

**BOSTON CIVIC DESIGN COMMISSION  
MINUTES**

The meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was held on Tuesday, May 1, 2018, starting in Room #900, Boston City Hall, and beginning at 5:22 p.m.

Members in attendance were: Michael Davis (Co-Vice-Chair), Linda Eastley, David Hacin, David Manfredi, William Rawn, and Kirk Sykes. Absent were: Deneen Crosby, Andrea Leers, Paul McDonough, and Daniel St. Clair. Also present was David Carlson, Executive Director of the Commission. Representatives of the BSA were present. Natalie Punzak, Mike Christopher, Jonathan Greeley, Michael Cannizzo, and Elizabeth Stifel were present for the BPDA.

The Co-Vice-Chair, Michael 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 Saturday, April 21, 2018, in the BOSTON HERALD.

The first item was the approval of the April 3rd, 2018 Meeting Minutes. A motion was made, seconded, and it was duly

**VOTED: To approve the April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2018 BCDC Meeting Minutes.**

Votes were passed for signature. The next item was a report from the Review Committee on the **Kenmore Square Hotels (“Crossroads at Kenmore”)**.

David Carlson (DC) gave an overview of the proposed PDA of two combined projects, one for an addition to the Buckminster hotel and one for the redevelopment of the Citizen’s Bank site into a hotel. The projects total around about 347,000 SF and include the addition of a public plaza between the two Buckminster hotels. It was moved, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the proposed Kenmore Square Hotels Project and PDA at 560-574 Commonwealth Avenue and 645, 651, and 655-665 Beacon Street in the Fenway/Kenmore neighborhood.**

David Manfredi (DM) was recused from the next item. The next item was a report from the Design Committee on the **115 Winthrop Square Project**. Michael Davis (MD) gave a brief overview of the project’s history and context--a 1.56 million SF office and residential tower at Winthrop Square in Boston’s downtown Financial District. MD noted that there were a number

of reports from Design Committee - it is generally the intent of the BCDC generally to approve the projects that have been through, and responded to suggested changes via, several BCDC sub-committees. So please keep presentations short.

Blake Middleton (BM), Partner of Handel Architects, presented the transformation of the building's design through elevation drawings, massing diagrams, rendered views, and perspective views of the towers in the Boston skyline from around the city. The two connected towers, tethered by a glass sky bridge, are located on a T-shaped site. Each tower has a distinct character--the West tower inspired by art deco and pleated forms, and the East by a carved, vertical material expression. The Eastern tower was shortened at the suggestion of BCDC by 75' from the Draft Project Impact Report, now 12' lower than the proximate Bank of America tower. At the street level, the Great Hall (building lobby) connects Winthrop Square with Federal Street. Pedestrian counts and studies anticipate high volumes of pedestrian traffic through the Great Hall every day, and the team plans to develop a strong service program for continuous activation from morning to evening. On the exterior, the loading dock entrance will be an I-fold vertical door. Handel Architects is working with Ground Landscape and Dream Collaborative to develop a design for Winthrop Square. In its current condition, trees have grown past their maturity and the ground plane has become uneven. The team will increase the footprint of available pedestrian space, slow traffic, recalibrate the ground plane, and create a central oasis space defined by rows of trees, to be further developed through the BCDC sub-committee process.

William Rawn (WR): During sub-committee, the commissioners recommended that 3 floors be [further] removed from the East tower, and the presented revision depicts 3 removed floors. I want to complement the proponents for making the East tower different enough from the West tower so that they feel like different buildings. Shaping has been powerful and effective in this transformation. Linda Eastley (LE): I think we've touched every piece of these buildings. The building entry now resonates with Winthrop Square, view portals on Federal, and the details of the service garage have been resolved nicely. It's still a very tall building, but the solutions have become very elegant. Kirk Sykes (KS): You've done a good job by making a tall building seem small by articulating two towers. You artfully dealt with the tops of both towers. It was always important to have the contrast of two pieces, and you offer compelling views from around the city. David Hacin (DH) arrived. WR: I would note the recommendation was to bring the Great Hall and the Winthrop Square public space back through sub-committee. MD clarified that a condition of approval is to go back through subcommittee, and asked for public comment.

Dan Domb with Rockpoint Group (real estate private equity group; owners of 75 Federal St and several hundred thousand SF. around the site): The major comment that was heard here was on massing and change in size from original PNF. The original submission did not impact all of our windows, but this revision does. The West tower is fantastic and could stand on its own. The current design is the densest building built in Boston, and we've proposed a decreased density to

increase light in the Great Hall as well as our building. Even with a smaller building, we believe the city benefits could still be fulfilled. We have proposed contributing \$30 million of our own money to ensure the development moves forward and the project benefits are fulfilled.

MD: As commercial abutters with a vested interest in this project, we encourage you to continue this process with the city and the developers.

Representative of BE Realty, owners of 133 Federal: I echo the comments of Rockpoint. We support the project but the massing is unprecedented and is too big for the neighborhood. Sean Fontes, labor and construction law attorney: The public benefit this project will and has produced is very unique. This project is serving as an incubator to help the construction industry, particularly the workforce. This project has already begun a very important and special initiative to create one of the largest minority apprenticeship classes. Barry Gaither: The intention of involving minority benefits is noteworthy. Millennium was involved in a small project in Roxbury. I would like to speak for them as committed to the kind of growth and change that we need in Boston, and as holding a vision that is not just expressed in the verticality of the tower, but is expressed in other pieces of the city where diversity and public civic value need the benefit.

With that, it was moved, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the schematic design for the 115 Winthrop Square Project, in the center of a block fronting on Devonshire and Federal streets in the Downtown Boston Financial District, with the condition that the design of the Great Hall and Winthrop Square itself return to the Commission for further review and approval.**

DM was recused from the next item. The next item was a report from the Design Committee on the **112 Shawmut (Shawmut Avenue/Washington Street Block PDA) Project**.

Michael Liu (ML) of The Architectural Team Inc. presented changes for approval of one building and proposed PDA for the Shawmut Avenue/Washington Street Block project. In subcommittee, BCDC recommended the creation of a stronger internal N/S and E/W connection which has now been realized. A commercial space on Shawmut Ave and a new connection from the building's lobby into the internal courtyard have been added. The facade of the CCBA building now aligns with 112 Shawmut with a 10' set-back as discussed in sub-committee for a more generous pedestrian landing point. First floor commercial space was expanded and now opens up to interior space. Changes on the southern edge make a minimum of a 30' width to reinforce the E/W connection.

DH: That looks like quite a serrated massing on the [Shawmut] street wall. I can appreciate the syncopation of the base, and the changes that have been made on the courtyard are great. But this still feels a little disjointed. ML: This illustration of architecture will come back to committee [with the BCEC]. The approval being sought is for the overall massing and not the articulation. DH: I'm inclined to approve the project, but I would like to request that the massings of the two additional buildings on site be diagrammed with urban design principles and volumes, because I am not prepared to approve this *specific* massing. Urban design principles need to be included in the PDA study in order to feel comfortable approving this to come back to BCDC. Currently, the massing comes across as a series of slight misalignments; there should be some coordination of the base and upper floor conditions of buildings on Shawmut Ave.

LE: I want to make sure as you continue that the garage access on the pedestrian connector be treated delicately. The work you've done to connect Shawmut and Washington will be beneficial for the public realm. As you think about the tight connection, I know we spent time wanting to make sure it felt large enough, so that will be a critical point of our discussion in the future. I'm sympathetic to the idea that this becomes a dead-end courtyard in the interim (the courtyard is a privately-owned, publicly accessible space that will be accessible after several phases of construction). I wonder if there are other measures, apart from a gate, that we can put in place. DH: The security of the public space is a concern in phasing. Public access upon completion is required. KS: The courtyard is good. The massing feels big, so we will need to break down the massing during BCDC processes in the future.

And with that, and no public comment, a motion was made, seconded, and it was duly

**VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the schematic design for the 112 Shawmut Avenue Project and Shawmut Avenue/Washington Street Block PDA on three parcels bounded by Herald and Washington streets, and Shawmut Avenue, in the South End neighborhood, with the condition that the 112 Shawmut and BCEC building street and courtyard walls are aligned to the extent possible, that the BCEC and CCBA buildings return to the BCDC for review and approval, and that the PDA Urban Design principles discussed continue to inform the remaining project designs.**

The next item was a report from the Design Committee on the **Boston Garden Phase 3 Office NPC Project ("The Hub on Causeway")**. Douglas Gensler (DG) of Gensler, Boston: We solicited feedback on the proportions of the tower to unify the mid-rise, tower, and podium in a complete way. The porches have been repositioned on the east-west sides to provide more vertical expression of productivity. The variety of spaces and choices resonate with the customer and with the diverse quality of their creative work. Our design concept erodes the mid-body

section of the building while maintaining identity of base and tower relationship. The tower's crown emulates the rhythm and cadence of street-level structure. These changes are fairly consistent with the last subcommittee meeting. We introduced a connection at the terrace, and have two proposed options: the first provides a set-back bridge hanging off the building to create continuity of terrace. The second carves away portions at the building's corner to allow circulation continuity to happen inside the building frame. (Presented vignettes that show both schemes for a terrace/porch at the 15th floor.)

DH: The second concept comes at the sacrifice of square footage but is a much stronger architectural idea that will be more comfortable for users. It strengthens the baseline scheme all-together. I want to compliment you on the detailing of coordinating the bracing, the more expressive sculptural presentation of the brackets. MD: I concur. I like concept two. LE: The most compelling composition is the view down Canal Street. The building and the base have the strongest composition. Concept two has a nice tension between the pulling out of porches and the pushing in of the terrace.

MD asked for public comment. A representative from Hawthorne Place Condominiums in the West End: I'm finding these porches very odd on the commercial building and I wonder how it relates to the residential buildings. Is there relationship between the other buildings and this architecturally? What is the purpose of the porches? DG: It's a composition of buildings with their own character and purpose. This building has a unique identity and the porches are exciting for the tenants. They provide a three-season porch and an opportunity for the tenants' brand to come alive in these spaces. They also give the building an intimate scale. Jane Forrestal, a member of the Impact Advisory Group (IAG) for this project: I appreciate that this building blends into an existing industrial neighborhood. I didn't like the porches in the beginning, and I'm not 100% convinced, but they look much better now.

With that, the project was moved, seconded, and it was

**VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the newly revised schematic design for the Phase Three Office component (NPC) of the proposed Boston Garden Project ("The Hub on Causeway") at 80 Causeway Street to the south of the TD Bank Garden in the North Station Economic Development Area.**

DM returned. The next item was a report from the Design Committee on the **Herb Chambers Jaguar/Land Rover Dealership (1186-1198 Commonwealth Ave) Project**. Mark Regent (MR) of Regent Associates Architects: Previous comments from BCDC critiqued the design for being boxy, horizontal, no scale. The design was based on Jaguar-Land Rover brand standards

designed for a suburban condition. We have agreed to widen the sidewalk from 8' to 10' so that the planned changes by the Department of Public Works for the future can be accommodated. We were asked to move the service entrance, and we have brought the upper floors 40' closer to the street. We've added a glass canopy over the doors to provide pedestrian scale. We pulled the second floor back to allow for a two-story glass facade on the street. The top two floors are vehicle storage.

DH: The proportions are so much better than the original guidelines outlined. This is a good example of pushing the provided corporate guidelines to create something better. DM: This is a big step forward, and you get credit for challenging the guidelines. The condition on Commonwealth Ave is an acknowledgement of consideration for future planning for the Avenue. LE: What happens at the middle of the two volumes? MR: Most customers enter from the left. The central entrance is the more formal entrance. It is part of the Jaguar/Land Rover design, and this median is a neutral zone between the brands. LE: My only comment would be that you take another look at the entry. It feels a bit small in relation to the scale. It needs something bolder to signify a welcoming entry. WR: I appreciate the response to sub-committee comments. The project is significantly better.

With no public comment, a motion was made, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the schematic design for the proposed Herb Chambers Jaguar/Land Rover Dealership at 1186-1198 Commonwealth Avenue in the Allston neighborhood.**

The next item was a report from the Design Committee on the **1550 Soldiers Field Road and 21 Soldiers Field Place Project**. Nancy Ludwig of ICON Architecture: This development contains 239 residential units. We heard and have resolved several issues from the BCDC. The first was an overarching concern about program on the site, and the physical response to Soldiers Field Road. We now have approval from DCR to make the sidewalk a multi-use path of 10' width with walking and biking. This area is on the city's radar. Birmingham Parkway is inhospitable to pedestrians. There is a plan to make improvements to Birmingham Parkway to provide crosswalks, so that this development will carry the character of improvements all the way to the highway that connect Boston Landing and the river. Andrea Leers suggested a taller building. This now (transformed from a four to a five story building) allows for more programmable space on site (child play area, dog park, running path) and a broad open public forecourt to the building entry. We studied the placement/connection central to the H-shape of our building to provide maximum relief around Soldiers Field Road and desired resident/pedestrian use. We removed the building cornice element and the building is now more playful and expressive.

LE: I am glad you explored and returned to your original scheme regarding the building relationships and H-shape. I really like the new height of the second building, and that the open spaces provide a buffer to the change in grade at the 12ft high retaining wall. DM: I think this is a nice project and you've made it even better. KS: This project has a good presence on a busy road. With no public comments, the project was moved, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the schematic design for the proposed 1550 Soldiers Field Road and 21 Soldiers Field Place Residential Development in the Allston/Brighton neighborhood of Boston.**

The next item was a report from the Design Committee on the **MassportMT Parcel 6 Project**. Andrew Hargens (AH), Deputy Director, Real Estate Development at Massachusetts Port Authority: This site has been targeted for seafood use. It sits within the South Boston Designated Port Area. Within the marine park area, it is designated for industrial use. On this site, we have targeted a modern seafood space to allow the targeted industry to expand. From our study with HR&A we issued an RFP on five sites and from that process we selected a pilot team to develop Parcel 6. The goal for us is to expand and strengthen the seafood industry in South Boston. Proposed is a Boston Sword & Tuna expansion (almost double their current space), and a 60,000 SF building. Also included is parking for the seafood workers which meets a need for the industry due to work hours that do not align with peak transportation time. Today there is virtually no infrastructure on the site, and this expands opportunities for circulation on the site. Cheryl Tougias of Spalding Tougias Architects, Inc.: At the March 6th BCDC presentation we discussed building placement and alignments of existing buildings. Super graphics and free-standing screening serve to unify the buildings. The screening system is wrapping and turning the corner of the building.

LE: I am more in favor of this now. The shared garage and shared screening helps brand and unify the space. Where I'm still tied up is in the idea of how the district ties together. At first glance, moving the building closer to the water seems to make sense, but you still have cars parked along that road and so to me it is now less compelling. I like the idea of a future setback for future pedestrian considerations. I think what you've done in terms of articulation is nice, but for me the idea that setbacks among buildings differ makes me feel that the district has not been thought through. KS: Area along the water is one of the few places for an edge. Right now there is refuge. Is there no way to get consistency along the strip? AH: There is a safety issue because this is a trucking area. WR: I support multi-use and the change in the garage--this becomes a town center for this district. All of us understand the imperatives of this district to support maritime uses. I'm not thinking of the near term; I recognize the danger of the drive. But maybe by 2070 there could be something more advantageous; I worry that the building coming out to the edge of the site will preclude that in the future. AH: The finances don't really allow us to

accommodate further setback because it eliminates several truck bays. The sites to the east are used for maritime use. This is the last site Massport has to support activities in the area.

DM: I fully agree with the importance of the industry, and I didn't really understand how vibrant and growing the industry is. But it has its own clock. By the middle of the day, the area transitions to a much quieter district. Since the reinvestment in South Boston with new built housing, there are people running on these streets 7 days a week. Somehow the protection of the industry is important, but it needs to coexist with the life around it. At first I questioned why, with a setback, would you put parking on the water? But Bill changed my mind in looking at the long-term view of this industry. There is a datum that has been established by the two existing buildings, and you preclude the possibility of a future by pushing this parcel to the edge.

LE: If we're going to set back to a datum, then we should support alternative A, with the setback to match the existing [Parcel 5] datum line. DM: I'm not fully understanding what the economic loss is here; I agree with Linda. Our charge is to look toward the future. MD: Motion to approve proposal contingent on Alternative A, and that A is massaged to come up with a viable alternative. With no public comment, it was seconded and

**VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the schematic design for the Massport Marine Terminal Parcel 6 Development in the RLFMP in the South Boston Seaport District, contingent upon a building setback to align with the existing datum line of surrounding parcels.**

DM was recused from the next item. The next was the presentation of the **Kenmore Square Hotels ("Crossroads at Kenmore")**. Haril Pandya (HP), principal at CBT, presented the project with Harry Wheeler (HW) of Group One Partners: They began by presenting the history of the Kenmore Square area. The site as is presents a pedestrian challenge getting through the square. A new pedestrian plaza will connect the change in grade from Brookline to Beacon Streets and link the new hotel with the Buckminster Hotel. The podium of the existing Buckminster Hotel will guide the design of the two new hotel additions (all independent from each other). The new hotel, with a bold presence on a triangular site, aims to be a landmark for Kenmore Square. Gary Hilderbrand of Reed Hilderbrand, the landscape architects, showed an altered traffic configuration by shifting building footprint to create a 'super-crosswalk' at the intersection of the triangular site that allows for a larger public realm. They are beginning discussions for a work-in-progress transit transformation.

KS: It would be helpful to understand pedestrian flows. To create an amenitized landscape is its own draw. This is an interesting project. MD: I was not buying the argument that this area is a destination before Gary's presentation of the extended corner. There are lots of ways to make the building space part of the amenity--the roof of the existing hotel as public space would be great. The building in the back seems to be tied to the historic structure, and I don't see a reason for

that. The two new buildings may want to have more in common typologically than the historic building.

Pam Beale, from the IAG: The community is looking forward to participating in this project. DM: you're welcome to attend subcommittee. And with that, the Kenmore Square Hotels ("Crossroads at Kenmore") 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 9:02 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was scheduled for June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2018. The recording of the May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018 Boston Civic Design Commission meeting was digitized and is available at the Boston Redevelopment Authority.