

DRAFT MINUTES

BOSTON CIVIC DESIGN COMMISSION

The meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was held on Tuesday, October 7th, 2014, starting in the BRA Board Room, 9th Floor, Boston City Hall, and beginning at 5:21 p.m.

Members in attendance were: Michael Davis (Co-Vice-Chair); Deneen Crosby, Linda Eastley, David Hacin, Andrea Leers, David Manfredi, and Lynn Wolff. Absent were: Paul McDonough (Co-Vice-Chair), William Rawn, Daniel St. Clair, and Kirk Sykes. Also present was David Carlson, Executive Director of the Commission. Jay Lee was present for the DND. 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 Friday, September 19, in the BOSTON HERALD.

The first item was the approval of the September 2nd, 2014 Meeting Minutes. A motion was made, seconded, and it was duly

VOTED: To approve the September 2nd, 2014 Boston Civic Design Commission Meeting Minutes.

Votes were passed for signature. MD asked for a report from the Review Committee on the **3521-3529 Washington Street Project**. David Carlson (DAC) reported that the 3521-3529 Washington Street Project did not require a vote since the Commission had voted to review it three years ago and it had not completed BCDC review due to the Developer's choice. The idea was to bring the modified Project back so that as many Commissioners as possible could see the changes. The next item, however, was new: the **5 Washington Street Project** at the corner of Corey Road, across from a Whole Foods near the Brookline border in Brighton. This was, at about 150,000 SF, over the threshold of the Commission; review was recommended. A motion was made, seconded, and it was

VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the proposed 5 Washington Street Project at the corner of Corey Road in the Allston/Brighton neighborhood.

The next item was a report from the Review Committee on the **135 Bremen Street Project**. DAC noted that this Project in East Boston was located on the East Boston Greenway near the previously reviewed 'Atrium Suites' project. At over 125,000 SF, it was 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 135 Bremen Street Project at the corner of Porter Street in the East Boston neighborhood.

The next item was taken out of order due to setup requirements and the fact that one team wasn't fully present. David Manfredi (DM) was recused from this item. This was a report from the Design Committee on the proposed **Boston Landing PDA Change and Parcel C3 Office/Rink Project**. MD reported that the changes to the Project were viewed favorably by the Committee; Guest Street in particular was much better. MD: There was a comment made about the corner's resolution; we will see a response. Mark Sardegna (MS) of Elkus/Manfredi presented the changes, using a large model on the table, and then presenting some slides showing first the plans. He noted the increased separation between buildings, allowing more light and air onto Guest Street. He then showed a series of views - a view up along the public stairs, with a projecting roof and column composition, and then a closer view of the same; a view from the Turnpike (again noting the separation); a view from further along the Turnpike. He finally showed the site plan, including a roofscape plan, and described the (public) program on both levels. MD: Any comments?

David Hacin (DH): The changes to the corner are good. The cascading stairs are a great improvement. The relationship to the Headquarters Building has been widened, loosened up. The triangular plan form should continue in future plans. Andrea Leers (AL): I think the opening of the spaces has helped a great deal. Deneen Crosby (DC): The development of the upper open space with the lower was very good. I would continue to work on that, the upper especially, since that will be dealing with fumes and noise from the Turnpike. MD: That's a good point. All this development will help mitigate sounds from the Turnpike. Linda Eastley (LE): I echo Andrea's comment. And the wedge angle not only sets up the environment, but a framework possibly all the way through the development. That might make the District more transparent. MS: We think the comments made very positive changes. It was duly moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the modifications in the PDA Master Plan and the schematic design for the proposed Office/Rink Project on Parcel C3 within the Boston Landing PDA Master Plan area in the Allston/Brighton neighborhood.

DM returned. The next item was a report from the Design Committee on the **Jackson Square 75 Amory Street Project**. MD noted the Project was unusual in that it's been before us - it's part of Jackson Square, and we see each component. We've not really seen a full presentation, but we have seen this twice, and we felt it had progressed enough to bring it back for a vote - with caveats to be carried out by (BRA) staff. Terronda Ellis (TE) of the JPNDC passed out handouts focused on Site III/Phase 3. She reprised the history of the Jackson Square Plan and

noted progress, walking Commissioners through the booklets. She noted that the loss of the proposed garage site meant that there would (likely) be some parking instead of the full green space originally contemplated along the Orange Line tracks in the Plan. Only part of that would be used by, and so built for, 75 Amory. (There were some questions about this; a brief discussion ensued.) TE: The idea is to set up here what the rest might feel like if executed. That discussion is really for the Phase 3 buildings. DH: I also recall a budget issue. Stephen Tise (ST) of Tise Design Associates: We have a SketchUp model, but no projector. We have boards. The townhouses had been cut out due to the severity of fund allocations - the ceiling is \$200/SF all in - but we have kept four of the original five despite that pressure. (Shows a view of the primary facade.) DH: The materials? ST explains: It's simpler now. The horizontal are metal panels. There is Nichiha at the corner, and stone veneer on the townhouses. One comment was the treatment of the corner; we have added some windows. (Shows a night view). DH: And the other side? ST explains: It's simpler, but there is a similar amount of windows, and the materials are similar. AL asked about the materials and colors shown. ST: The metal is aluminum, not anodized but a kynar finish, color not chosen.

Lynn Wolff (LW) asked about the master plan change. ST: There was a site loss (indicates) - that was going to be a garage clad with townhouses. Over at the corner (of Centre and Columbus), that's Boston Edison. DH: I know you don't have your SketchUp for us, so I will imagine it. But it seems simpler, better. It's a good evolution; the windows and the material change make the corner better - I was one of those concerned about that. DM: I agree. I congratulate you on what you're getting out of the budget. You've hung on to the townhouses, and kept the detail. AL: Actually, having the four instead of the five has given this a grander entry. ST: The Project has benefitted from the comments from everyone. LW: Do you have a landscape plan? ST: A landscape architect has just been hired, so no. LW: there's a lot here for them to work on. The motion was made, seconded, and it was

VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the schematic design for Building K, Parcel 69, part of Phase II of the Jackson Square Project, at 75 Amory Avenue in the Jamaica Plain neighborhood.

LW was recused from the next item. The next item was a report from Design Committee on the **Ashmont T.O.D. 2 Project**. MD: I'm the only Commissioner here who was at the last Design Committee. The building is good along the street. I was concerned myself about the relationship to the community behind it, and encouraged mitigation. There is strong support in the community, and we felt it should return for a vote. They have responded otherwise to comments. Chris from Trinity noted the changes, pointing out modifications to the rear, and reduced parking. Chris: We have looked at how we treated the sidewalks and surrounds, and the MBTA has allowed us to move the bus stop in front of our residential entry. John Copley (JC) of Copley Wolff Design Group then showed the changes to the rear. JC: We have eliminated much of the parking, with a change to special pavers at both ends. Columnar trees and a small grove add to the self-buffered (robust trees) houses nearby and the parking on the adjacent property (shows a perspective sketch). JC then showed sections through Dorchester Avenue and the side street. JC: That [sidewalk] is 8-10', and can fit trees in. (Shows photos up and down

Dot Ave to show the consistency of that approach.) Dot Ave slopes; at the corner, we're creating a plaza. The community wanted seats; we have added those at the planted areas (at bulb-outs).

DC asked about the views into the site. JC: There's a pinch-point. But you can see into the space, depending on the owner controls vis-a-vis a fence. AL: What's going on at the corner? We talked about that space. JC pointed to a seatwall and grade adjustments to support the retail there.

Mike Doherty of The Architectural Team then showed the building elevations and a couple of views. Mike: Now it's all a brick base and a panel system above. We have also softened the expression, with Juliette balconies below and real balconies at the condos. AL asked to see more views. LE asked about the rhythm: I see three at the top equal four below. Mike explained that rationale. DH: I'm seeing this for the first time. You could strengthen that relationship. Mike: We looked at making the piers wider, and it looked heavy. We can consider other options. MD and others discussed the issue - it could be just amending the top, and/or attention to depth and color. AL asked about the corner: I feel it would be better not to turn the corner (with the bay). Just a bay on that *one* facet. Make it a special place, a meeting place. The canopy, not so deep - you want sun. At the other corner, it's sunny; the canopy can be larger. Why does it change? It could be simpler. DH: The change at the back is very good. With that, it was moved, seconded, and

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

LW remained recused, and DH was recused for the next item. The next item was a report from Design Committee on the **55 India Street Project**. Scott Thompson (ST2) of Hacin + Associates presented the changes. ST2: There were three issues studied in Committee. The frames, the drop-off, and the space in front. (Goes quickly through the frame studies.) Our resolution on the frames was to have a tighter integration of the frame, which is now integrated with the height of the HVAC enclosure. It's a subtle change, but the proportions are better. The second issue...(shows the older drop-off with the cut corner). We revised the plan - the bicycle storage was shifted to loosen up the plan. We now have separated functions: a drop-off on Well for the entry and restaurant, with the loading on Franklin. (Describes the program interfaces, how the spaces interact with the building in plan, then using an axon.) The last issue - we provided more information on the public spaces around the building. (Shows prior, then newer.) The special paving across the Greenway ends at the frame. The streets behind are more standard, but we still have a special paving at the entry drop-off. AL: Is there a change in grade? ST2 explained further. DM: The change on the street is really only at the entry. ST2 showed views of the lower part of the building, then some moveable computer-generated views, and noted how their single column framed the views.

AL: I think separating the functions really helps, it's much better. I appreciate your taking a look at the frame, tightening it up. It remains that figure, but it's more integrated. LE: I

appreciate the design. It's a stage from which you can observe the Greenway. That's a powerful component. DM: I've been at each stage of our review, and it's better each time. It's better connected around the perimeter. DC: One of the things I like is how open it is. I know there will be a railing, but it should appear as open as possible. AL: Materials? ST2 noted the various materials intended. With that, it was moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of 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 Broad Street district.

LW and DH returned. DM left. The next item was a re-presentation of the revised **3521-3529 Washington Street Project**. MD noted to the Commission that all options were open to them, as though this were a new Project. Andy of BL Inc. began the presentation, first noting the location. Andy: The BRA had asked us to make this denser, more urban. But one of the reasons for the project delay was the discovery of a hot spot of contamination. And the community was very concerned about the scale of the Project [on Burnett]. We have increased the scale of the building on Washington, which steps down to three stories toward the community. We have simplified the building, and now have glass along the base at Washington and McBride streets. The fifth story is pushed back; the corner is emphasized, the mass brought back. At the 3-story side, we have a roof terrace opportunity. We have textured elements...(shows a perspective view from the 3-story side). This keeps the vertical elements moving. (The team searches for floor plans.) Andy goes on to show elevations and the site plan. LE: Why does the landscape end? It looks like garage doors. Andy: We probably could continue it; the sidewalk width allows that. AL: So, the retail is all on the ground floor, and through the building? Andy: Yes. DH: I'm trying to understand what's in and what's out, on the materials. Andy: The materials are brick and metal (pulls out views).

MD: I don't think we can give critical comments without a model, or a 3-D representation. Not just renderings. So we can understand the context, and how this fits into the master plan for the area, which we've seen [on the Commons project]. We will want to see a fuller presentation. LE: I agree with that. AL: Just a couple of design elements. The 3-story piece is not well integrated into the rest; think more about that. The many color changes aside from the modulation break it up more than is needed, so it's missing continuity. Inside, the courtyard - is very different as a shopping, vs. a living, experience. I'm interested to see how the ground floor responds, but also how the residential responds to that different space. LW: I agree with the comment about the street vs. the courtyard side. The garage entry - it's hard to see your plan. Why not have a vehicular entry from the side street? Andy noted the neighborhood concern about traffic on that street. LW: What is that park? Andy showed a view of the park with the neighborhood in the background. Andy: We have a SketchUp model, and will bring it to Design Committee. And a landscape architect - Kyle Zick, who couldn't be here tonight. David Goodman (DG) of The Boston Fund noted that the community talked about a Greenway and second bicycle path, but that doesn't exist yet. LE: We would like to understand the connections. AL: I have a question about where the [other residential] garage is accessed. Andy showed that. LW: What about the connection to the park? DG: It's there, but we had to avoid site contamination. With that, the 3521 Washington Street Project was sent to Committee.

Updated info booklets were handed out by the team at the end (!).

The next item was a presentation of the **5 Washington Street Project**. Tamara Roy (TR) of ADD Inc. presented the design, first noting the locus. She used an aerial to note the conditions surrounding the site - Commonwealth Avenue and the B Line, the scale of apartment buildings, Whole Foods, topography, the school. Photos were used to give more context. She showed the site plan and model, noting that the setback from Washington was intended to pick up on the scale of nearby residential portions and the scale of the Whole Foods retail. LE asked about a small outbuilding; TR noted it was a garage structure, but also clarified the access to a small office building behind the proposal. Commissioners asked further about the model, Bartlett Crescent, the relationship to grade, and the current conditions. TR noted that Shauna Gilles was the landscape architect but couldn't be here tonight. TR then explained the circumstances, noting the site bounds; they are still trying to solve for the perimeter. LW asked about the size. DAC: It's larger than zoning would allow, but BRA staff felt it was not out of scale with nearby elements in the neighborhood. MD: Zoning is FAR 1, height 35'. LW: Big. TR showed the ground floor plan and noted building materials. She showed perspective views which responded to preliminary comments from the BRA and community. TR: We have added a cornice, and varied the expression of the larger building masses; we have brought some elements to the ground, greened the terrace at the back, and emphasized the entry.

DH: Is the garage ventilated? What are the openings doing? James Gray of ADD Inc. (JG): Passive ventilation is not required. LW: You talked about a contemporary approach - the building is all the same, too homogeneous. TR: The landscape plan is still rough. There is streetscape along the streets, and trees on the plaza (shows a preliminary view of this). We are keeping it simple there to develop it with the community. DH: I know the site very well. We have some precedent images.... My first reaction is how much I wish some looseness could come into your presentation. It looks like you can read the cellular nature of the building a bit too much. The attic story could be articulated differently...I'm not a fan of the cornice. And the parking up Corey could be a nice wall. On the Brookline side, I just wonder if the facade - forgetting parking - if you could carve into the building, so that side of the building was participating in the sense of a *crescent*. If some sense of turning the corner could be done in the lobby/amenity area. I'm concerned about this area, the relationship of *this* to *this* (building, plaza, crescent). DC: I'm working to understand how that side works. I'm not as familiar with Washington. But the smaller residential, and large trees...some images that relate what's happening [in the context] to what you're doing. DH: You don't want to feel the City that strongly. Curve the entry.

AL: It feels to me like a very rigid plan for this condition. It has the sense of a '30s U-shaped building, and it needn't be that rigid. The difference at the top could be more strongly marked. All the other changes, vertical, in color, don't really help. In plan, you could work to loosen things up. The lower floor could even flare out. MD: It's a rare time when we don't say make it simpler. If the courtyard could move...strategies to help mitigate the mass....and make the public benefits of that stronger, like the Project we saw in Dorchester. DH: Per Andrea's comment, maybe shift the building back and allow the terrace to come around. LE: If you carve

away, allow the green to wrap. That would help as you approach going north on Washington. If you could acquire that (office) pavilion, that would also help. On Corey, I'm curious about the planting materials. That could make it feel more generous, and create a presence at the corner.

MD: We will send this to Committee. Thanks for presenting something we can understand. (The 5 Washington Street Project was then sent to Committee.)

The next item was a presentation of the **135 Bremen Street Project**. Jeff Drago (JD), legal representative of the owner, introduced the team and noted the locus. JD: It's at the corner of Porter and Bremen; it abuts the Greenway. It's a trucking terminal in a desolate part of East Boston. There are improvements further on along Bremen (the new library, etc.)...but this site is near two T stations. We will also remove two existing billboards. It's five stories above a garage, with parking on-site; within walking distance to Maverick Square, we have an active ground floor. The community likes the design - so far.

Linda Neshampkin (LN) of Neshampkin French presented the design, first showing the plan and noting the courtyard facing the neighborhood (vs. the Greenway). LN: The community did not want a wall facing them. On Porter, there is a WPA-era wall, so access is restricted to the corner; you can't come through the middle of the space (on Porter). So the residential entry circulation is at the corner, with a walk back to the elevator, which addresses the site grade change. The restaurant is on Bremen. The parking is on two levels; the upper includes commercial parking for the restaurant space. The lower level is exclusively residential parking. (Shows a perspective view and goes through plans; shows a faint lower level plan and then a site plan.) There is a small bicycle repair shop on the lower level. Velija Catovic (VC) of Neshampkin French showed an updated perspective and brought it to the table. LW asked about the grade difference, and in response he brought a Greenway view closer. VC noted changes associated with the proposed shifts at the rear [Greenway] side, and noted the new sidewalk created along Bremen.

DH: The plan here makes more sense on a rectilinear site. And I was worried about the facade, but am convinced by the renderings. I want to know more about the materials. I think the corner entry is a little odd. But you could loosen up the corner. AL: I think a little bit more about Porter...it's a 3-part volume, and the ground floor reflects that. Why not put the residential entry on Bremen, on the third bay. Make your entries prominent in their zone. DH: I'm convinced that might work; the Bremen Street facade could be really nicely done. The architecture often ends at the garage doors. Treat the street as a good street, and be simple on the rest of it.

MD: I don't really understand the context. What *is* the character of Bremen, really? And Porter. I don't know enough [from the presentation]. What is the relationship to infrastructure - and to the Greenway? DC: The more activity that can be added to the Greenway, the better. MD: We will bring this to Committee. Bring a model; it can be foam boxes, so that we can read and understand the context. And clear photos. LW: And some sections so we can see the relationship. I question the access to the Greenway from the upper level. MD: The model would help there. DC: The section should continue on both sides (not just the site). VC

pointed out other tall buildings in the area. LE: This is an incredible moment at the corner of Porter and the Greenway; that's where it will be seen the most. What is happening on the rest of the site? JD: Right next to us is the East Boston Health Center surface parking; the sidewalk ends there. LE: A highway on one side, a vacant lot on the other - the building doesn't respond. JD points out the highway ramp.... AL: That's why a model will help. With that, the 135 Bremen Street Project was sent to Committee.

There being no further items for discussion, a motion was made to adjourn, and the meeting was duly adjourned at 8:14 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was scheduled for November 4, 2014. The recording of the October 7, 2014 Boston Civic Design Commission meeting was digitized and is available at the Boston Redevelopment Authority.