

DRAFT MINUTES  
**BOSTON CIVIC DESIGN COMMISSION**

The meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was held on Tuesday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2013, starting in the BRA Board Room, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor, Boston City Hall, beginning at 5:19 p.m.

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

The Co-Vice-Chair, Michael Davis (MD), announced that this was the meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission that normally 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 Wednesday, March 20, in the BOSTON HERALD.

The first item was the approval of the March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2013 Meeting Minutes. A motion was made, seconded, and it was duly

**VOTED: To approve the March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2013 Boston Civic Design Commission Meeting Minutes.**

Votes and the sign-up sheet were passed for signature. The next item was a report from the Review Committee on the **Bartlett Place Project**. David Carlson (DAC) reported that the Bartlett Place Project, on the site of the MBTA's Bartlett Yard bus and vehicle maintenance depot, had been years in the conceiving, and was ready to move forward, although only the first phase would proceed at this time. The overall Project is over 400,000 SF, well over the BCDC threshold, and the first phase alone is over 200,000 SF. Review was recommended. It was duly moved, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the proposed Bartlett Place Project at 2565 Washington Street, bounded also by Guild, Lambert, and Bartlett streets, in the Roxbury neighborhood.**

Bill Rawn (WR) was recused from the next item. The next item was a report from the Review Committee on the **Northeastern University Institutional Master Plan**. DAC reported that Northeastern University's IMP, although extended for recent projects reviewed by the BCDC, needed to be re-done. No single IMP Project was currently proposed in the submissions to date, but the IMP overall had about 11 IMP projects totaling more than two and a half million SF. For this reason, and because the BCDC looks at IMPs as a matter of policy, review was recommended. It was duly moved, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission review the proposed new Northeastern University Institutional Master Plan in the Roxbury, Fenway, and Mission Hill neighborhoods.**

WR returned. The next item was a report from the Review Committee on **The Point Project**. DAC reported that The Point Project was termed that because of the triangular wedge-shaped site at the intersection of Boylston Street and Brookline Avenue at Park Drive. This site had always been considered for extra height in the area planning and zoning, and the project itself anticipated for some time. The Project is over 300,000 SF, well over the BCDC threshold; review was recommended. It was duly moved, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the proposed The Point Project at 1383-1395 Boylston Street and 176-200 Brookline Avenue in the West Fenway neighborhood.**

Daniel St. Clair (DS) arrived. Linda Eastley (LE) and DS were recused from the next item. The next item was a report from the Design Committee on the **D Street Development PDA NPC Project**. MD noted that the Design Committee had been inclined to recommend approval, with the notion that *all* the projects would be returning for review and approval. Tim Love (TL) of Utile, consultant to the MCCA, presented the updated background BCEC Master Planning material, noting that most of the material was shown in Committee and so he would go through it quickly. He went through a series of the Master Plan studies, showing the progressive thinking about the development in the area, the ‘event space,’ the treatment of the streets, the extension of the street grid, the connections between open spaces, and more. TL: It’s the urban design for the area, which informs what is going on on the D Street site in general, and on the hotels parcel in particular. We are incorporating Complete Streets...(shows D Street section and defers to a colleague). Laura of Sasaki showed a second section, at the southerly hotel, which responded to the ‘event space.’ The site plan indicated a temporary green space at the back of the hotels. She showed a larger scale plan, then an illustrative version, focused on the two hotel sites. Laura: The turnaround is a *temporary* condition (TL emphasized this as well). Laura then showed renderings of the spaces - the setback seating zone, i.e. And sections of the ‘connector’ streets, as suggested in a prior meeting by Deneen Crosby (DC); these were generally 60’ wide with some variations in profiles/use. Most car traffic would be on the central street, which would connect long, in the future. She compared these to precedents: Pearl and Broad streets, McKinley Square.

TL returned to show more slides. WR and MD asked Tim to accelerate the presentation; most had been seen. TL did so. MD then read aloud the suggested vote, emphasizing that the garage on the southern parcel was *not* recommended as a primary use. Lynn Wolff (LW): Check the sidewalks; Complete Streets don’t necessarily agree with the Seaport District standards. Kirk Sykes (KS): I would feel one way (against the garage) if the BCEC were also a blank wall. Another, and more flexible, if it were highly activated. WR moved the vote as recommended. This was seconded, and subsequently

**VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the revised PDA for the D Street Development Project, with the conditions that: the hotels site returns to the Commission for final review and approval once the design and public realm concepts have been finalized, interim conditions determined, and the relationship to the potential BCEC expansion clarified further; and, that the south parcel return to the Commission for review and approval when its program and design advance to conceptual stage - and further, with the**

**understanding that the Commission does not recommend pursuit of a garage as a primary use in this remaining parcel to the south.**

LE and DS returned. David Hacin (DH) arrived. WR was recused from the next item. The next item was a presentation of the **Northeastern University Institutional Master Plan**. Kathy Spiegelman, now Vice-President of Planning and Development at Northeastern, noted she was here with Patrick Tedesco (PT) and Alex Krieger (AK) of Chan Krieger NBBJ, who were working on the new IMP. Kathy: I am pleased to be here - and for Northeastern. AK: Northeastern has been on an amazing journey over the last 10, 20, 30 years, with its transformation into a major research university. My son is in his first year. MD: Mine is about to graduate. AK: So, this is an ambitious IMP, to sustain that excellence, and extend it further. Northeastern has built 4,000 units of housing, and revitalized their open spaces. And the campus has been transformed through the work of one of your Commissioners. Here, the idea is to create a second public face - the major opportunity is to move southward. How well that is done will determine how well Northeastern can advance in the future.

PT went through aerial and plan views of the overall campus. PT: A lot has been done on the West Campus, but there is also other work - and some leased facilities beyond that. (Shows a diagram focused on connections through the campus.) Connections are strong *to* the tracks, but not across them. The open space has become more of a network; we want to continue that. We will extend, on the campus, the pedestrian quality, and lessen cars (i.e., Forsyth Street). PT then showed a massing diagram for the campus which highlighted the new IMP projects, and went briefly through these projects. PT: Ryder Hall would get an addition; Cargill and Stearns would become one new building; the existing science quad (near the GrandMarc) would be transformed, the notion being to create two new facilities on lesser building sites and work with a third existing building to form a new quad; Matthews Arena would be folded into an athletics/events building at Gainsboro and St. Botolph; then, the Gainsboro Garage itself. PT then continued with a glassy tower on a housing site, and a multi-disciplinary science and engineering studies building with multiple track crossings. AK: This would have a space, on Columbus, equivalent to the Krentzman Quad plaza on Huntington. This is the beginning - you will see work from Payette Associates on this building soon. (Shows a rough site plan.) PT showed a plan to expand the Carter Playground by utilizing Northeastern Property along the tracks. PT: And using artificial turf, since the existing ground is often flooded, and artificial turf will increase the utilization.

MD: Is the Carter School a part of that? PT: No, that's a separate property. Paul McDonough (PM): What is the timing of the Columbus project? Kathy: The timing will coincide with that of the IMP submission, likely in the latter part of the year. KS: This is a phenomenal gesture to Roxbury, but it HAS to be accessible, it *has* to be interactive, and people have to feel safe. That's my one strong comment. LE: On Forsyth Street - we should have conversations about the use as a connection - and how it transforms to a more pedestrian use. PT: In early conversations, we have talked with Stull & Lee, and the MBTA, about improving the spaces. And shrinking Forsyth. DC: Can it be a shared street? PT: Yes, we are thinking about that. DC: that has a strong potential. AK: Forsyth has a strength as a connection that goes all the way through the campus. LE: It could be an amazing macro-move as a sequence of spaces. Now, the campus is a series of insular, not very comprehensible spaces; this could help organize those.

The Southwest Corridor? PT: We're working on that (points out the bicycle path running through the campus, which goes up on to the SW Corridor deck to the south). MD: How do we know how much public improvements will be incorporated? DH: The sites you showed - offer a compelling vision. Ruggles feels very public. The station IS. Other connections should feel public; neighbors should feel comfortable in moving directly through the campus. That can be tricky. You almost have to go into the railroad station to feel its retail is public, and not just an extension of Northeastern. AK: We couldn't agree more, which is why we're stressing this.

LW: I want to caution, about the spaces connected with building projects. You have to create an open space network that links all the spaces together. The spaces are like peanut butter spread out.... DH (pointing): Not all arrows on your connection plan are created equal; maybe the plan should reflect that. DS: It occurs to me that this is like the final step toward a mature campus. Does this provide the right mix of uses - residential, academic, etc. - so that it provides for the future? Kathy: It meets the goal, where we think we're headed - right now. The Plan anticipates all that, but also the nature of education is changing, and so may a number of uses. It's hard to know what programs will be like ten years from now. You have to know that you'll *use* what you build.. We'll have a re-evaluation each time we do a project. PM: Each arterial has an open space improvement opportunity. MD listed a few. PT pointed out the GrandMarc, and its changes to St. Botolph. KS: It gets very eclectic, especially as you go south, with the streets. Choose the streets where it's comfortable to connect. Ruggles has clean edges, but Bromley Heath is a brick wall. AK: There is the urban ring reservation, but we agree. LE: What is striking to me is that there is so little happening north of Huntington. Where do the ribbons of green come through? You go down to Columbus, but not up. You should consider the spaces there, extend your thinking more. DH: This is a lot about the edges. In view of the other infill projects - Mass College of Art, Wentworth, et al. - I would like to know how what you're doing adds to all of that along Huntington, giving that a boulevard-like quality, with the MFA. MD: The links to the neighborhood, the listed streets, the character of the spaces. This is a very good plan. Will you make changes when you return? PT: Yes. With that, the Northeastern IMP was sent to Committee.

WR returned. The next item was a presentation of the **Bartlett Place Project**. David Price (DP), Executive Director of Nuestra Comunidad Development Corporation, introduced himself and his team, including Mark Matel, and Cliff Boehmer (CB) and Sherry McNulty (SM) of Davis Square Architects. He noted that Bartlett Place was an 8+ acre brownfields site, sitting vacant just outside of Dudley Square. CB in turn introduced the site, noting it had been in continuous transportation-related uses since 1880, and was now essentially a hole in the bottom of Fort Hill. CB: It's really very close to Dudley Square. The site is terraced back, and has a 35-foot grade change. Nuestra responded to an RFP; we have been working on it since 2007. Funding and environmental issues were difficult. But the first phase is now ready for review. Bartlett Street runs right up to Elliot Square, with dense residential uses. It has torn-up edges, somewhat. There is a converted school at the upper corner of Lambert and Guild - it's the best immediate historic structure, and we've maintained a visual axis toward it; there's a little park space at that upper site. Our goal was to make a coherent circulation plan; the overall Master Plan has a lower FAR than public transit availability might suggest. There will be 323 units in all.

MD: But the first phase is before us. What is that? CB pointed out Phase One on an axonometric diagram, describing the program briefly, and noting that the open space/plaza was included in this phase. DH: What is the interim condition when the first phase is done? CB described the site's fencing, etc. CB: I'm not really sure how much we'll clean it up; we're still thinking. DS asked about the uses. CB noted it would be retail, office, 102 units residential in two buildings, but mostly residential in future phases. Parcel C1, as an example, might be elderly housing; there might be some changes. DS asked about the street grid - even if the street itself didn't continue. CB pointed out the 22-35' grade change. DS: I'm not sure why you didn't curve to follow the streets; it doesn't connect to the grid. CB pointed out the planned visual orientation, and noted again the ragged edges, which themselves have strong elevation changes. DC: The streets have the opportunity to be two-sided. LE: It seems none of the streets go anywhere; this is an opportunity to connect. MD: The brief from staff suggests we focus on the first phase, but this is clearly an issue we will discuss in Committee. KS: It might be useful to consider the larger area of Fort Hill streets. I have a question about the office use.

CB: Regarding the site, we have discussed the street grid many times, but the site is 'plowed flat' far back; it becomes infeasible to make connections. Starting on the first phase, about the office.... DP: It's a second and third floor component. It may be office - but also may be a gym on the second floor. We wanted the spaces used at night. CB pointed out the uses on a plan, and noted the parking. WR: Is it below grade? CB: Because of the grade, somewhat so. (Notes a large single retail unit in Building B, a connection through to the open space, and the main entry promenade between buildings A and B. CB: Changes are coming; Building B will be realigned with the edge of A, toward Washington Street. (Shows a view of Building A.) Building A will be visible when you leave Dudley. LE: Is the retail along Washington *entered* from Washington, or from the back? CB: So far, all spaces are entered from both sides. We are talking to a major tenant in Building B. DS: There is a very different design intent in the two buildings. CB: Yes - there are two architects. DS: Materials? CB: Metal, we think. We are in discussions with the BRA, and keeping the budget. DH: Are the greenhouses (on the roof) real? CB: We think so. KS: The sidewalk uses - is there parking along the edge of Washington? CB: Yes. The plans did not make it into the slide show. They are on p. 2-3 in your packet. DH: A model would be very useful. DH: Some quick architectural comments. The separation of the upper building from the base...I understand the retail distinction, but the building doesn't seem to come down. On B, per Bill's comment, what happens on the plinth? On the greenhouses, we want to make sure they are viable before we get excited.

MD: What is the parking ratio? SM: 1:1 for the market rate, 0.5:1 for the affordable. MD: On the plans, the parking is not clear, but there seems to be a lot of parking shown. DS: The buildings seem like they are too broken up. The office is hidden on the inside; it should come out. It's confusing. WR: there's a need for a careful parking plan we can understand. The parking behind the stores usually doesn't work. Is the Master Plan within our purview? Also, views from distances and a model would really help. KS: It appears to almost be a greenfield site, but isn't. I'm trying to figure out how this fits now, vs. the future. The plaza is so close to a very public street. I'm not sure if I'm invited in or not. Who is it for? Help us understand. If it's public, what are the uses there? A dichotomy: dense, big, urban; or, residential, contextual. LE: Do a model. Show how it ties to the other sides of the streets. It's urban infill, but we don't have anything like that around here. MD: The architecture has the promise of being interesting; it shouldn't be weak. I wouldn't want this in Committee without discussing

the architecture of Building A. LW: It would be nice to fill up the entire site, and bring it up to the level of its neighbors. What is the remediation plan? The whole neighborhood around the site is at its original slope. CB: If it goes to Committee, can we meet on the site? MD: It hasn't been done. DAC will decide whether this is possible. The Bartlett Place Project was duly sent to Design Committee.

The next item was a presentation of **The Point Project**. Peter Sougarides (PS) of Samuels Associates introduced the Project, noting it was their fourth major project in the Fenway: Trilogy, 1330 Boylston, and Fenway Triangle were the first three. PS (indicating the model): You've seen this model before. The BRA has always asked, 'What about the Point?' when we were doing the Trilogy project. The Point site had two owners, and we finally acquired it. This has always been a 'gateway' site, with an FAR of 12, and 250' height. The other 'gateway' site is the TNT building near the Bowker Overpass (points to site on map). PS then noted the dimensions of the site. PS: In a sense, we planned for this with Trilogy. We were unsure of parking usage, and so we have excess parking there and are using that for *this* Project. PS then showed existing conditions and introduced the Samuels team (Lesley Cohen, Melissa Shrock), Bernardo Fort-Brescia (BF) and Jooyeol Oh of Arquitectonica, and Keith LeBlanc (KL).

BF showed the site at the intersections. BF: When I went to school here, it pretty much wasn't a neighborhood. Now, there is retail at the bases, and residential and offices above; we want to continue that pattern. On this site, we started with a diagram. The residential wants to be 65' wide. BF then went through an evolutionary series of axonometrics, with a central piece moving forward in a wedge, the sides framing it, and shifting volumes in section. He showed the site, with the existing building cross-hatched, noting they intended to widen the passage between Brookline and Boylston. A long curb cut would also be removed. On a ground plane plan, BF noted the edge of Trilogy, and loading and parking access. BF: The landscape architects will describe the plaza, which matches the outdoor seating, and gradually reduces in a series of steps to the corner. This plays an important role - it completes the cycle of retail activity on both avenues. I would like to describe the tower relationship - it recedes on the sides, and at the corner, the volume comes down. There are several factors in the reorganization of the volumes (shows plan view, sketch, section, and elevation at the retail levels). The building is a diagram (shows a density variation diagram), resolving itself in transparency at the corner. It's graduated also in the colors of the material.

KL: I'll go back to the area plan. Boylston is the more widely traveled street. We have looked at Complete Streets, and the design of Boylston Street, which I know Deneen is familiar with. (KL noted the strategy for the street trees, underscoring healthy planting techniques.) The building has no basement, which helps. (Notes the overall site again, then 'walks' visually around the site.) The detail continues that of Boylston, with a travel zone in concrete. The café zone is broken down in scale; the colors and textures of the pavers might also relate to the building. At the passage, it relates directly to Sweet Cheeks, and then steps out. The sidewalk is 12-22' (shows section). There is no parking on Boylston here, but there is on Brookline. Here there is no café zone, but it is consistent with other areas of Brookline, at 10-12' wide. We are considering the corridor/alley in different ways, because of the loading and parking. We're doing everything we can to make it pedestrian-friendly, using bollards and different textures. We are thinking of an overhead canopy/wind screen here, which is one of the two 'hot spots'

identified in the wind study. Over at the Point, this intersection handles all of the traffic in the area. We wanted to create a refuge that felt safe. Not a seating area, but a place to pause. This is a premier facade that comes down, so we want to reinforce its tapering aspect, a special character of the site. And this is the other 'hot spot.' We could have addressed it by using a canopy or the building, but instead wanted to try something that's more sculptural; the trees are denser here as well. (Shows sketch. Shows precedents, including vertical screens and aerial structures; also for lighting and bollards.) Lighting should be special here. The planters and other furnishings are solid, sturdy, giving a sense of security.

LE: It looks like there are roof gardens. Can you describe? KL: It's a placeholder. There's a green roof on top of the retail. Above, there is an amenity space with a pool. BF showed an illustrative roofscape plan view, with green below and a pool surrounded by a brown plaza at the top. He noted the lower levels look into the green roof areas, which should be an amenity for the units here and at Trilogy. BF: It would be a pity to clutter them with people's furniture - they are so *visual*. And will help with the insulation. (Shows a ground floor plan, where retail predominates; there is a small residential entry along Brookline. Shows a bridge connector to Trilogy for the amenity users, at the second floor. Shows typical upper floors - three layers. Shows the upper amenity space, unit mix, a section diagram, elevations, the transformation diagram of the building.) BF: The building is hinging at the corner, and similar on the two wings (also angled). (Shows the opposite sides, an aerial view, a perspective of The Point, and more perspectives from the ground level, looking along Boylston.)

DH: On Boylston, you have gone to lengths to describe the relationship with Sweet Cheeks. But on Brookline, the interruption is quite abrupt. KL: We aligned that with the *rest* of the street, rather than the exception, which is Trilogy. DH: Maybe, but it could also be the same strategy. *Trilogy* is the future. The way the sidewalks taper, it feels a little tight. I'm not sure why you couldn't negotiate the plinth that way. Using as much effort as has gone into Boylston - but the (pedestrian) traffic is on Brookline now. DC: I think it's tight on both sides. I think you need 8' *clear* there. On Brookline, *maybe* you don't need trees - but 10' is too tight. DH: This is an intriguing Project, explained beautifully. The question is, and this is shown on the model, that there are a lot of large, block-sized projects occurring, but not related to each other. This is not aligned with *any* of these. With the Landmark, or Trilogy, or Fenway Triangle. The plinth can't do all that work. KS: I think it does align with Sears....

BF: It's a bisector. The wind study showed, if we moved it to one side or another, it got worse in different positions to either side. DH: I understand about the views too from your client's building. BF: Between the two avenues, why would you pick one or the other? This is Solomonic. DH: That's subtle. In this context, it can be an object, but it also needs to relate. KS: Back to the slide, the view from the Fens - I thought it aligned with, and could relate to, the Landmark. I'm also not convinced by the graduation from the Trilogy; I want to see more. MD: I'll start with a question on the alignment. If you are breaking from the context, why do you have gratuitous alignment datums? BF: It's better as a bisector; it resolves the two streets. KS: This side (from the Fenway) is more important. It's relevant as a landmark. This will be the view that everyone remembers. DH: I don't have as much of an issue with the language of the skin. More how it sits, how it stands. Those streets are very different. Boylston is a boulevard; Brookline, a connector. I'd favor Boylston. If it were completely off the grid, I would get it. But it's close enough to be unsettling. WR: I'd request a view from the hospitals.

This view is almost looking head-on, which is not your experience. MD: It's worth having a conversation about what makes a landmark. I don't read this as a landmark yet; it just doesn't have that quality. WR: Much of your presentation was dealing with this question. BF: We didn't feel it was important to align with every angle of the site. KS: Evolution of a language, sort of. It's chaotic, a lot of energy, but you are bridging also from the LMA. BF: There is a lot of glass on the medical side, but not here (toward Trilogy); this resolves that. This speaks to the other side. It shouldn't be all like that. KS: Actually I wasn't saying it should be. A landmark to me, is the ability to make that bridge. It's a 'tweener spot. It should show its place in Boston. DH: For me, it's a different issue. It's a big and long block, almost as big as Samuels' others. What you are doing with the base is creating a coherence with the street, while the tower is free of that. It's that balance: how reinforcing the building is, vs. its wrapper. It's about finding balance. Maybe it should be a bisector, but then the base needs to be more *strongly* related. What is the BRA opinion?

DAC: We worked with the team to get here, to a point that we felt should proceed. We haven't met with them since (submission), but I am interested to see and hear from BF the notion of the study and responsiveness to wind studies. So this is still, to some degree, up in the air. (BF then again defending the orientation.) MD: What should they study for Committee? KS: The view from up Brookline, and larger views. MD: The Brookline edge. I could be persuaded about the angle bisector. But DH is right; it needs to stand freer of the base. DC: I want to speak for the plaza. I'd like to understand it more. It's a tiny space, viewed at that scale. One can pass freely, but interact - that's a good idea. KS: The bridge - we need more info on that. Why should we approve that? LE: Boylston doesn't have pedestrian traffic. The cut-through is what people use. So Brookline is more important. WR: Both streets fade away, in terms of use. I'm not convinced that they will be lively. LE: There is a lot of traffic from the Colleges of the Fenway. WR: This is not like the Flatiron in New York, where there's more to walk to. DH: The question is, who is going to enter there - at the Point? BF: I heard you - it's important to do Brookline. With that, The Point 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 8:25 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission is scheduled for May 7, 2013. The recording of the April 2, 2013 Boston Civic Design Commission meeting was digitized and is available at the Boston Redevelopment Authority.