difference. There is a parking area behind, and 2-story houses beyond that.

DS: Has any planning been done around this station? The curved building you showed - It seemed like it would work with the adjacent property. KB: That's owned by NStar. And a private ownership. We looked at that when we did the Carruth. DS: No further planning studies by the BRA or MBTA? KB: No. There is an idea of developing a retail corridor along Dorchester Avenue. [DAC : There *was* a Dorchester Avenue Corridor study, and an overlay.] KB then responded to WR regarding scale: People are supportive of the program, and are okay with the size. The industrial aesthetic (loft-like) is accepted because of Ashmont Tire's long history on the site - it's an industrial site. And this increases the amount of home ownership. AL: It's very well planned. Its real strength is the dialog with the Carruth. I don't have major concerns there, but as an expression of the industrial...? The Carruth has an expression of domesticity, a simple organization which we understand. I'm not there yet with this. I'm not sure that just because it was industrial, that you have to add to that. The *lofts* add to that. In fact, I'd like to see more - on three sides, like the crown on the Carruth. If there were a residential scale below, that would heighten their drama. These are generous windows, yes - but more similar (to the Carruth) would build strength. KB: One of the community comments was *not* to duplicate the Carruth. So we are trying to do something equally as handsome. Related, but different.

MD: I'm concerned about the scale of the building - and that interstitial space, vs. the other buildings next door. I certainly want to support this, but that has to come with mitigation. Typically we would ask for a model. The earlier project had a SketchUp model, had enough evidence to convince us. This may be all right, but there's not quite enough material. DM: I agree with Mike. Also, these blue [first floor] units seem mean. And you had to carve out the building - so the sidewalk is *very* narrow. I completely admire the mix of housing, how you've made sense of it, and addressed Dorchester Avenue. The mix of architecture, I'm not sure. I was surprised about the cementitious panels. You are caught between expressions. DS: The

lofts feel top-heavy; if they were pulled in, they would feel more like a cap. As a gesture to the scale, might you step down at the far tail of the building? WR: One of the reasons the neighborhood is excited is the middle income component. I think the lofts would be stronger if the top floor were made more simple. Maybe they shouldn't be overhanging. On the right, the building fades away. On the left, it's complicated - you could simplify. You want to show it's a new building - work hard to make it coherent. KB: We are trying to mimic the industrial buildings that change over time. We can see if there's a way to treat it around. The industrial feel is well accepted by the community, and we've grown to like it. With that, the Ashmont T.O.D. 2 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 8:39 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was scheduled for October 7, 2014. The recording of the September 2, 2014 Boston Civic Design Commission meeting was digitized and is available at the Boston Redevelopment Authority.